

NEW SOUTH WALES

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

THIRD SESSION OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

PARLIAMENT was prorogued by his Excellency the Governor on the 20th December, 1881, to the 28th February, 1882; was thence further prorogued to the 11th April; thence to the 23rd May; thence to the 4th July; and further to the 22nd August, on which day it met for the despatch of business.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 22 August, 1882.

Clerk of the Parliaments: Leave of Absence—New Members—Resignations—Vacant Seat—Members Deceased—The Governor's Speech—The late President Garfield—Representation of the Government—Ordinance Lands Transfer Bill (*Format*)—The Governor's Speech: Address in Reply.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at noon.

The ACTING CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS read the proclamation convening Parliament for the despatch of business.

CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS: LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDENT informed the House that leave of absence for twelve months had been granted to the Clerk of the Parliaments (Mr. Calvert), and that his Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, had been pleased, on his recommendation, to appoint Adolphus Philip Clapin, Esq., to be Acting Clerk of the Parliaments during Mr. Calvert's absence.

Mr. Clapin, as Acting Clerk of the Parliaments, took the oaths of allegiance and office.

NEW MEMBERS.

William Maddison Alderson, Esq.; William Adams Brobribb, Esq.; Thomas Cadell, Esq.; Samuel Aron Joseph, Esq.; Edward Knox, Esq.; George Lee, Esq.; John Macintosh, Esq.; Henry Mort, Esq.; Richard Hutchinson Roberts, Esq.; Jeremiah Brice Rundle, Esq.; John Bligh

Suttor, Esq.; John Sutherland, Esq.; Samuel Henry Terry, Esq.; and Edmund Webb, Esq., having been appointed members of the Council and summoned to the House, those members who were present, namely, all except Mr. Rundle and Mr. Sutherland, took the oath and their seats.

RESIGNATIONS.

The PRESIDENT reported, that the Honorable Sir John Robertson had resigned his seat in the Council; and that Mr. W. M. Alderson, who, after appointment to a seat in the House had resigned, had since been reappointed.

VACANT SEAT.

The PRESIDENT announced that the Honorable Sir William Macarthur, having for two successive sessions failed to give his attendance in the Legislative Council without the permission of her Majesty or of the Governor, had, under the 5th section of the Constitution Act, vacated his seat, and that he had in consequence thereof directed the name of that gentleman to be struck off the list of members. He regretted having to make this announcement, as he was sure it was very painful to every member of the Council to be thus dissociated from one who had rendered, and whose family had rendered, such good service to the colony.

MEMBERS DECEASED.

The PRESIDENT announced the decease of the Honorable Patrick Higgins, the Honorable Arthur Alexander Walton Onslow, R.N., and the Honorable Samuel Deane Gordon.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR entered the Chamber and took the chair. A message was forwarded to the Legislative Assembly intimating that his Excellency waited the attendance of the members in the Council Chamber, who, being come with their Speaker,—

HIS EXCELLENCY was pleased to deliver the following speech :—

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

Although the parliamentary recess has been somewhat longer than usual, owing to circumstances within your knowledge, I have called you together sufficiently early to enable you to transact the business more immediately pressing before the close of the year.

2. A bill to extend the benefits of local government will be submitted for your consideration.

3. In consequence of the efforts made by unscrupulous persons to abuse the provision of the Lands Acts to their own advantage, you will be invited to consider a bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the public estate, with the view of carrying out more effectually the legitimate objects of occupation by lease and settlement by freehold.

4. Bills to convert the public securities into a form more acceptable to the general public and to effect other financial changes will be introduced.

5. A comprehensive measure to consolidate and amend the criminal law will be brought forward without delay.

6. Experience has shown that the existing Mining Act is defective in some of the more important of its provisions, and a measure will be introduced to give the miner more definite rights, and to afford greater facilities for legitimate mining enterprise, while more carefully protecting the interests of the Crown.

7. You will be invited to legislate in view of the better preservation and management of the public forests.

8. A bill will be introduced to make more satisfactory provision for the acquisition and registration of titles to real property, and to improve the administration of the law in relation thereto.

9. The adulteration of food and drink is a subject which concerns the dearest interests of all classes, and a bill will be introduced to make more stringent provision against practices so prejudicial to the general health.

10. You will be invited to consider a measure for the regulation of the navigation of inland waters.

11. If the state of public business will permit, a bill will be submitted for the regulation of the civil service, and also bills for amending the law relating to seamen, for regulating the inspection of steam-boilers, and for other purposes.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

12. The financial state of the colony will be explained to you, and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure submitted for your consideration on an early day; and it is confidently believed that the proposals of the Government will be of a nature to merit your approval.

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

13. I have to congratulate you on the continued buoyancy of the revenue derived from all the principal sources, and on the high position which the public securities have reached in the English money market, as evidenced by the brilliant success of the recent loan. It is gratifying to know that there are few states whose credit stands higher than that of New South Wales, or whose prosperity is more generally acknowledged.

14. You will be glad to learn that the important act passed in the last session for regulating the trade in intoxicating liquors, though defective in some particulars, has worked generally for the public welfare. Notwithstanding the increase of population, the number of convictions for the offence of drunkenness at the Metropolitan Central Police Court for the first six months of this year was 2,983, against 3,980 for the corresponding period of 1881, showing a decrease of 997; while the convictions for the same offence at the Water Police Court show a decrease of 622 on the same periods. It is impossible to resist the conclusion from these figures, that the sobriety of the community has been largely promoted by the present law.

15. In addition to the 996 miles of railway in operation at the close of last year, 178 miles of new lines have since been completed, making a present total of 1,174 miles open to traffic. The new lines are calculated to affect the trade of the interior in a manner specially beneficial to the colony; and the additional extensions which have been authorised, and which will be rapidly pushed forward, will still further promote the commercial relations between the distant parts of the country and the metropolis, while opening fresh fields for settlement and stimulating the development of our natural resources. The lines of railway now in the course of construction will add an extension of 396 miles, which with the 639 additional miles authorised by Parliament will form a total within the next two to three years of 2,209 miles.

16. It is the intention of my advisers to ask your concurrence in the adoption of a system of light railways, to act as feeders to the main lines, thus extending the advantages of railway communication to intermediate districts, increasing the volume of general traffic, and opening up valuable lands now comparatively little known.

17. Much preliminary work has been done towards the construction of tanks and wells in those districts of the colony which suffer most from the want of water, and it is hoped that contracts will be taken for the execution of the greater number of them before the close of the year.

18. With respect to the important works for supplying the metropolis with water from the abundant source of the Nepean, I am happy to inform you that, with the exception of the iron piping, the whole of the works, including the Prospect Reservoir, have been contracted for, and most of them are well advanced towards completion. The great sewerage works are also being advanced with as much rapidity as the many impediments to their progress will admit.

19. Since the close of last session her Majesty's Imperial Government have presented to the colony the armed ship *Wolverene*, lately under the flag of Commodore Wilson. The Government purpose converting this vessel into a training and gunnery ship, for which it is believed she is admirably fitted. Regulations for her equipment and management, and for the reorganisation and discipline of the Naval Brigade as a defence force in connection with her, will be laid before you.

20. Other matters of much interest and importance in relation to the defences of the colony will be submitted for your consideration.

21. It is hoped that time will permit of plans being submitted to you for carrying out material improvements in the city of Sydney and other of the principal cities and towns of the colony.

22. I now leave you to your patriotic labours, and pray that the Almighty may direct all your endeavours to the promotion of good government and the prosperity of the colony.

House adjourned until 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at half-past 4 o'clock p.m.

THE LATE PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

The PRESIDENT reported that he had received the following letter from the private secretary of the late President Garfield:—

Washington, 12 November, 1881.

Dear sir,—Your communication of September 29th enclosing a handsomely engrossed copy of the resolutions adopted by the Legislative Council of New South Wales was duly received by Mrs. Garfield, and handed to me, with the request that I convey to you, and through you to the members of the Council as well as to the people of the colony, her sincere and heartfelt thanks for their generous expressions of sympathy and condolence contained therein.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. STANLEY BROWN,

Private Secretary to the late President Garfield.
The Honorable John Hay, President,
Legislative Council, New South Wales.

**REPRESENTATION OF THE
GOVERNMENT.**

Mr. A. CAMPBELL: I have to state to the House that I have been requested by the Ministry to take charge of any formal business to be transacted here to-day, and for this day only, pending the appointment of a Minister to represent the Government in room of my honorable and learned friend, the former Postmaster-General. I must ask the permission of the House to act in this way, as I am not invested with any official capacity.

**ORDNANCE LANDS TRANSFER BILL
(Formal).**

Bill presented, and read the first time.

**THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS
IN REPLY.**

The PRESIDENT reported the speech delivered by his Excellency the Governor.

The speech was read by the clerk.

Mr. KNOX: I beg to move that the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech which his Excellency has been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament:—

*To his Excellency the Right Honorable
Lord AUGUSTUS WILLIAM FREDERICK
SPENCER LOFTUS, Knight Grand Cross
of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath,
a Member of her Majesty's Most Honor-
able Privy Council, Governor and Com-
mander-in-Chief of the colony of New
South Wales and its dependencies.*

May it please your Excellency,—

We, her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our thanks for your Excellency's speech, and to assure you of our deep and unfeigned attachment to her most gracious Majesty's throne and person.

2. The important bill to consolidate and amend the Lands Acts will receive the most careful consideration at our hands, with the desire that a sound and comprehensive measure may be passed into law.

3. The other measures to be laid before us will receive our anxious attention when they are introduced.

4. We rejoice with your Excellency in the buoyant state of the public revenue, and the high credit of the colony in England, and we join in the prayer that our labours may be directed to the advancement of the public welfare.

Although I am one of the original members of this House, and one of the five remaining out of thirty-eight who were appointed in 1856, I think it a fortunate circumstance for me that I am able to claim the privileges accorded to the youngest member, and to ask for that indulgence which is generally extended to honorable members in the position which I now occupy. I do not know the reason why I have been called upon to perform this task, but I imagine that it cannot be from any connection of mine with political life. Mine has been one of those busy lives which leave little time for party strife and party politics, and which almost unfit a man to undertake the duties of a politician. If I on this occasion felt it necessary to declare the most implicit belief in one party of men and one set of measures, and my most implicit disbelief in another party of men and in another set of measures, I should be very much embarrassed indeed. I feel, however, that this is not demanded. The House requires nothing of the kind from me. I am aware that any subject which has been brought before the House has always received at the hands of honorable members every consideration and every

attention free from all party spirit. I feel sure, therefore, that if I can show that the allegations contained in the speech to which we have to-day listened are borne out by facts, and that the legislative measures which we shall be called upon to consider are such as will promote the best interests of the colony, I shall have the sympathy of the House in moving the adoption of the address in reply. What are those allegations? They are allegations as to the buoyancy of the revenue which I venture to associate with the prosperity so generally acknowledged to prevail, and which is referred to in the 13th paragraph of the speech, the beneficial effects upon trade resulting from the extension of our railways, and the high position held by our public securities. We have also a promise that our public securities shall be converted into a form more acceptable to the general public. The following figures, which I have taken from the returns of the revenue for the years ending 30th June, 1881, and 30th June, 1882, bear out so completely the statement as to the buoyancy of our finances that I need only quote them without saying one word more on the subject:—The Customs revenue has increased from £1,393,675 for the year ending 30th June, 1881, to £1,542,587 for the year ending 30th June, 1882; the revenue from stamps for the same periods from £192,502 to £228,517; the income from railways from £1,459,683 to £1,665,019; the revenue from post and telegraphs from £330,413 to £386,152. Thus the total return from taxation and services, without the revenue derived from land, has increased from £3,376,276 for the year ending 30th June, 1881, to £4,259,801 for the year ending 30th June, 1882. The land revenue has increased from £2,483,000 for the year ending 30th June, 1881, to £2,953,996 for the year ending 30th June, 1882; and the total income from £5,859,585 for the year ending 30th June, 1881, to £7,213,797 for the following year. I think there is no necessity for me to say one word more as regards the buoyancy of the revenue, and that buoyancy goes to prove the general prosperity which is referred to in the speech of his Excellency. It may be doubted whether this prosperity is the outcome of success in pastoral and agricultural pursuits; whether it is the outcome of extended industries;

whether it is the outcome of full employment in the great industries of the colony; or whether it is not owing in part only to this and in part to the enormous government expenditure upon railways and other public works—an expenditure which has enabled every man who wants work not only to get it but also to get very high wages for his labour. It may appear an open question whether the prosperity of the country is the result of one or all of these causes; but my own opinion is that it is the result of all operating together. Be that as it may, the question is not: is there any general prosperity? The question is: how can we best take advantage of this great prosperity to promote the permanent interests of the colony? With regard to the extension of the railways, I remember seeing in the newspapers, a few weeks ago a speech delivered at Hay by the Commissioner for Railways. The commissioner stated in that speech that although we had only a population of 700 for every mile of railway as against 2,000 in England for every mile of railway; and that although we had only 1,157 miles of railway, or about that number, as against 20,000 miles of railway in England, which had cost an amount just equal to the British national debt, and that, notwithstanding that we are a small community of only 750,000 people, we were able last year to produce a revenue of 5.31, or a little over 5½ per cent. upon the whole cost of our railways. In England, where many of the railways have been in existence for thirty or forty years, and where £750,000,000 have been spent in railway construction, they have only succeeded as yet in raising an income of about 4½ per cent., whilst we here with our small railways and our sparse population have been able to obtain upwards of 5 per cent. This could easily be accounted for if our passenger and goods traffic were carried at higher rates than they used to be; if, in comparing our railway traffic with the coach and bullock traffic of forty years ago, it was found that we are paying higher rates than were charged in those days. But the reverse is the case. Not only are we paying far less than we paid then; but I venture to assert that the time and the labour which have been saved by the use of railways instead of the old means of communication have added

millions and millions to our national wealth. I quite understand how it is that our debentures are so favourably regarded in the home market ; but I say it is without precedent that a young colony like this should be borrowing money at less than 4 per cent. and investing it in public works which return upwards of 5½ per cent. Is this not a sufficient reason why our debentures should stand so high in England ? It is ; and I think we are amply rewarded for our efforts in the past by having been able to realise such a state of things. The speech of his Excellency refers to the very high rates of the last loan. I believe it is a fact that the rates which we actually obtained were rather lower than those which we received for the previous loan ; but it is utterly impossible to compare the circumstances of one time with those of another in the English money market, and I think we have been exceedingly fortunate in realising 103 for debentures yielding only 4 per cent. interest. I have no doubt that our debentures, high as they stand at present, will go on gaining influence in the English market. I believe that if the Government carry out the proposal referred to in the speech of his Excellency to convert the public securities into inscribed stock—for I cannot understand that the paragraph in the speech means anything else,—I believe that the time is not far distant when our debentures will rank second only to consols, and when we may expect to issue them at 3½ per cent., and not much below par. I think I have now disposed of the allegations as to the buoyancy of the revenue, the beneficial effects of our railway expenditure, and the high position of our public securities. Before touching upon another question, I will allude to the enormous amount of labour which is being absorbed in the construction of our railways and other public works. I regret that we do not find one word in the speech in reference to immigration. Considering the enormous amount of labour that the Government are absorbing at the present time, I think that we who have large industries dependent upon labour have a right to claim that at least some portion of that labour shall be drawn from the home country. I hope, and I still believe, that a scheme of immigration will form part of

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the policy of the Government. It is not mentioned in the speech, however, and I thought it right to notice the fact. I hope the Government will emulate the Government of Queensland, who have put £250,000 on their estimates for immigration for this year alone. I will now deal with those other parts of the speech which contain promises, partly of action and partly as to the introduction of certain measures for the consideration of the House. I will deal with these altogether for the sake of brevity. Those promises are as follows:—To construct tanks and wells in dry districts ; to carry out with energy and promptitude the projected metropolitan sewerage and water works ; to effect some material improvements in Sydney and other cities of the colony ; to amend the mining law ; to bring in a bill to provide for the preservation of forests ; a bill to prevent the adulteration of food and drink ; a bill to regulate the navigation of inland waters ; and a bill to provide for the inspection of steam-boilers. These are all eminently practical measures, and, if carried out, calculated to prove a great boon to the country. Every one will admit their importance, and honorable members will be prepared to give them their best attention. In reference to the inspection of steam-boilers, I wish to mention that some time ago I received a lecture from either the *Sydney Morning Herald* or the *Echo* on the subject of a letter which I never wrote, and with which I had nothing to do. That letter did not emanate from me, though it emanated from one in whom I thoroughly believe. I have never written a word about the inspection of steam-boilers, either afloat or ashore. It would be unbecoming in me to offer any remarks on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, as that measure has already been twice before the Council, and honorable members who have sat in the House during the last two years must be thoroughly acquainted with it. I have no doubt that the bill will receive the careful consideration which honorable members have given to it on past occasions, and I hope that it will be passed by the other House. The two great measures which we shall have to discuss during the present session, are the Local Government Bill, and a bill to amend the land laws. I think honorable members will agree that

the Local Government Bill refers to a subject of very great importance. I do not believe that it is in our power to pass any law upon this subject, which can have any material effect during the next few years. We may be able to do what they have done in Victoria, to establish municipalities, with the same powers as those possessed by the shire councils in that colony, so as to put an end to a good many of those local claims made on the Government at present. We may place local affairs under the management of local taxpayers, and we may do a still better thing than that, we may be able to relieve the Government of the pressure of all those local demands which they have at present to deal with; we may relieve them of that political pressure which is brought to bear on them, by those who think that the only duty they have to perform is to get all they possibly can for their own constituencies, and to leave all the others without anything. This I think is one of the great advantages that local government would confer upon us. When our cities and towns are larger, and our population is counted by millions instead of by hundreds of thousands, then I think such a measure will have some real effect, so far as the government of the interior is concerned. In the meantime, however, the measure may relieve the Government of trouble; it is one which requires the gravest consideration, and which I hope will become law. I come now to the most important subject which will occupy our attention, and that is the amendment of the land laws. I am glad that this matter is to come before the Council, and that every one will have an opportunity to express his opinion upon it. I am one of the warmest advocates in the colony for free selection in agricultural areas. I have seen the advantage of it on the Manning, the Hunter, the Macleay, the Clarence, the Richmond, and the Tweed, and those who can look back more than forty years, and who visited those districts long before free selection began, and who know what improvements have since been made, will bear me out when I say that free selection has done a wonderful amount of good on all those rivers. It has converted what was an almost impenetrable scrub into cultivated fields, worth £20 or £30 an

acre. It has brought together large communities on those rivers, and it has greatly enriched all the purely agricultural districts in which it has come into operation. But there is also a dark side to our system of free selection. Selection has been carried on by persons who had no *bona fide* intention to settle on the land. The selectors have been a means of worrying our pastoral tenants, they have been a means of interfering with the pastoral tenants simply for the purpose of levying black-mail upon them. They have compelled the pastoral tenant not only to purchase large areas of land which he did not want, but also to pick the very eyes out of the country; and in doing so their proceedings have led—I will not say to perjury—but to the grossest perversion of truth. I hope we shall be able to find some means of altering the law very materially. The present system of free selection has had a still worse effect than those I have mentioned. It has caused the useless alienation of 20,000,000 acres of land which need not have been sold. If we had had no free selection before survey, if the pastoral tenants had had a reasonable tenure which would have enabled them to pay a much larger rent than they can pay with a yearly tenancy, we should have received a net revenue from our lands largely in excess of the amount we have received during the last twenty years, namely, from 1862 to 1882. Not only would the net income have been much larger but we should have had that 20,000,000 acres to fall back upon, which is now entirely lost to the Government. Of all the subjects with which we have to deal this is the one which has the strongest claim upon our attention; and notwithstanding the vested interests, which I admit have sprung into existence, I hope we shall be able to place our land laws on a more satisfactory footing. In legislating on this subject we must bear in mind that we are not legislating merely for the 750,000 people at present in the country, we are legislating for a population which in another ten years will amount to a million and a half, and which, if our progress be similar to that of the United States, will in thirty or forty years be counted by millions instead of by hundreds of thousands. Are we not bound to remember this in our legislation? Are we

not bound to remember this in the extension of our railways, and in the erection of public works? Although we may not be able to extend our railways sufficiently to accommodate the traffic of the future; and although we may not be able to construct public works on such a scale as to meet the requirements of a population which will be counted by millions, still we can make reservations of land and provide, by other means, for their adequate extension when the proper time arrives. Ought we not to do this instead of being asked to pay £60,000 or £80,000 an acre for land which has been given away or sold for a trifle, and which it is found necessary to resume for the purpose of erecting a railway-station or a public library? We ought certainly to take warning from what has been done in the past and make provision beforehand, so as to prevent such claims from being made in the future. Our unbounded resources are quite sufficient to make our prosperity continuous, provided that our legislation is good; but if in addition to this we desire to have a high civilisation, and if in addition to a high state of civilisation we would claim to have a high state of morality, we must give effect to still higher aspirations. The dominion of dirt, which has been so well grappled with by my friend, Mr. Burton Bradley, must be assailed, must be destroyed; and those filthy dens called lodging-houses, with their reeking cesspools and bad drainage—those dens to which some of the poorer classes resort,—must be abolished, and model lodgings and clean tenements must take their place. We must teach the lesson of self-respect to those who need it. The dominion of intemperance which was so ably dealt with last session, and so weakened by the legislation of last year, must be further assailed; and that foul-mouthed larrikinism which threatens society, and makes us a by-word among the nations, must be stamped out, if not by other means, then by recurrence to the use of the lash. These are great questions which will come up for our consideration some day. I remember that, when in New Zealand last year, I read a speech made by Sir Henry Parkes, in which he said that if he were spared for ten years he would make Sydney one of the finest cities in the world. I believe him. The material is here; but before his promise can be realised, we

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must upset the dominion of dirt and clear away the filth that meets the gaze and fills the nostrils in every place. It meets one in every part of the metropolis, in the streets as well as in the slums. The speech delivered by his Excellency says—

It is hoped that time will permit of plans being submitted to you for carrying out material improvements in the city of Sydney and other of the principal cities and towns of the colony.

I see in this a fulfilment of Sir Henry Parkes' promise—the doom of the dominion of dirt; I see it in the legislation of last year, whilst in the effects of the Licensing Act I see again a powerful assault on the dominion of intemperance, and a measure of reform which will make us a much more temperate community. When a Government is capable of dealing with these they will be alike capable of dealing with the lamentable vice of larrikinism. As I see a desire to work out these ends, and believe the statement in the speech, which is borne out, and will hereafter be borne out by facts, and because I believe the legislative measures proposed to be offered for our consideration are such as will bear upon the very best interests of the colony, I venture to propose for adoption by the House the address which I have the honor to move.

Mr. MACINTOSH: I rise to second the motion for the adoption of the address, but the honorable mover has left little to be said, he having touched on all the subjects of great importance to the colony, the prosperity of which has been shown to promote the buoyancy of her revenue, as referred to in his Excellency's speech. The 1st paragraph of that speech almost apologises for the length of the recess. From my experience of legislation, which, however, is not very great, I am inclined to think that recesses are usually too short. It is commonly the case that bills are brought before Parliament in a crude state, so that it is almost impossible to deal with them as they are presented; and if the bills mentioned in this speech are introduced in a more finished state, and better drafted, we can well afford the long recess we have had. I hope that when the session is brought to a close we shall not regret that a longer period than is usual has elapsed before Parliament was called together, seeing that there is this benefit to be derived. Local government is a matter

which requires to be dealt with at once. Nothing can be more important, nothing can so well teach the people that self-reliance which makes the strength of a nation as local self-government. Wherever local government has been established its good effects can be perceived in the improved state of things which meet the eye. No doubt there will be squabbles in these centres of local government, and there will be disputes and cavillings. But that is nothing. It prevailed in Sydney for a considerable time, and also in the suburbs and inland towns; but we hear of no corruption such as has been laid to the charge of men in other parts of the world. This is remarkably in our favour, seeing that many of the men engaged in carrying on self-government in our municipalities have come from other parts, and do their work in a manner that is highly advantageous. So that the more self-government is spread the better. The next paragraph of the speech contains a phrase which it grieves me to find necessary in the speech of a Governor to Parliament—

In consequence of the efforts made by unscrupulous persons to abuse the provisions of the Lands Acts to their own advantage, you will be invited to consider a bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the public estate, with the view of carrying out more effectually the legitimate objects of occupation by lease and settlement by freehold.

This is the first time I ever heard in a speech from any Premier such words as "efforts made by unscrupulous persons," and it is to be regretted that they should ever appear, but the application of them is well deserved. They refer to men who ought to be an example to their fellow-men—men of wealth, of position, of education. Such are the men here hinted at. It is a pity, having a regard to the morality of the country, that such words should be used, though they are appropriate. I hope some measure will be brought forward to check these persons, and that the punishment will be severe when it comes. Free selection I believe has done a great deal for the country. It has prevailed in nearly all quarters of the colony, and especially in the northern parts along the coast. There was a time when a man could choose land where he pleased in the northern districts, and land was occupied leaving pieces of waste land between the parts taken up, and yet for

these waste pieces higher prices have been given than any that are now obtained. I can scarcely agree with the mover of the address when he says that 20,000,000 acres have been given away. If it were not for free selection, these lands would have been valueless. I remember that thirty or forty years ago petitions were presented to his Excellency the Governor from landholders praying that they should be forgiven even quit-rents to which the first Crown grants were subject, as it was said to be impossible to pay them. If free selection has its drawbacks, there are other systems which also have their bad features. But if free selection is well regulated by the caution and vigilance of Parliament, it will lead greatly to the benefit of the country. We must leave the country open to the industrious people who may come among us. If we are to have immigration of a right sort, we must provide facilities for the people who come here to settle on the lands, and to a far greater extent than has been done hitherto. We can never have these people here unless such facilities are given, and unless we deal liberally with them when they are here. A few years ago cargoes of humanity were discharged at the ship's side, wheeled to the different towns, and shot down. Some members of Parliament waited on the Government, and by their influence effected a change. We have to compete with the liberality of the United States, and seeing how much more distant we are from the thronged centres of population in the old world, we ought to deal more liberally with immigrants, especially as we have the means to do so. Very few people can go through the forests of this country without a feeling of heartache to see the destruction of timber, and I hope the Government will bring in some stringent measure to prevent the great waste now going on, and see that trees are planted to take the places of those so ruthlessly destroyed in times past. The Lands Titles Registration Act requires some amendment. It has not been taken advantage of to so large an extent as could have been desired. The intentions were to simplify the transfer of property, but comparatively few people have availed themselves of its provisions, and I should like to see it more extensively applied. It would be in vain to

deny that some legislation with regard to the adulteration of food and drinks is required. It is the poor who are chiefly affected by deleterious mixtures in food and drink, and they and their progeny are by these means kept in a state of unhealthiness and misery, so that legislation which would remedy this state of things will tend greatly to the benefit of the whole community, as well as to that of the indigent. Our railways, I think, ought to be promoted as far as is possible, having a due regard to other calls upon the means of the state. Those honorable members who will throw back their memory to the state of things a few years ago, will recollect that many dozens of drays were sometimes stopped for months on the banks of rivers, some laden with wool coming to market, others laden with merchandise to be distributed in the interior. But now we can bring wool in a few days from parts of the country several hundreds of miles from the metropolis, and return merchandise with equal expedition. Here we see how highly important our railways have become. I have seen some hundreds of drays at Bargo laden with wool, which were unable to pass each other. Instead of cattle being now used for that class of carriage, they are employed in the development of the natural resources of the country, and give a higher value to land in the different parts of the interior. Some time ago we had to send American flour into various quarters of the colony over break-neck roads; now, when we have railway communication, we can bring wheat flour from our own country districts to feed the population of Sydney. This beneficial change has been brought about by providing good roads and railway communication. When we reflect on the fact that now our 4 per cent. debentures sell at 103, and that a few years ago, when we had bad roads and scarcely any railway communication, our 5 per cent. debentures brought only 80 or 90, it is evident that a vast change for the better has been effected; and I think the measures promised in his Excellency's speech will further tend to raise the value of our debentures, seeing that the legislation to be passed into law is such as to promote the welfare of the country generally. Other matters might have been referred to in the Governor's speech,

[*Mr. Macintosh.*

but it would be almost impossible to pass any measure that could be of more importance to the interests of the people than those which have been promised. I have great pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the address in reply to his Excellency's speech.

Question proposed.

Mr. WEBB: I had hoped that some other members of the House would have said something on the subjects dealt with in the address to be presented to his Excellency, and in reply to some of the statements made by the honorable mover. I would, in the first instance, call attention to the fact that it is not necessary to have an Immigration Bill, or that any reference should be made to the subject on this occasion, because there are already in existence regulations which have worked satisfactorily to a very considerable extent, and because the question will in proper course be brought before the other branch of the Legislature when the Estimates are submitted. I believe the present Government are ready and willing to meet this demand, which is very pressing, and calls for the serious attention of the other House. But my main reason for rising is because I am rather in a fog, being scarcely able to see my way clear in reference to the land question as it is presented. The honorable member who moved the address in reply to his Excellency's speech has intimated that some alteration will have to be made in reference to free selection. The honorable member acknowledges that it has worked satisfactorily in some districts; but from the tenor of his speech I learn that he complains of its general operation, and I presume his speech is inspired by some authority.

Mr. KNOX: No.

Mr. WEBB: The honorable member's remarks would imply that a very material alteration in reference to free selection is necessary. I am glad, therefore, that he should disclaim that he spoke with any authority from the Government. But the seconder of the address does not agree with the mover, and I am disposed to agree with the former. I cannot believe that the present Minister for Lands will change his front in any way on this question. Although I am willing to admit that if free selection were confined within certain

areas the Crown lands in the interior would bring in a much higher rental than they do at present; yet, there is another point to be kept in view, namely, that these Crown lands belong to the people of the colony, and the people have a right to purchase them when and where they choose. The other branch of the Legislature, and I hope a majority of this Chamber, will never consent to shut up the Crown lands from the people. I hope that when the bill is brought in by the Minister for Lands we shall find it in such a shape, as far as free selection before survey is concerned—not after survey,—that the principle will be retained and be hedged in, so that these “unscrupulous persons” referred to in the speech will not be able to carry on the business they have hitherto been engaged in, either by levying black-mail on pastoral tenants or by robbing the public estate. I do not believe that the system of levying black-mail, so far as free selection is concerned, has been carried on to so large an extent since the passing of the last Lands Act as it was many years before. The mere fact that a person taking up a selection is compelled to reside on it for five years has to a considerable extent put an effectual stop to the action of those who would levy black-mail on the pastoral tenants; and now when they find that they cannot succeed in this way, what do they do? It is not necessary for me to say what all know; we all have seen in the public prints that they have resorted to other schemes, and their action renders it absolutely necessary that some amendments should be made in the land laws. It would no doubt be an advantage to the public if those laws were consolidated. We have now some three or four acts bearing on the land question, and it is almost impossible for those who have to deal with these matters and wish to take up land to decide with any degree of certainty what they shall do, for notwithstanding they may read the acts carefully they cannot understand what course they ought to take so as to obtain the land they desire to have. I believe the principle of the present land law—free selection before survey—has been the cause of an incalculable amount of benefit to the colony, and I cannot sit quietly either in or out of Parliament when I hear any gentleman say anything to the

contrary without confuting his assertion as far as I can. The very fact that we have a flourishing revenue at present—so much money coming into the state coffers from the sale and occupation of Crown lands—how does this come about? Is it not attributable to the operation of this very Lands Act? The honorable member who moved the address acknowledges that the act has settled thousands of people on the lands of the northern coasts of the colony, that it has raised up large towns and prosperous communities; but if it has done so in one district will it not do so in others? I know that it has done so. As far as free selection before survey is concerned, whatever alteration the Government may make in the law, I trust the proposals made by the mover of the address will not be those coming from the Government. Reference is made in the speech to the fact that it is the intention of the Government to bring in a bill to prevent the adulteration of food and drink. Now, there is already in existence an act dealing with this matter, and those who read it will find that it is capable of being a very useful measure; but the defect is that no person is appointed to prosecute offences under its provisions. If there were such a person to inspect the food and drinks offered to the public for consumption, the act in existence would work very satisfactorily, and tend very materially to prevent the sale of adulterated commodities of this class. I do not suppose, therefore, that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a bill of any magnitude on this subject, seeing also that it is only a short time since a prominent member of the present Government carried the measure I refer to through Parliament. I support the address in reply to his Excellency's speech; but I have thought it my duty to state that I do not agree with some of the views of the honorable member who moved it.

MR. PIDDINGTON: Before the question is put I wish to express the great pleasure with which I have heard the speech of the honorable member, Mr. Knox, who moved the address in reply. As the honorable gentleman has stated that he was one of the original members of the Council some twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago, and that he afterwards resigned, I can only say I regret that the

country did not have the advantage of his services during that period. If, however, the honorable member had held a seat in every Parliament of this country since the introduction of responsible government, as I have had the honor to do, having been for some twenty-one years a member of the Legislative Assembly, I do not think he would have spoken so positively, and in the language of such sanguine hope, in regard to the bills enumerated in his Excellency's speech. I am old enough to recollect an occasion on which a speech similar to the present one, containing a long catalogue of measures—and nothing but a catalogue, or little better, as it proved,—was submitted to Parliament; and when, at the close of that session, I referred to a dozen Bills which had been promised, I found that the promises had not been redeemed. I feel no confidence that the list of measures now promised will be carried during the present session, although the honorable member who moved the address seems to think they will. The 1st paragraph says—

Although the parliamentary recess has been somewhat longer than usual, owing to circumstances within your knowledge, I have called you together sufficiently early to enable you to transact the business more immediately pressing before the close of the year.

We have heard three speeches from honorable members on the other side of the House, and I would ask whether they have not shown great differences of opinion? There is one bill in the list enumerated by his Excellency the consideration of which would destroy the prospect of any of the others becoming law during any reasonable session; and it is evident that the mover of the address holds views diametrically opposed to the policy of the Land Act which has been in existence for the last twenty-one years.

Mr. KNOX: Partially opposed to it.

Mr. PIDDINGTON: As I understand the honorable gentleman—and I go with him to a great extent—he is in favour of free selection in all the districts of the country where the free selector can advantageously apply his labour to the cultivation of the soil. Any act enabling this to be done, would be an incalculable boon to the public; but there are individuals who go into the arid regions of the back country, not with the expectation of raising a bushel of wheat, or a bushel of barley, but in the hope of settling down, and levying

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black-mail on the stock-owner. I heard the other day, from a western owner of stock, that a man took up three or four selections on a very dry part of his run, where there was no probability whatever of his being able to cultivate successfully. The squatter happened to be shearing his sheep, when his overseer informed him that the selector wished to see him. The squatter on meeting him said, "I hear you have selected so many acres on my run. What in the name of common-sense do you expect to do with it? There is no water, and the soil is so sterile, that you will not be able to grow anything on it." "Oh," said the selector, "You must not ask me what I intend to do with the land; what you must think of is, what injury I shall do you if you do not induce me to go away." It is in cases of this kind that the system of free selection works so much injury. It is quite clear that free selection on the rich rivers of the north and on many parts of the Murrumbidgee is an unquestionable benefit, and that it has been a good thing for those selectors who have settled down with a desire to obtain a livelihood by honest labour. I believe, however, that free selection ought not to have been carried into what are called the unsettled districts of the country. I have never hesitated to express this opinion, and I recollect that on the dissolution of Parliament, in 1860, I nearly lost my seat for The Hawkesbury, because I would not support free selection before survey throughout the whole country, including the settled districts, the intermediate districts, and the unsettled districts. I did not give way, and although an honorable and learned gentleman, who was then a candidate retired, I managed to get returned. As the Land Bill to be introduced is an amending bill, I think that that measure alone, to say nothing of the others which are promised, will be sufficient to occupy the whole period of the session. The mover has correctly stated that our revenue has increased. We are told that the revenue for the year ending 30th June, 1882, amounts to seven and a quarter millions sterling. When the honorable member first held a seat in the Council, the revenue did not much exceed one million, and at that time the Legislative Assembly consisted of only fifty-four

members, only half the number of the present Assembly. And honorable members were so zealous in the discharge of their duties, and criticised the Estimates so closely, that our expenditure then, comparatively small as it was, occupied the greater portion of their attention while the House was sitting. Now the Estimates cover an expenditure of six millions sterling, and is it likely that a House comprising 108 members, and with an expenditure so largely augmented, will be able to do their duty as the former Legislative Assembly was in the habit of doing it, and to deal with the Land Bill and the other measures foreshadowed in his Excellency's speech? The Local Government Bill is one of the measures in which the mover seemed to feel a great deal of interest; but the Government promised us a similar measure last session, and it was shelved. We are also promised a measure to convert our securities into a kind of stock more acceptable to the public, and the mover spoke of that as a measure to convert the debentures into inscribed stock. But is that so easy a bill to carry? Our debt amounts to about eighteen millions, and are our securities to be vitally altered by a bill passed in the course of two or three months? The faculty of hope is certainly more strongly developed in the honorable member than I should have expected in a man of his strong good sense. He did not explain how this change was to be accomplished. I suppose he will admit that the holders of the debentures cannot be compelled to give them up. Some bargain must be made; there must be some inducement for them to give them up. The honorable member alluded to the fact that our 4 per cent. debentures are above par, but so are the debentures of Victoria. We are not peculiarly favoured in that respect. If, however, we are to change them into inscribed stock, it should be remembered that there must be two parties to a bargain. Suppose I hold £1,000 worth of debentures, and I am asked to convert them into inscribed stock, I should say, "They are worth so much to me, and if you do not give me so much I shall not part with them." We cannot, therefore, carry the thing out successfully unless the consent of the holders of the debentures is obtained, and probably a large bonus will have to be given.

Mr. KNOX: It must of course be optional.

Mr. PIDDINGTON: The honorable member now acknowledges that the holder may say, "I am very much obliged to you, but I do not choose to accept your terms. Your bonus is not sufficient." The whole thing then falls to the ground. Everything depends upon the amount of the bonus to be offered to the holder as an inducement to him to part with his securities.

Mr. KNOX: Hundreds will do so without any inducement.

Mr. PIDDINGTON: This is one of those important measures which are to be disposed of during the three or four remaining months of the present year. We are also to have a Mining Bill, a bill to provide for the better preservation of our forests, and a bill to make more satisfactory provision for the acquisition and registration of titles to real property. The bill to prevent the adulteration of food and drink is a measure which cannot be passed without a great deal of caution, and doctors differ upon that subject as well as upon others. There is also a bill promised for the regulation of the civil service; but a measure for that purpose has been spoken of for the last ten years, yet it has never been introduced. The mover has told us what he thinks about the prosperity of the country, and I fully admit that there is a certain amount of prosperity existing; but, I believe, it may be partly traced to the large influx of foreign capital which we are in the habit of borrowing. The honorable member who spoke with great intelligence, and interested the House very much, referred to the large expenditure on public works; but supposing some necessity compelled us to stop our public works—suppose our credit were so exhausted that we could not borrow much more—would not our apparent prosperity be very much interfered with? The honorable member has correctly stated that the Government is the largest employer of labour, but if the Government should be no longer able to employ labour there would be a reaction, and a fall in the value of every description of property. The honorable member mentioned that the interest on our railways, after paying all expenses, amounted

to 5¼ per cent., whereas the income from the railways in England is only about 4¼ per cent. ; but that is easily accounted for. In England the Government does not make the railways. They are made by a number of private companies, and many railways are made in the course of competition which are never likely to pay more than a very small percentage indeed. In this country, however, the Government have been the constructors of all our railways, with one miserable exception, that of the line between Deniliquin and Moama, which ought never to have been made. I do not even now understand the influence which led to that railway project being entertained. The supposed profit on our railways depends very much upon the way in which our railway accounts are kept. What I mean is this : if £20,000 is expended in the erection of a station building, and the cost is charged to the capital account, which is borrowed money, you will soon have a flourishing report ; but suppose that instead of being charged to the capital account it ought to be charged to working expenses. It will be seen that a great deal depends on the mode of keeping of the accounts. My feeling on the matter generally, I am sorry to say, is of a very dispendent nature. If the Government are sincere in their desire to carry out this half-score of measures, and if they really expect the Assembly to properly criticise our expenditure of some six millions sterling, they owe an apology to this House and to the country for not calling us together four or five months ago. I recollect that two or three years ago a strong effort was made to secure the assembling of Parliament early in the year—not later than May—so that our labours might close at the commencement of summer ; and how is it that Parliament was not called together on the 1st May this year ? It appears to me that the convenience of the Government, and especially that of the Colonial Secretary, has been the cause of this delay. Parliament was prorogued on the 22nd December, 1881, and now—eight months afterwards—we are called together and expected to pass ten important measures, respecting the main principles of which three honorable gentlemen on the Government side of the House very widely differ. I cannot see why the convenience of 160

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members of Parliament should not have been studied by the Colonial Secretary rather than his own convenience. It is all very well for honorable members who attend perhaps one week out of four or five to agree for Parliament to meet during the dog-days, but it is very inconvenient for those who feel called upon to attend more strictly to their duties. One result of the late meeting of Parliament will be that we shall have monthly Supply Bills. These afford a very inconvenient means of dealing with the expenditure, because it prevents the Legislative Assembly from exercising a proper supervision over it. I am sure that if any other man in the position of the Colonial Secretary had been guilty of casting such indignities upon both Houses of Parliament there is not a man in New South Wales who would have more vehemently denounced his delinquencies than that honorable gentleman himself. Suppose that Donaldson, Cowper, Watson Parker, Martin, or Farnell had thought fit to leave the colony for eight months, and by so doing to delay all parliamentary business until nearly the close of the year, I should like to know what the gentleman who is now Colonial Secretary would have said about it. He would have denounced the proceeding and have extolled those high and noble principles which he is so much in the habit of laying down for the conduct of public men. He would have cited the example of English premiers, and he would have asked whether any one could point out an instance of a premier of England leaving the country from the month of December to the latter part of the following August. Not only would he have done that, but he would have denounced as being degenerate and spiritless any Parliament who permitted themselves to be trifled with and their dignity to be trampled upon by any Minister who took such a course. I have been acquainted with the Colonial Secretary long enough to know the remarkable facility with which he lays down high and noble principles for the guidance of public men, and I am equally well acquainted with the ease with which he discards all those principles when they come into conflict with his own convenience or his own interests. He then treats his great principles as he would a threadbare coat which he casts off as a useless incumbrance.

The Colonial Secretary has described his own conduct at a dinner which recently took place in Sydney. All his high principles are only principles which are to be held up to the gaze of an admiring auditory; they are not for the guidance of this most authoritative and dictatorial Minister. He said—

I do admit that it is quite another thing when the head of the Government leaves the country. I admit it is a most unusual thing for a person in my position to leave the country in which he is Minister, and go away to the ends of the earth for seven and a half months.

That is about half a month too little. It is eight months, and it will be the ninth month before Parliament will really be able to do anything. The Colonial Secretary goes on to say—

I do not think the country would have been benefited by the breaking up of the Government.

Here the reporter has written, "Cheers," and I have no doubt that those cheers sprang most vociferously from the members of the Government present. I do not see that it follows as a matter of course that because the Colonial Secretary found it necessary to leave the country for the benefit of his health—though I have been informed that he was very strong when he left the colony—he could not delegate his functions to some member of the sacred band of patriots who form the present Administration. What a compliment for him to tell them, "You can have no independent existence; when I go, you go too!" When the Colonial Secretary left the country, surely there was some Elisha in the Ministerial ranks who might have received the mantle of the departing prophet! I am almost afraid that the Colonial Secretary looks upon his colleagues as so many schoolboys. At the dinner to which I have referred, he speaks of them as being the "best boys on the continent." It may be that some gentlemen are satisfied with that kind of treatment of themselves by the Premier. If they are content to be told that they are the "good boys" of the Government, I hope they will be properly rewarded, and that they will receive from their master some certificate of conduct such as it is the custom to bestow upon "good boys." I have had the honor of being on two occasions the colleague of the present Colonial Secretary, and he did not find me a good boy. I am not one of those

who give way to the opinion of a colleague, unless I think that he is right; on the contrary, I have often opposed the views of Sir Henry Parkes, and am likely to continue to oppose many of them. My charge against the Government is that they treated the Parliament of New South Wales with flagrant indignity, and insulted the people of the country by not calling Parliament together at an earlier period. The Colonial Secretary might, before going away, have resigned his seat, if he were an invalid; but when I saw him in the Chamber to-day he looked as strong as ever. Looking at the reports of his statements in the public papers, it would be curious to ascertain in how many banquets, dinners, tiffins, and other like festivities he has been a partaker whilst he has been absent. Now he has returned he says he is able to fight as well as ever, and if we had a Parliament of independent men he would have to fight, and that pretty hard, in defence of his extraordinary proceedings. I have said that I have so long been a member of the Legislature that I do not attach much importance to Governor's speeches, having been so often deceived by them. The address is, I think, of a rather ambiguous nature. I allude to the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs—

The important Bill to consolidate and amend the Lands Acts will receive the most careful consideration at our hands, with the desire that a sound and comprehensive measure may be passed into law.

The other measures to be laid before us will receive our anxious attention when they are introduced.

Now, when will they be introduced? When we have devoted sufficient attention to the amending Lands Act, we shall have enough to engage us for several months, especially if the views of members of the Legislative Assembly are as contradictory as those of honorable members who have spoken here to-day from the Government benches; and as the other measures have to be considered when they are introduced, we have a right to infer that this long catalogue of measures, like others under similar circumstances, will be very much curtailed before the end of the session. I could not allow this question to pass without stating that I believe the Government, and especially the Colonial Secretary, has passed a flagrant indignity upon Parliament, and an insult on the people of

the colony, and I begin to think when the Colonial Secretary talks of his opinions being carried out, and at the same time says nothing of his colleagues, that we have in New South Wales a miniature copy of a well-known German statesman—a sort of duodecimo edition of Prince Bismarck. Circumstances will show whether I am correct in my anticipation. I complain, on behalf of the people, of the unnecessary delay in convening Parliament, seeing that the Government could have arranged to meet it in May instead of in August. The lateness in calling Parliament together will have the effect of throwing back the parliamentary business for six months, and compel members to sit probably until the 1st April next year.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 25 minutes past 6 o'clock p.m. until 3 o'clock p.m. next day.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 22 August, 1882.

New Members—Opening of Parliament—Cudgong Town Hall Bill—Ordnance Lands Transfer Bill (*Formal*)—The Governor's Speech: Address in Reply (First Night's Debate).

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at noon.

The CLERK read the proclamation convening Parliament.

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. SPEAKER reported that during the recess elections had taken place which had resulted in the return of the following gentlemen:—Sir John Robertson, for Mudgee, in place of S. H. Terry, Esq., resigned; A. J. Pechey, Esq., for East Macquarie, in place of E. Webb, Esq., resigned; S. Smith, Esq., for East Macquarie, in place of A. J. Pechey, Esq., deceased; A. R. Fraser, Esq., for Tenterfield, in place of J. Dillon, Esq., resigned; E. Quin, Esq., for Wentworth, in place of W. A. Brodribb, Esq., resigned; L. F. Heydon, Esq., for Yass Plains, in place of M. Fitzpatrick, Esq., deceased; F. A. Wright, Esq., for Redfern, in place of J. Sutherland, Esq., resigned; T. Hungerford, Esq., for Northumberland, in place of W. Turner, Esq., resigned.

The new members named, with the exception of A. R. Fraser, Esq., took the oath, and subscribed the roll.

[Mr. Piddington.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The BLACK ROD, being admitted, delivered a message from his Excellency the Governor desiring the attendance of honorable members in the Legislative Council Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER, accompanied by honorable members, proceeded to the Council Chamber, and after a short absence returned.

The House adjourned until 4 o'clock p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER again took the chair at half-past 4 o'clock p.m.

CUDGONG TOWN HALL BILL.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. BUCHANAN), That leave be given to reintroduce the Cudgong Town Hall Bill passed by this House during the last session of Parliament.

Bill presented, and read the first and the second time.

ORDNANCE LANDS TRANSFER BILL (*Formal*).

Bill presented, and read the first time.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY.

FIRST NIGHT'S DEBATE.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that the House attended the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber this morning, when his Excellency was pleased to deliver an opening speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy, which I will now read to the House.

Speech read.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. S. SMITH),—

(1.) That a select committee be appointed to prepare an address in reply to the speech delivered by his Excellency on opening this session of the Parliament of New South Wales.

(2.) That such committee consist of Sir Henry Parkes, Mr. Russell Barton, Mr. Brunner, Mr. H. C. Dangar, Mr. Quin, Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Wright, and the mover.

The committee retired, and having re-entered the Chamber, presented their report, which was read by the Clerk, as follows:—

To his Excellency the Right Honorable Lord AUGUSTUS WILLIAM FREDERICK SPENCER LOFTUS, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, a Member of her Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the colony of New South Wales and its dependencies.