

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 14th October, 1919.

Obituary: Hon. H. J. Saunders Page 840

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m. and read prayers.

OBITUARY—HON. H. J. SAUNDERS.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.32]: It is my very painful duty to direct the attention of hon. members to the fact that since the House met last death has removed one of our members. The Hon. H. J. Saunders was in his place in this Chamber as recently as Thursday last, and although we were well aware that his condition of health was not robust, I am sure the news of his death last evening must have come to all of us as a great shock. It is not too much to say that the late hon. member in the past played an important part in the public life and in the development of Western Australia. Coming to the colony some 35 years ago, because of failing health, he was happily so far restored as to be able to lead a life of great usefulness, and that, too, at a time when men of push, of vigour, and of enterprise were a great asset to this young community. In the early days of the goldfields, I well remember of my own knowledge, and many other hon. members will remember, the late hon. member, because of his enthusiasm, because of his knowledge, and because also of people whom he knew in the old country, was able to do a great deal in furthering the development of our mining industry. He was a member of the city council for many years, and as mayor of the city at a time when the capital of the colony was just emerging from very small things into big things, he did a lot of useful work in the civic life of the community. For a period of nearly nine years prior to Federation, he was an active member of this Council, a man so esteemed by his fellow members of Parliament that, on the occurrence of an extraordinary vacancy in the Senate of the Commonwealth, he was elected by Parliament to fill that vacancy, and he represented Western Australia for some time in the Federal Parliament. Since his election to this Chamber 17 months ago advancing years and failing health have prevented him from taking that active part in affairs which he had been wont to do in the past. But he was none the less a very useful member, always ready with wise counsel drawn from the fount of a very long experience. And above all, I think hon. members, no matter what their political opinions may be, will agree that the late hon. member was a very likeable man. During his short membership of this House, he renewed and strengthened many old friendships, and

formed many new ones. All will deplore his sudden loss. I move—

That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the public services rendered to the State by the late Hon. Henry John Saunders, a member for the Metropolitan Province, and to express its deepest sympathy with his family in the irreparable loss which they have sustained by his decease. That the President be requested to forward the foregoing resolution to the widow of the deceased gentleman.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.35]: As a colleague of our late lamented member, and one representing with him until his demise the same province, I desire to second the motion which has been so ably moved by the leader of the House. In doing so, I can only re-echo the laudations so finely expressed by the Minister. It was my privilege since 1896 to enjoy the acquaintance and friendship of the late Mr. Saunders. As the leader of the House has said, he was indeed a most likeable man. One thing about him which will always leave a pleasant memory with me and with other hon. members, was that geniality of disposition which at all times characterised him, together with his unvarying sympathy and his kindly help and wise counsel, drawn, as has been said, from the fount of large experience. So marked indeed was that kindly disposition of his that it made him a man beloved, respected and esteemed by his fellow men. The Minister has rightly said that the late hon. member made his mark on the development of the industries of this country. In no industry was greater help extended by any man in this State than that rendered by the late Mr. Saunders to the mining industry. He was responsible in a very large degree for the advancement and development of that industry. He assisted in introducing capital to a very large extent indeed, and when he retired from active business the mining community lost one of its most able helpers. I feel that we, as members of the Council, will miss our late fellow member. Although his vigour of former years was restrained and impeded by indifferent health in more recent years, still we always knew that the wisdom gathered by many years of the widest experience was ever ready to be imparted to us on application. On many occasions since his re-election to this House it has been my privilege to confer with him and to receive that able assistance which could only be given by a man of vast experience such as he. I join sincerely in the sympathy with the widow and relatives of the deceased and in the regret which has been expressed for the loss to this House and to the State of a man so esteemed and loved by his fellow men.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (North-East) [4.40]: I also wish to associate myself with the expressions of regret, and with the sym-

pathy to be extended to the widow and relatives of our late fellow member. I remember that in the very early days of the goldfields the late Mr. Saunders was closely associated with the mining industry. Those old associations come to us more particularly at a time like this. The late Mr. Saunders at all times associated himself with public life, and as a man who took a keen interest in the affairs of his fellows, he earned the respect of the whole community. On this occasion I do not feel that I can say very much, but I do wish to associate myself with the expressions of regret, and to extend my sympathy to those who are left to mourn their loss.

The PRESIDENT [4.41]: Before putting to the Council the motion which I will ask hon. members to pass, standing in their places as a mark of respect, I wish to say that the death of the late Hon. H. J. Saunders terminates for me a pleasant friendship extending over many years. The hon. gentleman who has gone from us was eminently an adaptable man. I remember that some months ago it fell to my lot to journey through a portion of the goldfields where he had resided for some years. The expressions of concern and sympathy in regard to his welfare and health which were voiced, not by any one class, but by every class of the community, showed that adaptability of which I have spoken. But while he was adaptable, it always seemed to me the hon. gentleman wished to engraft on this Australian life of ours some of the best features of the life from which he had come, the life of an English country gentleman, a life which has given to the Empire many like the late hon. gentleman, which has given to the service of the Empire not only in England but in the more remote portions of the Dominions, men who have done work which will never be forgotten and which can never be valued at its just estimate. I mourn with you the death of the late hon. gentleman, and I take this opportunity of associating myself with the motion so eloquently moved, seconded, and supported.

Question put and passed, members standing.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.43]: I move—

That out of respect for the memory of the late Hon. Henry John Saunders, a member for the Metropolitan Province, the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

OBITUARY—HON. H. J. SAUNDERS.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.31]: I regret to have to inform the House of the death of the Hon. Henry John Saunders, late member of the Legislative Council. Mr. Saunders was for many years a well-known figure in the public life of the country. He became a member of the Perth City Council in 1895, and filled the position of mayor in the years 1890 and 1897. In the year 1894 he was elected to the Legislative Council, and when still holding that position was elected in 1903 to the Federal Senate on the occasion of an extraordinary election. Some time after that Mr. Saunders's health became so bad that he was obliged to relinquish his public duties. In 1918, however, he again became a member of the Legislative Council. Hon. members will agree with me that his loss will be felt from one end of the State to the other. He had a genial personality and was of a jovial disposition. As a mark of respect to the late hon. gentleman, I move—

That this House places on record its deep regret at the death of the Hon. Henry John Saunders, M.L.C., and tenders to his family its sincerest sympathy in the loss they have sustained and desires that the terms of this resolution be communicated to the widow and family of the late gentleman by the Speaker.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.32]: It is with profound regret that I have to second this motion. It has not been my privilege to be acquainted for many years with the late Mr. Saunders, but from the short acquaintance I had with him during the past 12 months, since he became a member of Parliament, I formed the opinion that he was a genial and kindly soul. In this I am sure every hon. member will agree with me. It is true that Mr. Saunders took a very active part in the public life of this State, even before many of us who are here to-day