

NEW SOUTH WALES PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

TWENTIETH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

THE First Session of the Twentieth Parliament was prorogued by Proclamation dated 21st December, 1904, until 31st January, 1905; thence to 14th March; thence to 25th April; thence to 16th May; thence to 30th May; thence to 13th June for the despatch of business; and the Second Session commenced on that day.

Parliament was opened by Commission.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 13 June, 1905.

Opening of Parliament—New Member—Leave of Absence
—Vacancy—Assent to Bills—Honorary Minister—Law
of Evidence Bill (*formal*)—Lieutenant-Governor's
Speech: Address in Reply.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at noon.

The Clerk of the Parliaments read the proclamation convening Parliament.

The PRESIDENT informed the House that his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, not thinking it fit to be personally present here this day to open Parliament, had been pleased to cause a commission to be issued under the Public seal of the state, appointing himself, the Hon. John Hughes, M.L.C., and the Hon. William Joseph Trickett, M.L.C., commissioners, in order to give effect to the opening and holding of this session.

The commissioners being seated, the President commanded the Usher of the Black Rod to let the Assembly know that the commissioners desired their im-

mediate attendance to hear the commission for opening the Parliament read.

The Assembly being come, the Clerk of the Parliaments read the commission.

The PRESIDENT said:

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

We, the commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor under the commission you have just heard, do now proceed to acquaint you with the causes for which this Parliament has been called together, and to read to you the speech entrusted to us by His Excellency for this purpose.

The PRESIDENT then read the following speech:—

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

We, the commissioners appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor, under the commission you have just heard, are commanded by his Excellency to read to you

the following speech, acquainting you with the causes for which this Parliament has been called together :—

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

1. After a recess of reasonable duration, I am happy to call you together, at this convenient season of the year, for the discharge of your public duties.

2. The departure for England of the Governor was rendered necessary by the illness of Lady Rawson, a circumstance that has awakened the sincere sympathy of all classes. I feel sure the whole community shares the hope of his Excellency, that he, with Lady Rawson restored to health, will before long be again amongst us.

3. During the recess the State Premiers, with whom were associated the Prime Minister and Ministers of the Commonwealth, discussed, in conference, at Hobart, matters of common concern to the whole of the states. As a result of the deliberations of that body, the good feeling existing among the states has been strengthened, the basis of a general understanding having been laid down in respect to many questions of interstate dealings and relations. The more important resolutions of this conference will be submitted to Parliament for consideration.

4. The settling, on terms just to this state and equitable to the Commonwealth, of the question of the site for the federal capital has been steadily kept in view. My advisers hope that the undoubted constitutional right of New South Wales in this matter will be respected by the Federal Parliament, and that the final determination of the question will not be much longer delayed.

5. I rejoice in being able to congratulate you upon the greatly improved prospects which the State, emerging from a succession of dry seasons, has before it.

The timely and bounteous rains with which all parts of the country have been blessed justify the highest hopes of a return to favourable seasons, with increased confidence both at home and abroad.

6. The better dissemination of information, showing the brighter and truer side of affairs connected with our primary resources, has been engaging the attention of the Government during the recess. It is hoped that the measures taken for that purpose will result in attracting a flow of desirable immigration to assist in the building up of our agricultural and other important primary industries.

7. It is with feelings of satisfaction that I am able to refer to the steady improvement in the public credit, evidenced by the enhanced prices commanded by our stocks. This has rendered practicable an arrangement, entered into during the recess, under which a substantial reduction in the rate of interest payable on local borrowings will be effected. In addition to assuring a direct saving to the taxpayers, it is hoped that this will work to the advantage of our producers, and help to stimulate the development of our natural resources.

8. The necessity for the completion of the many works and undertakings that, under the authority of Parliament, have been entered upon, has prevented, and will for some time prevent, the volume of state borrowing being reduced to the limited dimensions considered desirable by my advisers; but it has been, and is being, greatly curtailed. It is hoped that the day is close at hand when borrowing outside the Commonwealth, except for renewal purposes, will be entirely discontinued.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY :

9. Pursuant to the necessity for carefully husbanding the finances of the state, a firm hand has been kept on the expenditure for the current year, and Parliament

will be invited to assent to proposals that will ensure additional savings.

10. The condition of the public accounts is reassuring. While there has been a falling-off in receipts from some of the ordinary sources, notably from the Crown lands and from Commonwealth customs duties, the railway earnings show a steady increase, and the revenue generally gives gratifying proof of the indomitable spirit of our people and the stability of the country's resources. A substantial surplus on the year's transactions may be expected, and will enable the deficiency of previous years to be thereby reduced.

11. The estimates of expenditure for the approaching financial year, framed with strict regard to economy and the requirements of the public service, will, in due course, be laid before you.

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

12. In order to decentralise the administration of minor public works, a bill to confer simple powers of local government in rural districts at present unincorporated will be proposed. Parliament and Government will, by such a measure, be relieved of work that detracts from their high functions. At the same time, it is believed that the extension of self-governing powers in relation to public works will foster a more self-reliant spirit among those upon whom such powers are conferred. Economies will be effected by the transference of administration from central to local bodies, and against the charges imposed locally will be set the remission of taxation now levied by the central government, and the payment of subsidies duly proportioned to the needs of the various districts.

13. The necessity for enlarging and consolidating the powers of self-government in municipalities and urban areas is recognised by the Government. You will be invited to pass into law a bill dealing with this important subject.

14. The public works proposals to be submitted for your approval will embrace water conservation works, railways to promote settlement in our rich agricultural areas, and additional provision for the quick transport and storage of grain and other produce.

15. The undesirable position reached in the working of the Industrial Arbitration Act has engaged the earnest attention of Ministers. A bill to overcome present difficulties, as well as to give better effect to the principle of arbitration in industrial disputes, will be submitted for your consideration on an early date.

16. Ministers have given close attention to the question of the development of the mineral and manufacturing resources of the state, by the establishment, on a sound basis, of the iron and steel industry. Tenders have been invited, both within the Commonwealth and abroad, for steel and iron supplies under conditions which, it is hoped, will prove attractive to investors and fair to the taxpayer; and further inquiry is being made into the question of manufacturing locomotives within the state, in order that the decision ultimately come to may best conserve the public interest.

17. You will be asked to give your sanction to a bill dealing with the liquor licensing question. One of the leading features of the measure to be proposed will be the provisions rendering effective the principle of local option.

18. A bill will be submitted having for its object the revision of the present system of old-age pensions, which, while preserving intact the humane principle underlying the present law, will contain provisions designed to diminish the opportunities for abuse, and at the same time be just both to the deserving poor and to the public taxpayer.

19. A measure for the amalgamation of the savings banks and the Advances to Settlers Board will be introduced, and, it is hoped, passed into law.

20. An amended electoral law is deemed to be necessary, in the interest of economy and for the removal of obstacles to the free exercise of the franchise, as well as for the purpose of securing, as early as practicable, uniformity with the electoral law of the Commonwealth. A bill dealing with the subject will be submitted for your approval.

21. Among the measures of reform to be introduced will be bills making necessary amendments in the laws relating to the Crown lands and forests; a bill to simplify and liberalise the mining laws; a sanitation bill, specially framed to cope with outbreaks of disease; a measure of law reform; an amending fire brigades bill; a workmen's compensation bill; a bill for the better care and protection of children; a bill to more effectually deal with gambling; and a bill enlarging the scope of the Public Service Board's powers.

22. The importance of the subject of our national system of education, and the need for keeping our teaching methods up to the highest standards of efficiency, is fully realised by the Government. Administrative reforms, designed with a view to educational advance on the most approved modern lines, and for increasing the facilities for industrial education at our technical colleges and agricultural rms, are under consideration.

23. I now leave you to the discharge of your high and honorable duties, with the fervent prayer that, under Divine guidance, your deliberations may further promote the happiness and welfare of all classes of the people.

The Assembly then withdrew.

House adjourned at 12.25 p.m. until 4 p.m.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

NEW MEMBER.

The PRESIDENT announced that the Hon. James Nixon Brunker had been appointed a member of the Legislative Council.

The hon. member took the oath and signed the roll.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, intimating that he had granted leave of absence to the Hon. W. H. Pigott for twelve months, on account of ill-health.

VACANCY.

The PRESIDENT informed the House that he had received an intimation from the Chief Secretary that the seat of the Hon. T. M. Slattery had been declared vacant in accordance with the 19th section of the Constitution Act; and that he had given instructions for the hon. member's name to be struck from the register and from the alphabetical list of members.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Royal assent to the following bills reported:—

Wellington Cattle Sale-yards Bill.
Lismore Markets and Cattle Sale-yards Bill.
Parramatta Friendly Societies' Hall Site Vesting Bill.
Hyde, Cook, and Phillip Parks Bill.
Scone Cattle Sale-yards Bill.
Coraki Roman Catholic Church Trustees' Enabling Bill.
Oxford-street Extension Bill.
Loan Bill.
Appropriation Bill.
Fertilisers Bill.
Dental Hospitals' Union Bill.
Municipalities' Electric Light Bill.
Stamp Duties (Deductions) Bill.
Closer Settlement Bill.

HONORARY MINISTER.

The Hon. J. HUGHES: I have to inform the House that the Hon. J. N. Brunker has joined the Cabinet as an honorary Minister without portfolio, and will assist me here in representing the Government in this House.

LAW OF EVIDENCE BILL (*Formal*).

Bill presented by the Hon. J. Hughes, and read the first time.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The PRESIDENT reported that he had received a copy of the speech of the Lieutenant-Governor, delivered on the opening of Parliament.

Speech read by the Clerk.

The Hon. N. HAWKEN : It has been allotted to me as a duty to propose the address to his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor. No more onerous duty has ever fallen to my lot, and, as I have had a very short time to study his Excellency's speech, it is with diffidence that I approach the subject. In order that the House may entirely understand what I am to talk about, I will first read the address to his Excellency, as being the most important part of anything that I may happen to say. The resolution I have to move is this :

That the following address be presented to the Lieut.-Governor, in reply to the speech of His Excellency :

To His Excellency the Honorable Sir FREDERICK MATTHEW DARLEY, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

May it please your Excellency :

We, his 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 his most gracious Majesty's throne and person.

We beg to assure your Excellency that our earnest consideration will be given to the important measures to be submitted to us.

We join your Excellency in the hope that, under Divine Providence, our labours may prove of benefit to all classes of the people.

That is the pith of what I may have to say, weakly and poorly, to-night. I would first advance that never in the history of New South Wales has the Parliament of this country met under more onerous conditions, onerous in that the country generally, for which we have to legislate, is in a state of transition, and will continue in that state to a greater or lesser degree. Old landmarks have been removed; old ambitions have been altered. Now, instead of being a state, we are part of a mighty island continent, and take a larger and more expansive view of the welfare of Australia than we were compelled to think about, or to take, when we were simply a state. Under those conditions it is that we must approach the legislation of New South Wales, and consider the great work that we yet have before us, before we shall fully accomplish what the people expect us to do. Now, it is not expected of me that at a moment's notice

I should be able to notice all the policy of the Government. It is quite true that I have heard that policy read twice over. It is also true that for a few hours I have been enabled to read the projects, the wishes, and the expectations of the Government; and I must say that I am not disappointed. I find that the country is in a better state than it has been for a very considerable time, that the elements have gathered in connection with the wishes and the will of the people, that the country is thriving, that our finances, our works and our efforts generally have been smiled upon by a power higher than this or any other parliament. Under those circumstances, I congratulate the Government on the propositions they have made, and propose to carry through during the present session. No words of mine would, perhaps, influence the House in agreeing particularly with the projects of the Government; but I think all will agree with me that, in his Excellency's speech, there has been set forth a level, general appreciation and understanding of the obvious requirements, political and social, of the state. That is proposition Number 1. Secondly, the address strikes a high note of confidence in the general resources, the sustained energy of industry, and the hopeful outlook toward the state credit, which is pleasant to contemplate and cheering to Parliament and the people. Now to deal with the clauses of the address: the first which may strike the mind is No. 2, which relates to the departure of the Governor. Under ordinary circumstances, it is not generally considered in order, for certain high political reasons, to introduce the name of the Governor in our debates; but in this case it is certainly justified, because, under the circumstances, there is no citizen of this state, and no member of this House, but will sympathise with the condition of things which compels the Governor of this state to leave us at such short notice. I will say with regard to paragraph 2 that it is a graceful ornament to the address, although not usual. But we know the exceptional circumstances which have caused its insertion, and, if I may be allowed to say it, when history comes to be written, no higher praise can possibly be bestowed upon the Governor who has just left our shores than that he should be regarded as

the good Governor of New South Wales in contra-distinction to the greatness of other governors who preceded him or the fame of those who may follow. And we may only hope that after a short interregnum, his Excellency will return to us in joy and happiness to carry out and complete the work which he was so successfully performing before he left. Clauses 3 and 4 of the address are wholesome clauses, which show that whilst the state interests and privileges will be carefully watched, the Federal Government will be warmly supported in the best interests of Australia. Those two clauses must strike the patriotic nerve of every statesman and politician in Australia. There is no doubt about it, the federation of the country must be completed. Whilst as New South Wales statesmen, we may carefully watch our own interests, the interests of Australia are paramount; and when it is said that the Federal Government will be warmly supported in the best interests of Australia it will command the suffrages and vote of every man in every Parliament in Australia. I hope that clauses 3 and 4 are not mere idle clauses which will not be acted upon, but that during the coming session and the coming year we shall see settled those knotty problems which are causing friction between this state and the Commonwealth generally; and that the federal site will be settled in perpetuity to the pleasure and credit of every one concerned. I do not know that I should be justified in speaking at the present moment at greater length with regard to the questions which are between the federation and this state, but I call upon all patriotic persons who are Australians to support the federal system which has been inaugurated, and which for all time must continue, and which can never cease to exist; in the hope that instead of quarrels between one state and another we shall be ready to put our shoulders to the wheel, giving all away that we can give away, and receiving, of course, all we may be able to receive, and make one thing certain—a strong and enduring consolidation of this great empire of Australia. If it was necessary and essential that we should form ourselves into a strong people in the southern seas, it is more than ever apparent, now, to every man of thought that we should in unity be particularly

[*The Hon. N. Hawken.*

strong in the Empire, and that we should consolidate every part of our being in order to defend what?—to defend the great interests of the Empire in the southern hemisphere. Therefore, I speak not with bated breath, but with all the energy I can command, and with a desire to help the whole of Australia as well as New South Wales to consolidate federation for the defence of this country and the imperial interests of Britain. Clauses 5, 6, and 7 contain congratulations upon the improved prospects of the state, and an announcement of the determination to give information which may induce immigration, which in turn may help to increase all practical industry. Those three clauses further emphasise the improved state of the public credit. That must be an exceedingly gratifying announcement for every man, woman, and child in the state; and it must be peculiarly gratifying to the Government and members of this Parliament that there is an improved state of the public credit. Any one who knows this country knows that its resources are so unlimited that the wells of wealth have never yet been thoroughly tapped. When we compare the wealth of this country with that of the mighty empires of Europe, we cannot but conclude that we shall overtop them in such a way as the years go by as will be an astonishment to the whole of the known world. This country is full of minerals, and as time rolls on I trust it will be more full of industry. The germ of energy is here; the hills are full of the finest wealth of the world; and the soil is the most fertile, not alone in the southern hemisphere, but in the world.

The Hon. J. MEAGHER: Some of it would not feed a bandicoot!

The Hon. N. HAWKEN: I am well aware that there are regions which, under stress of drought, suffer very heavily, but notwithstanding all that, when we compare this great country with others, where the land for five months in the year is under perpetual snow, and is no more fertile than ours; when we compare it with lands which are subject to droughts, tornadoes, and storms, we must conclude that there is no country in the world, so far as I know, which, with regard to its general fertility, is equal to Australia in its power to rise above calamity. Time and again this

country has done so until it has become the wonder of the world. In the space of a year or so it has risen from the depths of a certain appearance of penury to the height of the wealth of riches. As I say, that has happened time and again, and in my opinion it will continue to happen until Australia becomes a mighty and great nation and the point of defence in this southern world. Clause 8 points out the completion of works requiring some present borrowing. That is the only rift in the lute of our music at the present time and needs to attract our attention. The debts of New South Wales, according to the pessimistic, are remarkably heavy ; indeed they are such a weight that these pessimists compare New South Wales to that figure in the fable of the jackass between two panniers having too much to carry. But allow me to observe that I know of no country in the world which is lighter in its debt than is this state. The debts of New South Wales are amply covered by the improvements which have been made in the country by the expenditure of the money. And these things do not cease. The improvements that have been made are eternal improvements. Every cutting through the hills, every sweeping away of the rocks to permit of communication between the various parts of the country will constitute an increasingly better means of communication and intercourse as time rolls on ; and putting aside all the buildings, all the palatial gaols, courts, and structures of a similar character, the pathways that have been made, and the country which has been redeemed and brought within the area of civilisation is worth more than five times the money which has actually been spent on the works I have mentioned. If all the great public works upon which our national debt has been accumulated had been carried out by private individuals, though the state debt might have amounted to nothing, still the same amount of money under private tutelage would have had to be spent in the country as has been spent now. Under those conditions it is better that the improvements should have been made. It is better that the work should have been done by the state, as it has been done, because it is a solid property of a value which is consequently increasing, and which makes the debt of the

country of no importance whatever. If the debt of this country had been incurred in the defence of the country there would not have been one farthing to show for it, and it would all have had to be taken out of the taxation of the people and the people's industry for all time. But in this case you have an asset for every farthing. And, what is more, the debt is not of the slightest importance if the legislative mind is turned towards finding the interest on the debt out of the works that have been accomplished by the money. But in Australia the difficulty has always been that everybody has wished to have his own little work done for nothing. People have wished to have their goods carried for as little as possible, and to travel as cheaply as they possibly could, instead of paying full interest and profit on the railways and other works of the country. That was an evil under the sun. And, there can be no doubt that under political pressure, it has been an evil in Australia which ought to have been wiped away. The people of Australia are constantly asking—those in the cities for cheaper fares and more accommodation, and those in the country for more accommodation and cheaper freights. Under those conditions weak governments and a weak management have cut down freights and fares to the lowest possible sum. I do not mean to say that the money of the country is not better in the hands of the individual than in the hands of the Government, but it is only fair, when such great advantages are provided, that the price paid for them should be equal to what people would have to pay elsewhere. We must all acknowledge that our treasurers for years past have failed in not securing, out of the great works of the country, sufficient emolument to pay interest, and a redeeming fund. There can be no doubt that that must be done. They may wish to wait until the country receives more immigrants so that they may divide the burden ; but the real fact of the matter is that the Government will have to be sufficiently strong and determined to see that, when they spend any sum on improvements, that sum shall be redeemed within a reasonable time, and also the expenses of that sum. If they fail in this, they fail as treasurers of the people's money. However, I will not pursue that subject further than to say that—putting all the public

business on one side—for all our debts in New South Wales we have in the means of communication throughout the whole state, an asset that is worth to the state three times the sum that was expended upon it. And I only hope that, in the career of the present Government, if they can see their way to do so—I see it is provided for in the speech—they will show an amount of enterprise until the whole of the state is honeycombed with ways as it is honeycombed with means. Why should not the railways be pushed farther into the interior of the state than they are? It is quite true that we have leading lines for political purposes, but most of our main lines are political lines. What we require now are social lines, lines for the benefit of the squatter, the selector and the small farmer. If you wish people to reside under modern civilisation, they must be provided with civilised conditions; they must have schools, they must have the village, they must have the church. Modern civilisation demands all these. It is essentially necessary that, wherever settlements are made, the railway, instead of following settlement, should be made before the settlement is made, but under certain conditions this cannot be done. I for one advocate the extension of the railways, and I will support the Government when they project a railway—if they wish to secure a certain further law which is mentioned in the speech—because I believe it is for the benefit of the people. I was very much surprised with regard to one particular locality—that is the locality affected by the Temora to Barellan railway. For years it was stated that a railway to Barellan would not pay, but we find that within the first year after the existing line was constructed the produce paid interest and a certain sum towards the principal. But it is not a question of payment within a year or ten years; it is a question of the present comfort of the people. I would draw attention to paragraph 10 of the speech referring to the public accounts, which shows that, although there has been a loss in Crown rents and customs duties, the railways show an increase on the transactions of the year, and leave a substantial surplus. It is some years since we had a surplus from the railways, and it is very cheering to hear that there is likely to be a surplus. That supports my argument

[*The Hon. N. Hawken.*

with regard to the necessity for roads and railways. I regret, and I daresay that others will also regret, to find that the Crown rents are not as much as they ought to be, but I hope that, with the continued good seasons, within a very short time the Government lands will bring in a fair return to the Government for the use of such lands. And I think that as the railways show a substantial surplus —

The Hon. J. GORMLY : But they do not show a substantial surplus!

The Hon. Sir JOHN SEE : The speech does not say they show a surplus!

The Hon. N. HAWKEN : What is an increase but a substantial surplus? I should imagine that, after the continual yearly deficits we have seen, anything in the shape of a surplus must be a substantial surplus, if it were only a sovereign. After the doleful, despicable complaints of former years, with loss upon loss, now, when we find there is a surplus, even a sovereign may be regarded as a substantial surplus. However, I am not going to argue upon the word substantial; but I say that any surplus must be substantial, and is exceedingly valuable. The only other item I will notice is paragraph 11. In that paragraph it is stated that the estimates have been framed with a strict regard to economy. Economy is a large word; and, while I am satisfied with the idea of economy, yet I am not satisfied with political penury. Neither is there any necessity for political penury when considering the estimates. The estimates depend to a large extent upon the credit of the country, and that credit depends to a very large extent upon the good feeling and the heroism and the straight, honest talk of the people of this country. As I tried to delineate sometime since, ours is a magnificent Empire, to which all the people of the civilised world desire to contribute; and it is only when some action has been performed that has had a peculiar appearance of insulation and isolation that the people of the world generally have complained; but the moneyed world can find no outlet better than an honest Australian outlet. I am satisfied that the credit of Australia will be one of the finest credits in the world. So, although the estimates have been framed with a strict regard to economy, I shall support the Government in devising liberal things, be-

cause by liberal things Australia has stood, and will stand in the future. I do not know that I need allude to the further paragraphs of the speech, as they will be dealt with by the general body of members. Paragraph 14 refers to the settlement of rich land areas as being one of those things which the country would like to see dealt with ; but I hope that, in the settlement of the rich land areas, the Government will take care that the lands' scandals of the past will not operate in the future. Having said that much, I will leave the matter there, because I do not wish to throw down any apple of discord, or make a quarrel ; but I do say that it is an exceedingly difficult thing for the Government to traffic in lands, to buy them and sell them and yet give satisfaction to everybody. To resume land for a specific high political purpose is worthy and right, but to continually resume land or purchase it for the sake of traffic is, to my mind, dangerous, and I hope the Government will not do any such thing. I notice that a bill is to be brought in to overcome the troubles of the Arbitration Act. Although I have not much hope of the Arbitration Act, as everybody knows who knows me, yet I trust the Government will evolve something that will save the Arbitration Act from destruction. I hope they will bring in something that will save the Act from ridicule, and that the act may be made effective for the good of the country.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS : It only wants honest administration !

The Hon. N. HAWKEN : Clause 16 is devoted to the development of the iron industries and the locomotive question. I had expected that a little thing like the construction of a few engines would have been settled long before this. But it seems that the Government, in their wisdom, knowing the difficulties they have to face with regard to majorities and in other ways, wish to take further counsel and consider the matter more at length ; though, as I say, it seems to me that the locomotive question ought to be settled in one act. What difference does it make to the country whether the locomotives are made in the east or in the west, provided they are made fair and square in New South Wales. If that is done it appears to me that everything else is

subsidiary and that this matter ought to be settled out of hand. Now, I will allude for a moment or two to clause 19, which deals with the amalgamation of the state banking interests. Hon. members will be fully seized of the fact that a banking bill was submitted and that it left us without being approved of. It is possible that that bill, or an improvement upon it, will be brought forward and submitted again, and I would urge, as strongly as I can, upon all those who have any regard for the banking interests of this country to consider it and aid the Government in every possible way to settle this banking matter on a proper substantial basis. I am not going into this subject to elucidate it in any loose way, seeing that there are large sums of money included in the enthusiasm of the people and in the hands of the Government without there being any coherent system of managing such money. I should only be too glad if every invested shilling or sovereign in this state had been invested in the old substantial solid way which we all understand ; but when we find that the people have moved away from the old style, and are determined to have something new it should be legislated for in the interests of the state as a whole.

The Hon. J. MEAGHER : The old style was to put it in their stocking !

The Hon. N. HAWKEN : I would point out in connection with this very grave matter that at the present moment we are not an empire ; we are a state, a limited liability state, and before we can have any bank we must have the assent of the Federal Government ; but we have as much right to a bank as any company in New South Wales, and under exactly the same conditions. The old state of things has passed away in the banking world, and we shall become a large, a mighty, and a wealthy corporation ; and it would be for the benefit of the state, the people, and of the banking interests themselves to have this conservative banking act passed. I hope when the measure comes before the House again it will be passed. I see by clause 20, that there is to be an amended electoral law to conform with the Commonwealth law.

The Hon. J. HUGHES : —————

The Hon. N. HAWKEN : If I have wrongly stated the effect of the clause

when I say that it is to conform with the electoral law of the Commonwealth, I had better perhaps put it in another form, and say that we wish to assimilate it as nearly as possible, under favourable conditions, so that there shall be no friction between the Commonwealth elections and the elections of this state. Reform in our electoral law is not before it is required. The existing law is a clumsy monstrosity which has been hard to administer, and which has never been satisfactory either to the voter or to the Government, and before long I trust that this is one of those things which will be amended. In clause 21 we have mention of a large number of excellent things—Crown lands and forests, mining laws, sanitation, law reform, fire brigades, workmen's compensation, a gambling bill, and a public service bill. Those constitute a large order. Some of them may be very valuable; at all events, they make an excellent *pièce de résistance*, to cut from and come to again, and I hope they may be considered; but others, I think, may well go over till next session. Of one thing I am certain, and it is that if we are to carry all the laws foreshadowed in the Governor's speech we shall either have to be very energetic or live to be centenarians. We come now to clause 22, and I cannot sit down without saying a word or two about the administrative attention to the national system of education. We have a national system of education in this state, and we find various authorities pointing to it as something they wish to see altered. I, for one, shall scrutinise any movement which may be made towards the national system of education, and if it is an improvement I will support it. The Government, I trust, will not bring in anything but what will be an improvement of this national educational system; but if any attempt is made to move the ground plan of our national system of education, well, then, that will be another story. Under those conditions I shall be glad to support the Government in their attempt to effect any improvement in the system. With clause 23 we shall all join, because it wishes happiness and welfare to everybody. Having at short notice submitted the address to the House in the best way I could under the circumstances, I will leave it and ask hon. members to give it their consideration.

[*The Hon. N. Hawken.*

The Hon. S. McCAUGHEY: I have very much pleasure in seconding the address in reply. It has been very gratifying to me to find in the speech to-day the progressive policy indicated for the present session. No one in this country more appreciates its resources than I do. I consider that we can carry a very big population here, but what we want is pretty well indicated in the address—we want immigration, railways, and water conservation. If these things can be brought about in an economical way, without any squandering of money, and in such a way as will secure interest upon the return, then I think this country must become second to none in the world. We all know what immigration has done for Canada. Any one who has visited the country—I visited it twenty years ago—will admit that Canada cannot for one moment be compared with Australia. They have seven months, or, at any rate, five months of snow, when they can do practically nothing. Here we have a climate which permits of outdoor work all the year round. This country offers a much better home than Canada both for man and beast, because we can grow almost everything we require. We hear a good deal of this cry of Australia for the Australians, but knowing our limited population we should remember that there are teeming millions not far from our shores who will not allow us to retain this country with a mere handful of population; and whilst we have the chance we should do everything in our power to encourage the young men and women of Great Britain and Ireland to come and help us develop the resources of this great country, and build up this portion of the Empire with our own flesh and blood. If we did this it would not be very long, probably not more than fifty years, before we should have a population which any nation would envy. In place of being a weakness we should be a strength to the mother country in the time of danger. I have very much pleasure in seconding the address in reply.

Question proposed.

The Hon. Sir JOHN SEE: With the limited time at my disposal I have not been able to quite comprehend all the promises included in the speech we have heard read. Glancing at it in a cursory way it certainly seems to me that there

is enough legislation shadowed forth for the next seven years, and if the Government get through anything like the number of measures indicated the House will have to sit very late, and give a great deal of attention to the measures submitted to it. However, it is not my intention to adversely criticise the speech. I am sure that every one of us must rejoice with the paragraph which refers to the fact that we have had a return of good seasons, as this country largely depends upon the weather being suitable for agriculture. The state has gone through a severe trial. I had some experience of it. But now that the good seasons have returned, and that there is a more hopeful outlook, I trust that the best expectations of the Government will be amply realised. No doubt the success of the Government depends, in a great measure, on the success of the country. My unhappy experience was that whilst the drought was on I was blamed even for the drought. And I notice, among the things promised, a great many things that were criticised by the gentlemen who now hold office while they were in Opposition, that is the carrying out of public works and the construction of railways. These were regarded as a crime, because they involved the country in extravagant expenditure. However, I can afford to forget all the charges that were laid against me, as they were due to adverse conditions. I congratulate the Government that, notwithstanding their opposition to those projects while in Opposition, now that they are in office they have got into a reasonable frame of mind, and realise that the construction of works, such as railways and for water conservation, and all those works which mark the advancement of the people, must be taken in hand vigorously and carried to a successful issue. Many of the projects which were formerly condemned the Government now promise will be taken in hand and finished. I congratulate the Government on their altered opinion. I think it is very necessary in a young country that we should carry out public works for the benefit of those who desire to settle on the land. And while I am one of those who believe that every inducement and facility should be given to take up land under favourable conditions, yet, unless good roads and railways are provided, we shall

not be able to compete against the world as we should do. I notice the hope is expressed that very shortly the Government will be able to borrow in the state itself for all its requirements. I hope that day is not far distant, but I very much doubt whether it will be practicable for a great many years to come to borrow either in the state or the Commonwealth all the money the Government may need to carry out works. As a matter of fact, those of us who have studied the question of finance know that the Government, when it goes into the market to borrow, has the first call. As the Government borrows extensively in the local market that must necessarily deplete the circulation of money which would be otherwise used for industrial purposes. We hear from time to time that borrowing outside our own state is a crime and a very great mistake, and that the interest which is sent away annually to pay the public creditor ought to be spent amongst our own people, but I might remark that if we had not borrowed we should not have had our public works erected. The prosperity which has attended the expenditure in connection with the construction of public works has been one of the largest factors in the development of the resources of this state. As I before pointed out incidentally, it is not, to my mind, one of the greatest blessings that a young country can have to borrow publicly within its own borders for all its requirements. In the first place, if that were done, we should limit the carrying out of public works which are very necessary; and in the next place—and this is a more important consideration than the other—we should limit the facilities which the public require from these institutions and from those who have money to lend to carry out the various enterprises of the state. And there is no doubt if a given number of pounds—hundreds of thousands or millions—are borrowed locally, and if the financial institutions know that the Government are going to put a loan on the market, the Government can get the money in preference to any private persons. That limits the circulation of money, and prevents industries going on that would otherwise go on. It thereby curtails the advantages which people could enjoy from a freer circulation of money.

The Hon. J. B. NASH: And it increases the price of money!

The Hon. Sir JOHN SEE: No doubt it must increase the price of money. The late Government, in consequence of the drought and other causes, had a difficulty in getting all the money they required at a price which was thought to be reasonable and fair as compared with prices which had been paid on previous occasions. But when we consider the causes that operated, and the unusual demand made upon the Government in connection with the resumptions, this happened at a most inopportune time, but, the obligations having been entered into by the will of Parliament, the persons from whom the land was resumed had to be paid. I am not one of those doleful, carping critics who, because they happen to sit on one side of the House or the other, can see nothing but sunlight or blackness. I believe in the resources of New South Wales. I believe that prosperity will only be delayed temporarily, whatever adversity the country may meet with; and that the recurring cheapening of money, not only in our own state, but all over the world, will be advantageous to New South Wales as well as to the Commonwealth. And these are matters of large concern. I do not want to go into details, because, when the measures which the Government propose in this long speech—this encyclopædia of almost all it is possible to imagine—come before the House I shall be prepared, in the most frank and open manner, to give my support to the measures I believe in, but I shall give my opposition to those I do not believe in. I would just utter one word of warning. I am sorry to see that one proposal is—I hope I have misread it—that the Government intend to introduce what they call their banking bill. If that means that they propose, as they did last session, to amalgamate the Post Office Savings Bank with the Barrack-street Savings Bank, I shall give the measure my most thorough opposition, and I hope that the majority of hon. members will do the same. I am speaking now deliberately and from experience, and I say the less the state has to do with the details of money the better for the people themselves. It is a nice fanciful kind of thing to believe that the Government can step in to the rescue of all persons requiring

assistance, whether by way of providing them with land or with employment. The Government can do a great deal, and ought to do a great deal under ordinary conditions; and under extraordinary conditions they ought to do a great deal more. But we have had experience in the past of the danger of an indiscriminate dealing by the Government with matters which ought to be dealt with by private concerns. That is a danger which will become very formidable and serious unless we look it straight in the face. The proposal to bring in this bill is put low down in the programme, and that is suggestive, but if the Government do bring in such a bill I shall give it my opposition. There is a danger in the Government handling large sums of money, in lending money out in small parcels. I do not care whether it is a question of closer settlement or not. We have had a little experience of closer settlement during the last few weeks. I am not going to say anything about the inquiry that is going on now, but, if the Government launch out extensively in the acquiring of property, there is a danger, in the first place, of their paying more for properties than they are worth, and there is also the danger of their getting properties which are not suitable for the people. They may be able to dispose of the best of the land, but what are they going to do with the remnants after the eyes are picked out? And under the indiscriminate system of disposing of these lands by lot, you cannot compel people to take the worst land. You must let them have what they tender for if the lot falls to them. Probably, in some respects, our present experience may save the country a great deal of money. I am sure there is sufficient enterprise amongst landowners to induce them to cut up their land in small lots, and sell it to the people; and they can do this better than the Government can. Under the Government system there will be an army of Government officials all over the place. However, I shall not detain the House any longer. I am not going to offer the Government any serious opposition. I can only congratulate them on the fact that a great many of the things they project are the very opposite to what they suggested before they held office!

The Hon. J. HUGHES: I should like the hon. member to give details!

[*The Hon. Sir John See.*]

The Hon. Sir JOHN SEE: I refer to public works.

The Hon. J. HUGHES: No large public works are proposed!

The Hon. Sir JOHN SEE: The railways projected by the late Government this Government intends to take in hand.

The Hon. J. HUGHES: We are only using up the material the hon. member's Government left!

The Hon. Sir JOHN SEE: Exactly so; but according to the late Opposition it was a crime on the part of the Government to carry out these railways.

The Hon. J. HUGHES: The hon. member's Government was on the "burst." We are sober!

The Hon. Sir JOHN SEE: I congratulate the Government on the reform movement they intend to bring about. The Government will have my cordial support in all progressive works. In everything that will increase the prosperity of the people I assure my hon. friend the leader of the House that he will have my cordial support.

The Hon. J. GORMLY: There is no doubt the Government programme is a very great one, if there is the remotest possibility of its being carried out, but the programme is the usual one—a number of measures proposed, very few of which probably will pass into law. Hon. members are placed in a difficult position, because they are not aware what bills will be proceeded with, and what bills will be abandoned. If they had an opportunity of knowing what would be gone on with they would be able to study the bills, and bring them to greater perfection before being passed into law. The present Government is not singular in this respect. That has been the fault of all governments. In regard to their programme, I am very pleased to find that the Government intend, seriously I trust, to go on with the question of water conservation. In a country like New South Wales no more important question can be considered. If water conservation were carried out in a judicious manner by capable officers there is no project which would do more to make the country progressive. We have many natural advantages. I am not one to advocate that we should go in for indiscriminate works of water conservation, but nature has favoured us, and where we can get great results from

a small outlay I know a great deal can be done, and if the works are carried out by capable officers no doubt they will prove a success. In regard to such progressive works as the extension of railways, in a country like this which possesses most of its resources in the interior, we can never really be progressive without the means of communication with the seaboard, and I am fully convinced that the roads of the future will be railroads or something of that class. We now find that the price of produce has been reduced so much that we must depend on the outside world and not upon local requirements for a market for our agricultural products, and therefore we must give the producer the cheapest possible means of getting to his market. I will not detain the House at any length, though I recognise that it would have been much better if the Government had placed a smaller programme before us, because we should then have had a greater assurance that it would be carried out.

The Hon. Dr. NASH: Before speaking to the general subject of this address there are two matters to which I would like to refer. I noticed during the first hour of our sitting here that we practically had no light; and, unless one came to the table, it was not possible to read a printed paper.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is the city light!

The Hon. Dr. NASH: I do not know whether it is the outcome of retrenchment on the part of the Government, of economy or what, but it is a matter which should be pointed out, because if we want anything here we want light. Another matter which may also be the outcome of retrenchment in connection with this Chamber, which last session seemed to be the butt at which retrenchment was aimed, is that our arm-chairs have been done away with.

The Hon. J. HUGHES: They will be back to-morrow!

The Hon. Dr. NASH: I do not say whether I approve or disapprove; I simply mention it as a fact which, in conjunction with the matter of the lighting, may be considered to cast a certain reflection on this Chamber. Looking at the speech presented to us by the Government, one would require a long time to criticise it in detail, and I do not propose to do so. But I certainly was surprised at the remarks of the hon. gentleman who moved the

adoption of the address in reply. Having listened to the hon. gentleman's speeches in this House for some time, I could not have imagined that he would come and deliver an address which is a total going back upon everything he has said during the last few years. He has adopted the very words which have been used not only in this Chamber, but all over the country by the members of the late Ministry and their supporters in defence of the means which they took to spread railways and public works and to give conveniences to the whole country. I am not quite sure that my hon. friend who proposed the resolution now before the House did not himself vote against many of the railways which were submitted by the late Government.

THE HON. J. MEAGHER: He voted for the Temora railway at all events!

THE HON. DR. NASH: That may be; and I remember something about that. However, I am quite sure that the hon. member has gone back on all his former speeches. It is a peculiar thing, and to me it is odd. Now clause 5 strikes me as being one of the most remarkable in this address. It would appear that the present Government take upon themselves the responsibility for the altered seasons. It is rather a large order. It is wonderful to me that they have not put in a clause saying that it is owing to their coming into office that the price of wool has kept up, that the price of lead and silver has improved, and that the price obtained for wheat during the last few years was better than in former years.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is cheaper now since they came into office!

THE HON. DR. NASH: It seems to me that the Government are hardly justified in taking upon themselves the responsibility for the change in the seasons which has brought about the prosperity now upon the country. Clause 8 also seems a remarkable provision. I thought that the members of this Government had mostly free-trade tendencies. Now, money, like any other commodity, is one of those things which is for the use of the country, and whether it is obtained in or out of the country depends on the price given for it, and the price regulates the use of the commodity. The Government, so far as I can see, are going to protect the money

[*The Hon. Dr. Nash.*

which is in the country. The effect must be that the people who are utilising it will have to pay a much higher price, because, as the late Prime Minister said, when the Government require a large amount of money, if they are borrowing in the open market of this country, then private individuals have no chance, or at least they will have to pay a much higher price for the money they require. And in regard to the general policy of public works, I would like to remind the Vice-President of the Executive Council that there is now in New Zealand a wave of feeling which is referring back to a period some fifteen years ago, a period very similar to that of recent years when there was what was called the Vogel regime in that country, when money was being freely spent on roads and railways and other public conveniences. At that time exactly the same arguments, speeches, and addresses, and exactly the same words were used to condemn the Ministry for their extravagance, and their want of foresight and regard for the interests of the country in spending money so lavishly upon public works. Now, what do we learn? We learn that the half million or £700,000 which is the surplus annually—and it is a surplus to be proud of, not like the £26,000 with which we have to be content—is attributed by the people who know best in New Zealand to be mainly due to the policy of public works which was initiated in the time of Julius Vogel, and for the carrying out of which money was borrowed from a country where it was cheaper than it could be obtained in New Zealand. And notwithstanding all the denunciation of the policy of the late Government, and especially of the late Secretary for Public Works, what do we hear every day and every hour of the day with regard to the tramway system of this city. I have asked people who have travelled all over the world, and they tell me there is no more efficient system in any city than the electrical system in Sydney. And in what more worthy way can money be spent when it is administered by the Government? Now, with regard to one or two of the subjects which, in the multitude of those proposed for our adoption, are to be forthcoming during this session, I notice a sanitation bill specially framed to cope with outbreaks of disease. I hope that when the authorities are dealing with

this matter they will not forget that there exists in this country something to which I have referred at the opening of every session, and that is the alarming death-rate which annually results from tuberculosis. I have done my little here on occasions, and at other times when appealed to, to ask the Government to make some provision beyond that now made for the reduction of this disease, which to a large extent can be wiped off the face of the country. I hope that the Government in bringing forward this measure will have due regard for present requirements, and that they will have removed from the Liverpool Asylum that disgrace to the public administration which has existed for so long a time. I believe that my hon. friend, Dr. Mackellar, has given a report on this subject. I have not been privileged to see it; but if the information is correct I am quite sure the hon. gentleman recommends that the whole place be wiped out of the administration of the country, and that the poor unfortunates who are now sent to Liverpool shall have some place where they can be treated with some chance of improvement, so that they may end their days in that comfort which is due to every humble individual in this state. There is one other matter to which I would like to refer, and that is the question of education. In the reports which have been brought from the old country by the gentlemen especially commissioned to investigate, there is a tendency which I do not think, if adopted, will benefit our system to any extent. I refer to the Germanising of the educational methods in this state. Those who have been to the old country, and who have brought back these voluminous reports, seem to think that in Germany alone can you get that system which is the best. Now it may be the best for Germany, but I am quite certain that methods which are suited to the phlegmatic individuals who inhabit the German states will not be entirely fitted to those of different temperament, and who are the offspring of an Anglo-Celtic combination. But these are questions with which we can hope to deal when the bills are before us. I am sorry to see that some of these important matters are put so far down the programme of the Government that if we are to take it as any index of the order in which the

Government propose to take its measures they will have very little chance of being reached this session. I have, of course, to congratulate the Government on the wide scope of their measures, and to a certain extent also upon the entire change of front which has taken place in the policy which they now put before this House as contrasted with the policy they so freely criticised during the years before they held office. I must again congratulate my hon. friend, the introducer of the resolution now before the House, upon his complete personal change of front.

The Hon. J. HUGHES: I will only say a few words, and they have regard to the misapprehension one or two of the speakers seem to be labouring under. If those hon. members consider that there is a word in this speech which indicates an orgy on public works, or anything of that sort, they are very much mistaken. A paragraph that seemed to be most misunderstood is paragraph 8. Some speakers have referred to the question of large borrowing, but, if they will look at the wording of the paragraph, I think they will find that, if it means anything, it means, as it certainly is intended to mean, that the Government intend to cut down public borrowing to the lowest possible point, but for the present they have been unable to get it to the point they wish, simply on account of the large liabilities left them by their predecessors. We have to pay for the Railway Station at Belmore Park, and for other responsibilities that have been incurred, and until we can get these liabilities off our shoulders we shall be unable to reduce the expenditure to the limit to which we hope it will be reduced. I defy the hon. member, Dr. Nash, with all his ingenuity, to read any other meaning into the paragraph. It is gratifying to the Government to find that even their strongest critics are prepared to support them in the programme they have put before the House. The list seems a long one, but, there are many very small things in it. Taken together, the passing of these measures will effect large reforms, and they will not take much time to pass. I trust the Government will have a good record before the end of the session.

The Hon. W. ROBSON: It has been said truly that the speech is a very long

speech. In regard to some parts of it it may be as truly said that it shows courage on the part of the Government. There are two or three questions proposed to be dealt with which I earnestly hope the Government will stick to, and I trust that the Parliament and the country will have the opportunity of discussing these all-important questions. It has been said in regard to one question that it is very low down on the list, and therefore stands very little chance of being considered. I am glad to observe that the first question referred to is that of local self-government. If the country wants anything, it certainly wants a measure of that kind. It may be that there are a great many persons in the community who do not want it, and that that accounts for the fact that during the last quarter of a century this question has appeared in nearly every Governor's speech, but as yet nothing has been done. I, for one, believe that the Government are in earnest over this question of local government, and I trust that there will be legislation in this matter. I am quite sure that for many years we have been pursuing a policy utterly destructive of the self reliance of the people, that we have been educating the people into an absolute dependence upon the Government for the supply of every little local want, whereas people should have had powers of self-taxation and self-administration to enable them to attend to those details in connection with their own interests. I sincerely hope that this session will see the passing of a local government bill. I congratulate the Government also upon paragraph 17 of the speech dealing with the liquor question; and I observe that the Government intend to make provision for the principle of local option being made effective. A great blot in the present licensing system is that the principle of local option embodied in the present law is utterly ineffective and utterly disappointing. Communities are in this position: They may carry the local option vote, but, because of another section in the act, applicants may come in and set aside the provisions for local option in the act. So it is a mere farce to ask people to vote for local option when their decision may be over-riden by the vote of magistrates under the particular section of the act to which I have

[*The Hon. W. Robson.*]

referred. I hope the reform which has been a long time demanded in this direction will be carried by the Government, and that communities will no longer have hotels thrust upon them against their will. I beg also to congratulate the Government upon the provision in paragraph 21, referring to a bill for the better care and protection of children, and a bill to more effectively deal with gambling. We know what a terrible evil the evil of gambling is. It is utterly destroying the moral manhood of the country, and if anything can be done to make the law more effective in preventing this terrible evil of gambling, which is sapping the public morality to a very serious degree, this Parliament will deserve the thanks of the country. If no other measures could be passed than those three measures for giving local self-government to the people, for making the licensing system more effective in the prevention of drinking in the community, and for effectively dealing with gambling, I think the Government and this Parliament would deserve for many years to come the earnest thanks of the community.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Hon. J. HUGHES moved:

That the address in reply be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor by the President.

He said: In moving the resolution in this form I am following precedent. I am doing this to spare his Excellency as much as possible any extra work at the present moment, as we all hope to see him shortly restored to complete health.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 6:25.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 13 June, 1905.

Opening of Parliament—Member Deceased—New Member
—Assent to Bills—Commission Opening Parliament—
Land Commission—Papers—Notices of Motion—Questions without Notice—Law of Evidence Bill (*formal*)
—Lieutenant-Governor's Speech: Address in Reply.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

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

The Clerk read the proclamation.