

necessary to connect up the Murchison railway with the Wiluna goldfields, Geraldton being the natural port for all that district. The present Government are doing well to continue the work of building up the Geraldton harbour; for it is quite necessary to have an up to date port there, in view of all the progress that is taking place. We have to proceed further with the development of our agricultural country. I am pleased to note that the Government contemplate building a railway to serve that country east of Pithara which is adjacent to the district I have mentioned, and which produced last year £350,000. I am sorry to note that the Premier, when in the Old Country, did not manage to buy the Midland Railway. Along that line progress has been retarded owing to the fact that the settlers there cannot get Government assistance in the development of their land. I hope that the Midland Railway Company, when dealing with the Government, will take into consideration the fact that they have retarded the development of a very large area of country and are retarding also the exploitation of the great Irwin coal deposits, the use of which depends largely upon the purchase of the Midland railway. There is also the development of that great area of country between Mingenew and Mullewa to be considered. There can be no gainsaying the fact that the Midland Railway Company are not fulfilling the conditions under which they were granted their concession. The Government ought to intimate to them that if they are not prepared to accept a fair price for their line they will have to live up to the conditions they accepted so many years ago. We are pleased to note that the State finances are now getting back to normal and to feel that in the days ahead of us their condition will be still more satisfactory. I do not wish to credit the present Government with the whole of the improvement made, but I do not think that fair-minded members believe what has been put up by the leading newspaper, namely, that the whole of the credit for the improved finances should be tendered to the previous Government. In my view the present Ministers have got right down to their work and fully understand their business of controlling the department. Certainly it must be conceded that they have accomplished a great deal in the short time they have been in possession of the Treasury benches. There

are a few other subjects I should like to touch upon but, having regard to the lateness of the hour, I will defer my remarks to a subsequent date, before the Address-in-reply debate is concluded.

**HON. E. H. GRAY** (West) [4.7]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 1.9 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 30th July, 1925.*

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### MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m. pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk.

**THE SPEAKER** took the Chair.

### SUMMONS FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The Speaker and hon. members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber, and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening Speech (vide Council report ante), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

### ELECTION RETURN—FORREST.

**THE SPEAKER** announced the return to the writ issued for the election of a member for Forrest, showing that Miss Mary Alice Holman had been duly elected.

**MISS HOLMAN** took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

## BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [3.45]: 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 for an Act to amend the Transfer of Land Act, 1893.

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

## GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

**MR. SPEAKER:** In company with hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For greater accuracy, I have had printed copies of the Speech distributed amongst hon. members of this Chamber.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*First Day.*

**MISS HOLMAN** (Forrest) [3.47]: I 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 members of the Legislative Assembly 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.

I desire to congratulate the Government on the result of the financial year, which, as we have seen, is the best since 1911. It is very pleasing to note that the condition of trade, industry, and land development generally may be regarded as satisfactory. It is also stated in the Speech that the timber export trade has been maintained during the past year. I regret, however, that the conditions of the workers in the industry have not improved. The basic wage paid to workers in the timber industry is computed upon an unfair basis. It is computed on the figures of the Federal Statistician. The Western Australian towns that are included in the 20 country towns of Australia, ex-

cluding Queensland, are Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, and Northam. I think you will agree, Mr. Speaker, that these four towns of Western Australia have nothing whatever to do with our timber centres. The cost of living is greater in these timber centres than it is in the towns. The freight on goods that are sent up to these centres is a big consideration. The stores are often unprotected when they are sent from the city, with the result that much loss and damage occur. The stores are sometimes left in unsheltered places, while awaiting transfer to the men out on the bush landings. The present rate received by the timber workers is £4 3s. per week. I regret to say that during the last 12 months it has been as low as £4 1s. per week. I wish to say a word for the staff employees on the mills. There is no award governing them. In many centres they work long hours, and the conditions are not what they should be. I am pleased to note that the Government have decided to give the timber workers in their employ a 44-hour week. That is what they are entitled to, and I thank the Government for their decision. Perth is at present the only capital city wherein the timber workers are not working 44 hours. Notwithstanding the poor conditions that appertain in the industry, the employers have served a log on the union asking for a reduction in wages and a different set of conditions. In some cases the reductions asked for mean £1 a week. The employers have also asked for an increase in the hours worked by the timber employees. When the 44-hour week was universal in the industry the employers went to great lengths to make that period compare unfavourably with the 48-hour week. I have in my possession sworn statements showing the ways and means that were taken to prevent the 44-hour week from operating favourably, and to ensure that not so good a result was obtained from the 44-hour week as from the 48. Another disability under which the timber workers are suffering is in regard to lost time. A great deal of time is lost on the mills. Much of this is due to shortage of logs. Surely the basic wage is little enough for the men without their suffering lost time. They have lost time and lost wages because of wet weather, the shortage of logs, and other factors. The basic wage is really calculated upon a worker receiving a certain amount per week over a period of 52 weeks in the year. The short-

age of logs is largely a matter of management or rather of mismanagement. This is proved by the fact that some mills suffer from no shortage of logs or any lost time. At Marinup there has not to my knowledge been a shortage of logs or any lost time. I know that at the railway mill at Dwellingup, over a period of 12 years, there has been a loss of only one and a-quarter days on account of shortage of logs, and during that time the men were otherwise employed. Another thing I would refer to is the influx of foreigners into the timber industry. In some of the centres practically half the employees are foreigners, and in one particular centre 55 per cent. of the men employed come within that category. In gangs of men perhaps only the ganger is a Britisher, and in other cases even the ganger is a foreigner, and there may be only one Britisher in the gang. These men are good unionists when they join up, but I think something should be done by the Labour Department for their protection. I could quote instances showing that these new arrivals have been imposed upon. In some cases they are sent out to work in the bush, and cannot speak much English. They work there and find they cannot get ahead of their store bills. Probably one of the gang may be able to speak English, and he may do the business for the remainder. From one of the centres there is a complaint that a foreigner has taken advantage of the rest of the gang, none of whom can speak English, and has re-branded the sleepers and obtained the money for them instead of the other fellows, who had done the work, receiving the reward for it. I know of another case in which anything up to 50 per cent. of the sleepers cut by these men have been condemned. Instead of these men getting any return for their labour the sleepers are re-cut to smaller sizes by others on day work, and the men who originally cut them have received nothing. The conditions of life on some of the mills, especially at the landings, are very dreadful. In many of the centres there are no sanitary arrangements whatever. Sometimes pits are supplied for the convenience of single men, but for the married people there are no conveniences—they have to provide their own. I have slept in a bush hut, and have counted the holes in the roof. There have not been more than 14 sheets of iron over my head, but I have counted 63 holes in them. Fortunately

for myself I have not been there in the wet weather, but the people who live in these centres have to put up with all the inconvenience due to wet weather. At the boarding house in a particular centre, a tablecloth cannot be used. They put oilcloth on the table because the tablecloths would be ruined. The sheets of iron that are used for roofing are made to do duty time and time again. The camps are shifted every now and again when cutting is started in a new place. Men, women and young children have to put up with all these disabilities. I was in a camp at one of the centres, and the holes in the floor of the structure I was in were numerous, and the gaps between the boards were an inch wide. If one sat on the floor the breeze whistled around one's ankles. It was all right for me because it was fine weather on the occasion of my visit, but it is not all right for the people who have to live there all the time. At the particular place I speak of the employee had spent a pound out of his own pocket to provide a hessian lining under the roof to keep the rain off his bed. The camps have to be shifted at intervals, and the hessian and any lining he provided would require to be pulled down every time this occurred. The place, however, did not belong to this man and he did not know whether he would be permanent, and he could not go on doing this sort of thing. He had a wife and a baby six weeks of age. He could not take the wife and the baby to that camp. She might have died if he had done so, for she had had two relapses. Married couples are generally provided with two rooms on the landings, but in this particular case the worker had to build a lean-to at the back for his stove so as to have a fireplace inside. The men frequently get wet, and there must be some place in which they can dry their clothes. This particular man was therefore subjected to a great deal of inconvenience. There were no locks in the doors, and the hinges were made of pieces of old belting. In another place there was no spouting on the roofs, and the rain ran down the wall. At one camp the stables were situated in the middle of a group of houses, and the flies were very thick. It was winter time when I was there, but one could not raise a cup of tea from the table to one's mouth without flies dropping into it. Surely there must be some way of improving these conditions. At many centres

there is no proper water supply. Most members will have read in the "Daily News" last week of the shocking occurrence at one of the sawmilling centres in connection with the pollution of the water supply. I should like to see something done by the Minister to ensure a pure water supply at all these centres. I see from the Speech that the agricultural water supplies and metropolitan water supplies are being catered for. It is quite as important that the timber centres should also be catered for in this respect. Typhoid epidemics have occurred at the mills through stagnant water, and there has been a great deal of sickness in other places from time to time. The landings are sometimes as far away as 25 miles from the mills, and there is no communication during the week end between the landing and the mill. If any person falls sick he or she has to depend on the kindness of someone who possesses a hack, and can take the message to the mill and obtain medicine and advice. There are no nurses for the women at the bush landings and when the time comes for the mother to leave, she has to travel on the log rake or on the engine tender, or else remain in the bush to take her chance. I have travelled on the tender. The day was fine; it was a novel experience and I enjoyed it. I can quite understand, however, that if a mother were to travel with her young baby during winter months under such conditions it would not be pleasant. I know of one instance where a mother with her young baby four weeks old had to travel on the engine in the rain. Both she and the baby were wet through. Thus, members will see that a mother in those circumstances would not enjoy her trip on the engine or seated on the logs as I did in my experience. At some centres first aid outfits have been provided, some being obtained through the local medical funds. The Minister in charge could do something to improve the conditions of the workers in the timber areas by introducing a Bill to regulate the industry. I have perused the Mines Regulation Act and I notice that, under its provisions, first aid outfits have to be made available, and in many other directions provision is made for improving the working conditions of miners. Similar legislation could well be introduced as soon as possible to have a similar effect upon the timber workers' conditions. Some employers have declared that the bush telephones have proved un-

workable. I saw one bush telephone that had been run out for 7½ miles through the bush. The wire was attached to the trees, there being no telephone posts. That telephone was quite successful, and it did not cost much to erect. It goes without saying that the further the telephone line was carried, the cheaper would be the cost of construction per mile. Regarding educational facilities in the bush, it is pleasing to note that the Minister for Education has approved of the provision of a railway carriage school at Jarrahdale Landing. Such a type of school represents a considerable saving in the bush country, because when the camp has to be shifted all that is necessary to remove the school is to hitch it on to the train and the school carriage is transferred easily. In many timber centres there are children but no schools. The worker has to either keep two homes going or else the children have to do without any education at all. When I visited Jarrahdale Landing there were 11 children between the ages of 14 and seven years. They were receiving no education whatever. There is nothing for a girl of 14 years to do in the bush, and she is too young to leave home. The boys have little opportunity beyond securing ordinary schooling. I know of one instance of genius suffering neglect because of such circumstances. He is a young lad who is a left-handed violinist. The boy is very clever indeed, but his parents cannot afford to send him away in order that he may carry on his studies. The result is that that lad, who is a little genius, has to take his chance in the back blocks. I have heard many complaints regarding little children having to walk three miles or more to and from school in the wet weather. Another matter concerning the timber areas relates to roads.

Mr. Withers: You mean the lack of roads.

Miss HOLMAN: That is so. Some of them are mere bush tracks. During the last 12 months an application was made for assistance for a road constructed by the people themselves from Dandalup to the railway mill. We did not get the assistance we sought. That road cuts off about eight miles, and its use would save a good deal of time. As an instance to show what this means, a little while ago a shafting was broken at the railway mill. They rushed it through the bush and had it back

from Midland Junction completely repaired in a day and a half. The men did not lose any time during the interval, but the mill was stopped. Had the shorter road not been available, the work could not have been carried out in so short a time. Another road requiring attention is that from Nanga Brook and Wuraming to Dwellingup. Under existing conditions any person travelling over such roads in order to go to the hospital at Dwellingup must suffer greatly. I have been over the road and know what it is like. Hoffman is a centre that is absolutely isolated. There is no way by which access can be gained to the place except by rail. The need for a road there is imperative. Holyoake Landing is another isolated centre, and if it were connected up by road with the Albany-road, some 10 miles would be cut off. I hope that the Government will do something to provide road facilities in the interests of those engaged in the timber industry. If the Government introduce a Bill to regulate the timber industry, one benefit will be the keeping of the machinery in order. There have been instances of faulty construction and faulty machinery causing serious accidents. In one instance the belt race was too small for a man to work in properly. The result was that a man was killed in that race owing to the belting striking the top of his head. There is practically no inspection of machinery in connection with the timber mills. The boiler inspector certainly goes through once in 12 months, but he does not inspect the machinery. There are many ways in which improved inspection would better the conditions and make for the added safety of the workers. During many years past, statistics have been kept in the office of the Timber Workers' Union, relating to accidents sustained by those engaged in the industry. The percentage of accidents has run up to 25 per cent. of those contributing to the accident fund of the union. Last year the percentage was 19, which is very high. Most of the men in the timber industry are maimed to a greater or lesser degree because of accidents sustained in the course of their employment. The Arbitration Court does not make any provision for the dangerous nature of the work, and great toll is taken of the men each year. In conclusion, I wish to say how honoured I feel that the electors of Forrest have put me in the position formerly held by my father.

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [4.8]: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, so ably moved by the member for Forrest (Miss Holman). I congratulate her on her maiden speech in Parliament. I also congratulate the Government on the successful results of their first year in office. The record is one of achievement. It is well known that the position at the end of the financial year was the most satisfactory recorded since 1911. That result has been due to skilful administration on the part of the Government, and also to the prosperity and progress of the State. Had it not been that the affairs of State have been in the hands of so able a Ministry, the deficit would not have been so small as it is to-day. The Leader of the Opposition may smile, but I do not think he would like to take over the reins of office to-day.

Mr. Corboy: That would be a change; he usually seeks them.

**MR. WITHERS:** By the end of the next two years we shall have made such progress that Opposition members will be only too anxious to cross the floor.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Make real progress and we will support you.

**MR. WITHERS:** The Governor's Speech was fairly long, but that was due to the work done by the Government last session. Perhaps when Parliament meets next time the record of work will be so lengthy that there will be no time for the moving and seconding of the adoption of the Address-in-reply. As to the financial position of the State, I come from a district largely responsible for our present position. It is recognised that the railway earnings resulted in one of the biggest profits recorded for years past. Then there is the revenue derived from the Bunbury harbour. During the last 12 months our exports of jarrah alone totalled 203,884 loads of 50 cubic feet each. That quantity has not been exceeded since 1913-14. The export of wheat this season totalled 52,002 tons, this having been the best year Bunbury has known. We realise that perhaps timber represents a wasting industry until such time as reforestation has had its effect. With the growing of wheat, however, the export trade has increased enormously because the south-western portion of the State has sent its wheat through its natural port, Bunbury. I trust that when the Narrogin-Dwarda railway is connected

through to Pinjarra, Bunbury will still get its quota. We may perhaps lose some of the timber trade, but our wheat exports should increase.

Mr. Thomson: Will it not go to Albany?

Mr. WITHERS: Bunbury will continue to get what she is entitled to.

Mr. Mann: What about dairying?

Mr. WITHERS: That will make a difference, too. Last year 27,878 tons of coal were exported from Bunbury; 42 steamers called for bunker supplies only and received good despatch. Other exports included 1,173 tons of apples and 500 tons of general cargo. The total tonnage shipped was 421,446 tons of an approximate value of £2,067,535. The total cargo handled at Bunbury during the year was 427,393 tons. The harbour was used by 159 steamers and two sailing vessels, the net registered tonnage of the ships being 448,040 tons. The imports into Bunbury totalled 5,947 tons, including approximately 3,000 tons of naphtha and kerosene. Three companies recognise the importance of Bunbury and use the town as a distributing centre. This record discloses one avenue of revenue from which the State derives much benefit. We hope to foster industries in the South-West, but that will not be possible while the harbour continues in its present condition. Last year the Minister for Works was good enough to provide an up-to-date dredge that has been doing excellent work in the harbour.

Mr. George: I bought it, when the Mitchell Government were in power.

The Premier: But I had to find the money.

Mr. WITHERS: I notice by the Governor's Speech that it has cost £10,000 to recondition the dredge "Sir William Matthews" for the dredging of Bunbury harbour.

Mr. George: And that is a jolly good bargain too.

Mr. WITHERS: As a matter of fact work of that kind should be carried on within the State, and Bunbury is admirably situated for a dry dock. At the present time there are at Bunbury 10 berths, but these can accommodate only six ships of present-day size calling at the port. In days gone by those 10 berths might have found accommodation for 10 or 15 vessels of the tonnage of those that were accustomed to call there. When dredging operations were authorised at Bunbury it was understood that that work was to be merely a tempor-

ary measure. I can only repeat the often expressed hope that the scheme for completing the harbour at Bunbury will be carried out in the not distant future. Bunbury, as a port, warrants the provision of much better harbour accommodation than it possesses to-day. There is a reference in the Speech to the railway lines that have been constructed and handed over since the advent of the Labour administration. The Government are to be congratulated on the good work they have done in this direction. I regret, however, to have to say that none of those lines, to any extent, is in the South-Western part of the State. Perhaps the South-West may be thought to be receiving sufficient attention, but at any rate the Government should give consideration to the important subject of re-grading, in many directions, the existing lines. I may be permitted to quote a recent instance in this respect. The department considered it advisable to re-grade Marsh's Bank, and in the short space of 12 months that work paid for itself. It is matters of this description that should be taken into serious consideration. A great amount of re-grading should be carried out on the South-Western line and the work would make for more economical handling of traffic and bigger returns. Speaking generally, Bunbury Harbour is entitled to every attention at the hands of the Government and something should certainly be done during the present financial year. Not only the harbour, but the railway yards should be improved in order to facilitate the handling of the traffic that is increasing so rapidly. The existing loco. sheds and all the appurtenances are obsolete. In fact, they are no better to-day than they were 25 years ago. The Bunbury Harbour Board receive no wharfage fees from the handling of wheat or coal, and when we see the quantities of wheat and coal that are exported from Bunbury, it seems a pity that the opportunity for collecting a substantial amount of revenue should be missed. Unless fees are imposed it will be impossible to expect the harbour to be maintained as it should be. Last year the Harbour Board paid into Consolidated Revenue no less a sum than £22,000, which is a record amount since the board's inception. There are many matters on which I would like to touch, but I promised to be brief so as to permit the guests to attend afternoon tea. I must, however make one allusion to the butter factory

at Bunbury, which is making excellent progress and which promises to thrive to an even greater extent in the future. Already the Government receive in revenue £300 annually from the factory. If only the Government will render assistance, there are other industries besides dairying that can be developed in the South-West. One request I would make is that the Government should carry power to the southern port. I hope at any rate the Government will give sympathetic consideration to the proposal. I am glad to note that the Government propose to re-introduce the Main Roads Bill, which is very essential for the South-Western part of the State. I can only express regret that it did not pass last session as printed.

Mr. Thomson: As printed!

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, as printed. If members of another place have come to their senses during the six months of recess they will see the wisdom of putting it through this session in the form in which the Government will submit it. Then we shall have decent roads throughout the State. The Minister for Works has been in constant communication with Mr. Hill, of the Commonwealth Works Department, and has had a little consideration from him, though, I think, we were entitled to a great deal more. I would like to see the Closer Settlement Bill again introduced. I had intended referring to the subject of group settlement, but as time is limited I shall defer my comments. I only wish to say in that regard that a good deal of dissatisfaction was expressed last year by growers of clover burr who disposed of it to those in control of the groups. I trust the Government will see that in future it is placed on the market in such a way that the growers will get better consideration. I regret there was no mention in the legislative programme of a proposal to amend the Municipalities Act. That is essential, and I hope that time will be found to submit such a measure during the current session. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.25 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 4th August, 1925.*

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

### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

The PRESIDENT: Before proceeding with the consideration of the Orders of the Day, I would like to mention one matter concerning the appointment of our Standing Committees. It would be well if the Minister, when deciding upon the personnel of the Committees, were to consider the names of those living in the vicinity of the city. During the time Parliament has not been sitting, it has been most difficult to secure the attendance of sufficient members to form a quorum. The Library Committee has not been able to sit once during the recess, and great difficulty has been experienced by the Joint House Committee as well. I throw out this suggestion so that the Minister may take the matter into consideration when proposing the Committees to be appointed. Only with the greatest difficulty have we been able to secure quorums and, of course, work done without a quorum is invalid.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Second Day.*

Debate resumed from 30th July, 1925.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [4.41]: At the outset I desire to express my deep regret at the untimely death of the late Mr. Greig and at the same time to offer my hearty congratulations to Mr. Glasheen on the success that attended his candidature. I hope Mr. Glasheen's experience in this House will prove of great benefit to himself, to the country at large, and also to the people he represents. On such an occasion as this, when looking through the Governor's Speech, one is apt to think it is very long. The difficulty I find in dealing with it is to determine what I shall omit when speaking on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. This is an occasion when hon.