

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT.

The Eighth Parliament was dissolved on 29th September, 1914. The Ninth Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 3rd December, 1914; and the First Session commenced on that day.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1914.

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The Senior Commissioner then read the following statement:—

*Mr. President, Hon. Gentlemen of the
Legislative Council and Gentlemen
of the Legislative Assembly—*

We have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to inform you that, at three o'clock this afternoon, His Excellency will declare to you the causes of the calling of this Parliament; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should be first chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and having been duly sworn by the Commissioner appointed by His Excellency, you do elect your Speaker, and notify the same to His Excellency.

Members of the Legislative Assembly having retired, His Excellency's Commissioners left the Chamber.

Sitting suspended from 12.12 to 2.55 p.m.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 12 noon pursuant to proclamation.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. G. F. Hillman) read the proclamation.

COMMISSIONERS.

His Excellency's Commissioners (His Honour the Chief Justice, Mr. R. F. McMillan, and His Honour 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 Legislative Assembly having arrived accordingly, His Honour the Chief Justice (Senior Commissioner), requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in his name for the opening of Parliament, which Commission was read.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3 p.m.; and, the members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber obed-

iently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

The opening of the Ninth Parliament since the establishment of constitutional government is unfortunately clouded by the consciousness of the great struggle the whole of the British Empire is exerting on behalf of human liberty and justice against the spirit of militarism and aggressive domination on the part of the common enemy of Great Britain and her Allies. Though there is no reason for fear or despair as to the final outcome of the present hostilities, the exigencies of war must produce throughout the whole Empire financial and industrial stress, as well as heroic sacrifices of the citizens. The times, therefore, are trying, and impose upon all parts of the Empire alike the necessity for endurance, economy, patience, confidence, and hope. In full trust in the history, resources, and courage of Britain and her Allies, there can be no question but that the ultimate result of the present war must be the establishment of wider liberty, greater prosperity, and more enduring peace among all the civilised nations of the world.

A disaster has fallen upon this State, in common with other States of the Commonwealth, in the shape of a drought, the more regrettable because it comes at a time when every source of national productiveness would be of advantage to the whole of the Empire, and when such great demands are being made upon all her resources. The farmers and settlers of the State will not be the only sufferers in consequence of this natural misfortune, and you will be asked to provide measures for the relief of sufferers from the drought settled upon the land and of those citizens deprived of employment as a result of the partial failure of our harvests.

It is gratifying that at such a time the Commonwealth Government has come to the aid of the individual States and

granted financial assistance and security through its Treasury.

The Session now commencing my Advisers desire shall be of short duration and confined principally to financial matters and short measures of a necessary character for the good government of the country.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

The Estimates of revenue and expenditure will be submitted for your consideration as early as possible.

An amendment of the Dividend Duty Act will be introduced.

Mr. President and Hon. Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

Among the other Measures you will be asked to consider will be a Bill with the object of rendering necessary Government aid to the settlers suffering from the effects of the drought. You will also be asked to pass a Bill for the purpose of uniting the Municipalities of Perth, North Perth, and Leederville as a preliminary step towards the establishment of the Municipality of a Greater Perth. "The Control of Trade in War Time Act" you will be asked to re-enact for a further term. Other Measures of a minor nature will be submitted; but Bills of a controversial character are deemed to be inopportune at this juncture, and will be deferred to a later session.

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

The Governor then retired, and the President (Hon. H. Briggs) took the Chair.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Report on proposed establishment of a superannuation fund for employees of the Government of Western Australia. 2, Annual reports of (a) State Children Depart-

ment, (b) Charities Department, (c) Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department, (d) Surveyor General, (e) Under Secretary for Lands. 3, Goldfields Water Supply, amendment of by-laws. 4, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, amendment of by-laws. 5, Western Australian Government Tramways, return of receipts and expenditure for quarter ended 30th September, 1914. 6, Returns under Government Railways Act, 1904, for quarter ended 30th September, 1914. 7, Western Australian Government Railways fares and conditions, amendment of by-law. 8, Education Department, amendment of regulations. 9, By-laws and regulations under the Cemeteries Act, 1897. 10, Timber regulations under the Land Act, 1898. 11, Additional regulations under the Dog Act. 12, Return of expenditure under the Mining Development Vote for year ended 30th June, 1914.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT: I have to report the receipt of the following letter from the Audit Department under date 3rd December, 1914:—

In pursuance of Section 53 of the Audit Act, 1904, and following the procedure adopted last year, I have the honour to transmit, for presentation to the Legislative Council, a copy of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer's Statement of the Public Accounts of the State of Western Australia for the financial year ended 30th June, 1914, together with Part I. of my report thereon. Part II. is in course of preparation, and will be transmitted to you at an early date. I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant. (Signed) C. S. Toppin, Auditor General.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills of last session reported:—

Bills of Sale Act Amendment.
East Perth Railway Siding.

Geraldton Agricultural and Horticultural Society's Land.

Leederville Rates Validation.

Licensing Act Amendment.

Perth Municipal Gas and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.

Plant Diseases.

Rights in Water and Irrigation.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): 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 further amend the Land Act, 1898."

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North East) [3.17]: I desire to move that the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us:—

May it please your Excellency, We, 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.

On the last occasion on which I had the honour and pleasure of submitting a similar resolution, some 2½ years ago, I remember that a gentleman sitting on the Opposition side moved an amendment at the conclusion of his speech which included something as follows:—"As a protest against the unwarranted expenditure of the Labour Government, and the constitutional rights of the Legislative Council having been violated, etc., etc." That debate went on for some considerable time, and I do not know whether it is the intention of our friends on the Opposi-

tion side on this occasion to move anything of a similar nature. However, if it is so, I sincerely hope that every opportunity will be taken by all members to freely discuss the all-important amendment. But, seeing that nearly three years have since elapsed, and the majority of the electors have once again returned the Labour Government, it makes one wonder whether the gentlemen sitting in Opposition will take that course upon this occasion. I realise that to some extent the personnel of the members constituting Parliament in another place has been altered, but at the same time I say that the electors who gave their votes at the recent election for those members in another place, by a majority of some 4,000 odd voted in favour of the Labour Government. When one glances at the printed copy of the Speech delivered to us this afternoon, one naturally comes to the conclusion that it is the desire of the Government that the session shall be a short one. In fact, it is set out in the Speech that the business will be confined principally to financial matters and short measures of a necessary character for the good government of the country. Seeing that we have struck such troublous times of war, unemployment, and bad seasons, I think the Government are wise at this particular juncture in making the session a short one and dealing mainly with those matters which vitally affect the people as a whole. I refer particularly to our financial position. Whilst we realise that we have a deficit, yet when one considers the bad seasons we have had for some considerable time past, and the war, and many other calls in consequence of the bad season, and, in particular, in respect of the assistance given to the farmers, we cannot wonder greatly at the fairly large deficit we have. But I feel certain that the time is not far distant when things throughout the world will look much brighter, when the war has ceased and people are again living under normal conditions. I think a brighter future stands before the people of Western Australia. Let us hope that the end of the war is not far distant. Although we have a very short programme in front

of us for the session, yet it remains to be seen whether we will be able to get through the Address-in-reply and Budget debates this year. However, I, like many other members, wish to see the session ended as quickly as possible, so that the administration of the country can be carried on without the hampering influences inseparable from a session of Parliament, especially in our present troublous times. I would like to say a word or two in connection with the farming industry. At the present time great hardships are being experienced by our farmers, and I am afraid their bad time is not yet over. Money will have to be raised to assist those people, and, seeing that the Bill brought down to the House at the conclusion of last session was rejected, some other measure will have to be introduced in the interests of the people on the land. I notice that the intention of the Government is to introduce an amendment of the Dividend Duties Act. No doubt this will cause some debate, particularly in this Chamber, but let us hope that those members who look upon it in a fair and just light, together with those who, notwithstanding our present conditions, are in comfortable positions, will not be backward in allowing a greater portion of their income to be placed to the credit of the Government, so that the people who are suffering will be somewhat relieved from their difficulties. Whilst upon that, may I, as a goldfields member, say that when the War Emergency Tax Bill was properly put before the people of the goldfields by the Premier, and others representing different constituencies, the people of the goldfields realised the necessity for the tax and, being the biggest wage-earners in the State, they were prepared to pay the tax. This being so, I think it ill becomes the communities of other portions of the State to go back on those who are willing to pay the impost. Whilst I will be prepared in the present session to support any measure for the assistance of farmers by railways or other expedients, I want to say that, had the House some years ago, in its wisdom or otherwise, passed the Esperance Railway Bill, I am satisfied, from

the season they are having in that district to-day, that thousands of pounds worth of wheat would have been forthcoming for Western Australia in this trying juncture. I do not know whether it is the intention of the Government to bring forward that Bill again, but if they do I hope members will look upon it in a kindly light in the interests of the people of Western Australia. No doubt the members of the Country party realise the necessity for railways through their respective districts, and also realise the necessity for a railway being constructed through the splendid land in the Esperance district. As a goldfields member, may I say that whilst I am always prepared to assist any movement in respect of the farming industry, I want something more done than has been done in the immediate past for the mining industry. I was expecting that a new Mines Regulation Bill would have been brought down this session, but no doubt, as such a measure is necessarily of a contentious nature, the Government have wisely held it over for a future session. Whilst the Government have done a great deal to assist in opening up mines, and in assisting mining companies in Western Australia, something more will have to be done to assist the prospector. The mining industry has supplied the means for the Parliament of the country to make it possible for people to go on the land, and whilst the farming industry is practically in its infancy to-day, mining is turning out a great amount of gold, and our yield last month was well up to the average established since gold has been produced in the State. It behoves the Government to watch carefully the interests of the mining industry and mining generally, so that prospectors may be sent out into new country. Probably well equipped men would do a great deal towards opening up some districts that at present are languishing for want of practical workers. I do not wish to take up further time. This is an occasion on which the Address-in-reply debate is expected to be of a formal character, and so I will content myself with moving the resolution.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [3.30]: I second the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. P. Colebatch, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.31 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1914.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

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

MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONERS.

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 proceeded to that Chamber and heard the Commission read they returned to the Assembly Chamber.