

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Legislative Council—Second Session of 1881.

Opened on Monday, 25th July, 1881.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 25th July, 1881.

Opening of Council—The Governor's Speech—Privilege Bill (Seab Act Amendment Bill, 1881): first reading—Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech—Adjournment.

OPENING OF COUNCIL.

THE Council was prorogued by His Excellency the Governor on the 7th April, 1881, until the 6th June next ensuing; thence to the 4th July, 1881; thence to 25th July, 1881, on which day it met for the despatch of business.

The Council met at two o'clock, p.m.

Shortly afterwards, HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR entered the Chamber, and took the Chair.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

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

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF
"THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.—

"In the Speech with which I opened the
"Special Session of the Legislative Council in March last, I passed in review
"the financial transactions of the Colony
"for 1880, and placed before you a
"statement showing the position in
"which we stood on the 31st December
"last. Since then, a considerable improvement has taken place in the
"Financial condition of the Colony, and
"as the successful working of the new
"system in the Treasury has enabled the
"Treasurer to issue his last quarterly

"Returns at an unusually early date, I
"am now able to lay before you a clear
"view of our position on the 30th
"ultimo.

"You will observe with satisfaction
"that the deficit has been reduced from
"£80,950 on the 31st December last, to
"£59,844 on the 30th June; the reduction being due to the circumstance
"that since the 1st of January we have
"paid off liabilities to the amount of
"£10,705, and further that the revenue
"for the six months exceeded the total
"expenditure by £9,647. I may add
"that the statement of expenditure for
"last quarter includes an item of £6,963
"on account of the Beaver Arbitration
"case, as also the ordinary charges for
"the month of June, which under the
"old system would not have been
"brought to account until July.

"As our deficit is about to be further
"reduced, by the restoration to general
"revenue of £50,000 on account of the
"Eucla Telegraph Line, we may confidently expect—even if our credit
"balance at the end of the present year
"should prove less than was originally
"anticipated—to clear off the whole of
"the deficiency within the next twelve
"months at the latest.

"This is a prospect on which I have
"much pleasure in congratulating you,
"as a deficit on current account is a
"serious detriment to the Colony, and
"necessitates the postponement of many
"desirable undertakings.

"The Revenue for 1882 is estimated
"at £199,365 against an Estimated Ex-

"penditure of £188,964, leaving a probable credit balance of £10,401 at the end of the year. As compared with the current year, the Estimated Revenue shows an increase of £7,211; the Expenditure, an increase of £20,070, mainly occasioned by the additional amounts required under the heads of Interest and Sinking Fund on Loans, Works and Buildings, Maintenance of Roads, and Working Expenses of Railways. Reductions are shown under various heads of the Expenditure, but on the whole a liberal Estimate has been framed, for, as I pointed out to you on a former occasion, 'it is better to provide for each particular service an amount within which, except in extraordinary circumstances, the Expenditure may fairly and properly be required to be kept, than to frame the Estimates on an insufficient scale, and leave it to the Governor to issue on his own authority Supplementary Warrants, which have to be legalised by subsequent legislation.' If your Honorable Council will second my wishes in this respect, you will greatly assist me in putting an end to the lax system of which you have had occasion to complain.

"The Loan and Railway Acts of last Session were sent home by me on the 14th April. On Thursday last I received a Telegram from the Crown Agents informing me that they have floated the Loan at an average price of £97, and that the interest has been fixed at the rate of 4 per cent. The final survey of the second section of the Railway will probably be completed by the beginning of August, and, as in the case of the first section, tenders for the extension will be invited in the Eastern Colonies, where a number of experienced Contractors with full command of labor, plant, and capital, are generally ready to undertake such works.

"Papers relative to the Intercolonial Conference held at Sydney in January last will be submitted to you, together with copies of my correspondence with the Secretary of State on the subject. As regards the introduction of Chinese Immigrants into this Colony at the public expense, the Secretary of State has informed me that strong evidence

"of injury already sustained, or likely to be sustained by the neighboring Colonies, would be necessary to justify Her Majesty's Government in disturbing the arrangements sanctioned by Your Honorable House for the very limited immigration now proposed, and that under the circumstances, as at present known to His Lordship, he is not prepared to interfere with our action in the matter. The question of erecting a Lighthouse in the neighborhood of the Leeuwin, at the joint expense of the Colonies, was brought before the Conference by our Representative. I am now collecting further information on the subject from persons interested in the navigation of these waters, and hope to submit to you a definite proposal in the matter in due course.

"Correspondence relative to the steps necessary for protecting Princess Royal Harbor from damage by siltage and the gradual narrowing of the spit behind Point Possession will be laid before you. It is estimated that the works proposed to be undertaken will cost about £700, which I have no doubt you will be prepared to appropriate for the purpose.

"A statement having reached me to the effect that the Messageries Maritimes intend establishing a monthly mail service between Marseilles, Mauritius, and the Australian ports, I have asked the Secretary of State to let it be known that if the company should think proper to make Fremantle a port of call, this Colony will be prepared to afford every assistance in its power (by the remission of port dues, and so forth) in furtherance of such an arrangement. I have also pointed out that the admirable surveys of Fremantle and the surrounding waters, recently made by Captain Archdeacon under the direction of the Admiralty, have removed all difficulties in connection with the navigation of the Port. Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris has reported, in reply, that in the present state of things the Itinerary cannot be changed, but that the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs will hereafter seek the means of giving effect, if possible, to the wishes of the Colonial Government. Despatches on this subject will be presented to you.

"By the end of this year the unexpended balance of the Roads Loan will be about £15,000. From a report which I have recently called for on the state of the Bridges throughout the Colony, I am of opinion that this sum will not more than suffice to place them in efficient repair. I therefore propose to place the unexpended balance of the Loan on one side for this particular purpose, and have re-placed on the Estimates the annual contribution from General Revenue for the up-keep and maintenance of the Roads, which from the first January next will accordingly revert to the care and management of the Boards. Whatever amount Your Honorable Council may appropriate for the up-keep of Main and Minor Roads for 1882 will be apportioned to the District Boards with due regard to the benefits which they have relatively received from the Loan, and their probable requirements during the year.

"I propose to proceed without further delay with the extension of the Public Offices in Perth, for which a sum of £5,000 was raised by the Loan Act of 1878. By the same Act a similar amount was raised for the purchase of a Steam Tug, but inasmuch as it has not been thought expedient to make use of this vote I shall submit to you a proposal for expending the money on works which are urgently needed in some of the out-districts.

"The Report of the Commission which I appointed in January last to inquire into the question of Departmental Expenditure will now be laid before you. I am indebted to the Members of the Commission for the great care and attention which they bestowed on the important duties entrusted to them, as also for some valuable suggestions, many of which I have adopted.

"The Annual Reports from the Heads of the various Departments for 1880 will be submitted to you. They appear to me to be more than usually interesting on this occasion, and will serve to give you a clear view of the manner in which the work of the Public Departments has been conducted during the Year. The Report of the Director of Public Works and Commissioner of Railways is particularly full and interesting, and contains much valuable

information as to the working of the important branches of the Service of which he has charge.

"Your resolution of the 25th March, with reference to the construction of Railways on the Land Grant System, has been forwarded by me to Downing Street, together with previous and subsequent Minutes from the Commissioner of Crown Lands on the subject. I hope that I may possibly receive an answer from the Secretary of State before the close of the Session.

"I presume that my Message No. 12 of the 31st March, on the subject of the further development of the Eastern Districts, consequent on the extension of the Railway, will now receive your attention. I shall be happy to afford you every assistance in my power in the prosecution of so important an inquiry.

"In my Message No. 22, of the 2nd September last, I informed you that I was about to appoint a Commission to investigate the Treasury and Audit Departments, and to report whether any, and if so, what improvements could be introduced in the mode of keeping and auditing the public accounts. The report of that Commission has been received, and a Bill based on the recommendations contained in it will now be submitted for your consideration. This measure will satisfy the wish of Your Honorable Council to see the Regulations of the Treasury and Audit Department embodied in legal form, and I hope that the details of it will be such as to meet with your approval. You are aware that the new system of account has already been brought into successful operation, and my thanks are due to the officers of the Treasury Department for the zeal and diligence displayed by them in the matter. My correspondence with the Secretary of State on this subject will be laid before you.

"The following Bills, with others, will also be presented for your consideration:—

"For the Protection of Oysters, and
"Encouragement of Oyster Fisheries.

"To provide for the destruction of
"Goats within the precincts of the
"Municipality of Geraldton.

"To confirm the Expenditure for the
 "services of the year 1879, beyond
 "the grant for that year.
 "To confirm the Expenditure for the
 "services of the year 1880, beyond
 "the grants for that year.
 "To amend 'The Scab Act, 1879.'
 "To consolidate and amend the
 "Laws regulating the Branding of
 "Live Stock, and to provide for
 "the due Registration of Brands.
 "To Regulate the Admission in
 "certain cases of Barristers of the
 "Supreme Court of Western Aus-
 "tralia.
 "For the Re-appropriation of certain
 "monies appropriated for the
 "purposes of a Steam Tug by
 "'The Loan Act, 1878.'
 "I feel sure that I may rely on your
 "co-operation in all matters calculated to
 "advance the best interests of the Colony,
 "and beg to assure you, in conclusion,
 "of my wish to afford you every assist-
 "ance in my power in the discharge of
 "your Legislative duties."

HIS EXCELLENCY having handed a copy of the Speech to Mr. Speaker, withdrew from the Council Chamber.

PRIVILEGE BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford), with leave, without notice, introduced and moved the first reading of a Bill to amend "The Scab Act, 1879."

The Bill was read a first time *pro forma*, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday, 26th July.

THE ADDRESS IN REPLY.

MR. HIGHAM, in rising to move the adoption of a respectful Address in Reply to the Speech with which His Excellency the Governor opened the Session, said he proposed to refer but briefly to the various topics of interest dealt with in the Speech. The Colony, from North to South, would rejoice to hear on the authority of His Excellency that a considerable improvement had taken place during the last few months in the financial condition of the country, and that at last we were placed in possession of the true state of the public accounts at a recent date. The second paragraph of the Speech informed them that a sub-

stantial reduction had been made in the deficit, which of late had done so much to cripple our action, and it was a matter for sincere congratulation that, after the refund of £50,000 out of the last loan, this deficit would be reduced to a comparatively small sum, and that within the next twelve months we may reasonably hope to find our financial equilibrium restored, and to wipe off that floating debt which during the last year or two had proved such a drawback to the undertaking of many desirable public works. The difference between the estimated revenue and the estimated expenditure for next year was not so great as he should have liked to have seen, but as the expenditure was augmented by the payments necessarily arising out of the policy we had lately adopted, namely, the prosecution of public works by means of loans, he did not think hon. members would be inclined to find fault, or to take exception to any appropriation of the public funds for the payment of interest, working expenses of railways, and such purposes. And, as they were informed by His Excellency that the estimates of expenditure had been liberally framed, he thought they might confidently expect that the Excess Bill for 1882 would be a mere trifle. Notwithstanding the increased expenditure occasioned by the charges referred to, it would be observed that His Excellency estimated that there would be a credit balance of something like £10,000 at the end of the year, upon the year's transactions, which, under the circumstances, was as much as they could reasonably expect. It would, however, be their duty to economise wherever they could do so, and, when they had the Estimates before them, they might possibly discover that they might make considerable reductions without at the same time impairing the efficiency of the public service. The intelligence received of the successful floating of the loan would prove gratifying to hon. members, and although the price realised (£97) compared favorably with our last loan, issued at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., still it was not so good as they might have expected, from the high favor in which colonial securities generally were held in the money market at home, and the advance which had recently taken place in them. He felt no doubt in his own mind that

the recent reference in the House of Commons to the irregular expenditure of public money and the unsatisfactory financial position of the Colony, had influenced tenders, and operated prejudicially to the more successful floating of the loan. He might state that he had been assured on the authority of one of our principal local bankers, that the loan could have been floated in this Colony on better terms than it had been placed in the market at home, and he thought it was a very great pity indeed that we were unable to realise more than we did. He considered that it ought at least to have been floated at par. He would not deal with that portion of the Speech having reference to the late Inter-colonial Conference, beyond merely remarking that the proposed erection of a lighthouse in the vicinity of the Leeuwin, at the joint expense of our neighbors and ourselves, was a proposal that would commend itself to that House, as well also as the proposed expenditure for the preservation of our fine harbor at Albany. In the next paragraph of the Speech they had another proof—if proof were wanted—of the interest His Excellency takes in all matters affecting the welfare of the Colony over which he presides, by the prompt measures which he took to endeavor to induce the proprietors of the new French mail service to make Fremantle a port of call for their steamers; and, though he regretted to find that His Excellency's efforts in this direction had not been attended with immediate success, yet he trusted they might result in the realisation of their wishes at no distant date. He hoped the House would see its way clear to offer some further inducements to the company in question, or some other mail company, to call periodically at the principal port of the Colony. The decision of His Excellency to appropriate the balance of the Road Loan for the repair of bridges throughout the Colony was one in which he most cordially concurred, inasmuch as by this arrangement the management of the roads would again be entrusted to the District Boards. He had always opposed both the loan and the manner of expending it, and he was well pleased to find that from this time forth the expenditure of the roads grant would be under the control of the Local Boards,

being convinced, as he was, from experience, that, in that way, every £2 spent would be as productive of beneficial results as £5 expended under Government supervision. Passing over the next few clauses, which called for no particular comment, he came to the paragraph referring to the construction of railways upon the land grant system, with regard to which he could only express a hope that before the close of the Session His Excellency might be in a position to inform the House as to the views of the Secretary of State on this all-important subject—important because it was by that means alone that they could hope to extend their railway system beyond York, for some years to come, and because such an alienation of land which was now valueless—because of its distance from the centres of population—would open up the country adjacent to it, and bring in its wake an industrial class of population, for the want of which the Colony was making such slow progress. The importance of the subject next alluded to—the development of the Eastern Districts, referred to in His Excellency's Message of last Session—was a guarantee that the question was one which would receive the careful consideration of the hon. members of that House, in fulfilment of the promise made at the close of the last Session. They were next informed by His Excellency that amongst the measures to be introduced during the present Session was a Bill to regulate the mode of keeping and auditing the public accounts. He trusted they should find that the provisions of this Bill were such as would ensure for the Legislature an efficient and satisfactory control over the issue of the public moneys, and that, upon examination of its details, it would be found to be such a measure as, if made law, would allay the feeling of public dissatisfaction which at present existed with regard to this subject. If such should be the case, he need hardly remark that the Bill would receive his cordial support. The proposed amendment of the Scab Act was another measure which no doubt would receive due consideration, and engage the special attention of those hon. members who represented the pastoral districts of the Colony; while that dealing with the admission of Barristers would doubtless

be especially interesting to his legal friends. To his mind, the Speech taken altogether was a satisfactory one, and disclosed an anxiety on the part of the Government to advance the best interests of the Colony. At the same time he could not refrain from expressing his settled conviction, that no energetic move would ever be made towards rapid and material progress whilst everything of any importance connected with the advance of the Colony had to be referred home for the sanction and approval of the Secretary of State, before it could be proceeded with. He now moved, That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, in reply to his Speech, as follows:—

*"To His Excellency Sir William Cleaver
"Francis Robinson, Knight Commander
"of the Most Distinguished Order of
"Saint Michael and Saint George, Gov-
"ernor and Commander-in-Chief in and
"over the territory of Western Australia
"and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c."*

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"It is with great satisfaction we learn
"that the deficit of this Colony is being
"rapidly reduced, and that the Revenue
"of the last six months has exceeded our
"Expenditure; and we trust sincerely
"that such conduct of affairs will con-
"tinue. We view, too, with gratification
"that this has been brought about not-
"withstanding the large claim that has
"been paid. We trust that Your Excel-
"lency's confident expectations that the
"entire deficit will be paid off in the
"course of the year may be realised, and
"we recognise that such is within possible
"means.

"Your Excellency may rely on this
"Council taking the Estimates of Expen-
"diture into our most careful considera-
"tion, and the increases proposed under
"certain heads will receive our fullest
"attention, and we shall endeavour in
"every way to assist you 'in putting an
"end to the lax system' which has
"hitherto been the practice in force and
"of which we have complained.

"We are pleased to learn that the
"Loan of 1881 has been floated under
"fairly favorable circumstances, and we
"are glad to learn that tenders for the
"extension of the railway will be at once
"invited.

"It is with gratification we hear that
"the Secretary of State has thought right
"to uphold our views regarding the
"introduction of a limited number of
"Chinese at the public expense, and that
"he has expressed his intention of not
"interfering with the action of the Legis-
"lature, as suggested by members of the
"Intercolonial Conference, and that our
"right to legislate for ourselves in such
"matters has been recognised.

"On Your Excellency submitting a
"proposal regarding the Cape Leeuwin
"Lighthouse, we will most carefully con-
"sider such.

"It is with pleasure we learn that steps
"are about to be taken for the protection
"of Princess Royal Harbor, and that a
"sum is proposed to be appropriated for
"the work.

"Whilst thanking Your Excellency for
"endeavouring to induce the Messageries
"Maritimes Line of Steamers to call at
"Fremantle, we regret at the same time
"that your efforts have been unsuccess-
"ful. We trust that shortly some other
"ocean line may be induced to call, as
"we consider it of great importance to
"the welfare of the Colony.

"We view with satisfaction that Your
"Excellency proposes to expend the bal-
"ance of the Roads Loan on a work
"much needed, namely, the repair of the
"bridges throughout the Colony, and
"that it is your intention to place a sum
"on the Estimates for the up-keep of the
"roads next year; this subject Your
"Excellency can rely will receive our
"earnest attention.

"We will take into our consideration
"the project mentioned by Your Excel-
"lency to devote the sum which has been
"appropriated for the purchase of a
"Steam Tug for the purpose of other
"Public Works much needed.

"We need scarcely say that the Report
"of the Departmental Commission will
"receive our best attention, as the opin-
"ions of those gentlemen who have given
"such great care in performing the
"labors imposed upon them must neces-
"sarily carry great weight.

"We appreciate the labors of the
"various Departments for the care shown
"in the interesting and full Reports
"which Your Excellency has caused to
"be laid on the Table.

"We look forward to the answer to

"our Resolution of 25th March, which
 "Your Excellency is expecting from the
 "Secretary of State, with very great
 "interest.

"Your Excellency's Message No. 12 of
 "31st March will receive our careful
 "attention.

"We are glad to learn that an Audit
 "Bill is to be presented to the Council
 "this Session; a matter of such grave
 "importance must necessarily receive our
 "fullest consideration.

"Your Excellency may confidently rely
 "on our giving all measures submitted
 "to us our consideration, and that we
 "heartily wish, with Your Excellency, to
 "carry out all such as may be calculated
 "to promote the best interests of the
 "Colony which we have so much at
 "heart."

MR. STONE: I have much pleasure
 in seconding the motion of my friend the
 hon. member for Fremantle. I think
 the speech that His Excellency has just
 read will commend itself to our approval.
 No doubt it would have been more satis-
 factory had His Excellency been in a
 position to tell us that, with the repay-
 ment to general revenue of the £50,000
 lately raised by loan for refunding the
 amount spent on the Eucla telegraph
 line, our deficit would be entirely paid
 off. It would have been, further, pleasant
 to have heard that the Secretary of State
 had sanctioned the construction of rail-
 ways on the land grant system, and still
 more satisfactory had His Excellency
 been enabled to state that the financial
 condition of the Colony was so flourish-
 ing that the Government was in a
 position to introduce a Bill to place our
 at present burdensome and bungling
 tariff upon an equitable and satisfactory
 footing. But, although His Excellency
 has been unable to address us in these
 terms, I think there is in his Speech
 much matter for congratulation. It will
 be satisfactory, I am sure, to us and to
 the Colony at large, to learn that the
 financial deficit is being gradually re-
 duced, and that our revenue during the
 last six months has exceeded our expen-
 diture by the sum of £9,647; also that,
 with the restoration to general revenue
 of £50,000 on account of the Eucla
 telegraph line, the deficit will, in all
 probability, be entirely paid off during
 the next twelve months. The statement

that His Excellency has made with refer-
 ence to the estimated revenue and ex-
 penditure for the ensuing year—although,
 perhaps, as compared with the financial
 transactions of the current year, not so
 satisfactory—the statement, namely, that
 the expenditure for the ensuing year, as
 compared with the expenditure of the
 current year, will show an increase of
 £20,000, is, on the face of it, somewhat
 discouraging; but, still, when it is borne
 in mind that this increase is mainly
 occasioned by the additional amounts
 required under the heads of interest and
 sinking fund on loans, and upon works
 and buildings absolutely necessary to be
 proceeded with, and the contribution
 proposed to be made of general
 revenue towards the maintenance of main
 roads, I do not think the estimated
 increase of expenditure is more than
 could fairly be expected, under the
 circumstances. The intelligence just
 received with regard to the floating of
 the loan—referred to in the next para-
 graph of His Excellency's Speech—
 appears to me to be rather unsatisfac-
 tory. I cannot say that the amount
 which the loan has realised has come up
 to the expectations which I had formed
 with regard to it. £97 does seem indeed
 a low average, but we must bear in mind
 what His Excellency told us in his
 Opening Address last year with reference
 to our position as borrowers,—that, in
 view of the unsatisfactory condition of
 our finances, we should go into the
 money market at a disadvantage, and
 that, under the circumstances, we should
 find it difficult to raise a loan on such
 favorable terms as we might otherwise
 do. I think the Council cannot but
 believe now that a deficit on current
 account is a very serious detriment to a
 Colony having to enter the money market.
 And that, Sir, is how I account for this
 last loan realising such an unsatisfactory
 price. But it would appear from His
 Excellency's Speech that there is now
 every likelihood of our financial vessel
 being soon brought out of the dangerous
 shoals into which it had been carelessly
 allowed to drift, and I think we have
 reason to hope that, with the assistance
 of a couple of new hands to keep correct
 entries of her reckoning, with a steady
 crew, and some new sailing regulations
 having the force of law, our good ship

"Finance" will soon be in smooth water again, and that the lax system of reckoning, of which the owners have hitherto had occasion to complain, will afford no further ground for dissatisfaction. His Excellency's efforts in the direction of establishing direct Steam Communication with the port of Fremantle, by means of the monthly mail service about to be established by the Messageries Maritimes, is a step that must commend itself to the approval of all hon. members, and I think His Excellency deserves the thanks of the House for the action he has taken in that direction, as indicated in his Speech. The importance of inducing these large mail steamers to pay a periodical visit to the principal port of the Colony cannot, in my opinion, be over-estimated, and I think if we persevere and make a united effort to bring this about, we shall eventually succeed in inducing either this French Company or the P. & O. Company to so alter their itinerary as to admit of their vessels making Fremantle a port of call. The détour which this arrangement would entail would be a very trifling one, as regards distance, and, so far as that is concerned, the alteration of route would be no serious detriment to the service. As pointed out by His Excellency, the admirable surveys of the port of Fremantle, recently made by Captain Archdeacon, have removed all difficulties in connection with the navigation of that port, and it is a well known fact that, in the summer months at any rate, the harbor affords as good and safe an anchorage as any in the world. There is therefore not the slightest objection on that score to the proposed change. This is a matter I have very strongly at heart, and I think if this Council, backed up as it is by the Government, and supported by the country, will make a stronger and more determined effort than it has done in the past to induce one of these companies to allow their steamers to call at Fremantle, our efforts will be crowned with success. The statement made by His Excellency with reference to the unexpended balance of the Road Loan, in the next paragraph of the Speech, will I think be read with mingled feelings of satisfaction and regret—of regret, because it is not pleasant to find that our bridges are in

such a state of dilapidation that it will be necessary to expend so large a sum as the unexpended balance of the loan (£15,000) in placing them in efficient repair. It is, however, satisfactory to learn that, from the 1st January next, the up-keep and maintenance of our roads will revert to the care and management of the District Boards. That is a statement which I venture to say will be received with satisfaction throughout the length and breadth of the Colony. My own opinion is that the up-keep and maintenance of the roads should never have been diverted from the care and management of the Local Boards. But, to my mind, the most important subject to which His Excellency alludes, and one which will doubtless occupy a considerable time, and claim the careful attention of this Council, is that referring to His Excellency's Message of last Session with regard to the further development of the Eastern Districts, consequent upon the extension of the railway in that direction. In that Message His Excellency observes that it appeared to him the time had arrived for a full consideration of this subject, "with a view to determine what steps should be taken to induce further settlement and to encourage the introduction of capital and labor from abroad." With the facts before us, I think this question is the most important one that we shall have under our consideration during this Session. Although no allusion is made in His Excellency's Speech to the census recently taken, I am afraid that when we come to have the detailed returns (as I presume we shall have), and come to analyse those returns, we shall discover a very unsatisfactory state of things as regards the adult population of this Colony. We shall find that we have had to rely for any numerical increase of population merely upon the excess of births over deaths, and that during the past ten years the number of our adult population will have remained stationary. I think this is a very serious matter indeed, and one demanding the gravest consideration in view of the large sums we have expended upon immigration, and the inducements we have held out to newcomers to settle in the Colony. It does seem strange that notwithstanding these inducements—notwithstanding the offer

of free passages and of free grants of land to the intending emigrant, we should still have to deplore the want of that labour which for years past we have been endeavouring to introduce at the public expense, and that, after all our efforts in this direction, and after all the expenditure incurred, the adult population of the Colony should show no increase. I do hope that some scheme which will be an improvement upon that which has heretofore prevailed with reference to immigration will be matured by the House this Session, and that, in the words of His Excellency in the Message referred to, we shall be able to adopt some steps "to induce further settlement and to encourage the introduction of labor and capital from abroad." It is absurd to talk about going on with railway construction and of opening up new country unless the extension of railway communication and the opening up of new country are to be the means of inducing an influx of fresh population into the Colony. It is impossible, to my mind, for a country with the small population we possess at present, to contribute the large amount we shall have directly to provide for the payment of the interest and the sinking fund upon these loans, if we have to rely entirely upon the revenue at present derived from the handful of population existing in the Colony. We must take some steps to increase the number of consumers, and thereby increase the revenue derivable from duty-paying articles, and create a market for articles of local production; otherwise I fail to see that railway extension will do us any good. It is useless to talk about providing improved facilities for bringing produce to market, when there is no market to dispose of it—when there are no consumers to whom the produce may be disposed of. If our railways are ever going to pay, if we are ever going to derive any material benefit from them, we must have an increase of population. The one must go hand in hand with the other, and it will be the duty of this House to give its most serious consideration to the solution of the question of how the object in view may best be obtained. His Excellency in the course of his Speech also states that he proposes to introduce an Audit Bill, based upon

the recommendations of the Finance Commission, for the consideration of the Council. I have no doubt that, regard being had to the importance of an efficient system of keeping and auditing the public accounts, the measure will receive from hon. members that serious consideration which it is entitled to. The other Bills to be introduced by the Government are, apparently, of not very great importance. There is one measure which I should have liked to have seen brought forward, for I think the question is one that should receive our early attention—I allude to the consolidation of our local statutes, which are really becoming voluminous, and I think the sooner we set about it to consolidate them the better. It is a matter that would necessarily involve some little expenditure of money as well as of time, but I think the results would be so very advantageous that this Council would not begrudge the trifling expenditure which such a measure would entail. Another measure, the necessity for which has been brought to my attention as a member of the local school board, is an Act for establishing a reformatory for juveniles. His Excellency in his Speech says that other Bills, besides those enumerated, will be presented for our consideration, and possibly a measure such as I have alluded to may be embraced among them. At any rate, I should like to see such a Bill introduced, and also such an amendment effected in the Elementary Education Act as would carry out some of the suggestions which have been made by the different school boards from time to time. In conclusion I can only reciprocate the sentiment expressed by His Excellency in the closing paragraph of his Speech, feeling sure as I do that His Excellency may rely upon the co-operation of this Council in all matters calculated to advance the best interests of the Colony. I beg to second the Address in Reply moved by my hon. friend, the member for Fremantle.

MR. STEERE moved the adjournment of the debate until next day.

Agreed to.

The House adjourned at a quarter past three o'clock, p.m.
