

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Legislative Council—Session of 1870-71.

Opened on Monday, 5th December, 1870.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 5th December, 1870.

Swearing in of Members—Election of Speaker—Opening of Council—The Governor's Speech—Question of Privilege—Representation of the People Bill: first reading—Address in Reply to Governor's Speech—Appointment of Chairman of Committees—Adjournment.

The Council met at 11 a.m.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.

The Clerk of the Council (Mr. E. A. Stone), read a Commission from His Excellency the Governor, authorizing His Honor the Chief Justice (Mr. A. P. Burt) to administer the Oath of Office to the Members. Thereupon all the Members present took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance.

Mr. E. A. Stone was then sworn in as Clerk of the Council.

His Honor the Chief Justice then retired.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) rose and said that the first duty the Council had to discharge was the election of a Speaker, and he had much pleasure in proposing Mr. L. S. Leake. That gentleman had many high qualities that fitted him for that office. In meeting there for the first time, it was to him a source of great pleasure that the first act of the Council devolved upon him, and in doing so to unite and merge personal friendship for the public good in naming Mr. Leake as the first Speaker of the Legislative Council. It was not indeed to be supposed that Mr. Leake, or indeed any other member, had all the necessary qualities to discharge the duties of that important office, but Mr. Leake possessed them in the

greatest measure, and it was most desirable that the Speaker and the Council should work well and unitedly together for the public good. Mr. Leake was a member of a wellknown and highly respected family; he had himself for years been a resident in this colony, and was known and esteemed for honesty of purpose and principle, and upon no better member of the House could the important and responsible duties of Chairman of that Council devolve. He was quite sure that Mr. Leake possessed the confidence of the members, and that under that gentleman the business of the House would be conducted with dignity, honor, and impartiality, and that it would be the aim of all members to enable Mr. Leake to discharge the important and responsible duties that devolved upon the Speaker of a deliberative Assembly. He was sure it would, as he had said, be the aim and ambition of members of the Council to carry on the business of the Legislature with dignity and respect; and in Mr. Leake, as Speaker, they would have a guarantee that their united wishes would be carried into effect.

Mr. STEERE had much pleasure in seconding the proposition of the Colonial Secretary. He thought the Council could not select a more fitting person to discharge the important duties of the Speaker of the House than Mr. Leake. It must be realised that the Speaker himself, to maintain due decorum and order during their deliberations, must possess the confidence of the House, and he believed Mr. Leake did possess their confidence.

No other member being proposed, the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Steere conducted Mr. Leake to the Chair.

Mr. LEAKE said he naturally felt much flattered at the very kind manner in which he had been proposed and seconded to fill the important and responsible office of Speaker of the House. He would only say that he would discharge the duties devolving upon him to the best of his abilities and judgment. The members had given a pledge that they would assist him in carrying out and in maintaining the dignity and decorum of the House, and with that pledge he was satisfied. It was now their duty to proceed to the Governor for his approval, and though it was only necessary for the proposer and second to accompany him, he would suggest that the whole of the members wait upon His Excellency with him in a body. (Hear, hear.)

The House then adjourned, and the members proceeded in a body to Government House to submit the newly-elected Speaker for the approval of His Excellency the Governor.

Upon return to the Council,

The SPEAKER rose and said that His Excellency the Governor having formally approved of his appointment, and given freedom of speech to the Council he would call upon the members of the House to hand in their declarations of qualifications.

With the exception of that of the member for Champion Bay—Mr. Major Logue—the whole were filed by the Clerk.

The Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Hillas) announced a message from Government House; and upon the consent of the Speaker, His Excellency's Aide-de-camp—Lieut. DeLisle—entered bearing a message from His Excellency to the effect that he would appear in person and open the Council by a speech at 2 o'clock.

Sitting suspended from 12.10 to 1.45 p.m.

OPENING OF THE COUNCIL.

The Sergeant-at-Arms announced the approach of His Excellency the Governor. The Governor entered the Chamber and took the Chair.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

His EXCELLENCY was then pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

Mr. Speaker, and Hon. Gentlemen of the Legislative Council—

You are, for the first time, assembled in the Representative Council of Western Australia; and upon you the responsibility of its future will now, in great measure, depend.

The past progress of the colony has been slow, and perhaps not for years has it been in a more depressed condition than when, after three bad seasons, at a time of commercial depression, with a decreasing Imperial Expenditure, and consequently a somewhat diminished Revenue, you are called upon to aid me in the Government of the colony.

The year that has passed since my assuming the Governorship of Western Australia has, however, I trust, been not altogether wanting in the seed of future promise.

In that year, a measure of the establishment of Representative Institutions has been introduced, has been passed, has received the Royal assent, and is now brought into operation.

Desirous to evoke local exertion, and to encourage the spirit of local self-government, I have, as far as in me lay, given real power to Road Boards; and you will, I hope, recognize with me that the result has generally shewn that the people are not unworthy of that confidence. A Bill will be introduced to regulate and give legal form to these institutions, and another to organize Municipalities in your principal towns.

This year, too, has afforded the promise of a great development in the Timber Trade. Her Majesty's Government has permitted me to make very liberal and special concessions to the West Australian Timber Company, as a pioneer company on a large scale; they have already commenced operations. Another Melbourne Company has since asked concessions which I am advised are within my power to grant, under existing regulations, and another year may reasonably be expected to see Rail and Tramways to your forests, an increase of shipping in your ports, and Steamers upon your coast. Papers upon this subject will be laid before you.

The formation of a Telegraph Company has been promoted by a small Government guarantee. It will at once lay down lines *via* Bunbury to King George's Sound, and to the Eastern, and I trust, ultimately, to the Northern Districts. You will be asked to give effect by a Bill to the resolution of the late Council in this matter; and it is hoped that, in doing so, you will have laid one link in a future direct line of communication between Europe, Ceylon, and the Eastern Australian Colonies.

At the request of the York Agricultural Society, with a view to opening overland communication with the Eastern Colonies, and possibly facilitating future Telegraphic communication, and opening new country, I despatched Mr. John Forrest with a small

party overland, who reached Adelaide in safety, having traversed a very large extent of the finest grass country, nearly destitute however of surface water.

Mr. Forrest's Report will be laid on your table. You will, I doubt not, concur with me in according the thanks of the colony to Mr. Forrest and his party, and also in expressing our appreciation of the reception that was afforded him by His Excellency the Governor, the Government and the Colonists of South Australia.

The success of the Pearl Fisheries, the extension of Whaling enterprise, the recently established manufacture of rope from native fibres, and of several other minor industries, capable, it is hoped, of indefinite expansion, may, I confidently trust, with a better system of agriculture, more care in the breed of stock, increased attention to the cultivation of the vine, and other products especially suitable to our soil and climate, lead to renewed prosperity; and even now we must gratefully acknowledge that, in these Colonies, we are mercifully preserved from those dire calamities which have this year fallen upon great and highly civilized European communities.

Gold has been found over a considerable extent of country, but not yet in payable quantities. A Government Geologist has been appointed under a vote of a former Council, and is now engaged in a practical survey, which will afford much reliable information on the great mineral resources this colony undoubtedly possesses.

The Surveyor General, an officer whose long life has been devoted to the service of Her Majesty, and of this country, having resigned, it has become a matter of urgent necessity that I should take upon myself the responsibility of supplying his place, subject to the approval of the Home Government, by the appointment of a gentleman possessing a practical knowledge of the administration of Crown Lands. Pending his arrival and the expression of your opinion upon any changes that may appear desirable in the Land Regulations, I have not moved the Home Government to take any action upon the subject.

A Bill will be introduced to carry out the intention of the 4th clause of the 14th and 15th Vict., chap. 59, and to amend the Qualification of Representatives.

A Bankruptcy Bill, and other important measures of a legal nature, tending to assimilate our law and the practice of our Courts to the latest English forms, will be submitted to you.

The Education Question is one of very great importance, which you will doubtless take into your serious and impartial consideration.

The protection and the amelioration of the condition of the Aborigines is an imperative duty, which I hope to see increasingly recognised. A Bill will be laid before you for the protection of natives at the Pearl Fisheries, and to regulate their employment.

You will consider the subject of Public Works with a view to the requirements of the various districts and interests of the colony, and in reference to the means you are prepared to place at the disposal of the Government.

Full information regarding the Finance of the colony will be placed before you at an early period.

Several other important matters have been under the consideration of the Government, and will be brought forward, should it be the wish of the Council to entertain them this Session.

And now, before I formally declare this Session opened, I cannot, standing on the threshold of a new order of things, but look back on the past, and call to mind those who have, during this year, gone from amongst you for ever. It is but fitting that I should recall to you the memory of Governor Hampton, who worked hard for years for the good of this country, and of Lieutenant Colonel Bruce, to whom I owe deep obligations personally, and whose high sense of honor, uprightness, and zeal for the Public Service you all revere: and from that retrospect let us turn to the duty now before us, calmly, considerately, dispassionately, to work for the good of that country which they had so much at heart.

I have relied upon the assurances of support I have received from the country in establishing a Representative form of Government. I shall continue to devote myself to promote its success. That success will, however, mainly depend upon your wisdom, moderation, and patriotism, which, with God's blessing, I trust may overcome difficulties, and tend to the advancement and prosperity of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

I now declare this Session opened.

His Excellency, having handed a copy of the Speech to the Speaker, withdrew from the Council Chamber.

The SPEAKER took the Chair.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) rose and said he desired to make a

few remarks on the proceedings that had taken place in the morning. It might have been observed by members that His Honor the Chief Justice, in administering the oath, called some *Honorable* and some others only *Mr.* Now, he wished to state that there was no intention on the part of the Government to make any difference between members elected by the people and those named by the Governor. (Hear, hear.) It happened that two of the members present to-day belonged to the Executive Council, and from that circumstance, had the word *Honorable* attached to their names. He held in his hand the list that had been given to His Honor the Chief Justice, and only two members had the prefix of *Honorable* to their names. There was no wish or desire on the part of the Government to deprive members of privileges, but as Her Majesty had not given the title to members of the Legislative Council, His Excellency did not presume to attach it to their names. It was a mistake on the part of His Honor, and, by desire, he corrected it; and at the same time he would wish them to understand that the mistake was not intentional. In mentioning this matter, he did so not to provoke a discussion at the period on a point of privilege, but solely to correct a mistake. It was quite competent, however, for the House to raise the question at some future time in any way they pleased, either by Commission or application to the Governor.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

First Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Representation of the People, and to abolish the Property Qualifications of Members.

The Bill was read a first time.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that a committee be now appointed to prepare a respectful Address in Reply to the Speech that His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to deliver to the Council; such committee to consist of Mr. Brown, Mr. Steere, Mr. Newman, Mr. Drummond, and the Mover.

Question put and passed.

The Committee then retired to prepare the Address. On returning to the House the Colonial Secretary (Hon. F. P. Barlee)

brought up the Address prepared by the committee and moved that the same be read. The Address, read at the Table by the Clerk, was as follows:—

May it please Your Excellency—

We, the members of the Legislative Council of Western Australia, in Council assembled, thank Your Excellency for the Address with which you have pleased to open this first Representative Council of Western Australia, and we assure you that we are deeply sensible of the responsibility that has devolved upon us.

The past progress of the colony has been slow, and it is still in a depressed condition, but we believe with Your Excellency that the events of last year afford much promise for the future.

We readily take this occasion of giving expression to the feeling of the country in hailing the introduction of representative institutions, and we will give our best consideration to any measures Your Excellency may propose, calculated to evoke local exertion and to encourage the spirit of local self-government.

We regard with satisfaction the development of the timber trade and the introduction of capital, and doubt not that it will greatly conduce to the prosperity and progress of the colony.

We see, with Your Excellency, in the formation of a Telegraphic Company, not only a present step in advance, but a greater end for the future, and will give due effect to the resolution of the late Council.

We concur with Your Excellency in according the thanks of the colony to Mr. John Forrest and his party, and in expressing our appreciation to the reception that has been afforded them by His Excellency the Governor, the government, and the people of South Australia.

We gladly recognize in the success of various branches of our industries, in the possible improvement of others and establishment of new ones, a source of future prosperity, and we join Your Excellency in grateful acknowledgment of those mercies which even, in time of depression have been extended to us.

The arrival of a Government Geologist is most opportune, and we trust that his reports may tend to make better known the great mineral resources that this colony undoubtedly possesses.

The resignation of the Surveyor General has rendered the immediate appointment of a successor possessing a practical knowledge of the adminis-

tration of Crown Lands, a matter of pressing importance, and Your Excellency has consulted the urgencies of the Public Service in taking steps to fill the vacancy without delay.

Our earnest consideration will be given to the various measures that Your Excellency has expressed your intention of laying before us, and to the important matters to which you invite our attention.

We unite in Your Excellency's commemoration of Governor Hampton and Colonel Bruce, and it will be our earnest desire calmly, considerately, and dispassionately to approach the work that lies before us.

We warmly thank Your Excellency for the reliance you have placed upon the assurances of support you have received from the country in establishing a representative form of Government, and it will be our endeavour, with God's blessing, so to co-operate with Your Excellency as to overcome difficulties and promote the advancement of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. STEERE suggested the appointment of a Chairman of Committees. He said what they wanted was an efficient man—a working man as Chairman of Committees—and he considered that they could not select a better person for that post than Mr. Carr, and if Mr. Carr would accept it, it would give him much pleasure in proposing that gentleman.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) concurred with Mr. Steere and begged to second Mr. Carr's nomination.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

Mr. BROWN rose and said he had much pleasure in proposing the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech, which had been read, be received. And as this was the first meeting of the Legislative Council, it would be well, in his opinion, to consider all the questions put before them in His Excellency's Address, or Speech. He therefore proposed, as briefly as he possibly could, to consider the Speech paragraph by paragraph. His Excellency Governor Weld had, in the first place, pointed out, that upon them now depended the future weal or woe of the colony, and His Excellency had justly referred to the commercial depression under which this colony had been laboring for three

years past, owing mainly to bad seasons, and from which it would, in his opinion, take her some time yet to recover, but as had also been well said, Representative Government was deemed the best remedy for the ills from which the colony was suffering—it was strongly sought for and obtained, and he believed that every one there present would labor to the best of his ability for the good of the country, and to attain the benefits which the possession of those privileges enabled them to acquire. The institution of road boards had been productive of much good, and though they did not possess as much power as was desirable, they possessed as much as His Excellency could grant, and it was pleasing to know that they had resulted in benefiting the colony. The next subject touched upon in the Address was the timber trade, He looked forward to great results from the development of our timber trade, and at a period of such commercial depression to find companies formed and capital invested in its development, was highly satisfactory. The next subject was telegraph communication, and though at present only Perth and Fremantle enjoyed the benefit of it, he had found it a benefit, and, he believed, others had too, yet he was convinced it would soon be spread over the whole colony, and without the guarantee which had been wisely given, would be made to pay. The next subject was the expedition to South Australia, by Mr. Forrest and his party. On this subject, he was aware, there was much difference in opinion. He believed the expedition was despatched through the instrumentality of the York Agricultural Society—one of the oldest societies in the colony—and the representations of that society ought to have weight, and he himself thought, with His Excellency, that the thanks of this colony were due to Mr. Forrest and his party, and also to the Governor and people of South Australia, for the very kind and hearty reception they gave to that explorer and his party. It must be remembered that Mr. Forrest and party, did not go in their private capacity—they went from this colony as the representatives of the Government and people of Western Australia, and therefore their reception by the Governor and people of South Australia of Mr. Forrest and his party, should be warmly recognised, apart from the question as to its utility or necessity. As he had said, there was great difference of opinion respecting the expedition; but he had some knowledge of exploring, and he could say that Mr. Forrest and his party had suffered many and severe privations, and the reason why he did not diverge from a certain straight line, was simply

owing to circumstances over which he had no control. As to the pearl-fishery and whaling enterprise, there could be no doubt they were of great benefit to the colony, and were capable of being greatly extended. There was another subject to which His Excellency had referred, and that was the war which is now raging in countries so much more prosperous and civilized than ours, and though this colony is afflicted from other causes, yet all must be thankful that it is not from such dire calamities as those under which the countries referred to are suffering. The next subject is the report of the Government Geologist. He considered that the investigations of that gentleman would do good to the colony. They all knew that the country abounded in mineral wealth, but the precise spot, or nature of that wealth, was not known; hence the opinion of a scientific person, such as the Government Geologist, would not only be satisfactory to the colonists, but would also be the means of convincing people in other parts of the world that we really possessed the mineral wealth of which we had spoken so much. The next subject was the appointment of a Surveyor General, and it was satisfactory to learn that the colony would secure the services of a competent man, in the room of our old and much esteemed Surveyor General, whom old age compelled to relinquish that office. There are six or seven other matters touched upon in the Address which did not call for any particular remarks. There was one, however, to which he would allude, and to which His Excellency feelingly drew their attention. They were, that day, called upon to look to the past, and to pay a just tribute to the memory of the late Governor Hampton and Lieut. Col. Bruce, men who had worked hard, and well too, for the good of this colony. It was a solemn thing to look back to the proceedings of the last Council, and reflect that the late Colonel Bruce was then full of life and vigor, and who took such a deep interest in the proceedings, would no more be among them. The reflection would, at least, emulate them in the discharge of their duties. His Excellency Governor Weld referred, in a manly spirit,—he would call it a manly spirit—to the promised support of the country, in carrying out Representative Institutions, and he had no doubt they would work unitedly with His Excellency to secure the benefits they would undoubtedly confer. To the members of the House and to every one, it was a duty to assist His Excellency, and believing they would do so, he had much pleasure in proposing that the Address now before the House be adopted as a reply to His Excellency's the Governor's Speech.

Mr. STEERE rose and said he had much pleasure in seconding the motion of Mr. Brown,—that the Address now before the House be adopted. It might appear unseemly in him to do so, but he seconded the Address on that occasion to show that there was no such thing in that House as "opposition," and to prove that they all met to co-operate with each other for the good of the colony. He said there was no such thing as "opposition," nor would there be, unless the measures introduced by the Government called it forth. He was therefore able to second Mr. Brown's motion because, besides the reasons he had given why he could do so, it must be remembered that the Address did not bind them to any particular line of policy, nor commit them to anything fixed or definite. It had very properly been pointed out that upon the House important duties now devolved, as should anything go wrong it was not now in their power to turn round and blame the Governor or the Government. He accepted the responsibility, and was glad of the political change that had been effected, and to which he contributed largely; yet at the same time he would raise his warning voice and tell the people that they must not expect too much, and that it would be utterly impossible for that or any other Council to immediately change the present state of depression to one of prosperity. He was aware people entertained very extravagant ideas of what the Council would do, or was capable of doing, and as a sample of these expectations he would tell them an incident which occurred during what he might call his canvassing tour, though that term was not strictly correct, as he had only asked one man for his vote. However, the circumstance or incident to which he referred was this: Speaking to one of the electors in the south, he (the elector) said to him—"Well, Mr. Steere, you're a very good fellow, and speak very well, and all that, but you're not the man to make people rich." He was aware he was not, and in coming to the Council he did so in the hope of doing as much good for the country as possible, and not with a view of making people rich; but as soon as any Council could be found that could make people rich, he for one was quite prepared to resign his seat, and enjoy a share of the promised wealth. As regards the formation of road boards, he could speak for his own part of the colony that they had done much good, and would have done much more had legal authority been conferred upon the chairman, and he was glad to find that the Government intended introducing a measure for that purpose. It was certainly satisfactory to find our timber trade being developed, but he

trusted that greater concessions had not been made to these companies than he could agree with; he had heard that one company possessed such privileges that they positively refused the Road Committee the right to cut, on their land, timber which was required for necessary public works. However, full information on these points were now before the Council. Telegraphic communication was calculated to do much good for the colony, and without the small Government guarantee he believed it would ultimately pay. There was one matter upon which he disagreed with the mover more than on any other, and that was with regard to Mr. Forrest's expedition. As far as he was aware, the York Agricultural Society had nothing whatever to do with it. The York Agricultural Society did solicit the Government, in Governor Hampton's time, to send an expedition to Port Eucla, and made most liberal offers of assistance to the Executive, but their offers and request were disregarded. The Forrest expedition was originated and undertaken by Governor Weld, and he certainly believed that it would prove futile in practical results to this colony. Some said that it would be the means of encouraging telegraphic communication, but it was clear that it would not do that, as the route to Adelaide via King George's Sound was much better. Others again contended that it would cement the two colonies more closely than heretofore, but that it would not be calculated to do anything of the kind must be evident to all, as no one would ever dream of undertaking the journey to South Australia overland. Looking at the expedition altogether, he must say that it was a great waste of public money; he had a practical mind, and he would like to have seen some practical results from the expenditure of the public funds. If the expedition had been sent to Eucla, and there engaged in surveying that portion of the country, great advantages would have resulted to the colony; as it is, the expedition has done no good to the colony either at the present time, or that can be reasonably hoped for in the future. To Mr. Forrest and his party, however, great credit was due for the skill and perseverance displayed by them in successfully crossing the country to Adelaide. The pearl fisheries were no doubt of much benefit to the colony, especially to those resident at Nickol Bay. Native industries were particularly deserving of encouragement, and he was therefore glad that the rope works at Bunbury had received the countenance of the Government. Some short time since a rumour was abroad that a gold-field had been discovered in the north, and many went there: he was sorry to say only to be disappointed. They had now the

report of the Government Geologist before them, and though no gold-field had yet been found, still it was not improbable that a paying gold-field may yet be discovered. As to the Survey Department, it was a subject of regret that our respected Surveyor General's advanced age compelled him to retire, but it was satisfactory to learn that the coming man was a competent person, as a good deal of the well-being of the colony depended upon the Survey Department. He was glad to find that a certain class alluded to were to be franchised, and that the very high property qualifications for members were to be abolished. The Government had also at last, he was glad to find, introduced a new Insolvency Bill, after two or three years' talking on the subject. He regretted, however, very much the Government did not intend bringing in an Education Bill; he fully expected to find a comprehensive scheme on education submitted to them. As to education in this colony, they only knew a little, and he would suggest the appointment of a commission to take evidence on that question, as it was impossible for them to form conclusions without having reliable evidence before them. As to the Aborigines, though efforts in their behalf were praiseworthy, his experience led him to the conclusion that they were irreclaimable savages, and that in Western Australia, do what you would for them, they would relapse again into their savage habits; and he looked upon the large annual sums paid to the Albany institution as a waste of public money. As to public works, until the Colonial Secretary brought forward the Estimates, and foreshadowed the policy of the Government, it would be useless to speak. As to the other important measures mentioned by the Government, when he knew what they were he would be prepared to give his opinions upon them; he did not wish to shirk his work, nor did other members; and he hoped the Government would not keep back important measures simply for their "convenience." Though he was opposed to the late Governor Hampton, and to Lieut.-Colonel Bruce, yet he believed they worked honestly for the good and welfare of the colony, and he therefore now most cordially joined in a tribute of respect to their memory. He knew Governor Weld well, and he could say no man had the good of the colony more at heart than he had; and though he had lost some power by the change in Constitution, yet, when it was for the good of the colony, the Governor was satisfied. He was sure the Council might depend upon the cordial support of Governor Weld and his Government in their efforts to promote the welfare and good of the colony.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. NEWMAN rose and said he would propose an adjournment of the House until to-morrow, for the purpose of affording members an opportunity of considering the Governor's Speech and the Address. He did not make that proposal in a hostile spirit, but as that was the first speech, and was a long one, and touched upon many important matters, it was only fair to give every member of the House an opportunity of carefully considering it; he therefore proposed the adjournment of the House until 4 p.m. to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 6th December, 1870.

Opening of Council by Prayer—Standing Rules and Orders—First Readings—Address in Reply to Governor's Speech—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4 p.m.

PRAYERS.

OPENING OF COUNCIL BY PRAYER.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee), in accordance with notice, moved for a select committee to consider and report on the question of opening each sitting of the Council by Prayer. Such committee to consist of the Speaker, Mr. Steere, Mr. Drummond, Mr. Marmion, Mr. Shenton, Mr. Moore, and the Mover.

Question put and passed.

STANDING RULES AND ORDERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee), in accordance with notice, moved for a select committee to frame Standing Rules and Orders for regulating the business of the Council. Such committee to consist of the Speaker, Mr. Walcott, Mr. Steere, Mr. Carr, Mr. Newman, Mr. Drummond, and the Mover.

Question put and passed.

FIRST READINGS.

The following Bills were read a first time, in accordance with notice, on motions by the Colonial Secretary (Hon. F. P. Barlee): Local Boards Bill, Municipalities Bill, Bankruptcy and Insolvency Bill, and Fraudulent Debtors Bill.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

Resumed debate.

Mr. NEWMAN resumed the debate on the Address in Reply and said that the subject of the Governor's Speech had already been so well commented upon that there was little left to be said. He was, however, both surprised and disappointed at finding matters touched upon in so general and cursory a manner, so general that it was impossible from that document to learn what was the policy or intention of the Government on many subjects of public importance. He was surprised and disappointed in not finding any reference to public works or to the subject of a loan; matters which His Excellency must have been aware engaged a large share of public attention. These important topics were not touched upon in the Address to the House. As to the working road boards, living as he did in the town, he did not feel himself called upon to offer an opinion, but would leave the subject to those gentlemen who lived in the country. A good deal had been said regarding the very large concessions of land that had been made to the timber companies, especially to the timber company in the south. He admitted that the concession was considerable, yet he approved of it and viewed it simply as a bonus, and the fact that the second company had not nearly such large concessions as the first, was evidence that the Government viewed the concession in a similar manner. As regards Mr. Forrest's expedition, a great many widely-different opinions had been expressed, but he was afraid that it was all mere talk after the event. The expedition has not led to much, but before starting, who could have told what would have resulted? The country had to pay for expeditions, and as Mr. Forrest's expedition was effected as economically as any previous expedition, he could see no reason to find fault with it. The pearl fishery was a success, and a law should be introduced for the protection of the fishery, or else it would soon be destroyed. As regards a better system of agriculture and an improved breed of stock, he was afraid that all His Excellency could say, or that they might add to what His Excellency had said on the subject, would be of any effect. It was too true that bad farming was too general, and many of the agriculturists were now suffering therefrom. As to the Government Geologist and the Surveyor General he would offer no opinion. He would only remark on one other paragraph, and that was the promise of assistance which the country had given His Excellency on obtaining Representative Institutions. He trusted and believed that