

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

### THIRD SESSION OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT.

#### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

*The Third Session of the Sixth Parliament under Responsible Government was convened for the despatch of business on the 4th July, 1907.*

*Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.*

### Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 4th July, 1907.*

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#### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at three o'clock p.m., pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of Parliaments.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

His Excellency Sir Frederick G. D. Bedford, G.C.B., entered the Council Chamber shortly after three o'clock; and the members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber obediently to summons, His Excellency delivered the following Speech:—

*Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council—*

*Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—*

1. It had been my intention to call you together earlier in the year, but owing to the absence of many Members

of Parliament from the State, and the necessity for Western Australia being represented at the recent Conference of Premiers, I deemed such a course impracticable.

2. The opportune rains which have been general throughout our Pastoral and Agricultural Areas give promise of a prosperous Season, and every effort is being put forward to secure permanent settlement on the soil, while the large increase in the number of settlers who have taken up land inspires my Advisers with every confidence as to the future of the State.

3. During the past year 809,200 acres have been acquired under Conditional Purchase, providing homes for many new producers, and I am confident that the vigorous and liberal policy of my Advisers will tend to a still farther increase; whilst at the same time the Amending Land Legislation passed during the last Session of Parliament will have the effect of securing a more genuine development of the land now being alienated.

4. The extended provisions made under the Act amending the Agricultural Bank Act, whereby financial assistance of a liberal character was rendered available to all genuine settlers, has been carefully administered, and taken advantage of to a large extent by all classes it was designed to benefit.

5. My Advisers appreciate the fact that the future of the Agricultural Industry is largely dependent on the more general adoption of Mixed Farming, and have therefore taken every measure to encourage this development by making practical advice available to all those settlers desiring it, by introducing the best strains of cattle suitable to the requirements of the Dairy Farmer, and by a reduction of freights on local produce, which should farther assist in this direction.

6. The Mining Industry (though values won show a slight decline on the two previous years) is in a very satisfactory condition. The high market for the baser metals has caused considerable inquiry for these minerals, and it is confidently anticipated that the early exploitation of our vast resources of Tin, Copper, and other Metals, will conduce to the prosperity of the State, and to those concerned in the Mining Industry.

7. Mining Development during the past year has progressed most successfully. At Ravensthorpe, in the Far South, a promising field has been energetically developed; long-closed Mines in the Northampton District have been re-opened; gratifying possibilities in Copper, Tin, and Antimony are within legitimate expectation in the North-West; whilst in the Far North the discovery of Copper at Derby opens up a new and hitherto unknown Mineral area, which in time will add its quota of wealth to the State.

8. Up to date we have produced Gold to the value of £74,354,345, and other Minerals valued at £1,677,568; whilst Dividends amounting to £16,461,915 have been disbursed. The value of Gold won last year amounted to £438 for every man employed in our Gold Mines, and the satisfactory development in the deep levels of many of the properties proves conclusively that the lodes not only live, but carry high values at great depths.

9. Magnificent as has been the development of the Pastoral Industry during the past 10 years, the present Season is confidently expected to eclipse all previous records.

10. The very large increase in the number of Stock within the State has impressed my Advisers with the necessity of giving immediate consideration to the establishment of Freezing Works at those Ports where an export trade can be encouraged and improved. Increased Harbour Facilities are being provided at the more important points of shipment, while a Stock Route is being opened from the Kimberleys to the Eastern Goldfields.

11. A Conference of Premiers, at which this State was represented, took place during last month at Brisbane, for the purpose of dealing with many matters of grave concern, and more particularly with a view to considering the Federal Treasurer's proposals in regard to the future financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States.

12. My Ministers regret that no settlement which can be deemed satisfactory to this State was arrived at.

13. My Advisers having decided not to renew the engagement of Mr. George as Commissioner of Railways, an amendment of the Railways Act will be introduced enabling the Government to pay an increased salary to the occupant of that important Office, who it is desired should be a recognised authority of wide experience in Railway management.

14. During the past year the Works authorised by Parliament have been proceeded with, and a vast amount of work has been either completed or is in course of construction. The railways from Katanning to Kojonup, from Wagin to Dumbleyung, and from Goomalling to Dowerin have been completed and handed over to the Working Railways. The Collie-Narrogin Railway has been completed from Narrogin to Darkan, and it is anticipated that the whole section will be completed within three months; and the Armadale-Jandakot line will be open for traffic at an early date. Tenders have been let for the first section of the Coolgardie-Norseman line, and a start has been made with the construction of the Ravensthorpe-Hopetoun line; whilst tenders will be called for the construction of the main work during the current month. A contract has also

been let for the Greenhills-Quairading, and a commencement made with the Donnybrook-Preston line. In addition to the Agricultural and Mining Railways already referred to, the Metropolitan Sewerage Scheme, Harbours, Buildings, Bridges, and other Improvements in various parts of the State, amounting in the aggregate to £600,000, are now in course of construction.

*Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—*

15. It will be necessary to ask you to grant temporary supplies for the requirements of the Public Service, pending the passage of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the ensuing Financial Year, which will be presented to you at an early date.

16. A measure for the imposition of a Tax on the Unimproved Value of Land, which my advisers consider necessary to secure a proper adjustment of the Finances of the State, will be again submitted for your sanction.

17. During the past year our Revenue fell short of the estimated amount to a considerable extent, thereby producing a deficit on the year's transactions. My Advisers are confident that with the adoption of their Financial Proposals to maintain the Revenue, together with perseverance in the paths of Administrative economy pursued during the past year, the Finances of the State will be placed in a satisfactory position.

*Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council—*

*Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—*

18. Several important measures will be brought forward for your consideration, included in which will be an amendment of the Constitution, providing for a reduction of the Franchise of the Legislative Council; an amending Electoral Bill, having for its object the securing of pure rolls; and a measure to amend the Mining Act, giving greater Security of Tenure, the registration of Treatment Plants, and the construction of Mining Tramways.

19. The necessity for amending the Arbitration Act has become very ap-

parent, and you will be asked to consider and determine the best methods to be adopted in the settlement of industrial disputes.

20. Recent revelations have rendered it necessary to secure more efficient Protection for Infant Life than has hitherto prevailed, and it is hoped that the measure drafted by my Advisers will prove thoroughly satisfactory.

21. A Bill providing for the better supervision of the Liquor Traffic, and embodying the principle of Local Option, together with measures for the amendment of the Public Service, Health, Road Boards, Workers' Compensation, and Local Court Acts, will also engage your attention, as well as other legislative proposals of lesser importance.

22. The more important Railway Proposals you will be called upon to deal with are those for the construction of Railways from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, and from Mount Magnet to Black Range, while Bills for the authorisation of several of the Railways provided for in the Loan Act of last Session will be submitted for your consideration.

23. The works proposed for this year include the completion of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, the extension of the Goldfields Water Supply Main to the Agricultural towns of York and Beverley, the Fremantle Dock, the erection of three much-required Lighthouses on the North-West Coast, the Kalgoorlie Abattoirs, the vigorous prosecution of the works connected with the Sewerage of the Metropolitan Area, and the thorough testing of the North-West for Artesian Water Supplies.

24. In the early part of the year a Board was appointed to consider and report upon the best method of obtaining for the Metropolitan area a supply of water from the hills. The Board's labours are nearing completion, and as soon as its proposals are before my Advisers the question will receive immediate attention.

25. The unfortunate dispute in the Timber Industry, which has retarded industrial matters to a considerable extent, has now happily terminated, and my Ministers trust that the country may look

forward to an extended term of Industrial peace in connection with this important industry.

I now declare this third Session of the Sixth Parliament of Western Australia opened, and trust that, aided by Divine direction, your labour will prove of material service to the State.

The Governor then retired, and the President (Hon. H. Briggs) took the Chair.

### ELECTION RETURN—NORTH PROVINCE.

The *President* announced the return of writ, issued during the recess, for the election of a member for the North Province in the place of Sir E. H. Wittenoom, resigned, showing that the Hon. Richard William Pennefather, K.C., had been duly elected.

*Hon. R. W. Pennefather* took the oath and subscribed the roll.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the *Colonial Secretary*: Reports and Returns in accordance with Railways Act; Jetty Regulations and Wharfage Rates and Dues operating from 10th June, 1907; Report of the Public Works Department for half-year ended June, 1906; Report of Labour Bureau for the year ended December last; Government Railways By-law No. 54, rules and regulations operating as from 1st June last; Regulations for control and management of the Oyster Pearl Bank contained in the Government reserves in Useless Inlet, Shark Bay; Report of Mines Department for year 1906.

### STANDING ORDERS REVISION.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL brought up the report of the Standing Orders Committee in regard to the revision of the Standing Orders relating to Public Business.

Report received and ordered to be printed; the adoption of the report to be an order for the next sitting of the House.

### BILL—MARINE INSURANCE.

The *COLONIAL SECRETARY* (Hon. J. D. Connolly): In order to assert and

maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move for leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to codify the laws relating to Marine Insurance.

Leave given; the Bill introduced, and read a first time.

### DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Motion to Adopt.*

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North): Mr. President, this is the first time I have had the honour of addressing you in this Chamber, but I cannot help reflecting that it revives old associations with another place. I have not had an opportunity of congratulating you on your elevation to the Chair: permit me on this occasion, although late, to do so, and I do so with great pleasure. The Speech we have heard delivered in this Chamber is marked by two characteristic qualities which I think will commend it to members. The first keynote that it strikes is one of buoyancy, and the second is a temperament of sanguine hope in the gloom which no doubt has oppressed us for many a month past. It is pleasant to hear these cheerful sounds because they may stimulate us, and others outside this Chamber, to do the best we possibly can to advance the interests of the State, and to endeavour, although late in the day, to repair some of the great injuries which, I regret to say, have been inflicted on the State by our precipitate action in joining the Federal Commonwealth. When federation was in the air, it was impossible to attend a public meeting and not hear the advocates of the union point out to the people that the millennium would, in all probability, arrive directly we joined federation. Many hopeful things were said, many of them were fully believed by the speakers; but, alas, those people—if there are any in this Chamber to-day, and at all events I know that there are some outside of it—confess that things have sadly changed, that hope has been deferred, and that the reward they fondly hoped for is just as distant now as if it were a will-o'-the-wisp. I am glad to have been able to

point out, in referring to one paragraph of the Address, that it is a fortunate thing for this State that no decision was arrived at by the recent Conference at Brisbane which was detrimental to the interests of this State. The fact that no decision at all was arrived at in regard to the future financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States is a source of satisfaction which we appreciate; for if a decision disastrous to our interests had been come to, it would no doubt have told against us powerfully in the Federal Parliament. It is a sufficient excuse for and answer to any criticism that has been levelled at the Government for delaying the opening of this Parliament, that the Premier and the other Minister who accompanied him should be enabled to attend the Conference. It was necessary, indeed absolutely necessary, that this State should be represented at the Conference, because small though our representation is in the House of Representatives and co-equal as it is with the other States in the Senate, yet the former body having the initiative and voice (so to speak) has such a preponderating influence in favour of the Eastern States; an influence which I regret to acknowledge has been exercised in a way hostile to us at the outset, or at any rate one that has not developed the friendly feeling which we all fondly hoped that federation would bring about. It is pleasing to remark that in paragraph 3 of the Speech it is pointed out that so large an area as over 800,000 acres has been taken up under conditional purchase. That indicates, if such indication were needed, that the Lands Department and the Government generally are alive to the necessity for placing settlers on the land, and it is of the utmost satisfaction to see that their efforts have, so far, been crowned with success. The next paragraph to which I wish to direct attention—and this only in a small way, for I know there are many other members who will direct themselves at some length to it—is the necessity that has arisen for the Government to stimulate, to foster, and to develop the farming industry and the agricultural industry

generally. I desire to refer more particularly to the efforts made to raise the standard of dairy stock. When I first read of that in the Press I thought it was an excellent move in the right direction. This State, although slow to enter the field, will, before long, be able to hold its own. The three great industries brought forward prominently in the Speech, according to the order of importance in which they are placed, are the pastoral, agricultural, and mineral. The last-named should have held the foremost place, for you will agree with me that if we have regard to the great development that has taken place in this State since the discovery of gold, mining has to the present day been the principal industry of the State. For our great prosperity in the past, for our hopefulness that it will be continued in the future, we are indebted, if not entirely, to a very large extent, to the discovery of gold and other minerals. Although it takes third place in order of precedence, perhaps unintentionally, the industry has, it is satisfactory to note, been brought into great prominence owing to the development in connection with the baser metals during the past twelve or eighteen months. The increase in the value of these commodities has shown that there is a great future, hitherto unsuspected, for the mineral wealth of the State. Nowadays the talk of the mining man is all about copper and tin, gold occupying only a third place, and there is no doubt from what I have seen myself, from what others in this Chamber have seen, that this country possesses as regards the baser metals larger deposits in comparison with its territory—and that is very large—than any other State of Australia. The industry needs that stimulation which the Government seem anxious to give it, and I am glad to take advantage of this opportunity of tendering a sincere compliment to the Government for doing their best to foster this great industry which, I hope, will bring about a revival of that prosperity in which we all duly shared in the past and of which we were proud to boast. The Speech is long but not by any means wearisome. I do not intend

on this occasion to attempt to dwell at any great length upon all the paragraphs of that Speech—for otherwise my task would be a tedious one and an undue tax upon the attention of hon. members—but I would like to refer to a few of them. Paragraph 9 deals with the development of the pastoral industry and confidently anticipates an even brighter future. There is no doubt that the pastoral industry in the North-West portion of the State—for which I have the honour to be one of the representatives—is in a flourishing condition, and I am sorry that certain information which I possess with regard to it is not inserted in the Speech. I will announce the information, however, and that is that, in consequence of the successful operations of boring for artesian water in the Carnarvon and Ashburton districts last year, no less than 2,000,000 acres of land have been taken up for pastoral purposes. That is undoubtedly very pleasing information. I mention it also with this object, that the Government might see their way to assist many of the smaller settlers who have ventured to those parts and who have not sufficient capital themselves to sink deep bores. The bores vary in depth from 800 to 1,200 feet and it needs a considerable sum of money to tap water at such a depth. If representations were made to the Government and they decided to assist those settlers either by giving them £ for £ spent in boring or a contribution in the shape of interest on capital sunk, the State would suffer no loss. By this means the small pastoralist would be able to more than hold his own, he would make his holding a valuable one and, necessarily, there would follow indirectly on his prosperity, that of the State as well. This is a matter which I have thought of for some time, and I hope sincerely that the Colonial Secretary will bring it soon before his colleagues. The establishment of freezing works, which I see referred to in paragraph 10 of the Speech, is particularly pleasing to me as one of the members for the district and I think it will greatly assist the small cattle raiser. [*Hon. J. A. Thomson: There are none.*] I am told there are none. I doubt that, in fact, I know to the contrary, for there

are many of them and these gentlemen have always complained to me that one of their difficulties has been that, when they drafted the cattle they desired to send to market, they found invariably that all the space available on the steamers had been taken up and they were compelled either to sell to the large local man, who had command of the shipping facilities and the market, or to drive the cattle overland for considerable distances. The Government are doing a wise thing in establishing these freezing works, as they will assist greatly the pastoral industry. Paragraph 13 of the Speech deals with the recent alterations in the management of the railways and refers to the intention of the Government to bring in an amending Railways Bill. Having read in the Press not so very long ago, some cogent, trenchant and lucid articles written by Mr. Chinn, members will, I feel sure, realise that these representations have borne fruit. Undoubtedly the Railways Department is the greatest revenue producing one the State possesses at present, and it is also the Department that expends the greatest amount of money; therefore it behoves every member of the community to interest himself deeply in the management of that system. When we learn that, although the railway system does not much exceed 1,600 miles, and that Queensland, which has a similar gauge to ours, has a mileage exceeding ours by two miles to one, that although our railways earn over £80,000 a year more in traffic than those of Queensland, nevertheless the expenditure on this railway system of ours is over £300,000 in excess of that of Queensland, it will be realised that the articles in question place the position in a nutshell. Excuses may be offered and it is suggested that wages are higher here than in Queensland. Undoubtedly they are 15 per cent. higher, but against that there are many things in favour of this State. There is for instance the fact, as I am informed, that sleepers, which form such a prominent item in railway maintenance, are 21 per cent. cheaper here than in Queensland; therefore the extra expenditure in wages is more than

counterbalanced by the saving we make in the price of sleepers. Again, it is shown that the cost of stationery, oil, and waste for our railways is £21,000 more in this State than in Queensland. At the same time let me remind you that Queensland has 1,450 more rolling stock than we possess and twice the mileage has to be travelled there than here. It is only by comparisons of this kind that we are able to realise what I must confess is the disastrous management of our railway system. There has been extravagance of an unchecked order, and the sooner it is checked the better for the community. Had the railways been properly and efficiently managed there would have been no necessity to bring down measures for the taxation of land or commodities. I see that it is the intention of the Government to appoint a Commissioner of Railways of great experience. I hope that hon. members will give a close study to this subject, and I am sure that the Government will see the importance of the question. If the railway system is to be carried on without radical changes being effected, there is no doubt whatever that one Commissioner would be enough; but you must recollect this—a Commissioner or the body of people who will take control must go through the whole service, root and branch, and how can they, without local knowledge, achieve anything except by extreme labour and great waste of time, especially considering the fact that they cannot expect any sympathy from a staff which has been identified with mismanagement in the past. Therefore I do think it would be in the interest of the State, and of the Railway Department in particular, that however great the attainments of one Commissioner may be, his colleagues ought to be men of good local knowledge, for they would give him the benefit of their experience, which only time can teach a man. There is a tendency to go abroad for everything that is wanted in the State; that has been the case in the past, and it may be perpetuated in the future. But local knowledge may be a great factor towards bringing about a strict system of amending that which has been going to waste. I notice in paragraph

18, amongst the important measures to be brought forward are many old familiar faces to members of this Chamber, some new, some old. In fact this Speech, I may term it, is a happy blending, a judicious blending of old and new measures, old and new spirits, and the question arises whether these shall be taken neat or in a diluted condition. We have the perennial attack on this Chamber—the reduction of its franchise. That is very old. As long as I was in another place it always was a stock piece in the Governor's Speech. There are many members who may believe that a reduction may be made and others who think differently; others think that this is an attempt to get the thin end of the wedge in this Chamber to burst it up. I may, with the modesty of a young member, be permitted to emphasise that it is no doubt the thin end of the wedge. It is only by reducing the franchise to bring it almost on a level with another House that an opportunity is given for this Chamber to abolish itself, otherwise the Sovereign and no other person would think of venturing to interfere with our rights and privileges. This Chamber will have itself to blame if anything happens to it in that respect. Therefore I think we should take a firm stand, unmistakably, and say that any farther reduction of the franchise of this House will only lead to disaster in the State; and I may also say that such a change in our Constitution I hope you, or I, or any other member may not live to see. It is intended, I see in paragraph 19, to amend the Arbitration Act. I hope when the member who represents the Government brings that measure down he will not be too precipitate, for no doubt a great deal of soreness is felt in regard to the working of the Act in consequence of some of the late awards. It is to be hoped the amendment will serve to mellow the feelings of those who hoped that the Arbitration Act would bring about a general pacificatory state for everything that labour suffered from, and that labour would lie alongside capital and capital would have the hand of labour always in its hand. It is to be hoped that after a little time

the soreness will wear away. I was one of the persons responsible for bringing in the first Arbitration Act in another place, and I do think after a little more use of the machinery the people will begin to see that it can be used for certain fair purposes and cannot be used as a bludgeon, but that if honest arguments and differences are confined to it, it will work the cure expected of it. The 20th paragraph refers to measures that the Government intend to bring forward for the protection of infant life. Every member will agree that such a Bill will be highly acceptable. It will do a lot of good in protecting those infants who are left. I regret to say, to those unfeeling people who have no interest in them except to make the greatest amount of money out of their existence. Any one of the measures named in paragraph 21 will occupy the attention of the House for weeks or months, and how it is possible, unless of course it is intended to sit into the middle of next year, to get through them I cannot see. I see a reference to an amendment of the Local Courts Act, and such amendment is not to be brought forward a bit too soon. I would like the Government to bring the Bill down as soon as possible for it is a sadly needed amendment. The fees charged under the Local Courts Act are far too high, thus defeating the end for which the Courts were created. Dealing with this there is a matter which I must bring before members in some little detail. We have a system of dual appointments prevailing on the coast of the State. The resident magistrate is invariably the resident medical officer, who in the remote parts is a power in himself. He has two great functions to perform, and it is found that a gentleman occupying the position of resident magistrate sits on the bench to hear cases, and then has to leave the bench to go into the witness box to give evidence in the case on which he is adjudicating, and afterwards goes back on the bench and adjudicates upon it. A case occurred recently in which a resident magistrate was adjudicating in company with two honorary magistrates. During the hearing of the case it was necessary to establish

that the injury the man complained of was received intentionally and not accidentally as the defendant wanted to make out. The resident magistrate having previous knowledge of the facts of the case and having attended the man as his medical attendant, leaves the bench and goes into the witness box and explains to his brother magistrates how impossible it was for the man's injuries to have been received accidentally, and that they must have been intentionally inflicted. Having satisfied his brother magistrates that his view of the case was correct the magistrate resumes his seat on the bench, adjudicates, fines the defendant a sum of money with eleven guineas costs, most of which went, as medical expenses, to the resident magistrate. I say the sooner that system is abolished the better. It is more than a joke on the unfortunate people who have to put up with it. I think the Government should bear this in mind that no matter what sum of money they expend they should not economise to such an extent as will allow justice to become a travesty. I venture to think the Government ought at the earliest opportunity alter that state of things in that particular town, and in many towns along the coast where one gentleman is fulfilling the two functions. I heard about this case on every side when I went into the district, and the sooner the Government change that system the better for the pure administration of justice. Before I sit down I would like to say one word in favour of the two great railways that the Government intend to undertake, the railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar and the railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range. Dealing more particularly with the railway that affects my district, everything depends on the celerity with which the Government will carry out this work. Undoubtedly an influx of population will set in there. Between the mines and the coast is an impossible stretch of sand which would do credit to the Sahara if it came from that quarter. It makes pitiable the condition of the people living on the coast who have unfortunately to cart goods across the sandy desert. If the Government brought down this Bill

early in the session we should make sure of its passing into law, and no measure, I venture to say, that will be brought before the House will do more to speedily remove the depression under which we are suffering than a Bill for the construction of this railway. I think the first tide of prosperity that will begin to flow will come from the North-West direction. As soon as the Government give facilities for developing that place, the people will produce wealth to such an extent that population will flow there and afford a large market for the products of the Southern portion of the State, and help, in a large degree, to bring about the prosperity we had before we joined federation. Three light-houses along the coast are to be established, and none too soon. We have had some wrecks partly due to their want. Also the testing of the North-West artesian water supplies is a matter to commend itself to my colleagues representing the district, and all the people interested in pastoral pursuits. I will not venture to say more; I have touched on a few of the salient features of the Speech, but before sitting down I should like to refer to one or two subjects which, although not mentioned in the Speech, are matters worthy the consideration of the Government. The first is the barbarous condition in which our Statutes are at the present time. Time after time it has been mentioned that the Statutes ought to be consolidated. Members are aware that many of our Acts were adopted from the Imperial statute-book, but when one looks at our statute-books one does not find them, and if one wants to find them one will have to go to some large library where some person who can afford them has them. Why not have our Statute law in our own books? Some of the amendments are scattered over various volumes, and it will take a day or two on the part of some experienced person to find out the Statute law on any given subject. I think the Government would be wise to at once start about the consolidation of our Statutes. I hope the Government will take the first opportunity to make a start with our university. The trustees

have been endowed with a large extent of very valuable land, and many of us have interested ourselves in the establishment of this institution. A large sum of money is sent out of the State annually to pay for examinations, and I venture to think that in population, in development, and in universal knowledge this State is in a satisfactory condition to start its own university. At first the cost will not be anything, because in the beginning the university would be an examination institute. The last subject on which I will say a few words is the question of the aborigines. It is an old question, and I have taken much trouble when travelling through the North-West to find out whether there is much to complain of in the treatment of these unfortunate people. The conclusion I have come to is that the aborigines have been well treated by the pastoralists and by the white men; but that the system which prevails at present under which these unfortunate creatures, for trifling offences such as cattle-spearing, are subjected to chains night and day, is, I venture to say, repellant to our instincts as Britishers. I have seen these people, some of them fine specimens of humanity, lined up in a long room, 30 or 40 on each side, in a state of nature except for a cloth round their loins, chained two by two, so that wherever one went the other must accompany him. The native is taken out in the morning at 6 or 6.30 o'clock, chained to another man, dragged with him in chains day after day, and has to sleep with him in chains night after night. The marvel is, that the hatred of one man towards another has not broken out into murder long ago. This is a terrible way to treat these men; and some other system must be adopted in order to keep our reputation for humane treatment of these unfortunate creatures. We should recollect that it is their country we are occupying, and that every year their hunting grounds and their means of maintaining themselves are being circumscribed. It is natural that, if they cannot get the game which nature provides for them, they should seek for other food. What is the remedy? We should

be more humane than we have been in the past; we should not treat them like common white criminals, but we should try and teach them as we would teach children, for, after all, they are children both by nature and habit. The Government should establish plantations at considerable distances from the large centres—to establish them in towns would be fatal for the working out of the system. At these plantations rubber trees, cotton plants, and tropical fruits could be grown, and after a while the Government would be able to make the control of the aborigines a self-supporting scheme. That would be the class of labour that the aborigines would have the least objection to. It goes to a man's heart now to see the natives led through the streets chained to one another with a hopeless, dejected look in their countenances. The suggestions I have made, if carried out, would do something to mitigate the conditions of the aborigines. I know that it is a very dangerous subject for a member for a northern part of the State to touch upon; but the feelings of humanity cannot be repressed by such a consideration. I trust that the Colonial Secretary will soon bring the matter under the notice of the Minister for Agriculture. I have already spoken to the Honorary Minister about it, also to Mr. Despeissis, the expert of the Department, and I have their sympathy in the matter. If this innovation in the treatment of the aborigines is carried out it will do something to alleviate the terrible misery we are inflicting, if indirectly, on a suffering race. I am sorry that I have spoken much longer than I had intended. In conclusion, I beg to move the adoption of the following Address in reply to the Speech of His Excellency:—

*To His Excellency Admiral Sir Frederick George Denham Bedford, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor in and over the State of Western Australia and its Dependencies, etc., etc.*

*May it Please Your Excellency,—*

*We 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 address to Parliament.*

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): At this juncture, I beg formally to second the motion moved by Mr. Pennefather.

On motion by the Hon. W. Maley, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

## ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, the House adjourned until the next Tuesday afternoon at 4.30 o'clock.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th July, 1907.

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## OPENING OF THIRD SESSION.

The Legislative Assembly met at three o'clock 'p.m., pursuant to Proclamation, which was read by the Clerk.

In obedience to summons, Mr. Speaker (Hon. T. F. Quinlan) and hon. members proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber; and having heard His Excellency deliver the opening Speech (*vide* Council report, *ante*), they returned to the Assembly Chamber. Mr. Speaker reported to the House what had been done.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Government Labour Bureau—Report of Superintendent for 1906; 2, Regulations for the Sharks Bay Pearl Shell Fishery; 3, By-laws passed by the Municipalities of Beverley, Boulder, Claremont, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Leonora, Perth, South Perth, Subiaco, and Victoria Park; 4, Department of Mines—Report for 1906; 5, Regulations under the Inspection of