

ces, the large increase of population, and the good season which is now setting in, and I feel assured that we may look forward to still greater prosperity during the next year than we have experienced in the past. I beg to second the adoption of this Address-in-Reply.

THE HON. J. G. FOULKES: I move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (HON. E. H. WITTENBERG): I desire to consult hon. members as to the sitting of the House. I propose that we shall adjourn until 3 o'clock to-morrow, so that we may finish this debate, and after that I shall suggest that we adjourn for a fortnight. In the meantime I shall put what Bills I can on the Table, and thus afford hon. members an opportunity of considering them. It is of no use my asking hon. members to come here without a fair amount of work for them to do, and thus cause them to waste time which at this season of the year is especially valuable to many of them. I wish to study the convenience of hon. members to the fullest extent, and therefore I make this suggestion. I now move that the House adjourn until 3 o'clock to-morrow.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I would just like to point out that to-morrow is rather an off day, and I would suggest that it might be desirable to fix Thursday instead of to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House, at 4.12 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, 26th June, 1895, at 3 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 25th June, 1895.

Communication from His Excellency the Administrator—Representation of the De Grey Electorate—Annual Report of the Auditor-General—Standard Time Bill; first reading—Civil Service Commission; Cost of, etc.—Question ruled out of order—Repealing the Stock Tax—His Excellency the Administrator's Speech—Address-in-Reply—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 3 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR.

Shortly after 3 o'clock a Message was conveyed by the Usher of the Black Rod that His Excellency the Administrator requested the attendance of the Speaker and hon. members of the Assembly in the Chamber of the Legislative Council. Accordingly Mr. Speaker with members of the House went to attend His Excellency, who delivered his Opening Speech.

REPRESENTATION OF THE DEGREY ELECTORATE.

On the resumption of the sitting,

THE SPEAKER announced that since the last meeting of the House he had issued a writ for the election of a member to serve for the electoral district of the De Grey, rendered vacant by reason of Mr. A. R. Richardson having accepted an office of profit under the Crown, and that by the return to the writ it appeared that Mr. Richardson had been re-elected.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL.

THE SPEAKER laid upon the table of the House the Annual Report of the Auditor-General upon the public accounts of the colony for the financial year ended 30th June, 1894, as required by the Audit Act.

STANDARD TIME BILL.

Introduced by SIR JOHN FORREST, and read a first time.

COST, ETC., OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—

- (a.) The cost to the country of the Civil Service Commission to date.
- (b.) The number of times during the recess

the Commission met for the transaction of business.

(c.) The number of hours each sitting had occupied.

(d.) The names of the gentlemen forming the Commission, and the date of each appointment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows :

(a), (b), and (c) : The Chairman of the Commission promises to supply these in the following letter :—

Civil Service Commission of Western Australia.

Perth, 22nd June, 1895.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 14th inst., No. F. 1527.95, asking for certain information required to enable you to answer in the Legislative Assembly the questions relating to the Civil Service Commission, of which notice has been given by Mr. R. F. Sholl, member for the Gascoyne. In reply, I regret to have to state that owing to the continued illness of the Secretary of the Commission I have been unable to have the desired information compiled, but should the Secretary be unable to resume his duties on Monday next, I will obtain temporary clerical assistance elsewhere, in order that it may be prepared and sent into you in the course of next week. With regard to the question marked "A" in your letter, I may add that so far as my recollection serves me, the expenses of the Commission, since its Progress Report was brought up in October last, have been confined to the Secretary's salary, the remuneration to the shorthand writer, office rent, and some minor charges for removing furniture from one to another of the different offices occupied by the Commission.

I may mention that it is laid down in "Blackmore's Practice of the House of Assembly of South Australia," page 87, as follows :—

"It is customary to lay the reports of Royal Commissions on the table immediately after they have been received by the Governor. Prior to this it is contrary to usage to ask questions or communicate information touching them, but no objection is offered to questions as to the probable date when the report will be furnished." Nevertheless, as the questions of the member for the Gascoyne do not appear to be of a character to prejudice the attainment of the object had in view in appointing the Commission, there is no desire on its part to withhold the information asked for.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

M. F. ALFRED CANNING,
Chairman.

(d.) M. F. A. Canning, D. K. Congdon, W. Traylen, G. T. Simpson, E. Solomon, D. Symon, W. J. George.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: You have not answered my first three questions, nor the latter part of the fourth.

THE PREMIER: The Chairman of the Commission promises to supply the information.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: They have had nearly a month to supply it.

THE PREMIER: I understand their Secretary has been ill.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It is a pity he was not ill during the recess.

QUESTION RULED OUT OF ORDER.

THE SPEAKER intimated that the next question on the notice paper, standing in the name of Mr. R. F. Sholl (who proposed to ask the Director of Public Works "if he was of opinion that some practical advantage to the country would result, or was likely to result, by the Civil Service Commission continuing its labours for a further period") was out of order, as it involved argument.

REPEALING THE STOCK TAX.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier if it was the intention of the Government, during the current session, to introduce a Bill repealing the Stock Tax.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government did not intend submitting any proposal to the House in the direction of making any alteration in regard to the existing law.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH.

THE SPEAKER reported that he had, with members of the House, attended His Excellency the Administrator in the Legislative Council Chamber, when His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which Speech (Mr. Speaker said) he had, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy, which he then read to the House (*Vide p. 12 ante*.)

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO THE ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH.

MR. THROSSELL: Mr. Speaker,—Sir, it is with pleasure that I rise to move an Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Administrator, which is possibly the longest Speech ever discussed in this Chamber, and therefore I do not propose at this stage to do more than cursorily glance at some of its leading points. But, notwithstanding its length, I maintain it is a Speech that has been listened to with great interest by every member of this House, and will be read with great interest by every thoughtful person throughout the colony. It is a Speech, also, which I venture to say will afford satisfaction and gratification to British investors, whose money we are ex-

pending in so many reproductive public works. It is a Speech that tells its own unvarnished tale. It tells us in plain language of the public works policy successfully carried out by the present Government, as authorised by this Assembly. In that respect it enunciates no new policy. It is simply a continuation of the same old policy entered upon by the Forrest Government,—a policy of public works having for their object the development of the public estate. There can be no question, I maintain, that this is the policy which of all others at the present time is the one best calculated to advance the interests of this growing colony. The Speech tells us of important public works that have been carried out during the year, as sanctioned by Parliament; it tells us also of other works in progress, and of others that are in contemplation. It also tells us of the almost boundless prosperity of our goldfields, and of the prospects of the development of valuable coalfields. It tells us of an ever increasing population, and of an overflowing Treasury; and, last but not least, it tells us of the prospect of reduced taxation. Surely this is a good tale for any Ministry to have to tell, and it is a cheering tale. It is all the more gratifying when we consider the bad season which our agriculturists and our pastoralists have just gone through, and when we consider the low prices ruling for our staple products, wool, sandalwood, and wheat. The tale told us in His Excellency's Speech is one, as I have already said, that must be gratifying and re-assuring to British capitalists who have trusted us with their money, and who have a right to ask, "How are these people in Western Australia spending our money?" The answer to that question furnished by this Speech cannot fail to give the greatest possible satisfaction to British and other foreign investors, whose eyes are now turned towards this colony. It must inspire them with a feeling of gratification with the policy that has brought about these satisfactory results, and at the same time inspire them with the greatest confidence in the future of the colony. I do not propose to deal with all the paragraphs of His Excellency's Speech *seriatim*; but, touching upon some of the more salient points of the Speech, I first come to the announcement—and a satisfactory announcement it is—that the first portion of our new Loan has been so successfully floated upon the British market. All must feel gratified at the fact that, for the first time in the history of the colony, we have

been able to float a Loan at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and that even, at that rate, the handsome premium of £3 per cent. was realised. Surely that is a good tale to have to tell us. It is the most pleasing proof we could have of the high estimation in which the colony is now held in the eyes of the British investor. My only regret is, seeing the favorable conditions of the money market and the high character which our securities have obtained,—my only regret is that our Government did not see their way clear to float the whole of our Loan. The reply I may possibly receive is that the Government, if they had possessed themselves of all this money, at one time could not have made use of it, or could not have profitably invested it, or that possibly the Banks would not have offered them any profitable interest upon it. Of course, if the Government tell us that, we must accept it as a reasonable excuse. But there is no gainsaying the fact that the conditions of the money market are very encouraging. As showing the improved tone of the English market, not only as regards our own stock, but Australian securities generally, I need only refer to the fact that New Zealand succeeded in floating its last loan at 3 per cent., and it occurred to me that it would be a brilliant stroke of finance if our Government were to take advantage of the present cheapness of money, and endeavour to float the remainder of our own loan at the same rate. It will also further illustrate the altered tone of the money market when I mention that in January, 1894, only eighteen months ago, the South Australian $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan only brought £90 15s., whereas in May this year our own $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan realised £102. This, to my mind, gives room for the heartiest congratulations, and must be a source of gratification, not only to every member of this House, but to every man in the colony. Coming to another point in His Excellency's Speech, I notice with pleasure that, after due consideration, the Government are able to come before Parliament with the announcement that we possess not only rich goldfields—possibly the richest goldfields the world has ever seen—but that we also possess what is of equal importance and of equal value to the colony, a rich coalfield. Some of us had ocular demonstration, a short time ago, of this fact, when we had an opportunity of visiting this coalfield; and no doubt some of us came away wiser men after that visit of inspection, and with greater faith in the car

boniferous resources of the country. The only point to my mind that remains to be settled is this: at what cost can this coal be placed on our market? At what price per ton can it be delivered? If it can be demonstrated that we not only possess coal in boundless quantity, but also of suitable quality, and that it can be placed on the market at a price that will enable it to compete with the imported article,—if these facts are made patent to us, both as regards the quantity and the quality, and also the cost of production and the cost of placing our coal in the market, then I say the benefits of this discovery cannot be over-estimated, and we should be unworthy of such a heritage if we hesitated in connecting this coalfield with our railway system, and in doing all in our power to develop what should prove one of our most valuable resources. I only hope the Government will be able to show us that we would be quite justified in undertaking a railway to this coalfield. Harking back for a moment to our goldfields, some of us may not think that these are of sufficient importance to justify all the expense we have been put to in connection with them; but I think that when we come to look at the beneficial results to the country—results already achieved and the future results in store—we must congratulate ourselves upon the discovery of these great factors in the progress and prosperity of the colony. There is no gainsaying the fact that it is to these goldfields alone we owe our present enviable position; and there can be no doubt, notwithstanding all the rich finds of the past year and the number of claims worked, that the goldfields of the colony can only be regarded as being yet in their infancy. With the extension of the railway to Coolgardie and to Cue an immense impetus will be given to the fields. While on this point I should like to say that the colony is to be congratulated upon the low price at which the Coolgardie line has been taken, leaving a large sum under the estimated cost available for further extensions. When we remember that only eight short years ago the Southern Cross goldfields were an unknown name, when we bear in mind that it is only eight years ago since the first prospecting party left Northam, my own township, to search for gold in that direction, and that the only evidence of the existence of gold discovered at that time was in such minute particles that a puff of wind would blow them away; and when we consider that it is only three short years ago since Bayley's first

find was made at Coolgardie, and we also bear in mind the development that has since taken place, and that Southern Cross and Coolgardie are now known all over the world as possessing phenomenally rich goldfields—when we bear these facts in mind, we may form some opinion as to the wonderful results that have been attained in so short a time in the face of tremendous difficulties, and we may form some idea as to the still greater results we may look forward to in the future, especially now that the rainfall seems to have extended in that direction. When we take all these facts into consideration, surely we have reason to go forward with boldness and confidence in the future of these goldfields. The developments have simply been wonderful. I think I am right in stating that land in the main street of Coolgardie, which a few years since was a barren wilderness, was sold a few weeks ago at the rate of £30 a foot, and that there are men at present walking about who only invested £20 in Coolgardie town lots, a few years ago, but who now derive an independent income from these solitary blocks of land. If there are any faint-hearted ones in this Assembly—and I am sorry to say that in Western Australia we have some faint-hearted ones, who do not yet believe in the colony's good fortune, and in the bright future that lies before it; if there are any such in this Assembly, I ask them to take heart from these facts and from the brilliant prospects which this once despised Cinderella is now face to face with. Let them take heart not only from the development of the country's auriferous resources, but from the other indications of progress and prosperity which we see around us, and which are indicated in His Excellency's Speech. While on the subject of our goldfields, I should like to remark that the development of the Dundas goldfield points to the early growing importance of the southern port of Esperance Bay, and I think it may be regarded as fortunate for this part of the colony that the Southern Cross and Coolgardie railways were decided on so early, as there can be no doubt that without such established means of rapid communication, Esperance Bay would have commanded the bulk of the Coolgardie trade. Coming to another part of His Excellency's Speech, I think the colony is to be congratulated upon the grand work that is going on at Fremantle in connection with the new harbor works. The colony has reason to be proud of the rapid progress made with these

important works, and the whole scheme reflects the highest credit upon its designer, the Engineer-in-Chief. Speaking of harbors, it appears to me that with the development of our goldfields, attracting ships and steamers of all nations to our shores, bringing a large influx of population,—it appears to me a matter almost of indifference whether the Government carry out their declared policy of making Fremantle the port of call for the mail steamers, instead of Albany. I think that with all the good things this colony has before it the Government can afford to be generous in this matter, and take a broad view of the matter, and recognise that Albany is an integral part of the colony, and let her keep her steamers if she likes. With the population now flowing into the colony, attracted by the development of our goldfields, and with the promise of a continued influx to our shores from all parts of the world, affording plenty of scope for the development of trade and shipping in all our harbors, and particularly at the port of Fremantle, with the splendid work now going on there, I think the Government can well afford to do something for Albany. I think that the claims of Albany, with its magnificent harbor, should not be forgotten, and I would urge upon the Government that it is their duty to take a broad view of this question, and not seek to do everything for Perth or everything for Fremantle, but also bear in mind that Albany also forms a part of this great colony. Sir, I notice amongst the other good things promised in His Excellency's Speech, that the Government are going to establish a branch of the Royal Mint in this colony. With regard to this movement, while I admire the boldness of the Government and their readiness to grasp at every possible means to elevate the colony in the estimation of the outside world, I think they should act cautiously in this matter, and that it is possible for us to go too far in this direction. I think we should hasten slowly in this respect. It is at the time we are most prosperous that we ought to be most cautious; and I ask the Government to be sure, that in establishing a branch of the Royal Mint in this colony, they are not establishing what may turn out to be an expensive toy. Possibly it may be justified as a reproductive undertaking, but, as sensible business men, we require that fact to be clearly demonstrated to us. If the Government can show us that such an establishment

will not only add prestige to the reputation of the colony, but also pay its way,—which no doubt they will be able to do—then I dare say we may be induced to favourably consider the advisability of taking this step. Possibly, one of the most gratifying features in His Excellency's Speech is that in connection with the progress of our railways. We are told in one paragraph that not only are they proving of the greatest importance to the country, but that the revenue from them is not only exceeding the working expenses, but also paying the interest and sinking fund on the capital expended in their construction. I think the success of our railways is among the most satisfactory features of the Speech we have just listened to, indicating as it does the wisdom of the policy of giving the country facilities of transit for the development of its resources. I will touch next upon a subject referred to in the House last session; I refer to the discontinuance of the Ecclesiastical Grant. I am sure members will rejoice to see that the Government are about to face this question, and have intimated their intention of introducing a measure that will wipe out this grant. At the same time I am bound to say, judging from the inkling we have had of the manner in which they propose to deal with the question, that they seem inclined to behave rather niggardly towards our Churches. I believe the hon. member who first introduced the question of the discontinuance of this grant, the hon. member for Geraldton, when he comes to speak on the subject, will show us that he would be inclined to deal more liberally with the Churches than the Government appear to be. I think we can afford to be liberal and just in dealing with this grant, and, when the proper time comes, I hope that members will be inclined to take that view of it. Instead of dealing with it in a niggardly spirit, by providing for the termination of the grant in two instalments, as we are told the Government intend doing, I trust they may be induced to deal with it in one instalment, and upon liberal terms,—say ten years' purchase, and so wipe it out, and be done with it for ever. Another gratifying announcement made in the Governor's Speech is that relating to the proposed reduction of duties upon the necessities of life. I trust that this reduction of taxation will be in the direction of a free breakfast table. This announcement of the intention of the Government to lighten the burden of taxation, cannot

fail to strengthen their hold upon the esteem of the colonists throughout the length and breadth of the country. It will do away with much of that feeling of dissatisfaction which would have existed if they had not taken this step, in view of the flourishing condition of our finances. Another important and gratifying feature in the policy of the Government as indicated in this Speech, is the promise given to reduce the transit rates on our railways for agricultural and pastoral produce, to the lowest possible paying point. This is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. Simple though the proposal may appear to be, it occurs to me that while it professes to treat the producer liberally, it is not so simple as it looks. Though I am open to conviction on the point, it seems to me that the step proposed to be taken will result in the benefit of the consumer quite as much, if not more so, than the benefit of the producer. Nevertheless, I regard it, as I have said, as a step in the right direction, and it will have my heartiest support. Coming to another important point, members will observe that it is the intention of the Government to move in the matter of improving the water supply and sanitary arrangements of some of our larger towns. I hope, Sir,—and I speak with some authority on the subject, and after due consideration—I hope, Sir, that when such a scheme is submitted for our approval, it will be found that it is a scheme of a comprehensive nature, and that it will not be confined to the city and the port, but that other towns besides Perth and Fremantle will be allowed to participate in its advantages. I conceive it to be of paramount importance that our country townships, as well as our principal cities, should be made attractive to new arrivals; and there can be no doubt that one of the greatest attractions in this respect will be improved sanitation and an improved water supply. We all know that the curse of the other colonies has been the steps taken to attract people to the town and cities, and so depleting the country districts of their quota of population. We know that the result of this policy has proved disastrous to the other colonies, in times of depression; and our own Government have a grand opportunity of profiting in this respect by the experience of our neighbours. If we are anxious to make this colony attractive not only for people to come to, but also to remain in, we must take steps to make our country townships, as well as our

larger towns, attractive; and for this reason I hope that the scheme of water supply and sanitation which the Government have in view will not be confined to Perth and Fremantle, but that it will embrace such towns as Albany, Geraldton, and all the towns of the Avon Valley. No scheme that falls short of meeting the requirements of these country towns will be acceptable to the community at large. I speak, as I have said, with some authority on this subject. I think the scheme which we are told is to be submitted to the House will provide for this, and that all municipalities which are prepared to tax themselves for the payment of the interest on the money expended in such works, will be included in the scheme. In no part of the colony will such improvements be of more value, I maintain, than in the provincial towns of the settled districts of the Avon Valley. I hope, when the scheme is laid before us, the Government will be able to give a good account of themselves on this point, which I regard as a most important one, and one requiring their urgent attention. I trust that members representing country districts will not fail to make their voices heard in this important matter. So far, Sir, I have dealt with all that is brightest in His Excellency's Speech. But I have not lost sight of the fact that notwithstanding the brightness of the outlook it cannot be denied that there are dark spots even upon our fair horizon. Prosperous though our career has been, and brilliant though our prospects are, still there are clouds that tend to dim the horizon. We have passed through one of the worst agricultural seasons the colony has ever seen, and our farmers have had to contend with very low prices for our staple products. We have had to contend with, if not the lowest prices, certainly the lowest yield; and we have successfully passed through the hardest times which our hard-worked farmers have ever known. The low prices prevailing for the products of the soil, as His Excellency says, give cause for serious consideration and anxiety; and I should like to urge on this special occasion that it is the bounden duty of the Government to do all they can to meet these adverse circumstances, and to lighten the weight upon our hard-worked farmers. I regret to say they have not been doing so in that liberal spirit which the flourishing condition of our finances and the professed interest the present Government take in the well-doing of the settlers entitled us to expect.

For the first time in the history of the colony the farmers of the Eastern Districts have had to appeal to the Government for help. What did our farmers ask from them? Not a remission of their rents; the poor farmers, notwithstanding their adverses, did not ask for that, but simply for an extension of time for the payment of their rents. How has their request been met? It has been met in this spirit, that notice has been sent to them that if they do not pay their arrears of rent by the 30th of this month they must take the consequences. Such treatment, in the face of such circumstances, is, I venture to say, unworthy of a Government led by the great man whom we all respect, Sir John Forrest, who is ever foremost in his expressions of sympathy and interest in the well-doing of our settlers, and I hope that at the proper time, steps will be taken to redeem the Government from a charge of want of consideration for our hard pushed farmers in the hour of their adversity. They do not ask for charity. Charity they do not want. All they ask for is fair and considerate treatment, and just consideration. The simple remedy asked for in their present circumstances is not a gift in the light of charity, but simply that the time for the payment of their arrears of rent be extended for at any rate one year. I hope that in urging this upon the Government I shall have the support of the members of this House, and certainly of all our country members. Pleased as I am to observe all the good things which the Government have been able to place before us in this Speech, I am not one of those who cannot look at both sides of the question; and I cannot help referring to this fact, that one of the few regrettable features in the affairs of the colony is the vast quantity of what should be the products of our own soil we are still importing into the colony. Grand as is the position of the colony with its great and boundless goldfields—and no one will deny that were it not for its goldfields Western Australia would not be in the grand position it is in to-day; but, gratifying as its prospects are in this respect, with population flowing to our shores, the fact remains that we are largely dependent upon outside sources to supply the wants of this population. Everyone is alive to the necessity and importance of increasing our population. This is emphasised by the fact that, according to the Year Book, each unit of the population of the colony, according to the latest return,

was contributing £4 13s. 10d. to the revenue of the colony. That being so, I think we can easily recognise what a valuable addition to the wealth of the colony an increase of 10,000 or 20,000 people to our population means to the Government. In dealing with this point, I think it must be a source of surprise, while at the same time it must be a source of gratification, to our old settlers who looked upon the advent of Responsible Government with suspicion, and who looked upon the colony borrowing large sums of money with still greater suspicion,—I say it must be a source of great surprise and of great gratification to them to realise that we are able to embark upon all the great public works and the great national enterprises we have embarked upon without increasing our taxation, but that on the contrary, we are now face to face with the prospect of reduced taxation. If any fact were wanted to emphasise the wisdom of the bold policy of public works entered upon by the present Government, we have it here. In the Speech before us reference is also made to the Agricultural Land Bank. I am one of those who entertain great hopes of this institution. I am one who always pinned my faith in this Land Bank, and I am pleased to learn that the Government are fully satisfied of the usefulness of the institution, in assisting persons with small means to settle upon and improve their lands. While saying that, I venture to say too that this Bank is not doing what we expected of it, nor is it doing all that it is capable of. The fault lies not with the Bank, or with the principle upon which it is worked. But there is too much red tape about it. If a little of that red tape business were done away with, and the institution worked on practical lines, there would be no fear that, with God's blessing in giving us a good season, by this time next year the Government would be able to give a good account of this Agricultural Bank. That something should be done to encourage and to enable our people to bring more land under cultivation and supply the wants of the colony, is acknowledged on all hands. When it is borne in mind that after sixty-three years of settlement, and after all that has been done in the way of providing railways throughout the country, this great colony can only boast of about 178,000 acres of land under cultivation, and that only about half of that is under crop—about 80,000 acres under crop throughout the whole of this vast

territory, after sixty-three years of settlement, —when all this is borne in mind, what wonder is there that our Government has derived a most important part of their revenue from duties upon products imported into the colony which ought to be the products of our own soil. I think all will agree with me that it is the duty of the Government and of the Legislature to adopt such steps as may be deemed necessary to endeavour to remedy this state of things. We boast, and rightly boast, of our prosperity as a colony, but there is no gainsaying the fact that when it comes to the question of the well-doing and prosperity of private individuals, there is not that amount of prosperity we should like to see and have a right to expect. To my mind the secret of this lies in the fact that we are living, so to speak, upon our capital, rather than upon the natural resources of the country. Both the pastoral and the agricultural industries are passing through a period of great depression, owing to adverse circumstances and low prices. Wool, I suppose, was never so low in price in the history of the world, and, with the prices ruling for cereals, it is no wonder that those who are engaged in these important industries are very far from being in a prosperous position, notwithstanding the undoubted prosperity of the colony, as a colony. It is a duty of a wise and just Legislature to adopt every measure possible to relieve those who are engaged in these staple industries of the country, not by imposing additional burdens and additional rents, but by reducing their rents and assisting them in every legitimate way. I will not trespass upon the time of the House by referring at any further length to the various matters referred to in His Excellency's Speech; other opportunities will be afforded us for dealing with all these subjects as they come up for our consideration. In conclusion I heartily congratulate the Government and every member of this House upon the success of their policy; and if it be as Carlyle tells us, a proof of greatness to make some work of God's creation more fitting for the abode of man, then it will be admitted that our present Ministry have achieved that enviable position. When we find large public works carried on all over the colony, railways and telegraph lines extended in all directions, harbor improvements and postal improvements going on when we find hospitals and other public buildings undertaken in all parts of the colony, and when we look at the other works which are in contemplation. I think we have a right

however we may differ from the Government upon some questions of policy, and whatever, may be our views as regards some of their actions,—I think we have a right to express our honest appreciation of their efforts to promote the welfare of the colony. Sir, I have now done. It only remains for me once more to congratulate the colony upon its position and its prospects, and to congratulate the Ministry upon the success of their policy and upon the programme which they have placed before us in the Speech we have just listened to, and which on the whole is perhaps the most encouraging Speech ever delivered within the walls of this House. I now beg to move that the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be adopted:—

*To His Excellency Sir Alexander Campbell
Onslow, Knight, Administrator of the
Government of Western Australia, &c., &c.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Our most careful consideration and attention will be given to the important matters referred to by Your Excellency, and all other matters that may be brought before us; and it shall be our earnest endeavour to so deal with them that our labours may result in the continued prosperity of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

MR. PIESSE: Mr. Speaker,—Sir, I also rise with very great pleasure indeed, to second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Speech delivered to us by His Excellency to-day. I am sure it is a very interesting Speech that he has presented to us, and that it gives to us as colonists much satisfaction to hear from him that everything is making such rapid progress, and that Western Australia is taking a foremost place amongst the Australian colonies. I think the many encouraging things that have been said by His Excellency to-day augur well for the future welfare of this colony, and all that is needed now is energy and perseverance on the part of the colonists themselves to develop the wonderful resources of this vast colony. I am sure that that development is in good hands. We are all glad to hear that our finances are in such a sound condition. To

those of us who can recollect the raising of our first loan of £35,000, in 1872, and the difficulty we had in connection with it, the great success of the first moiety of our last loan floated on the London Market must be very encouraging. Indeed we have reason to congratulate ourselves on the continued credit of the colony, and it rests with this Parliament and the country whether that credit shall be continued. We have often heard it suggested in this House that we should not go ahead too fast. There is no doubt, as it has been so ably pointed out, that in times of prosperity we are inclined to be very speculative—indeed, we are inclined to over speculation, and it behoves us to weigh well every consideration before going ahead so fast. With regard to the federation of the Australian colonies, that is a great question, and one that has become very prominent in most of the Australian colonies of late. The time has almost arrived, when for the protection of commercial interests, it will be found necessary to adopt such a bond of union, but I quite agree with the Government that it is not necessary for us at the present time. Our circumstances do not warrant, or require federation, though at the same time I think the question is one of great importance, and should not be indefinitely shelved. When the time comes for its consideration the Parliament of this colony will give it. I doubt not, that consideration which it demands. With regard to railways, I am pleased that the lines to Mullewa and Busselton have been completed. The completion of the Mullewa Railway is a matter of great satisfaction, and an important addition to the railways of the colony, and will no doubt add largely to the development of the rich resources of the Murchison goldfields. The further extension of the railway to Cue which is contemplated, and for which surveys are being made, will also be a great factor in the development of the rich resources of that district. With regard to the completion of the Busselton Railway, which hon. members have unduly ridiculed from time to time, I am glad it has been completed. I have had the opportunity of inspecting some of the country which this line traverses, and there are large tracts of fertile land that might be utilized for agricultural purposes. One thing, however, I should like to say, and that is that I do not agree with the payment of such large sums of money as have had to be paid to the owners of

land through which this railway runs. I think the amounts have been monstrous, and in future it behoves the Parliament of this country to see that no such sums of money be again paid for such purposes as have been paid in the past. When the line of railway was being constructed to Busselton every one down there was delighted to know they were to have a railway, and they understood that the compensation to land owners would be very small indeed. We understood the same thing in connection with the line from Northam to Southern Cross, but found that very large sums of money were being paid by the Government. Indeed it was held out as an inducement to vote for the construction of the line that an arrangement had been arrived at, and fixed valuations had been placed upon the land. That arrangement was never carried out, and now we find the people at Busselton asking £120 an acre for land not worth £10 an acre.

MR. WOOD: Not worth 10s. an acre.

MR. PIESSE: There seems to be a fault somewhere in our railway construction, and there should be an amendment of that part of the Act dealing with payments to owners of land through which the railway passes. With regard to the Southern Cross and Coolgardie Railway I think the Government are to be congratulated upon the tender that has been accepted. It is indeed at a low rate and shows conclusively what can be done when competition is brought to bear, to the very great advantage of the country. I am sure the completion of this railway will tend very largely to develop the Coolgardie goldfields. I am pleased the contractors have commenced the work, and it is to be hoped they will proceed with it without delay. With regard to the Bridgetown Railway I am pleased to hear they are making such progress with it. Perhaps some one will say that land is not worth 10s. an acre there; but, no matter what the present value of land is, the people of that district deserve a railway as well as the people in any other part of the colony. When the railway is constructed to the Blackwood it will be found to be one of the best agricultural and horticultural districts in the colony. While talking of railways there are older districts, too, that require railway communication, and I hope the Government will see to when considering their Public Works' policy. I hope they will make provision for a railway from Pinjarrah to the Williams, for I think

that is a district which deserves a railway. With regard to the Eastern Districts, the settlers were very disappointed in the matter of the starting point of the Yilgarn railway, and now, in connection with this agitation for a loop line, I think the starting point should be Beverley. If the Government contemplate carrying out such a scheme, I venture to point out that at Beverley they already have very large refreshment rooms, a junction with the Great Southern Railway, and other advantages to enable them to cheaply construct the line. I say if a loop line is to be carried out, that loop line should go from Beverley and not from York. With regard to the Collie coalfield I wish to add my testimony to the information hon. members have already received with regard to this wonderful coalfield. As hon. members know, a trip was arranged during the recess, and a number of hon. members visited the Collie coalfields and inspected some of the coal. From an outsider's point of view I consider we have a wonderful coalfield, and no doubt there are large coal measures and a very large field. If the coal can be raised and brought into market at as low a rate as will warrant its use against the imported article, then the country should build a railway. There is another thing too that will warrant the carrying out of this railway, namely the vast timber resources of the district. The report issued by the Conservator of Forests points out that the timber of that district ranks with the best in the colony. I am pleased also to notice that the Dundas goldfields, which have so long hung fire, are making headway. I think the Government have done wisely in subsidizing a steam service to Esperance Bay. This is a step in the right direction, and will help to advance the whole of the Dundas district. With regard to the Ecclesiastical Grant, I hope when the Government introduce the Bill they will deal liberally with the various Churches. We all know that this source of revenue has been a very great help to them in their work, and of very great service especially in the country districts. With regard to the Agricultural Bank, authorised and established last session, I think hon. members will remember I addressed the House upon this subject at that time, and that I had my doubts about the administration of the Bank, though I had no doubt about its usefulness. Since then, however, my doubts have been removed

by the appointment as manager of the late member for the Murray, Mr. Paterson. I think the management is perfectly safe in his hands. I also wish to bear my testimony to the fact that the operations of the Bank have been appreciated in a large measure up to the present time. The loans contemplated to be made to farmers will be of very great service in assisting them to develop the agricultural lands of the colony. At the same time I agree with the hon. member for Northam that the regulations need revision, and that the fees should be reduced. There should be no fees for transfer, but when the deeds are deposited they should be registered without delay. All this sort of work is very tiresome to a farmer, and sometimes it means a delay of two or three months before he gets sanction for the loan, and consequently he tires, and the reason for the loan passes. I hope the Government will see their way clear to introduce a Bill this Session to simplify the regulations, and also introduce a provisional schedule to include orchards, fencing, gardens and vineyards as part of the security upon which advances may be made. The class of borrowers up to the present—the men I know who have been borrowers—are men to whom I would not hesitate to lend money, and I think the Government are quite safe with the Agricultural Bank, although I think they are acting in a way that hampers the men who would be borrowers and who would use the money well. I am pleased to notice that dredging operations have been carried on so successfully in connection with the Princess Royal Harbor at Albany, whereby the P. & O. and Orient lines of mail steamers are enabled to come right into the harbor, instead of having to disembark their passengers into the launch in the open roadstead as in the past, with very great difficulty indeed. I am also pleased to notice the Government intend to extend the telegraph system from Coolgardie to Eucla. This is an extension that will prove of immense advantage in developing the goldfields, and will assist the colony generally. It is now about a quarter of a century since the first telegraph line was erected in this colony. I remember it well; it was between Perth and Fremantle. The line was erected by a company, and one of the contractors was Mr. Edmund Stirling, who was one of the first to introduce this system into the colony. I had the pleasure of speaking to this gentleman

some time ago upon this very subject. I notice it is just 25 years this month since the first telegraph line was built between Perth and Fremantle, a distance of 12 miles. There are now 5,278 miles of wire with 79 stations, and in the year 1894 there were 446,780 messages sent, producing a revenue of £37,483. This is a very great result, and I think the colony should be congratulated upon its wonderful telegraph system, extending as it does from Wyndham to Eucla, between which places messages can be sent for the sum of one shilling. I do not intend to detain hon. members longer. I have several notes here, but my hon. friend on my left has very ably brought them before the House. His opinions are almost the same as my own, consequently I do not see the necessity for dwelling upon the subject. I would however just make one remark: I think he is wrong in contending for the remission of rents to lease holders and conditional purchase holders. He blames the Government for not allowing them to defer payment, but if he turns to Clause 101 of the Regulations, he will find the Government have no power to allow deferred payments of rent. Fines are imposed, and the Government have gone as far as they possibly could in remitting fines that were imposed under that clause. It is not for him, nor for me, nor for the Government to deal with it, because it is in the hands of Parliament. It is for the Parliament of this colony to deal with it in an amendment of the Regulations, and if it be brought before the House, it may be dealt with in a manner satisfactory to the hon. member for Northam. We all know there is difficulty in dealing with the question of deferred payments of rent. It is a question that should be approached with great caution, for if we allow them to put in the thin end of the wedge we know not where they will end. My knowledge of farmers leads me to say this: If you give them an inch they will take an ell. If you allow them to defer payment you will do away with the payment of rents altogether. I think the Government have done their duty in remitting the fines, and I submit we ought not to tamper with the land regulations. I think, Sir, there are only one or two other points I would like to mention. One is that when the Government bring in their Estimates I hope they will make due provision for water conservation in the agricultural areas. I notice it is their intention to introduce new legislation dealing with Parliamentary electoral laws. I think this is

necessary, particularly on one point, and that is with regard to the transfer of voters from one district to another. A man leaving one district and going to another should be allowed to transfer his vote to that district. We have found it work very hard in this respect, and I think there should be some provision made for it in the Bill. I hope to see the Fencing Bill introduced again. I think it is necessary something should be done and I hope it will be re-introduced this session, because it is a measure that must become the law of the country sooner or later, and I think it behoves this House to have a Bill of this nature brought before it for its consideration. We ought to know how the country is being settled, and there is very great difficulty with regard to this matter of fencing, because the small farmer is not able to put up the fences demanded by the Act, consequently he should have some sort of protection, and a Fencing Bill is the only method we have of affording protection. I think the time has come, now the revenue is in such a flourishing condition, for the introduction of the penny postage system. It does seem ridiculous that we have to pay 2d. to send a letter from place to place within the colony, and yet we can send a letter all the way to England for 2½d.

MR. RANDALL: They pay 2d. in the City of Melbourne.

MR. PIESSE: We ought to have it reduced to a penny at least. In conclusion, I also join with the hon. member for Northam in congratulating the country and the Government upon the satisfactory condition of our finances in general. I think the Speech is an admirable one, and I am sure hon. members who found such fault with the Government for not introducing the Speech at the opening of Parliament, cannot find fault with the length of the Speech. It is long enough, and having had to wait a few weeks, they are now recompensed. I have very much pleasure in seconding the Address-in-Reply, and in doing so I may fairly congratulate the Government upon their successful administration, and I hope they will long continue to have the confidence of this House and of the country.

MR. RANDALL: It would be inconvenient to go on with the consideration of the Address-in-Reply this afternoon, and, having consulted with the leader of the Government, I move

that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday evening.

Motion put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House at its rising adjourn until 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 26th June.

Motion put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 4.45 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 26th June, 1895.

Death of Hon. E. G. Henty—Address-in-Reply—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 3 o'clock p.m.

DEATH OF THE HON. E. G. HENTY.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I deeply regret, Mr. President, that the first address I should have to make would be one of a melancholy character. This morning I received a telegram from the Post Office, which reads as follows:—"I beg to report that the Hon. Mr. Henty, M.L.C., died here suddenly last night." It is signed by Mr. A. Thompson, Postmaster, Coolgardie. The late Mr. Henty, as hon. members are aware, was a colleague of mine. He was returned for the Northern Province at the same election that I was, so that, personally, I deeply regret the unfortunate news. It is always sad to hear of the death even of acquaintances, but when we come to the death of one who was intimately connected with us, as Mr. Henty was, one who worked with us last year, and took an interest in all the measures that were passed and deliberated upon for the good of the colony, one who showed himself in all his bearings to be a thorough gentleman, and one about whom there was nothing despicable—I say, Sir, when we hear of the death of a gentleman of that description, it is the very saddest news that can be conveyed to us; and I feel sure all honorable members of this House will join with me in sympathising with his friends on the sad

tidings they heard this morning. Mr. Henty has done good service to the colony through his mercantile transactions. In these he has endeavoured to develop the colony, and in carrying the trade into our interior parts, he has done as much as a good many, and in consequence our thanks are due to him. Not only was Mr. Henty well known here, but portions of his family are well and respectably known in the other colonies, and they have been associated with these colonies almost from their inception. I do not know that I need take up much time in speaking on this sad matter. I feel sure, however, that honourable members would like to show some respect for their dead friend, and, under the circumstances, I shall now move that the President do leave the chair until half-past 2 o'clock this evening.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Mr. President,—As a strong personal friend of the late Mr. Henty, perhaps you will allow me to second the motion which has just been proposed by the hon. the Minister for Mines. I am sure I speak for all the members of this House when I say we echo to the fullest, the language he has used in regard to our departed friend, and the terms of regret he has spoken of as to the loss to this House and to this colony. Mr. Henty's decease unfortunately makes the first gap by death in the ranks of this Council since its election, and it is the more to be grieved at, because among all the members of this House we might have selected Mr. Henty as the one who promised to live longest, and to work hardest, for the good of Western Australia. He was a man who has left no enemy behind. I think we may challenge anyone to find a wrong deed, or recollect an unfriendly act or any hostile feeling which is within the memories of this Legislative Council or elsewhere. And it is with still greater regret that I have to mention that he leaves, at a time of his life when he was young, strong, promising and full of hope—a wife and family who are I believe in a peculiarly helpless condition. I beg to second, with deep regret, the motion of the hon. the Minister for Mines.

Question put and passed.

THE PRESIDENT then left the Chair till 7.30 o'clock p.m.

On resuming,

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES: I think any