

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT.

The Parliament was prorogued on the 18th January, 1922, until the 1st June, 1922. It was further prorogued to the 27th July, 1922, when it met for the despatch of business.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Lieut-Governor and Administrator.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 27th July, 1922.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. G. P. Hillman).

COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency's Commissioner (Mr. Justice Burnside), having entered the Chamber, a Message was sent to the Legislative Assembly requesting the presence of members in the Council Chamber.

Members of the Assembly having arrived accordingly, His Honour requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in his name for the opening of Parliament. The Commission was read.

The Commissioner then made the following statement:—

Hon. members of the Legislative Council, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly,—I have it in command from His Excellency the Lieut. Governor and Administrator to inform you that he will in person in this place declare the reasons for his calling this session of Parliament, so soon as the members of the Legislative Council shall have notified him that they have appointed their President.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The members of the Legislative Assembly having retired, the Clerk of Parliaments read the Commission appointing Mr. Justice Burnside to administer the oath of allegiance to newly elected members.

The Clerk announced the return of writs for the election of members, showing that the following had been duly elected:—Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom (North), Hon. A. J. H. Saw (Metropolitan-Suburban), Hon. E. Rose (South-West), Hon. V. Hamersley (East), Hon. J. W. Hickey (Central), Hon. J. M. Macfarlane (Metropolitan), Hon. G. Potter (West), Hon. H. Seddon (North-East), Hon. A. Burvill (South-East), Hon. J. E. Dodd (South). These members took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

The Commissioner then left the Chamber.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

The Clerk of Parliaments reported that the office of President was vacant.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East): I propose to the Council that the Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom be elected as our President.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West): I second the motion.

No other member being proposed,

The Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM rose in his place and said: I have to thank you, hon. members, very much for the honour you have conferred upon me and I trust I shall be able to carry out the duties satisfactorily to yourselves and to myself.

Having been conducted to the Chair,

The PRESIDENT-ELECT said: I have to express the deep obligation I feel for the honour you have conferred upon me. It is one for which I have had some little am-

bition for some time, and I again thank you for placing me in such a distinguished position.

Congratulations.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East): As Leader of the House I desire to convey to you, Mr. President, the warmest congratulations of the Council on your elevation to the office of President. We feel that you are peculiarly qualified by reason of your long public experience to maintain the dignity of this high office. You are not merely the senior member of the Legislative Council, but you are the only present member of Parliament and, with the single exception of that very worthy citizen Mr. W. T. Lorton, the only man now living who has sat in the Parliament of Western Australia under each of its three phases—as a member of the Crown colony, as a member under responsible Government during the period from 1890 to 1900, and as a member of the State Parliament since Federation. This unique record of service, I think, fully entitles you to elevation to the office of President. It is now nearly 40 years since you first entered Parliament and, during the whole of that time, you have been almost continuously in the service of the public in some form or other. As a member of Parliament, as a Minister of the Crown, as Leader of this House, as acting Premier for a considerable period during the absence of Sir John Forrest, and as Agent General for this State, you have discharged the duties of every one of these offices with credit to yourself and advantage to Western Australia. I tender to you the heartiest congratulations of your fellow members on your elevation to the office of President, and I give you the warmest and sincerest assurance of our desire to assist you in maintaining the privileges of this House and upholding the dignity of your office.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West): May I add to the words of the Leader of the House my sincere and hearty congratulations on your having assumed the office of President of the Council. I am sure it was gratifying to us all to hear the Minister's references to your long and faithful services to the people of Western Australia which fully entitle you to the position you have been placed in to-day.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator has intimated that he will be pleased to receive you, Mr. President, forthwith at Government House.

Sitting suspended from 12.34 p.m. to 3 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT-ELECT.

The PRESIDENT: I desire to inform the House that I have waited upon and have been presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-

Governor as President elect of the Legislative Council and His Excellency has been pleased to signify his approval of the choice of the Council.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3 p.m., and the members of the Legislative Assembly, having also attended in the Chamber, obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

It gives me great pleasure to open the Second Session of the Eleventh Parliament of Western Australia.

Since your last meeting His Excellency the Governor, Sir Francis Alexander Newdegate K.C.M.G., has departed on a brief visit to England and has conveyed to the King an assurance of the continued loyalty and devotion of the people of this State to the throne and person of His Majesty.

My advisers have long felt that not only the material prosperity of Western Australia but its safety as a white State in the Imperial Commonwealth of Nations, depend upon a rapid increase of population and production. Believing that the time had arrived when a vigorous attempt should be made to repair the period of comparative inactivity, resulting from the war, the recess has been devoted to the preparation of a comprehensive policy of immigration, the details of which will be submitted for your consideration.

Following upon the initiation of this policy the Honourable the Premier visited Melbourne early in the year and placed certain proposals before the Right Honourable the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. These proposals were accepted by Mr. Hughes, and Sir James Mitchell then proceeded to London to seek the co-operation of the Imperial Government. In that mission also he was entirely successful, and before he left London on his return journey a Bill was passed through both Houses of the Imperial Parliament authorising His Majesty's Government to render assistance in a policy of migration within the Empire; and an agreement was completed under which Western Australia will be the first country in the Empire to secure the advantages of that legislation.

Experience has demonstrated that it is on thing to obtain immigrants—another to hold them. In the thirteen years from 1909 to 1921, inclusive, the Government brought to Western Australia, at considerable expense to the taxpayer, 45,409 people. For this period however, the gross excess of arrivals in the State over departures from the State was only 9,468, indicating that 35,941 of the people

brought out, partly at Government expense, had been required to make good the excess of ordinary departures over arrivals. The present policy seeks to correct these conditions by securing immigrants free of cost to the State, and by assuring them employment in developmental undertakings that will open up larger avenues of occupation for both the present and the new population.

The arrangement contemplates the taking from Great Britain of 75,000 men, women, and children, in a period of three to five years, the direct aim being an annual total of 25,000 souls. Under the agreement entered into with the Commonwealth Government, the whole cost of propaganda work, examination, and passages is borne by the Commonwealth Government, whilst the State, through officers of its own nomination, maintains control of the selection of immigrants. The Commonwealth Government further undertakes to return to Britain, at its own cost, any immigrants who on, or shortly after, arrival are found to be unfit by reason of mental or physical defects to take their place in the industrial life of the community.

The agreement between the Imperial Government, the Commonwealth Government, and the State Government, provides that in respect of these 75,000 immigrants £6,000,000 of money shall be made available to the State, in annual instalments in the proportion of £2,000,000 to each 25,000 immigrants. The interest on this money for the first five years after each moiety is raised will be borne by the Imperial, the Commonwealth, and the State Governments in equal parts. The per capita payment of 25s. annually by the Commonwealth to the State under the Surplus Revenue Act will be augmented on account of the 25,000 new arrivals by a sum almost sufficient to pay the State's third of the interest bill. Thus, not only will the immigrants be landed in the State free of all cost, but each loan raised under the arrangement will be free of interest charge to the State for a period of five years.

The money so raised will be employed in the following directions:—

- (1) To strengthen the funds of the Agricultural Bank in order that improvements—chiefly in the direction of clearing, fencing, and dam sinking—may be put in hand by existing holders to enable them to double the present production of wheat and to largely increase the stock-carrying capacity of their farms;
- (2) To provide for the housing of people in country towns and districts;
- (3) To settle six thousand additional people on the land, chiefly in the South-West portion of the State, to bring their holdings to a productive stage by clearing, drainage, fencing, and housing, and to provide railways, roads, and other facilities to enable them to market their products.

In connection with this policy of land settlement and development, steps have been

taken to secure the early construction of the railways authorised by Parliament, and further railway proposals will be submitted for your consideration, including a line to serve the country between Manjimup and Denmark.

Whilst these proposals for the increase of population and production in the South-Western portion of the State have been finalised and will be put into active operation forthwith, my advisers recognise that the development and peopling of the North and the North-West are of equal importance in State, Commonwealth, and Imperial interests. The collapse of the market for frozen meat, and the recent stagnation in the market for pearls and pearlshell have struck a severe blow at two of the principal industries of the North. In each case it is felt that the depression is only temporary. In order to afford some assistance to the cattle industry the Government decided to operate the Wyndham Freezing Works this season on an arrangement which it is hoped will result in no greater loss to the State than would have accrued had the works remained idle.

The survey of the unoccupied territory lying between Derby and Wyndham, which was carried out during last winter, confirmed earlier reports of the existence of an enormous area of fertile and well-watered country, much of that in the immediate vicinity of the coast being exceptionally suitable for tropical agriculture.

The Commissioner for the North-West, who assumed duty a year ago, has established permanent headquarters at Broome, and from 1st February of this year all activities in connection with works in the North-West, previously carried out by the Public Works Department, were placed under his jurisdiction. Since that date, in addition to several minor operations, over fifty different works have been brought to completion, or are now in progress. These include jetties, hospitals, good-sheds, schools, and stock-route wells. Tenders were invited for the construction of a deep-water jetty at Beadon Point, near Onslow, and a contract has been let.

The Aborigines Branch of the North-West Department has continued the experimental growing of cotton at Violet Valley, East Kimberley. The station, embracing 70,000 acres, has been declared a quarantine area by the Commonwealth Director of Quarantine, wherein the propagation of imported cotton seed may be undertaken. Seed of Australian, American, and Egyptian origin has been tried. An area of 2½ acres of the Egyptian variety is now coming into bearing. The experiments have been attended with considerable success, and justify the expectation that cotton can be grown successfully in the Kimberleys. Arrangements have been made for the securing of expert and practical advice regarding cotton-growing in the State generally.

An area of approximately 2,000 acres cut into 70 blocks was thrown open for selection in the Gascoyne district close to Carnarvon. The blocks were quickly applied for, and many of the applicants have started operations.

The question of throwing open additional blocks in the same area is under consideration. Further north other areas are available for selection, and additional lands are to be thrown open in due course. An expert in tropical agriculture will be appointed as soon as a suitable applicant can be secured.

A successful exhibition of North-West products was opened in the city in April, and continued for about two months. It served to attract much attention to the possibilities of the North. Private enterprise is organising projects for the expansion of the pastoral industry, and financially well-equipped organisations have taken in hand the exploitation of the hitherto neglected wealth of our northern waters. It will be the aim of the Government to give them every possible assistance and encouragement.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

The revenue for the year ended 30th June, 1922, was £6,907,107, showing an increase of £117,542 over that of the previous year, whilst the expenditure was £7,639,242, being £162,951 greater than that of the previous year. The deficit on the year's transactions was £732,135, making the accumulated deficit £5,505,565.

The operations of the railways for the year showed a gross surplus of £467,944, against which interest (£740,000) and sinking fund (£142,000) had to be provided by the Treasury, leaving an actual shortage of £414,056. The position was better than for the previous year by £180,807, large economies having been effected. During the recess the whole question of railway administration and finance has been inquired into by Mr. G. W. Stead as a Royal Commissioner. His final report has been presented. It contains far-reaching recommendations, which are now receiving the attention of my advisers.

You will be asked to grant temporary supplies, and at an early date the estimates of revenue and expenditure will be submitted to you. Provision will be made for increased revenue from liquor license, but the Government are hopeful that the general stimulus given by the policy of immigration and development will obviate the necessity for any other considerable increases in taxation. The credit of the State is beyond question, and the large provision made by way of sinking fund places Western Australia in a particularly strong position to meet obligations as they arise. The direct contributions to the sinking fund from revenue last year amounted to £285,610. The sinking fund now totals £3,370,160, the accretions for the year being equal to the year's deficit. The amount provided by way of sinking fund to meet the Goldfields Water Scheme loan is so far in excess of requirements that sinking fund and interest to the amount of £100,000 per annum may for the future be suspended. An actuarial calculation is proceeding, and it is believed that without in any way interfering with the requirements of the different Loan Acts further relief to revenue may be afforded.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

Timely rains throughout the agricultural areas give every prospect of a bountiful harvest, and the area under crop shows a substantial improvement over last year. Pastoral prospects throughout the State are also good. For this year's harvest a State compulsory wheat pool was satisfactorily conducted under legislative authority. The growers, through their organisations, have intimated their desire to associate themselves with the voluntary pool system now established by the other wheat-growing States, and, in view of this the Government do not propose to introduce legislation for a compulsory pool for the forthcoming harvest.

Soldier settlement operations indicate that the repatriation of ex-soldiers on the land is nearing completion. Most of the application now being received are for advances to develop and stock holdings already occupied. The number of men settled for the year was 607, as against 936 for the previous year. The total registrations to date amount to 7,288, and of these 4,547 have been granted advances. A percentage of the earlier applicants have abandoned their intention of following land settlement as a means of repatriation. In addition to the foregoing figures, 8 ex-A.I.F. men are being repatriated under group settlement conditions. Seven munition workers and 51 British ex-service men have also been settled under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act.

The commitments to the end of June in connection with soldier settlement amounted to £5,181,629, including £4,425,153 Agricultural Bank approvals for improvements, and £756,476 for purchase of estates, drainage, clearing, etc. The latter amount covers the cost of preparation for large numbers of men yet to be settled, e.g., Peel estate, Herdsman's lake, etc. The average commitment per soldier is £1,121.

Group settlement is proceeding satisfactorily; 26 groups have been established and are in various stages of development. On the earlier groups on the Manjimup and Pemberton areas the permanent houses are erected, every location is more or less ready for production, and between 100 and 125 acres have been laid down in pasture. On the August side it was found necessary to erect a sawmill near Augusta, and the construction of settlers' homes is now proceeding. The group members on their blocks now number 407, and a further 110 will be despatched shortly to make up the complement of the 26 groups. Over 1,500 men, women, and children are in the groups, and it is estimated that when the existing groups are complete some 2,300 souls will be in residence. To provide for the education of children whilst the groups are in their temporary camps, arrangements have been made with the Education Department for temporary schools pending the erection of permanent schools after the group members have gone into occupation of their holdings.

mutual sick and accident fund has been created, to which group members contribute weekly, and from which payments are made during absence through sickness or accident.

The year 1921 showed a further decline in the output of gold, the yield being 64,111 fine ounces less than in 1920. The decreased output is largely attributable to the continued high cost of production, but it is noteworthy that our gold production was 63.01 per cent. of the total of Australasia for the year. A further increase in the output of coal to the extent of 6,796 tons was recorded, whilst the output of asbestos, copper, and pyritic ore was well maintained.

The attention given to the possibility of obtaining mineral oil in the State has in no way diminished, and the northern portion of the State is being thoroughly prospected by various parties. Boring is proceeding in the areas held by the Freney Kimberley Oil Company, Limited, and will shortly be commenced on the adjoining area held by Okes-Durack Kimberley Oil Company.

In continuation of its policy of assisting the prospector, the Government, since June, 1920, have equipped and despatched 175 parties, comprising 317 men, at a cost of £6,183. At present there are operating throughout the State 76 parties, comprising 139 assisted prospectors. In addition, a party of nine men and a leader, estimated to cost £2,500, has been sent out by the Government on the recommendation of the State Prospecting Board to systematically prospect certain metalliferous areas considered to be geologically favourable. A sum of £38,101 has been advanced since July, 1921, for development of mining.

Crushing facilities are available in 29 districts where State batteries have been established for the treatment of ore raised by prospectors. The policy of moderate treatment charges has been continued, and, with only two or three exceptions, these State batteries provide the only treatment facilities in the districts in which they are located. In all, no less than 1,329,275 tons of ore have been crushed by them, returning a total output of gold valued at £5,552,874. Water supplies are being maintained and extended where necessary to assist in advancement of the industry.

In order to augment the metropolitan water supply, larger mains have been provided where required, and it is expected that there will be no difficulty in coping with the demand for the coming summer. Investigations in connection with the permanent scheme on the Canning River are proceeding, and supplies for the country districts are receiving careful attention.

The policy of extending encouragement and assistance in the establishment of secondary industries is being continued, and during the past twelve months several small exhibitions have been held which have served the purpose of illustrating the progress that is being made in this direction, and also of cultivating a demand for locally produced articles.

It is the intention of my advisers that the work of Parliament during the present session shall be devoted chiefly to the questions of finance and development, but there are certain legislative matters urgently requiring attention. During the recess Royal Commissions have been engaged investigating several proposals, and it is hoped that their inquiries and reports will facilitate the work of Parliament in dealing with such matters as the Licensing Act Amendment Bill and the Hospitals Bill. Amongst other measures of first rate importance that will be submitted for your consideration will be a Closer Settlement Bill following the lines of the measure passed by the Legislative Assembly last session, and a Bill to amend the Arbitration Act by making provision for the appointment of a permanent President, and in other directions.

I now leave you to your labours, trusting that by the blessing of Divine Providence they may prove of material advantage to the State.

The PRESIDENT: For the sake of greater accuracy I have obtained from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor copies of the Speech His Excellency has just delivered. These copies will be distributed among hon. members.

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.30]: 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 to amend the Public Education Acts.

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [3.32]: I move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us: "May it please Your Excellency. We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of the State 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."

We are pleased to learn from recent advices that His Excellency the Governor Sir Francis Newdegate, and Lady Newdegate, have arrived safely in England and are in good health. We know, too, that they have missed

no opportunity of attending to the wants of Western Australia, to do which His Excellency showed every indication when he was in the State. I am sure we shall all be glad to welcome His Excellency back in the course of the next few months. I desire to congratulate you, Sir, upon your elevation to the position of President. I feel I may take some little credit to myself for the consummation of such a happy event. After the poll was taken I was a little depressed at the suggestion that the constitutional wisdom of this Chamber had fled. Upon reflection, however, I felt that there were still several members in the House with 25 years' experience who would possibly be able to carry on as of yore. When I learned to-day that you had had 40 years of Parliamentary experience, I felt that all was well. I am sure the constitutional wisdom of the House will be just as well catered for in the future as it was in the past. The most important point of the Speech deals with the question of immigration. All members of this Chamber, indeed everyone in the State, must feel that they owe a debt of gratitude to the Premier for having conceived, perfected and successfully carried out this scheme of immigration we are just about to consider and put into operation. The Government are to be congratulated upon having this scheme to deal with in the future. When we reflect upon the position of the State and the prospects of our being able to find an outlet for the energies and activities of the people, it must seem to us that immigration is the only line to follow. The Premier, by a stroke of genius at the right moment, hit upon the proper plan for dealing with the situation. When we remember that during recess he has practically encircled the globe, influenced the Commonwealth Government as well as the Government of Great Britain, and secured the magnificent terms he did in connection with his immigration scheme, we may well be satisfied with the result. Some little doubt has been raised as to whether the organisation is yet perfect for dealing with the proposed rapid influx of population. I am sure that the experience gained in the repatriation of soldiers has, in a sense, prepared the Ministry for the task of placing other new settlers upon the land. I anticipate no difficulty along these lines. It is a matter of gratification that 75,000 new souls are to come amongst us in the next three years to help us bear the burden of taxation.

Hon. J. Cornell: We hope they will remain.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The fact that they will be here and will doubtless give promise of being able to say, will be a reason why we should all be ready to assist the Government with our best endeavours to make their lot such that they will stay. That there is a 50 per cent. increase in the rural population must be a great source of comfort to the Commissioner of Railways in trying to overcome the great difficulty he has of meeting his expenditure with his revenue.

Hon. J. Cornell: He needs a little comfort now.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: If that be the case, we ought to give it to him. In order that the Government may be able to carry out their programme, an increase of faith and hope as to the future on the part of the people is necessary. Under the immigration scheme the people must feel that their burden will be lightened in their task of carrying on this great State. It is satisfactory to note that the money that is to be found for the working of this scheme can be used by the Agricultural Bank in strengthening its finances, so as to afford facilities to settlers who already have holdings to develop those holdings and to employ the new-comers, to the end that the output of cereals may be increased in all directions. It is hoped that great care will be taken in the selection of the class of immigrant to come here. From what I have learnt I am sure this care will be taken, and that the best possible class of immigrant will be brought to this State. One of the reasons why some settlers do not stay on the land is that rural life is not as attractive as city life. The pioneering of new country offers many difficulties, and the conditions are not nearly as pleasant as they are in the city. The monotony of the life is often heart-breaking. Those people who have been accustomed to city life do not in the country meet people in a social way as frequently as they desire. It is easy to understand that these conditions, together with the difficulty of bringing up children in the same way as they can be brought up in the cities, are an inducement to people to seek a life that may be more congenial to them. We, as members of this Chamber, should endeavour to remedy that evil as far as possible. We should see that people who are settled on the land are provided with necessary comforts, and are given opportunities of settling down to a rural life, in the same way that people can do in the cities. I am pleased to note that a special clause has been added to the agreement that mentally and physically unfitted persons are to be returned at the expense of the Commonwealth. I could wish that all those people who are brought out, and find themselves dissatisfied with the location on which they have been placed, and with the country generally, and who cannot be made to stop on the land, could be returned to England in the same way as the others I have referred to.

Hon. J. Cornell: We will have a lot of joy-riding out here.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: It is better to give them a joy-ride than to keep them here as useless members of the community.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is better to keep them away. Do not bring them at all.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The settlement of 6,000 people in the South-West is a bigger proposition and a more difficult problem than the settlement of people on the wheat lands. If it is the intention to leave it to the individual to clear heavily timbered land and become a producer within a reasonable time,

I cannot help thinking that 99 per cent. will fail. I hope some arrangement will be made for the clearing of these lands, and for them to be handed over to the settler in productive order. The greatest encouragement it is possible to offer a settler is for him to find that his farming operations are returning him something, and that he is becoming independent. When a man feels that he is in the hands of the bank, or is working against disabilities he cannot overcome, he will not only regard himself as a failure, but will be inclined to scare off many other desirable citizens that we would wish to see upon our shores. An important question that must be carefully gone into in connection with the great South-West is the conservation of our forests. I do not like to think that land will be indiscriminately alienated in the South-West. I have a good knowledge of the South-West and fully appreciate the assets that our forests are to Western Australia. I am very much in accord with the idea to use immediately some portion of the six millions for the purpose of constructing already authorised railways, chiefly for the purpose of keeping our promise to those people who took up land along surveyed routes years ago. At the same time I do not view with very great favour the proposal to construct new lines until such time as the lands already served are settled. In the great middle north and the north-west, it is pleasing to note that the Government activities there are intended to be of developmental interest and value, but it occurs to me that the question is too gigantic for us to undertake properly at the present juncture. How best to deal with the matter is very difficult to understand. I feel that possibly the idea of creating a new State would permit of the concentration of effort and finance, and so secure that portion of the State to the Commonwealth and Empire for good in a quicker way than we could ever hope to do from this end. Whatever the policy of the Government may be, I hope that every effort will be made to develop that part of the State and the industries which exist and which are likely to arise. The question of the growth of cotton in the North and the reference to it in the Speech, so far as the aborigines reserves are concerned, is very interesting, and I hope the experiment will be carried further. If it is found that cotton can be grown profitably with white labour, I am convinced that it will be possible to bring many millions of acres into use. The Wyndham Meat Works have been the subject of a good deal of controversy in the community, and diverse opinions have been expressed in regard to them. I agree with the policy the Government have adopted this year in the way of operating those works, even though public opinion may be to the contrary. We must realise that the plant at Wyndham is a very costly one, and to permit it to remain idle in those tropical parts would result disastrously. It is, therefore, very much better to operate the works, even though they be operated at a loss, than to permit

them to remain idle and so depreciate rapidly. Again, it has to be borne in mind that there were a couple of season's cattle ready to be dealt with. I may explain at this juncture that I am not in favour of the Government interfering with private enterprise, and I trust that the earliest opportunity will be taken to dispose of this particular concern before the next season comes round. It is interesting to note also that the Gascoyne closer settlement scheme has been started and that the blocks which were made available have been readily taken up. I trust that the experiment will turn out as valuable as it gives every promise of doing. On the question of finance I do not feel quite so happy. We still have with us the monthly deficit, while the accumulated deficit is of such proportions that it proves Western Australia to be still in a very bad way financially.

Hon. H. Stewart: The credit of the State is good.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: When it is realised that there was an increase of £117,000 in last year's revenue, and that the expenditure was greater than that of the previous year by £162,000, bringing the total deficit to five and a-half millions sterling, the taxpayer will recognise that the existing taxation must be maintained for some time to come. I am quite satisfied, however, that the people will agree to carry the burden, provided, of course, they have the right to demand that rigid economy be carried out. For myself, before I became a member of this House, and had a voice in it, I felt that the payment of taxes was a duty, and in some cases a privilege, when it was carried out for the public good in a sensible way, that is to say, free from extravagance. When we look around, however, we see that our sources of taxation are very limited. As the Post Office, the Customs, and the Mint have been taken from us, we must concentrate on one or two avenues which mean much to the general community. There is a matter, however, that we can deal with, and which so far has not been touched, by which economies can be effected, and it is in respect of Parliament itself. To-day the Western Australian Parliament consists of the same number of members as before Federation, when the State had control of the departments which are now in the charge of the Commonwealth. Our Parliament too is conducted now at even greater cost than was the case formerly, and the people cannot understand why the Legislature of the State is maintained at the same strength as formerly and at that greater expense, without giving the same amount of satisfaction which was previously experienced. Economies could be effected in this direction and I trust an effort will be made to bring them about.

Hon. J. Cornell: Abolish this House.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I am referring to both Houses. I have not spoken of the abolition of either House; I wish to see a reduction effected in both places. With re-

gard to the railways, we must realise that they are responsible for four-sevenths of our annual loss. I recognise that economies have been made there, but I question very much the manner in which those economies were effected. We should realise that the railways are the people's best means of transport, and that by increasing the fares and freights we make them unpopular. That is a questionable policy to adopt. I have evidence of the detrimental effect this course of action has had on the railways. I am sure of my figures when I say that I am aware that 103 all-lines tickets have been lost to the Railway Department within the last year, and that motor transport has taken the place of carriage by rail. I practise this myself and I know that transport between Fremantle and Perth is cheaper and more expeditious by motor than it is at the present time by rail. This important fact has been brought under the notice of the Commissioner of Railways and others, but so far no attention has been given to the matter. The position is developing in such a way that the railway authorities will find it exceedingly difficult to recover that traffic which they are daily losing. We have before us the report of the Royal Commissioner who was appointed to investigate the management of our railway system, and we have also the counter report of the Commissioner, and I am sure that, between the two, it will be possible for some light to be thrown on the position as it exists to-day. Regarding group settlements, the Government are to be congratulated on the success of these up to the present time. I feel that that method of settlement is appreciated by those people who have adopted it, and my belief is that it could be adopted to even a further extent, because this form of settlement carries with it features which are satisfactory to those people who take up land under those conditions. The settlers in this way become satisfied with country life, and a spirit of self-help is evident. In regard to mining, it is disclosed that there has been a drop in the output for the past year to the extent of 64,111 ozs. While this is regrettable, it is by no means discouraging to anyone who understands mining, because it is known that the industry is one of ups and downs. There is not a better type of citizen anywhere than the prospector. He is able to stand more knocks and disappointments in a better way than any other member of the community. He is ever full of hope, and I trust that those prospectors who are now receiving support from the Government will be so far successful that their efforts may result in the discovery of at least another satisfactory goldfield in the near future. I am entirely in accord with the proposal to continue the vote to assist prospectors. It is also satisfactory to know that, in spite of the decreased gold yield, Western Australia is still producing some 63 per cent of the total Australian output. It is also encouraging to know that the coal industry is developing in a successful way. It has a

great future ahead of it, which is satisfactory to everybody. With regard to oil, many of us during the past 12 months have been buying shares in the various companies, either for the purpose of profit, or from patriotic motives. Whatever the motive, however, I trust that the efforts to strike oil in the North will prove successful. It can easily be appreciated that if oil were struck in the North-West, the problem of settling that portion of the State would be much easier than it is to-day. With reference to liquor reform, the report of the Royal Commission has been placed before the public. That report is sure to create debate upon many points. The opinion generally expressed is that the members of that Royal Commission have done good work and have furnished Parliament with good results. The trade and the people generally must be prepared, of course, for increased taxation on the liquor traffic, because it did not produce satisfactory returns last year. I do not think those connected with the trade are so much concerned about the extra taxation to be imposed as they are regarding the selection of the three permanent members of the licensing bench. I think the trade hope that the selection of those gentlemen will be from the best classes of the community, and that those selected will be men who will be able to profit from the experience gained from year to year. The liquor business is a difficult one and requires careful handling. I think the very best magistrates should be appointed; that will be the safest plan to adopt. A Closer Settlement Bill is to be introduced this session, and I trust it will be before members at an early date so that many of its provisions may be put into operation and thus foster settlement. At present there are many difficulties in the way to prevent settlement from proceeding. I am anxious to see legislation adopted that will give the Government power to resume land from estates which are not properly developed, and which are located along the railway lines throughout the country. I understand that within a few miles of the railways there are millions of acres available and that within a distance of 20 miles, some 12 million acres of land, not yet under cultivation, could be resumed. The best part of the 75,000 people who are to be introduced under the Premier's immigration scheme, could find a place on those 12 million acres close to the railways. Settlement in such areas would be of advantage to the newcomers. The metropolitan water supply and tramway questions are of special interest to the people in the Metropolitan Province. It has been mooted that a board or boards will be appointed for the purpose of controlling those utilities. I trust the creation of those boards will be based on the elective principle. The councils and road boards concerned are awaiting some concrete proposal. In common with the metropolitan bodies generally, I am interested in the statement made that the Upper Canning water supply scheme has been investigated. I hold that for all

time the Mundaring scheme should be reserved for the agricultural and mining industries. It is understood that the consumption of water in the metropolitan area during the summer months is four times the capacity of the Mundaring scheme. If this be so, those who are asking for a hills water supply to serve the requirements of the metropolitan area will see that it is just as well to get on with the Canning scheme. I have been informed that plans and specifications in connection with that scheme have been completed for a long time, and that the original scheme has been approved by the expert who was brought to Western Australia to advise the Government on the question. I understand that that expert declared that the Canning scheme was the best to serve the requirements of the metropolitan area for all time. The North Perth people will be glad to hear that they will get something out of their taps other than mud or silt during summer months. The Premier's announcement in the daily Press, which announcement finds repetition in the Governor's Speech, to the effect that land settlement and developmental matters rather than the introduction of Bills, will engage the attention of Parliament this session, is one that I am sure will appeal to hon. members. I fervently pray that that will be so. It is only by increased land settlement that we may expect a return of anything like the good old times we had in earlier years. There is a lot of work ahead of the Government, but there is also success assured. Regarding recent legislation, it is pleasing to know that I, as President of the Royal Agricultural Society, have been informed that the Stations Act passed last session has been put into operation and has given general satisfaction. The Minister for Agriculture has promised that this year we will have a comprehensive Dairying Bill dealing, among other things, with the registration of pure-bred bulls. This is important in connection with the dairying industry, and it is to be hoped that the Bill will be introduced at an early stage and will become operative as soon as possible. I understand that the operations of the Agricultural Bank will be such that no advances will be made respecting bulls, unless they are pure-bred. There is another point about land settlement which so far has not been dealt with, and that is the necessity for an increased yield per acre. This can be brought about by the establishment of an agricultural college, which, in turn, would establish a laboratory for an agricultural chemist. I am sure that the work of an agricultural chemist would be of great value to Western Australia and to the farmers themselves. In Western Australia the services of the agricultural chemist have not been availed of as they might have been. I am told that wheat production can easily be increased by one or two bushels per acre, and if that be so, it is quite worth while establishing a laboratory to deal with the soils of the State.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do you think you could get more that way than you could with the use of pedigreed seed?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: We should follow something along the lines adopted in America in relation to rural life. There they have colleges dealing with many thousands of students, and they keep in close touch with the rural community, supplying literature to them of every description and generally making life as satisfactory to the individual as is life in the city. In conclusion, may I express the wish that the labours of hon. members during this session may give satisfaction to them and to the people of Western Australia as a whole, buoyed up with the certain conviction of good times ahead. If we only give our attention to the questions which will arise from time to time during the session, and assist the Government with a generous support, particularly in connection with the immigration scheme, we shall have done something in the interests of Western Australia as a whole.

Hon. G. POTTER (West) [4.11]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 27th July, 1922.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at noon, pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant).

MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONER.

A Message from the Commissioner appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator to do all things necessary for the open-