

## VICTORIA.

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

### First Session of the Seventeenth Parliament.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Monday, October 25, 1897.*

Opening of Parliament by Commission—Adjournment.

The Seventeenth Victorian Parliament was opened this day by Commission. The Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor for the purpose were Their Honours the Chief Justice (Sir John Madden) and Mr. Justice Hood.

At three minutes to five o'clock p.m., the Clerk of the Parliaments (Mr. G. H. Jenkins, C.M.G.) read the following

#### PROCLAMATION

“By His Excellency the Right Honorable Thomas, Baron Brassey, Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of Victoria and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.

“WHEREAS by the Constitution Act it was amongst other things enacted that it should be lawful for the Governor to fix such places within Victoria, and, subject to the limitation therein contained, such times for holding the first and every other session of the Council and Assembly, and to vary and alter the same respectively in such manner as he might think fit; and also from time to time to prorogue the said Council and Assembly, and to dissolve the said Assembly, by Proclamation or otherwise, whenever he should deem it expedient: And whereas the said Council

and Assembly are called ‘The Parliament of Victoria,’ and it is expedient to fix the time for holding the next session thereof: Now therefore I, the Governor of Victoria, in exercise of the power conferred by the said Act, do by this my Proclamation fix Monday, the twenty-fifth day of October, 1897, as the time for the commencement and holding of the next session of the said Council and Assembly, called ‘The Parliament of Victoria,’ for the despatch of business, at twelve of the clock at noon, in the Parliament Houses, situate in Parliament-place, Spring-street, in the city of Melbourne: And the Honorable the Members of the Legislative Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly are hereby required to give their attendance at the said time and place accordingly.

“Given under my hand and the seal of the colony, at Melbourne, this fifteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven, and in the sixty-first year of Her Majesty’s reign.

“BRASSEY.

“By His Excellency’s command,

“GEORGE TURNER.”

“GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!”

The Clerk of the Parliaments also read a further proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, altering the hour for the attendance of members from twelve o’clock noon to five o’clock p.m.

The Commissioners immediately afterwards entered the chamber, and directed that the attendance of the members of the Legislative Assembly should be requested.

The members of the Assembly having appeared at the bar,

The CHIEF JUSTICE said—Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council, and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, His Excellency the Governor, not thinking fit to be present in person this day, has been pleased to cause letters patent to issue, under the seal of the colony, constituting us his Commissioners, to do in his name all that is necessary to be performed in this Parliament. This will more fully appear from the letters patent which will now be read by the Clerk of the Parliaments.

The letters patent having been read by the Clerk,

The CHIEF JUSTICE said—Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council, and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, we have it in command from His Excellency to inform you that on a future day, of which due notice will be given, His Excellency will declare to you in person in this place the causes of his summoning this Parliament; and, Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, as it is necessary before you proceed to the despatch of business that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly be chosen, His Excellency requests that you will proceed to the choice of a proper person, in your chamber, to be Speaker.

The members of the Legislative Assembly then withdrew.

At eight minutes past five o'clock the PRESIDENT took the chair, and read the prayer.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until two o'clock on the following day. He said that His Excellency the Governor would attend on the following day for the purpose of stating his reasons for calling Parliament together.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past five o'clock, until the following day.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Monday, October 25, 1897.*

Swearing of Members—Representation of Carlton South—  
Election of Speaker.

Proceedings commenced at five o'clock p.m., by the Clerk of the Assembly (Mr.

W. V. Robinson, C.M.G.) reading the Governor's proclamation convoking Parliament for Monday, October 25, at twelve o'clock noon. The Clerk also read a further proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, altering the hour for the attendance of members to five o'clock p.m.

The Usher of the Legislative Council then appeared at the bar, and intimated that the Commissioners appointed by the Governor to open Parliament requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the chamber of the Legislative Council.

The members present, accompanied by the chief officers of the House, at once proceeded thither. On their return the Commissioners—Their Honours the Chief Justice (Sir John Madden) and Mr. Justice Hood—were introduced, the former taking his seat in the Speaker's chair.

The letters patent appointing the Chief Justice to administer the oath of allegiance were then read.

The CLERK intimated that he had received 83 writs issued by His Excellency the Administrator of the Government for the election of members to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the several electoral districts of the colony, with the names of the members elected duly indorsed thereon.

The members present were then sworn in the following order:—

Albert Park	...	J. S. White
Anglesey	...	M. K. McKenzie
Ararat	...	R. F. Toutcher
Ballarat East	...	Robert McGregor
Ballarat West	...	{ J. W. Kirton R. T. Vale
Barwon	...	J. F. Levien
Benalla and Yarra- wonga	...	{ Thomas Kennedy
Benambra	...	A. W. Craven
Bogong	...	I. A. Isaacs
Borong	...	J. H. Dyer
Bourke East	...	M. J. S. Gair
Bourke West	...	S. T. Staughton
Brighton	...	W. H. Moule
Carlton	...	F. H. Bromley
Castlemaine	...	{ J. W. McCay E. D. Williams
Clunes and Allan- dale	...	{ A. J. Peacock
Collingwood	...	{ Edgar Wilkins W. D. Beazley
Creswick	...	W. B. Grose
Dandenong and Berwick	...	{ John Keys

Daylesford ...	J. H. Wheeler
Delatite ...	J. H. Graves
Donald and Swan Hill ...	J. W. Taverner
Dundas ...	John Thomson
Dunolly ...	D. J. Duggan
Eaglehawk ...	H. R. Williams
East Bourke Boroughs ...	J. N. H. H. Cook
Eastern Suburbs ...	David Methven
Emerald Hill ...	Frank Madden
Essendon and Flemington ...	Thomas Smith
Evelyn ...	Alfred Deakin
Fitzroy ...	E. H. Cameron
Footscray ...	R. W. Best
Geelong ...	A. L. Tucker
Gippsland Central ...	John Hancock
Gippsland East ...	William Gurr
Gippsland North ...	H. B. Higgins
Gippsland South ...	Albert Harris
Gippsland West ...	Henry Foster
Grant ...	Allan McLean
Grenville ...	F. C. Mason
Gunbower ...	G. J. Turner
Hawthorn ...	J. P. Chirnside
Horsham ...	George Russell
Jolimont and West Richmond ...	Michael Stapleton
Kara Kara ...	J. H. McColl
Kilmore, Dalhousie, and Lancefield ...	R. Murray Smith
Korong ...	J. H. Brake
Kyneton ...	Theodore Fink
Lowan ...	Peter McBride
Maldon ...	J. G. Duffy
Mandurang ...	Thomas Langdon
Maryborough ...	Hugh Rawson
Melbourne ...	W. H. Irvine
Melbourne East ...	John McIntyre
Melbourne North ...	Richard O'Neill
Melbourne South ...	A. R. Outtrim
Melbourne West ...	G. D. Carter
Mornington ...	E. L. Zox
Normanby ...	John Anderson
Nurmarkah and Nathalia ...	W. A. Watt
Ovens ...	J. B. Tucker
Polwarth ...	William Maloney
Port Fairy ...	Alfred Downward
Port Melbourne ...	William Shiels
Portland ...	George Graham
Prahran ...	J. A. Isaacs
Richmond ...	C. L. Forrest
Ripon and Hampden ...	Bryan O'Loughlen
	George Sangster
	D. N. McLeod
	F. C. Gray
	G. H. Bennett
	W. A. Trenwith
	E. H. Austin

Rodney ...	John Morrissey
Sandhurst ...	J. W. Mason
Sandhurst South ...	W. A. Hamilton
Shepparton and Euroa ...	D. C. Sterry
South Yarra ...	J. T. Brown
St. Kilda ...	Joseph Harris
Stawell ...	George Turner
Talbot and Avoca ...	J. B. Burton
Toorak ...	C. C. Salmon
Villiers and Heytesbury ...	Duncan Gillies
Wangaratta and Rutherglen ...	J. N. McArthur
Warrenheip ...	John Bowser
Warrnambool ...	Edward Murphy
Williamstown ...	John Murray
Windermere ...	James Styles
	William Anderson

The CLERK intimated that he had also received the following letter from the returning officer's substitute for the electoral district of Carlton South :—

“Rathdown-street, North Carlton,  
“25th October, 1897.

“*The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria.*

“Sir,—I understand that the writ referring to the Carlton South election is reported as missing. Mr. Charles Leach, the returning officer for that electorate, is now out of the colony, and cannot be communicated with, either by letter or telegram.

“As his acting substitute, I hereby declare that Mr. James Moloney was duly elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria for the electorate of Carlton South.

“I enclose herewith cuttings from the *Argus* and *Age* newspapers of 18th inst., referring to such election, which were inserted by the returning officer, Mr. Charles Leach, prior to his departure from the colony.

“I am, sir, your obedient servant,

“ALEX. KEMP,

“Substitute for Chas. Leach,  
Returning Officer.

#### “ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CARLTON SOUTH.

“I hereby give notice that, at an election held before me this day for one member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the district of Carlton South, the following votes were recorded :—

James G. Barrett ... 774

James Moloney ... 907

“I therefore declare James Moloney to be duly elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Carlton South.

“Dated at Carlton South this 14th day of October, 1897.

“CHARLES LEACH,  
“Returning Officer for the Electoral  
District of Carlton South.

“—*Argus*, 18th October,

**"ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CARLTON SOUTH.**

"I hereby give notice that, at an election held before me this day for one member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the district of Carlton South, the following votes were recorded:—

James G. Barrett	...	774
James Moloney	...	907

"I therefore declare James Moloney to be duly elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Carlton South.

"Dated at Carlton South this 14th day of October, 1897.

**"CHARLES LEACH,**

**"Returning Officer for the Electoral District of Carlton South.**

**"—Age, 18th October."**

Mr. James Moloney was then sworn.

On the completion of the ceremony of swearing members, the Commissioners retired.

**ELECTION OF SPEAKER.**

Mr. SHIELDS rose, and, addressing the Clerk of the Assembly, said—Mr. Robinson, a very pleasing function has been assigned to me to perform, which I shall do with great brevity. I have to offer, to what I believe will be the unanimous acceptance of the House, the name of Mr. Francis Conway Mason, as a fit and proper person to take the chair as Speaker. In Mr. Mason we have a gentleman of tried experience, who, as Chairman of the House through two Parliaments, has borne the heat and burden of the day. He has passed through a trying ordeal, with the approval and appreciation of those who were subject to his jurisdiction. He has slowly climbed up the rungs of the ladder till he is now, by the grace of the House, within reach of its topmost rung, and the House's highest gift. I am sure that every honorable member will unite with me in saying that Mr. Mason deserves the highest praise for his performance of the duties of Chairman, and will join with me in the hope that hereafter that praise may be as freely and graciously given to him for his discharge of the duties of Speaker.

Mr. MURRAY.—Mr. Robinson, it would ill become me to attempt in many words to support the nomination of Mr. Mason, which has been proposed in such felicitous terms, as he alone can use, by my friend the honorable member for Normanby. I, therefore, without any additional words of mine, which are quite unnecessary, beg to second that nomination.

Mr. F. C. MASON.—Mr. Robinson, I beg most respectfully to submit myself to the

pleasure of the House, and I have only to assure honorable members that if I have the great honour of being elected to the high position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, I will endeavour, as far as I am able, to discharge the duties of the office in a manner which I trust will give satisfaction to the House.

There being no other nomination, Mr. Mason was then conducted by his proposer and seconder to the chair, on reaching which,

The SPEAKER said—I have to express my most grateful thanks to my honorable and learned friend who has so nicely proposed me as Speaker of this House, to the seconder of the motion, my friend the honorable member for Warrnambool, and to honorable members of this House for having done me the honour of electing me unanimously to this position. I know I can depend on the leaders of the House, on both sides, and also on the able and assiduous officers at the table, to help me in the discharge of the duties appertaining to the office of Speaker of this House. Honorable members may rely upon it that my first principle will be to endeavour to discharge those duties in a manner befitting the position, and in a way which, I trust, will be wholly impartial and give satisfaction to the House and the colony.

Sir GEORGE TURNER.—Mr. Speaker, I desire to congratulate you upon the fact that the choice of the House has fallen unanimously upon you to preside over us during this present Parliament, and I think I may go a step further, and congratulate the House upon having in the chair a gentleman of whom experience in a somewhat lower position has proved conclusively to us that he is well fitted and well capable of occupying the chair. I am perfectly satisfied that you, sir, will fill that position with satisfaction to us and with credit to yourself, and that the words you have just spoken are absolutely true. I have no doubt that whatever rulings you may be called upon to give, or whatever decisions may fall to your lot, will be given impartially, and I am satisfied also, sir, that at the end of this Parliament, if you are spared, as we all hope you will be, to occupy the position during that length of time, we will be able to heartily congratulate you on the manner in which you have discharged your duties when you have finished your labours as far as this Parliament is concerned. I believe we all join in wishing you every success in the

high position you now occupy, and that we all agree that you will do credit to the position.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—Mr. Speaker, I have very great pleasure indeed in rising to add my congratulations to you, on behalf of the opposition side of the House, on your election to the very high and distinguished position you now occupy. It is customary that such congratulations should come from this as well as from the other side of the chamber, I think more to show that, in the discharge of his important duties, the Speaker may rely on as much support from honorable members sitting in opposition as from honorable members sitting behind the Ministry. I can assure you, sir, that you may rely on as much support from honorable members on this side of the House as from the phalanx now sitting on the Ministerial side of the chamber. These phalanxes are sometimes very troublesome, and above all to the Chair; but I trust that, as far as you are concerned, there will be no such trouble from the present phalanx of Government supporters. On the contrary, from the way the Premier has expressed his congratulations to you, I believe you will get as much support from the Ministerial side of the House as you are sure to get from the Opposition. You are now elevated to the highest position to which your fellow members can raise you, and I trust you will discharge the duties of that position with satisfaction not only to yourself, but to the whole colony. Personally, I believe you will do so. Your long experience in this House, your knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and the way in which you have conducted yourself in the position of Chairman of Committees, as well as the satisfactory manner in which your decisions have been received in the last two Parliaments, warrant me in saying that we have now in the chair of this House a gentleman who will perform the duties of Speaker in a way that will give satisfaction all round. I trust that we will all be friendly throughout this Parliament. Of course you may, at times, have to exercise your powers in a way which will not give satisfaction to every one, but I am certain that your duties will be discharged and your decisions given in a thoroughly impartial manner. On my part, I promise you every support in the high position you now occupy.

Sir GEORGE TURNER moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until two

o'clock the following day. He said he was not in a position to state the exact hour at which His Excellency the Governor would receive the Speaker and such members as chose to accompany him, next day, but he would endeavour to ascertain it that evening, and would give publicity to it, so that honorable members might know the time.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at six o'clock, until two o'clock the following day.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, October 26, 1897.*

State Opening of Parliament: The Governor's Speech—Public Contracts Bill—Sessional Arrangements—Standing Committees—Railways Standing Committee—Election of Chairman of Committees—Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech.

The PRESIDENT (Sir William Zeal, K.C.M.G.) took the chair at five minutes to two o'clock p.m.

### STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Usher announced the approach of His Excellency the Governor, and immediately afterwards the Governor entered the chamber, attended by his suite.

The members of the Legislative Assembly having been summoned,

His EXCELLENCY addressed the following speech to both Houses of Parliament:—

“MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

“MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

“I have called you together as soon as practicable after the return of the writs for the general election of the Legislative Assembly, in order that I might avail myself of your advice and assistance at the earliest possible moment.

“I am rejoiced to meet you at a time when we have a favorable prospect of an abundant harvest, and every reason to believe that Victoria is once more entering upon a period of prosperity in production, trade, and commerce.

“Since I last convoked Parliament the fact of Her Most Gracious Majesty having reigned longer than any of Her predecessors has been celebrated by the whole

of the Empire with unbounded loyalty and enthusiasm. It is deeply gratifying that the people of Victoria took due part in the celebration that marked this auspicious epoch, and manifested in fitting manner their devotion to the throne and person of their beloved Sovereign, and that the Premier of Victoria, present at the capital of the Empire, was able personally to testify to the loyalty and good-will of the people of the colony. The magnificent reception accorded to him, and extended to the citizen-soldiers of Victoria who took part in the celebration, give the undoubted assurance that these feelings were understood and appreciated, not alone by our Sovereign but also by all classes of our fellow citizens.

"Owing to the period of the year at which the last session of Parliament closed, and to the sitting of the Federal Convention which is to be held in Melbourne in January next, my advisers intend to place before you during the present session only such urgent measures of public importance as are immediately necessary, and such other matters as may be speedily and easily dealt with.

"The adjourned session of the Federal Convention is to be held in Melbourne, when it is to be hoped that the great and noble work committed to its charge will be accomplished, and that the patriotism, ability, and moderation of the representatives of the Australian people will enable them to overcome the numerous and serious difficulties of their task, to frame an Australian Constitution which will prove acceptable to the people of all the colonies, and consummate the union so long and ardently desired.

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

"Provision for the service of the year has already been made in such a manner as to meet the public requirements with due liberality but without extravagance.

"The Trust Funds now amount to a very large sum, and, as it is deemed advisable

to place the same under more efficient control, my advisers have prepared and will submit for the consideration of Parliament a measure for that purpose.

"MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

"The first measure that my Government will lay before you will be a Bill to regulate public charities.

"The unsystematic manner in which the public charities of Victoria have been administered, and the insufficiency of the present law to provide for deserving cases of distress, have long been a reproach. The proposals to be placed before you are intended to provide an efficient remedy and to place the public charities on a satisfactory footing and sound financial basis, giving them certain means of revenue, and affording effective local control.

"No classification of the public service having taken place since 1884, many anomalies have arisen which, in the interests of the service and of the colony, should be removed, and a Bill designed to accomplish this end will be submitted for your approval.

"A conference has been held on the subject of the supervision of the slaughtering of animals and the sale of meat for human food, and the result of its labours has been embodied in a Bill which will be laid before you, and which will, it is believed, have the effect of improving the food supply and averting serious danger to human health.

"Unfortunately, the measure dealing with the supervision of exported products placed before you last session failed to become law. You will be asked to again consider the question, and it is to be earnestly hoped that a satisfactory result will be arrived at.

"The Merchant Shipping Act 1894 passed by the Imperial Parliament having been found to work satisfactorily, you will

be asked to pass into law a Bill adapting that Act to local requirements.

"Numerous difficulties and disputes having arisen in respect to the drainage of land in various municipalities, my advisers have prepared and will place before you a Bill dealing with this important matter.

"The Post Office Bill, which passed the Legislative Assembly, but failed to become law, will be again presented to you.

"You will be also asked to deal with Bills relating to the administration of estates of deceased persons; preventing the fraudulent sale of Railway tickets; and with various other measures which will be submitted to you as the exigencies of public business permit.

"I now leave you to your deliberations, which, I trust, by the blessing of Divine Providence, will result in the advancement of the public welfare and the continued and increased prosperity of the people whom you represent, and in whose interest I have called you together."

Copies of the speech were handed by the Governor's private secretary to the President and to the Speaker.

The members of the Legislative Assembly then withdrew, and His Excellency and suite also left the chamber.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at twenty minutes to five o'clock, and read the prayer.

#### PUBLIC CONTRACTS BILL.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to certain public contracts.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### SESSIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT remarked that it was not very long since the previous session of Parliament was opened, and he moved the usual motions with regard to sessional arrangements and the appointment of Standing Committees. They were now entering upon a new session, and it was desirable that they should, as far as possible, economize the time at their

disposal, because he trusted that the session would not be a protracted one. He hoped that within the next three or four weeks the important measures that the Government were desirous of placing on the statute-book would receive the sanction of both Houses. Under the circumstances, if it was agreeable to honorable members, he would move the motions with regard to sessional arrangements and to the appointment of the Standing Committees without the usual notice. He begged now to move—

"That Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week be the days on which the Council shall meet for despatch of business during the present session, and that half-past four o'clock be the hour of meeting on each day; that on Tuesday and Thursday in each week the transaction of Government business shall take precedence of all other business; and that on Wednesday in each week private members' business shall take precedence of Government business."

The motion was agreed to.

#### STANDING COMMITTEES.

On the motion of Sir HENRY CUTHBERT, the Standing Committees for the session were constituted as under:—

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—The Honorables the President, S. Austin, J. Balfour, J. Bell, S. W. Cooke, Sir Henry Cuthbert, J. Service, Sir Arthur Snowden, Sir H. J. Wrixon, and A. Wynne.

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS COMMITTEE (JOINT).—The Honorables the President, J. H. Abbott, T. Dowling, S. Fraser, and W. Pitt.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE (JOINT).—The Honorables the President, Sir Henry Cuthbert, C. J. Ham, D. Melville, and A. O. Sachse.

REFRESHMENT-ROOMS COMMITTEE (JOINT).—The Honorables E. J. Croke, W. H. Embling, E. Morey, J. M. Pratt, and J. A. Wallace.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.—The Honorables the President, T. Brunton, J. Buchanan, Sir R. T. H. Clarke, J. H. Connor, G. Godfrey, D. Ham, C. Sargeant, J. Sternberg, and T. D. Wanliss.

#### RAILWAYS STANDING COMMITTEE.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT said that he had now to ask the House to appoint certain honorable members to represent the Legislative Council on a very important committee. He referred to the Railways Standing Committee. During the present session, short as it would be, the

Government would probably desire, if they could, to introduce some measures for the construction of lines of railway. Honorable members had no reason to be dissatisfied with the manner in which the members who had previously been chosen to represent the Chamber on the Railways Standing Committee had discharged their duties. They had done their work efficiently and well, and they had gained a vast amount of experience, not only from their travels through different parts of the country, but also from personal observation and from the evidence that had been taken. It would, therefore, be a great pity indeed to make any alteration in the representation of the Council on the committee. There was no gentleman who would have been more desirous, if it had been in his power, to give his best attention to the performance of the duties of this office than Mr. Buchanan, but he had been to some extent prevented from doing so by illness. Mr. Buchanan was a man who was universally respected by the House, and he (Sir Henry Cuthbert) felt confident that had it not been for his illness he would, as he had done previously, have given the most unremitting attention to the work of the Railways Standing Committee. He was glad, and he was sure that honorable members generally were glad, to see Mr. Buchanan back again in his place. The honorable member was very much improved in health, and he hoped that he would be spared for many years to give the House the assistance of his great practical knowledge and experience. He begged to move—

“That the following members of this House be appointed members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, namely:—The Honorables J. Buchanan, D. Melville, and E. Morey.”

The Hon. J. BELL observed that he called the attention of the Solicitor-General, some few months ago, to the fact that the sum given for the expenses of the members of the Railways Standing Committee was not equally distributed. He thought it well now to remind the honorable gentleman of the promise he made at that time that he would consult the Cabinet and see if some better method of distribution could not be adopted. It was not fair that men who were residing in Melbourne, and who were called away from their business pursuits to attend the meetings of the committee, should receive

nothing, whilst others who resided 20 miles from the metropolis were paid their expenses.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT remarked that the members of the Railways Standing Committee had not been adequately recompensed for the services that they had rendered to the country generally. He did not understand why gentlemen should be asked to devote their time and attention to such important work without being paid their expenses, nor did he understand why a member who resided at a distance of 20 miles from Melbourne should for that reason alone receive consideration that was not extended to others. He would be very glad to see some measure introduced which would give these gentlemen some reward for the services they rendered to the country. It might be said that all the members of the committee should not be treated on the same terms; but in his opinion no difference should be made whether a gentleman resided 4 miles or 20 miles from Melbourne. All the members of the committee should be treated alike. If time permitted, and his views were shared by others, it would be quite possible to make the necessary amendment of the law during the present session.

The PRESIDENT.—Before putting the motion I would like, as a member of the first Railways Standing Committee, to say that I think the Solicitor-General should press upon the Cabinet the desirability of giving effect to the wishes of this House. The sum of money that is asked for is a very trifling one. Probably it would not amount to more than £200 or £300 a year. It is not a serious matter, and it would not embarrass the Government in any way. All that we desire is that justice shall be done to those members of the Railways Standing Committee who reside in Melbourne. They are as much entitled to payment as the members who reside out of Melbourne, particularly as the larger proportion of the business is done by the members who reside in Melbourne. I think the Solicitor-General should, if he can, give the House an undertaking that the Government will consider this matter fairly.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. J. BUCHANAN said he desired to thank the Solicitor-General for the kind remarks he had made, and the House for having again elected him a member of the Railways Standing Committee. He



had, unfortunately, been prevented by ill-health from giving that full attention which was required to the work of the Railways Standing Committee. Under the circumstances, he determined to resign his position, and he wrote to the committee to that effect. The committee urged him to withdraw his resignation, and expressed the hope that he would be able to take his place among them again. He was thankful to say that he was now so far recovered that he could attend to the duties of the office. He was grateful to the House for the consideration that had been shown to him during his illness. He would give his closest attention to the work of the Railways Standing Committee, but he would perhaps not be able to accompany the committee in its travels about the country. Honorable members had no idea of the hardship and inconvenience which the members of the committee had to undergo in travelling. This did not suit an old man like himself. He had consulted the members of the committee, and they desired that he should remain with them. It was for this reason that he had accepted the appointment, and he would do his best to efficiently discharge his duties.

The Hon. E. MOREY stated that he desired to thank the House for having again elected him a member of the Railways Standing Committee. The position was an honorable one, and one which any honorable member might be proud to occupy. It had been the endeavour of the committee to do the best it could in the interests of the colony, by only recommending such lines of railway as they believed would be remunerative. The work done had been quite an education to the members of the committee, and it would be an advantage to every Member of Parliament if he could undergo the same experience, as his knowledge of the colony would in that way be considerably enlarged. He was proud to have held the position of a member of the committee, and he had gained a great deal of information by acting in that position which he would not otherwise have received. The committee had done very good work, and sometimes it worked so hard that the members were knocked up in their efforts to do their best for the country. He hoped that in the session now beginning some of this overwork would be avoided. The members of the committee received only £1 a day for travelling expenses, and the work was thus

really a labour of love, because so small an amount of remuneration could not be regarded as any inducement. Country members belonging to the committee often had to come to town and remain two days in connexion with their duties, and then return home, so that they were really out of pocket. However, they did not complain, because they accepted the office out of love for the work. The committee had done very valuable work in the past, and he was sure that it would continue to do so in the future. By advocating the making of lines to settle the people on the lands, and objecting to those which could not bring in any revenue, it performed most important functions, and saved a vast amount of expenditure to the colony. He thanked the Council for the honour which it had conferred upon him.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE stated that he also desired to thank the House for having again intrusted him with the duty of representing it on the Railways Standing Committee, while he likewise thanked honorable members for having indorsed the remarks which had been made in regard to the appointment. He hoped that committees of the kind would be extended, so that they might look into many matters affecting the interests of the country deeply. The House frequently had to vote large sums of money without any proper investigation having been made into the subject. He believed that the Railways Standing Committee had done fair work for the country. Whether the members of it were paid their expenses or not was a small matter. It was the duty of every member of the House to devote himself loyally to the service of the House and of the country, and if he were not willing to do that he ought not to be a Member of Parliament. He naturally felt proud of being intrusted with the performance of a share of the work of the committee, and he would continue to discharge his duties to the utmost of his ability.

#### CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT moved that the Honorable Frederick Brown be Chairman of Committees of the Council. He said that Mr. Brown, who had held a position in the House second only in importance to that of the President, had performed his duties admirably during the time in which he had acted as Chairman of Committees. It was a great pleasure to him (Sir Henry Cuthbert) to say, as the representative of

the Government, that they were perfectly satisfied with the honorable and efficient manner in which that gentleman had discharged the duties of his high office.

The Hon. A. WYNNE seconded the motion. He remarked that Mr. Brown was esteemed by every member of the House. Though when first appointed Chairman of Committees he followed a gentleman who had had great experience in the position, he had given entire satisfaction. He (Mr. Wynne) was satisfied that every member of the House was delighted with the way in which Mr. Brown had performed his duties, and especially with the assistance he had always given to young members. When the House was in committee, and honorable members were inclined to talk a great deal, the Chairman had a difficult task to perform. Mr. Brown, however, had ruled gently but firmly. He (Mr. Wynne) was sure that honorable members would be delighted to see him re-elected.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. F. BROWN said he had to thank the Solicitor-General for the very kind manner in which he had moved the motion, and also Mr. Wynne for the way in which he had spoken. His (Mr. Brown's) feelings rather overcame him, and he could hardly express himself as he could wish. However, as honorable members appeared to agree that his duties had been performed satisfactorily in the past, he would endeavour in the future to discharge them with the same impartiality. He must thank honorable members for the kind manner in which they had always supported him in the chair, and whenever it had been necessary for him to call "Order." Honorable members had never opposed him, but had always shown the utmost kindness in falling in with his view. He hoped in the session now entered upon to be able to give the same satisfaction which he gave during the last session.

### THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The House proceeded to the consideration of the speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor to both Houses of Parliament.

The Hon. T. COMRIE moved—

"That a committee be appointed to prepare an address to His Excellency the Governor, in reply to His Excellency's opening speech, such committee to consist of the Honorables J. Bell, Sir R. T. H. Clarke, S. W. Cooke, W. H. Embling, E. Miller, E. Morey, and the mover.

Sir RUPERT CLARKE seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

The committee retired, and were absent some time.

On their return, they brought up the following address in reply :—

"To His Excellency the Right Honorable Thomas, Baron Brassey, Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of Victoria  
• and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

"We, the Legislative Council of Victoria, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the gracious speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament."

The Hon. T. COMRIE moved the adoption of the address in reply. He said—Mr. President, I have much pleasure in moving that the Council agree to the address in reply. In undertaking the honour conferred upon me this day, I do so fully realizing the compliment paid me by the Government, and I fear that my apologies will have to be made for the imperfect manner in which I feel I shall fill the position. However, unlike those honorable members of this Chamber who have for years past performed the duty I am now attempting, I am convinced that mine is a more pleasurable undertaking. I shall not to-day have to refer to ever-accruing deficits, nor entertain a fear as far as the producers of this colony are concerned. We are made aware of the fact that for the first time for years the Treasurer of the day has been able to show a surplus on the year's transactions. The national ledger has been balanced; I must compliment the Government upon this achievement, and I feel that they deserve every praise from the people of this country. That the Government has the fullest confidence of the country, I am sure, goes without saying. If evidence of that were needed, the result of the recent general elections fully furnishes it. The position of our agriculturists and producers generally is almost assured, and there is every indication of a most bountiful harvest, although our producers have suffered a most severe shock. Still, I feel that with a good harvest or two, and the absence of any further taxation, they will overtake their difficulties. Our farmers have received exceptional assistance from the Government by the passage of the *Crédit Foncier Act*, the *Mallee Act*, and by

the bonuses provided in connexion with products exported. Much still remains to be done for this deserving class of our population. The land laws generally are to be amended and consolidated. The Exported Products Bill is to be re-introduced, and I trust it will become law with such amendments as may commend themselves to this House. Water conservation will be provided for, and the liabilities in connexion with water trust loans relating to the past will be materially modified. Railways are promised for the mallee country and Gippsland, for all of which the Government cannot be too highly commended. In our Railways Commissioner, in the person of Mr. Mathieson, we undoubtedly have the right man in the right place. He is an able man, and one who does his duty without fear or favour in running our railways on a commercial basis. With regard to our mallee lands, which comprise one-third of our fair Victoria, and which were only a few years ago a howling wilderness, infested with rabbits and wild dogs, we may now note a change. Our lion-hearted settlers are quickly turning this howling wilderness into something like the Land of Canaan, which we are told flowed with milk and honey. Our mallee lands will, we trust, this year, flow with milk, honey, wheat, and oats. That the country is grateful for the placing on the statute-book of such remedial measures as the Companies, Insolvency, and Mines Acts is very evident. I feel that the Government has been very sincere in its endeavours in the past. Some of its measures, no doubt, like every piece of new machinery, will need amendment, and probably this is to be expected. I agree with the Government that just at present fresh or further taxation is unnecessary and is not demanded. Could there be better watch-words than those adopted by the Government—"Economy, peace, progress, and prosperity"? I feel that if this policy is carried into effect political rest and political progress must be followed by commercial peace and prosperity. The colony having now turned the corner, I am satisfied that if a policy of judicious economy be pursued everything else will follow. We are now on the up grade. We have got over a great deal of our commercial trouble, we have an abundant harvest in prospect, a good gold yield, and a rise in the price of wool, so that I am sure we shall go on prosperously. I am

extremely hopeful of the result of federation. I am satisfied that the outcome of the next meeting of the Convention in Melbourne, in January next, will clear the political atmosphere, and that soon afterwards a Bill will be submitted to the people of Australia which will meet with their full approval and consent. A policy of reproductive public works is promised by the Government, and I have every confidence that in advancing such a policy the Government will have the fullest assistance of this House. I am very pleased indeed to learn that it is the intention of the Government to finally arrange all matters appertaining to the public service and railway employes by the appointment of an expert board, which will deal with this vexed question as a whole. Let us hope that this board will suggest a means of removing the existing anomalies and grievances. The income tax is to be reduced, and this concession will tell most favorably in the interests of Victoria, by retaining within it a large amount of money which since the passing of our Income Tax Act (which is the highest in the world) has been otherwise bestowed. It would also be a great advantage if we floated our loans locally. I hope to see perfected some scheme by which our aged poor may be better cared for, and I learn with pleasure that the Government propose to take this question in hand at the earliest possible moment. I am pleased to be able to congratulate His Excellency and Her Majesty's Ministers in Victoria upon the hopeful sentiments and expressions contained in His Excellency's speech. I am glad that no proposal of an extreme radical nature has been hinted at; and that the aims, objects, and ambitions of the Government are peace and progress. That the legislation promised in the future is calculated to produce those effects cannot be gainsaid. I am sure that every member of this House will assist to his utmost in aiding the Government in the laudable stand it has taken, and no matter how far they may have disagreed with it in matters of detail in reference to legislation in the past, every credit must be given the Government for sincerity and honesty. For that which it has achieved every acknowledgment and thanks should be forthcoming, and for what is promised in the future I have to express the hope that it may be realized. I note with great pleasure the reference made in His Excellency's speech to the

Queen's Jubilee, and the grand reception given to the Governors and the citizen soldiers of the colonies. That the loyalty of the colonies is appreciated in our home land is clearly shown, and I am sure that we will not be found wanting should our help be required to uphold British rights and British liberty. We may well say that under the British flag we can sit under our vine and fig tree, none daring to make us afraid, and that our lines have fallen in pleasant places, while we have a goodly heritage. Reference is also made in His Excellency's address to the slaughtering of animals used for human food. I think a Bill dealing with the subject should be prepared and submitted to the local boards of health throughout the colony for their approval, and made law. Then proper supervision would be exercised all over the colony; this is urgently required. I have probably gone a little beyond what has been mentioned in His Excellency's speech, but I thought it would not be out of place to refer to matters that are of some interest to the country. I have to thank honorable members for the very kind consideration they have accorded me while moving the adoption of this address in reply.

Sir RUPERT CLARKE.—Mr. President, it is with very great feelings of gratitude to the Government for having afforded me the opportunity of seconding the address in reply to His Excellency's speech that I now beg to do so. I feel very deeply the honour which the Government have done me, being not only the youngest member in the House, but also, I think, the youngest member who has ever sat in this Chamber. I am very glad to observe the statement in His Excellency's speech that we are now coming to a very prosperous era, and I may say that I think that statement is perfectly true. Our harvest, our crops, and our greatest industry—the butter industry—are undoubtedly flourishing. It must be patent to every one that we have prospects of very large financial success this year, not only as regards our crops but also as regards our wool. Some of the northern parts of the country suffered considerably from drought, but, fortunately, on the whole, we got off very lightly in this colony. I am also very glad to notice that the Government programme for the session is a very moderate, fair, and useful one. We have all, I think, great confidence in the present Government;

at all events, the country has great confidence in it, as it showed at the recent general election by the great number of Government supporters which it returned. We have received many past favours from the present Ministry, and we are in hopes of favours to come. I think that in the Premier we have a very level-headed man—a man to whom all Australians owe a very great debt of gratitude for the manner in which he represented this colony at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Sir George Turner showed in England that we have statesmen here. He carried his position not only with very great credit to himself but also with great honour to us. I think every colonial native must be proud of the manner in which the Premier represented them in the old country, showing that, though we are the British lion's cubs, we have learned a little and are worthy of our motherland. The federation movement, I am very glad to see, is proceeding in the right direction. If we could be united under one great flag by a federation of the colonies, retaining the silken bond which binds us to the mother country, England might well point with pride to her great empire in the southern seas, instead of having as now to deal with us as separate colonies. With a United Australia, defended by her citizen soldiers, we should then occupy a very high position. Citizen soldier, I think, is the highest term of honour which any irregular can hold, and the citizen soldiers in England and in other parts of the world have many times borne the brunt of the hardest-fought battles. Of course we cannot expect to turn out men so smart in uniform and drill as the regulars at home, but when the fighting comes—if it ever does—I think our citizen soldiers will be found to bear themselves just as bravely as any standing army. I am also glad to notice the statement in the speech that provision for the year has been made in such a manner as to meet the public requirements with due liberality, but without extravagance. We have turned the corner of prosperity again, but still we do not want to rush into extravagance, and I think the present Government may be relied upon to look after the pennies for us, and if that is done the pounds will take care of themselves. His Excellency's speech also states that the charities of the colony are to be put on a more satisfactory basis. No doubt in the past we have done our best to support our

charities, but of course that is no reason why we should not be able to do better. It is rather unsatisfactory for a charity not to know exactly what income it will get in the year, and there have also been cases where, for the want of proper supervision, some slight scandals have occurred. It is therefore desirable that the matter should receive the attention of the Government and Parliament, so as to take care that no such mistakes, even though they have been unwittingly made in the past, shall crop up again in the future. The classification of the public service is also referred to, and that, I think, is a very necessary work. The public service was last classified in 1884, which is a good while ago, and no doubt it now requires to be again classified, so as to correct the anomalies which have occurred in the interval. Although we hear whisperings of the unsatisfactory state of some portions of the service, I think that, as a whole, the public servants are fairly well satisfied; but if the Government can place them on a still more satisfactory basis, of course it will be a very good thing, and the Ministry will deserve great credit for their action. Reference is made to the supervision of the slaughtering of animals and the sale of meat for human food. In the metropolis the supervision is fairly good, but in some of the country districts it is almost nil. It is very wrong—indeed, a lasting disgrace—for any country not to look after the health of its population, because our rising population are the most valuable assets of our country, and therefore too much supervision cannot be given to the food supply of the colony. The speech states that, owing to difficulties and disputes arising in respect to the drainage of lands in various municipalities, a Bill is to be brought forward dealing with the matter. I am aware that in some of the shires such a measure is wanted very badly, because in many places the sewage is allowed to run down the rivers, and, in fact, anywhere and everywhere. I am sorry to say, also, that it is among the poorer classes of the community that this great and lasting wrong is allowed to exist, and I trust that the state of things will soon be altered, because it is extremely discreditable to any country to allow its rivers to be polluted by sewage, especially where there is a population in the neighbourhood who must suffer intensely through the want of proper

measures being taken. I also notice that the Exported Products Bill is to be again introduced. Well, I hope that measure will come up again to this House, and I think that in a certain form many of us will be willing to support it heartily. Of course there are some items on which we cannot all agree; but I trust that the Government will propose a reasonable compromise, because we shall be only too glad to assist them in what I believe they really desire, namely, to develop and maintain the great and growing exports of this country. Of course, I know it is a very difficult task for the Government to try and please the various sections interested, but in this House our wish always has been to do our utmost to help the Government to frame a good serviceable working Bill, giving power to see that our great export of butter especially should not be ruined by a few men who try to make a personal profit out of it. I notice, further, that it is intended to copy the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, with some modifications suitable to this colony. I think that if the adaptation is made so as to suit our somewhat different circumstances the passage of such a measure will be a very good thing. The present Act has been in operation for a very long time, and it is desirable that we should take advantage of the knowledge and experience of the old country to render our shipping law as perfect as possible. The speech states that the Post Office Bill is to be again sent up to us. I have already heard of certain reforms in the Post-office, but, of course, if we can thoroughly reform that establishment, so much the better.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT.—We have made reforms. We have saved £5,000 a year.

Sir RUPERT CLARKE.—I am very glad to hear it.

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE.—What about the penny postage?

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT.—We do not want fresh taxation.

Sir RUPERT CLARKE.—Certainly not; and I think this Government are showing that they are carrying out everything on purely commercial lines. They are not lowering the postage when they find they cannot carry letters at the lower price. Indeed, I think the Government deserve the greatest credit for the fact that in each measure they have brought forward they have looked at the commercial side of the matter, and that is

really what we want at present. I also notice that a Bill is to be introduced relating to the administration of estates of deceased persons. Of course, anything we can do to cut down law expenses—I do not know whether I am right in saying this with so many lawyers about—will be acceptable to the public, because anything we keep out of the lawyers' pockets we keep in our own, and there are very few things that men grumble at so much as a lawyer's bill. In conclusion, I may say that I think the Government have had very fair support in this House. We have all tried to help them along, and they have brought forward very fair measures. They have also treated us with very great consideration, and I think, in return, the Government have received consideration from us.

The Hon. G. GODFREY.—Sir, I should not have risen but for the fact that there is one paragraph in the speech put into the mouth of His Excellency the Governor to which I, as representing one of the most important public charities, being treasurer of the Melbourne Hospital, feel bound to take exception. That paragraph states that “the unsystematic manner in which the public charities of Victoria have been administered, and the insufficiency of the present law to provide for deserving cases of distress, have long been a reproach.” I desire to say that I am quite sure that this House is not of opinion that the public charities of this city have been administered in an “unsystematic manner,” because such statements would be a reproach to men who have devoted years and years of public labour without any remuneration to the administration of the public charities of the metropolis. I think it was not the intention of the Government in this paragraph to cast a reproach of that kind; and I believe the House will agree that the great public charities in Melbourne have, up to the present time, been administered in a manner which reflects the greatest credit on those who have had charge of them, and not in an unsystematic manner. While it is necessary that there should be legislation to provide for deserving cases of distress, which cannot be properly dealt with under the present law, I am sure the House will not in any way, by inference, cast a reproach on men, many of whom have passed away after devoting a whole life-time, without receiving any pay, to the public charities of this city.

The Hon. S. W. COOKE.—Mr. President, I just wish to remark only on one paragraph of His Excellency's speech, and that is the paragraph with reference to the Exported Products Bill. It will be in the recollection of the Minister in charge of that Bill last session that very great opposition was made to it in this House, and finally the Bill was lost. Personally, I do not think that Bill was a good Bill. It had one special defect, and that was that it contained too many subjects. It seems to me to be very much better, in dealing with questions of this kind, to have a Bill referring to one subject only. The subject which we discussed last session more particularly was the export of butter, but in that Bill there were other subjects dealt with, such as the export of meat and the export of fruit. Now, I think it would be very much better if there was a separate Bill for each of those matters—one Bill dealing with the export of dairy products, another with the export of meat, and a third with the export of fruit. We have a good example in this respect in Queensland and New Zealand. In Queensland the Meat Export Act is confined to meat only, and in New Zealand they have an Act dealing solely with the export of dairy products. I do not say that we should, in our Dairy Products Bill, follow the New Zealand Act exactly, but we should imitate the example of New Zealand by confining the Bill to that one subject, dealing with the other questions in separate measures. In that way we could have a much better discussion, because it will be remembered that last session members, while speaking on the export of butter, were continually being drawn away from the subject to speak also of the export of meat and fruit. With regard to what has fallen from Mr. Godfrey, with reference to the charities, I think that perhaps the wording of the paragraph he alluded to has misled him. I do not think the Government meant in that paragraph that the charities had been unsystematically administered by particular committees, but that the charitable vote of £110,000 had been given to charities in a very haphazard manner. The Government had also in their minds, I think, the fact that people have had to be sent to gaol who ought to have been sent to a benevolent asylum. This, however, has nothing whatever to do with the administration of the charities, and the defect arises from our system of helping people,

from the state of the law as it stands at present. I do not think the Government intended in any way to reflect on the management of the various institutions.

The Hon. J. H. ABBOTT.—Sir, I think the remark in His Excellency's speech with reference to the unsystematic manner in which the charities have been administered is certainly a mistake. There has been no maladministration of the charities so far as I am aware of. I have been connected with a hospital in my district since 1854, and I have never yet heard any charge made of maladministration. We have, however, all regretted to notice cases in which poor men have had to be sent to gaol because there was no other provision for them. That was not maladministration, but merely carrying out the law. I would draw the attention of the House and of the Solicitor-General to the fact that at the present time there is an Old-age Pensions Committee sitting, who have not yet reported. I would ask whether we are to wait for the report of those gentlemen, who have spent so much time on the subject, before we legislate upon it, or whether we are to legislate without waiting for the result of their inquiries? The matter is one in which the whole country is very deeply interested, and I think the question of old-age pensions should be part and parcel of any new arrangements that might be made for assisting persons requiring charitable aid in the future. My own opinion is that we should wait until we get the report of the commission. It certainly seems an extraordinary thing to appoint a commission to inquire into a subject, and then to legislate upon it without waiting for their report. To do so would, I think, be to cast a slur on the commission.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE.—Mr. President, I think the Government may be fairly congratulated on having arrived at last at the decision that when no measures are wanted they are not going to bring in any. What the country has suffered from mainly in the past has been from the attempt to hustle through Parliament an immense number of things that were really theoretical, and which caused an interference with business and trade. The Government now tell us that this is to be a very short session, and that they are only going to bring forward those measures which are urgently necessary. That statement, I think, will be accepted by the country as one of the best things the

Government have ever said, and I believe that they have arrived at a reasonable decision on this point. The first matter with which they propose to deal is the charities, and a measure on this subject, I think, is urgently necessary. Would it have been right for the Government—in the face of the fact that men and women are frequently being sent to gaol for three or four months solely on account of their poverty, and to give them a home—to have delayed dealing with this question? That state of things has been a disgrace to the colony, and we have all felt it to be so. In the paragraph relating to the subject, I believe the Government had no intention of reflecting on the management of the charitable institutions; but certainly something has been wrong with our system, when a fellow creature found on a doorstep has had to be brought up before a police court, and sent to gaol, merely because he was destitute and homeless. We have often during the last ten or twelve years resolved that this state of things would not last many months, but until now nothing has been done. The Government, however, I am glad to see, intend to take action at last, and I must congratulate them upon their announcement on the subject. The speech contains a kind of half-reflection on this House for not having passed the Post Office Bill, but, if I remember rightly, we have passed some Post Office Bills.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT.—You made amendments.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE.—And are we not entitled to make amendments in Post Office Bills as well as in other Bills? If we have made amendments in the Bill referred to, I hope that when the Solicitor-General again introduces the Bill it will embody those amendments, because I have no doubt that they were wise ones. In connexion with the Yarra Junction Railway Bill which we amended last session, we find the Commissioner of Railways stating the other day that, after all, there is no justification whatever for breaking the gauge at all, and is that statement not a justification of the amendment which was made by this House? I will defy the Solicitor-General to point to a single amendment we have made in any Bill which could be called anything but a wise and proper amendment. When the celebrated Exported Products Bill was before the House last session the real difficulty was that neither the Solicitor-General nor Mr.

McCulloch, who had charge of the Bill, knew anything about what they were doing. The Solicitor-General was pulling one way, and Mr. McCulloch the other. How, indeed, could it be otherwise when they did not know the subject that they were dealing with? Under those circumstances, was it not a wise proceeding for this House to afford Ministers a fair and reasonable opportunity of considering the subject further, so as to bring forward a measure in a business-like way? If there is anything wanted in connexion with the export of products, let it be dealt with in a wisely-considered measure, which will tend to increase and develop our trade. That is very different, however, from bringing forward a measure which only sought to meddle and tamper with things unnecessarily. The apple business in that Bill was one of those ridiculous proposals into which Governments sometimes fall. I remember that a Government once brought in a Bill in which they proposed to imprison a man if the locusts were not driven away from his land. The locusts, I believe, were given their Latin name in the Bill, so that I suppose the Government were not at first aware that the proposal for imprisonment was because a man had failed to extinguish the locusts on his property.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT.—Was that long ago?

The Hon. D. MELVILLE.—Not so long ago; it was during the régime of this Government. There is no doubt whatever that the House properly rejected the Exported Products Bill, so as to enable the Government to have a few months to further consider it. Something may be wanted for the proper protection of the export of butter, but any measure passed should only afford proper and reasonable protection; and if the Government on this occasion bring up a Bill grading butter in three qualities, they will find that it will be no more welcome than their last Bill was. That kind of thing seems to be universally condemned. I am certainly with the Government in the brevity of the programme which they have submitted for the session. They have withdrawn all the theoretical things, and that is satisfactory; but it must be borne in mind, also, that never has there sat in the Legislative Assembly a Government with such powerful support. For that reason never has there been a Government with so much responsibility, for apparently they will be

able to carry anything they please. My advice to them would be to take advantage of their opportunity and their power so as to pass measures worthy of the position they occupy, and the power they wield. The next Government in office may not have the same power. The present Ministry have an immense following in another place; they have a favorable Chamber here, which is ready and willing to help them to render the country prosperous, if Parliament can make it prosperous; and I trust that they will act in a manner commensurate with their great opportunities.

The Hon. E. MOREY.—Mr. President, in the Governor's speech reference is made to the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill dealing with the charities. In the past the charities have been to a considerable extent supported by voluntary effort, and large numbers of people have willingly given not only their time but also their money to the work. It is now recognised that some different system must be adopted. It seems to me that there will have to be a tax to supply the funds necessary. There are large numbers of persons who do not at present contribute anything to the charities, and an effort should be made to reach them. How is this to be done? A rate must, I suppose, be levied. In this country, where the sun is always shining, the young men particularly take a very great interest in sport, and I think that a tax should be levied on all sports on behalf of the charities. The tax might be either local or national. There appears to be a falling-off in the amount of assistance given to the charitable institutions. At present those who like can give, and, as I have said, there are large numbers of persons who do not contribute anything at all. A revenue should, in my opinion, be obtained from sports on behalf of the charities. The Ministry have, no doubt, given their careful attention to the subject, and will be in a position to submit to us a well-considered scheme. I think that every person in the colony who earns money should contribute something towards the maintenance of the charities. If he will not do so voluntarily he should be compelled to do so. At present poor people are being sent to gaol simply because there is no other accommodation for them. In the interests of humanity alone, we should not permit the continuance of such a scheme. Some proper provision



should be made for our poor, and we should not make criminals of them by sending them to gaol. If every person earning money is compelled to contribute to the maintenance of the charities the difficulty can easily be overcome. With regard to sports, I might mention racing. We know that gambling is associated with horse-racing. It is a custom of all nations, and we cannot prevent it; but why should we not have the totalizator run by the Government, and apply the proceeds to the charities? Some people say that such a thing would be a disgrace; but I do not take that view. At the same time, if people can afford to gamble upon the race-course, they can well afford to contribute to the charities. The Government have taken the subject in hand, and they have only one object in view, and that is to do the best they can to place the charitable institutions of the colony on a sound basis. Of course we all object to a poor rate, but something will have to be done, because the charities are not receiving the support that ought to be given to them.

The Hon. T. DOWLING.—Sir, I rise to congratulate the mover, and especially the seconder, of the address in reply to His Excellency's speech on the clear and lucid manner in which they placed their views before the House. There is nothing in the Governor's speech that calls for criticism. We may very well wait until the measures that are promised are placed before us. I shall have a great deal to say on the Charities Bill, and also on the Exported Products Bill. The Government are to be congratulated on the large following that they have in another place, but they are not entitled to all the eulogiums that have been passed upon them. I say this advisedly, because I feel, even now, that the Premier has drawn out for himself a policy that must be detrimental to the interests of the country. This policy does not appear in the Governor's speech, but I would remind the House that the Premier has told the people that if he wants more money he will endeavour to obtain it by means of a tax on unimproved land values. That alone, I think, condemns the Government. The people of the country would never, in my opinion, agree to such a tax, and, in addition to that, its introduction would be diametrically opposed to what the Premier said on the hustings three years ago.

The motion for the adoption of the address in reply was agreed to.

*Second Session 1897.—[2]*

The Hon. T. COMRIE moved that the address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President of the Council, and such members as might desire to accompany him.

Sir RUPERT CLARKE seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

### ADJOURNMENT.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT said that there was not much business before the House. He had that day introduced only one measure. He had no desire whatever to request the attendance of honorable members unless there was work for them to do, and he did not think that there would be work of any very great importance until the 10th of November. The 9th of November was the Prince of Wales' Birthday, and would be a public holiday. He begged to move that the House, at its rising, adjourn until Wednesday, November 10.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past six o'clock, until Wednesday, November 10.

---

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, October 26, 1897.*

---

State Opening of Parliament—Presentation of the Speaker to the Governor—Swearing of Members—Carlton South Election—Drainage Bill—Governor's Speech: Address in Reply.

### STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The SPEAKER took the chair at two o'clock p.m.

Immediately afterwards the Usher of the Legislative Council brought a message from His Excellency the Governor, requesting the attendance of honorable members in the chamber of the Legislative Council.

The members present, headed by the Speaker, and attended by the Clerk, the Clerks-Assistant, and the Serjeant-at-Arms, proceeded to the chamber of the Legislative Council.

Business was afterwards suspended until half-past four o'clock, when the Speaker again took the chair.

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The SPEAKER.—I have to report to the House that I this day proceeded to

Government House, and presented myself to His Excellency the Governor as the choice of the Legislative Assembly, and that His Excellency was pleased to address me in the following terms:—

“Mr. Speaker, I have much pleasure in congratulating you upon the high and honorable position to which the confidence of the House of Assembly has raised you. I doubt not that your long service in the House, and your experience as Chairman of Committees—a duty which you have always discharged to the satisfaction of members—will prove of benefit in the deliberations of the Assembly; and I rest assured that you will fulfil the duties of the position in a worthy and dignified manner.”

#### SWEARING OF MEMBERS.

The SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a commission from His Excellency the Governor authorizing him to administer the oath of allegiance from time to time to such members of the Legislative Assembly as had not already taken and subscribed the same in the present Parliament.

Mr. A. S. Bailes was then sworn as one of the members for the electoral district of Sandhurst.

#### CARLTON SOUTH ELECTION.

The CLERK intimated to the House that the writ issued by the Administrator of the Government for the election of a member for Carlton South had been sent to him, that day, and from the return indorsed thereon it appeared that Mr. James Moloney was duly elected.

#### DRAINAGE BILL.

Mr. I. A. ISAACS stated that, in accordance with the invariable custom, in order to assert the privileges of the House, he begged to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the drainage of lands.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

##### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER informed the House that, pursuant to the summons of the Governor, the members of the Assembly attended in the chamber of the Legislative Council that afternoon, when His Excellency delivered his speech on opening the session.

Mr. MORRISSEY (who was received with cheers) moved—

“That the following address, in reply to His Excellency the Governor's speech to both

Houses of Parliament, be agreed to by this House:—

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

“We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the gracious speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.”

He said—Mr. Speaker, I beg to thank honorable members for the encouraging reception I have received at their hands this evening; and in moving the adoption of the address in reply I am deeply sensible of the honour conferred on me by the Premier and his colleagues in choosing me for the performance of such an important duty. I take it that my selection for this duty reflects as great credit on the very large and important constituency for which I have been recently elected a member of this House as it does on myself. The Governor's speech contains many very valuable measures, which, if placed on the statute-book, will be a decided advance in the legislation of this colony. The Government intend to introduce a Bill to deal more efficiently with the trust funds, which now amount to a very large sum. At the present juncture those funds are not under efficient control, or, at any rate, under control sufficiently efficient to place them beyond the reach of any impetuous Treasurer who might be inconsiderate enough to make an injudicious use of them. It is intended to place them under better control. As the Premier has now no necessity to have recourse to the trust funds, he wishes them to be put beyond temptation. This is a step in the right direction. It indicates a healthy line of financial action on the part of our administrators, with the view in future to make ends meet from the means that we have in hand to carry on the government of the country. We have under our control, or well within our means, ample power to make ends meet, provided we have in office administrators who are sensible enough to use that power judiciously, and who are prepared to give legislative effect to any measure desired by the people for the advancement of the interests of the colony. A Bill for dealing with the public charities is also about to be introduced. No nobler duty can be intrusted to our administrators than that of providing the means of subsistence for those who are not able to provide for themselves. At the present time the vote

for charities is not as judiciously used as it might be. It is to be hoped that from this forward the sum set aside by Parliament for that purpose will reach the object for which it is intended in a much more efficient manner than it does now. At the same time, it is also to be hoped that the Bill in question will not promote mendicancy—that it will not cause those who are reckless, indifferent, and extravagant in early life, although possessed of physical power to make reasonable provision for their declining years, to consider that the State is going to adopt the rôle of foster-parent, but that the provisions of the measure will be framed on such a scientific basis that its operation will rather have the effect of minimizing than of increasing the poverty of the colony. There is no denying the fact that the information acquired by the Aged Poor Commission clearly shows that a very great deal of poverty exists amongst the people of Victoria, and it is a duty that devolves upon us to immediately give the present state of affairs in that respect our fullest consideration. When our assistance is asked in dealing with this measure, I sincerely hope we will take care that a proper scheme is framed, and that wealth is compelled to contribute its due proportion of the means that are necessary to alleviate poverty and distress in this country. The reclassification of the public service is also to be taken into consideration by this House. We are to be asked to pass a Bill designed to remove many anomalies which have arisen since the classification of the public service in 1884, and such a measure is absolutely needed in the interests of the equitable treatment of the employés engaged by the State in administering its affairs on our behalf. I trust that the legitimate grievances of our public servants will be redressed by the State in such a satisfactory manner as to set at rest for all time the differences between the various departments that are in conflict in relation to this matter. We are likewise promised a Bill for the better supervision of our meat supply. That is one of the most necessary measures that the House can address itself to. The food supply and the health of the community are inseparably connected, and with a view of improving the general health of the people it is the duty of the Government to see that the food supply is thoroughly supervised by competent inspectors, so as to prevent

anything going into consumption that might menace the health of the people. No effort should be spared to make the nature of our food supply satisfactory to all concerned, and of such a kind as will reflect credit on those who are responsible for its proper inspection. It is true that the health reports with regard to the live stock of this colony bear very favorable comparison with those relating to the flocks and herds in the other colonies of the Australasian group, but it would be well to “make assurance doublesure”; and to accomplish that object satisfactorily it is necessary that a keener supervision should be exercised on our behalf by those in whose hands we have placed this duty, with the view of securing a sounder and better quality of food going into consumption than there is at the present time. From personal knowledge, I can confidently say that a very large quantity of the present food supply of the people should never be allowed to go into consumption, and that desirable result can only be secured by bringing the whole of the food supplies of the colony under the careful supervision of those officers who are appointed to inspect them on behalf of the State. In many cases in which beasts that are slaughtered for human consumption may not be diseased, there are other objections that could be, and should be, raised against the sale of the meat for human food, and I believe that if the grounds of those objections were only known to the general public, the people would declare it to be simply revolting that they should have to use food of the kind that is now continually going into consumption. Another matter which, if not the most important, is, I consider, one of the most important subjects for State legislation, and which the Government now intend to submit, is the measure dealing with the supervision of exported products. The mandate of the country is—“Develop the resources of the colony.” We are aware of the fact of the immense possibilities of our production, which completely overshadow the possibilities of our consumption. Our present consumption bears no comparison at all to what we are now able to produce, and the possibilities of increasing the production of the colony are simply illimitable. Now, if we wish to increase our production, we can only accomplish that object by securing to our producers the fullest and most sympathetic assistance of the Government of

the day. One way in which our administrators can help our producers is by finding profitable outlets for their products. What the Government requires to do is to exploit the markets of the world, and thereby give an assurance to our producers that every possible source of outlet for their productions at paying prices will be discovered. I venture to say that if that policy is carried out the production of this colony will increase enormously. Sir John Barnard Byles tells us that "a nation, whether it consume its own productions, or with them purchase from abroad, can have no more to send than it produces; therefore, the supreme policy of every nation is to develop its own producing forces," and that quotation has a special application to the condition of the producers of Victoria at the present time, because of the unbounded possibilities we possess, and the illimitable means of increasing our production that we have under control. If a progressive policy is pursued, I believe that before long we can double our present production. The total products of Victoria in 1894 represent a value of about £23,000,000. Of that amount £7,750,000 is represented in the output of our manufacturing industries, and the balance, about £15,250,000, by the agricultural, pastoral, and mining industries. Now, if the State wishes to discharge its duty efficiently, it can only accomplish its desire by obtaining a thorough knowledge of the duties it has to discharge, and doing as private individuals do in managing their private affairs, namely, paying special attention to that part of their business concerns from which they derive the larger share of their income. In like manner the State ought to pay special attention to that part of the production of the colony from which the larger returns are obtained. The great producing element—agricultural, pastoral, and mining—is that to which special attention should be given, with a view to the utmost possible development. When we consider the very small amount of wealth produced in this colony in comparison with what is raised by other large producing countries of the world, we will be bound to admit that we have barely scratched the surface of the possibilities of our productive life. Right throughout Australia the total production of wealth in 1894 amounted to only £70,000,000, and in the same year France, with an area

insignificant as compared with the area of all Australia, raised over £400,000,000, and Germany £500,000,000. In the face of the fact that such an enormous amount of wealth can be raised in countries within such contracted limits of territory as compared with Australia, it surely must be patent to every one of us that we have in this country vast and unbounded means within our grasp, if we will only make use of them, to increase our wealth to an untold extent. But that can only be accomplished by the State giving sensible and healthy assistance to the development of those departments of life from which this wealth is to be obtained. As furnishing an evidence of our possibilities of development, I may remind honorable members that a few years back our exported dairy products represented a very trifling sum, but the State undertook to assist the dairymen of the colony by giving a small bonus to those who were interested in the production of butter and cheese, with the result that in a very short time the dairying industry advanced by leaps and bounds. We know that as a rule the capitalist is not desirous of exploiting or exploring the country to discover undeveloped resources. That pioneering work generally devolves on the labourer—the hardy enterprising individual who takes his life into his hands when he goes into the wilderness with barely sufficient to sustain himself while he endeavours to ascertain where undeveloped sources of wealth exist. Immediately those resources are discovered and pointed out the capitalist comes forward, money flows in freely, wealth and labour enter into combination, and the outcome of their united efforts results in benefits of untold extent to the State. For instance, prior to the recent discoveries of gold in Western Australia very little was done by capitalists to exploit the auriferous resources of that colony, but when those resources were made known, capital flowed in from all parts of the world. But the State must take the initiative, and then capital will follow on and develop the resources of the colony; and instead of having large sums of money lying idle and valueless, as regards production, in the vaults of our various financial institutions, capital will then find profitable investment, and labour profitable employment, in developing our natural resources and advancing the prosperity of the country. The wine industry of the colony, for example, is at present in a languishing

condition, and that industry can only be developed by the State giving it the same help as it has already given to the butter industry. If the same assistance be given to the wine industry as has already been extended to the dairying industry, similar gratifying results will undoubtedly accrue, even to a greater extent. I believe that the time will come when we will be able to absolutely dispossess the Dane of his hold on the British market as regards dairy products. We have natural advantages and facilities here which are not possessed by the people in Northern Europe, and when those facilities and advantages are used to the fullest extent, instead of a return of something less than £1,000,000 a year, it will probably be £4,000,000 or £5,000,000. As the grain-growers of Australasia, America, and other grain-producing countries have shut down the British agriculturist who sought to raise grain for his own countrymen, so, I believe, Australian dairymen will close up the Dane, and prevent him from successfully producing butter for the British consumers. To give full effect to the accomplishment of this desirable object, it only requires the assistance that it is in the power of the State to confer—and if the State readily confers that assistance, it will obviously result to the general advantage of all and sundry who are engaged in the dairying industry in Victoria. The mining industry can also be developed to a much greater degree than it is at present. Some people seem to think that the mineral treasures of Victoria have been fully exploited, but that is not the case. I have recently passed over a portion of the colony—the country between Heathcote and Rushworth—where there are many hundred square miles of auriferous land into which, comparatively speaking, the pick of the miner has not yet been driven, and which is simply awaiting the advent of capital to develop and make manifest its wealthy resources. Some time back the State endeavoured to assist the mining industry there by sending a diamond drill into the district, but it was only allowed to remain there a very short time, and nothing like a fair test was made of the resources of that part of the colony. The wealth of the mining, agricultural, and pastoral resources of Victoria can only be developed to their fullest extent by means of State aid. It is necessary that sufficient sums of money

should be set aside for the purpose of making available the natural wealth of the country. Immediately after that is done, capital will be forthcoming, and the wealth now in the earth will be brought to light. The future policy of the Government, as foreshadowed in the Premier's speech at St. Kilda, has been described as a policy of peace and progress. It is to be hoped that this House will insure to the Premier and his colleagues that peace which is necessary to give effect to the progress predicted in the Premier's speech. The settlement of the mallee country and land settlement throughout the colony is made a very prominent factor in the policy of the Government. So far the Lands department have exhibited very commendable promptitude in settling people on the land, but not one moment too soon, because other colonies are offering facilities to induce the agriculturists of this colony to go there and effect developments that should be effected here. At the same time, I would give one word of warning to our Lands department. In their anxiety to resume areas of land in the mallee country, they may make grievous mistakes. They should only resume areas of a most fertile character—land that will give ample returns to the settlers, and in convenient locations. The mallee country has a very treacherous climate to contend against, and a lot of the land is quite unfit for cultivation. The Patterson Government resumed large areas of mallee land which is still in the possession of the State, being unsuitable for agriculture. It would have been far better to have left that land in possession of the leaseholders, as a revenue was being derived from it, whereas now it is in possession of the State, yielding no income and being of no use to settlers. Henceforward there should be a most careful scrutiny of the land offered for resumption, and the Lands department should be perfectly satisfied that the land is of a fertile nature, and suitable for people to settle upon, before paying a high price to resume it from the present leaseholders. We are told that railway management is to receive the full consideration of the State. Our railway administration has been one of the most disturbing influences in the political life of the colony. The railways have been a source of continual trouble, but that is because the administration of the railways has been unsound. In saying this I am not reflecting

on the Ministry now in office. What I mean to convey is that the view we take of our administration of the railways is wrong. If the railways of this colony had been managed from their inception by a company or a syndicate, their capital value would have been written down to the value they are to us at the present time. We should at once recognise the loss we have made in constructing the existing lines, and write down their capital value by that amount. Then we should insist on the administration showing a fair return on the reduced capital value. If we adopted this mode of procedure, we should then know what loss we have actually made. That amount could be placed to a suspense account, and from the profits of the Railway department a sufficient sum should be set aside to provide a sinking fund, so that in succeeding generations that loss would be wiped off. If that course were adopted, we would no longer have the yearly deficits of more or less amount, which have been with us so continuously that we have become apathetic as to whether the loss is greater or less one year than another. One year we are told the loss is £350,000, and another £400,000. Once for all, the Railway department should tell us what our loss is on the railways. That loss should be written off, and henceforward we should insist that the managers of our railways must show a satisfactory return on the reduced capital value. There are also large sums invested in irrigation schemes in various parts of the colony, which should be treated in the same fashion. Irrigation in Victoria has been entered upon fully a generation before its time, so far as the scale of operations is concerned, but, nevertheless, it is one of the safest projects the State has ever undertaken. On the present basis of valuation the cost of irrigation is too much for the people to successfully cope with; and with a view of assisting those who are now associated with irrigation enterprise, and to induce them to remain where they are now settled, the Government should, I think, be prepared to recognise those works at the present value they are to the people whom they benefit. That being done, the Government should insist upon a prompt payment of the interest due. In this way I believe people would be prevented from leaving those parts of the country where the taxation payable on account of irrigation works is more than can be borne,

*Mr. Morrissey.*

and where the uncertainty as to the amount of taxation they will be subjected to is inducing many to desire to remove to other parts. With regard to the necessity for finding work for the surplus labour of the colony, the Government have already made strenuous efforts, and I am pleased that they have been particularly successful; but henceforth it is to be hoped that any works to be undertaken on behalf of the unemployed will be of an absolutely reproductive character. When labour begins to agitate for State assistance it often happens that particular individuals who may be interested in the construction of works in particular localities league themselves with labour for the purpose of joining in the hue and cry that may be raised, and advocate the construction of works in places where they may have property or be otherwise interested. No consideration whatever should be given to such proposals. When labour agitates to be assisted by the State, let the assistance be provided in the form of works carried out in portions of the colony where reproduction will ultimately ensue. At the present time we have vast undeveloped territories awaiting the construction of railways into them. These are the areas to which the State should address itself with a view of development, because the money so laid out will be reproductive. We have had sufficient experience in the past to enable us in the future to avoid the pitfalls we have fallen into. It is also intended by the State to appoint conciliation boards, with a view to better effecting a reconciliation of the difficulties which frequently arise between capital and labour. That is "a consummation devoutly to be wished" by all of us. The estrangement that exists now—the breach between capital and labour—is becoming continually wider, and only by State intervention can we be likely to bring about a reconciliation. I am in full sympathy with the labourer at the present day who views his position from a somewhat hopeless stand-point. He is coming to find his inalienable rights—or what should be his inalienable rights—alienated. I do not wish to speak in a sentimental sense. I speak merely of the sense in which I should view the situation were I in the labourer's position. Through the accident of circumstances, and through being unfortunate enough to come into life a generation later than we have, the labourer who is born into this country to-day finds that the same opportunities

that would have been open to him formerly are not forthcoming now. He finds that that which would have been his heritage has been taken away from him, and that his only hope is to labour for a wage that is not remunerative, and not work enough available even at that. We also find that by improved machinery, which is coming into use in all industries, the path of the labourer is still further beset with difficulties, and all these things in combination make his position really hopeless, and make him more distrustful in the view he takes of capital. Capital, on the other hand, is distrustful of the labourer's position in regard to itself, and the breach is becoming widened instead of being lessened. It should be our endeavour to join the hands of these two great elements in a country's greatness, with a view to the one being used for the benefit of the other. A true combination of forces will then have been obtained, and greater prosperity will be the result to the whole people. In conclusion, I may be permitted to express the earnest hope that the deliberations of this Parliament will be conducted by honorable members with a single-minded desire to framing laws and passing measures necessary for the advancement of the colony—measures unwarped by prejudice and unbiased by faction—measures leavened with justice, with liberality, and with progressiveness. It is only in the pursuance of that course that we can hope to obtain and retain the confidence of the people; and at the same time, in doing that, we shall add to the dignity and act up to the traditions of our legislative institutions, and thereby shed a lustre on the personnel of this House, and confer a long tenure of stability and prosperity upon our people.

Mr. TOUCHER (who was also received with cheers) said—Sir, in rising to second the address so ably and so eloquently moved by the honorable member for Rodney (Mr. Morrissey), I do so with a considerable amount of diffidence. That diffidence, however, is lessened to some extent by the very encouraging cheers which have greeted me on rising, and which indicate the ever kind indulgence extended to new members, or—because, strictly speaking, we are all new members of this Parliament—extended by older and more experienced politicians to a new-comer amongst them, and especially to one who is endeavouring to

contribute his maiden effort to the deliberations of this House. Like my honorable friend who has just sat down, I recognise the great compliment which has been paid to myself, and also to the constituency which I have the honour to represent, by the Premier and his colleagues, in my being asked to-day to second the address in reply to the Governor's speech. But while one has natural timidity, still I am glad that I have to-day the duty of seconding the address, in order that I may warmly congratulate the Government upon the excellence of its work. I think the Government has the satisfaction of feeling that the country has acknowledged its financial ability, its judicious economy, and its wise administration; and the volume of the expression of the country's appreciation is seen in a moment by one glance around the Ministerial benches which are occupied by honorable members on this side of the House. I am glad, sir, to find that allusion has been made in the Governor's speech to the visit of the Premier to England. There he did noble duty, not only with credit to himself, but with honour to our people. I believe, indeed I feel sure, that that Jubilee, that great gathering, must have impressed the whole of the people of Great Britain, and the people of the world, with an idea of the greatness and unity of Britain; and that it will and must convey to our kith and kin across the seas that our hearts beat in unison with theirs, and that we are inspired with all that noble and stimulating appreciation of the past which forms the glory and greatness and grandeur of Britain, which we are proud to claim as our country. Now, sir, the appeal has, so to speak, been made to Cæsar, with the result that the Government meets this House with the consciousness of a renewal of the trust and confidence so long entertained by the people of Victoria in the present Ministry. Their return with an increased majority is a recognition by the people that they have done great work, and that they have loyally obeyed the mandate of the country in squaring the State ledger, which is a very gratifying piece of work indeed. I am very pleased to find that not only have they succeeded in that particular work, but they have succeeded also in enabling the Treasurer to show at the end of the financial year a small but creditable surplus. I do trust that the Government will still pursue the lines they have laid down for their future guidance—that is to

say, a judicious economy in regard to the expenditure of public money. In regard to the Tariff, I am very glad to find that the country has indorsed the wise determination of the Government to have no further interference with it at present. The free-traders, in regard to that issue, have said "Let there be peace;" the protectionists have replied "There is peace;" and the country has now with no uncertain voice said "There must be peace." I trust, sir, that the next revision of the Tariff will be by a Federal Parliament for Federated Australia. I was also very glad to hear a very eloquent reference made to the great agricultural, mining, and viticultural interests by my honorable friend the member for Rodney, and I trust that the Government will manifest the same intelligent interest in regard to the fuller development of our natural products and our mineral areas in the future as they have done in the past. The great addition to our national wealth which may be brought about by a system of proper encouragement has been fully dwelt upon by my honorable friend who has preceded me, who believes, as I do, that the Government which I have the honour to sit behind recognise this necessity. Indeed, I do not think that there should be any difference of opinion amongst honorable members sitting on this side of the House and those sitting opposite in regard to the necessity for doing all that can be done for the development of our natural products. I do not think it is necessary for me to make any further reference to this matter, with the exception of saying that I trust the Government will give some assistance to the vigneron in the direction, perhaps, of establishing a central wine cellar, or by some other practical means, in order that these people may be encouraged to remain upon the land as producers of our national wealth. I am also pleased to find in the Governor's speech that reference has been made to the necessity for some measure to deal with the public service. It is a fact, sir, that to-day much discontent and dissatisfaction prevail in the public service among a great number of the employés. It is essential at all times, as much for the State as for a private employer, to expect from his servants the best return for the money paid to them; and if men feel that they are unjustly treated, and are working under hardships, it is hardly possible for the State to get

*Mr. Toucher.*

from them that good and loyal service which should be got, and which they would desire to render. If the Government wishes to see the State departments efficiently administered, it is their duty to make a thorough investigation into the whole service, and, if there be any cause for discontent, to remove it, and to place the service on a proper footing. If there is a board to be appointed, I trust that the personnel of that board will be such as to inspire all public servants with the fullest confidence as to the ability, integrity, and the impartiality of the men who are going to undertake that important work, in the interests not only of the service but of the State. I would also like to say in this connexion that I trust that due regard will be paid to the claims of the railway men, in order that they, being State servants, may have a proper recognition made of their position in the service. I trust that they will be recognised as public servants, and be no longer treated in an unfair manner in comparison with other members of the public service. I am very glad also to observe that the first measure which the Government intend to bring under the consideration of this House is a measure to deal with the public charities. As the honorable member who has preceded me has said, this is a most important matter. To my mind, it is one of the most important matters awaiting the consideration of this House. It is a well-known fact that the present system is decidedly incomplete and unsatisfactory. The revenue of these charitable institutions is at present an unknown and uncertain quantity, and it must be apparent that a better system of dealing with the charities and of raising revenue can and should be brought into being. I trust that it will be brought about in the direction of touching those people who always close their purses to charity's appeal, and that it will be also a system which will have the effect of compelling well-to-do people to take care of their destitute relatives. That old philosopher, Samuel Johnson, has said that a proper provision for the poor is the truest test of a nation's civilization. If that be so, I fear that if the test were applied to us at the present time we should ill sustain it, because, unfortunately, poverty has been regarded as a crime amongst us for a considerable time past, and we find that our aged destitute are sent to gaols, there to live amongst criminals, simply because they are poor. Now,



this is a shocking state of things, and something must be done to remedy it. Some credit is undoubtedly due to this Government for having partially tried to remove the state of things to which I have referred by making provision for aged and destitute people at the Bendigo Benevolent Asylum. But a new and efficient system will have to be adopted if we are to treat these people in a fitting and considerate manner. We often say, especially those of us who are Australian natives, how much we are indebted to the pioneers who have built up this great country; and I do say that it is the duty of every Australian native in this House to spare no effort in bringing about a measure that will recognise the great work these men and women have done, many of whom to-day are, through no fault of their own, fallen upon times of adversity and misfortune. A great question which I am also glad to observe—and I think every honorable member is pleased to observe—in the Governor's speech, is a reference to Australian federation. I am very glad indeed to have this opportunity, speaking as a public man, of thanking the Government, and of thanking Parliament, for the great work they have done in connexion with this subject. This Government, in common with the other Australian Governments, have made the question a people's question. As the result of that popular movement all the unifying and solidifying forces are at work, and to-day, before our very eyes, a nation is being gradually but surely brought into being. When we consider that our local Parliaments are jealous of their rights and privileges—and properly so—and that they have in a measure abdicated their functions in favour of a National Parliament, charged with the consideration of this great measure in all its bearings, we are brought face to face with the momentum of an Australian patriotism behind the federal cause; and no hand, save the interposition of a mightier hand than a human one, can stop the onward march to Australian unity. In March last the Federal Convention met at Adelaide. There, I regret to say—speaking as an Australian native—that the federal spirit was not too conspicuous. But whether it was owing to the visit of the Premiers to England or not, I think that there was a marked contrast between the meeting held in Sydney and that held in Adelaide. There was a much stronger manifestation

of this federal spirit in Sydney, and I trust that when the Convention re-assembles in Melbourne, in January next, Victoria will be able to crown the work commenced at Adelaide, and continued in Sydney. It is not for me to enter into any consideration of details, but I earnestly trust that when the Convention meets in Melbourne the delegates will act in that spirit of compromise which alone can bring about the union we all desire. I trust that they will recognise that the large and the small states have their rights, which are equally entitled to consideration, and that it will be recognised also that the large states of to-day may be the small states of to-morrow. When the Constitution which the Convention has to frame is presented to the people it will, of course, be impossible for every elector to find perfect agreement upon every point of his political faith; but so long as essential principles are recognised and conserved in the interests of the people, I have the fullest confidence in those statesmen who are going to frame the Constitution, or rather are going to put the finishing touches upon the Constitution; and I trust that during the existence of this present Government they will be able to put the coping stone on the national edifice, reared upon foundations so well and truly laid. Sir, I thank honorable members for the attention with which they have listened to me.

Mr. HANCOCK moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. HAMILTON seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

Sir GEORGE TURNER moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until the following day at three o'clock.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE stated that he trusted that the Premier would agree to the House meeting at half-past four o'clock on the following day. He hoped that they would not begin again in this Parliament the system of breaking into the day by meeting at half-past three. He would also remind the right honorable gentleman that on the following day honorable members desired to accept the invitation which had been offered to them to visit the Zoological-gardens, and therefore half-past three o'clock would be an inconvenient time.

Sir GEORGE TURNER said that he had overlooked for the moment the fact that honorable members had been invited to visit the Zoological-gardens on the following day. He did not desire to debar

honorable members from seeing their "friends"; but, while he would consent to the House meeting at half-past four on the following day, he desired to intimate that he intended to move subsequently that the time of meeting on Wednesdays and Thursdays be half-past three o'clock. He begged to move that the House, at its rising, adjourn until the following day at half-past four.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past five o'clock, until half-past four o'clock p.m. next day.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, October 27, 1897.*

Joseph Hall—Land Board at Birchip—Residence Areas—32nd Section Holdings—Horse and Forage Allowance to Foresters—Elections and Qualifications Committee—Governor's Speech: Address in Reply—Bills read a First Time—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past four o'clock p.m.

JOSEPH HALL.

Mr. STYLES asked the Minister of Railways if he would lay on the table of the Library all papers and documents relating to the case of Joseph Hall?

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS.—The documents referred to are original documents, and it is very inadvisable, I think, to place them on the table of the Library.

Mr. MURRAY.—Could you not place copies on the Library table?

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS.—The papers are very voluminous, and it would require a considerable amount of time to copy them. The honorable member for Williamstown, however, can have full access to the documents if he comes to the department. I have them in my own room, and he can see them there.

Mr. STYLES.—I suppose other members can also see them?

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS.—Yes, any member who wishes can see the documents at any time.

### LAND BOARD AT BIRCHIP.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister of Lands the following questions:—

"1. If his attention has been called to the fact that a number of farmers and other intending selectors were summoned by the Lands

department to attend a land board at Birchip last month, and that, after having travelled some hundreds of miles at great expense to get a chance in the ballot, they were refused the opportunity?

"2. Why were these men not told by letter they were not eligible to compete for the land?

"3. Will he reimburse their actual expenses of the journey and refund the application fee?"

He remarked that at the recent land board at Birchip a very large number of farmers from different parts of the colony were very badly treated. They were invited by notice in the *Government Gazette* and by advertisements in the local newspapers to apply for land. They applied in the usual way, and on the application forms they stated whether they were already owners or occupiers of land, so that the department knew exactly what land every applicant held. Instead, however, of the department notifying existing land-holders not to come to the board it invited them to appear, and then they were told that because they had already selected their applications would not be entertained. They were turned adrift, and the land given to others. He thought that these applicants ought at least to have received notice by letter not to attend the board, because others were considered to have a preferential claim. In his opinion, the Minister should see that the applicants got at least the expenses they incurred in being called before the board.

Mr. LANGDON stated that during his election tour his attention was called to this matter three or four times. He had addressed a letter on the subject to the Minister of Lands, and if the Minister could answer the statements in that letter when replying to the question of the honorable member for Numurkah the whole matter would be made clear.

Mr. BEST.—I think that some of the comments which have been made with reference to the Birchip Land Board have hardly been fair. It is only to be supposed, when there are only 140 allotments, and some 900 applicants, for those allotments, that there will be a number of dissatisfied applicants. Now, in the first place, I took great care in regard to this matter. I sent the Secretary for Lands himself and three other experienced officers up to Birchip for the purpose of dealing with the matter, because I was aware that there were a very large number of applications. I may point out that those who have previously selected are not ineligible; on the contrary, they have the right, under

ordinary circumstances, to make a selection in the mallee quite irrespective of other holdings. But what my honorable friends have failed to remember is that out of the 900 applicants there may have been 700 or 800 who really were most eligible applicants, and the 318 who were ultimately sent to the ballot had all the merits of those who were not sent to the ballot, together with—

Mr. GRAHAM.—That is not correct. I can give plenty of cases in which that statement is incorrect.

Mr. BEST.—The honorable member says that what I have stated is not correct. Fortunately, we had the evidence taken in writing, and that evidence is open to the honorable member's perusal. What I was about to explain was, that we had some 700 eligible applicants whose applications were carefully examined, and the merits of those who were sent to the ballot were equal to the merits of those who were not sent to the ballot, with this additional merit or qualification—that they had not previously selected. The officers, in the exercise, as I believe, of a wise discretion, thought that the merits being equal those who had not previously selected should be granted the preference. The honorable member for Korong has also referred to certain cases which he is informed have occurred. He was told that those who were working under the share system were declared to be ineligible. Now, that is totally incorrect. Men who were working under the share system were considered by the officers who had charge of the matter to be highly eligible, and a number of those men amongst others had their applications inserted in the ballot-box.

Mr. GRAHAM.—Why were the men who were refused not told by letter that they were not eligible to compete for the land instead of being dragged before the land board?

Mr. BEST.—It was quite impossible to follow the course the honorable member suggests. It is true that those applicants appeared on their applications as following certain occupations; but it is only by careful personal examination of men with regard to their experience as farmers, and as to their means and other qualifications, that the officers of the department are able to come to a reasonable decision. It would have been very unfair to have written such letters as the honorable member has suggested, because it was not really

known until the men were actually before the board that those who had previously selected land would not be sent to the ballot.

Mr. AUSTIN.—Why were papers sent to them telling them that if they were successful at the ballot they would be allowed to select? Such letters were sent to my constituents.

Mr. BEST.—I have already explained that men who have made previous selections are entitled to send in applications, and have a right to be considered and dealt with, as these men actually were.

Mr. AUSTIN.—They were not considered at all, because they were told at once to stand aside.

The SPEAKER.—I am afraid the Minister of Lands is more lengthy in his reply than is necessary.

Mr. BEST.—The question is a very important one, and I was asked to give an explanation on the subject. My reply is that those who had previously selected land were not disqualified, and it was only when they came on the ground that the board were able to come to a determination on the matter. Under the circumstances, it is quite impossible to hold out any hope that there will be either a return of the application fees or a reimbursement of the expenses incurred by any applicants.

Mr. AUSTIN.—It is receiving money under false pretences by the department.

## RESIDENCE AREAS.

Mr. BAILES asked the Minister of Lands the following questions:—

"1. Is he aware that the Lands department is refusing to allow holders of residence areas who have purchased such areas from persons who have been registered for such areas for more than two and a half years to purchase such areas under section 36 of the Mines Act 1890?"

"2. Is he also aware that clause 19 of section 9 of the Sandhurst Mining By-laws, which have been certified to as not being contrary to law by the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, distinctly sets forth—'Any person acquiring a residence area by transfer and desirous of purchasing the same from the Crown in accordance with section 36 of the Mines Act 1890 shall be entitled to all the privileges of the transferrer, so far as the title of the latter was continuous and without a lapse'?"

"3. Will he take the necessary steps to have the practice that has hitherto been observed in accordance with the by-law reverted to?"

He observed that until very recently it was the practice of the department to regard the holder of a residence area as

having a right to purchase, even though he had not been in occupation himself for two and a half years, providing that the man from whom he had purchased the residence area had been in occupation for that time. This practice, however, had now been upset.

Mr. BEST.—In this matter the Lands department is acting on the advice of the Crown Law department. As to the second question, I have forwarded the by-law referred to to the Crown Law department, and asked them to fully consider it. On the receipt of the opinion of the Crown Law department I shall be happy to reconsider the question.

### 32ND SECTION HOLDINGS.

Mr. CRAVEN asked the Minister of Lands if he would give some indication of what he purposed to do with regard to 32nd section holdings in the proposed Land Bill, as the holders of these blocks were suffering considerable loss, being kept in a state of suspense, as they did not know whether to stock their holdings or improve them? He said he would be glad if the Minister could see his way to give some definite reply to this question, because the holders of 32nd section blocks throughout the north-eastern portion of the colony were very anxious to know whether they were likely to be allowed to continue in future as holders of the same blocks. One year's extension of the leases had been granted, and they were now in a state of suspense. They were afraid to expend more labour or money in improving their blocks, and they were also afraid to stock up, as they did not know what might be done at the end of the period of extension.

Mr. BEST.—In order to relieve the urgency of dealing with this matter I agreed to an extension of these leases for twelve months. I can also give the honorable member an assurance that a Land Bill will be one of the first measures introduced next session, but until then it will be quite impossible to come to any determination on the subject.

### HORSE AND FORAGE ALLOWANCE TO FORESTERS.

Mr. McCOLL asked the Minister of Lands if the horse and forage allowance to the foresters, reinstatement of which was promised about four months since, had been paid?

Mr. BEST.—The Public Service Board have not seen their way yet to grant the necessary certificate to enable this money to be paid. The board desire further information on the subject, but I can assure the honorable member that the matter is not being overlooked, and as soon as the board issue a certificate the money will be paid.

### ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER laid on the table his warrant appointing Mr. Beazley, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Burton, Mr. Cameron, Mr. A. Harris, Mr. Moule, and Mr. Murray Smith as the Committee of Elections and Qualifications.

### THE STEAMER "GEM."

Mr. BEST, in compliance with an order of the House (dated August 25), presented a return relative to the subsidy paid to the steamer *Gem* by the Railway department.

### THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) was resumed on Mr. Morrissey's motion for the presentation of an address in reply to the Governor's speech.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Mr. Speaker, I regret extremely that the duty of moving the adjournment of the debate on this motion should have devolved upon me. I have always looked upon the motion for adopting the address in reply to the Governor's speech as affording an opportunity for the expression of opinion on both sides of the House on the Government policy. There seems to have been some potent power behind the scenes that has induced one portion of the House to refrain from discussing the Ministerial policy. I do not know whether that can be taken as a compliment to the Government, as a compliment to their policy, or even as an admission of the fact that there is no policy at all. I think, however, that things have occurred since this House last met regarding which it would be unwise if there were not an expression of opinion in the House with respect to whether the same policy should be pursued in the future. I allude especially to the attempt at press domination and press tyranny. I am quite prepared to admit that the press properly conducted should be a powerful factor in the dissemination of news, and even for the dissemination of

intelligence in the community. But when we find the press arrogating to itself an unwarranted power; when we find it denouncing, misrepresenting, censuring, and blackguarding certain public men, I say it is time that this House should express its opinion upon such conduct. The public policy of the Government, it has been openly stated, has been simply placed in the power of the press. There has been such a large number of wonderful coincidences in which the Government and the press have thought the same way at exactly the psychological moment, that it is pretty well time we asked for and got a statement from the press that they have no desire to dictate, or, at any rate, if they have that they will dictate on the floor of this House, and not through the columns of any newspaper. We find that, following on the statement made by the Premier that he intended to ask the people in October to send him supporters of no uncertain character, advantage was taken of this utterance by the press, or one section of the press, to make it mean that certain gentlemen were to be driven into private life; and the most unscrupulous tactics were adopted to try and coerce the people of the colony to shut those gentlemen out of public life. I am glad to say that the effect of those efforts in the majority of cases has been that the men who were thus attacked have been placed on a higher pinnacle than they ever occupied before, and the newspaper which tried to do this thing is now simply looked upon as a by-word and a reproach. I say that until we have a daily *Hansard*, or until we have something which contains a faithful report of our utterances, we shall always be placed in an unfair position as regards these cowardly opponents. Why, sir, one gentleman was accused of the terrible offence of inviting municipal councillors to his house to dinner, and this was placed among the electioneering news. The journalism of Tennessee or of Eaton will never descended so low as that. We have gentlemen in this House whose conduct has been open to public criticism, and who have never avoided that criticism—men who have ever been ready to defend themselves and their conduct, as well as the conduct of the Ministry of a former day, who appointed them to certain positions. Yet a newspaper has placed before the people as a political job what was a legitimate transaction, and recognised as such by members on both sides of the House.

I submit that we must protest against this kind of thing. Personally, I have never minded saying what I thought of the paper in question. I reckon any success I may have achieved in public life has been achieved through the abuse of that paper, and long shall I court its abuse. But I would point out that the coincidences between the action of the Government and the dictation of that paper are very striking, and they are noticed. I will give some illustrations of this. The Government introduced a Bill providing for a State Bank, and the Premier made one of the most eloquent speeches on the subject that ever I heard in this House. That speech was considered so good that it was printed, and scattered north, south, east, and west. However, a series of articles appeared saying that this was not the right time to bring forward such a proposal. Now, was that the voice of Sir George (then Mr.) Turner, or was it the voice of an unknown scribbler? However that may be, the State Bank proposal was dropped, never to be heard of again. The same thing happened with regard to the tax on unimproved land values. The press said it was no time for a conflict between the Houses, and the consequence was that this proposal was also dropped. This was the policy of the Government, and curious to say it was also the policy of the *Age* newspaper. Everything that has been said and done by this newspaper right through, even to the expenditure of the £2,000 for sending home a rifle team, and the theatrical refusal of a title by the proprietor of the *Age*, is equally characteristic of this discredited newspaper. The present Government, I believe, is one of the best Governments that we have ever known, but I want them to throw off the domination of the *Age*, and to say—"This is our policy, and we will not be dictated to." Honorable members can see themselves that there is now a general revolt against the *Age*. There is nothing too mean, too paltry, or too unscrupulous for the *Age* to make use of to discredit a political opponent. The last dying kick of Ananias I got on the morning of the election, when the *Age* said that I admitted I was an Orangeman. Whether I am an Orangeman or not has nothing to do with the matter, but I believe that if the *Age* had been given sufficient time their special correspondent in Pekin would have made me a Chinaman. These are the tactics against which I succeeded in returning to

this House, and similar tactics were used against other honorable members, whom I am pleased to see here, although I differ from them in politics. In fact, owing to the way they were attacked by the *Age*, I am as pleased to see them in the House as I would be if they belonged to my own corner, because their return means that the people have risen to the occasion and declared that they will not be dominated by a rag of this description. I was told this morning by the *Age*—I read it by accident; because honorable members may depend upon it that I do not buy it—that they expected me to give some “weighty words” this evening. It seems it was all arranged, cut and dried, that the address in reply was to be adopted last night, and that not a word was to be said, but we were all to live happy and comfortable over the “Cup.” But I have a few words to say, and I sincerely hope other members have also a few words to say. I was supposed to have stated that I would go into opposition, but I never did make any such statement; indeed, the mere fact of the *Age* having said that I made such a statement should be quite enough to render it certain that I had not done so. This poison is placed before the people every morning, and men are subjected to persistent persecution. Whether it be Speight, Gillies, or Hancock, the same cowardly tactics are adopted, and I want to have placed on record in *Hansard* my protest against the *Age*. They won't put it in their own columns, and perhaps there is a certain *esprit de corps* which will prevent some other newspapers from reporting what I have said. I hope, however, honorable members will grasp the nettle. This kind of thing does not exist in any other part of the world. There is no such thing as press domination in England. The London newspapers, strong and excellent as they are, would not descend to such dirty tactics as are used by the *Age*. This is due simply to the fact that here the *Age* has a monopoly—such a monopoly as you will not find anywhere else. If you try to start a newspaper the cable service is in the hands of these few people, and they hold your destinies in the hollow of their hands. There must be a protest against this kind of thing. Now that I have got rid of those “weighty words,” I wish simply to address myself briefly to the address in reply to His Excellency's speech. Before coming to that subject, however, I may say that it

would be a very ungraceful thing if somebody, either a member of the Government, a member of the Opposition, or some insignificant member of the House, did not express gratification at the accession of strength we have received in the two honorable members who proposed and seconded the address in reply. While we are always prepared to give consideration and attention to a new member, I think we must all recognise that when we find two gentlemen coming out with the proper democratic ring, as those honorable members did, we have reason to congratulate ourselves on their presence in this Chamber. The policy of the Government, so far as they have exhibited it, I believe in, with one exception. I wish to ask the Premier whether we have arrived at such a state of prosperity that we can afford to reduce the income tax? I want to know whether every act of restitution has been performed? I want to ask whether those public servants who have been compelled to bear more than their fair share of the system of retrenchment are to have anything placed back to their credit before the Government attempt to reduce taxation? The income tax I was born to; I took it in with my mother's milk. I love the income tax. I have always been placed in such a position that I have had to pay very little of it. But at the same time I never heard of a man in my life who was not quite prepared to pay income tax on £100,000 or £200,000 a year. The income tax is a tax according to your means, and it is the very last tax that should be reduced, unless we are in that happy condition that we have met all our liabilities, and that we can perform all acts of restitution which we ought to perform. We ought not to reduce the income tax unless we can turn round, and

“Look the whole world in the face,  
For we owe not any man.”

When we achieve that position, then we can reduce the income tax. Possibly the Premier, in the course of his travels, may have got a few tricks up his sleeve, but it is highly probable that the honorable member for Toorak has got the bigger bag. I want to know what is going to be done in the direction of restoring municipal subsidies, of restoring charitable grants, of restoring educational grants, and of increasing the grants to develop the resources of the country, in connexion with which we are so disgracefully behind? The Premier came to the

Mr. Hancock.

House three years ago with a pitiful tale of the way in which the revenue was diminishing, and the expenditure increasing. We sympathized with him and his Government, and helped him in the task which he had to perform. We have always assisted the Government—both sides of the House have assisted them in that matter. I have had to protest, and members of my party have had to protest, time after time, about the unfair way in which retrenchment has been carried out; but I am not narrow-minded enough to blame the Premier. In any wholesale scheme of retrenchment there must be some mistakes; and I will say this, that when mistakes were placed fairly and squarely before the Premier, he was the first to remedy them. But I will give one illustration of cases of injustice which have not been remedied. Eighteen months ago I appealed to the Chief Secretary and to the Premier with regard to some junior warders. Their position is simply a terrible one. The Chief Secretary admitted the justice of the claim, thanked me for the way I explained it, and, with the Premier, promised that those warders should be placed in a better position.

Dr. MALONEY.—Are they?

Mr. HANCOCK.—No, they are not placed in a better position; they have had nothing whatever done to better their position since that time, although I myself, and the then members for East Bourke Boroughs—Sir Graham Berry and Mr. Cook—persistently urged their claims before the Chief Secretary. That is simply one illustration. Then there are the increments of the railway servants. They were supposed to be paid from the 1st July last. They have not been received. And yet we are told there is to be no more taxation, in fact, that the Government intend to reduce the income tax. In what direction will the reduction be? Will it be to lighten the burden of the rich and the well-paid man or to lighten the burden of the poor man? Honorable members can pretty well guess which. I do hope that our Premier will be able to place arguments of such a character before this House that we shall be able to support his policy unanimously. I speak in no captious spirit. I want to follow a Government that carries out its promises. When the policy of the Turner Government was expounded three years ago I believed in every plank of it, but I did not want to see a policy of magnificent

advances turned into—well, I will not call them “masterly” retreats. We want a reform of the Legislative Council. What chance is there of getting it? When the Premier attempted to get a land tax passed, it was rejected by the Legislative Council, and he has not asked them to agree to it again. Members, no doubt, watched the position which the Government of New South Wales took up with regard to a similar tax. They watched the bull-dog tenacity with which the Premier of New South Wales—whose only fault is that, like my honorable friend the member for Hawthorn, he is a free-trader—stuck to this tax, and compelled the Legislative Council to pass the measure.

Mr. TRENWITH.—But he had a weapon which we have not.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Then we must create a weapon. Are we to sit down quietly until the end of time? No, sir, I say that a Government with 65 adherents, solid adherents —

Mr. HIGGINS.—Very solid!

Mr. HANCOCK.—Yes, solid, as long as the Government carry out their pledges, and with an Opposition that I do not think will be very earnest —

Mr. T. SMITH.—Or dangerous.

Mr. HANCOCK.—I will not say that. You cannot tell how dangerous an Opposition will be. That all depends upon this side. We had a chance of securing legislation of the character to which I have referred, and I am deeply disappointed that this particular tax is not to be introduced by the Government. I say so, not because I want the money to be spent in Footscray, nor do I want to bolster up any of those industries we have heard so much about. I want to carry out the policy which was advocated last night by the honorable member for Rodney (Mr. Morrissey)—the policy of increasing our exports, and placing us in the proud position of being the greatest exporting country in the world for our size. I want to have this money raised, and I want to see inaugurated a policy of judicious expenditure. I do not want to see merely a policy of spending a miserable £140,000 or £120,000—I forget which—to develop the whole of the mining resources of this great colony, including the clearing of tracks and the opening up of huge auriferous areas. This sum of money is to be spent in three years. I feel inclined to ask whether the Government can

spare it. We have districts in this country which, if we depended upon private enterprise alone, would never be developed. What we want is a strong Government with a determination to carry out works of this character, and you may depend upon it that a policy of that kind would soon get us out of our difficulties. We have all the resources, and what is wanted is a spirited and not a cautious public works policy. What is "caution"? We only want the money to be spent where there is a reasonable prospect of it being reproductive. This corner has never advocated a sand-shifting policy, a policy of digging holes in order to fill them up again. We want money to be spent in developing the natural resources of the colony, and we feel sure that public opinion when properly educated will approve of a policy of that kind being carried out. I am disappointed at not being able to find reference made to such a policy in the programme of the Government. There is a little item with regard to the settlement of the people upon the land, intimating that the policy recommended by the honorable member for Gippsland North some years ago, and rejected by the Legislative Council, is to be pursued. That would possibly be a gain. It means that the Government should be instructed to buy up certain land, instead of placing people upon land under conditions which have been a by-word and a reproach. Now, sir, I recognise that there are some difficulties in the way. I want to know how the Government are going to do it? As the other place opposed that policy previously, they will oppose it this time. Of course, if the Premier has something "up his sleeve" it will disarm my criticism a little bit, but I have sufficient experience of another place to know that, in regard to everything where the rights of property have to be looked after, its members rarely change their policy except under pressure. That pressure at the present time is not likely to be used. We have the question of electoral reform brought before us. How many honorable members of this House have had the Purification of Rolls Act brought under their notice during the recent elections? With the exception perhaps of those members who have had a walk-over, there is not a single member of the House who is not aware of the urgency of that reform. I know that the metropolitan members recognise as a standing disgrace the number of people who have been simply disfranchised

*Mr. Hancock.*

in consequence of the present state of the law.

Mr. KENNEDY.—It is the same in the country.

Mr. HANCOCK.—I have had many members for country constituencies saying the same thing to me. As we have a practical Ministry in power, and as the repeal of the Purification of Rolls Act has been promised to us, I should have thought that that would have been the first work which the House would have been asked to deal with. But instead of that we find that we are told that one of the first Bills which the House will be asked to deal with will be a measure relating to the estates of deceased persons. Sir, we want to deal with live people. You will find sufficient astuteness already in the administration of the Act with regard to the estates of deceased persons. The Government generally know how to deal with them. Let us, I say, deal with live people first of all. Let us have domestic reforms that are urgently needed. To my certain knowledge, during the recent elections, over one hundred people came to me who were off the rolls when they should have been on, and many were on who should have been off. The same sort of thing applies in all districts. I do not say that this was an attempt on the part of the Government to disfranchise certain districts. The Purification of Rolls Act was put through in a great rush. It should have been the corollary to another measure that was not allowed to become law—namely, a measure providing for one man one vote. One passed in this House, and honorable members were told that one man one vote was to follow, and that there must be a Purification of Rolls Act, in order that a One-man-one-vote Bill might be introduced. But the Purification of Rolls Act was passed into law, and the other was not. Now we have a Government with such a tremendous majority at its back, are not these reforms, that have been demanded for years, and which this House has expected to be introduced time after time, such as should be entered upon at once? These are errors of omission. I need not refer very much to the good work done in regard to factory legislation. I am prepared to admit that the Act recently passed is a considerable bit in advance of the legislation of any other part of the world. But we want an extension of the principle. We are brought face to face with certain people who ask the



question—"Why should others be protected? why should a paternal Government come forward and defend them, and not defend us?" I am sure that this House, which has shown itself so just and considerate to the claims of labour, will be ready to assist the Premier to carry out a work of that kind. The extension of the minimum rate of wage principle, and the better administration of the minimum rate of wage system, is demanded. If it is right to apply that principle to one class it is equally right to apply it to all, and it should be done. As it is, we are open to the reproach that only one class—one pampered class—in the State has received such remedial legislation. I was in hopes that the Government would have carried out these reforms. Once more I say that my criticisms are not made in any factions spirit. I only want the Government to carry out the promises that were made by the Premier at St. Kilda three years ago, and so eloquently defended in this House by himself and by the Attorney-General. If this House feels that the country is satisfied, and that we are to go upon a rest-and-be-thankful policy; and if we are going to rest until such a time as federation spreads its beneficial effects over the whole colony, you might as well keep back all reforms for the same reason—even such a reform as reducing the income tax. I say that we must try and keep our own house in order. The best way to bring about the federation of the colonies is to try and bring about an assimilation of the laws of the colonies. The various fiscal policies are only one instance of the variation that at present exists. The value of the vote, the question of who is to have a vote, and the question of how we are to vote—these are questions upon which we should agree amongst ourselves as to whether there should be any difference between this colony and South Australia or anywhere else. The policy of New Zealand has been questioned in this House. Charges have been made against the prosperity of New Zealand which have been refuted time after time. What is possible in New Zealand should be possible here. Why should we drag behind? I feel perfectly sure that the Premier himself has no desire to drag behind in these questions of reform. And if we would be a United Australia, it can only be by the people consenting; and if they have equal rights over all the colonies a lot of the small

objections that have cropped up at the Federal Convention will prove to have disappeared. Some of the colonies place themselves in the position of small aristocracies, and say that state rights must be defended under all circumstances. They claim that without the recognition of state rights there can be no federation. Sir, there will be no such thing as state rights under a proper Federation. It is the rights of the people, the rights of the whole people, that have to be recognised, and no such thing as a state; and as there is no such thing as a state there ought to be no such thing as state rights. I was pleased to see the action taken by our delegates upon this question. I maintain that this is no time to push off our own reforms. I am as much in earnest as any one else in my desire to obtain a proper federation of these colonies, but I would look upon "federation at any price" as being the most unpatriotic action any statesman could join in. I look upon some of the measures promised by the Government as being absolutely necessary, but I do urge upon the Premier the necessity of trying to break off first of all with the old love before he starts with the new. The confidence of the members of this House was procured by promising certain legislation. A few honorable members have come over from the opposite side of the House to this side because those promises have not been kept. Surely the Premier owes an allegiance to the people who were his first supporters, and not to those who opposed his policy, and simply came across the floor when they found that the Government were not so anxious to bring about those reforms. I look upon it that our duty at the present time is to look carefully into the condition of the colony. We may talk of things improving. If honorable members had my experience of the numbers of people coming up every morning and asking for work—people ready to work, and prepared to take whatever work is offered to them—they would not be so certain about improvement. While you have these people idle instead of being wealth producers for the community there must be "something rotten in the state of Denmark." When the Premier has been spoken to with regard to the necessity of finding work, he has replied that he has been very busy. I will admit that he has been busy—too busy. There is a plank in our platform that it is necessary that there

should be a Minister of Labour, not in order that some one may get a fat billet, as it would very likely be charitably supposed, but in order that the work of the Premier, the Minister of Railways, the Minister of Mines, the Minister of Lands, and other Ministers may be confined to the proper administration of their departments, whilst the regulation of labour may be left in the hands of a department for the purpose. We have plenty of precedents for taking that course. Why has it not been adopted here? Surely it would be better that we should adopt that course. What could be worse than the present state of things? I have had to follow the Premier up to his own office with regard to the cases of workmen. I have had to follow the Minister of Lands from the Customs department to his own office on similar business. They say—"Yes, it is much to be deplored that there should be such a large number of people out of work, but we will get a report upon it." Why should there be these delays? You are bound to have men who are hungry, idle, and angry while such is the case. I say that before you attempt to reduce the income tax the Government should do something in the direction of establishing a department of Labour, so that when work is to be given out it may be given out fairly, equitably, and justly. If that were done I should consider that this Government would have placed itself upon the highest point to which they could possibly aspire. If something of that kind is not done, we shall have a repetition of those old scenes that have worried every Premier for many years past. We have large tracts of country lying idle, huge territories capable of producing sufficient wealth to get us out of all our difficulties lying idle, and men walking about the streets in a starving condition. To remedy this state of things should have been the policy of the Government. I have announced my intention of supporting any Government that will carry out a policy of this description, and that will support such measures as I have indicated. If the Premier will carry out his original policy, he will find no warmer adherents than the members sitting in this corner. But if we consider that he is pursuing a policy of a shift character, he will certainly receive our opposition.

Sir BRYAN O'LOGHLEN. — Mr. Speaker, I desire to say a few words, but not to inflict upon the House a long speech. First of all, you will allow

me, sir, before I refer to matters under discussion, to congratulate you upon having been appointed to the high position you now occupy, and to assure you that, as far as I am concerned, I shall give you the most warm and cordial and loyal support that any member can give to the Speaker. There is one question referred to in the Governor's address that is of very great importance. In fact, it is a question of the very greatest importance that has ever come up in Australia, and that is the question of federation. I know that some members are of opinion that I am opposed to federation. So far from that being the case, I am a warm and ardent federationist; and I go further than some honorable members, because I support Imperial federation, to which we have not yet turned our attention in this colony. But I desire to see the federation of the Australian colonies established upon a proper basis. I cannot sympathize with those honorable members who declare for "federation at any price." It is very easy optimism to "let us get federation, and if there is anything wrong with it we will alter it afterwards." We all know that that policy in politics has led to the most disastrous results. What I desire to do in reference to this matter is to enter my protest, not alone on behalf of myself, but on behalf of a large number of people in various parts of the colony, and engaged in various walks of life, with regard to some points in the Commonwealth Bill, and to inform the House that these people are not satisfied with the Constitution as proposed by the Convention at its meetings in Adelaide and Sydney. There are many points in that Constitution which render it unacceptable, in my judgment, and in the judgment of many other of the people of Victoria, and the sooner that comes to be understood by the public generally the better for the settlement of the question of federation. Now I may refer, first of all, to the point in regard to equal representation of the colonies in the Federal Senate. As far as I can judge, the public opinion of this colony—and I have addressed, I suppose, dozens of meetings upon the subject—is decidedly against the proposal, and you will have the people of the colony upon that point alone saying emphatically "No" to the present Bill so far as it has been drafted by the Convention. I am not going to enter into the arguments *pro* and *con*.

I only desire to let the House understand what I believe to be the general opinion of the electors of this colony. There are many points of constitutional law in connexion with the proposed Constitution which are also objected to, such as amendment by way of suggestion of Money Bills by the Senate. But these points, which of course require more time than I have now to give to the discussion of them, will have to be considered later on. I desire, however, to refer particularly to a commercial aspect, and that is in reference to the abolition of intercolonial protection. Now, there is a very strong feeling amongst those engaged in all the productive interests of this country, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or mining, that if that change is to be brought about—which seems to be inevitable—it should be brought about gradually and by steps. Some honorable members may hold strong views with regard to this question, but there are thousands of farmers who hold as strong views the other way. And the views that they hold upon this subject are that if these protective duties have to be swept away, it must be done so gradually that it shall not be done at any particular time, but in such a way that the farmers may have time to look about them in order to turn their land to other purposes. Honorable members may think that I am simply referring to the question of the stock tax. I am not referring to the stock tax alone. I am referring to the protection given to a great number of farmers' productions all over the country. I know, for instance, that we have a substantial protection on potatoes. I know that we have a substantial protection on wheat, which we know will this year amount to a very substantial sum. We have a substantial protection in regard to many other matters of production. If we turn to mining, we have a substantial subsidy given to coal mining, which has resulted in the success of the coal industry in Victoria, and that is the carriage of coal at a figure below what the railways are prepared to charge for the carriage. But if these measures of protection are to be swept away, and if intercolonial protection is to end, there ought to be some provision in the Bill for having a period during which those benefits are to be diminished, and the protection gradually extinguished. If the farmers are to sacrifice the benefits they receive under protection at the present time, they should only do

so during a series of years. We have seen in a neighbouring colony the effect of the abolition of the sugar duties. We know what the result has been to the farmers in the Hunter district, and what it is likely to be to the owners of land in the Hunter and neighbouring districts. The farming opinion is very strong upon these points. No doubt a great many manufacturing industries will also be affected. It must necessarily be so if intercolonial free-trade is to be established. It may be that intercolonial free-trade is necessary for the future prosperity of the whole of Australia, but at the same time you should not destroy vested interests, but should give people time to look about them in order to make a change, whether in manufacturing, or in farming, or in mining. Then, again, there has not been arrived at any means of settling the division of taxes—what taxes are to be collected by the Federal Government; and there is a very strong feeling abroad that if you hand over customs and excise at once this colony and others may find themselves in a very straitened financial condition. Fancy the Treasurer coming down to this House and not being able to announce anything in the shape of a real Budget! He would be able to give merely a hypothetical statement of what might be returned to him by the Federal Government. This would leave the whole matter in a state of uncertainty. We would never know how the colony stood; it would all be a question of conjecture. Now, there is no absolute necessity in federation for any amalgamation of either the railways, the debts, or the customs and excise of the colonies. That can all come in good time. Let us secure a Central Government, and unite in regard to those matters about which we are all agreed, such as for defence purposes. We are now attempting too much, and if we persevere on the lines on which we have started we shall find that the two great colonies—the colonies that we want to federate—New South Wales and Victoria, will refuse to accept the offered Constitution. The majority of the people in each of those colonies will vote "No," and then federation will receive a blow from which it may not recover for ten or twenty years. Having regard to the utter impossibility of the minor colonies agreeing to what the larger colonies require, it would be far better to leave the matter alone and to start again on fresh lines in two or three years. I lay these

views before the House. I dare say that to a great number of honorable members who are enthusiastic about federation and its immediate results they will not be agreeable.

Mr. TRENWITH.—That is not the question. The question is how they arise on the address in reply?

Sir BRYAN O'LOGHLEN.—There is a paragraph in the Governor's speech in which the hope is expressed that the high qualities the members of the Convention have shown will enable them to overcome the numerous and serious difficulties of their task and to frame a Constitution that will prove acceptable to all the colonies, and to consummate the union so long and ardently desired. I am pointing out that at the present time the public opinion in Victoria—I am not going into the question of public opinion in New South Wales—is that the Constitution which has been framed will not be acceptable to the colonies. While the colonies want a proper federation and a proper Constitution they do not want a Constitution which may be destructive to the future peace, the future happiness, and the future good government of Australia. They desire a Constitution that will raise Australia to a high pinnacle, that will give us everything that the most ardent Australian can dream of and hope for. I do not know whether many honorable members have read the large book which contains the reports of the Adelaide Convention. Those who have and who have studied those reports are aware of the views that were held by certain honorable members of the Convention. Those views were repeated again at Sydney. In some cases they have been supported by a majority, and we can see that the smaller colonies will make the acceptance of those views a condition of federation. The Constitution which they wish, and a part of which has already been agreed to by the Convention, would not, I say, be acceptable to a majority of the people of Victoria. I do not speak of the other colonies, although from certain things that have occurred in New South Wales, the Constitution does not appear to be acceptable there. I know too little of New South Wales, however, to attempt to form an opinion on the subject. I can form an opinion of what are the views of the people of Victoria, and I say that, as far as the Convention have progressed, the Constitution will not be acceptable to the people of Victoria.

Mr. HAMILTON.—Mr. Speaker, I am sure that honorable members are deeply grateful to the honorable member for Port Fairy for the words of wisdom and of solemn warning which have fallen from him regarding federation. We value what he has said, but we have heard nearly the whole of it before. We had a three months' debate in this House upon the Federation Bill, and the questions that have been mentioned by the honorable member received the fullest consideration. I refer particularly to the control of the railways, the customs, and other services by the Federal Government. I would point out to the honorable member, with very great respect indeed, that each and all of those points did receive careful consideration from honorable members. Whilst we were delighted to hear his remarks, they were not new to us. I do not wish to deal specially with the question of federation, and I will only say, further, that the whole of the people of Australia viewed with very great concern indeed the deliberations of the Federal Convention, and are looking forward anxiously to the time when the Convention will meet again. It is a fact that there are some proposals in the draft Constitution that will not be acceptable to the people, or even to a majority of the people. At the same time, I do not think that the question of the intercolonial duties is going to be a bar to federation. I feel confident that when the people of Victoria, at any rate, are satisfied as to the merits of the Bill in giving large constitutional privileges to the people they will not allow the matter of the intercolonial duties to stand in the way for one single moment. With regard to the address in reply, I cannot help re-echoing the sentiments so eloquently expressed by the honorable member for Footscray. As far as I am concerned, I have a feeling of keen disappointment, not only at the Governor's speech, but at the general character of the proposals that were put forward by the Premier at St. Kilda. I would ask, with very great respect, whether this Parliament, after three years' continuous effort, is only to get through the small number of measures that were mentioned in the speech at St. Kilda? Whilst that speech abounded with eloquence, and whilst it was, from a certain stand-point, great, it was most disappointing in what it promised in regard to the future. Since I have been a member of

the House, I have seen more legislation put through in one session of Parliament than is proposed by the Government for the next three years. Leaving out franchise reform and the alteration of the electoral boundaries, there is no question included in the programme of the Government that can be considered in the remotest sense as being a party question at all. I do not wish to give honorable members the impression that I deplore the fact that there are no party questions in the Government programme; but I do desire to point out that there are certain great questions that still have to be settled by the people of this country, and that until they are settled our people cannot hope to enjoy that comfort and prosperity which they have a right to expect, and which they have so long been without. Now, I will take the proposal of the Government to reduce the income tax. That is a matter about which I feel very strongly indeed. I admit, without any hesitation, that the present rates of income tax are too high. It is well known that our income tax is the heaviest in the world.

Mr. TRENWITH.—That does not make it too high.

Mr. HAMILTON.—I admit that, but I do think that the rates are excessive. Still, although we have an excessive income tax, I would ask honorable members to consider the circumstances of the people who have to pay it. Nobody has to pay unless he has an income of at least £200 per annum. If he has an income of £210, or £220, or £300 the amount of the tax he has to pay is very small indeed, and does not, and cannot, deprive him of a single comfort or necessary of life. The amount paid since the imposition of the income tax has been about £500,000—I think rather less, but that is near enough—and it has been paid by a class of people who have felt practically no inconvenience from the impost, and who have not been deprived by it of a comfort or in most cases of even a luxury. Now, let us take the other side of the picture, and compare with the figures I have given the receipts from the sugar and tea duties, which are paid by the poorer classes.

Mr. BURTON.—The rich pay these taxes also.

Mr. HAMILTON.—The rich pay a very small proportion of them only. In the first place, there are not many rich persons, and a large number of them purchase

their goods wholesale, and at wholesale rates. It is therefore fair to say that almost the whole of the sugar and tea duties are paid by the working classes. Just before the close of the last session of Parliament I asked for a return from the Minister of Customs, which was given to me with great willingness, regarding the sugar duties. During the time the tax has been imposed no less than £4,056,000 has been paid by the poorer classes of the people. In 1893 the sugar duties were doubled, and since 1893 £1,056,000 have been paid under this tax. I will now take the tea duty. Last year it brought in £120,000. In other years it has realized a slightly smaller amount; but never less than £100,000. Those who pay income tax have contributed in three years about £500,000, whereas other classes of the people, who are notoriously much worse off, and some of whom are extremely poor, have paid in sugar duties alone a sum of £1,056,000. And yet the Government propose that the income tax shall be reduced, whilst the other taxes are to be continued at their present rate. I told my constituents that I was prepared to give the Government a general all-round support, but that, unless the reduction of the income tax was coupled with a reduction of the taxes on the necessities of life, I should certainly vote against the Government on that question. I am prepared to do so. While I feel the greatest possible respect for all the members of the Government, and for the Government as a whole, I do think that proper consideration has not been given to the question of reducing the income tax. The returns from the income tax and from the taxes that are paid by the working classes have not been compared. If they had, the Government would never have proposed to reduce a tax which has not done harm to anybody. I was pleased to notice certain remarks that were made by two new members yesterday. The honorable member for Rodney (Mr. Morrissey) said in effect that people who were born now into the world found that their common heritage had been taken away from them. The honorable member, I presume, referred to the fact that whilst all are born equal, numbers of people find that practically the whole of the sources of production have been monopolized, and that therefore they have to pay the price of the monopoly or to starve. Sometimes they do both. I was pleased to hear these

words from a new member of the House, because it seemed to me that there was a true democratic ring about them. The honorable member has apparently made himself closely acquainted with the great social problems which we all have to face, and he is prepared to face them. He did not propose any remedy for the evil to which he referred. It was not his place to do so. Then the honorable member for Ararat spoke in a similar strain. He deplored the fact that so many of our old people are forced into penury and poverty in the declining years of their lives, and stated that it was a standing disgrace that in a new country like this the people should be brought to destitution and ruin, and left sometimes to die in the streets. I will take these two statements and compare them with one remark that was made by the Premier at St. Kilda. The honorable gentleman there spoke of the urgent necessity of doing something to ameliorate the condition of the poor in this respect, and he also spoke of the great importance of opening up the land to the people, so that the sources of production might be brought within their reach. Now, what is the remedy proposed by the Premier? It is that the Minister of Lands shall take trips to the mallee and try and find out some land that has not been used, or some land that might be brought into use. Has the honorable gentleman forgotten that three years ago, when he proposed the tax on the unimproved values of land, he mentioned the fact that that tax would have a double effect—that it would first of all give a large revenue to the Government, and then that it would open up a large area of land which is now withheld from use, or is only half used? It is for these reasons that I am surprised and disappointed at the programme of the Government generally. The two honorable members I have named and the Premier are all convinced of the necessity of doing something. They are all fully aware of the bad conditions under which a large number of our people are living, yet nothing appears to be proposed to alleviate these conditions, with the exception of the Charities Bill. I shall say nothing about the Charities Bill now. There will be plenty of opportunities of doing that later on. But I do say that it is a matter of keen disappointment to thousands and tens of thousands of people throughout the country that other measures have not been promised, including the great reform

*Mr. Hamilton.*

in our system of taxation, to which I have alluded. I hope that the Government will lose no time in dealing with the franchise. But whilst that is a reform that is urgently needed, I venture to say with very great respect that there are other questions that are equally important, and that ought to be attended to without any delay. Are our people, and the poorest of our people, to be compelled to pay the bulk of the taxes of this country for all time, or are we prepared to adopt a more scientific system and try to relieve those classes of the community who are already too badly off, much worse off than they deserve to be, seeing that they are all willing and anxious to work? I have heard it said in this House that legislation of the kind I have mentioned would bring the country to ruin. It has been described as socialistic. It does not matter very much to me whether it is socialistic or not. I believe it to be good, and I would point out one striking fact to those who oppose this kind of legislation. Seven or eight years ago New Zealand was afflicted with a property tax. When the Ballance Government came into power, they swept that tax away. It was destroying capital, retarding industry, and injuring the labouring classes. The Ballance Government introduced a new system of taxation. During that seven years what has been the position of New Zealand? Her finances have gradually crept up, her people are better off, and the position of the labouring classes is much in advance of what it was seven years ago. For years the finances of the colony showed a heavy deficiency, but the other day Mr. Seddon made a statement in which he showed a surplus of £320,000 on the year's transactions. Where is the disaster that was to come to New Zealand, and that was so confidently predicted by all the conservatives in New Zealand, and by the conservatives and others in our own colony? There has been no disaster. The people of the colony are better off than they were.

Mr. TRENWITH. — And hundreds who had left have gone back again since that policy was adopted,

Mr. HAMILTON.—That is quite true. Now, I would ask honorable members to compare the condition of New Zealand with that of our own colony. I admit that we had a bad time after the collapse of the boom, but even that does not account for the heavy loss in our population. It is true that the gold-fields of Western Australia

have been opened up, and that they have taken away large numbers of our miners, but it is also true that had the conditions of living been easier in Victoria many of the men who have left would have been with us to-day. Let honorable members look at the prices of the two articles that I have mentioned—tea and sugar—and note the large increase that has been caused by the enormous duties. The duty on tea amounts to fully 70 per cent. Does not the high price of those articles make it harder for the average individual to live? Most assuredly it does. It destroys his purchasing power, and when a man's purchasing power is destroyed, others who are producing the commodities that he needs are thrown out of work, and general disaster is bound to ensue. It is not my intention to speak at any great length. I confess to a feeling of keen disappointment at the policy submitted by the Government. I thought from a chance remark that was made by the Premier—and I do not know that it was a chance remark—some time ago, when he was delivering a Budget statement, that it would be the policy of the Government to introduce some of the proposals that have been mentioned here this afternoon. Honorable members were interjecting when the honorable gentleman delivered the Budget statement to which I have referred, and reference was made to the tax on the unimproved values of land. The Premier then said that the Government were in favour of that tax, but they thought that it ought to be coupled with a reduction of the duties on the necessities of life. I took that as an indication of the intention of the Government to make the question a part of their policy when they went to the country. Many thousands of persons took the same view. This and other questions have been deliberately laid aside, and I, for one, feel a keen disappointment at the policy of the Government.

Mr. HIGGINS.—Mr. Speaker, it would be only honest for me, feeling as I do, to echo the keen disappointment which the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) has expressed—a keen disappointment which, I find, is shared by many liberals who are not incautious, who are not too impulsive, but who are anxious to see a steady progress in the direction of liberal measures. As far as I am concerned, I am free to express my views on this subject, because I did so on the platform

at the general election. I read with very much regret the speech of the Premier at St. Kilda. In that speech many measures were referred to, to which I shall give my cordial support. They are wanted; but at the same time it is in the direction of omission rather than of commission that the policy of the Government is to be condemned. I am sorry, and many an old liberal whom I have met is sorry, to see that the Premier has been misled by the cant about peace and progress. The country does want peace and progress, but you can't get peace and progress by going to sleep. The country wants peace and progress, but the way to get peace is to take away the causes of disturbance, and the way to get progress is to remove the drags from the wheels of progress. Apparently the Premier—I say it with all respect, and I am only saying to his face what I have said upon the platform—has mistaken who it is that wants peace and progress. It very often happens that to get peace and progress for the people we have to adopt a bold clear-sighted comprehensive liberal policy, and to pursue it strenuously. We have often, in order to get peace and progress, to fight for that bold and comprehensive liberal policy. Peace and progress! We have heard those words before. The words have been used to describe previous policies. I am reminded of the policy of chickens and champagne and shire councillors. A peace and progress policy! Peace and progress will not be attained by a policy of *laissez faire* and laziness. I should like, in the most friendly spirit, to warn the Premier that he will have to decide some day as to whether he is going to take a policy from the opposition benches or from here.

Mr. McKENZIE.—He has decided that already.

Mr. HIGGINS.—The Premier will find that that cant about peace and progress will be taken up and re-echoed by certain gentlemen on the opposition side of the House for whom we all have the greatest respect, but he must not mistake that for an expression of the feeling of his own party in the country. They are willing to give him help in passing the measures which he has suggested, but they want him to go a little further. I would like to remind honorable members that throughout the last Parliament there was little or no advance in a really liberal direction. The only

thing I can call to mind as being a step in that direction is the measure for the amendment of the Shops and Factories Act. But other measures which were submitted in the last Parliament might just as well have been brought in by a reactionary Government as by the present one. Nor have the details of the measure dealing with the factories and shops been worked out with proper care. A land tax has been proposed and dropped. We had a Constitution Bill which was carried by a big majority, and by a ruling of the President of another place, which most of us thought was outrageous, the Council was not allowed to entertain it. We were informed that the Ministry adopted the view that there was no foundation for this ruling, but the Government, in place of testing the ruling of the President, dropped the measure. As the ruling of the President of another place is not expected to override the opinion of the Attorney-General, I asked the Premier to have the matter referred to some impartial authority, not a partisan, in England or elsewhere, so as to determine the practice. However, the Premier would not do that, and we were left out in the cold. It is proposed that there shall be single electorates for the Assembly. I can speak feelingly of the evil which results from the system of double electorates, but as we are going to have single electorates for the Assembly, why on earth cannot we have single electorates for the Council also? The position is simply preposterous. A return which was presented to the last Parliament showed that out of 48 members in another place only four or five had had to face the electors. I submit that that is a preposterous state of things. Surely the position is clear enough that the provinces which return members to the Legislative Council are too big, and that poor men cannot canvass them with any chance of having the opinion of the electors expressed. At the same time, I cannot see why the qualification of members of another place should not be lowered.

Mr. TRENWITH.—Do away with it altogether, as in South Australia.

Mr. HIGGINS.—I would not object to that course being adopted, but I do not expect extreme changes from the Premier. What amazes me is that the Government will not give its support to such obvious improvements as I have mentioned. The honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr.

Hamilton) has referred to the proposal of the Government to reduce the income tax. My experience during the general election was that nothing met with the approval of the people so much as opposition to this proposal to reduce the income tax. The honorable member for Sandhurst struck the right nail on the head when he said—"You must not talk of reducing the income tax unless you first reduce the duties which press most hardly upon the poorest classes of the community—the duties on rice, sugar, and tea, which are mere revenue duties." We have no right to speak of a reduction of the income tax until we put things right in that respect. There are peculiar reasons in Australia why we should have direct taxation. It is desirable that we should be more careful as to the way in which our money is expended, and there would be less tendency to extravagance if we had to fork out the money from our own pockets. Though the income tax is reduced the same trouble will have to be gone to by business men in making out their schedules. One of the principal inconveniences in connexion with the income tax is the making out of the schedules.

Mr. T. SMITH.—And that work is being made more difficult every year.

Mr. HIGGINS.—Yes. No reason has been shown why a reduction in the income tax should be made, and I do not think that the country will agree to it. There are obligations to the public servants and others which ought to be met before we attempt to reduce the income tax. I understand from the Governor's speech that it is proposed to introduce a Bill to alter the method of dealing with the trust funds. I gather from the Treasurer's speech that the Treasurer at present has power to put his hand into the trust funds and use them if there is any deficiency in the revenue, and that they are to be vested in trustees, who are to be compelled to hand as much of them over to the Treasurer as he wants. Of what use is a provision like that? If the trustees of the trust funds are compelled to give to the Treasurer all he wants he merely has to take one more step than before.

Mr. GILLIES.—It is what he "requires," not what he wants.

Mr. HIGGINS.—That is about the same thing. Such a provision is a delusion and a snare. People will think that the funds are protected while they are not



protected. What right have the Government to reduce the income tax and bring in such a pettifogging measure dealing with the trust funds before we have a surplus? According to the financial statement, which I hold in my hand, there was a deficit in the year's revenue, at the end of June last, of more than £196,000. What right have we in the face of that deficit to talk of reducing the income tax? I do not propose to detain the House long, but I feel it to be my duty to put very briefly the general view which I hold in regard to the Government policy. I shall be happy to give the Government a cordial and general support, and to help it to carry the measures it proposes, but I say with much regret that the Government has not availed itself of the grand opportunities it possesses of passing good measures. No previous Government of this colony has ever had such an opportunity, being supported by the great bulk of the people, to press beneficial measures, and the opportunity is being lost.

Mr. MURPHY.—Sir, I believe that it is the desire of all of us to do everything we can to advance this great colony of Victoria. One of England's foremost statesmen said, on a memorable occasion, that Her Majesty's Opposition was the true safeguard of good government. I have as many friends on one side of the House as on the other, and I hope that good work will be done without frittering away time on side issues. Measures ought to be passed which will enable Victoria to take a commanding position in Australia. I think that at the next meeting of the Federal Convention all the colonies represented will say in their own interest that Victoria is the pivot, and that her relation to Australia is like that of England, which has an empire on which the sun never sets. I have the highest regard for the Premier, but I think that it is best to tell him when he is wrong, according to my humble judgment. Every exertion ought to be made to prevent the bone and sinew of this colony from going to Western Australia and South Africa. The Minister of Lands ought to copy the example of New South Wales, and do something to keep our young people here. The large landed proprietors of Victoria are setting a good example by leasing their ground on reasonable terms. I think that when railways are carried through private lands the land-owners ought to receive just compensation, and that the farmers especially

should be offered inducements to keep the young people in the colony. The Premier is a young Australian, and I arrived in Victoria almost as soon as he was born. He must recognise the fact that the pioneers of the colony were the cream of the civilized world, and that the claims of their sons and daughters ought not to be overlooked. The Australian natives should not be allowed to knock the old men on the head. The removal of the old men will come ultimately. The second generation of Australian natives might as well speak disrespectfully of the first generation of Australian natives as of their present fathers and mothers. At the general election the Australian natives furnished some of my best supporters; some of the women even prayed for my success. We have a colony second to none in the world, and the Ministry ought to do something substantial to develop its great resources. Because I happen to be on the opposition side of the House I am put down as a blooming conservative. I am no more a conservative than I was when I had the honour to defeat at an election my dear friend, John James. I have the highest regard for him, and he told a friend of mine at the last election that if he had a vote for Warrenheip he would come all the way from Gippsland to record it for me. I have great sympathy with the honorable member for Toorak, who fought so good a fight against the dictation of the press. We must have liberty in this colony. I say that the fight of the honorable member for Toorak commands the sympathy of the whole of the people. The press has no right to dictate to the colonists what they shall do and what they shall not do, and I hope that the Government will have sufficient backbone to resist anything of that kind. There is not a better liberal in the House than I am. Sugar and tea are now cheaper than they were before the duties were put on those articles. We must look at matters from a fair stand-point, and not talk to the gods in the gallery. In conclusion, I desire to thank the House for its indulgence.

Dr. MALONEY.—Mr. Speaker, I join with honorable members who have preceded me in congratulating you upon your elevation to the chair. Your election is especially pleasing to me because, when some years ago you were seeking the position of Chairman of Committees, you were attacked in a portion of the press in a

cowardly and wicked manner. It is clear that the power over this Parliament of the newspaper in question is not so great as it has been. The time in which that journal could determine which candidate should be elected and which should not has passed away, and there is not a member of the House who will not be glad to know it. No finer or truer battle could have been fought than that of the honorable member for Toorak, who faced the most unjust criticism and cowardly and brutal vilification, which even his most strenuous opponents were sorry to see. The same tactics were also pursued against the honorable members for Eastern Suburbs and Hawthorn. It seemed to me that the man who once had great influence through his newspaper had lost the splendid ability which he possessed twenty years ago. Before the dissolution of the last Parliament the lash was applied to us. The brightest and keenest representative of the workers of this colony, who would willingly make him their leader to-morrow, had the lash applied to him, and he was defeated at the late general election in common with Mr. Barrett under similar circumstances. We should not have the respect of the workers if we were not abused in that way. Every day I receive letters from different parts of Australia expressing regret at the defeat of labour members. In the heat of the moment, feeling the injustice of the press, I may have used too strong language on a recent occasion. I wrote to the newspaper concerned, but my letter was not published. It contained a line stating that my remark in regard to the Attorney-General was unjust. I was in a temper on the evening in question, and my language may have been exaggerated. I have had nine years' experience of press flagellation. I was called a liar and a perjurer before I entered Parliament because my name is Irish. No one can point to a single member of the labour party who has broken one plank of its platform. There is, therefore, no necessity to lash the labour party. I will quote an extract from the remarks of the brightest leader who ever delivered a speech on democracy in Victoria. I refer to the honorable member for Normanby, who when he was Premier, on going down with his colours flying, said—

"Sir, I have had to stand with a sword in my hand. I have had to be a fighting Premier . . . We have been met with a

*Dr. Maloney.*

most loyal unswerving support from a large body of our supporters, and I should feel that I was an ingrate indeed if I did not to-night make them my warmest acknowledgment for that splendid support which they have shown us through good report and through evil report. If I have to discriminate in my praise at all, I have to acknowledge here, to a party that is under the ban of public opprobrium in some quarters, that never did a Government or the leader of a Government get better or more consistent support than we got from those members who are called the labour party. As I have said to members privately, as I have said to the honorable member for Eastern Suburbs himself, in all my experience I never met one of those men pressing any improper demand, and the experience of myself is the experience of my colleagues. Never were they importunate. Never did they place themselves in the position of beggars for favours which it would be unfair to grant."

Those remarks are remembered and treasured by every worker who honours a labour candidate by helping him into this House. I have to thank the proposer and seconder of the address in reply for their remarks. I am sure that their votes and voices will be given on the lines of democracy. It is time that the infamy resting on Victoria which was referred to by one of those members should be removed. We are promised a Bill dealing with the charities, and I hope that it will be an effective one. The income tax collected in Victoria is one of the lightest raised in any country. It is very much less in proportion to the population than the one raised in Great Britain; yet it is proposed to reduce this income tax, while the money paid for the keep of homeless infants has been reduced from 5s. to 4s. a week. These infants require milk three times a day, and the income tax has only to be paid by persons who are in receipt of £4 a week and over.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER.—The amount for infants has not been reduced so much.

Dr. MALONEY.—I am glad to hear it. It would be better to increase the amount to 6s. a week; 4s. a week is not sufficient to keep those children and properly build up their constitutions. With regard to the public servants, it is very unfair that money lenders should be able to obtain garnishee orders against railway employes and not against other public servants. It would be well to pass a law providing that no father of a family should be left without as much as £2 a week. I have known public employes with wives and families to be left at the end of the month with 5s. to face the next month owing to the operations of the money lender. That is cruel

and wicked. Of course if a man has an income, and he does not make any effort to pay his debts, he ought to be put in prison. We are promised improvement of the slaughter-houses and the re-introduction of the Exported Products Bill. Diseased cattle are being milked throughout the length and breadth of Victoria. I have seen cows milked though they were a mass of corruption. When dealing with postal matters, I trust that the Postmaster-General will keep an eye upon the Peninsular and Oriental steamers. The proprietors of those steamers receive £1,000 a day from the British Government and dependencies, and they insult us by carrying German produce at 50 per cent. less cost than English produce. This is also the only line of steamers which employs black labour, and it ought not to be allowed to carry our mails until that practice is stopped. The honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) showed that it is absurd to reduce the income tax when we are drawing £295,000 per annum out of the poor people of this colony on sugar. The present Government are supporting one of the most iniquitous taxes upon food eaten by the poor people that I know of. I believe in the absolute prohibition of any goods which we can produce in the colony; but we cannot grow tea and sugar here. If it is necessary to support the beet sugar, it should be allowed the advantage of a bonus, just as the butter industry is assisted. No honest free-trader or protectionist wishes to see duties on sugar. The tax on tea and sugar presses very heavily on the poor, and it ought to be wiped out. I wish that the return moved for by the honorable member for Sandhurst could be spread far and wide. If we had a daily *Hansard* it could be printed in it with advantage. As the honorable member pointed out, the sugar duties have been doubled; the sugar in bond having a further impost of an odd 9d. The country has never called out in stronger terms for anything than it has for reform of another place, yet the Legislative Council is allowed to be in a position to slap our faces. As far as I can understand the matter, the present Government has placed the Upper House in a more powerful position than it ever occupied before. It now has the right of dealing with certain Money Bills, which it did not before possess. The unemployed are treated in a manner which will not commend itself to any man with much humanity in his

composition. In my own district alone 400 men have left for another colony; and the money which is constantly being sent here from Western Australia shows how great the exodus to that colony has been. The Government are willing to reduce the income tax, but they will not give work to the people who want it. I will refer to the case of an old lady, 78 years of age, who is one of those people whom the Premier said the Ladies' Benevolent Societies would assist. That grey-haired old woman is now in the Melbourne Hospital, endeavouring to live on 1s. 6d. a week, and she is probably dying at present. That is all the money which could be offered to her by the Ladies' Benevolent Societies. The name of this lady is Newman. She lies in No. 11 ward of the Melbourne Hospital, where she is dying under the munificent dowry of a Ladies' Benevolent Society, supported by the Premier's grant. If she does die it will be the result of the infamous system under which human beings are expected to live upon a mere fraction. If the people thoroughly understood federation as it has been agreed to by the Convention in Sydney, some strange remarks would be made. I understand that the Premier, the Attorney-General, and the Chief Secretary are firm believers in the referendum. That being so, why did they vote against it in the Convention? Would they dare to tell their constituents they were not fit to express an opinion in regard to any law? I am sure that the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins), the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith), and Sir Graham Berry—whose loss from Parliament I regret—would not have been so false to their liberal instincts as to vote against the referendum. Sir Charles Dilke has said that our Upper Chamber is one of the strongest in the world, and yet we are making it twice as strong as before, in order to bind down the young democracy. We must have the referendum or the double dissolution, though we know that the press will be against it. The *Argus* is certainly more just to its opponents in reporting their speeches than another newspaper I could name. For instance, take the reports of the meetings of the people's labour Parliament—the Trades Hall, Melbourne. A comparison of the report in the newspaper which is called the opponent of the workers—although I do not agree with that term—and the report in the journal that claims

to be the supporter of the workers will clearly show which newspaper gives the true account of that body's proceedings. I will be glad to hand to honorable members who are interested in the subject copies of the *Tocsin* and the *Age*, and then ask them which report is correct. The *Age* is a powerful organ, which uses its great power to wipe certain men out of political existence; but I hope the workers of this colony will organize for the protection of their interests. If they do, the Premier, who thought fit to lash the labour members at the end of last session, will find that he has to reckon with a strong labour party, who will glory in sending men here to fight their battles in Parliament. Let them send us here as delegates and agents if necessary. Then we shall have one adult one vote, and a proper electoral roll, not a roll which prevents men who are honestly entitled to vote from exercising the parliamentary franchise, owing to the infamous effect of the so-called Purification of Rolls Act, a measure which was projected when the present Premier was Solicitor-General, although I have no doubt that he never contemplated the injury it would do. I give him credit for having intentions that are better than his words. If he proposes liberal legislation he never need ask how the labour members are going to vote. Their platform is known to the whole world. We have signed our programme, and we cannot break away from it. To the Premier or to any one who may ask me why don't I go to the other side of the House, my answer is that if my party go there I shall go—we will go in a solid phalanx. Wherever the labour party sits I shall sit. I agree with the Scotch Chieftain, who, when he was told that he was sitting at the end of the table, said—“No, wherever I sit is the head of the table.” Wherever my party sit I shall sit, and we will be true to our platform. I thank the Premier for the lashing he gave us at the end of last session. Those of us who were strong enough have tried to hit back, and even with the aid of the powerful *Age* in the general election, he only managed to get from the labour party one poor little scalp.

Mr. McKENZIE.—Mr. Speaker, I desire to take this opportunity of congratulating you upon your elevation to your present honorable position. In common with the majority of, nay, all the members of this House, I believe that you deserve

the distinction which has been bestowed upon you by your fellow members, and we trust that, if you are spared to the end of this Parliament, we will then be able to look back upon a period that has not been excelled in the history of the Chair. I would like also to congratulate the two honorable members who addressed the House last night for the first time. I feel that those honorable members made a most favorable impression, and we have every reason to believe that they are an accession and an acquisition to the House. I was very much pleased with the remarks of the honorable member for Rodney (Mr. Morrissey) in respect to several matters. I was glad to observe that he had grasped the principle that has been alluded to by the honorable member for Footscray this evening, although I adopt a somewhat different view from that honorable member as to the manner in which the honorable member for Rodney has grasped it. That honorable member referred to the fact that wealth does not, as a rule, do a great deal of pioneering work—that it is the workers who, in the first instance, open up industries, and are afterwards joined by capital. From what followed I came to the conclusion that the honorable member had in his mind's eye particularly the mining industry, and that he was looking to the work done in the mining industry in Western Australia and other places by the pioneers who had opened up the gold-fields where capital subsequently flowed in. That is very true; but those workers had capital to sustain them while they were engaged in their prospecting operations, and, although it was capital in a smaller degree, it was capital notwithstanding. But the great principle which I think the honorable member grasped is this—that work without capital or capital without work cannot exist, that the one is dependent on the other, and that is the principle which the honorable member for Footscray failed to understand or to deduce from the remarks of the honorable member for Rodney. Now, I think that is a principle which should be grasped by every man, not only in this House but throughout the colony, but I regret to say that very often it is ignored. When that principle is firmly grasped, when it is generally recognised that capital and labour must go hand in hand—that each is dependent on the other, then we will have a better state of feeling and a better state of things in the country than

prevails at the present time. I was very pleased to hear the remarks of the honorable member who moved the address in reply last evening. So long as we have honorable members coming into this House who look at questions from this point of view, I think the country has every reason to congratulate itself on their entering the halls of our Legislature. While I am in the way of congratulating, and as this is the season of congratulation, I would congratulate the Government on their splendid majority, but I would also remind them that that majority has been acquired by some change of attitude towards many of their former principles. I would also remind them that if they had gone to the country with the programme that they adopted three years ago they would not have had the majority they have to-day. They have, in fact, taken the programme that has been advocated by the Opposition for the past three years, and, therefore, when the Premier announced the Government programme at the last general election we found ourselves in the position of being Government supporters.

Mr. MURRAY.—One adult one vote—is that part of your programme?

Mr. McKENZIE.—I am coming to that directly. That is a very small matter, and the Government place very little dependence on it. It is a matter they will trot out by-and-by, to parade it before the House and the country, and give honorable members like the honorable member for Warrnambool an opportunity of making speeches and displaying their eloquence to the admiring ladies of the colony, or rather, I should say, a small section of them, and then the measure will be sent to another place; but I won't say how it will be dealt with there.

Mr. MURRAY.—As you direct, I suppose.

Mr. McKENZIE.—No; not as I direct. It is not within my power to direct another place.

Mr. MURRAY.—It is not a very hard Chamber to nobble by rich men.

Mr. McKENZIE.—Perhaps the honorable member will be good enough to let me get on with my speech. With one or two very small exceptions the programme of the Government is identical with that which has been espoused by honorable members sitting on the opposition side of the House. If I have to bring forward proof of my position, let me allude to the remarks which have been made by the honorable member for Footscray and the

honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins) this evening. They spoke in very sad accents of the Government having abandoned those great principles of the land tax and the State Bank and other matters of that description. The extremely sad way in which they alluded to the action of the Government in this respect reminds me of the alderman at the corporation feast, who was very much astonished to see his neighbour at the table regaling himself with bread and butter instead of waiting for the delicacies provided. On observing this, he said to his neighbour that he was very much astonished to see him eating plain bread and butter when there were great delicacies on the table. Honorable members in the Ministerial corner are very much astonished that the Premier and his colleagues should have put forward such a plain political programme when there are such delicacies as the land tax, the tax on unimproved land values, and the State Bank. Now, I think that the country will approve of the action of the Government in adopting this plain bill of fare instead of bringing forward legislation of the description that those honorable members wished to force them to submit to the country at the present juncture. Still we cannot congratulate them on taking up this position. When the land tax was proposed I was on the Ministerial side of the House, and I opposed it so strongly as to force me across the floor along with other honorable members. We objected to it because we believed it would be most injurious to the small land-holders of the colony, and would impose on the farmers a burden they were unable to bear. We were told that we were opposing the will of the country, and a tax that would operate in the very best interests of the country, and I do not know what national evils were to follow our action. We were warned that the country was only waiting for the opportunity to force this legislation through Parliament—to compel members to accept it. Well, the Government have gone to the country, and have come back with probably, with one exception, the largest majority any Government of this colony has had, and yet they have not brought forward the land tax, and they tell us that they do not intend to propose it during the present Parliament. Now, if their previous position were correct, how is it that they have not submitted that proposal? Do they look forward to having a still larger majority

after the next general election, or what is the reason? With 65 or 66 members on their side of the House, surely, if the tax on unimproved land values is desirable, the present is a favorable opportunity for proposing it.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Hear, hear.

Mr. McKENZIE.—I agree with the honorable member on that point, but the fact that the Government have not brought forward the proposed tax on unimproved land values proves that they now see it in a different light than before.

Mr. HANCOCK.—They are wobbling.

Mr. McKENZIE.—No; the Government are taking a straight course now, and I quite approve of their present course. From the honorable member's point of view they may seem to be wobbling. At the same time, I want to justify my opposition in the past and at the present time. We were told that a proposal for the establishment of a State Bank was to be brought forward, and that it was to be legislation for the future. Yet that has gone the way of the land tax. That justifies our opposition. I say, further, that the Government has justified our opposition by the abandonment of the socialistic trend of legislation which prevailed in their proposals before. I congratulate the Government upon doing so, but I say again that their former policy justified our opposition to the Government, and justifies us in sitting in opposition to-day. But though we have been opposed to the Government in regard to these matters, we have not shown them any factious opposition. The Government cannot lay that charge to members of the Opposition, and, to be fair to them, they have never attempted to do so. They have given the Opposition credit for assisting them in every fair and reasonable manner, and I am certain that it is the intention of the Opposition to act in the future in that respect as they have done in the past. The Government has received a great deal of credit from the country, and very properly; but a great deal of the credit for having balanced the ledger, and for having placed many useful measures on the statute-book is, I claim, due to the Opposition for having assisted the Government. We assisted them in their retrenchment policy, and had to bear the odium without having the claim that we had the responsibility of supporting the Government from motives of loyalty. The Government has also claimed and received a great deal of

credit in respect to special measures. There is, for instance, the Mining Law Amendment Act. They deserve great credit—the Minister of Mines in particular deserves great credit—for that measure. But it should not be overlooked that an honorable member sitting in opposition, namely, the honorable member for Gunbower, practically brought forward that measure when he was a member of the Patterson Ministry.

Mr. HAMILTON.—Not that measure.

Mr. McKENZIE.—A number of new clauses were introduced, but the Minister of Mines has admitted that it was practically the same Bill.

Mr. HAMILTON.—It was not.

Mr. McKENZIE.—It was practically the same, and I say that the Minister of Mines deserves great credit for it.

Mr. GRAHAM.—It was the Bill of the honorable member for Maryborough, first of all.

Mr. McKENZIE.—He never introduced it.

Mr. GRAHAM.—He left it in the office for his successor to make use of.

Mr. McKENZIE.—Well, the honorable member for Maryborough sat in opposition also. Between them, at all events, they brought these proposals forward. I do not wish to detract in any degree from the credit due to the Minister of Mines. He has done a great deal for the mining industry of this colony. But I do claim that honorable members sitting on this side of the House are entitled to a share of the credit. There is another measure that the Government receive a great deal of credit for, and that is the *Crédit Foncier* scheme. That was brought forward in the first instance by a member sitting in opposition, namely, the honorable member for Melbourne. As far as he was concerned it was an original proposal. The *Crédit Foncier* scheme had not been introduced at that time in any legislation in the Australian colonies, and it was an attempt to adapt the *Crédit Foncier* principle to Australian conditions; and, although I admit that the present Government made improvements in the measure, still their Bill was founded upon the same principle that the Patterson Government deserve credit for having brought forward in the first instance. Therefore, I say again that, although the Government are entitled to credit for what they have done, the Opposition are also entitled to a share of the credit for having

assisted the Government to place these measures upon the statute-book. I might also refer to the Railways Management Act Amendment Bill. That was strongly opposed by honorable members on the Government side of the House, and had it not been for the loyal co-operation of members on this side of the House it would never have become law. That is certain.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Hear, hear.

Mr. HAMILTON.—The part that the members on this side opposed was the part relating to the constitution of a board.

Mr. McKENZIE.—And there were other principles in the Bill which were opposed by honorable members sitting in the Ministerial corner.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Why do you not sit on this side of the House?

Mr. McKENZIE.—Perhaps we might change places. If honorable members in the Ministerial corner will come over here in a body, we will consider the matter.

Mr. HANCOCK.—That would improve the Opposition.

Mr. McKENZIE.—I say, Mr. Speaker, that the members on this side of the House assisted the Government in placing that measure on the statute-book, and assisted them against their own supporters. I will refer to another measure. The Mallee Bill, which would never have become law—

Mr. COOK.—It never should have become law.

Mr. McKENZIE.—The interjection of the honorable member for East Bourke Boroughs (Mr. Cook) is proof of what I say. It was honorable members on this side of the House who assisted in placing that Bill upon the statute-book. It is a Bill that has given great satisfaction, and which will do very much for the settlement of the people upon the mallee lands of the colony.

Mr. HANCOCK.—You are always ready to support all the bad measures.

Mr. McKENZIE.—I am alluding to the measures emanating from the Government. The honorable member for Footscray supported the Government which he says introduced bad measures, therefore, according to him, he has supported a bad Government.

Mr. HANCOCK.—It is a much worse Opposition.

Mr. McKENZIE.—I thought it well to refer to some of these matters as proof of the good work the Opposition has done, and to show that we are entitled to a share

of the credit that is given to the Government in regard to these proposals. I heartily congratulate the Government that they have abandoned the measures that the Opposition were previously strongly opposed to, and so long as they continue to act on the lines they have marked out for themselves, I am confident that they will find no more loyal supporters than amongst honorable members sitting on this side. There are one or two omissions from the Government programme to which I would like to refer. I regret that the Government has not seen fit to bring forward a Water Act Amendment Bill, which is much required by the country at the present time. If the Government were to grapple with this question thoroughly, it would give relief and confidence to hundreds of deserving men in the dry and arid parts of this colony. In many of the water trusts the people are placed in a most unfortunate position. So also are many people in regard to the local water trusts in many townships throughout the colony. Fresh legislation on this question is urgently required. I regret very much that the Government have not seen fit to introduce such a Bill during the present session. It is demanded by large sections of the population in the country districts, and should not be postponed one day longer than is absolutely necessary. There is another matter about which I would like to remind the Government, and that is that relief has been promised for a long time to the people living in the 5th and 6th class shires of the colony, and also to many of the 3rd and 4th class shires. The Government have promised a reclassification of shires, and appointed a board about eighteen months ago, I think, but not one word has been heard as to the proceedings of that board. We do not know what they are doing, or how the inquiry is proceeding, or at what time it is likely to come to a conclusion. Many of the people living in the shires that are not in their proper class are beginning to be tired of waiting, and are anxious to know what is to be done. Was the appointment of the board simply a put-off and a subterfuge, or is there to be a report relating to the matter laid before this House within a reasonable time? Many of the shires in the 4th class should be in the 5th class, and they are receiving very small rates of subsidy, and urgently require additional assistance from the State. There

are many other measures that are required at the present time, but I do not think that it is fair to mention them all, because the Government can only do a limited amount of work in the short session they have at their disposal. But I trust that early next year the Government will take all these measures that I have referred to, and which are required by the people, into their consideration. We require legislation to enable our people to produce more, so that we may export more than we have done, and by that means bring additional wealth into the country. In conclusion, I would say that, as a member of the Opposition, I do not think I have any reason to apologize for our past actions, or for the attitude we now assume towards the Government. On the contrary, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves on the good work we have done in the interests of this colony, and on the fact that the Government, feeling the weight of the influence opposed to them, have withdrawn the socialistic legislation—at least the legislation with a socialistic trend—that was objected to by members sitting on this side of the House, and have now submitted to Parliament and the country a programme that, with one or two exceptions, can be heartily approved of. I congratulate the Government upon this action, and I think we can look forward to useful work being done in the interests of the colony. What the country requires at the present time is not legislation that will be of a novel character, or which will have the effect of disturbing the people, but rest and recuperation; and that is the principle I believe the Government intend to adhere to. If they conduct the business of Parliament upon the lines laid down in their programme, I am confident that they will get the most loyal assistance from members on this side in giving effect to it.

Mr. MOULE.—Mr. Speaker, I have but a very few words to say upon the address in reply, which has been so ably moved and seconded by the honorable member for Rodney (Mr. Morrissey) and the honorable member for Ararat. I desire, in the first instance, to speak about a matter as to which the honorable member for Bourke West has tabled a motion. I feel sure the Premier, with his spirit of justice, which we all admire him for, will—

Mr. MURRAY.—Resist it, I hope.

Mr. MOULE.—I think honorable members might wait till I have finished what I

have to say. I feel, I say, that the Premier, with his spirit of justice, which we all admire in him, will, at the first opportunity he feels justified in so doing, restore the civil servants to the position they occupied some time ago, and in expectation of which they entered the service. They have had to bear a heavy burden of retrenchment; and my remarks, I feel sure, will find a ready echo in the minds of honorable members who take an interest in these matters, when I express the hope that the Premier will see his way so far as he can to provide that members of this House shall sacrifice themselves while at the same time they sacrifice the members of the civil service. At present we stand in the position that the law in regard to the reduction of our remuneration, or reimbursement for expenses, has expired, and we now enter upon a new term with £300 a year reimbursement. The point I wish to direct my remarks to is that, so long as the burden still has to be kept on the civil service, we Members of Parliament should set a good example by continuing to have our salaries reduced to the extent to which they were reduced during the last Parliament. This will at all events enable a small class in the public service to get back the sums which have been withheld from them. I am certain that the Premier, as soon as he sees his way to return to the civil servants the deductions taken away from them, will be glad to do so. I should also like to say that I regret that an outcry has been raised against the Premier for promising to remove a certain portion of the income tax. I feel certain that there is something behind that—something which has struck the statesman rather than the mere politician, and which has led him to believe that capital has been driven out of the country. I am speaking at large, but I feel sure that is the reason, and not a desire to help the wealthy people at all. When the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins) taunts the Government with having backed down from this and from that, and asks why they do not bring in their land tax, and their State Bank proposal, I say that the Government are exercising a wise statesmanship in their view of these matters. Could the honorable member for Geelong imagine a more inopportune time for the introduction of another tax on land than when we are faced in our suburban districts with the highest municipal taxation we have ever had, and when we



have to bear a further sewerage tax of 1s. in the £1?

Mr. HANCOCK.—You have not got to pay that.

Mr. MOULE.—We have to pay 2d. in the £1, and property in the suburbs is faced with the prospect of having to pay 1s. in the £1. I think the Government have shown wise and statesmanlike tactics in sticking merely to one form of taxation, with which we are now familiar. I would only ask the Attorney-General in dealing, as he will have to deal, with the income tax, to see that the Act is remedied in respect of those defects which have made it stink in the nostrils of the people. It has not been the fault of the commissioner, but the faults have been those of administration in consequence of the defects of the Act. Requisitions here and there have cast a burden on trustees which it has been hard for them to bear. When the Government sees fit to put that Act into fair working order, I am sure that no one will ask for a fairer or more beneficial Act. The question of our railways has been referred to by the honorable member for Rodney. I wish to draw attention to one small fact, which is a question of policy. I speak as one representing an outlying suburban district, and desire to say that it does seem to me to be a most retrograde policy to limit the running of suburban trains. A portion of our people have built their homes in the suburbs, and our railway revenue from the suburban lines can only depend upon keeping those people there, and attracting others to live in seaside places and elsewhere. But if you take away their railway service, you cannot expect that more people will go to live there, and those who do live there now will leave. I am speaking of a serious matter of railway policy. It is one that is considerably affecting the suburban districts, and I maintain that it is an absolutely retrograde step to cut away railway facilities that the people enjoy at the present time. There is another matter also to which I should like to refer, but it is not mentioned in the Governor's speech. When the Companies Act was before the House eighteen months ago, I suggested that the clauses dealing with fraudulent prospectuses, misrepresentation of material facts, and so on, should be made applicable to mining companies. We recognised that they are practically the only companies now being formed, and the Minister of Mines said he would introduce a Bill making those

portions of the measure applicable to mining companies. I know that in a short session you cannot bring in the whole life of a Parliament in the way of legislation, but no mention has been made of that matter, and I trust that the Government has not lost sight of the promise that was then made.

Mr. HANCOCK.—That will drive capital away.

Mr. MOULE.—No, it will tend to attract capital when we have got rid of wild-cat concerns. There is another matter which I desire to bring under the notice of the Attorney-General. He will know that we have during the last six or seven years been passing Act after Act, one Act overlapping another, until even lawyers do not know where they are. It is absolutely necessary for the benefit of the whole community that these Acts should be consolidated and put into ship-shape order. I refer particularly to the Companies Acts. There are a number of Acts dealing with companies. There is the principal Act, then there is our important amending Act, and a number of smaller ones. They all require consolidation. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins) drew attention to portions of the new Insolvency Act overlapping the previously existing one. That also is a branch of the law requiring consolidation. There are likewise six or seven Local Government Acts. I hope that the Attorney-General will take steps to have these Acts consolidated and put in such a form that there will be no ambiguity and no unnecessary difficulty confronting those who have to read them.

Mr. I. A. ISAACS.—I have already been discussing the matter.

Mr. MOULE.—I am very glad to hear it. When honorable members opposite taunt the Government with having initiated a policy which most of us quite willingly give our assent to, and which merely means passing useful laws, I am almost inclined, speaking for this side of the House, to rebuke the Ministerial followers for so attacking the Government. It seems to me that the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) has been crying out for something, he hardly knows what, when he says that we have got through so much legislation in days gone by, and asks why we are to get so little now. The honorable member should know that it is not much legislation, it is good legislation, that the country wants. We want few laws, easily

understood, and meeting the requirements of the people. When a Government takes up an honest and honorable way of conducting the business of the country, and brings forward measures which most of us are in favour of, surely there is no cant about it, as has been said; but it does mean peace and progress, and is a policy preferable to introducing experimental measures leading we do not know where.

Mr. McCOLL.—Sir, it is somewhat strange that the first word of approval of the Government policy should come from the opposition benches, and I think it certainly augurs well for the peace and progress that will characterize Parliament during the next three years that it should be so. The Government has been returned with a very large majority. Why is that so? Because they have brought forward a programme, enunciated a few weeks ago at St. Kilda, which honorable members have been returned to support. It does seem strange that most of the speeches made on the address in reply from the Government side of the House have consisted of nothing else but carping criticism of the Government programme. It is time that some one rose up to support it. I am happy to say that I joined with my friends on this side in giving the Government programme very hearty support indeed.

Mr. HAMILTON.—We thought you would do that.

Mr. McCOLL.—The honorable member for Brighton has anticipated much that I intended to say, and I need not, therefore, make a long speech. I desire to congratulate you, sir, on your deserved accession to the Chair. I am sure that you will fulfil that honorable office, and do justice to all sides of the House. The House and the country are to be congratulated on the fact that, while we miss many old and familiar faces on these benches, many new members have been returned of whom we have an assurance that they are men of independent minds, who will think for themselves, and support those views which they believe in their consciences to be right, without regard to whether they are sitting in opposition or on the Government side. As a member of the late Government, I read with peculiar satisfaction the utterances of the Premier at St. Kilda. We find that not only has the Government supported important measures which were brought forward by the late Government—modified to some extent, it is true—but they have adhered right along to the

Patterson policy; and, as a member of that Government, I feel it my duty to give the present Ministry my best and heartiest support. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins) has said that the Premier has a grand opportunity. A grand opportunity—to do what? To bring forward measures which the Premier knew there was not the slightest chance of carrying! The honorable member for Geelong has referred to an amendment of the Constitution Act and to the abolition of the rate-payers' roll, and the establishment of one general roll for the whole colony. He has advocated such measures as the establishment of a State Bank and the imposition of a tax on unimproved land values—measures which the honorable member knows very well there is not the slightest chance of passing. The introduction of an Unimproved Land Values Tax Bill would compel one-third of the members on the Government side to vote against the Ministry. The Premier is quite right in going in for a policy that will secure to us three years of peace. How can we have progress unless we have peace? We want peace and quietness in order that capital may extend its operations and find avenues for the employment of labour. The policy the Premier has adopted is the one that is most appropriate for the time, and I think that it is only right that those who desire to promote the interest and progress of the colony should do their best to support it. The honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) regrets that the Government have not included a land tax in their programme. What good would a land tax do to the workers?

Mr. HAMILTON.—It would relieve them of some of the taxes that they now have to pay.

Mr. McCOLL.—What taxes? The honorable member is really a free-trader, because he says that he would support certain protective duties, but he would abolish all duties on food.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Hear, hear.

Mr. McCOLL.—The "hear, hear" comes from the ultra-protectionists of the House. Do they not think that the man who produces food is as much entitled to protection as the man who makes boots and clothing?

Mr. HAMILTON.—We do not produce tea and rice.

Mr. McCOLL.—I will vote for the abolition of the duties on tea and rice

whenever the opportunity occurs. The protectionists say that they want protection because the workers have to compete with the lower-paid labour of other countries, where the conditions of life are much inferior to those of this colony. That argument is right, but do they not know that the producers of food have to compete under the same conditions as the makers of boots and shoes and clothing? Do they not know that there has been an enormous advance in agricultural machinery during the last ten years, and that the cereal-producing area has been largely increased? In Argentine, Southern Russia, India, and other countries they have now the best machinery for harvesting, and it is in the hands of the lowest-paid class of workers—the Hindoos of India, the Coolies of China, and the moujiks of Russia. If we are to have protection, should we not have it for those who produce food, as well as for those who make boots and clothing? I consider the tax on unimproved land values one of the most iniquitous taxes that was ever proposed.

Mr. HAMILTON.—You do not understand it.

Mr. McCOLL.—I do. It is unfair as between man and man, and as between city and country; and the end of a large number of those who propose the tax is not revenue, but absolute confiscation.

Mr. HAMILTON.—What nonsense!

Mr. McCOLL.—What was the statement made by the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) in the House three years ago, and repeated by him in the town hall, at Richmond, during the last election? The honorable member stated that he supported the tax, not because it would bring in revenue, but because he regarded it as a means by which the land of which the people had been robbed could be restored to them. That is the object of this tax. I can assure honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House that a tax on unimproved land values might suit them as an election cry, but that there is not the slightest chance of getting such a tax carried in this decade.

Mr. HAMILTON.—The economists are all against you.

Mr. McCOLL.—When there is an eager demand for a tax we ask—"Who are the people who are crying out for it?" We find that the people who are crying out for this tax are those who have no land, and who will not be touched by it. There

is an important section of the community who, instead of putting their money into business or bank shares or Government stock, have chosen to invest it in land, and our friends opposite would say to these people, who employ labour, and who by developing the resources of the soil add to the wealth of the country—"We are going to tax you to such an extent that by-and-by we will squeeze you off the land altogether." That is the morality of the unimproved land values tax.

Mr. BURTON.—You are talking about the single tax.

Mr. McCOLL.—No; I understand what I am talking about. The people of the country understand this question also, and they will not have a tax on unimproved land values. There is another subject about which I desire to offer a few remarks. It is impossible, I think, for the House to pass the Charities Bill this session. Complaints have been made because the Government have not included a larger number of Bills in the Governor's speech. They have put as much in the Governor's speech as we can get through this session, and probably a great deal more. To put more in would have been an absurdity. The Charities Bill will have to be distributed, and the people of the country, and especially the municipalities, will require a month or two in which to consider it. It will effect a most important social change. We all trust that a good measure will be passed, and a measure that will compel those who can afford it to contribute to the maintenance of the charities. The change will be so great that we will require at least two or three months in which to consider the Bill. I think myself that the proposal to appoint a commission to regulate and reclassify the public service is a very great mistake. I do not believe that the anomalies in the public service are such as to require the appointment of a commission. In the recess, the Public Service Board, assisted by the Minister of each department, could reclassify and re-adjust the service wherever that was necessary. I feel confident that if we appoint a commission, and they go through the departments and reclassify them according to merit, and according to salary, and according to work, they will leave the service in a greater state of discontent and disorganization than it has ever been in before. The proposal to reduce the income tax seems to me to be wrong. At the same time, I

prefer keeping an open mind on the subject, because I would like to hear the Premier's reasons for the reduction. He may have good reasons, but, on the face of it, it appears to me to be a retrograde step which should not be taken. We are told that the Government intend to adopt a policy of public works. I trust that during the recess the Premier will take into consideration the question of the large number of railways that have been in a state of suspense for years past. Districts have been kept with railways dangling before them, and they do not know now whether they are going to get them or not. It would be well if the lines which have been proposed in the House, and which have received a certain measure of approval, were submitted one after another to the Railways Standing Committee, and either put on one side altogether, or some hope given to the people of the districts that they would be constructed. Some such step should be taken, so that the question of railway construction might be settled for some time to come. I think, also, that it would be wise on the part of the Government to give some attention to the matter of water conservation. If we are to have public works, they should include additional reservoirs. On our main rivers, such as the Campaspe, the Coliban, and the Loddon, there are sites on which reservoirs could be constructed at a low cost. During the last two or three years we have seen the terrible effects of droughts, and means should be taken to protect the tillers of the soil from the great losses from which they suffer in this way. It would, therefore, I think, be a wise step to include in any programme of public works a number of reservoirs, as that would encourage production, and keep the people on the land. I regret, with the honorable member for Anglesey, that no mention is made in the Governor's speech of the Irrigation Bill. A comprehensive Water Supply Bill has been lying by for the last three years, and this would be a good time at which to deal with the measure. I trust that the Minister of Water Supply will give his attention to the question, and have it settled on a solid and definite footing. At present things are in a state of chaos, and people do not know which way to turn or what to do. With regard to the proposal to purchase land in the vicinity of cities, I gave it, when introduced by the honorable member for Gippsland

North some years ago, my hearty support. I think it is a wise proposal. We may go further, and follow the New Zealand practice by purchasing land along the main lines of railway, not confiscating it by the imposition of a tax on unimproved land values, but purchasing it fairly and honestly, and settling people upon it. I am told that of all the legislation adopted in New Zealand, and which has been so much belauded, the most successful has been that providing for the repurchase of large estates and the settling of people upon the land on easy terms. That legislation has been a great success, and I believe it would be a great success here, and would do more to make our railways pay than any other measure that we can adopt. There is no doubt that the Land Bill promised is most important, and there are several matters in connexion with it that I would ask the Minister of Lands to note. We have very little land left now, and it is very poor land. The sum of £1 an acre is too much to charge for it. The State would be amply repaid if they gave some of it to the people for nothing, on condition that they lived on it and cleared it for cultivation. But the State charges as much for these poor lands as it charged for the good lands that were sold years ago, and that is altogether unfair. Something should also be done with regard to the selectors' rents. It is impossible that they can be paid. Some years should be added to the term of the leases, and the Government should be satisfied in the meantime with the payment of the annual rents, letting the arrears stand over. There is one matter that has been mentioned by the honorable member for Numurkah, and that is of very great importance. I refer to the charge of £1 that a man has to pay every time he applies for land. In many cases the amount paid in this way covers the actual value of the land. This is not a question that involves an amendment of the Land Act. It is a mere matter of regulation, and it should be attended to. Only those applicants who are successful should be required to pay the fee of £1. To the unsuccessful applicants the fee should be reduced to a large extent. I trust that the Premier will adhere to the policy that he laid down at St. Kilda. He has now a grand opportunity of doing good work for the country, and I hope that he will take full advantage of it. So far as the Government

programme goes we might as well all be sitting on one side of the House.

Mr. SALMON.—Mr. Speaker, I desire very briefly to refer to one or two questions that are worthy of the attention of the Government and also of honorable members. I would, first of all, tender to you, Mr. Speaker, my hearty congratulations upon the high position to which you have attained. I regretted very much, indeed, to find absent from the Governor's speech several measures which would have been of great benefit, and of great interest also, to this House and to the country. I am not going to deal with them at length. With regard to railway management, I would like to draw the attention of the Premier to the fact that last session the Minister of Railways was approached with respect to the position of a very large number of miners who are living in one place and working in another. We have done a very great deal in the past for the unemployed. We have given them free passes to enable them to go to other parts of the colony in which they desire to seek for work. We have allowed them other privileges, and these men are practically in the same position. They are virtually unemployed, and yet we find that the privilege of reduced fares, which had been granted to them for a considerable time, has suddenly and without notice been taken away from them. This may seem to some honorable members a very small thing, but the number of men affected by the recent action of the Commissioner of Railways in doing away with the miners' tickets over a radius of 25 miles is very large. Those honorable members who have any knowledge of the subject are aware that this is not a small matter, at any rate to the men concerned. We have throughout the length and breadth of the colony gold-fields which have been worked up to a certain point, and which for want of capital and enterprise are now lying comparatively idle. On these are settled a large number of men. They have built their homes upon them. They have taken small areas of land. They have cultivated orchards, and some of them keep cows and a few other domestic animals. They make in this way a certain amount of profit out of the land, and they are really some of the best settlers we have. They spend their wages very wisely indeed, bringing up large families, and keeping themselves respectable. Owing, as I have said, to

the want of enterprise and capital, mines have been shut down temporarily, and a number of these men have been compelled to go elsewhere to seek for work. They get this work and they are compelled, if they are some distance from their homes, to remain away for weeks together. The department very wisely granted them a special privilege. They allowed them to obtain railway tickets through the secretary of their association at a reduced cost. The tickets were not issued at the sweet will of any irresponsible person or body, but through their own authorized agent. They were then able to travel at a certain rate. The rate, as far as I can gather, was  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per mile less than the ordinary rate charged on the English railways. It was  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per mile. The men used the privilege, and it was a great advantage to them, and I think a great advantage also to the country, because it saved the men from the necessity of leading a sort of nomadic life, travelling from one place to another, and possibly giving up all their family ties, and leaving their wives and children to become a burden upon the charitable or upon the State. The matter has been brought before the Minister of Railways by myself and other honorable members. The honorable gentleman promised that he would consult with the Premier, but up to the present apparently nothing has been done. I believe myself that the department has actually been losing money owing to the alteration in the fares. It is my intention to ask for a return showing how much money has been received for miners' tickets since the new regulation was brought into force. In my own district there are about 100 men working away from their homes. Formerly they visited their homes once in every three weeks, but now they only do so once in every nine weeks. The fare to one place was, under the former regulation, 5s. 6d., whereas it is now something like 11s., and the men visit their homes, as I have said, every nine weeks, instead of every three weeks, so that there is a distinct loss to the Railway department. I trust that the matter will be favorably considered by the Premier. I know that it is no use appealing to the Minister of Railways, because he has already said that he does not believe in this privilege being granted to the men. It is a privilege to which I think they are entitled if we regard them in their proper light—that is, as men who are seeking employment, and who cannot get it

without going away from their homes. If the conditions are made hard for them, they may be forced to break up their homes and to compel their families to follow them to the uncomfortable surroundings of a new gold-field. There is another point with regard to the Land Act that I would like to bring under the notice of the Minister of Lands. The 65th section holders are charged for their land at the rate of 1s. per acre per annum, and in addition to that they have to pay 2s. 6d. each year for the licence issued to them. At the same time there is no finality. The men go on paying, not for twenty years, as the old 49th section holders did, but continuously, and they are paying the same amount now as was charged years ago. I think that the licence-fee should be done away with. Provision might be made whereby a man holding one of these small allotments of 20 acres of land would, as soon as he had paid £1 an acre, be allowed the use of the land at a nominal rent.

Mr. DUGGAN.—A registration fee.

Mr. SALMON.—Yes, that would meet the case. The land still remains the property of the Crown, and the miner has perfect freedom of access to it. There would not be the slightest objection, I feel sure, on the part of the miners to these men being granted the land at a nominal charge. In fact, a large majority of the holders of this land are miners themselves. There is one other question to which I desire to allude, and it was referred to in eloquent terms by the seconder of the address in reply. I understand that the honorable member for Rodney (Mr. Morrissey) also intended to refer to it. I regret that he did not, because I feel sure, from the way in which he addressed himself to the other portions of the Governor's speech, that he would have done justice to this, the greatest of all questions. No one is more pleased than myself to witness the advent to the House of a number of men who are pronounced federalists. There is nothing that gives me more gratification than to know that they will have an opportunity now of finding out whom they can trust, and also who are the true opponents of federation. They will find this out very soon indeed, and I would urge them to lose no time in seeking the sources of the strong opposition that is offered to this great movement. There is no use disguising the fact that there is a strong opposition although it is not spread over a very large

area, and it is the bounden duty of these honorable members to seek it out, and to combat it by all means in their power. I believe that they will be found to be reasonable men, and not men who desire to have federation at any price, as has too often been said of others who have been ardent in support of this movement. They will be willing to give up something, at all events, to secure this all-important end.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Give up something that does not belong to them.

Mr. SALMON.—They are, at any rate, able to say that this is their native country. No man who comes from the old country can say that Australia belongs to him especially. The native-born members of the community have that privilege, and I believe it is their intention to have a good deal more to say in the future than they have had in the past with regard to the interference of those who do not, and cannot possibly, understand the feelings with which they regard their native land. I have much pleasure in complimenting the Government on the reasonableness of their programme. It has been said very often that the popularity of the present Government is due altogether to the work they have done. I deny that, as I have denied it very frequently during the last few weeks. I think that their popularity is to be attributed very largely to the reasonableness of their proposals for the future. The country has seen that in this Government they have a body of men who are determined that they will not allow Victoria to be torn asunder by internal dissension, but that they will see that the natural recuperative power the country possesses shall be allowed to have its full effect. If time is available, I trust that the Attorney-General will give his attention to one other matter, and that is the amendment of the Medical Act, with reference to the position of the Medical Board of Victoria. The members of the board have been doing very good work, and doing it gratuitously, and they now find themselves without any *locus standi*. They have not the educational powers which they should possess, and their position is an anomalous one. The matter has been brought under the notice of the Government time after time, and relief has been promised, but up to the present nothing has been done. It was the Attorney-General who gave it as his opinion that the board did not possess the

necessary authority to enable it to properly perform its functions, and I think it behoves the Government to see that the men who are doing this work—and it is undoubtedly a valuable work, because it means the protection of the people from quacks—are properly assisted, and to provide some amendment of the law. There would be no difficulty in passing a Bill, and it would afford the relief which is so earnestly desired, not only by the members of the Medical Board, but by every professional man throughout the colony of Victoria. I sincerely trust that we are entering now upon a period of quietness, and in saying this I am speaking for my own district. The feeling there is very strongly in favour of the position taken up by the Government. They think that Parliament should confine its attention, for the present at all events, to the development of the splendid resources the colony possesses, and that instead of going in for experimental and wild-cat legislation Parliament should give its very best attention to such measures as will be for the benefit of the colony as a whole.

The motion for the adoption of the address in reply was agreed to.

Sir GEORGE TURNER moved that the address in reply be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the Speaker and members of the House.

Mr. I. A. ISAACS seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Sir GEORGE TURNER said he would suggest that private members who had given notice of Bills should now be allowed to move their first reading, so that the Bills might be circulated. If there was any other honorable member who intended to introduce a Bill of which he had not yet given notice, he also might be allowed to move the first reading. He (Sir George Turner) would afterwards introduce a number of Bills.

#### SCRIPTURE LESSON BOOKS (PLEBISCITE) BILL.

Mr. GRAHAM moved for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for taking a plebiscite of the electors of the colony on the question of using the Irish National Scripture Lesson Books in the State schools.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS ACT 1890 FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. GRAY moved for leave to introduce a Bill to further amend the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1890.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GEELONG) BILL.

Mr. HIGGINS (in the absence of Mr. GURR) moved for leave to introduce a Bill to apply a certain provision of the Local Government Act 1890 to the town of Geelong.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### ALIENS BILL.

Mr. KIRTON (in the absence of Mr. VALE) moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to aliens and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### BUNGAREE JUNCTION TO RACE-COURSE RESERVE RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION BILL.

Mr. MURPHY moved for leave to introduce a Bill for the purpose of constructing a railway siding from Bungaree Junction to the Race-course Reserve.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### REFERENDUM BILL.

Dr. MALONEY (in the absence of Mr. OUTRIM) moved for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the adoption of the referendum.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1).

Mr. GRAHAM (in the absence of Mr. KENNEDY) moved for leave to introduce a Bill to further amend the Local Government Act 1890.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT  
FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL  
(No. 2).**

Mr. DUGGAN (in the absence of Mr. MCGREGOR) moved for leave to introduce a Bill to further amend the Local Government Act 1890.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**NON-COMPULSORY VACCINATION  
BILL.**

Mr. COOK moved for leave to introduce a Bill to abolish compulsory vaccination.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**HOMES PROTECTION BILL.**

Mr. MCCOLL moved for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the protection of homes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**AUCTION SALES ACT AMENDMENT  
BILL.**

Mr. O'NEILL moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Auction Sales Act 1890.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**TRADE MARKS ACT AMENDMENT  
BILL.**

Mr. BENNETT moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Trade Marks Act 1890.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**PURIFICATION OF ROLLS ACT.**

Dr. MALONEY asked if it would be possible for him to proceed with a measure that night to provide for the abolition of the Purification of Rolls Act?

Sir GEORGE TURNER.—The honorable member can proceed as far as the first reading with any Bill he likes to introduce.

**HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Sir GEORGE TURNER moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Hospitals and Charities Act 1890 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE  
ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.**

Mr. I. A. ISAACS moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Administration and Probate Acts.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**POST OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT  
BILL.**

Mr. DUFFY moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Post Office Act 1890 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**VEGETATION DISEASES ACT 1896  
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Mr. TAVERNER moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Vegetation Diseases Act 1896.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**GREAT MORWELL COAL COMPANY'S  
RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.**

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS moved for leave to introduce a Bill to validate the purchase of the Great Morwell Coal Company's line of railway.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**TRUST FUNDS VESTING BILL.**

Sir GEORGE TURNER moved for leave to introduce a Bill to vest the trust funds in trustees and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**STUDLEY PARK BRIDGE BILL.**

Mr. I. A. ISAACS moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to the Studley Park Bridge.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

**VERMIN DESTRUCTION ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Mr. DUFFY (in the absence of Mr. BEST) moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Vermin Destruction Act 1890.



The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### EXPORTED PRODUCTS BILL.

Mr. TAVERNER moved for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the inspection of live stock, meat, dairy produce, fruit, and other products intended for export, and to regulate the exportation thereof.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### FRAUDULENT RAILWAY TICKETS BILL.

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to fraudulent railway tickets or passes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### DOOKIE AND KATAMATITE TRAMWAY BILL.

Sir GEORGE TURNER moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to the Dookie and Katamatite Tramway.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### MARINE ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. I. A. ISAACS (in the absence of Mr. BEST), moved for leave to introduce a Bill to further amend the Marine Act 1890.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (OFFICERS AND TEACHERS) BILL.

Sir GEORGE TURNER (in the absence of Mr. PEACOCK) moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to certain officers and teachers who held office in the Education department at the passing of the Public Service Act 1883.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### MINING DEVELOPMENT ACT 1896 FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. I. A. ISAACS (in the absence of Mr. FOSTER) moved for leave to introduce a Bill to further amend the Mining Development Act 1896.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

Sir GEORGE TURNER moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until Wednesday, November 10. He said that the Bills which the House had been good enough to read a first time that evening would, in the meantime, be circulated. When the House re-assembled he hoped to be in a position to proceed with his second-reading speech on the Charities Bill, after which the other measures, which chiefly related to small matters, might be gone on with.

Mr. ZOx asked whether the Premier intended to distribute copies of the Charities Bill among the various municipalities and charitable institutions of the colony, so that those bodies might make any suggestions for improvement which they thought desirable? The matter was one of very great importance to the municipalities and charitable institutions, and they should have ample opportunity of discussing the subject on its merits.

Sir GEORGE TURNER remarked that he proposed to send a few copies of the Bill to each municipality and charitable institution which would be affected by it.

Mr. MURRAY observed that no member of the House was more anxious to see the work of Parliament expedited than he was, but he understood that adjourning till the 10th of November would put the House in a difficult position. He was informed that the Speaker had made an engagement with Vice-Royalty which would oblige him to be absent from the chamber on that day. He (Mr. Murray) did not know what the House would do under those circumstances. No Deputy Speaker had been appointed, and it seemed that either a breach of arrangement made with the representative of Her Gracious Majesty must be made or the House must forego the transaction of business. He (Mr. Murray) would ask the Premier what course was to be followed? As the Warrnambool Agricultural Show was to be held on the 11th of November, he (Mr. Murray) would have some difficulty in attending the House on the 10th. He had so frequently appealed to the generosity of the Premier in vain that on the present occasion he would merely appeal to the honorable gentleman's sense of justice.

Sir GEORGE TURNER.—I am willing that the House shall meet on the 11th November instead of the 10th.

Mr. MURRAY stated that that arrangement would be worse than the first one proposed. It would be better for the House to meet a few days later. There were the festivities of the 9th of November to be got over. He believed that honorable members generally were favorable to the House meeting for the resumption of business on the 16th November.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH said that, in the absence of the leader of the Opposition, he would gladly fall in with the proposal of the Premier that the House should adjourn until the 10th November.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier to reconsider the terms of his motion, as the Speaker had entered into an engagement with His Excellency the Governor which would take him to South Gippsland on the 10th November. An adjournment to that day would hardly be fair to the Speaker, who perhaps when he made the arrangement with His Excellency was not expecting to be elected to the chair. If the House adjourned till a week later than the day named by the Premier, the Speaker would be enabled to carry out his engagement.

The SPEAKER.—His Excellency the Governor made an arrangement, at the request of some of my constituents, upwards of three months ago, to pay an official visit to South Gippsland, leaving Melbourne on Wednesday, the 10th of November, and returning on the following Friday, and I agreed to accompany the Government House party. The position is awkward, but, of course, my first duty lies here. At the same time, I shall be loath to break my engagement with His Excellency.

Mr. ZOX suggested to the Premier that he should consent to the House adjourning till the 16th November.

Sir GEORGE TURNER remarked that, under the circumstances, honorable members would agree with him that the only course open to him was to ask the House to adjourn till the 16th November. At the same time, honorable members must not forget that the Federal Convention was to meet in Melbourne on the 20th January, and that he, as a member of the Finance Committee, would for some time before the end of the year and in the first three weeks of January have his hands full, as he had to prepare for the meeting ;

and additional work would also be thrown upon his colleagues. He trusted that honorable members would bear those facts in mind, and that they would do their best during the four or five weeks in which the House could sit to expedite business, so as to finish the work of the session as early in December as possible. He begged to withdraw the motion, and to move that the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, November 16.

The substituted motion was agreed to.

The SPEAKER.—I have to express my obligations to the Premier and to honorable members for the gracious way in which they have assented to my wishes.

The House adjourned at twenty-eight minutes past nine o'clock, until Tuesday, November 16.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, November 10, 1897.*

Leave of Absence : Sir Frederick Sargood : Hon. N. Levi—  
Defunct Companies Bill—Public Contracts Bill—  
Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at nineteen minutes to five o'clock p.m., and read the prayer.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The Hon. C. J. HAM (in the absence of the Hon. J. SERVICE) moved that leave of absence be granted to Sir Frederick Sargood for the remainder of the session, on account of urgent private business.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. G. GODFREY moved that leave of absence be granted to the Hon. N. Levi for the remainder of the session, on account of urgent private business.

The motion was agreed to.

### DEFUNCT COMPANIES BILL.

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to defunct companies.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

### PUBLIC CONTRACTS BILL.

On the order of the day for the second reading of this Bill,

Sir HENRY CUTHBERT observed that an intimation had been given through the press that the Council would meet that day merely for the purpose of adjourning to a certain date, and it would