

that several of these will be established in the near future.

As already intimated, financial stringency has necessitated a drastic curtailment in the public works policy of the State. It is felt that in view of the very large railway mileage in proportion to population, railway construction for the immediate future must be confined to such short lines as are necessary for linking up purposes, and that more attention should be devoted to the provision and maintenance of roads to enable settlers to get their produce to rail quickly and cheaply.

The Wagin-Bowelling line was connected up on June 26, and will be handed over to the working railways in November. This will enable a large quantity of wheat from the lines junctioning at Wagin to be conveyed to Bunbury speedily and economically.

The Bunbury breakwater has been extended and has proved successful in mitigating the action of winter gales. The department is now proceeding with the construction of two berths designed to give accommodation for shipping up to a depth of 30 feet.

An amalgamation of the Water Supply and Public Works Departments has been carried out, and it has been found possible to largely reduce the staff without impairing its efficiency.

The long standing differences between the orchardists and the Government, in connection with the Harvey Irrigation Scheme, have been settled on a basis equitable to all concerned. An amendment of the Irrigation Act will be necessary to carry out the agreement that has been arrived at, and a Bill for this purpose will be submitted shortly.

In view of the great capital cost of our State railway system, its important bearing upon our financial situation, and its influence upon the development of our industries, my Advisers have given serious attention to the question of its future management. A Bill will be introduced at an early date to amend the Railways Act so as to permit of the appointment of three Commissioners, in the place of one Commissioner as at present.

Notwithstanding the existing financial stringency and the imperative need for economy in all directions, every reasonable effort is being made to meet with the requirements of the people, particularly in the outlying portions of the State, in the matter of educational facilities and the care and treatment of the sick.

A permanent committee, representative of the University, the Education Department, and the Agricultural Department, has been appointed to advise on the important question of agricultural education, with a view to making the educational system of the State of greater value in the development of our primary industries.

In addition to the proposed legislation already referred to, it is intended to present to Parliament a Roads Bill and a Traffic Bill. Bills will also be presented to amend the Constitution Act for the better regulation of the date of general elections; to amend the Criminal Code; the State Children's Act; the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act; and to deal with other matters of minor importance.

Within the next few months the State will be honoured by a visit from the French delegation. Arrangements have been made with the Commonwealth Government whereby the activities of the delegation during its stay in this State will be under the direction of the Western Australian Government, and my Advisers are confident of receiving the very heartiest co-operation of all sections of the community in the welcome and entertainment of the distinguished representatives of a country that has sacrificed so much in the cause of freedom, and from whose people the sons of Australia have received such unstinted hospitality.

I now leave you to your labours, trusting that by the blessing of Divine Providence they may prove of material advantage to the people of Western Australia, the Commonwealth, and the Empire.

[The Governor then retired, and the President resumed the Chair.]

[For "Papers Presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

#### BILL—NAVIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.29]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "An Act to amend the Navigation Act, 1904."

Leave given; Bill introduced, and read a first time.

#### GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT: His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to deliver a Speech, and for the sake of accuracy a copy will be placed in the hands of every member.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [3.31]: In reply to the Speech which His Excellency has been pleased to deliver, I desire to move that the following Address be presented to His Excellency:—

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir William Grey Ellison-Macartney, Privy Councillor, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor in and over the State of Western Australia and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

May it please Your Excellency, We, the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

In moving the motion I desire to refer to the intention of the Government to repurchase estates adjacent to railways for the repatriation of our soldiers, and I am in agreement with

this, subject to certain safeguards against overvaluing and a repetition of mistakes made in the Avondale, Yandanooka, and Bowes estates. We cannot do too much for our soldiers, but I would like to see our own Crown lands made more attractive. We have a great amount of good wheat land, but there is not much encouragement to go on it. The values are too high, coupled with taxes of all kinds, and men are not disposed to go and waste their lives trying to overcome difficulties which are impossible. As far as the soldiers are concerned, I think they are entitled to extra consideration, and I would like to see the Government prepared to grant to any returned soldier who is a farmer a freehold of, say 1,000 acres, in the Wheat Belt, subject of course to certain conditions, that is conditions of residence and improvements, and so forth. The Government intend to erect freezers at Fremantle. About two years ago fat stock were sold in the open market here at famine prices. Since then freezers have been erected at Wyndham, and at Carnarvon they are almost assured. Private enterprise is going to erect them there. At Geraldton £30,000 has been promised to assist in erecting freezers, and a large number of shares has lately been taken up, so that it is almost certain that works will eventually be erected. The cattle in East Kimberley will be diverted to the freezers there, and the stock on the Gascoyne river and probably on some of the rivers further north will naturally be brought to Carnarvon to be frozen. In the case of Geraldton, the Murchison stock will filter through in great numbers, and be frozen there, therefore I cannot see any justification for freezers being erected at the present time at Fremantle. In all probability, in the near future, they will be necessary, but the eastern districts and south-western districts of the State are called on to supply the metropolitan market, and in order to justify freezers there must be some 300,000 to 400,000 sheep frozen there to give a fighting chance to provide working expenses and interest. It is a trading concern which the Government and their immediate predecessors denounced everywhere. Why, therefore, perpetuate another injury on the public by creating another trading concern? It is interesting to see that the Bunbury breakwater has been extended so as to provide two berths being made 30 feet deep, so that sea-going vessels may be accommodated. Some two years ago a harbour scheme was started at Geraldton at a cost of something like £30,000, but for some reason, of which I am not aware, unless on the ground of shortness of finance, the work was discontinued. Yet in the same breath we see that £150,000 is to be tilted into Bunbury. The Government should be just to Geraldton before being generous to Bunbury. During last session the land regulations were amended, and the maximum price of first class land was reduced to 15s. This was a splendid step in the right direction, had it gone far enough. But there has been no alteration in the price of second and third class lands. Personally I think the Government would be well advised if they charged only for their first class land and gave their second and third class lands to the

soldiers, conditionally on certain improvements, and residence. In my opinion the minimum of 3s. 9d. per acre for third class land is ridiculously high. There are tens of thousands of acres which are not worth a penny until dealt with by the hand of man. They are only a harbour for dingoes and rabbits, which are a menace to the farmers and the agricultural industry. I shall have an opportunity of speaking again, and as I am indisposed I beg to move the motion.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [3.39]: I rise to second the motion proposed to the House, and I feel sure the Address, couched as it is in the terms in which it has been read by the hon. member who had moved it, will be most readily accepted by the House. Whilst I support and endorse every sentiment and expression which is contained in that Address, I reserve to myself the right to offer suggestion and criticism where I think these may be justified in connection with matters that have been referred to in the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor. These reservations are in keeping with a time-honoured custom, which permits members, I believe, on an occasion such as this, to ventilate their grievances, and at the same time to enable them to express their concurrence or dissent in connection with the deeds or misdeeds of the Government. I submit, therefore, that one may, with every sense of propriety and relevancy, support much which has been set forth in the Speech, without necessarily concurring in all. In the opening paragraph of the Speech, a copy of which has been handed to every member, reference has been made by His Excellency to the present war. We welcome indeed that message of confidence and hope of victory which has been uttered by him. The war has now waged for over four years, but it is now being waged with brighter and better prospects than during any portion of the past period. Our hearts thrill with pride and joy at the achievements of our brave Australian soldiers, but we must not forget that those achievements are accomplished only with many and severe losses. They make many hearts sad by the loss of those near and dear to them, and it also means depleted ranks. It means that great gaps are occurring in the ranks, gaps which it is our duty as loyal citizens to do all we possibly can to fill. It is for us as citizens to say whether we have done our duty. I know members of the House at all times have sought to use their best efforts in this direction. It is our duty, therefore, I say, to continue to fill the gaps until victory has been secured, and until that freedom for which we are fighting rests on a sure and firm foundation. Whilst we honour our soldiers for their bravery, we must not forget the duty we owe to them and their dependants. I believe a certain limited amount of good work has been done by the Government in seeking to make arrangements for the settlement of soldiers on the land. His Excellency has referred in the Speech to the fact that the settlement of the soldiers is a State matter. That is quite correct. It is sometimes overlooked by many that this work in connection with the soldiers is a Federal matter, and sometimes others think