

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

### FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT.

#### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

*The First Session of the Third Parliament under Responsible Government was convened for the despatch of business on the 17th August, 1897.*

*Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.*

#### Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 17th August, 1897.*

Opening of Parliament—Election of Acting President—Opening by Commissioners—Swearing-in of Members—The Governor's Speech—Papers, &c., Presented—Railways Construction: Tenders Accepted—Cemeteries Bill: first reading—Address-in-Reply—Adjournment.

#### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 2:30 p.m., pursuant to a proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of Parliaments.

#### ELECTION OF ACTING-PRESIDENT.

The Clerk of Parliaments announced that the President (Hon. Sir G. Shenton), who had last year obtained leave of absence, had not yet returned from London, and it would be necessary to elect someone to preside until his return.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It gives me much pleasure in proposing that the Hon. J. W. Hackett take the Chair. Last session the hon. member filled a similar position, and though in asking him again

to occupy the Chair we are asking no small sacrifice, seeing that the hon. gentleman's time is so largely taken up, yet I am sure he will fall in with our request and fill the position, which he will do with credit to this honourable House.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. I hope the hon. gentleman will accept the position; he has had great experience, and will uphold the dignity of the Chair.

Question put and passed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT, upon taking the Chair, said: I have to return my sincere thanks to the House for the great honour it has done me, and I beg to submit myself to its pleasure.

#### OPENING BY COMMISSIONERS.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMISSIONERS (Sir Alexander Onslow and Mr. Justice Stone) having entered the Chamber, a Message was sent to the Legislative Assembly asking for the presence of hon. members in the Legislative Council Chamber.

The members of the Legislative Assembly, in obedience to the message,

having arrived, the senior Commissioner read the following speech:—

HON. GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

We have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to inform you that at 3.45 o'clock this afternoon the causes of His Excellency's calling this Parliament will be declared to you; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should be first chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and having been duly sworn by the Commissioner appointed by His Excellency, you do elect your Speaker and notify the same to His Excellency.

The members of the Assembly then returned to their own chamber.

#### SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The following members, elected since the prorogation, took and subscribed the oath of allegiance as required by law, and signed the Members' Roll:—G. Randell, A. P. Matheson and H. G. Parsons.

The Acting President then left the Chair until a quarter to 4 o'clock.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

At 3.45 o'clock His Excellency the Governor entered the Council Chamber, and, the members of the Legislative Council having also arrived in obedience to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

On meeting you for the first time after the recent general elections, I note with satisfaction that the further representation of the people in Parliament has been effected under the provisions of the Act of last year for the amendment of the Constitution.

You have been called together at a somewhat earlier date than was at first intended, for two special purposes, namely, to afford you an opportunity of considering and amending the Draft Bill to con-

stitute the Commonwealth of Australia, and to enable you to grant temporary supplies for the use of the Public Service during the months of September and October next.

Copies of the Bill I have referred to will be laid before you as framed and passed by the Federal Convention which met at Adelaide in March last. Such amendments of the Bill as may be passed by the several Parliaments of Australia will be considered by the Federal Convention at its adjourned meeting to be held in Sydney on the 2nd day of September next, and it is desirable that Western Australia should take part in the final deliberations of the Convention at that meeting.

In order to enable the delegates to the Convention to be in Sydney by the 2nd proximo, it is not proposed to ask you to proceed with any further business beyond the matters to which I have alluded.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The finances of the colony are in a satisfactory position. The financial year closed on the 30th June, when the estimated revenue was more than realised, and a surplus remained of £312,000. The Government have £96,226 available for present requirements, and are not indebted to any of the financial institutions of the colony.

The funds to the credit of the Savings Bank account steadily increase each week, and now stand at £242,650.

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The monthly output of gold is satisfactory and well maintained, with every appearance of a substantial increase as additional machinery is erected.

The continued demand for agricultural land and the preparation of fresh areas for food production is most encouraging.

I now declare this session open, and leave you to the consideration of the important Bill to be submitted to you, with the full assurance you will give your earnest and close attention to so important and far-reaching a measure.

## PAPERS, &amp;c., PRESENTED.

By the ACTING PRESIDENT: (1.) Copy of the Governor's opening Speech. (2.) Report on the Public Accounts for the financial year ending 30th June, 1896, together with the Auditor General's Annual Report—(ordered to be printed).

By the MINISTER OF MINES: (1.) Report of the Collector of Customs and Registrar of Shipping. (2.) Report of Joint Library Committee relating to the reporting of Parliamentary Debates—(ordered to be printed).

## RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTION: TENDERS ACCEPTED.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) said: I desire to inform the Council that two tenders for railway construction were received to-day in connection with two important works; and, as it may be of considerable interest to hear the prices, I will read them as follow:—Kalgoorlie-Menzies Railway, tender accepted, £137,851; York-Greenhills Railway, also accepted, £32,879. In the former case I may state that the Government estimate of the cost of the work was £150,000, so that we have gained an advantage by accepting the present tender.

## CEMETERIES BILL.

Introduced (upon leave given) by the MINISTER OF MINES, and read a first time.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

HON. H. G. PARSONS: Sir, I rise to move the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. Before stating the terms of the Reply, I think it my duty to say a few words in regard to the main topics, federation and finance, touched on in it, especially in regard to their bearings on the gold districts and the colony at large. I would be diffident on such an occasion, only that I know how much indulgence is shown in this House to a new member under the circumstances. The Speech of His Excellency deals chiefly with the great question of intercolonial federation. We are called together thus early to amend the Draft Bill and to vote Supplies for the months of September and October. I think this House will recognise, and that the whole colony will recognise, the urgency

of this matter and the necessity for intercolonial federation, at any rate, in the long run. The necessity for such federation is especially felt in the district from which I come, because intercolonial federation means inevitably intercolonial free trade, and that is what we wish to see at some day or other established. But we feel, and I venture to believe that the whole colony feels, that the federation movement must not be unduly hastened, and that, while it is before everything necessary for the dignity and honour as well as for the profit of this colony that the representatives of this colony should be at Sydney on September 2, and should take their due part in the deliberations of Australasia, and in moulding the Bill which will hereafter affect the destinies of this continent, at the same time we feel that we are postponing the immediate and pressing interests of the colony as a whole in order to allow our representatives to be there, leaving Western Australia to join whenever it seems good. At the same time we feel that it is a great question, that of giving up the control of all our public works and revenue, and that while Western Australia is a sturdy youngster, still it is a youngster and requires nursing. What I mean to say is that I do not think any particular pressure should be brought upon us in the way of urging the Government to act in a way that does not recommend itself to the common-sense of the whole colony or conduce to the permanent interests of the colony as a whole. There is one thing, however, which I would like to say before I go any further. We would desire the Government, in the interests of the colony, not to put off the re-assembling of Parliament too long. It may appear to some of us that the session has been already put off too long and that we might have been sitting before now. I regret that there was no allusion in the Speech to the Mining Commission. The constitution of the commission is of paramount importance to the interests of the colony. Who shall sit on it and what they will do when they are sitting are matters of great importance, and the way in which they shall conduct their deliberations is of equal importance. I do not know what the plans of the Government are, but if we could manage to sit in October it would be in the interests of the

colony, and whenever Parliament does reassemble it would be in the interests of the colony if that Commission were ready to report, so as to enable Parliament to deal with the questions connected with mining—questions which affect the credit of the colony and the individual credit of every member in the colony. We recognise—at any rate I do—the vigour and capacity of the departments, and, in fact, of the whole policy of the Government in the direction of public works, particularly with regard to the railways and the water supply. I have watched for some time now the development of the colony, and I feel that we are deeply indebted to the energy of the Government. At the same time, there are certain reforms which are absolutely and imminently necessary, and I think it will be advisable that they should be introduced with as little delay as possible. The questions of goldmining leases, the extra security of tenure, and the settlement of the labour conditions—the final settlement, I mean so far as finality can be obtainable in politics—the establishment of batteries, the prospect vote both for prospecting and for deep sinking, which is only prospecting perpendicularly, and the enforcement of regular returns from the goldmining leases and companies—these are questions that recommend themselves for consideration. Those of us who know the course of business in London and in this colony, and who are aware of the importance of these questions to the prosperity of this colony, will be glad to see them dealt with as soon as possible. The establishment of a local share register and the final settlement of the attitude of the colony towards the great water scheme, which has been brought forward with the best intentions in the world, are also matters that require consideration and that should be dealt with as soon as possible. We may congratulate ourselves on the steady increase of gold production. I do not know whether the returns have been published, but I believe they will be found to be extremely satisfactory. They will be watched with the greatest interest in the other colonies. Our prosperity as a mining community is linked with the prosperity of the agricultural districts, and I hope for a long time to come it may remain so. I hope to see the agricultural

industry fostered and nurtured and making large progress by the aid of moneys invested in it by those who are fortunate enough to make money in the inland portion of the colony. It is not only on the coast indeed that agriculture and the pastoral industry can succeed. Inland there are large tracts ready for cultivation and occupation. It was regarded as farcical some months ago to talk of the pastoral industry being conducted on a commercial basis like mining but we have got beyond that now, and I hope to see the agricultural and pastoral industries enjoying their share of prosperity with the rest. I hope to see all hon. members in this House working together in unison for the advancement of the best interests of the colony as a whole. I also hope to see all parts of the colony working together in the best possible feeling and all industries sharing in the general prosperity. I now beg to propose that the following Address-in-Reply be presented to His Excellency the Governor:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Council of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection to our Most Gracious Sovereign.

We thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been good enough to deliver to us.

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 tend to beneficial results and the welfare of this colony.

HON. J. H. TAYLOR: I have much pleasure in seconding this motion, and in doing so, I may congratulate the House upon the advent amongst us of the mover of the motion, who has shown us that he will not often have to ask for the indulgence of the House. He has clearly shown that he will be able to hold his own, and I hope he will take an active part in the debates. Touching upon the Governor's Speech, I am glad of the extraordinary representation which the country now has both in this Legislative Council and in

the House of Assembly, and I have no doubt, from what I know of the men, they will take a very active part in the debates, and will be able to give both Houses much valuable and useful information tending to the advancement of the gold-fields, on which the colony so largely depends. This colony, which now holds a position in the front rank of gold-producing countries, has before it ample evidence that it will hold a higher position before long. As regards the very great question of federation, you know, sir, I was present at the Convention. I was there more as a student of the question than a debater, and it was a great privilege to be present at such a school and to meet so many of the most brilliant and greatest men in Australia on this subject. I came away thoroughly convinced that for the future greatness of Australia federation is absolutely necessary. When federation is once adopted I believe there is no reason why the Commonwealth of Australia should not occupy, in years to come, the same position in the world that the United States of America now hold. Although a patriotic Australian—I am a West Australian first—I cannot but feel that the time for West Australia to federate with the other colonies has not yet come. One of the main points of the federation is the division of the colonies' revenues. That revenue from the various colonies is proposed to be derived from customs duties with a uniform tariff. For many years to come the customs revenue of West Australia will be far more per head of the adult population than any of the other colonies. The male adult population of West Australia is so much larger in proportion to the other colonies, the male adults being the great consumers of the articles excised, such as spirits and various drinks, that the revenue in West Australia from customs is much greater per head than any of the other colonies; and it is proposed that the customs revenue of the various colonies, gradually at first, should be thrown into a common purse; and as long as the disparity of population exists, and it must exist for some time, it will be unfair to West Australia to join in the federation movement. At the present moment I am perfectly convinced that Federated Australia is the secret of the great Australia of the future; and I hope

before many years to see the time and opportunity for West Australia to join with the other colonies of Australasia. At the same time, perhaps, it is right that we should still be represented at the Federal Convention, and still take a part in framing a Constitution to which we hope to belong at a later period. From that point of view I am in favour of the members of the Federal Convention for this colony proceeding to Sydney, to join in the debate and help to frame a constitution which will make Australia one of the greatest countries in the world in time to come. We may fairly congratulate ourselves on the financial position of the colony. We have been through a time of depression, certainly, but that depression is not the result of any going back of the prosperity of the colony, but rather of an inflated position a short time before. Even with that, our position is certainly a most satisfactory one, and I only hope, that with care and caution, our position next year will be even more satisfactory. As regards the gold outlook, the Speech refers with satisfaction to the monthly gold output, which is well maintained with the additional machinery. Perhaps I should be allowed to make a few remarks on this. A great deal of ore is now being found at a great depth which is not being treated by the machinery which we have at the present time, and it will be some time before the new machinery is erected. Consequently a large quantity of ore is shipped to South Australia and a large portion of the gold output has during the past months gone away. The output rose as high as £59,000 per month. Last month there was a falling off: that in a large measure was due to the cessation of shipments. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the Government on this question. Some time ago the Government, very liberally indeed, offered to carry ore to the sea coast at 16s. 3d. per ton. That is about as low for a journey of 400 miles as can be found in any part of the world; but it was found that, through the fault of someone, a certain amount of stone was lost or stolen, and now the department refuses to give receipts for the ore, and, consequently, the shipments were stopped for a couple of months, which affected the gold output. But the officers of the department, as

business men, were quite right to refuse to take the responsibility at 16s. 3d. per ton for 400 miles. No one can argue against that. They, as business men, refused to take the responsibility. I would appeal to the department to look at it not so much from a business point of view as from a patriotic point of view. Mine owners will not ship ore except at a low rate, but at a low rate the department will not take the responsibility. I think the Government might take the responsibility or exercise more care and protection. At once there would be larger quantities of ore shipped and the output will be greatly increased, and the increase directly or indirectly would do good to the colony. It will far and away out-balance any loss the Government might be involved in in the loss of a few pounds of ore. I cannot see how there can be any loss if sufficient care is taken to guard against it. This may be slightly wandering from the Speech, but it is an important point, a very important one, and I thought I would take the opportunity of bringing it under the notice of the Government. I do not blame the Government for not taking the responsibility, but I appeal to them to look at the matter more from a patriotic point than a strictly business point. I think the country may congratulate itself on the extra demand for agricultural land. Large areas of land have been taken up in various parts of the country. Many men who were looked upon as birds of passage are now taking up land, and are now looked upon as *bona fide* settlers. They are trying, and in many instances with success, to make the colony, in more ways than one, a producing colony. I may be excused if I touch upon the timber lands and express my satisfaction at their promised development. I saw in a newspaper the other day that the Minister of Lands proposed to bring forward his new Forests Bill to improve the present regulations, which are not favourable towards the cutting and export of timber on a large scale, except in regard to those people who have vested interests. I think all the members of this House and the country may feel perfectly satisfied that although a depression has existed, and does exist, it is only a thin depression, only a very slight veil over the blue sky of prosperity which is stretching over us,

and before long our prosperity will be greater than we have ever dreamt of before.

HON. E. McLARTY moved the adjournment of the debate until the next sitting day.

Put and passed.

THE ACTING PREMIER (the Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) moved, "That the House at its rising do adjourn until 4.30 p.m. next day."

Put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 4.30 o'clock until next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th August, 1897.

Meeting of the Assembly—Message: Opening Proceedings—Swearing-in of Members—Election of Speaker—Presentation of the Speaker-Elect—The Governor's Opening Speech—Motion: Address-in-Reply—Papers, &c., Presented—Roads and Streets Closure Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

#### MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.30 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which Proclamation was read by the Clerk.

#### MESSAGE—OPENING PROCEEDINGS.

A Message from the Commissioners appointed by the Governor, to do all things necessary for the opening of Parliament, requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber; and hon. members having accordingly repaired to that chamber and heard the Commission read, they returned to this chamber.