

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 1st December, 1903.

Obituary : Sir James G. Lee Steere, Speaker	... 2398
Adjournment of House (State funeral)	... 2399

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Harper) took the Chair at 2.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

OBITUARY—SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE, SPEAKER.

THE CLERK ASSISTANT (Mr. Grant) said : Honourable members, it is my duty to announce that, owing to the lamented death this day of the Honourable Sir James George Lee Steere, Knight Commander of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, member for the electoral district of Nelson, the office of Speaker to this honourable House has become vacant.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (having ceased to hold the office of deputy in accordance with Standing Orders) vacated the Chair.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) : I beg to move "That the House at its rising do adjourn until half-past seven p.m. to-morrow."

MR. S. C. PROCTOR seconded the motion. Question put by the Clerk Assistant and passed.

THE PREMIER, in formally moving that the House do now adjourn, said : Mr. Grant, the announcement you have just made to the House, though not unexpected, will cause a deep feeling of sorrow and a deep sense of the loss sustained by the Parliament and the people of this State, by the death of Sir James Lee Steere. We all had a feeling that the presence of Sir James in this House tended to secure smoothness of debate, the despatch of business, and above all that decorum and orderliness which should distinguish a deliberative Assembly. It was his absence, however rendered necessary by illness, which at once brought home to us the greatness of his power for good in the Parliament of this State, and gave rise to a profound and unanimous hope that a life so valuable to the State might be longer spared in its service. This

State has been indeed fortunate in its Speakers. Two men only have watched over and controlled the deliberations of the State's Assembly since its initiation, and they have both been men whose long tenures of office were distinguished by firmness and by impartiality, whose personal characters won the respect of every member, and whose control of this Assembly, whilst firm, left behind no feeling of resentment, no sense of injustice. It was the rule and governance of two wise men who knew the temper of the House they governed, and who earned the respect, I may almost say without exaggeration the affection, of every member who bowed to their rulings and admired their uprightness. Sir James's career in the public service of this State was a long and honoured one. It contains its records of battles fought and won for constitutional freedom, its records of great and faithful service in the cause of popular government. It was a life rich in unselfish effort for the State ; and its brave, uncomplaining termination bore unquestionable testimony to the resolute courage and the Christian fortitude of the man who lived a life devoted to duty, and died a death of unflinching courage. Well may we say of him, as was said of his predecessor : "His public life was a single-minded and successful endeavour to discharge an honourable duty to the approval of his own conscience and of those towards whom that duty lay." His great qualities as public man, as Speaker of this Assembly, and as private gentleman were embedded in the sterling gold of a fine nature, which remained without alloy, and impressed all those who were brought into contact with it. You announce, Mr. Grant to-day, the death of a great and distinguished public servant. To-morrow we shall lay to rest the last remains of one whose long life of devoted service to the State should serve as an example to those who, coming into the richer and greater heritage of to-day, can do no greater service to the State of Western Australia than to follow in the footsteps of Sir James—one who has fought the good fight in days that were, and who, on laying down the burden of life, could with all sincerity but with all humility say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,

I have kept the faith." I beg to move that the House do now adjourn.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley), in formally seconding the motion, said: The words which have fallen from the Premier will, I am sure, be indorsed by every member of this House. Sir James Lee Steere was considered by all of us as the father of the House, and we mourn his loss as a family mourns the loss of its beloved head. Though Sir James Lee Steere is dead, his memory will ever remain cherished in the hearts of those over whom he so long and so ably presided.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kalgoorlie): In supporting the motion before the House, I wish to join the Premier and the leader of the Opposition in expressing the loss this House and the State have sustained by the death of Sir James Lee Steere, and also as far as I can to indorse every word of the very eloquent tribute we have just heard paid to his memory by the Premier. This State has lost one of its best and most distinguished citizens, and this House has lost one of the fairest and most courteous-minded of men. It has been my lot to take part in various assemblies of men in all parts of the world, under different conditions; but never yet did I meet with one who came so close to my ideal of a fair chairman as did Sir James Lee Steere. He has finished his good work, and we can only pay to his memory that respect which is due.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): I think it would be well, on behalf of the older members of the House, if I also refer to the sad loss we have sustained by the death of Sir James Lee Steere. As one of those who came in with the inauguration of Responsible Government, I have, during the years I have sat here, had the able assistance and advice of our departed friend; and I may say that on all occasions I have found Sir James Lee Steere of great assistance to members who have had to do duty in this House. I join with the Premier and others who have preceded me in mourning the loss of our departed friend, and in expressing my deep regret and my sympathy with his family in the bereavement they have sustained. We in this House have suffered a great loss: they have suffered a loss which is irreparable; and it requires no word of mine to express our

condolence and sympathy with them in their great trouble.

Question passed (members standing).
The House adjourned accordingly until the next evening.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1903.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 7:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Alterations to Railway Classification and Rate Book.

Ordered, to lie on table.

PETITION—FACTORIES BILL.

HON. J. A. THOMSON (Central) presented a petition from the Coastal Trades and Labour Council, praying for the passage of the Factories Bill.

Petition received and read.

WATER AUTHORITIES BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

BOULDER TRAMWAYS BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill), in moving the second reading, said: As members will see, this is a Bill to confirm a provisional order