

business men, were quite right to refuse to take the responsibility at 16s. 3d. per ton for 400 miles. No one can argue against that. They, as business men, refused to take the responsibility. I would appeal to the department to look at it not so much from a business point of view as from a patriotic point of view. Mine owners will not ship ore except at a low rate, but at a low rate the department will not take the responsibility. I think the Government might take the responsibility or exercise more care and protection. At once there would be larger quantities of ore shipped and the output will be greatly increased, and the increase directly or indirectly would do good to the colony. It will far and away out-balance any loss the Government might be involved in in the loss of a few pounds of ore. I cannot see how there can be any loss if sufficient care is taken to guard against it. This may be slightly wandering from the Speech, but it is an important point, a very important one, and I thought I would take the opportunity of bringing it under the notice of the Government. I do not blame the Government for not taking the responsibility, but I appeal to them to look at the matter more from a patriotic point than a strictly business point. I think the country may congratulate itself on the extra demand for agricultural land. Large areas of land have been taken up in various parts of the country. Many men who were looked upon as birds of passage are now taking up land, and are now looked upon as *bona fide* settlers. They are trying, and in many instances with success, to make the colony, in more ways than one, a producing colony. I may be excused if I touch upon the timber lands and express my satisfaction at their promised development. I saw in a newspaper the other day that the Minister of Lands proposed to bring forward his new Forests Bill to improve the present regulations, which are not favourable towards the cutting and export of timber on a large scale, except in regard to those people who have vested interests. I think all the members of this House and the country may feel perfectly satisfied that although a depression has existed, and does exist, it is only a thin depression, only a very slight veil over the blue sky of prosperity which is stretching over us,

and before long our prosperity will be greater than we have ever dreamt of before.

HON. E. McLARTY moved the adjournment of the debate until the next sitting day.

Put and passed.

THE ACTING PREMIER (the Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) moved, "That the House at its rising do adjourn until 4.30 p.m. next day."

Put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 4.30 o'clock until next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th August, 1897.

Meeting of the Assembly—Message: Opening Proceedings—Swearing-in of Members—Election of Speaker—Presentation of the Speaker-Elect—The Governor's Opening Speech—Motion: Address-in-Reply—Papers, &c., Presented—Roads and Streets Closure Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.30 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which Proclamation was read by the Clerk.

MESSAGE—OPENING PROCEEDINGS.

A Message from the Commissioners appointed by the Governor, to do all things necessary for the opening of Parliament, requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber; and hon. members having accordingly repaired to that chamber and heard the Commission read, they returned to this chamber.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour Mr. JUSTICE STONE, having been commissioned by the Governor, appeared in this chamber to administer to members the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty.

The CLERK (Mr. Gale) thereupon produced the election writs, showing the return of 44 members as representatives to this Assembly.

The members present then severally took and subscribed the oath, as required by the 52 Vict., cap. 23, sec. 22.

[At a later stage, the Speaker after his election, announced that he had received a Commission from the Governor, authorising him to administer the oath or affirmation to other elected members who might present themselves.]

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

MR. HARPER (Beverley) said: Mr. Gale,—I rise with very great pleasure to propose Sir James George Lee Steere as a suitable person to be elected the Speaker of this Assembly. Sir James has so long occupied a seat in previous Parliaments in this colony, and has filled the position with so much dignity and honour to himself and pleasure to the members who have sat with him, that I think no one can for a moment say he is not the fittest person in this Assembly to preside over its deliberations.

MR. SIMPSON (Geraldton): I have very great pleasure in seconding the motion of my hon. friend. Very few words are required to commend it to the House; for I believe I express the opinion of every member who has previously held a seat in this House when I say that the late Speaker's urbane impartiality and dignified judgment in the conduct of business have ever commended him to their respect and that the very atmosphere of fair-play which Sir James Lee Steere infuses into the Assembly contributes largely to the dignified character of the proceedings which, under his presidency, always have, and I believe always will, mark the procedure of Parliamentary business. I have very great pleasure in seconding the nomination.

No other member being proposed,

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE rose in his place and said: Mr. Gale,—I highly

appreciate the honour which it is proposed to confer upon me by the House, and I beg to submit myself to the desire of hon. members.

THE SPEAKER-ELECT, having been conducted to the Chair by his proposer and seconder, said: Honourable members,—I desire to thank you for having placed me in this dignified and honourable position, as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I can assure you I value it very highly indeed, believing as I do that it is one of the most dignified positions which any man can hold in any country, that of Speaker of the representatives in the people's House. I think that the proceedings in this House hitherto, as hon. members who have sat in it will agree with me in saying, have been conducted with great decorum, and in such a manner as I believe has obtained the approval not only of members who have sat in this House, but of the public generally; and I am quite certain that no House can deserve the commendations of the public unless its proceedings are conducted in such a manner as to deserve their approbation. But, at the same time, I would wish hon. members to always bear this in mind, that the Speaker is completely powerless unless he is supported by the goodwill of the members. Hitherto I have always received that support, since I have had the honour of being Speaker, and I feel certain I shall continue to receive it from hon. members. The other day, when reading in the newspapers a report of the appointment of the Speaker in the House of Commons, I could not help thinking how very true was the new Speaker's remark, that it was easy enough for a Speaker to be impartial, but sometimes very difficult for him to appear impartial to others. I can quite understand that when, in the heat of debate, the Speaker has called a member to order, that member may think the Speaker has been unfair, and his conduct may not appear impartial at such a time. But I am certain that in calmer moments, when the heat has cooled down, any member who may have had this feeling will afterwards realise that the Speaker's conduct had been impartial. Of course a Speaker is guided principally, almost entirely, by certain text-books that he has to rely upon, embodying the Standing Orders

and the practice of Parliaments throughout the world. Those Standing Orders may appear to many people, as I know they do, to be in some respects ridiculous; and such persons are apt to say, "What do we want to have such and such a Standing Order for?" But I am sure that when we come to consider why these Standing Orders have been passed by some of the ablest Parliamentarians that ever lived, we shall form a different opinion; for we shall find they have three principal objects in view. One is to give power for preserving due decorum during debate. Another is to protect the rights of minorities in the House. And another is to ensure that there shall be certain intervals of time for the due consideration of measures passing through the House. These are, I think, mostly considered to be laudable objects indeed; and perhaps you will agree with me that all these rules of procedure for the orderly conduct of business in Parliament have been devised with the best intent, and are such as I think will be approved by members of this Assembly as being rules which cannot well be improved upon. I thank you again for having placed me in this honourable position; feeling sure that, with your support, I shall be able to conduct the proceedings of this House with satisfaction to yourselves and the country. I would also wish to say to new members of this House that it will always be my pleasure, as it is also my duty, to afford every assistance to those members who may desire at any time to take counsel with me, in reference to bringing forward any measures in which they may be interested, or any matter on which they may wish to have my opinion in regard to the procedure of this House.

PRESENTATION OF THE SPEAKER-ELECT.

Hon. members then proceeded to Government House, to present the Speaker-Elect to the Governor; and, upon their return to this chamber,

MR. SPEAKER said: I have to inform the House that, accompanied by hon. members, I proceeded to Government House and acquainted His Excellency the Governor that, in pursuance of the Constitution Act, the Assembly had elected me their Speaker. In the name and on

behalf of the House, I also laid claim to the undoubted rights and privileges of the House—freedom of debate and access to His Excellency—and I requested that the most favourable construction may be put upon all our proceedings. His Excellency was pleased to approve of your choice, and also to confirm the constitutional rights and privileges of the House.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Black Rod having appeared at the Bar, and delivered a summons from the Governor,

MR. SPEAKER and hon. members repaired to the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered a Speech on the opening of Parliament. [*Vide p. 2, ante.*] Mr. Speaker and hon. members then returned to their own chamber.

MOTION—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): Mr. Speaker,—In rising to propose the Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor which honourable members have just listened to, I must put on record my intense appreciation of the honour that has been done, not only to me personally but also to the district of Pilbarra which I represent and to the great and important mining industry, by one section of whose adherents I have been returned to this House. I must, in anticipation, crave the indulgence of honourable members towards one unversed in Parliamentary procedure, and ask them to extend to me the leniency which the circumstances of the case seem to me to demand. The Speech of His Excellency the Governor has allotted to this House a task which, though likely to be a short one, contains as its principal item a measure which I—and I think most of the honourable members of this House will bear me out—regard as one of the most important which the Parliament of Western Australia has yet had to deliberate upon. I refer to the Commonwealth Bill, which it will shortly be our duty to consider. It is to be hoped that Western Australia will furnish to the Federal Convention, to be held in Sydney in September, a Bill embodying principles that will be reconcilable with those contained in the contributions of her sister colonies, and that the combined efforts of the people's representatives in each State

may quickly result in a United Australia, free from those vexatious heart-burnings and petty jealousies which arise from the presence of imaginary boundaries between peoples whose characteristics are the same and whose interests are one. It is a matter for congratulation that a step in the right direction was taken by the last Parliament in the Amendment of the Constitution Act, providing further representation for the people of this colony. It is my most fervent wish that this Parliament may worthily follow in the footsteps of its predecessors in this direction, and render the voice of the people more intelligible by an amendment of the Electoral Act now in force, and under which such irksome conditions are imposed on the would-be elector. The domestic finances of the colony appear from His Excellency's Speech to be in a satisfactory condition. To one like myself, who has on his way hither to traverse the greater part of this immense colony, evidences are forthcoming at every point that the wants of the people are being attended to, by the number and importance of the various public works now being proceeded with. There is little index given in His Excellency's Speech of the further policy of the Government in this direction, but I most earnestly hope that their future endeavours may have the effect of ameliorating the conditions of life and increasing facilities for production throughout the colony for all classes. His Excellency has made reference to the continued satisfactory yield of gold; and it is pleasing to know that almost as the Speech was being penned there arrived from the Eastern goldfields an escort bringing by far the largest amount of the precious metal yet carried in one consignment to Perth—a most eloquent vindication of his statement, and a still more flattering augury for the future. In my opinion, the Government now have it in their power to materially increase the already large yields, by the carrying out of the scheme promulgated by the Hon. the Premier in his speech at Bumbury for the erection of public batteries at suitable centres. I also think that if care and discretion be used in the management of these batteries they can claim to be classed as reproductive works. A most desirable step also on the part of the Government would be the allocation of

money for the encouragement of *bona fide* prospecting by private individuals. There is probably no class of men who do more to benefit the country—and in most cases do it with a wholly inadequate personal reward—than the men who risk, not only their money, but in many cases their health and even their lives, in opening up fresh country. It is pleasing to be able to note that minerals other than gold are attracting considerable attention. The coalfields of the colony promise to become an important source of prosperity, and coppermining is being assiduously and prosperously carried on near Roebourne in the North West, where the erection of smelting works will shortly, in my opinion, conduce to further discoveries. It is satisfactory to note from His Excellency's Speech that matters agricultural and pastoral are in a prosperous state. We may hope that the Government will continue to encourage those engaged in these pursuits in what appears to me to be the most fitting manner, that is, by giving them every facility for production and disposal of their staples by a judicious policy of public works. It is to be regretted that in my attempt at a forecast of the proceedings of this House, I can derive so little direct or definite information from the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, so that I am reduced to expatiate on what I myself consider desirable more than on what is laid before us for consideration by the Government. Although a proportionate increase in the prosperity of the colony to that which occurred during the last Parliament is almost too much to be expected, still I think I express the hope of every member of this Assembly in wishing that the prosperity of the colony may steadily and surely increase and that our efforts may be guided towards that end. Mr. Speaker, I now submit the following Address-in-Reply for the approval of this House, and hope that unanimous support will be accorded to it:—

"To His Excellency Lieut.-Colonel Sir
 "Gerard Smith, Knight Commander of
 "the Most Distinguished Order of St.
 "Michael and St. George, Governor,
 "&c., &c., &c.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful
 "subjects, the members of the Legislative

"Assembly of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection to our Most Gracious Sovereign.

"We thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been good enough to deliver to us.

"Our most careful consideration and attention will be given to the important matters referred to by Your Excellency, and all other matters that may be brought before us, and it shall be our earnest endeavour to so deal with them that our labours may tend to beneficial results and the welfare of this colony."

MR. PENNEFATHER (Greenough) : Mr. Speaker,—I have very much pleasure in rising to second the motion proposing the Address-in-Reply. I ask, through you, sir, the same privilege the last speaker claimed, as one inexperienced in the ways of Parliament; and while I know that hon. members of this House will grant to every person who arrives amongst them unacquainted with the procedure of this House, the indulgence I ask, I also feel sure that every maiden speaker in this House will use it with discretion, and will appreciate it extremely as an indulgence coming from older members. The first subject in the Speech we have had read to us is that of the amendment of the Constitution of the colony. If it need any evidence to justify those who were the mainspring in bringing about that amendment of the Constitution, I think it will be found in the fresh accession of strength which the new members for the goldfields have introduced into this House; and if we may judge by the utterances of the last speaker, I am sure we may conclude that these new members will bring to the deliberations of this Assembly a knowledge and a readiness and a facility of speech that will do credit to themselves and assist our deliberations. If any further amendment of the Constitution becomes necessary, I, for my part, shall always take it as my duty to see that the goldfields and mining constituencies, which are undoubtedly the mainstay of the colony, obtain, as they have a right to obtain, a full and adequate representation in this House. Then comes the question which overshadows all others; that is the question whether or not we as a colony are prepared to throw in our

lot with the other colonies of this vast continent and become a united nation. It is a grand subject to contemplate—a subject which at first seems to awe one by the importance of its considerations. At the same time, I cannot hide from myself that there are many considerations of a most open character which it behoves every hon. member of this House to thoroughly weigh before he commits the destinies of this colony to the united action of the States of the other colonies. We must recollect that our position, geographically, is very different from that of any of the other colonies of this vast continent. We are removed by a wide waste of water which takes three or four days to traverse, and that water, as many of us know from experience, rarely sleeps, but is always, more or less, in a state of wondrous activity. That is the first consideration. The next is that we have much to do in this young colony; and let us not shut our eyes to the fact that we have before us a boundless field for well directed activity. I will ask hon. members of this House to consider whether those of our wants which are of a pressing nature can be more adequately attended to by having the central power, which controls them, at an extreme distance—say in any part of Victoria or New South Wales—than if we retain the same governing authority amongst ourselves. I venture to say that there is not one hon. member in the House who would think for one moment that, during the past three or four years of wonderful activity, such as I might say electrified the various departments of the State, we could have obtained the same facilities for communication, whether by rail, telegraph or post, if the authority which has the direction and control of these services were situated in New South Wales or Victoria. I look on federation as a subject that is fascinating. When I read, as most hon. members, I am sure, have also read, some of the most eloquent speeches which were delivered in the recent Convention in Adelaide—some wonderful examples of eloquence, brilliantly put and illustrated by imaginative minds—I almost wondered whether I was living in the regions of politics, or reading a romance such as might have been written by Rider Haggard or some other imaginative author. We are apt to be carried away by the glamour of elo-

quent tongues, particularly when those tongues are stimulated by imaginative minds. When the tongue which is ready and pointed, and the mind which is keen and active, come into conjunction, then, of course the audience are spell-bound. The time has now come when we must gravely approach the subject of federation, removed from these influences. The first thing to consider, when a man makes a proposition to you, is: what are the motives which prompt that proposition? If you find the motive is honourable and the proposition is disinterested, you will no doubt pay great attention, reason it out, and perhaps ultimately adopt it. Then hon. members have to consider whether those gentlemen, who were, so to speak, the motive power that brought together that vast Convention were, as it might be said, actuated by a desire for personal aggrandisement or by personal ambition. Many politicians, as we all know, having conquered fields within their own limits, soar to regions only confined by the shores of this vast continent.

MR. W. JAMES: That is a worthy ambition, is it not?

MR. PENNEFATHER: No doubt a most worthy and laudable ambition; but at what cost? The cost may be too great for the benefit you receive. It is proposed among other things—and it will be adopted if the federation scheme is carried out in its entirety—that we, and every other State, shall surrender the revenues derived from customs and excise. A speech to which I particularly want to direct attention, was delivered at the Adelaide Convention by Mr. McMillan, —a speech which for lucidity of language, for the marshalling of facts, and for the amount of instruction which can be obtained from its reading, is unequalled by any address on that occasion. Mr. McMillan has made a perfect study of the statistics of the several colonies; and in reasoning the matter out, in support of his argument that it would be unfair to confine the basis of representation to population, he showed that the smaller colonies would be yielding up their revenues and not getting anything practical in return. He illustrated that in a very apt manner. He said he had at some labour obtained information from a reliable source that the average revenue per

head of the population for the whole of this continent is, roughly speaking, £1 13s. 7d. With that as a starting point he reasoned out what each colony would gain or surrender. The first in importance that would gain is New South Wales. That colony, according to Mr. McMillan's account, would gain no less a sum per annum than £319,000. The next colony that would gain in proportion is South Australia, which would obtain something like £140,000. Then comes Victoria with a gain of about £10,000, owing no doubt to its high protective duties; and then Tasmania, with a gain of about £27,000. Now come the two colonies that would lose. The first is Queensland, which would lose annually about £180,000; and the second is the colony of Western Australia, which would lose no less a sum annually than £319,000.

MR. W. JAMES: That is not the scheme proposed in the financial clauses.

MR. PENNEFATHER: My friend opposite may say that; but what I have said is put forward as the basis of what we are asked to surrender. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.] We have a right to consider whether it is justifiable to make that surrender. There is, of course, to be intercolonial freetrade; and intercolonial freetrade would be the means of breaking down barriers—a breaking down which I dare say some members in this House would be only too glad to see; but that breaking down would be at the cost I have just mentioned. The next consideration is that we would have of course to surrender our system of telegraph service and our post office service; and the main consensus of opinion went so far as to support the surrender of our railway system. [HON. MEMBERS: No, No.] Well, at any rate, the surrender of the railway system could be fought for. Our post and telegraph services are worked for an amount not exceeding £60,000 or thereabouts per annum as a loss. But it must be borne in mind that the major portion of that amount is made up not of the cost of maintenance but of the cost of construction. The annual loss in Victoria on the maintenance of the post and telegraph services is not less than £98,000, and there is a similar loss in New South Wales. And yet we are called on to throw in our little lot and

to suffer in common with the other States. [An Hon. Member: So we ought to do.] That may be; but at what cost? I would ask these gentlemen who will represent this colony at the Convention to remember that, if they are asked to throw the lot of this colony in with the others, we must be admitted as a State, and not only in proportion to population. Federation, as I understand it, is a union of States; and yet the basis of the federation proposed is to be the number of the population of each colony. That is an advantage that would make the older colonies pre-eminently powerful. Where such a condition of things may be brought about, great consideration is necessary, and we should not run precipitately into the scheme until we have thoroughly weighed it in every aspect. It is a matter of history that for the last 50 years my countrymen in Ireland have been fighting for Home Rule, and I hope they will get it; but I would remind members of this House that this federal measure has for its object the alienation of Home Rule. If the powers I have indicated are surrendered by this colony, it means that they are gone for ever. When you join this union you never can withdraw from it. A similar constitution was framed in the United States of America. But that constitution was framed at a time when America was forced to the step by outside hostile pressure. Yet what was the result after nearly half a century of such a constitution? The fields of America were drenched in blood, in order to assert the claims of some States to withdraw or secede at pleasure. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: They did not secede.] They did not; but what did it cost that country? It cost the country a million lives. Therefore, this House, in considering this question of federation, ought to remember that before we join a union where such consequences may follow, it is necessary to weigh in our minds every argument. It is necessary this colony should be adequately represented at the next Convention in Sydney. I do not say a word to the contrary; and I am sure the gentlemen who are to represent us will do justice to our case. If they do that justice, they will not be forgetful of the trust that is reposed in them, not only by their local constituents, but by the united voice of this House, speaking on behalf of the colony.

Federation is no doubt a most ambitious subject. It is a subject that almost intoxicates one, when it is considered that those engaged in the work may have the framing of a great nation, which will, perhaps, in time, rival some of the greatest nations that ever existed. It would be a grand thing to have one's name linked with such a movement, and handed down to posterity as a framer and maker of so noble a Constitution. But I regret to say that, in my opinion, the time has not yet come for this young colony—young in growth and young in responsible Government—to join in federation; for we have yet much to do in the development of our local resources and effecting necessary improvements. But when the time does come, as it may come, when we ourselves, by population and by wealth and power, can take our stand equal, and not subservient, to any of the other colonies, then will be the time to throw in our lot, and become part of a federated Australia. I am sure it is our desire that in our history to be handed down to nations unborn it should be shown that we, at the proper time and at a proper juncture, acted wisely, and were not carried away imprudently or impetuously. There is one other subject I should like to touch upon, if I am not wearying the attention of hon. members—that is the subject of agricultural lands which have been thrown open and been availed of very largely by many settlers, not only those who were in this colony, but by many who have come from other colonies to make their homes here. Let me assure hon. members that although I am here as, comparatively speaking, a new-comer to the colony, I intend, like every man who comes from the same colony as myself, to throw my lot in with you. All considerations of the past are sunk, in our case, for those of the future. Therefore it is I would ask the House to remember that if, in anything I have said, there is what some may perhaps call a weakness, or what others may regard as expressions of unkindness towards the colony we have left, yet there is a higher consideration with us, and that is the common good of this colony. I hope the activity of our Lands Department will be continued, as I am glad to see it has been during the last six months; and I am sure every-

one in this portion of the country especially will be conscious that agriculture is one of the great arteries for the circulation of the wealth of this country. The Minister who has this department under his guiding care has shown such activity in his administration, and such sympathy with those members of this House who want anything done to assist their own districts, that I hope he won't stop short in his efforts, but will carry his activity much further afield. I hope also to have the opportunity of reminding him that there are many arid plains up about Geraldton—(Mr. SIMPSON: No; not about Geraldton)—and to the north of Geraldton, also the south of it, which only need proper distribution of water to make those parts no less productive than the more favoured portions in the south. That can be done by a system of irrigation; not, however, to be carried out at any great cost at first. We know that many blunders have been committed in Victoria over the matter of irrigation; therefore I only ask the Government to approach this subject rather gingerly at first, by arranging a plan of distribution, and then, if the people think fit, let them apply the water for themselves. That will be the means of stimulating agriculture in those parts which, I regret to say, are not over-prosperous at present. I do not know in what particular aspect I can say anything in reference to one subject on which the hon. member who preceded me spoke at length. It is a subject, of course, with which he is intimately connected—the gold production of the colony. Though I represent an agricultural constituency, I have just as much sympathy with the mining constituencies as any hon. member, and I think it will be a bad day for this colony if mining interests are opposed to agricultural interests. Let them go hand-in-hand; and it should be the duty of all those hon. members who represent agricultural constituencies, to hold out the hand of friendship and assistance to the representatives of mining constituencies, in every possible way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We will keep you to your promise.

MR. PENNEFATHER: I never make a promise unless I keep it. Before I sit down, I must thank the House for the kindly hearing that has been accorded to

me, notwithstanding the few bantering remarks occasionally from the other side: and I shall, of course, get used to them in time. What I admire is that there is no personal feeling in such remarks; and so long as I am a member of the House, and receive such friendly treatment, I shall be the first to reciprocate. I thank hon. members for the attention they have given me.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved the adjournment of the debate.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said it would be for the House to decide the date to which the debate should be adjourned; and on this point he would like to convey to the House a suggestion on behalf of the Government. On the following day (Wednesday) the Government thought it would suit the convenience of hon. members if the House met at the usual hour of half-past four, and, if desired, sit during the evening, to afford opportunity for going on with the debate on the Address-in-Reply. The Government would propose that the House should go into Committee of the Whole, for the consideration of the Commonwealth Bill, on Thursday next, when it was expected the Premier would be in his place and would submit a motion to that effect. The Government, therefore, asked the House to continue the debate on the Address-in-Reply on the following afternoon and evening, making some progress with it, if not completing it. The general debate on the Commonwealth Bill could be commenced on Thursday. It would not be necessary to move the first and second reading of that Bill; because it was intended to follow the procedure adopted in other colonies, by at once going into Committee for considering the clauses of the Bill. The House would, therefore, be moved into Committee of the Whole, on Thursday; and at that stage it would be open to hon. members to debate the general principles of federation to any extent they might think fit. For these reasons, the Government suggested to hon. members the desirability of limiting in some respects their observations on the general question of federation during the debate on the Address-in-Reply. Hon. members were invited to hold those observations over until the discussion of the motion to go into Committee of the Whole on the Commonwealth Bill. An hon.

member opposite had said there was very little to discuss in the Speech. Well, he (the Attorney General) was not inclined to disagree with that hon. member, and perhaps the absence of material for discussion was not altogether a misfortune.

AN HON. MEMBER: There was a lot you forgot to put in the Speech.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: At any rate, it was hoped the debate on the Address-in-Reply would be concluded on the Wednesday evening, in order to clear the ground for the federal discussion on Thursday.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had much pleasure in acceding to the wish of the Attorney General; and, with the leave of the House, would move the adjournment of the debate until the following day.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) pointed out that the hon. member was quite right in merely moving that the debate be adjourned, as the motion to follow that would be that the House at its rising should adjourn until the following day.

Motion—that the debate be adjourned—put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL then moved—"That the House at its rising do adjourn until to-morrow, at half-past four o'clock."

Put and passed.

PAPERS, &c., PRESENTED.

By the SPEAKER: Public Accounts for the financial year ended 30th June, 1896; accompanied by the Auditor General's sixth annual report.

By the ATTORNEY GENERAL: 1. Report by Joint Library Committee of arrangements made for placing the Parliamentary Reporting Staff on a permanent and efficient basis. 2. Annual Report of Collector of Customs, Registrar of Shipping, &c. 3. Copy of Commonwealth Bill, as prepared by the Federal Convention at Adelaide. (Bill ordered to be printed.)

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

Introduced (upon leave given) by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 4:55 o'clock until next day.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 18th August, 1897.

Question: Intercolonial Free-trade—Question: Replacement of Railway Stock—Commonwealth Bill. Explanation of procedure—Address-in-Reply: second day's debate and conclusion—Adjournment.

THE ACTING-PRESIDENT (Hon. J. W. Hackett) took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—INTERCOLONIAL FREE-TRADE.

HON. F. T. CROWDER, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Mines, If the Government were in favour of intercolonial free-trade.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied: Not under present circumstances.

QUESTION—REPLACEMENT OF RAILWAY ROLLING STOCK.

HON. F. T. CROWDER, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Mines. What principle was adopted in regard to replacing worn out railway stock, and if it was replaced from revenue or loan moneys.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied: That the system adopted up to the present was that the cost of repairing or rebuilding rolling stock had been defrayed from revenue, and not from loan moneys.

COMMONWEALTH BILL.

EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURE.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom), having laid on the table a copy of the Commonwealth Bill as drafted by the Adelaide Convention, and given notice of a motion in connection with the same, said: I would point out to hon. members that, when this motion is brought forward to-morrow evening, they will have an opportunity then of addressing themselves to the subject of the Federation Bill. All the speeches that are made then will be taken as second-reading speeches, so that hon. members can say what they think fit in