

to be the one basis of exchange on which all the nations of the world are agreed, and it appears to me that the present state of world unrest will serve to accentuate the demand for gold. In view of its importance, therefore, it is essential that the industry be fostered and nurtured. The recent remarks of Professor Whiffeld should claim the attention of all. In addressing the Institute of Engineers of Australia, the professor urged that wider powers should be granted to the Mines Department to ensure that our mines were worked scientifically and that valuable State assets were not wasted or destroyed for the sake of individual profits. The professor is confident that, with proper control, the industry can be maintained for many years to come. It is a matter for regret that during the past year the number of fatal accidents that occurred in the mining industry has assumed alarming proportions. This is an aspect to which the Government must give their closest attention because it is causing grave concern and anxiety to the men employed in the mines and threatens to affect their morale. Another aspect that is sure to claim attention is the shorter working week. Mining is a very dangerous and hazardous occupation and in view of that and the immense profits being earned from it, the claim of the men for a shorter working week must receive most serious consideration. There is a world-wide trend towards the shortening of working hours, and unless we realise it and grapple with the problem, it will assuredly solve itself in some unpleasant form. Other subjects upon which I should like to touch are workers' homes and decentralisation, but other members from the goldfields especially will undoubtedly deal with them during the course of the debate. In passing, however, I must mention that the housing problem on the goldfields is still very acute, and exorbitant rents are being extracted from the workers. We are hopeful that the start made in extending the operations of the Workers' Homes Board to Kalgoorlie will continue. We hope also that the Government will give their practical and moral support to the growing movement in favour of opening up the port of Esperance for goldfields' freights. Great quantities of machinery and other goods which must be purchased from the Eastern States are at present being shipped all the way to Fremantle and then conveyed by rail to the goldfields. We on

the goldfields are of opinion that this is a hardship on all affected, and that a great improvement could be made by utilising the port of Esperance, which is the natural port of the goldfields. In conclusion, may I express the wish that this session of the sixteenth Parliament of Western Australia will achieve a great amount of good for the people, not only of Western Australia, but of the Commonwealth, to which we all belong.

**HON. T. MOORE** (Central) [3.39]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 3.41 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 6th August, 1936.*

	PAGE
Meeting of the Assembly ... ..	7
Message, opening by Commissioner ... ..	7
Swearing-in of Members ... ..	8
Election of Speaker ... ..	8
Presentation of Speaker-elect ... ..	9
Demise of King George V.: Accession of King Edward VIII. ... ..	9
Summons from the Lieut.-Governor ... ..	9
Bill: Fremantle Literary Institute Mortgage, 1s. ... ..	9
Lieut.-Governor's Opening Speech, distribution ... ..	10
Address-in-reply, first day ... ..	10
Adjournment, special ... ..	13

### MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at noon, pursuant to Proclamation by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. G. Steere).

### MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONER.

A Message from His Excellency's Commissioner requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber. 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 Mr. Justice Dwyer having been commissioned by the Lieut.-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 50 members; also writs for by-elections for East Perth and for Northam (Ministerial re-election).

All the members elected, with the exception of the Premier (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder), the Minister for Justice (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton), Miss Holman (Forrest), Mr. Hughes (East Perth) and Mr. Marshall (Murchison) were present and took and subscribed the oath as required by statute and signed the roll.

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [12.45]: The House being duly constituted, I now move—

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

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans): I second the motion.

**MR. PANTON** (Leederville): I submit myself to the will of the House.

There being no other nomination,

The **SPEAKER-ELECT**, having been conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the motion, said: I desire to thank hon. members very sincerely for the honour conferred upon me to-day in re-electing me as Speaker of this House. I can only say that I will use my best endeavours to carry on the traditions and follow the example set by my predecessors, and I feel sure that with the co-operation and assistance of hon. members, we shall have a very happy and harmonious Parliament. Given that co-operation, members will at least have no regret at having appointed me to the honourable position of Speaker.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [12.47]: I desire to offer you, Sir, the congratulations of the House on your re-election to the very high and distinguished position of Speaker. The Assembly has had experience of your admin-

istration as Speaker during the last three years, and as your election has been unanimous, it is an indication that you enjoy the confidence of the House and that the House has been satisfied with your judgment, integrity and capacity. It is quite possible that we shall not have too easy a task in this Parliament, because the numbers are more even, but the Speaker always commands the respect of the House and the House is always prepared to accept his judgments. I am sure that you possess not only the ability but the temperament to preside over the House with dignity, capacity and courage, and I can assure you that you will find the House as a whole only too willing to uphold your judgment as far as possible. I do not say that there will not be objections sometimes, but your temperament, capacity and fairness entitle you to respect which I am sure you will receive. On behalf of the House, I offer you congratulations.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [12.49]: May I also tender congratulations to you, Sir, on your appointment for a second term as Speaker of this House. While I endorse a great deal of what the Minister for Lands has said, I cannot say that we have always been satisfied with your rulings. At the same time we have always obeyed your rulings, believing that your decisions have been marked by that fairness which you always display. We had a very easy time during the last Parliament, and, owing to the manner in which you conducted the business of the House and the high esteem in which you are held, I do not anticipate that there will be any great trouble for you during this Parliament. You know that I am always pleased to congratulate you because you are a fellow digger. On the previous occasion when you were elected Speaker, I told you how pleased I was to recall the first time I met you. We congratulate you on your appointment and hope that during this Parliament the good feeling that existed in the last Parliament will continue.

**HON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [12.50]: On behalf of members of the House who sit on these cross-benches I desire to associate myself with the utterances of the Minister for Lands and those of the Leader of the Opposition in offering congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on acceptance of your high office. I do not share for one moment

the fear which has been in some measure expressed by the Minister for Lands that the fact of the House in this Parliament being more evenly divided will lead to any challenge of your authority. I can assure you, Sir, that we on these benches will on every occasion where you exercise your judgment—as we feel sure you will exercise it to the best of your conscience and ability—give you our support. Therefore I do not anticipate that there will be any greater difficulty in your handling of the House during the ensuing session than you have found in the past Parliament. I again tender to you, Sir, the congratulations of this part of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank hon. members for their congratulations.

### PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER-ELECT.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [12.53]: I desire to announce that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor will now be pleased to receive the Speaker and such hon. members as desire to accompany him.

*Sitting suspended from 12.51 to 1.18 p.m.*

MR. SPEAKER: I desire to report that I have submitted myself to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, and that His Excellency has been pleased to express his satisfaction at the choice of the Assembly in the following terms:—

The Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.—It is with much pleasure I learn that you have been elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly to the high and honourable office of Speaker of that House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner, and I have the honour to affirm the constitutional rights and privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Legislative Assembly of this State.—(Signed) James Mitchell, Lieut.-Governor.

### DEMISE OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V.: ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VIII.

**THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [1.20]: I move—

That the following address be transmitted to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor for presentation to His Majesty the King:—"We,

the members of the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, take this the earliest opportunity of expressing our deep sympathy in the great sorrow which Your Majesty has sustained through the death of your illustrious father, and our late beloved Sovereign, King George V."

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [1.21]: I beg leave to second the motion.

Question passed, members standing.

**THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [1.22]: I move—

That the following address be transmitted to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor for presentation to His Majesty the King:—"We, the members of the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, humbly offer our sincere congratulations on Your Majesty's accession to the Throne. We desire to assure Your Majesty of our loyalty and devotion, and to express the hope that Your Majesty may enjoy a long and prosperous reign."

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [1.23]: In seconding the motion, I desire to add that the terms of the motion itself convey the feelings of members on this side of the House towards His Majesty the King. We desire to associate ourselves fully with the motion, and to congratulate His Majesty the King on his accession to the Throne.

Question put and passed.

*Sitting suspended from 1.21 to 2.55 p.m.*

### SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

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

### BILL—FREMANTLE LITERARY INSTITUTE MORTGAGE.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [3.30]: 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 the Fremantle Literary Institute Mortgage Bill.

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

### LIEUT-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

Mr. SPEAKER: In company with hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Lieut.-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 members of this Chamber.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*First Day.*

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [3.32]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—"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."

Before proceeding to deal briefly with His Excellency's Speech and matters that vitally affect my own electorate, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, upon having again been elected to the important position of Speaker of this Assembly. It must be pleasing to you, Sir, and it cannot be taken as anything other than a tribute to the manner in which you carried out your duties during the sessions of the last Parliament. Had you not given entire satisfaction to the members of this Assembly, you would not be sitting in the Chair again as you are to-day. I wish also to congratulate the Premier—unfortunately he is absent on account of illness—on having again been appointed head of the Government of Western Australia. Also I would congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on retaining the confidence of his party. I sincerely hope that gentleman will hold that position for a great number of years to come. I desire to express my regret at the absence of Mr. Willecock, the Deputy Leader of the House, who is seriously ill in hospital.

I understand I have but a limited time at my disposal to-day, and so I propose to make the best of it in submitting brief references to His Excellency's Speech, and even more particularly to matters of vital import in my own electorate. The first subject to be dealt with is, naturally, that of the gold mining industry. It is recognised that the gold mining industry has twice saved this State from stagnation. Many years ago, in the early history of Western Australia, the discovery of gold lifted the State from the doldrums and placed it on the map of the Commonwealth. During the last six or seven years the gold mining industry has again come to the rescue of the State. One shudders to think what would have been the position in Western Australia had there not been a revival in the gold mining industry during the last few years. I am pleased to be associated with the Labour Government, because it is realised on the goldfields that to a great extent it was due to the Government's efforts that the gold mining industry was not allowed to peter out. During the time when the gold mining industry was passing through a period of adversity, the Government on several occasions came to its assistance. There was the instance of the Golden Horseshoe Company, which was then having difficulty in keeping its operations going, until the Government made available a sum of £50,000. Then there was Wiluna, one of the greatest gold producers and one of the greatest sources of employment. The money was not actually advanced to Wiluna by the State Government, but the State Government guaranteed a sum of £300,000, which was advanced by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of allowing the Wiluna company to complete its operations and to bring about the success it has since achieved. In addition we have the case of the Sons of Gwalia mine, which at that time was supposed to be worked out. Pessimists said there was not sufficient gold-bearing ore with which to carry on, but the Government advanced £75,000 to the company. Not the least pleasing feature about it all is that the whole of those several amounts have been reimbursed to the respective Governments, Commonwealth and State. Some slight idea of the importance of the gold mining industry to this State can be gained by the fact that in 1929 there was a total of only 4,108 men employed in the industry. Yet, inside of three years, in 1932, when the revival of

the industry took place, 7,983 men were employed in that industry. Coming to the latest complete figures available, namely, those for 1935, we find that 15,549 men were employed in the industry, or an increase of 11,000 as against 1929. As I have said, one shudders to think what the position of the employment market in this State would have been had all those additional 11,000 men, absorbed in the gold mining industry, been thrown into the ranks of the unemployed. And it must be remembered that not only are the 15,000 men affected by being directly employed in the gold-mining industry, but in addition to them there are, in consequence, large numbers of men provided with employment in the various trades. The position of the gold mining industry in this State has vastly improved. We have the Youanmi, which is regarded by those who should know, as the coming Wiluna. Then we have the Big Bell. In view of the money to be invested there, it is probable that a thousand men will be working on the property within the next 12 months. Then we have very favourable fields in Laverton and in the Norseman district, where there is a number of ore-bearing bodies which can be worked on a large scale, but which have been unoccupied during the last two years for lack of water. The Government have now almost completed a pipe line from the goldfields main to Norseman which will give a great impetus to the gold mining industry in that district, employing many more men and so relieving the unemployment market. One phase of the industry which I would touch upon to-day is the alarming increase in the number of serious and fatal accidents that are taking place in the industry. I have attended many conferences of the miners themselves, and so I can say there is no one cause to which can be attributed the alarming increase in the number of men that have lost their lives in the gold mining industry. One theory which gains a certain amount of public favour is that the accidents are attributable to new chums going to work in the mines. But when we search the records of those who have lost their lives in the mines since the beginning of this year, we find it is not the new chums that have been killed, but numbers of men of many years' experience, notwithstanding which they have sustained fatal injuries. Another belief put forward is that there has been a system of speeding-up methods introduced into the

mines. Amongst men on contract work many are prepared to scrap safe-working methods for the sake of extra tonnage and extra footage. It is also said that the companies, particularly one company, have introduced speeding-up methods, and it is held that those methods have caused a number of fatalities. It is appalling the number of men who are being killed and maimed in the mines. Conferences have been held between interested parties such as the Minister for Mines, the Chamber of Mines and the A.W.U. mining section, which controls the men working in the industry. Out of the first conference, at any rate have come two methods which will to some extent minimise the number of accidents. The first is the adoption of the cartridge system of firing. Since that conference was held and the cartridge system of firing has been made compulsory, there has not been a single fatality due to premature explosion. That is one of the methods devised at the conference which should almost totally eliminate fatalities from premature explosions. The other saving method is contained in an Act passed by Parliament which makes it compulsory for all supervisors or underground foremen to pass an examination to show that they have the qualifications and the necessary experience to warrant their being placed in charge of men working underground. That will to a great extent imbue the men with confidence that the people who are placed in charge of them on the different shifts have had the necessary experience and the requisite qualifications to direct the work. The proposal of goldfields members, one that I hope will be supported by this party, is to introduce amendments to the Mines Regulation Act during the current session. I hope this will have the effect of still further reducing the number of fatalities and serious accidents. The next point I wish to refer to deals with the necessity for a Fair Rents Act for the goldfields if not for the whole State.

Mr. Raphael: Make it one to cover the State.

Mr. STYANTS: It will remain for the Assembly to say whether it should cover the whole State or apply only to the goldfields. If any member of this Chamber made inquiries on the goldfields he would soon realise the necessity for a Fair Rents Act there. I would be pleased to show any member houses that have been built in Kalgoorlie for 30 years. They are for the most part antediluvian in type consisting of weatherboard

and scrap iron. They have four rooms, and lack the convenience of a bathroom or wash-house where the housewife can do her washing. Rentals of up to £2 a week are being charged for premises of this type although many of them were bought some six years ago for £70 or £80. Many people shy at the suggestion of fair rents legislation and visualise something in the nature of confiscation. That is not my idea of a Fair Rents Act. If a person is prepared to invest £400 or £500 in building a home on the goldfields he should be allowed a fair and equitable amount for interest on the money invested. He should be allowed to make provision for depreciation, renovation, rates and taxes, etc., and to secure a fair return on the capital laid out. That, however, is not the principle operating on the goldfields to-day. I gave evidence before the Basic Wage Commission only a few months ago, and was able to show that for 4-roomed houses the extortionate rental of £2 a week was being charged. Consequently upon the debates of last session, the Premier was good enough to mention the matter to the Workers' Homes Board. That board visited the goldfields and decided that the securities offered warranted an extension of the activities of the board to the goldfields. Something like 40 homes are in course of construction there as a consequence of the board's decision. That, however, is only a drop in the ocean. I was informed by the postmaster at Kalgoorlie some time ago that in the Kalgoorlie postal district alone there are over 220 houses in which more than one family is residing. This is due, in many cases, to the fact that men on the basic wage, or anywhere within the margin of the basic wage, are unable to pay the rents asked for, and they have to double-bank in the same houses. Thus two families may be found living together. Another matter which affects workers on the goldfields, and was dealt with by this Chamber last year, is that of the exemption of the basic wage from the provisions of the Financial Emergency legislation. Most members know that the Basic Wage Commission sits annually for the purpose of declaring the sum of money that, in its opinion, is sufficient to buy the necessary commodities to keep a man, his wife and two children in reasonable comfort. The Commission divides the State into four districts. The Kalgoorlie district, because of the high cost of living, which is due to a great extent to the high

rents being charged, has a basic wage of £4 6s. per week. In the metropolitan area I think the basic wage is £3 10s. 6d., and in the agricultural and pastoral areas I think it is £3 11s. 6d. Legislation was passed during the last session of Parliament providing for exemption in the case of a man earning £3 12s. a week. This covered the basic wage in all districts except the goldfields. I believe there was a measure initiated in this Chamber, but rejected in another place, providing for the exemption of the basic wage from the operation of the financial emergency tax in all portions of the State. That would have brought in the worker on the goldfields. As things are to-day, the worker on the goldfields is not subject to that exemption, whereas the worker in every other part of the State is subject to it and does not pay the tax. It is a most invidious distinction, and I can see no justification for it. The fact that the man on the basic wage in Kalgoorlie receives £4 6s. a week is no indication that he is any better off than the man in the metropolitan area who receives £3 10s. 6d. I could prove to any impartial person that the reverse is the case. The trouble is that whilst the worker in every other part of the State is exempt from this particular tax, the man on the basic wage on the goldfields is still subject to it. I sincerely hope that some measure will be passed ensuring that goldfields workers will, at any rate, be placed in the same category as workers in other parts of the State with regard to financial emergency taxation. In glancing over His Excellency's Speech my eye was caught by the paragraph relating to the pastoral industry. In the northern goldfields area that industry has been passing through the same bad times as in the north-eastern portion. Around Laverton and Leonora, erosion of the soil is alarming. In fact, the country is blowing about in clouds of dust. For the first time within my memory, extending over 20 years, mulga and gum trees have been destroyed as the result of drought. Moreover, seriously menacing the pastoral industry on the goldfields, a pest has been introduced from the Eastern States—the Bathurst burr, of which most hon. members will know something. This pest has been carried over from the East by sheep; and if it is not checked promptly, it will have the effect of exterminating the pastoral industry not only on the northern goldfields but also in other portions of the State, to which it will

assuredly spread. Numbers of stock are on free range within a short distance of Kalgoorlie, and from time to time they are trucked to the agricultural areas. It is impossible to find any beast—cow or horse or sheep—which, having been on free range within 15 miles of Kalgoorlie, does not carry the burr in its mane or on the hair around the fetlocks or on the tail; in the case of sheep the wool is filled with the accursed burr carrying the seed. In my opinion, the present is the time when the pest can be curtailed within a radius of 20 miles of Kalgoorlie; and it is up to the Agricultural Department to secure the eradication of the pest in those districts, otherwise it will assuredly spread over the whole of the State. Another matter I wish to deal with is that of unemployment. When the Labour Government took office in 1933, 13,645 men were unemployed in Western Australia. On the 30th June of this year that number had been reduced to 8,065; and a most pleasing feature of the position is that of those 8,065 men, only 8 per cent. are actually receiving sustenance. The others are employed, for the money they receive, on reproductive work. Probably one could speak for a couple of hours on the unemployment question, but I do not propose to do that, for I feel certain that the Government fully realise the seriousness of the position, realise that whilst there are 8,000 inhabitants of the State not being employed on full time, not in industry as revenue earners to the full extent of their power, there can be no real prosperity here. Though it may not be possible to get all those men back on full time immediately, I feel sure there will be a considerable improvement in the condition of our part-time workers as the result of this session of Parliament. Yet another matter to which I desire to refer is that of hospital accommodation in the Kalgoorlie district. It is impossible to imagine a greater contraption of decrepit old buildings than those which constitute the Government Hospital in Kalgoorlie. I refer particularly to the maternity ward of that hospital. Something will have to be done promptly in connection with that ward. Unfortunately I was for six weeks recently an inmate of the Kalgoorlie Government Hospital, and the condition of the maternity ward was then brought under my notice. After becoming convalescent I inspected that ward with the matron of the hospital, and I am convinced that it is no credit to any authority either

in Australia or in any other part of the world. I understand that the Health Department do propose to effect some alterations in the maternity ward. Existing conditions there necessitate that a mother shall be moved as many as three times from the period of the confinement until she leaves the institution—this for the purpose of making accommodation available for other patients coming in. Such a state of affairs is nothing short of deplorable. I propose to conclude by saying that, in my view, sustenance or part-time work for unemployed is the most serious problem which this Parliament will have to deal with in the coming session. I have read "Hansard" closely, and I believe that members sitting in Opposition regard it as a non-party matter to get the whole of our adult population back into profitable employment. With the assistance of the Opposition, and with the development of our secondary industries, our forestry, and our mining, I feel convinced that within a very short period—probably before the life of this Parliament expires—part-time work will be entirely eliminated in Western Australia.

**MR. RAPHAEL** (Victoria Park) [3.56]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [3.57]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 3.58 p.m.*