

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Assembly was dissolved by proclamation on the 10th August, 1917. The Tenth Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 20th November, 1917, and the First Session commenced on that day.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 20th November, 1917.

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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.

COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honour the Chief Justice, Sir R. F. McMillan, Kt., 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 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 Commissioner then read the following statement:—

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

I 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 together 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 me, in accordance with the terms of a Commission granted to me 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 Commissioner left the Chamber.

Sitting suspended from 12.10 to 2.55 p.m.

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 obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council,—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,—

The tenth Parliament of the State of Western Australia has been summoned for its first session, in the midst of a great national crisis.

Following upon series of magnificent victories in France and Flanders, in which the Australian troops—vying in resource and gallantry with those from the other Dominions of the Empire—had achieved notable successes, misadventure has befallen two of our Allies. Internal dissension, resulting in revolution and counter-revolution, threatens to destroy, at least temporarily, the effectiveness of Russia as an offensive fighting force, whilst the hitherto triumphant Italian armies have been overthrown by treachery and forced to retreat.

These untoward happenings have increased the already heavy burdens cast upon the British Empire and upon France, particularly until such time as the United States of America can complete arrangements to throw further great armies into the conflict.

In this grave emergency, and in recognition of Australia's undertaking, given on the outbreak of war, to stand with the Empire even to the last man and the last shilling, the Government of the Commonwealth is appealing for the necessary power to enable it to reinforce, month by month, the Australian divisions at the front.

For this purpose a referendum of the Australian people will be taken on the 20th of December next; and in view of the paramount importance to the Empire and the Commonwealth of a right decision being then arrived at, my Advisers deem it essential that you be afforded every opportunity of placing the issues before the people of Western Australia, in the confident hope that—as on a previous occasion—they may record their unalterable determination, at whatever sacrifice, to prosecute this righteous war to a triumphant conclusion.

Pending the taking of the referendum, the only legislation to be immediately submitted will be Bills to secure the continuance of the following expiring laws:—The Roads Act; The Sale of Liquor Regulation Act; The Postponement of Debts Act; The Wheat Marketing Act; The Land and Income Tax Act.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,—

A Supply Bill will be submitted to meet the requirements of the public service until the passing by Parliament of the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year.

My Advisers are at present engaged upon a re-organisation of the civil service, with a view to securing economies in administration.

On the re-assembling of Parliament after such adjournment as is necessitated by the circumstances already referred to, the Estimates of revenue and expenditure will be submitted, together with a complete statement of the position of the public finances.

In view of the increasing deficit occasioned by ever-growing interest obligations and the falling revenues of certain departments consequent upon the temporary curtailment of industrial activity throughout the State, you will be asked to sanction the suspension of the sinking fund contributions for the time being, and to agree to certain additional taxation.

Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council,—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,—

The past week has witnessed an incident marking an epoch in the history of Australia, the official opening of the Trans-Australian railway by His Excellency the Governor General. The great work just completed will set a seal upon Australian federation. It will stand as a monument to the sagacity and foresight of those responsible for its consummation, and should prove for all time an important strategic factor in the defence of this far-flung outpost of the British Empire.

The condition of the industries of the country, due to shortage of suitable labour, scarcity and dearth of supplies, and the almost insuperable difficulties in the way of transporting our products to the world's markets, is occasioning my Advisers the gravest anxiety. In co-operation with the Government of the Commonwealth, every legitimate assistance will be rendered to these industries, in order that, on the resumption of normal conditions, they may possess those possibilities of expansion on which the solvency of the State and the well-being of our returning soldiers must chiefly depend.

In the work of repatriation the State Government is co-operating with the Federal authorities, and every endeavour will be made to give practical expression to Australia's gratitude to those who have brought imperishable glory to her name, and who, with unconquerable valour are still defending her liberties.

In view of the urgent necessity for careful and un-remitting attention to matters of administration and the desire to arrange for the assembling of Parliament for its second session at a convenient season, it is not intended to submit a lengthy legislative programme. The bills to be considered after the proposed adjournment will include:—A Bill to continue the operations of the Industries Assistance Act; A Bill to amend the Criminal Code; A Bill to amend the Health Act; A Bill to provide for the Compulsory Education of Deaf and Dumb Children; A Bill to consolidate the Stamp Acts; A Bill providing for the lodging of deposits by Fire Insurance Companies; A Bill to amend the Pearling Act; A Bill to facilitate the administration of Intestate Estates.

Commending your deliberations to the guidance of Divine Providence, I now leave you to your responsible duties.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch): In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move

without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "An Act to amend the Transfer of Land Act."

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

The Colonial Secretary laid on the Table reports and papers similar to those presented by Ministers in the Assembly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [3.22]: In reply to the Speech which His Excellency the Governor has been good enough to deliver to this House, I desire to move that the following Address be presented to His Excellency:—

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

May it please Your Excellency, We, the Legislative Council of the Parliament of 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.

In moving the motion I desire to congratulate the country upon what appears to be a return to a settled state of Government. Prior to the elections recently held, the Government in Western Australia was somewhat chaotic, due principally to the party system in vogue. The difference in the numbers was so small that very often matters occurred which did not meet with the approval of the people outside of Parliament. All that was due to the parties being so equally divided. Happily, this condition of things has passed and we now have a National Government in power with a strong majority behind them, a Government

which will make for the best interests of Western Australia. National forms of government exist almost throughout the length and breadth of the world; at any rate this form of government exists amongst those powers which are fighting the cause of justice and right. The Allies have all practically adopted this form of government, and it is said that it is necessary that such a form of government should obtain, in order that all party differences, recriminations, and desire for office, as well as everything that is evil and everything that can do harm at the present juncture, should be avoided. A national form of government exists in the Commonwealth, and its formation has materially helped the Commonwealth. I hope, too, it will help in the States of Australia. Plenty of people will tell us that that form of government is not necessary in regard to State politics. Their contention is that State Parliaments have nothing whatever to do with the war, and it is said that a State Parliament should deal only with matters associated with the advancement of the State and should have nothing to do, in any shape or form, with the conduct of the war. I disagree with that opinion. I hold that we do not want anything in the nature of party politics. We want to join and assist the Government to do those things that are necessary to encourage the development of industries for the benefit not only of the State but, at the present juncture, the Empire as well. There is supposed to be a good deal in a name. The name "national" to my mind is the right one to apply to the party in power in the Commonwealth, and also the parties now in power in Western Australia, in New South Wales, and just recently come into existence in Victoria. At any rate, I have no intention of quarrelling with the name. I only know this movement to be one in the interests of the Empire, a movement which has brought into existence a combination of men who are determined that the Empire shall not be harassed at this period in its history, and who are also determined to do all they can to encourage development and production, and thereby assist in winning the war. One great thing that appeals to me in regard to the national form of

government is that no combination of people, whatever their politics may be, will take advantage of the abnormal times existing. We had an illustration of the great value of the State National party in New South Wales quite recently. That State experienced very serious industrial strife and, on account of the strong and able, and at the same time just attitude of the man who was at the head of affairs there, backed up by a combination of people who called themselves Nationalists, he was able to overcome what threatened to become at one time a dire disaster to the whole of Australia. We have also had evidence still more recently of the desire of another section of the people in Australia for a national form of government. I refer to the result of the elections lately held in Victoria. The Peacock Government went to the country practically as a Liberal Government; at any rate they went as an independent party, opposed by other sections of the House outside the Labour party, which sections were determined that they should sink their differences in the interests of Victoria and the Empire. The result is that the Peacock Government have resigned and Mr. Bowser, the leader of the Economy party, whose desire it is to put aside all other questions, has been commissioned to form a Government. The policy of this new party which has been returned to power in Victoria is that no loan money shall be spent in that State except for the purpose of production and repatriation. That is very much the same as obtains in Western Australia, and those people who thought we should not have a National Government, but that we should have a Government by some other name, should congratulate themselves on having such a form of government which has been emulated recently in Victoria. I recognise that the time at my disposal is not sufficient to enable me to go into the question of the finances of this great country of Western Australia, but we are told that, on account of our interest obligations, and on account of the falling revenue, we shall be asked to consider the advisability of doing away with the sinking fund. The sinking fund has been in operation in Western Australia for many years and it is, of course, a splendid thing in normal times, but I do not think,

at the present stage, we can quarrel with the Government and that those who lend us the money will quarrel with the Government, if it is decided to do away with the sinking fund at the present juncture. The money which will be saved will be of advantage to us on account of the parlous condition in which the finances are at the present time. We are also told that it is proposed to increase taxation in Western Australia. Taxation in Australia is very high but we must remember that in the Old Country, where they are finding many thousands of millions of money for the conduct of the war, the people are taxed right up to the hilt, and no one has grumbled. We can congratulate ourselves that taxation is not as high in Australia as it is in other parts of the world. Whatever the taxation proposals of the Government may be, we shall have the opportunity of considering them when they come before the House in detail, and we shall then have the opportunity of doing what we consider right and just in the interests of the country. There can be no doubt in regard to the financial position of the State that a good deal is due to the curtailment of industrial activities, on account of the war now raging. This is admitted, but we must not fail to learn a lesson from what has passed. We must not forget how loan money in the past has been wasted on the day labour system, which has been rampant not only in Western Australia, but also throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth. A good deal of loan money has been spent in the past on unproductive works and the unfortunate position was accentuated by the expenditure of that money on the day labour system. When we consider that, during the past six years, we in Western Australia have spent upwards of 15 millions of loan money, we can well realise how we stand to-day. This expenditure has brought us very little, if any, increase in our population, and we now have a good deal to be sorry for. I hope we have learnt a lesson and that whatever money is spent during the remaining period of the war, none of it will be spent except as is proposed in Victoria for the purposes of production and the repatriation of our soldiers. If this money had been expended on the en-

couragement of our primary and secondary industries, in opening up the vast areas of lands lying dormant to-day, and in encouraging settlement, we would, following on a policy like that, have a large influx in population, which would considerably reduce the debt per head of the people of this State. That policy should be pursued in all countries of the world. Money should not be wasted on non-productive works unless such expenditure will bring population in its wake and so help us to overcome the difficult financial position we find ourselves in to-day. We consider, and it is true, that the only hope we have in Western Australia of overcoming our financial difficulties is by increased production, production and continued production. We all agree to that. I think that the question of production will be the main thing for the Parliament of this State to consider, especially in regard to the agricultural industry, whilst at the same time we have to consider the position of all our industries at the present time. There is no doubt that our primary industries must be developed and encouraged, and the wealth that we have in our country must be brought forth if we are to overcome our financial difficulties. The chief primary industries of the State are mining, agriculture with its accessories, the pastoral industry, and the forestry or timber industry. The gold-mining industry has practically made the State of Western Australia. I do not think we would have been the State we are to-day had it not been for the gold discoveries made during the early nineties. Coming here as I did 20 years ago, about the time of the rush, I marvel at what has been done. the enormous amount of gold which has been won, the dividends which have been paid, the money which has been expended upon the industry in wages and development, and in the great strides made by this industry. It no doubt went ahead for many years, and has perhaps placed Western Australia in the position of being the greatest gold-mining country in the world. I am sure that we all know, as well as those representing constituencies on the goldfields, that the output from the mines has been to a considerable extent curtailed of late on account of the fact that a large number of men have gone to the war.

This has meant less efficient labour and less efficient production in regard to this particular industry. We have to direct attention to the fact that so far as gold is concerned, it is impossible to get a higher price for an ounce of it because it has a standard value, and that standard value does not increase according to the cost of producing it. Seeing how necessary it is to develop the industry, I feel sure that the Government will devote every attention to it, and either by encouraging prospecting or by a reduction in freights, do something to overcome the difficulties with which it has to contend. I should now like to touch upon the coal mining industry. This, too, is one of the primary industries of Western Australia which has had a very chequered career, and has failed to receive the support of Governments to which it is entitled. Furthermore, it has not had the support of those who have been using the local coal upon our railways. The industry has been in existence for 15 or 16 years. It has been a difficult task to get the coal brought into use, but the great advantage that the State has reaped through the development of the coal mining industry has been apparent to us during the last few months, when we have had a stoppage of shipping, when no coal has been brought to this State, and when our railways have been run exclusively by the fuel supplied from our coal mines. If it is so useful to the State, why is it that the industry has been without the requisite attention for so long? I was glancing through my papers the other day, and found a report of a committee called "A Committee to stimulate the coal mining industry," held in 1902. The late Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Rotheram, promised that at the end of two years we should use the fuel exclusively and that all would be well with the industry. Unfortunately for the State, and much to our regret, he did not live very long after that, and after giving evidence before the Committee I have mentioned. Since that time, practically nothing has been done here to overcome the difficulties of the industry. During that time, we have sent thousands of pounds per annum of good gold out of Western Australia to purchase coal from the Eastern States. The whole

of that money could well have been expended in the development of our own coal industry, to its own advantage and the advantage of the State. I hope the Government will be fully alive to the position. As a member of this Chamber, I, in company with those connected with the industry in another place, am constantly bringing before the Government the necessity for encouraging and developing this industry and for seeing that the primary products of our State are used by our people, and that we should not be importing those commodities which we have so close at hand within our own borders. In connection with agriculture, which is another of our primary industries, I wish to touch briefly upon the position so far as our wheat is concerned. In 1908, when Mr. Mitchell was Minister for Lands, he went in for a progressive policy, as a result of which we have had a large and rapid development in our wheat areas. To-day we are large exporters of wheat. As, however, with other industries in this State and other parts of the world, our wheat industry is in a somewhat unfortunate position. The grain is lying at our ports, in stacks and at the sidings because of the unfortunate circumstances now existing. At the same time, however, whereas a few years ago we were producing nothing in the way of export wheat, to-day we are great exporters of that necessary commodity. I do not intend to go into the wheat question or into the question of the management of the wheat board, which, no doubt will receive consideration at the hands of hon. members. No doubt also I shall have an opportunity later of criticising, or perhaps eulogising, the Minister who has taken certain actions lately in regard to the wheat board. I am satisfied that whatever has been done has been done with the best intentions and I trust in the best interests of Western Australia. The fruit industry has gone ahead in leaps and bounds. We are large exporters of fruit to-day, have a wonderful climate and a wonderful soil in the South-West for the production of many varieties of fruit. My reason for touching upon this question is to bring under the notice of the Government the position which obtained last year in regard to the industry, and which I think will obtain this year. We had

an enormous crop of fruit but a large amount of it was wasted, and the animals in the country were fed upon it, whilst the people on the Eastern goldfields and in the City did not procure apples at a reasonable price. I want the Government to assist this industry, to help in the preserving of fruit, and in the making of jam; to assist the settler who is going through a very strenuous time, and also to think out some scheme, some wise policy, by which the people will be enabled to secure fruit at a reasonable price, and thus offer an inducement to people to take up the industry and confer a great advantage upon the State. There is one question in particular which appeals to me and which should receive the earliest consideration of the Government, that is the development of the South-West of this State. We have had the experience during the last five months, since the outbreak of the industrial trouble in New South Wales, of a shortage of butter, bacon, and other commodities which should be produced within our own borders. It is now some 16 years ago since I first took any part in politics in Western Australia. At that time, I made up my mind to do all I could to see that we produced these things in our own State. To-day, of course, we are met with difficulties in the shape of a scarcity of shipping, and we cannot get these articles as readily as we could wish. We now wonder what we have been doing in years gone by. With regard to the development of the wheat industry, I give all credit to those who have been far-seeing enough to foster it, but I do take great exception to the manner in which the development of the South-West has been neglected. This, in fact, has been very sadly neglected. I trust the Government will realise the necessity for closer settlement in that portion of Western Australia, where the soils are varied, where the rainfall is good and the climate equitable, and where all things favour closer settlement. I hope, too, that the Government will consider the advisability of going into this question seriously, and seeing if something cannot be done to increase the production of those articles which are so much required in this State. Something is being done, and some improvement has taken place, but it

will be many years before the present difficulties which now have to be faced are overcome. We talk about a State National Government and the necessity for it. I think one of the greatest necessities for it arises from the great responsibilities placed in the hands of the Government with regard to the settlement on the land of our returned soldiers and sailors. In dealing with this matter, all party feeling should go by the board, and all factors should work together to see what can be done to repay in some measure the sacrifices made by the men who have gone to fight for us. Although the settlement of soldiers on the land has been advanced in other parts of Australia, very little advancement has been made with it in this State. I know it is a fact, and one upon which to congratulate the Government, that they have already settled a considerable number of men in the Wheat Belt. There are, however, many men waiting to go upon dairy farms, which are so much required in Western Australia. The Government, however, cannot tell these men who are waiting where they are to get the land and we do not know what the policy in regard to the matter is. We know that the Government are working in conjunction with the Federal authorities and are endeavouring to do their best in the matter, but the right thing is not being done. We want to know whether the policy of the Government is to survey all land within a reasonable distance of a railway, which by the way is very limited in extent, or whether the policy is to go to Nornalup and build a fresh line of railway in order to settle the country there, and, further, whether it is the policy to repurchase estates within a reasonable distance of a railway for this purpose. The Harvey district, which I know well, is rich in production, has a fertile soil, is particularly adapted for fruit growing and especially adapted for dairying purposes. Why do not the Government settle these 15 or 20 men I have in mind in this particular area? I merely point this out by way of criticism of previous Governments—not the present Government, because of their comparatively short term of office—on the grounds that they have not risen to the occasion, and have not made that provision which is necessary to provide for those men who are

still fighting for us at the front and others who have already returned from the field of battle. Before concluding on this matter, I want to draw attention to the Brunswick State Farm and particularly to draw the attention of the Minister thereto. An advertisement has appeared in the paper which practically sets out that it is the intention of the Government to sell off all there is on the Brunswick Farm. The Colonial Secretary shakes his head, and I am pleased to see him do so. There are, at all events, 30 milking cows to be sold off there. If that is so, there will surely be a reduction in the efficiency of the farm, which has done excellent service for the people in the South-West. One has only to visit the country agricultural shows to see how much the dairy stock has improved year by year, as a result of the establishment of that farm. I want the Government to continue the good work done there, and to see that advantage accrues, not to the Government, in the way of making money, but to the settlers who will be able to secure at cost price the progeny from the cattle on the State farm. In connection with the development of the South-West I notice that at any rate part of the policy of the Government is that certain gentlemen are going to be retired from the civil service. I have in mind particularly the Commissioner for the South-West, Mr. Connor. I hold no brief for that gentleman, but consider he has done excellent work for Western Australia. When he first came here he may have been somewhat inexperienced in conditions appertaining to Western Australia, but he has now had seven years of experience here and has devoted great energy to his work, and if he was valuable as an officer then, surely after seven years' experience he should be of still more value to the State. Whatever may be in the mind of the Government I do not know; it may be a question of reduction, or amalgamation, in order to save money. However, we will assist the Government in that direction, but I want to warn the Government that they will not attain the object they have in view by dispensing with the services of officers who are of value to the country. I have no intention of making any reference to the North-West, because we have members in this House who are

quite capable of watching the interests of that part of the State, members who have a greater knowledge of the pastoral and pearling industries than I have. We have been told by those who have been there what the North-West is capable of producing, and we learnt from Mr. Boan, in his speech to this House at the beginning of last session, what he saw and what, in his opinion, ought to be done. All I desire to add in regard to the North-West is that the Government should do something in the direction of developing the great riches known to exist there. We have heard a good deal lately with regard to the forests of Western Australia. We appreciate, and I am sure the people of the State fully appreciate, the good work which has been done here in regard to forestry. The Governor General, speaking in this Chamber a few days ago, on the occasion of the opening of the Forestry Conference—and in connection with which a number of wise men from the East are visiting us at the present time—told us what excellent forests we have. We are always glad to see distinguished practical visitors, and we appreciate what they have to tell us. We have only to look up statistics in order to learn that Western Australia is the leading country in regard to forests. The best of the hard woods are here, and we have greater possibilities in regard to this industry than any of the other States. Unfortunately, the Federal Government do not seem favourably inclined towards us in this matter. Although we have timber which is admirably adapted for shipbuilding, the Federal Government have decided to confine their shipbuilding operations in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. There has been no mention of Western Australia, nor has anything been said of the value of the timber industry in this State, and there has been no appreciation expressed of our immense resources in this direction. I hope the Federal Government will rectify this great oversight. There is one part of the Government policy, not mentioned in the Speech, to which I take exception. No doubt it emanates from the Treasurer, who is most anxious, as we all are, to straighten the finances. It is all very well to raise revenue with the object of meeting

the expenditure, but it is also possible to raise that revenue in a manner which will be detrimental to the producer, I refer to the proposal, on the part of the Government, to increase the freights. If this policy is carried out, it will act to the disadvantage of production in Western Australia, and will seriously affect the consumers as well. The policy we should adopt is not one of increasing freight; what we want to do is to carry at the lowest figure to those who are out-back, so that they may be encouraged to produce and return their products as cheaply as possible to the consumers. Of course we recognise the difficulty in which the Railway Department finds itself at the present time, and it is a difficulty which must receive early attention at the hands of Parliament. We must seriously consider the advisableness of reducing freights, so as to enable our producers to supply consumers, not only here but overseas, at the lowest possible rate. No other policy will bring about development in Western Australia. With regard to the primary and secondary industries, there is only one thing I would like to mention which appeals forcibly to me, and it is the application of science to industry. We know that this is the most important thing in the world to-day. We know how our enemies concentrated on that for 40 years and their efficiency, in consequence, is not to be wondered at. In England they have concentrated on this to a certain extent at the present time. On the Eastern Goldfields we find that science is applied to the big industry of mining, but so far as agriculture is concerned nothing has been done, and it is necessary that we should, without any further loss of time, apply science to that important industry, so as to reduce the cost of production and to bring about greater efficiency. I notice that the Federal Government have taken this matter in hand and have appointed a temporary council. I have only referred to this matter in order to impress upon the Government of Western Australia the necessity of seeing that we here are not neglected, as is usually done by the Federal authorities. They have neglected us in regard to many things, but there must not be any friction between the two Parliaments, and it is our duty to see that consideration is given to us. If a laboratory

is established in one of the Eastern States, we shall get little or no attention. Let us have a laboratory in Western Australia and make use of the scientists who are at present engaged by the State. His Excellency has told us that we are to sit for only two or three days and that after a Supply Bill has been passed, and a few measures submitted to secure the continuance of existing legislation, the Houses will adjourn. Members will then have an opportunity of taking part in the Referendum campaign and endeavouring to induce the people to vote in the direction which will have the effect of bringing about compulsory service for overseas. So far as we are concerned, the necessity for this course is clear. When we look at the position of Russia to-day, where there have been revolutions and counter-revolutions, and see the impotence of those people and their inability to help us, we must realise that many members of the enemy forces must have been released from the Eastern Front, and concentrated on the Western Front. It is on the Western Front now that we need more than ever to assist the Empire. We sincerely hope that Russia will recover and fight to the end with those whom she set out to assist. I believe that will obtain; perhaps it will, perhaps it will not. Italy, for the time being, is in a somewhat parlous state, and therefore it is necessary for us to make the greatest effort we can in order to help win through in this great war. Every other country, with the exception of Australia and South Africa, has adopted conscription. The great democracy, America, passed conscription almost without a dissentient voice, but the most satisfactory thing which happened in that country was the assurance given to President Wilson by the workers that there would be no industrial trouble during the continuance of the war. Surely this is a lesson to the people of Australia, who seem to take the opportunity of the present difficult times to hamper and harass the Governments in every way they possibly can. I hope that a lesson will be learnt from America and that no more trouble will arise during the remaining period of the war. In conclusion, may I express the hope that the people of the Commonwealth will awaken to a sense of their responsibility and follow the path,

though it may be a rough one, which will lead to freedom and to victory.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.53]: I desire to second the motion which has been so ably moved by Mr. Ewing. It will be admitted that Mr. Ewing covered all the ground and made many sensible suggestions, and if I were to simply say ditto, ditto, ditto, I would probably be thought more of on this occasion than if I made a speech occupying the best part of an hour. At the same time I realise that the ringing note which has been more clearly sounded than any other is that referred to in the Governor's Speech relating to the national crisis. Hon. members will agree with me when I say that the abnormal times through which we are passing, brought about by the war we are engaged in, are of far greater importance to us as individuals, and as representatives of the people than anything of a parochial nature. I fully realise my responsibilities in this matter. When I contemplate the deeds of heroism performed by our boys on the heights of Gallipoli, on the burning sands of Egypt, on the fields and in the mud and slush of Flanders, I realise that this is not a time when we should wrangle over party politics. It will be generally acknowledged that the note which has been sounded so clearly in the Speech this afternoon is one which calls for the earnest attention and the immediate co-operation of members of this Chamber. I feel satisfied that the best thing that can be done has been suggested, and that is, that instead of entering upon the ordinary business of politics, as soon as the formal matters connected with the session are disposed of, the House should adjourn so as to enable members to do their duty in the direction of educating the people to give a similar verdict in connection with the Referendum to be taken on the 20th December next as they did on the 28th October, 1916. A few weeks ago it was my privilege to travel through New Zealand. I went down there to ascertain for myself, amongst other things, the result of conscription in that country. I desired to see how it was working. I was agreeably surprised to see the smoothness with which the machinery worked. When they knew that I had come from Australia,

the first impressions were anything but favourable as regards the action of the people of Australia in October, 1916, but when it became known that I was from Western Australia, I can assure hon. members that the enthusiasm was very great. They realised that the people of Western Australia had established a reputation which was most enviable, to be envied not only in the Commonwealth but throughout the length and breadth of the world. It will be our duty now to induce the people of Western Australia to again take up the work in the same whole hearted manner that they did in 1916 and it will be to our everlasting credit if again we record a verdict similar to the previous one. If there is praise due to one section of the community more than to any other in connection with that great result, it is due to the women of the State. There is not the slightest doubt that the women of Western Australia are amongst the bravest; they consent to part with their husbands, they consent to part with their brothers and their children, and it behoves us, if we are to fill our place in the community with credit, to again urge the people to vote "Yes" on the 20th December next. I gather from the remarks uttered in Kalgoorlie a few days ago that the reasons advanced against conscription by the anti-conscriptionists are the alleged broken promises of Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister. What are these promises worth—even though they may be broken promises—if the Germans win through in this war? I contend that all our freedom, all that our soldiers have been fighting for, would be of no avail. I notice in the Speech that economies which the Government have seen fit to put into operation are touched upon. I have every confidence in thinking that the economies which have been commenced by the Government will be carried out with discretion, and with as little resultant harm as possible in the circumstances. We know that retrenchment and economy at all times are anything but enjoyable commodities for any Minister to have to deal with. The fact remains that the Government have to go in for a system of economy as a portion of their work in order to balance the ledger. There are many things which have to be considered by them in bringing about a

safer state of affairs than that which now exists. It is true the finances of the State are in anything but a sound condition, but when we take into consideration, as Mr. Ewing has pointed out, all the natural resources of Western Australia, we must realise at once that there are ways and means by which we can bring about a better position of affairs than by creating a black Wednesday. Economies will have to be practised and retrenchments made, but it is our duty as the representatives of the people to show that we ourselves are in accord and willing that retrenchment and economy should be commenced in our Parliament. I contend that at a time like this, when there is so little to be done in the way of law-making, and when so much depends on the administration of the country, the time has arrived when the amount of money which is paid for the production of the laws of the State and the upkeep of Parliament, should receive consideration. I am of opinion that the salaries of members of Parliament should in these trying circumstances be reduced by at least 50 per cent., which would show the people of the State that we, as their representatives, were prepared to make a sacrifice and that we realised it was our duty to do so. It may be argued that there are representatives of a certain section of the people who could not live upon their Parliamentary salaries if reduced 50 per cent. On the other hand, I contend that as their Parliamentary duties are not of a laborious nature and do not occupy very much of their time, opportunities are afforded of augmenting their Parliamentary salaries in other directions outside Parliament. It might also be suggested that the unions could be induced to put their money to very good advantage by augmenting the amount which members of Parliament are receiving from the funds of the union. Be that as it may, I am convinced that the cost of Government in Western Australia to-day is considerably greater than the people should be taxed for, in order to keep the Government going. I am also satisfied that the constitution could be so altered as to provide for a substantial reduction in the number of the members of Parliament. In this House there are 30 members, three for each province, the State being divided into

10 provinces. The Metropolitan-Suburban province contains nearly half the number of the names on the rolls of the whole of the remaining provinces, and yet during the past 12 months—and I say this without a vestige of egotism—that province has been served by two members, and I feel I am justified in saying well served, and has not been neglected in any manner at all. If the constitution is altered to provide for two members for each province and each member is elected for three years, we might get on just as well and perhaps better in the future than we have done in the past with three members for each province. At all events, I throw this out as a suggestion. With regard to another place, I am satisfied that a very substantial reduction in the number of members could be made. I hope the Constitution will be so amended that this avenue of economy can be opened up in the near future. We are also told that in all probability we shall be called upon to pay extra taxation. In order to square the ledger it is proposed to get the money out of the people, and tax the thrifty in the community. Before I consent to any increased taxation or at any rate, any tax upon the wages or salaries of the people below £156 per annum, I shall desire to see a substantial reduction made in the salaries of members of Parliament, and also some indication that there will be a reduction in the number of members. Western Australia with 300,000 people is represented by 91 legislators. The thing is positively absurd. There are 50 members in the Legislative Assembly, 30 in the Legislative Council, all getting £300 per annum, not including the emoluments to those who occupy the Ministerial benches, and 11 members in the Federal Parliament. Western Australia, with a population of less than one of the suburbs of London, has 91 legislators drawing what amounts to an enormous sum of money. I say without hesitation, that before this or any other Government can begin to talk about saddling the people with extra taxation, they should first turn their attention in the direction I have indicated. I trust that as we are shortly to adjourn to allow members an opportunity of going in to the country and again urging the people to do their duty to the Empire and in the

cause of freedom, members will avail themselves of that opportunity and go out in greater numbers this time than they did on the occasion of the last referendum, and so make this final effort to bring about the consummation of conscription, which I regard as absolutely necessary in this, our deep anxiety. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. H. Carson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 20th November, 1917.

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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 COMMISSIONER.

A Message from the Commissioner 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.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour the Chief Justice (Sir Robert Furse McMillan, Kt.), having been commissioned by the Governor, appeared in the Assembly Chamber to administer to members the oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King.

The Clerk produced election writs showing the return of 49 members.

With the following exceptions all the members elected were present and took and subscribed the oath as required by Statute, and signed the roll:—Mr. J. B. Holman (Murchison), Mr. H. Robinson (Albany), Mr. A. A. Wilson (Collie).

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [12.31], addressing the Clerk, said: Mr. Grant, the House being duly constituted, I now move—

That Mr. Taylor do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [12.32]: I second the motion.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [12.33]: Is it open to submit further nominations?

The Clerk: Yes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then I have much pleasure in nominating Mr. E. B. Johnston to take the Chair. During his previous occupancy of the Chair the hon. member gave promise of developing into a very capable Speaker. Consequently I now nominate him for the high and honourable office of Speaker.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [12.34]: In view of the quarter from which the nomination proceeds, I refuse to accept the proposed honour.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [12.35]: Mr. Grant, and hon. members, I submit myself to the will of the House.

The SPEAKER-ELECT, having been conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the motion, said [12.36]: I desire to thank hon. members for having placed me in the high and honourable position of Speaker-to-day, and I can only hope that I shall be able to fulfil hon. members' expectations in that position. I realise the importance of the Speakership in rela-