

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT.

*The Legislative Assembly was dissolved by Proclamation on the 24th January, 1921.
The Eleventh Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 28th
July, 1921, and the First Session commenced on that day.*

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 28th July, 1921.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon pursuant to proclamation.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. G. F. Hillman) read the proclamation.

ELECTION RETURN—SOUTH-WEST PROVINCE.

The Clerk announced the receipt of return to a writ issued for the election of a member for the South-West Province showing that Francis Edward Sykes Willmott had been duly elected.

The Hon. F. E. S. Willmott took the oath and subscribed the roll.

COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honour the Chief Justice, Sir Robert Furse McMillan) 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 Ex-

cency's Commission to do all things necessary in his name for the opening of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament, which Commission was read.

The Commissioner then read the following statement:—

Mr. President, Hon. Gentlemen of the Legislative Council and Members 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, Members 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 12.13 to 2.50. 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 Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

It affords me extreme pleasure to meet the members of the Eleventh Parliament of Western Australia, and to open the First Session of that Parliament.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

The revenue for the year ended 30th June, 1921, was £6,789,565, compared with £5,863,501 for the previous financial year, showing an increase of £926,064; the expenditure for the same period was £7,476,291, compared with £6,531,725, an increase of £944,566. The deficit on the year's transactions was £686,726, increasing the total deficit to £4,773,431. The contributions from revenue to the Sinking Fund for the year amounted to £320,203, and the interest on, and appreciation of, invested Sinking Fund to £472,535, or a total increase for the year of £292,738, making the grand total of the accumulated Sinking Fund £7,641,563.

The deficit exceeded the estimate submitted to Parliament by £285,425, a result chiefly due to the falling off in railway revenue following upon the partial or complete suspension of certain of our industries and the restriction of trade generally. The aids to revenue imposed in the forms of increased taxation and higher freights and charges were absorbed by additions to salaries and wages awarded by Arbitration Courts and boards, and by losses resulting from industrial disturbances.

The credit of the State is good, and my advisers anticipate no difficulty in securing the money necessary to continue the work of development. Pending the flotation of a loan of £2,000,000 sterling, Treasury bills for that amount have been issued on the London market on very satisfactory terms, and in order that this transaction may be completed without delay, you will be asked to pass forthwith a Bill for an Act to enable the Agent General to sign these bills on behalf of the State.

You will be further asked to grant temporary supplies, and at an early date the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, together with the details of the Government's financial policy for the current year, will be submitted to you.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

The industries of Western Australia are passing through a period of crisis resulting from world-wide influences, the outcome of the recent war and the turbulent conditions still prevailing in many countries. The markets for wool, frozen meat, base metals, pearls and pearlshell, sandalwood and other products are in a condition of collapse, and although this phase is merely a passing one, the greatest care will be necessary to meet the resulting losses and to keep these industries in a state of readiness to resume activities when the markets recover.

Bountiful rains have fallen in all parts of the State, and whilst—from this point of view—the prosperity of the pastoral districts

is assured, the prospects for the coming harvest are also exceptionally bright.

The question of the method by which this harvest is to be disposed of is occasioning my advisers the deepest consideration. The Government is firmly convinced that, because of the still unsettled condition of world finance and world trade, it is to the best interests of the State that our wheat growers should be assisted to obtain the full value of their product by the continuance, for another season, of a statutory pool. The efforts of the Government are at present being exercised in this direction with a view to inducing the other wheat producing States of Australia to join in a Commonwealth pool, or, alternatively, to establish an independent pool for Western Australia.

The premium on gold continues at a satisfactory figure, but the difficulties resulting from decreased ore values in the lower levels of the mines, and increased wages and other working costs, continue to hamper the industry. The legislation passed last year in regard to tributing has not been submitted to a full trial because of the opposition of the mining companies, and a Royal Commission has been appointed to investigate the matter.

Good rains on the goldfields have had a stimulating effect on prospecting, and seventy-two approved parties, comprising 126 men, are being assisted, equipped, and despatched into various portions of the State, whilst eight repatriation committees have the loan of prospecting equipment for issue to returned soldiers. Advances for development and mining are being continued, and subsidised diamond drill boring is in progress to test the southerly extension of the Kalgoorlie deposits.

With a view to further encouraging prospecting for new goldfields, an amendment of the Land and Income Tax Act, removing the heavy impost on the sale of mines, will be submitted for your consideration.

The work of settling returned soldiers on the land is proceeding steadily. As against the quota originally allotted to Western Australia of 1,650, applications have been received from 6,539 returned men. To 5,506 of these, qualification certificates have been issued, whilst 3,954 have been settled on the land. During the year 1920-21, 1,066 applications were received, 1,050 certificates were issued, and 936 soldiers were settled on the land. The total commitments to date in connection with this work amount to £1,383,490, covering 3,954 soldiers, or an average commitment per soldier of £1,110. Not only have the grit and quality of the returned men been demonstrated by the large proportion who have elected to settle upon the land, but the work they are doing, under the guidance of the Soldier Settlement Board and the Agricultural Bank, is of the most satisfactory character, and there can be no doubt that the great bulk of them will prove successful.

In pursuance of the policy of development of the vast empty territory in the North and

the North-West, an exploring party is now engaged on an overland expedition along the coast-line between Derby and Wyndham, with a view to deciding upon the most suitable harbour in which to establish a new port, so that now vacant lands to the extent of many millions of acres may be made available for pastoral occupation. In order that better attention may be given to the requirements of the people and the industries of the North, a Resident Commissioner has been appointed and is about to take up his duties. Steps are also being taken to facilitate the exploitation by private enterprise of the great mineral wealth of the North, and the undoubted possibilities of tropical agriculture.

The need for increasing our population by a steady influx of suitable immigrants is pressing. For the five years prior to the war the average number of immigrants entering the State was 3,086 per annum, whilst for the two years ending 30th June, 1920, the total number of immigrants received was 3,400. An arrangement has been made with the Commonwealth Government under which that Government will bear all the cost of propaganda work and transport, whilst the Western Australian Government, through officers of its own appointment, and under its control, will have the final right of rejection or selection of intending immigrants. In view of the alarming disproportion of metropolitan to rural population, as disclosed by the recent census, it is increasingly necessary that new arrivals should be men and women suitable for country life and adapted to country industries.

Owing to the high cost of and difficulty in obtaining rails, pipes, and other requirements, the public works policy has been necessarily restricted. The time is now approaching when it will be possible to proceed with authorised railways and other works, whilst such matters of urgency as the augmentation of the metropolitan water supply are receiving attention. Increased supplies for next summer have been secured, and the preliminary investigations in connection with the permanent scheme from the Canning River are nearing completion.

In the interests of economy and efficiency, the Department of Agriculture has been reorganised, with an agriculturist as Director and Permanent Head. With the object of spreading the latest information amongst farmers, and thus providing facilities for maintaining their technique at the highest possible level, it is intended to appoint three assistant agricultural advisers. One of these will devote himself entirely to dairy work, the others will work in the northern and southern portions respectively of the South-West Division of the State, and will be in constant touch with the farming community in their respective areas. It is confidently anticipated that these appointments will have the effect of increasing our butter and crop yields. In order to make provision for securing skilled specialists to fill vacancies as they occur, and for new positions consequent upon the agri-

cultural development of the State, a number of agricultural cadets are to be appointed.

The great task of regeneration and conservation of the forested areas, made possible under the provisions of the Forests Act, is proceeding apace. The exact extent of the forest wealth is now known, and this knowledge will form the basis of future operations. The high rates to which timber rose during the war period show little tendency to reduction, at least so far as the export trade is concerned.

A Forest Products Laboratory has been established as the result of active and earnest co-operation between the Governments of the Commonwealth and the State, and it is hoped that in the near future a very large proportion of the timber now burned in the waste fires at the sawmills will be converted, through the process of destructive distillation, into a large number of valuable chemicals for which there is a constant demand. Already the laboratory has justified its existence by the splendid work it has accomplished in providing a solution for the tanning problem centring in the kino of our marri or redgum tree.

In pursuance of the policy of assistance to industries, the constitution of the Council of Industrial Development has been widened to permit of representation of both primary and secondary industries, combined with technical and commercial interests. The scope of the council's activities has been enlarged to embrace the fostering of industrial development, including scientific investigation and research; the establishment of a bureau of industrial information; the creation of a permanent exhibition of the State's resources; and, generally, the giving of advice on proposals for financial assistance.

In fulfilment of a promise made during the closing session of last Parliament, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the educational system of the State. This Commission was given the widest powers of investigation, and, without limiting these powers, it was expressly desired to ascertain whether or not the State was obtaining full value for the money spent on education; in what way the system might be improved to better suit the requirements of the State; in what way country education might be amended to the advantage of country industries; and what alteration in administrative methods might be desirable. The Commission has completed its work, and its report will be submitted to you shortly.

From the commencement of the current financial year the Commonwealth and State Taxation Departments have been amalgamated. This amalgamation will save the State Government upwards of £20,000 per annum, and will also prove beneficial to the taxpayers. The question of combining other Federal and State activities in order to eliminate the waste of duplication and to conserve the public's interest and convenience is receiving close attention, and it is hoped that it will be found possible to reach agreements

which in several directions will achieve these ends without in any way impairing the sovereign rights of a self-governing State.

In obedience to the provisions of the Licensing Act, 1911, a local option poll was held in April of this year. The result of that poll has revealed certain defects in the existing legislation, and a Bill is being prepared to remedy these and to put our licensing laws generally on a better footing.

Many measures of first-class importance will claim your attention during the life of the present Parliament, and amongst those which it is proposed to submit at an early date are:—

A Bill for a Hospitals Act,
A Gold Buyers Bill,
Stamp Act Consolidation Bill,
Constitution Act Amendment Bill,
Land Drainage Bill,
Auctioneers Bill,
Land Agents Registration Bill,
Local Courts Act Amendment Bill,
Bank Holidays Bill,
Fisheries Act Amendment Bill,
Evidence Act Amendment Bill,
Architects Bill,
Road Act Amendment Bill,
Municipalities Act Amendment Bill,
Coal Mines Regulation Bill,
Machinery Inspection Bill,
City of Perth Bill,
Electoral Law Consolidation Bill, and
A Re-distribution of Seats Bill.

I now leave you to your labours, trusting that by the blessing of Divine Providence they may prove of material advantage to the State.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT: For the sake of greater accuracy I have obtained from His Excellency the Governor copies of the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to Parliament. Those copies will be distributed among hon. members.

QUESTION—BREAD SUPPLY.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (without notice) asked the Minister for Justice: Is the Minister aware (1) That the master bakers propose to go on strike on Saturday? (2) If a strike takes place, will the Government supply the people through State bakehouses and (3) If so, will the Government supply police protection in the event of a demonstration by the master bakers on strike?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I ask that the hon. member give notice of the question.

BILL—COURTS OF SESSION.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.35]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legis-

lation, I move without notice for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "An Act to provide for the establishment of Courts of Session."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

OBITUARY—HON. E. M. CLARKE.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.38]: During the brief period that has elapsed since our last meeting, death has removed one of our members. The Hon. Ephraim Clarke was in a double sense the father of the House. He was the oldest member in point of years, and also by virtue of the longest continuous service. We have amongst our members one, in the person of Sir Edward Wittenoom, whose service dates back beyond the period of Responsible Government. But his membership of the House has been broken; and so it was that when, at the age of 75 years, the Hon. Ephraim Clarke completed 21 years as a representative of the South-West Province, he was the oldest member in the House. Apart altogether from State politics, Mr. Clarke played a very prominent part in the public life of this country. He was for no less a period than 27 years a member of the municipal council of Bunbury, and for six years he was the mayor of that thriving seaport. In his private life he did an immense amount for Western Australia and particularly for the part in which he lived. Some years ago, when the policy of repurchasing estates for the purpose of closer settlement was decided upon, Mr. Clarke, because of his great knowledge and experience and his known integrity, was selected as one of the advisers of the Crown; and there can be but little doubt that the success associated with that policy was in large measure due to the soundness of his advice. In his own district he was, I believe, the first man to replant vines after they were destroyed throughout the district by a fungus growth as far back as 1865. As an orchardist, agriculturist, and merchant, he was of the very best type of pioneer. A native of the country, his love for it and his confidence in its resources gave him the necessary courage to embark on big enterprises; his pertinacity enabled him to carry those ventures to a success, whilst his transparent honesty earned for him the respect of all men. During the long period he was a member of this House he was always very active. He brought to all our debates ripe knowledge singularly free from any taint of party bias or class prejudice. He was a man of a charming nature, and I think it may be said for members on both sides of the House that we all loved him. Whilst his passing will occasion lasting regret, we all feel that it was a privilege to have enjoyed his companionship and his friendship, and we shall treasure imperishable recollections of those qualities of kindness, goodness and wisdom which made him so valuable a member of this House and

this community. As a slight tribute to his memory I move—

That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the public services rendered to the State by the late Hon. Ephraim Mayo Clarke, a member for the South-West Province, and to express its deepest sympathy with his family in the irreparable loss they have sustained by his decease; and that the President be requested to forward the foregoing resolution to the widow of the deceased gentleman.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [3.43]: I second the motion so eloquently and sympathetically proposed by the leader of the House. I am sure the sympathy of every hon. member goes out to the widow and family of the late Mr. Clarke. I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Clarke for over 20 years, and I can say without qualification that he was one of the finest men I ever knew. He was one of a very old school, born at a time when conditions were not nearly so favourable to the rising generation as they are to-day. Yet his indomitable pluck and perseverance, and his wide knowledge of affairs, enabled him to rise above all difficulties and to attain a position of which any man might well feel proud. He was an agriculturist and an orchardist, and of everything pertaining to production from the land he was a past master. It might well be said that all residents throughout the South-West had the greatest affection for him. During the whole of his life he was an ardent advocate of improved agriculture, horticulture and viticulture, and at agricultural show time it was gratifying to see people from all around coming to him for advice. The advice he gave, being the outcome of his own experience, was always sound. He was president of the agricultural society for many years, and for 12 years he was chairman of the Bunbury butter factory. We all know the difficulties through which those interested in the manufacture of local butter have passed, and it is largely due to the energy and determination of the late hon. member that the industry is now in a relatively flourishing condition. The Minister for Education apparently forgot that the late hon. member was once an Honorary Minister. It was many years ago, but I know that in his capacity as Honorary Minister for Lands he gave to the State the best of his ability and knowledge. As a member of this House he was greatly loved and respected. Every word he uttered was listened to with the greatest attention by hon. members. He never spoke on any question which he did not thoroughly understand. His great devotion to duty, and his faithful service, will keep his memory green for many years to come. I join with the Minister and other hon. members in expressing deep regret at the loss of so valuable a member of the House, and I think it will be gratifying to the widow and family to know the high esteem in which the late Mr. Clarke was held by hon. members.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [3.45]: I deeply regret that the occasion has arisen for a motion such as this, one which has necessitated my supporting the remarks which have so ably fallen from the lips of previous speakers. They have testified so fully to the qualities of our late hon. member that they have left little for me to add. I was acquainted with the late Mr. Clarke for a great number of years, and it must be a great gratification to those who belong to him to find that he gained the respect of everyone. I looked upon him as a splendid example of a man, because his one object was to develop and improve the country in which he lived. In consequence of his work there are numerous landmarks in the district in which he lived, pointing to his untiring and well-directed industry and enterprise. To my idea he fulfilled the qualities that a man should fulfil, namely that having lived a long and useful life, and having made perhaps a competency instead of retiring into an old age of slothful ease, he devoted his remaining years to the country which had done so much for him, and he placed at its disposal, whatever they might be worth, his experience and abilities so as to forward its interests. It ought to be the ambition of every man, that after he has done for himself what he can, whatever his abilities and brains may be worth he should place them at the disposal of his country, if those who belong to that country are willing to accept them. We find that the late Mr. Clarke actually died in harness after having had a hard contest to get back into Parliament. That only shows that he was willing to place at the disposal of his country what experience and ability he possessed. I think nothing could be better than that. It is pleasing to know that he leaves behind him members of his family who, I am certain, will continue to carry on that good name. I do not think I can add anything more to the remarks which have been so well made concerning him, except perhaps to repeat the old and well-known words "requiescat in pace."

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [3.52]: I join with the leader of the House and other speakers in my expression of keen regret at the necessity which has arisen for this motion. We have come to realise that after each successive session a motion of this kind is usually moved by the leader of the House. On this occasion it unfortunately happens to relate to our former old friend, the Hon. E. M. Clarke. We are carrying the motion to his memory. Next session, possibly, it will be a motion concerning some member at present in this Chamber. Be that as it may we must recognise the fact that in our late colleague we had one of nature's gentlemen. I wish to support the motion, feeling that we cannot do anything less than convey a tribute to his memory and our heartfelt sympathy to his widow and family. The State has lost an able statesman and useful public servant. From this Chamber we have lost

an able colleague; his family have lost a loving husband and father. I had many consultations with the late Mr. Clarke on various occasions. Although differing from him in politics in many instances, I realise that his advice at all times was worth the most serious consideration. I support the motion.

The PRESIDENT [3.54]: Before putting the motion which has been moved and seconded, and which I will ask hon. members to pass standing in their places, I may perhaps be allowed, after eighteen years companionship with the late Hon. E. M. Clarke in this House, to testify to the advantage and pleasure I gained from my intercourse with that gentleman. It is men like the late Mr. Clarke who make this or any other country. Mr. Clarke was a man who both in his pursuits and in his thoughts was a believer in the outdoor life. He was a believer in that country life to which we must look for the future welfare of Australia. We all know what his services were to his beloved south-west, and indeed to the whole of the State. Hon. members will agree with me that it will be long before those in this House or members in another place forget his long, his faithful, and his practical services to his constituency and to the State, and it will be long before they cease to revere his memory.

Question put and passed; members standing.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (South-West) [3.56]: I move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us: "May it please your Excellency. We, the members of 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."

I notice that His Excellency's Speech begins with finance, and very rightly so. I know nothing that is causing more anxiety to this State than finance. The Speech shows that the revenue has increased by nearly a million pounds, but that the expenditure has also increased by an amount greater than the increase in the revenue. The deficit still increases, and now reaches the handsome sum of 4½ millions. On the other hand, it is pleasing to know that the sinking fund has reached an amount of over 7 million pounds. Heavy losses on our railways, we are told, particularly account for this. It would be an easy matter to further increase taxation and to further increase the railway rates and fares in order that the revenue might be made to

meet the expenditure. The time, however, has not come when this can be done. People cannot pay much more taxation and fares and freights, which, although comparing favourably with fares and freights in the other States, cannot to-day be increased in Western Australia. Furthermore, this would be altogether too easy a means of dealing with the question. If those in control of our railway system knew that Parliament would agree time and again to increased fares and freights they would then become careless in the matter of expenditure, and the trouble would go on as it is going to-day. It seems to me that most people are of opinion that by the ruthless discharge of civil servants, irrespective of their worth or merit, we can wipe out the deficit. From the little experience I have had, running over about four years, I say such is not the case. I do not think that the discharge of numbers of civil servants will make any difference to the finances. On the other hand, where departments are over-manned, then we should certainly get rid of the drones. The pruning knife should be carefully used, and we must see that we do not impair efficiency when doing so. Again, I have always been of opinion that such matters as water supply can be better controlled either by boards or municipal authorities. I have always been of opinion that the funds of the State could be better used for developmental work than in trading concerns, and that such a matter as trade should be left to private enterprise, except where we find private enterprise extorting undue profits from the public. State enterprises could then come in and serve as policemen, as was done in the early days on the goldfields when people had to obtain their supplies of water from condensers. Private condensers in those days undoubtedly profited on the public.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Put them under the price-fixing measure.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The price-fixing measure is very nice on paper but mythical in practice.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You will cause a big commotion amongst the bakers.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: In the old days when private people profiteered in water, the Government erected condensers in order to reduce the price of water from 1s. to 4d. a gallon. The result was that people in charge of the private condensers immediately reduced their price of water to 2d. per gallon. The Government then, being a wise Government, did not continue to compete against private individuals but left their condensers to act as policemen upon these profiteers.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Would you do that with the State Implement Works?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: In the days when I sat in another place I quarrelled with members of the Country Party because I maintained that we should not pick and choose amongst the trading concerns. We could not, for instance, sell the State Saw-

mills and keep on the State Implement Works. As a matter of principle we must either keep them all or sell them all. I say we should sell them all. It has also been pointed out that general chaos has been caused by the War in the finances of the world. That is undoubtedly the case. Anyone who has been following financial questions must find that the rate of exchange has been against us with deplorable results, because we import so much of our requirements into Western Australia. On the other hand the manufactures of the Eastern States have been hedged round with a high wall of tariff. Western Australia has very few manufactures, and consequently we in this State are not deriving the same benefits as the Eastern States receive. As we make most of our money from the land, we find that we have to pay the piper for the advantages accruing to Eastern States manufacturers. Western Australia suffers accordingly. The gold mining industry, I note from the Speech, is in rather a poor condition; matters in that respect are dull. However, I do hope that some of the prospectors about whom the Governor's Speech has told us that they are now searching the country from one end to the other, will succeed in finding for Western Australia another Golden Mile. The market for base metals, I am sorry to say, is in a very bad condition indeed. That circumstance affects us in many ways; as regards tin mining, for instance. At the present price of tin, that metal can be produced at a huge profit in other countries, where coloured labour is abundant. Here, on the other hand, because of our different living conditions, such is not the case. The whole of the tin output of the world is only about 250,000 tons per annum; and, of that quantity, seldom more than 25,000 tons is stored in the warehouses or on the water. The result is that, should at any time that quantity be exceeded or diminished by, say, 5,000 tons, the manipulators of the market are in a position to use that circumstance to their own advantage and to the detriment of the tin producers. I trust that Western Australia will profit from the huge manganese deposit which has been so favourably reported upon by the State Mining Engineer. If I remember rightly, that officer estimated the value of the deposit to be over 12 millions sterling. I trust the deposit will be worked in the immediate future. We have also the huge iron deposit at Yampi Sound. We do not want to see that deposit utilised by Queensland or any other State. Let us see what we in Western Australia can do with it. We have here coal, iron and manganese, and indeed, we have everything in our favour here for the establishment of steel works.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Everything except a go-ahead Government.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The Government, I take it, are quite all right. It is the opposition the Government have to put up with that is sometimes rather tiring. I am pleased to note that a resident Commis-

sioner has been appointed for the North-West. This is a step in the right direction. We have heard rumblings and grumblings as to the cutting off of that portion of the State from this end. North-Western people frequently assert that matters of vital importance to the North-West cannot be dealt with expeditiously in existing conditions. I trust that this complaint will now be a thing of the past, and that we shall find in the officer appointed, a capable man fully equal to dealing with the many North-Western questions which will from time to time call for attention. Certainly we want another port between Derby and Wyndham. There is a huge tract of country in that North-West corner which has been reported upon and which, from the information that has reached me, I believe to be excellent pastoral land indeed. If we do not populate that end of the State in the near future, then somebody else will do it for us.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: What about the State steamers?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: There are millions of acres of good pastoral land there, and it is well watered land. I hope that speedily we shall find those districts stocked, to the advantage of the pastoralist and to the advantage of Western Australia. The report of the Education Royal Commission was, in part, made public recently, as I daresay hon. members will have observed. I hope that the results of the report of that Royal Commission will be for the benefit of the State. Necessarily the cost of education in Western Australia is high; it must be so, considering our huge territory and our small population. But I want to impress upon hon. members generally and upon the Minister for Education certain circumstances in this connection. We talk about settling the back country. We say that if we do not produce we shall never wipe out our deficit. Let me point out that we shall never settle our back country satisfactorily until we give the children in the back blocks the same educational facilities as are available in the cities and in the larger towns. The trouble is that although much has been done, not half enough has yet been done, with the result that we find fathers and mothers in the country, seeing their children growing up around them and not receiving the same grade of education as is available to city children, and as these country children need in order to fight the battle of life on equal terms with the children of more populous centres, we find such fathers and mothers declaring that they will give up their farms and seek employment in the nearest town. We want to stop that drift to the towns. Attention has been called time and again to the large influx into the towns, and into the metropolitan area in particular, from the country districts. If we are to stop that, we must see that the children of the back blocks are afforded every educational facility. While on the subject of education, let me express the hope that no-

withstanding the condition of the Treasury, sufficient money will be found for the establishment of an agricultural college. I am sure hon. members will agree with me that nothing is more needful to-day in this State than an agricultural college on up to date lines. We can go far beyond what exists in the Eastern States. Let us turn to America and find out what has been done there. I care not where our agricultural college may be established. The point is not one on which a parochial opinion should be expressed. Let the site of the agricultural college be in Northam or Bridgetown or any other important country centre; so far as I am concerned, it does not matter to me one iota as long as we have a thoroughly up to date college where our sons can learn to combine science with practical farming.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Why not leave that matter to private enterprise?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: As regards soldier settlement, I think we can flatter ourselves that the settlement of soldiers on the land has been better carried out in Western Australia than in any of the Eastern States. I had something to do with that matter, and I know that soldiers when they first returned were rather obsessed with the idea that things in this regard were so much better done in Queensland that it would pay a soldier to leave Western Australia and take advantage of the offers made in the northern State. I know of several returned soldiers who went from Western Australia to Queensland, and I am pleased to say that every one of those men—I speak of those of whose cases I have personal knowledge—was very glad indeed to return to Western Australia and take up farming pursuits here. The grass on the other side of the fence always looks the greenest; but generally it is found that if one looks carefully at the grass on this side of the fence, there is much to commend it. In connection with soldier settlement, there is just one point which I desire to stress. The question is, where can we best settle immigrants? If we say that we will settle them on the wheat lands, we find that practically all our wheat lands in the neighbourhood of the existing railway system are already alienated. If we talk of settling immigrants on the pastoral areas of the North, then the question arises of finding the necessary capital. One cannot start in the North-West without a fairly large capital. I have heard truly wonderful ideas uttered from time to time by people who surely must know very little about the subject, people who talked about cutting the pastoral runs of the North into 2,000-acre blocks to be run with 5,000 sheep. It really makes one very much afraid when one reflects that amongst the new blood in this new Parliament there are men who have given utterance to such absurdities as this. I do indeed trust that such hon. members will listen to their fellow members and thereby learn a little wisdom. Then, where are we to settle the immigrants referred to? I contend that there is only one

place in which they can be settled, and that is the great South-West Province of which I have the honour to be a representative. I know Western Australia, with the exception of the Kimberleys, fairly well, and I declare that there is no part of the State which offers greater possibilities for the immigrant with small capital than does the South-West. It is a well watered country.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Too well watered.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Would not certain other portions of the State have been very glad indeed to have some of the surplus water of the South-West in the past? It is not so very long ago that the settlers in other parts of this land of Western Australia practically went down on their knees. Why? Because they were suffering from drought. In the North and in the East there are droughts, unfortunately; but we never get droughts in the South. In the South we enjoy the great privileges of a wonderful climate, good soil, and practical immunity from droughts.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: What about drainage?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Undoubtedly the South-West does want drainage. In fact, we want many things done there which we intend to get. The land of the South-West is particularly suitable for dairying, and we have there orchard lands equal to anything in Australia, not excluding Tasmania. The geographical and climatic conditions of this State are such that we can place our fruit on the London market three weeks earlier than Tasmania can. Unfortunately, in the past we have not always been able to secure ships with refrigerated space to carry our produce to London. I trust that during the coming season we shall at least get one ship in February and then, if we have 40,000 or 50,000 cases on that ship, we shall again show what we have proved this year—that our fruit is superior to any other fruit grown in Australasia. In the southern portion of this State, particularly in the South-West corner, we have a great variety of soils and the finest timber that can be seen anywhere in the world. Of course, our jarrah lands must be preserved. Our karri land, where the towering karri is growing so profusely, must also be carefully preserved. With the mixed country of red gum and the karri, however, it is a different question altogether. If we are to have people settle there, we must be prepared to sacrifice some of that karri timber. Hon. members who have visited the karri forests know that they comprise a sight never to be forgotten. The country there abounds with running rivers, ever-green bush and millions of karri trees standing like huge pillars. It is one of the finest sights in Australia, and I hope and trust that we will see many people making use of the road which has been constructed from Manjimup to Nornalup whereby they will gain some idea of the nature of the country in that part of the State and appreciate what a wonderful asset we have in our timber belt. We have another asset and one which might

almost come first; I refer to Collie coal. It is an extraordinary thing that we find people from time to time making derogatory remarks about Collie coal. Where would Western Australia be to-day without Collie coal? Has it not saved us from time to time when, owing to industrial troubles and other causes, we could not get coal from the Eastern States? What filled the breach—Collie coal every time. We have proved the worth of Collie coal and we should realise that we have coal seams there which are practically unlimited. We should be proud of such a marvellous asset. To utilise it, however, as we should, we must have proper bunkering facilities at the natural port, which is Bunbury.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Why not at Fremantle?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Fremantle is not the natural port for Collie coal trade.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is the only port.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: We do not want to drag everything to Fremantle. We must use the natural port of Bunbury and we intend to use it. We must have proper bunkering facilities there and provide wharves to enable our timber, wool, fruit, wheat, and many other commodities, which are produced in that part of the State to be handled efficiently and expeditiously.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Karri can be loaded more cheaply at Fremantle than at Bunbury.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: We will be able to load it more cheaply at Bunbury, if we are given the proper facilities. I do not think I need dwell further upon the South-West except to say that the main trouble there in the past has been the task of dealing with the heavily timbered land. I think the group settlement scheme is the solution of that difficulty. What one man cannot undertake "on his own" becomes less difficult and troubles are minimised when groups of 20 or more men are put on to cope with the work. The task of clearing these huge areas of heavily timbered country can be carried on cheaply and expeditiously by means of the group settlement scheme. This is a big country and we require men at the head of affairs to look after the interests of this large State. Men are wanted with big ideas and it must not be forgotten that to-day great things have to be done and that a man must live as if he had never to die.

Hon. J. Ewing: Hear, hear! That is right.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.20]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson debate adjourned.

BILL—TREASURY BILLS (SIGNATURES).

All Stages.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.21]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended for the present sitting as is necessary to permit of Message No. 1 from the Legislative Assembly being taken into consideration forthwith and the Bill forwarded therewith being passed through all stages.

I regret, Mr. President, the necessity to ask members to pass this Bill to-day but I can assure members that the Bill is purely a formal one.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Cannot we see the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, the Bill will be circulated.

The PRESIDENT: It is customary for Bills to be circulated at the second reading stage.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Bill will be circulated in a few minutes, and I realise that it is usual for the Minister to justify asking the House to take what is rather an unusual procedure at this stage of the session. The position is that the State made arrangements to raise a sum of two million pounds by loan in London. The Imperial Government, because of financial arrangements of its own, prohibited the issue of State loans for a fixed period. The State was then advised to issue Treasury bills for six months in order that the loan might be arranged at a subsequent date. Treasury bills were offered for the amount of two millions and were taken up at a discount at the rate of 5½ per cent. for 12 months. The transaction has been completed, and the difficulty arises in this way, that the usual practice is for Treasury bills to be signed in Western Australia by the Treasurer and Under Treasurer in blank. They are sent to London in blank and are filled up there when taken up. That is quite a satisfactory arrangement when we know some weeks ahead particulars of the Treasury bills to be taken up. In this case, however, the position was not known until the immediate necessity arose, because it was intended to raise a loan and all arrangements had been made to that end. The purpose of the Bill is merely to authorise the Agent General in London and the accountant at the London Agency to sign these bills in lieu of the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer. That is the sole purpose of the Bill, and such purpose is expressed by the terms of the measure. The measure refers to no other Treasury bills except the two millions sterling referred to, and it merely authorises the Agent General and the accountant to sign instead of the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.25]: I have attended sittings of Parliament for some 30 years and this is the most unique proceeding I have yet encountered. The Minister in charge of the House asks us, without even a typed copy of the Bill in our hands, to pass authority to sign Treasury bills for two million pounds in London.

The Bill I see has now been distributed among members and perhaps when I have had an opportunity of reading it, I may offer no objection to the suspension of the Standing Orders, which has been proposed by the Minister. Any proposal affecting the financial position of the State such as that brought forward by the Minister should not be assented to by this House without some protest on the part of members. Having now looked through the Bill, I for one would like to have further time to consider it. Last session we passed a Loan Bill for £3,870,000. This authorisation—

The Minister for Education: This is not an authorisation at all.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There is nothing to show that it is not, and that this Bill does not affect the financial position of the State accordingly. I do not think this House should pass a measure of this sort on the word of a Minister that the thing is all right; and, especially in view of the financial position of this country, the fullest consideration should be given to a measure of this sort. In these circumstances I feel I cannot vote for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.27]: As one who is very reluctant to agree to anything adding to the financial burdens of this State, I do not see that we can do much except to carry this Bill. As a matter of fact, I suppose the two millions involved is nearly all expended at the present moment.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What about an overdraft?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: If we do not get this money to refund the two million pounds, we shall be in a distinctly awkward predicament.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: On a point of order. Are we discussing the suspension of the Standing Orders or the Bill in general?

The PRESIDENT: We are discussing the question of the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I was led to make these remarks because of the references which have already been made to the purposes of the Bill.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. members are dealing with the question that so much of the Standing Orders should be suspended and so on. The hon. member is not really out of order, but I ask him to confine himself to the question of the propriety or impropriety of suspending the Standing Orders.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: While I am in order, despite the interjection by Mr. Baglin, in proceeding as I was doing, I will content myself with saying that I am in favour of the suspension of the Standing Orders for the purpose indicated by the Minister.

Question put and passed.

First Reading.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.29]: In moving the second reading of the Bill, I ask Mr. Lovekin to accept my assurance that this is purely a formal matter in connection with the signing of Treasury bills and it does not give the Government authority to do anything. The money is raised under the existing authorities and this Bill has no purpose whatever except to substitute the signing of Treasury bills by the Agent General and the accountant at the London agency for the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer in this State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The PRESIDENT [4.30]: I would point out to hon. members that it is not permissible to discuss on this Bill anything except the matter of the signatures to Treasury bills. No doubt members will have an opportunity at a later stage to discuss the propriety or impropriety of borrowing the money, but this Bill, as I read it, is simply one for altering the personality of the signatories, and members must confine themselves to that subject.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.31]: According to Clause 2 of the Bill, these Treasury bills have to be signed under an Act which already exists for the issue of Treasury bills. This Bill has just been put into our hands and we have had no opportunity to look into the Act to ascertain the nature of its provisions. We find that, under this Bill, the Agent General and the accountant to the London Agency are to be substituted for the Colonial Treasurer and the Under Treasurer to sign these Treasury bills for two millions of money, but no rate of interest is stipulated. The Minister has informed us that the rate of interest is 5½ per cent. per annum, but there is nothing in this Bill to bind the Government to that rate. I happen to know that in London to-day nearly the whole of this two millions of money is owed on overdraft to the London, Westminster and Parr's Bank, and that a good deal of the money is subject to an interest charge of 7 per cent.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. member to speak to the Bill.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am coming to the Bill. This measure provides for no rate of interest.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have already explained to hon. members that the subject of this Bill is one of signatures to Treasury bills, the substitution of the signatures of the Agent General and another officer for those of the Colonial Treasurer and the Under Treasurer. I ask members to confine themselves to that subject.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There is something more than that in this Bill. Clause 2 states that Treasury bills, bearing the signatures of the Agent General and the accountant at the London Agency, in lieu of the signatures of the Colonial Treasurer and the Under Treasurer, may be lawfully made out and issued in London under the authority of the Treasury Bills Act 1893, and then it goes on to say "for the purpose of raising a sum of money not exceeding two million pounds." But no rate of interest is stipulated.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Are we to get another Bill for the two million pounds?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know. I am informing the House that the London, Westminster and Parr's Bank has advanced an overdraft of about two millions, and that some of this money is carrying interest at 7 per cent. Is it likely that that bank, which is earning 7 per cent. on an overdraft, is going to advance money on Treasury bills at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.? I do not think it is at all likely. This Bill does not limit the rate of interest at all. The rate may be 20 per cent. All that the Bill provides is that the Government may issue these Treasury bills at any rate of interest they like. Certainly we have the word of the Minister, which we are bound to accept, that the rate of interest is $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, but we have no right to pass legislation of this sort. If the rate of interest is $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, it should be stated in the Bill. When the Bill reaches the Committee stage I propose to move an amendment requesting another place to limit the amount of interest to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [4.34]: Before agreeing to give the right to the Agent General and the accountant to sign these Treasury bills, the House is entitled to some information which it has not yet received. I personally do not know what is likely to happen at the end of six months, or whether this House will have the right to say whether the Government shall be authorised to float a loan for two millions of money. I would like to know what the position will be when the Treasury bills expire. As Mr. Lovekin pointed out, we do not know at what rate of interest these Treasury Bills are being issued. I certainly wish to assist the Government in any way that I can. Money is needed in this country and we have been told that the State's credit is good, but one cannot help viewing with a certain amount of suspicion a request to adopt some unprecedented procedure of this sort to give the Agent General and the accountant authority to sign these Treasury bills. I do not mind doing this provided the necessary information is given to us, that is information as to the actual need for this procedure, and what will happen after the Treasury bills so signed have expired. While I am disposed to support the Bill, I think we should first be given this information.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [4.36]: While I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, I do wish to enter my emphatic protest against the method which the Government have adopted of bringing down legislation to this House. Parliament has been in recess since December last and surely between that time and the present the Government must have known what was likely to happen with regard to the financial position of the State. Yet, on coming here to-day, we are asked to rush through in a few minutes legislation of this description about which most members seem to know nothing at all. We frequently hear complaints about legislation being sent to us late in the session, but evidently the Government have rushed it down early on this occasion. I hope that the House will take a stand this session and insist upon legislation being sent here in such a manner that members will be able to discuss it thoroughly. I trust that the leader of the House will get his colleagues to give us a proper opportunity to deal with legislation in a thorough manner.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [4.38]: I should like to assure Mr. Pantton that the Government did not know of the necessity for this Bill until after the date for the opening of Parliament had been fixed. I wish to make it clear to Mr. Baglin that this Bill gives no authority whatever for the borrowing of money. The authority under which this money has been borrowed is authority which the Government already possess. It would have been quite competent for the Treasurer to have signed the Treasury bills, to have had them countersigned by the Under Treasurer, and to have sent them to London, without approaching Parliament or discussing the question in Parliament at all. This would have been entirely within the authority already conferred by Parliament. The provision to which Mr. Lovekin has referred merely restricts the authority to this present issue of Treasury bills. We are not asking Parliament to make it a practice that the Agent General and the accountant should be able to sign Treasury bills which the Government have been authorised to issue. We are merely confining the authority to this one issue of Treasury bills, and we ask that the Agent General and the accountant should be empowered to sign, in lieu of the Colonial Treasurer and the Under Treasurer, Treasury bills which it is competent for the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer to sign without any authority from Parliament; that is to say, the authority is already possessed by the Government.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Swing in the Chair: the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Method of signing certain Treasury bills:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Can the Minister inform me what rate of interest was allowed under the Loan Act of last session?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government have authority to borrow in two or three ways. The rate of interest on lower loans, by way of Treasury bills, is not limited. The Government can pay whatever rate of interest they like. The rate of interest fixed by the Loan Act of last session, however, was 6 per cent. or $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think it was $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not think we should pass this Bill as it stands. I move an amendment—

That in line nine, after "pounds," the words "at a rate of interest not exceeding $6\frac{1}{4}$ per centum per annum" be inserted.

We should not permit to be passed at this stage legislation which allows of frenzied finance.

The Minister for Education: That has nothing to do with it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If these Treasury bills can be issued at any rate of interest the Government like to prescribe, we should take care to see that the rate of interest is stipulated.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We have already authorised the Government to raise the money.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: But it is our duty to guard against the Treasury bills being issued at an inflated rate of interest.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: They are issued at a discount.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Whether at discount or interest, it amounts to the same thing.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot accept the amendment; it is entirely foreign to the purpose of the Bill. The title is "A Bill for an Act to make further provision for the signing of Treasury bills." The only effect of the Bill is to substitute one set of signatures for another. The only effect of the amendment would be to make it impossible for the Government to keep an undertaking into which they have entered.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: It seems to me that this Bill is designed merely for the purpose of saving time. Under existing conditions these Treasury bills could be signed here and sent to London, and this House would have no say whatever in the matter. The Bill will merely facilitate the finalising of the matter. Therefore I support the measure. At first sight I thought it would be dangerous, but, after further consideration, I am satisfied that it is quite in order.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I realise that the leader of the House is quite correct in stating that the Government have ample authority to issue these Treasury bills. The Government have

also their loan authorisation under which they can redeem these Treasury bills, after being discounted, out of the loan to be floated. On the other hand, Mr. Lovekin has undoubtedly presented a phase of the question which should not be overlooked by the Committee. What this means is that the Government have carte blanche to sell Treasury bills at almost any rate of discount. I desire to be corrected if I am wrong. If the Government can to-day discount their paper at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum for six months, it would be interesting to know what in addition to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is charged in connection with this discount. Is there any brokerage attached to it? Have we an assurance from the leader of the House that it simply means £2 15s. for every £100 we are borrowing, and that at the end of six months the amount will be redeemed out of the loan to be raised?

Hon. A. Lovekin: He cannot give you that assurance.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: It is wrong that a Government should have power to discount Treasury bills at any rate irrespective of the cost to the country. If that should be the position then the amendment submitted by the hon. member is in order.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

House adjourned at 4.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 28th July, 1921.

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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).