

NEW SOUTH WALES PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

THE First Session of the Seventeenth Parliament was prorogued by Proclamation dated 20th December, 1895, until 4th February, 1896; thence to 17th March; thence to 14th April; and thence to 12th May, for the despatch of business; and the second session commenced on that day.

Parliament was opened by his Excellency the Governor.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 12 May, 1896.

Governor's Speech—Seat Vacated—Assent to Bills—Leave of Absence—Ordinance Lands Transfer Bill (*Formal*)—Governor's Speech: Address in Reply—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at noon.

The Clerk of the Parliaments read the proclamation convening Parliament.

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 awaited the attendance of hon. 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:

I congratulate you upon the legislative changes made last session, which have enabled me to call you together at this convenient season of the year.

2. The death of Sir Henry Parkes has evoked feelings of profound regret, shared, I believe, by all parties and all classes of the people. The public services of the veteran statesman constitute a claim to national gratitude, which has been freely acknowledged in all parts of Australia.

3. In March last, at a conference of Australian ministers, representing New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria, it was resolved that a measure should be submitted to the respective parliaments extending the provisions of the Chinese Restriction Acts to all coloured races. In accordance with that promise, a bill containing those provisions will immediately be placed before you.

4. In dissolving the late Parliament, a few months ago, owing to a disagreement between the two houses with regard to the proposals for direct taxation, my advisers also placed prominently before the electors the necessity for radical changes in the constitution of the Legislative Council. Ministers intend to adhere to the course they marked out for themselves when before

the country. A measure will shortly be submitted providing for reference to the electors of all important bills upon which the Assembly and Council have failed to agree in two consecutive sessions. A further measure to limit the number and to abolish the life tenure of the members of the Legislative Council will be introduced next session.

5. The strife in Parliament on fiscal policy having terminated, ministers are convinced that they will fulfil the desire of an overwhelming majority of the people, if they take advantage of this session to submit a number of large and important proposals, free from party lines, and affecting the industrial welfare of the whole community, — measures which for many years past have been considered urgently necessary by each successive Administration.

6. The settlers in the more remote districts of the colony have been called upon to endure untold losses and hardships, and the development of many large and fertile areas has been arrested, owing to the absence of legislation for the conservation and distribution of water. Private enterprise in this direction has also been paralysed from the same cause. A bill dealing with these matters, and defining riparian rights, has been prepared, and will be submitted without delay. I may add that the Government is taking steps to secure the services of an eminent authority to advise upon these subjects.

7. Another want of the highest practical consequence to all classes is legislation on matters affecting the health of the people, such as the suppression of nuisances dangerous to health, the discovery and treatment of cases of infectious and contagious disease, the enforcement of sanitary precautions, and the punishment of attempts to make dishonest gains out of the adulteration and fraudulent description of articles of human food and drink. A bill dealing with these questions, and placing the exist-

ing Board of Health upon a more efficient basis, will be another prominent measure of the session.

8. My advisers also propose that the present session shall not be allowed to close without a large instalment of reform in the constitution, procedure, and practice of our courts of law. The distinction between law and equity can no longer be allowed to exist. The rules of equity should prevail in every case and in all jurisdictions. Every action should be made the means of a final settlement between all the parties who are joined, and also those who ought to be joined, whether as plaintiffs or defendants. Procedure must be simplified, redress made less costly and more speedy. For these purposes the jurisdiction of the lower courts will be enlarged and improved, and supreme courts made available for the trial of causes for much longer periods than at present.

9. Your earnest consideration will be invited to much-needed amendments in the Mining on Private Property Act of 1894, and the Mining Act of 1874, and you will be again asked to pass a bill for the regulation of collieries.

10. A bill to regulate factories and workshops, especially as to the employment of women and children, will also be taken up as an urgent question.

11. The labours of the Royal Commission on Fisheries have resulted in a well-considered measure for the promotion of this national industry, which will be introduced this session.

12. A bill to extend the provisions of the law relating to municipalities, to remove serious defects discovered in its operation, and to provide, under stringent conditions, for placing approved municipal loans under the guarantee of the Government, will also be proceeded with.

13. Bills dealing with electoral reform, relief to the free selectors, the rabbit plague, stock routes, a bill to amend the Navigation Act, the church and school estates,

the amalgamation of the savings banks, a medical bill, a pharmacy bill, public roads bill, truck bill, juries bill, and other measures of minor importance will also be presented. Even though it be impossible to pass all these measures during the present session, they may be advanced one or more stages under the new standing orders, and their consideration resumed next session.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY :

14. The estimates of expenditure for the year 1896-7 will be placed before you in a form showing the changes made by the board now reorganising the public service. The new financial system is working smoothly, and I am advised that there is every probability that the revenue will exceed and the expenditure fall short of the estimates.

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

15. I am glad to be enabled to state that there is now a reasonable prospect of the whole of the colonies of Australia and Tasmania being represented in the convention to frame a federal constitution.

16. It is also highly gratifying that the Land Act of 1895 is proving, in the opinion of my advisers, a marked success. Homestead selections have been taken up by a large number of families. The growing demand for agricultural lands on the part of a genuine class of farmers is one of the most satisfactory amongst many signs of returning prosperity. In order to fully meet this demand, the Government will ask Parliament to provide, under safe conditions, for the acquisition of private lands in suitable localities for the purpose of that closer settlement the absence of which has been one of the greatest drawbacks to our prosperity and good government.

17. The Government intend to continue the policy of making light lines of railway in connection with existing lines. The growing need for a new metropolitan rail-

way terminus has brought the question of an extension into the city again into prominence. A proposal on this subject has been considered, and will be submitted to Parliament without delay. It is also the intention of the Government to ask authority for the extension to Broken Hill of the railway now under construction to Condobolin.

18. I have received with satisfaction assurances that the widespread distress arising from dearth of employment since the banking panic of 1893 has of late sensibly diminished, and that in many other directions there are signs of increased enterprise. My advisers have determined that the tendency shown by so many of the unemployed to leave the country districts and assemble in the metropolis shall be resolutely discouraged, and the claims of those who remain in the country districts will be preferred to the claims of those who do not. The network of local registration now established throughout the colony will enable the Government to give full effect to this policy.

I now leave you to the discharge of your high and honorable duties, and I pray that the wisdom of the Almighty may guide your deliberations, so that they may largely tend to the advancement of the colony.

House adjourned at 12-21 p.m. until 4 p.m.

The House met again at 4-30 p.m.

SEAT VACATED.

The PRESIDENT reported that Mr. Harman John Tarrant having for two successive sessions of the legislature of the colony failed to give his attendance in the Legislative Council without the permission of her Majesty or of the Governor of the colony, signified by the said Governor to the Legislative Council, and having thereby, under the 5th section of the Constitution Act (18 and 19 Victoria, cap. 54), vacated his seat, it had become his duty to direct the name of that gentleman to be struck from the register and alphabetical list of members.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Royal assent to the following bills reported :—

Municipal Loans Validation Bill.
Locksley Deviation Bill.
Treasury Bills Deficiency Bill.
Appropriation Bill.
Australasian Federation Enabling Bill.
Public Service Bill.
Wellington Show-ground Bill.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDENT reported that his Excellency the Governor had granted twelve months' leave of absence to the Hon. W. H. Pigott from the 1st January last, and to the Hon. S. E. Lees from the 20th instant.

ORDNANCE LANDS TRANSFER BILL

(Formal).

Bill read the first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH : ADDRESS IN REPLY.

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

The speech was read by the Clerk.

The Hon. J. HUGHES rose 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 HENRY ROBERT, VISCOUNT HAMPDEN, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of New South Wales and its Dependencies.

May it please your Excellency :

We, her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the 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 unfeigned attachment to her most gracious Majesty's throne and person.

We desire to assure your Excellency that the utmost consideration will be given to the various important measures that will be submitted to us.

We join your Excellency in the hope that under the guidance of Divine Providence our labours may be so directed as to advance the best interests of the colony.

He said : In undertaking the duty of moving the address in reply to his Excellency's speech, I do not claim any indulgence at the hands of hon. members. For, in the first place, I have no intention of trespassing upon their patience in discussing at any great length the items referred to in the speech ; and, in the second place, I feel perfectly assured that courtesy will

be always rendered by hon. members to those who do not fail to deserve it. Before addressing myself to what I may call the legislative items of his Excellency's speech, it appears to me that any hon. member entrusted with the task which has devolved upon me to-day, would be wanting somewhat in good taste and good feeling, whatever his political opinions may be, if he failed to allude to the second paragraph of the speech in which the long and distinguished political services of the veteran statesman who has lately passed away from us, are remembered. That the late Sir Henry Parkes rendered great services to this country in a critical time no one, I think, will deny ; and that those services should be thus commemorated is, I think, a fitting tribute to his memory. I have not, like other hon. members, such personal recollections of his political career as to justify me in more particular reference to it ; but though there may have been some special episodes which I would wish to forget—though there may have been some actions which I cannot indorse—I cannot but feel that he did much for the people of this colony to entitle him to our gratitude and enduring remembrance among the great names of the country. In referring now to what I have called the legislative character of his Excellency's speech, whatever hon. members may think of the quantity and quality of the subjects proposed for our consideration, I fancy they will acknowledge that it is time some attention was devoted to the social and more pressing matters of non-contentious legislation which have been requiring our attention for so long. I venture to hope they will recognise the whole of the proposals of the Government, however much they may differ as to details, to be, at any rate, a *bond fide* attempt to deal with social questions in a practical manner. Hon. members who believe all governments, and, perhaps, this Government in particular, should be severely criticised for their temporal good, will probably find among these proposals many not very new to them. This, I believe, is not uncommon under similar circumstances in other portions of her Majesty's dominions ; but I also believe that if hon. members will give that time and attention to the proposals now to be laid before them which I am sure it is the object of all of us to do, before this session

shall have closed we shall, at any rate, have gone a long way to place upon the statute-book many of the proposals which are submitted to us. The first in order is the promised measure in respect to coloured races. I feel assured that hon. members will, at any rate, be at one with the Government in this respect : that they will not question the necessity of preserving this country from having to confront later on those racial problems which are tormenting our kinsmen in America. I think it is time, in the interests of this country—and I do not think any hon. member will disagree with me—that this question should be boldly faced and promptly settled, and I feel sure hon. members will give that consideration to it which will ensure not only due protection for our own people, but a fair consideration for the rights of others. Perhaps the most important point of all referred to in his Excellency's speech is that in which hon. members are invited to pay attention to the question of points of difficulty arising between the two houses. As far as I have understood the arguments of all hon. members who have spoken on this subject since I have been within the precincts of the Chamber, it seems to me that the honest desire of everybody is to find out what exactly is the will of the people. It seems to me that hon. members contend—and I think rightly—that the existence of this Chamber is necessary as a check on over-hasty legislation—that this Chamber, as an integral part of the Constitution is intended, in fact, to be a brake on the wheels of the political machine, when, perhaps, in another place, yielding to popular clamour, real or imaginary, the parliamentary vehicle is inclined to go a little too fast. I think not one of us will disagree with that view of the rights and responsibilities of this Chamber; but I think we all admit that once we are sure that the question over which we may happen for the time to disagree with the more representative Chamber, is really the expressed will of the people, we are always prepared to give way. At any rate that is the effect which hon. members' speeches in relation to this question have had upon me; and I feel sure we will all welcome any proposal that will enable us in an honorable and amicable way to terminate questions in dispute between the two houses. It seems to me that the proposals of the

Government in this respect will, and should meet with the approval of members of this Chamber. There is no proposal to rush these matters to the electors suddenly. Due time for consideration is given to all parties concerned. As his Excellency's speech states, the proposal is that when in two successive sessions both houses shall have failed to agree on some measure of public importance submitted to them, some means shall be taken to refer the particular question in dispute to the people, to whose opinion both houses must bow. It seems to me that this is a fair proposal, that it is a proposal which will preserve the honor and dignity of both chambers, and will obviate the necessity for long and protracted discussions on matters in regard to which we may honestly differ as to their political necessity. I hope, therefore, that this particular bill—this bill dealing with the referendum in regard to matters in dispute between both chambers—will receive that attention from hon. members which it deserves, and which I am sure they are all anxious to give to it, and that before the session is closed we shall have found a solution of the difficulty which has frequently caused tension between the houses in a manner that might perhaps be obviated. There are other measures mentioned in his Excellency's speech; but I do not propose to weary hon. members by going through them seriatim, and discussing them as they arise. There are one or two, however, to which I should like to refer before I close. On the great question of water conservation I do not profess to have such information as would justify me in laying any particular opinions before the House; but I believe, and I think hon. members will agree with me in this, that this is a question upon which the future of the colony very largely depends. It is a question upon which the occupation and cultivation of many of the large inland districts of the colony particularly depends. I would say in passing, in case hon. members have not themselves had their attention called to it in the course of their reading, that some very curious and instructive information on this point appeared within the last twelve months in one of the American magazines—the *Century*, I think—dealing with this very question under the general heading of "The conquest of arid America." There they had, as we have here, large trackless wastes,

in which no vegetation could apparently live, and in which no human being could live under the then existing conditions ; but, forced by pressure of population, of late years it seems that certain portions of the American population have been trying their luck with this particular desert, and by the scientific handling of the water supply—the conservation and scientific irrigation of this desert—the results have been strikingly wonderful. We have the same sort of country here, I believe—at any rate we have large wastes. We have not the mountain streams which came so conveniently to hand to our American kinsfolk ; but we have, as we are discovering every day, large supplies of underground water which can be utilised in the same way. I trust this very important measure will receive the careful attention of members of both houses, and particularly of this House, and that with our united efforts some progress may be made in what I believe to be a very great factor in the future prosperity of the colony. There is another question I should like to touch upon were it not that I feel sure that hon. members feel as urgently as I do the absolute necessity of some reform of our present system of legal procedure. We are, I believe, perhaps the most backward of all her Majesty's dominions in that respect. We know from practical experience, in the course of our daily lives, that suitors are harassed by the delays of the law ; they are harassed by the intricacies of the law, and particularly they are harassed by the peculiar distinctions between law and equity. I think, if the Government proceed on the lines they indicate in this respect only, if they proceed to harmonise the distinction between law and equity, if they proceed to reduce the technicalities of the procedure, and above all if they proceed to enlarge the jurisdiction of the inferior courts—probably, I suppose, on the line of the English county courts—in such a manner as to relieve the higher courts of the pressure which is now upon them, and save suitors from the expensive process of having recourse to the higher courts, they will perform an act in which every member of this House will heartily support them. I regret that the great question of local government does not definitely hold a place on this programme this session ; but I am not at all sure, in view

[*The Hon. J. Hughes.*

of the burdens which hon. members placed on the people last session, that it will not be to the ultimate advantage of the people to let the matter rest for a very short time. At any rate I notice that there are two matters dealt with in two separate paragraphs of the address which will go a long way towards smoothing the path for the larger and more extended bill which I hope will be introduced in the following session. I refer to the questions embraced in the paragraph dealing with the public health, and especially to the question dealing with municipal loans. Both these questions, in my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of many members of this House, are purely municipal questions. The public health and cognate questions are not matters which ought to be thrown on the general revenue. I believe the municipalities should look after these things as they have to do in more settled countries—as they have to do in England ; and I can only trust that the special acts relating to health will be so drawn, so modelled, so to speak, upon the English health acts, that there will be no difficulty whatever when the larger measure of local government is ready, in incorporating them in that larger measure, and transferring the powers of the boards to the local authorities. On the question of the municipal loans, I think I can speak with some experience. I know the difficulties municipalities have in this respect, and I have had some practical experience in the matter. I know that, taken as a whole, the municipalities of New South Wales are paying a far higher rate of interest than in many cases private people pay for the same loans. Had they the facilities which they should have, and which they are promised in this proposal, I believe the credit of the municipalities would stand second only to the credit of the colony. With regard to, perhaps, two of the last loans floated, I believe it is a fact that, protected by the wisdom of this House and the other House, the city council, subsequent to a loan floated by the Government, actually obtained a higher price in London for a city loan than was given for the Government loan. I believe that is a fact. At any rate they got a very large premium, and they obtained their money at a fair rate of interest. I am referring to the market loan ; and I believe at the time it actually produced a

better return to the municipal council than the previous Government loan, which had been floated a few months before, did to the country. I only mention this as an illustration of what the value of the municipal securities ought to be if they are properly looked after. The Government promises that, subject to stringent conditions, a Government guarantee will be given in favour of these municipal borrowings. I for one shall welcome this very heartily, and I hope at least two of these conditions will be—one that the granting of the loan shall depend upon an independent Government audit of the municipal books; and secondly, that in every case a proper annual sinking fund shall be provided for. I feel sure that, with those conditions, and the Government guarantee, such legislation will be of very great advantage to the country. It will lessen the burdens of the municipal taxpayer by nearly one-half, and will provide what is also badly wanted—a safe and liquid security for the investment of trust funds. I think in this direction the bill will go a long way. As I said before, in these two bills after all we will get an instalment of that local government—at any rate we will have the way made smooth for that local government—which we are all so anxious to see established. I think I have sufficiently trespassed on the patience of hon. members this afternoon. I am about to be followed by an hon. gentleman who, I am sure, will deal in a practical manner with many of the questions referred to in the speech, and which I had better leave to him. Before sitting down I may state that there are two things upon which all members may congratulate the Government. The first is the information that we are given of the success of the Land Act of 1895, and of the increased demand for agricultural holdings. That, and the hope so plainly expressed in another paragraph of the speech, that the revenue for the financial year promises to be greater, and the expenditure less, than the estimates, are two things on which I think we can heartily congratulate the Government. They are two things which indicate a return of prosperity to the country, and that, I am sure, we are all pleased to hear and to welcome. I do trust that these promises will be more than realised in their fulfilment.

The Hon. A. KETHEL: I beg to second the motion just moved by my hon. friend, and I have extreme pleasure in doing so because of the peaceful tone which runs through his Excellency's speech to this Chamber. What the speech indicates, in my opinion, is that we shall have a peaceful session to do earnest work, to apply ourselves to domestic legislation; a session somewhat different from the stormy scenes that occurred here when I had the honor of first taking my seat in this House, when we were all at sixes and sevens. I rejoice at the prospect of a useful session's work; but I must express my regret that paragraph 4 is in the speech at all. It is the only element of discord that I see in the whole speech; and, speaking for myself, I should certainly have relegated it to a later period of this Parliament or to a future parliament; and as it is the desire of the Government to proceed with useful domestic legislation to benefit the people generally, I should have been far better satisfied had this paragraph not been in the speech. Unquestionably it touches a phase of politics which will have to be faced by this Chamber in the future, and I have only to express my hope that when a bill dealing with the application of the referendum is presented to this House, its provisions will be of such a character that hon. members will find that they can conscientiously accept it and pass it into law. The second paragraph in the speech is one which I can hardly allow to pass without comment—the paragraph referring to the departure from amongst us of the great public man whom we followed to the grave a few days ago. As many hon. members of this Chamber have been more or less directly associated with Sir Henry Parkes in by-gone days, assisting him to fight many stiff battles on behalf of the people's liberties, and the welfare of this colony, I trust it will not be deemed presumptuous if I desire to pay a last tribute of respect to the memory of that great departed statesman. Reference is made in the speech to the exclusion of alien races. I am exceedingly pleased at that, because it is an unquestionable fact that wherever colonisation has taken place by European people in other parts of the world where they have intermixed with alien nations, there has been an undoubted development of the vices of both, and the virtues of neither in their descendants. We

have ample evidence of that in many of the minor republics of Central and South America, where they are in a continual state of revolution. As it is desirable that the race should be kept as pure and as free as possible from contamination by inferior blood, I commend the Government for tackling this matter in real earnest. In connection with this matter, I may be pardoned if I state a fact which came under my notice, and which gave me very great pleasure indeed. As some hon. members are aware, I have a considerable interest in the north coast district of the colony. In connection with the fiscal legislation of last year, it was widely circulated in that district that it was the intention of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to retaliate upon the fiscal policy of the Government by importing coloured labour to work their mills. I desire to allude to the statement made by the able and distinguished chairman and manager of that company, at a recent annual meeting of shareholders, when he declared that no matter how disastrous the effects of the fiscal policy of the Government might be upon the company, they would not import one single coloured labourer to work their mills and factories. I think we ought to pay a tribute of respect to this company, that has very often been very unjustly maligned. In reference to the conservation and distribution of water in the interior, there is a matter alluded to in the Governor's speech which is intimately connected with that. It says, "The extension of light railways into the sparsely-peopled districts of the colony." It is of no use to irrigate the land in the far interior, to stimulate production and to encourage settlement, unless we provide means by which those who take up land in the back parts of the country will be able to get their produce to the market. The market is in the centre of population, where people are waiting, ready and willing, to consume the products of the interior. I trust the proposal of the Government will commend itself to the consideration of every member of this House, and that, as a part of the policy of the Government, the construction of light cheap lines of railway over the inland plains to the back parts of the colony, remote from the coast districts, will meet with the favourable consideration of the Council which the

[*The Hon. A. Kethel*

project deserves. Further down I find there are two measures mentioned in the speech, one of which was introduced in the other branch of the legislature last session, and the other in a previous session. The ninth paragraph says that it is intended by the Government to introduce a measure to amend the Mining on Private Lands Act. Whatever good features there may be in that act, unquestionably it has, from some cause, been rendered almost entirely inoperative. Neither the man who desires to take up a large block of land for mining purposes, nor the miner who desires a small block of land to mine on, the one representing capital and the other representing labour, has been able to avail himself of the provisions of the act. All who desire to see the surplus labour of the colony absorbed, and the mining possibilities of the country developed must commend the Government for proposing to introduce a measure which will remove those obstacles in the way of the mining industry. There is another measure proposed by the Government which also, I trust, will receive at the hands of this Council the consideration which it deserves, and that is the Collieries Regulation Bill. In the session prior to my entering this House there was such a measure introduced; but because of certain differences of opinion between the majority of the members of the Assembly and the majority of the members of this House that measure failed to pass into law. Since then there has been a royal commission appointed, consisting of representatives of mine-owners and of miners, to take into consideration and inquire into all the circumstances surrounding the coal-mines and their working. I have not seen the report of that body; but I trust that with the additional light that will probably be thrown upon the matter as a result of the inquiries of those gentlemen, we shall be enabled to come to a satisfactory conclusion, and to settle this much-vexed and long-deferred question which affects not only the safety of the mines and the value of mining properties, but also the welfare of thousands of miners and the safety of their lives and limbs. There is another item that I am sure will cause the heart of my hon. and learned friend, Sir Arthur Renwick, to rejoice, namely, the proposal to bring in a bill to regulate the factories and workshops, espe-

cially as regards the employment of women and children. I had the honor and privilege of sitting behind the hon. and learned member, Sir Arthur Renwick, some years ago in the Assembly, and to assist in the passing of a measure such as that indicated through nearly all its stages ; but, unfortunately, the bill was lost owing to the dissolution of Parliament, and the country has suffered ever since in consequence. It must be considered a praiseworthy object to work in a cause intimately linked with the name of such men as the Earl of Shaftesbury and others, who worked year after year in the Imperial Parliament to pass a measure for the protection of persons employed in factories in the old country. As the legislation there has proved to be so beneficial in its operation and so praiseworthy, I trust we shall have the pleasure, before the session closes, of seeing such a measure on the statute-book of New South Wales. Clause 13 of the speech mentions a number of measures which are intended to be introduced before the close of the session. Some of those measures have a very wide scope. There is to be a measure for the amalgamation of the savings bank, and a truck bill is to be introduced. As regards a truck bill, I shall be pardoned if I anticipate a remark that may be made on that measure. I believe that there is some kind of a measure of that sort already on the statute-book. I am given to understand that this bill will take the form indicated by the Secretary for Public Works, and noted in the press a few days ago, when he mentioned that in his electorate a great many saw-mills have stores connected with them, from which the employees are compelled to obtain their supplies. This is a subject which requires very delicate handling. Hon. members who have had anything to do with timber-getting in the country districts will know that people who take that kind of employment seldom have the wherewithal to pay for what they want, and many of the mills are situated in out of the way parts of the back country, whence it is impossible for the employees to reach the market towns to obtain supplies from there. In addition to that, it is almost an invariable fact that men entering into employment in those places have no means whatever with which to keep themselves until they earn their

fortnightly or monthly pay, and the first thing they do is to run to the store and get clothing and food for their wives and children to keep them going until they can earn some money. I trust that the Government will handle this question very delicately, because there are decidedly two sides to it. Paragraph 17 of the speech refers to a proposal to extend the railway into the city of Sydney. I had the honor to be a member of a royal commission that inquired into this matter some years ago, and my hon. friend, Mr. John Macintosh, was also a member of that commission. Whilst I think it is well that the railway terminus should be brought further into the city, I trust that the Government proposals will not involve the taking away of any part of the public parks of the city. It is a distinguishing mark of the enlightenment of men in other countries that where provision has not been made for promoting the health of the people by having these lungs of the cities, patriotic men who have made themselves wealthy have purchased tracts of land, demolished buildings thereon, and made the sites into gardens and parks for the people. I trust that the Government in any proposal brought forward to extend the railway into the city of Sydney will not touch one foot of our public parks as was intended some time ago. If it is proposed to do that, no matter how much I may be in favour of the Government measure, I will resist such an attempt to the utmost of my power. The provision of these lungs of the city is the result of the foresight of our predecessors in this country, and they are given to the people of Sydney for all time. It is not consistent with the enlightened policy of such a country as this to take away from the people their unquestionable right, their birthright, and to sacrifice the welfare of the city simply for the convenience of a few business people whose residences are in the suburbs and whose places of business are in the city, and it would be doing a wrong that could not be rectified. The programme of business which has been laid before us is at once so extensive and so comprehensive and so practical in its character that it must be self-evident to every unprejudiced observer that the man who framed it meant to go on with honest, earnest work for the welfare of the country ; and I trust that before the session

closes we shall see many of the most important measures foreshadowed in his Excellency's speech placed on the statute-book of New South Wales.

Question proposed.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : This Chamber is characterised by the fact that it belongs to no party and speaks only for the country. Consequently I am quite sure that there will be no objection whatever to the very excellent proposals contained in this programme. But I may be permitted to point out that many of these proposals are proposals that are well known to hon. members. Many governments have attempted to pass them ; but have failed. I therefore give this Government very great credit, in the first place, for the fact that they are making an attempt, at any rate, to do much-needed work in the way of legislation in the interests of the country. This programme reminds me very much of a book which occasionally I have to consult. I mean the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It contains such a large number of proposals that I am perfectly certain that if the session were extended to two or three years it would be almost impossible for us to deal with all the questions that are referred to. There are some measures proposed in his Excellency's speech which I consider of supreme importance, and to which I trust the Government will be able to give practical effect. My hon. friend who just addressed the House in a very able, calm, temperate, and excellent speech referred to the question of a factories bill. If that bill alone were carried into effect it would be a matter of very great importance to the House and to the country. In this colony we are behind in regard to social legislation. That, I am sure, everyone who takes an interest in the welfare of the country must thoroughly comprehend. There are other proposals referred to in the speech with which I entirely agree ; but there are some points upon which I should like to say a few words. In the first place, I should like to refer to paragraph 4 of the speech. I agree with my hon. and learned friend who has just addressed the House, that it is most unfortunate that the matter referred to in this paragraph should be brought forward at this time, more particularly after being discussed to a large extent during last session. I refer to the question of the referendum.

[The Hon. A. Kethel.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : A great many members last session agreed with it !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : The House did not.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : A great many members expressed approval of it !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : The House itself did not. I should like to point out that the matter might very easily have been postponed until all these other important questions had been discussed. I consider, therefore, that a serious mistake has been made by the Government in giving this question a prominent position in their programme.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : If there is only one mistake we are pretty lucky !

The Hon. J. MACINTOSH : It is necessary for an election cry !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : There can be no doubt whatever that it is extremely desirable that some arrangement should be made to prevent the clashing of interests between this House and the other House. Perhaps a change in the constitution of this House may be desirable. I have always held the view that it is pre-eminently desirable that this House should, if possible, have greater strength than it has ; in other words, that it should be backed up by the people, and should be elected by the people. What is the proposal which underlies paragraph 4 of the speech ? The proposal is to weaken this House, because, unquestionably, by-and-by, as has already been freely stated by the Premier in his addresses, it is intended to continue the House as a nominee house, but the nominations are to be only for a limited period.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB : And with payment !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : And with payment of members.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : That is not in the speech !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : It is not in the speech, but it has already been foreshadowed by the Government.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : Forgive me, the Premier distinctly said that he was not speaking for the Ministry or his colleagues !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : I am very glad to hear that all the members of the Government do not agree with that proposal.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : Quite right—I do not for one. The Premier distinctly said that he was not speaking for his colleagues, and he knows that I am one of those who would not stick up for that kind of thing at all events.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : I have always been of opinion that it is desirable to bring this House into the utmost sympathy with the people.

The Hon. D. O'CONNOR : Then the hon. and learned member will have to oppose the Attorney-General !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. I am only expressing the Attorney-General's views. He has been an old colleague of mine, and I know his liberal opinions upon all questions which affect the higher interests of the people.

The Hon. D. O'CONNOR : He is a dark tory !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : If we have a nominee house with nominations for a limited period, and with paid members, and with the referendum, the House will be really at the command of the Ministry of the day : it will be utterly useless for public purposes. Therefore, I hope when the matter comes before the House, if it does come before the House, that instead of dealing with it as is suggested in this speech, we will postpone it until we know what the Government propose in regard to the constitution of the House itself. The question of federation is referred to in this programme. I am glad to say that the federation of the colonies is almost an accomplished fact. Every true Australian wishes to see the federation of Australia accomplished. I know myself, and I am quite sure that any hon. member who has travelled in different parts of the world must be aware that the fact that we are dissociated colonies puts us at a very great disadvantage, not only in the markets of the world, but in the opinion of public men generally. As a united Australia we should have the same prominence, the same position, the same influence in public matters, especially in the home Parliament, as the Dominion of Canada has. I sincerely trust that the wishes of the Government in this respect will be speedily carried into effect. I regret that I cannot agree with that part of the speech which states that there seems

to be a great improvement in the position of the country generally. I unfortunately have had brought under my attention facts which entirely dispel any view of that kind. Our charities throughout the country are entirely overcrowded. Not long ago the Public Works Committee held an inquiry in connection with this matter, and facts were revealed in the evidence—which will ultimately, I have no doubt, be laid before hon. members—which, I am sure, will appal them. At this very time in our charities—in the Government institutions, I mean, at Parramatta, Liverpool, Rookwood, and elsewhere—the diseased and healthy are all crowded together. No classification is adopted, and the overcrowding is something extraordinary—so extraordinary that I am astonished that the Government have taken no action to remedy this serious state of things. I sincerely trust that the suggestions which have been brought under the notice of the Government in a general way, to provide for some of the poor old people, at any rate, who are housed in these charities, will be carried into effect, and that to some extent the Government will relieve these institutions and remove what I consider a crying scandal in the treatment of the poor of this country. But, sir, putting that aside altogether, I appeal to hon. members as to whether or not they consider that there is any sort of improvement in financial matters in this country. Is it not a fact that a kind of suspicion runs through all our commercial circles ? Is it not a fact that we have not the confidence which we had a few years ago in regard to our public matters ? Is it not a well-known fact that securities—landed property and every other kind of security—are in a most depreciated condition ? What does this arise from ? It certainly does not arise from any failure in the condition of the country itself. We have the same resources behind us as we have always had.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : Droughts !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : We have, unquestionably, as the learned Attorney-General suggests, had droughts. But droughts do not account for the evil I refer to.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : Oh, yes, they do !

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : There is an influence acting upon the

Government in which those who take the deepest interest in the welfare of the Government have no confidence. I speak plainly, because I know that the learned Attorney-General sympathises with me in the remarks I am now making.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: I do not agree with my hon. and learned friend, though!

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK: I am quite sure that the learned Attorney-General sympathises with me in the remarks I am making on this particular matter. With regard to paragraph 13 of the speech, I am rather surprised, unless the speech is intended as a catalogue of what is to be done within the next five years, why such a large number of incongruous bills should be associated together in one clause. They are of a most extraordinary character. Some of them I am sure will take a considerable time to discuss. We have to deal first with the church and school estate; a matter which has been dealt with by ministers, but has never yet been definitely settled, and which requires very serious consideration indeed. I am sure it requires very grave consideration from the fact that the Minister himself, who has considered the matter very fairly lately, and whose addresses on the subject have appeared in the public press, is still at a loss how definitely to determine it. Then we have the amalgamation of the Savings Bank and the Post Office Savings Bank. Is that a matter which can be very easily treated? It requires very considerable attention.

The Hon. D. O'CONNOR: It requires a great deal of consideration!

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK: But passing by these various matters, I must congratulate the Government upon being a working government. It has evidently determined to do what it possibly can.

The Hon. C. G. HEYDON: A labour government!

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK: I do not wish that interpretation to be put on the words I am using. It is a working government, and it has done good work in the past. With many of the measures which have passed into law I have not the same amount of sympathy as the learned Attorney-General may have, but I must confess that the Government deserves some consideration for the way in which they have stuck to

[The Hon. Sir Arthur Renwick.

their posts, and the large amount of actual hard work which they have done in connection with their offices.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: [*Inaudible.*]

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK: That is a matter to which this Government is supremely indifferent. I wish, in conclusion, to say that my deepest sympathy is with the friends and relations of Sir Henry Parkes. I am quite sure that in the death of that distinguished statesman the country has suffered an irreparable loss: that in the loss of Sir Henry Parkes—a man whose place, in my opinion, can never again be filled, because the circumstances of his life, and the circumstances of the country at the time in which he lived were so peculiar—we have sustained, I might almost say, a serious injury. It is a most unfortunate circumstance that the “claim to national gratitude” was not recognised in his case a little earlier than it seems to have been done by this speech. To some extent I was aware of the circumstances connected with this unfortunate statesman's life in its later period, and I sincerely regret that some action was not taken to relieve the pressing claims which were made upon him at that time. It is true that at the last moment the Government stepped in; but it would have been a handsome thing if some action had been taken by Parliament a little earlier to relieve the urgent necessities of that gentleman. Knowing him as I have done for very many years, I am perfectly sure that all his public character was as pure as any man's possibly could be, that his services in the interests of the country were quite disinterested, and that he has a claim upon the country, or, as is well stated in this speech, “a claim to national gratitude,” which I sincerely trust Parliament and the country will never forget.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: I could have hoped that this debate might have been closed without the necessity of a minister speaking; but an unfortunate allusion by my hon. friend, Mr. Kethel—for which he deserves a certain amount of credit, because in one way it shows his independence—seems to have raised the ire of several hon. members—in a playful kind of way, I admit. I refer to his stirring up this little question contained in paragraph 4. I believe it is just about as harmless as it can possibly be. It is only

the construction that hon. members are putting upon the paragraph which seems in some way to have brought my hon. and learned friend, Sir Arthur Renwick, up to this mild pitch of excitement. Although I am only going to say a few words, I feel that it would be impossible for me to resume my seat without indorsing the remarks made by hon. members in regard to that great statesman, Sir Henry Parkes, who has lately left us. I should not like it to be said that a minister of the Crown in this House, if he spoke at all, had omitted to pay his tribute of respect to that great man. We were, perhaps unfortunately for me, sometimes at loggerheads in political matters ; but I am happy to say that our personal friendship was never strained to any great extent, and that I had the honor and pleasure of being upon what I may call terms of friendship with Sir Henry Parkes a few months before his death. I think the Government in placing on record what they have done in this paragraph of the Governor's speech are simply re-echoing the sentiments of every right-minded man in this community, and we should not have done what was right to the people or what was due to ourselves, in conscientiously performing what we thought to be right, if we had not drawn attention to the fact that not only do we ourselves owe a debt of gratitude to him, but that the whole of the colonies—these great Australian colonies—are in the same position ; because although in the latter days of his life his duties and his acts were confined to this colony, we cannot forget that in the olden days the colonies were all one, and that he fought for our Constitution and our rights, and the welfare and progress of all these colonies have been due to a great extent to his hard and good and honest work. In answer to the remark of my hon. and learned friend about national gratitude, I think he and others must know the independence of that great old man, and that he refused to listen for one moment to any suggestion that he should accept a grant so long as he was able to fight in the front rank of the battle as he had been doing ; that he himself expressed a wish that no suggestion of that kind should even be made to him.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RENWICK : I am aware of that !

The Hon. J. H. WANT : Knowing that almost up to the last minute the old man remained in harness, this Government could hardly go to him when he was in public life, and say, "You are opposed to us ; we wish you to retire, and we will give you a grant to enable you to do that." I think hon. members will see that an offer of that kind would have come with very bad taste from this Government as long as the veteran statesman was in harness. I think my hon. and learned friend is quite right in saying that when Sir Henry Parkes had almost publicly stated his intention of retiring from public life, then almost immediately some question of this kind was raised, and it was only put a stop to, firstly, on account of Parliament being about to rise, and not having time to carry out the suggestion ; and secondly, by the step which Sir Henry Parkes himself took in coming forward, like the old war-horse he was, at the election for Waverley. I am not speaking now for the Government ; but I am speaking as one of his old friends—as one who respected and admired him. I believe that any government and any house would have done what my hon. and learned friend, Sir Arthur Renwick, has suggested, if he required it, and made provision for him in return for his great public services. Unfortunately, he has gone from among us, and all that can be done now is for the public of this colony to recognise those great services. As hon. members know some step was taken by the Government in that direction before he passed away, and we hope before long to see those he left behind him removed from any possibility of penury or want. With regard to paragraph 4 of the speech, I think hon. members ought to recognise that the Government have not introduced anything here which is likely to cause the slightest possible dissension between the members of the House and the Government, or between this House and the other House. A number of hon. members in this House, and I have their speeches here—my hon. and learned friends, Mr. R. E. O'Connor and Dr. MacLaurin, amongst them—in a general way have spoken on this question of the referendum if it were introduced in a proper way ; if it were introduced in such a way that it could be acceptable to hon. members in the House, and if it were applied to great

public questions. This paragraph of the speech simply proposes—what?—not that we should bring forward any measure which is likely to cause any contention between hon. members and the Government or between this House and the other House—that is purposely postponed to a session long distant, in order that the legislation which is proposed to be introduced this session, and which should induce all parties to join hands and work shoulder to shoulder with the Government, may be considered without any question of dispute or ill-feeling arising. All that is said here is that :

A measure will shortly be submitted providing for reference to the electors of all important bills upon which the Assembly and Council have failed to agree in two consecutive sessions. A further measure to limit the number and to abolish the life tenure of the members of the Legislative Council will be introduced next session.

I am quite sure that there is nothing in that paragraph to rouse the ire of any hon. members. If, as hon. members have all said, they approve of the general principle of the referendum on great public questions where that referendum can be introduced in such a way as to enable us to say that we have ascertained clearly what public opinion is, surely every one here must be glad to remove the cause of deadlocks which have often existed, and to let the people themselves give an expression of opinion which may be a guide to the other House or to this House. I feel perfectly sure that when hon. members see this bill they will find that it is of such a character that they can lend a helping hand to make it what it should be, and that is a measure which will prevent these very undesirable collisions which have occurred in the past, and render the work of this House much easier and pleasanter, and put the House in a position where it will be able to do really good and honest work for the country. I think hon. members may as well wait and not anticipate that the Government intend to raise any collision between hon. members and the other House. I hope that if the bill contains any objectionable feature hon. members will point out what it is, and will lend us a helping hand to put it in a fit and proper form. The other measure is purposely put off until next session

[*The Hon. J. H. Want.*

because the measures which we propose to pass this session are measures which other governments year after year have promised, and which year after year the country has asked for. We ought to come together and place the colony where it ought to be—on a par with the other colonies in domestic legislation. We are a long way behind the other colonies in that respect, and I venture to think that there is not one of these measures which ought not to have been placed on our statute-book twenty years ago. With regard to paragraph 13 which refers to so many bills, and which induced my hon. and learned friend, Sir Arthur Renwick, to refer to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*—I am sure he will admit that he has not a nicer, or more useful book, in his library than that book. Therefore, when he admits that paragraph 13 is on a par with a very valuable book in his own library, I have to thank him on behalf of the Government for the compliment he has paid them. With regard to the number of things contained in paragraph 13, I may state that they are exactly on a par with a good dinner. Hon. members may partake of which they like. Those which they do not like they will have to get rid of as they can.

The Hon. C. G. HEYDON: Is it all digestible?

The Hon. J. H. WANT: It depends upon the appetite of the hon. member. If he is subject to what the medical profession call attacks of dyspepsia, I have no doubt some of it will not be palatable. I venture to think, however, that the greater part of it will suit the palate of the hon. member.

The Hon. H. C. DANGAR: There may be some humble pie in it!

The Hon. J. H. WANT: Not from this Government. The hon. member, Sir Arthur Renwick, seemed to think that the Government were going to be "bustled" about by every one who felt inclined to "bustle" them. I do not think the hon. member has had any proof of that as yet. I think he will find that the Government will have a pretty stiff back when necessary. With regard to the statement that the Premier has suggested that the Government were going to introduce payment of members in this House, I think it is only fair to draw attention to the fact that I only read the

speech—and I presume it is reported correctly, as the speeches of hon. members, especially of this House, usually are—the other day ; and if I remember rightly the Premier distinctly stated, “I cannot speak now on behalf of any of my colleagues, or on behalf of the Ministry: I am simply speaking for myself.” The Premier knows that there are some members of his Ministry who are absolutely opposed to payment of members. He knows, for instance, that I am opposed to it, and under those circumstances it is hardly fair to hon. members to suggest that the Government have hinted anything of this kind. Hon. members will always find me in the front rank fighting against payment of members. As I have been in the past so I shall be in the future.

The Hon. D. O'CONNOR: That is one of the follies of the hon. and learned member's life!

The Hon. J. H. WANT: It was a great mistake for the hon. member once. The chickens came home to roost and no mistake. When the hon. member went up for re-election at West Sydney, after introducing the Payment of Members Bill, the people showed their gratitude by turning him out. My hope is that some day we shall see payment of members disappear. I know, as they say in America, that it is like getting butter out of a dog's throat to go back to the old style, but I do hope that some day we shall get rid of the system. I know I am speaking against the ideas of a great many people, but, at all events, I have the courage of my opinions. I hope hon. members will brush aside the idea of the hon. members, Mr. Kethel and Sir Arthur Renwick, that the Government intend to introduce a “red rag” into the House. I think we shall find, when the bill comes up, that we shall legislate for the welfare of the country.

The Hon. C. G. HEYDON: Notwithstanding the extensive bill of fare which has been placed before us by the Ministry, there are one or two dishes which appear to me to be prominent by their absence. The first one—which I am surprised has not been placed in the list—is a measure for reforming the imperfect existing astronomical conditions under which we live. At present, speaking roughly, there are, unfortunately, only about 365½ days in the year, and I think, before asking us to

consider all these measures in one session, the Government—to adopt a phrase used by them in the 6th paragraph of the speech—ought to take steps to secure the services of an eminent authority, who might advise them on the matter and then make arrangements for giving us at least 730½ days in the year. We might then have some chance of getting through one quarter of these measures in a session. The other measure, the absence of which seems to me remarkable, is the bill providing for local government. I remember when the Premier first came into office he pointed out that that was a question with which a number of other ministries had promised to deal, but that he intended not merely to promise but to fulfil and to pass a measure into law. How far that has been done we may gather now from the fact that there is not the slightest mention of the matter in the whole of the speech. I am very sorry that I cannot entirely agree with what the hon. member, Sir Arthur Renwick, when he stated that the measures proposed in the speech bore the stamp of no party at all. It seems to me that they show very strong marks of the influence of a party whose influence is not always a beneficial one. To please whom are we told that a measure is to be introduced extending the provision of the Chinese Restriction Acts to all coloured races? Who is to be pleased by that? Is it not perfectly clear to any thinking man that the Chinese Restriction Acts were, however necessary, a most unfortunate necessity? That any statute should be placed on the statute-book imposing heavy taxes upon individuals coming to this country, and forbidding their coming here, except in very small numbers, may, as I have said, be necessary; but it is a most unfortunate necessity, and the law should never be enlarged in its operations until an absolute necessity for such enlargement arises.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: A necessity arises now!

The Hon. C. G. HEYDON: What necessity has arisen for extending those acts to all coloured races? No necessity whatever. Is this to be a country absolutely forbidden to any man who is not a white man unless he can raise £100? We know in regard to the enormous majority of the races of the world only a very small number come here, and they come here not

to settle but only to visit. Are we to build a wall of that kind around our shores? Is that to be the character of the permanent legislation of this country? I sincerely hope not. The argument used by the hon. member, Mr. Kethel, was to my mind entirely beside the mark, and utterly failed to justify any such proposal. He referred to the state of things that has come to exist in the southern states of America. What analogy is there between that case and ours? The mixture of races which has come into existence there was due to the fact that the Spaniards and Portuguese who went there, found already in the country a large population of a race which did not wither away and disappear before the face of the white men, who remained there in large numbers. Nothing of that kind exists here. The aboriginal races here are not holding their own, but are disappearing rapidly; and because the country has been placed in danger, as I fully admit, by the arrival of large numbers of Chinese on our shores, rendering it necessary that some regrettable, but necessary restriction should be placed upon their immigration here, to say that the law should be extended to all coloured races, so that no one but a white man can come here unless he can raise £100, seems to me to be a proposal of the most monstrous character, and to have been put into the speech only for the purpose of currying favour with a particular party.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: Go to San Francisco and Honolulu, and see what is going on there!

The Hon. C. G. HEYDON: What I say I repeat. Measures of this kind may become necessary, but they should not be introduced until they are necessary. When the necessity arises then let them be introduced. At present it seems to me there is no necessity for bringing in a comprehensive measure, saying that no member of any coloured race whatever can come to these shores unless he can pay £100 down: Then we have in paragraph 4, not merely as the Attorney-General says, the announcement of a measure introducing the referendum, but we have dragged in a most unusual thing. We have dragged in a statement as to the intention of the Government in regard to next session—the session after this. It seems a measure is to be brought in to limit the number, and

[*The Hon. C. G. Heydon.*]

to abolish the life tenure of the members of this Council. I again ask the question to please whom is that put in? Why has his Excellency been sent out of his way in this manner to inform us as to what is going to be done in the session after this, as if the bill of fare already provided were not sufficiently extensive. Then we are told that a measure containing what are called much-needed amendments of the Mining on Private Lands Act of 1894 is to be introduced. That is a branch of legislation which was very recently considered by this and the other House. There is an existing measure, only passed a short time ago, and we may infer, I think, that the bill to be brought in to amend it is to be a measure containing all, or nearly all, the provisions which were struck out or amended by this House so recently as the session before last. Then we are to have municipal loans placed under the guarantee of the Government—to my mind a most dangerous proposal. Why should municipal loans be guaranteed by the Government? Have not we had already sufficient experience of the danger of having the Government as a creditor? How could a government, being called upon to pay the money, enforce its right against the municipality? Is it to be placed in the invidious position of entering into possession of the rates—confiscating, seizing, and putting them into the Treasury, and leaving the inhabitants of the municipality without any funds with which to improve their roads or carry on other local work? Considering that the members of these municipalities are all voters, how long do we suppose such a state of things would continue? The system of assisting classes and bodies throughout the country at the expense of the public has already of late gone a great deal too far. I am sorry to see this proposal made. It will have an unfortunate effect in extending that system if it is carried out. Then there is to be a measure to amend the Navigation Act. I do not know whether that is to be the same measure as the one which was submitted to us before. The principal feature in it was a proposal that the Marine Board should be abolished, and that a number of billets should be created which would be filled by persons taken, no doubt, in part, from the party to which I have referred. Then we

have a measure promised to amalgamate the savings banks. Why are the savings banks to be amalgamated? I know there are a certain number who think that by some hocus-pocus of legislation in regard to banking an immense amount of public benefit may be done, and the labouring classes relieved from the hardships under which they at present labour, or think they labour. As an instalment in that direction we are promised a measure for the amalgamation of the savings banks—to my mind an utterly unnecessary and uncalled for thing. There is no need for it whatever. The two savings banks are doing very good work; each of them is perfectly secure, and each of them is a benefit to the public. The amalgamation of them, instead of being a benefit, to my mind would be a mischief. Then we have a promise of a truck bill—a measure which seems to the hon. member, Mr. Kethel, although a supporter of the Government, to be of a dangerous character, so dangerous that he felt called upon to protest against it. Looking at the nature of the proposals to which I have referred I do not think it can be said that they are entirely free from a party character. No doubt there are many proposals which are perfectly harmless, and more which may be introduced in a form which will be very beneficial to the country. If they are brought before us I am sure they will be considered with attention by hon. members. I felt that I could not accept the statement of the hon. member, Sir Arthur Renwick, that there was no stamp whatever of party in the speech. It seems to me to bear that character very strongly indeed, and I very much regret it. However, if the Ministry are well advised, if they bring forward first the measures which are not of a mischievous character, they will be fully discussed in this House, and the statute-book will, I have no doubt be enriched with some very useful provisions. With regard to the other measures I have no doubt they will be dealt with upon their merits in a judicious way, and it is quite possible they may not find their way to the statute-book.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The PRESIDENT: I have to inform hon. members that his Excellency will be pleased to receive this House at 3 o'clock to-morrow to present the address in reply.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: I move:

That this House do now adjourn until to-morrow at half-past 2 p.m.

In doing so, I would impress upon hon. members that it is necessary that they should muster as strongly as possible to-morrow, so that we may have a sufficient number to go to Government House to present the address in reply. I should like hon. members, if possible, to be here by a quarter to 3. We shall have to form a House.

The PRESIDENT: There must be a quorum before we can go to Government House.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 6.11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 12 May, 1896.

Opening of Parliament—New Members—Governor's Speech
—Assent to Bills—Ordinance Lands Transfer Bill
(*Formal*)—Governor's Speech: Address in Reply.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The House met at noon, pursuant to the proclamation of his Excellency the Governor convening Parliament.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. SPEAKER informed the House that during the recess he had issued writs for the election of members to serve in the Assembly for the electoral district of Waverley, in place of Angus Cameron, Esquire, deceased, and for the electoral district of Cowra, in place of Denis Cornelius Joseph Donnelly, Esquire, deceased, and that the writs had been returned indorsed respectively with the names of Thomas Jessep, Esquire, and Michael Thomas Phillips, Esquire.

Mr. Phillips and Mr. Jessep subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The Usher of the Black Rod, being admitted, delivered a message that "his