

THE LATE HONORABLE
E. STEINFELD.

The PRESIDENT.—As honorable members are aware, death removed from our midst, before the prorogation of Parliament last session, the late and much-lamented Honorable Matthew Lang, and I then addressed a few remarks to honorable members with reference to the great loss we had thereby suffered, and which we all deeply deplored. I have now to announce the death of another member of this House in our old friend the Honorable Emanuel Steinfeld. I am sure there is not an honorable member who does not deeply regret the removal from our midst of so valuable a colleague and friend. Amongst Mr. Steinfeld's many good qualities was a singularly unobtrusive modesty, which never brought him into any undue prominence or betrayed him into any position that he was not qualified to fill. Many honorable members had the painful duty of following Mr. Steinfeld's remains to their last resting place. I am sure that, although Mr. Steinfeld was a young member, this Chamber has sustained no greater loss than in his much-lamented death.

The Hon. A. WYNNE.—Mr. President, I would like also to refer to the great loss we have sustained by the Honorable Emanuel Steinfeld's death. I knew Mr. Steinfeld for a great many years. He was a man of great commercial experience, and his unobtrusive manners, his great diligence, and his interest in all matters concerning the welfare of the colonies, made him one of the most valuable members of this Chamber. He took the keenest interest in the question of intercolonial free-trade, which is just now exercising the minds of the inhabitants of the various colonies, and I think he met his death when visiting Adelaide to confer on this very subject. We all deeply deplore the loss this Chamber has suffered by his decease.

Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD.—Mr. President, long before the Honorable Emanuel Steinfeld came into this House he took a deep interest in many matters of a public character. He was always prepared to assist as far as he could in that which he had deeply at heart—any measure which would tend to bring the colonies into closer harmony one with the other—and he spared neither time nor money. It is perfectly true, as Mr. Wynne stated, that it was when attending to his most important duties in connexion

with a conference at Adelaide that Mr. Steinfeld was seized with the illness which ultimately terminated fatally. During the short time Mr. Steinfeld was in the House he proved himself to be a worthy and a valuable member. He took care never to attempt to rise unless he had thoroughly mastered his subject, and we know that on the few occasions on which we had the privilege of listening to him in the House we did so with pleasure, and, I think I may say also, with profit. Personally, I deeply lament his loss. I knew Mr. Steinfeld for many years, almost from the time he came to the colony, and I can bear testimony that the House has lost by his death a most valuable member.

The Hon. N. LEVI.—Sir, I also would like to offer a few remarks with reference to our late member, the Honorable Emanuel Steinfeld. I was one of the members who walked home with Mr. Steinfeld on the last morning on which the House met last session. As the present President of the Chamber of Manufactures, I can indorse the observations that have been made by Sir Frederick Sargood, more particularly with reference to the large interest that Mr. Steinfeld took in the question of intercolonial free-trade. It was upon that business that Mr. Steinfeld visited Adelaide, and I was to have accompanied him upon that occasion. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that this Chamber has lost a valuable acquisition to its numbers, and I am very pleased to find that the services rendered by the deceased gentleman are so highly appreciated.

LIBRARIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. A. WYNNE moved, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Libraries Act.

The motion was agreed to.

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

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. E. MILLER 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 D. Coutts, S. Fraser, N. Levi, J. M. Pratt, Sir Frederick Sargood, N. Thornley, S. Williamson, W. I. Winter-Irving, A. Wynne, and the mover.”

The Hon. N. LEVI 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 John Adrian Louis, Earl of Hopetoun, Viscount Aithrie, and Baron Hope, in the Peerage of Scotland; Baron Hopetoun of Hopetoun, and Baron Niddry of Niddry Castle, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom; Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the colony of Victoria and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.

“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. E. MILLER moved the adoption of the address in reply. He said—Mr. President, in proposing this motion I desire to make a few remarks on the Governor's speech, but I do not intend to occupy much of the time of honorable members, as I think it well for a new member not to say too much in his maiden speech. The first part of His Excellency's speech refers to the finances, and I think that the question of finance is paramount to every other question in the country at the present time. The speech refers to the necessity that there has been for retrenchment in the past, and also to the necessity for retrenchment in the future, and it asks that all members of the Legislature shall assist the Government in their efforts to bring about this retrenchment. We all know that the expenditure of the country has been excessive, and that our finances now stand in a deplorable condition. I am sure that Parliament will support the Government in any retrenchment proposals they may bring forward—not merely in retrenching the public servants, but in connexion with all votes that the Legislature may grant. We must all sympathize with the public servants in the fact that retrenchment should be necessary, and we also probably sympathize with the Government in that they have to carry out such harsh measures; but the good of the country must be considered first, and I trust we shall support the Government in any measures that may be found necessary for restoring the finances of the colony. The speech passes on to the necessity for village and land settlement. I myself very much approve of any

measure that may be brought forward for settling the people on the lands. We all know that we have a vast number of unemployed about the metropolis, and the one way to assist such people, some of whom are very deserving, and have wives and children to support, is to settle them on our waste lands. We know that many philanthropic gentlemen have already started village settlements by public subscriptions and by the assistance of the Government, and they are in a thriving condition. I trust that the Government will continue to assist those settlements, in order to provide homes and employment for the unemployed, and to relieve the great distress at present existing. Following on that, we have the opening up of the mallee. The “mallee desert,” as it used to be called, which we once despised, we now find to be one of the richest parts of the colony. I think that every encouragement should be given to settle the people on the mallee, and any measure of the Government in that direction should receive our warm support. While on that subject, I may also refer to the statement in His Excellency's speech that the Government have taken over the railway from Beulah to Hopetoun, and that is a step which I warmly approve of. It was the best thing that they could do for various reasons, and especially for the opening up of the mallee country. Further, we find that the Government recently took over the responsibility of the Commissioners of the Savings Banks, and turned what was a moral obligation into a legal one. I heartily approve of the Government adopting that course, and also of the expeditious way in which they carried out such a beneficial measure. At the time they did it there was a run on the Savings Bank, and by their action they saved a very great disaster. They not only stopped the run, but gave ample security to the thrifty population for their savings. The issuing of legal tender notes is also referred to. I think that honorable members will coincide with the Government in the course they took of declining to issue such notes.

The Hon. S. FRASER.—I am not so sure about that.

The Hon. E. MILLER.—The Premier and the Government said that the banks should be left to work out their own salvation, and the banks have done so and are now, happily, in operation again. I do not think that issuing legal tender notes

would in any way have prevented a panic. The public, in fact, were perfectly satisfied with the bank notes of the colony, because they knew that a well-established bank always kept a sovereign in their coffers for it. They were satisfied to take bank notes, and there was therefore no need to issue legal tender notes. We can congratulate the Government on not issuing such notes, for if they had done so it would only have interfered further with the credit of the colony. We are informed that a Banking Bill of a federal character is to be introduced, and anything calculated to foster federation should receive our hearty support. But the suspended banks are now open again and enjoying the confidence of the public, and I am sure that the Government will not bring in any Bill to interfere with the working of our banks in the future. Further on, the speech refers to the magnanimous offer which we received from South Africa to assist us in our national distress, if necessary. No doubt, every honorable member of this House will join me in thanking South Africa for its splendid offer, and I think it should be placed on record that we indorse that part of His Excellency's speech, as showing the solidarity of sentiment of the various outlying parts of the British Empire. The next part of the speech refers to the great disaster to our British Navy in the loss of the great battleship *Victoria*, and the loss of the life of Vice-Admiral Tryon and his British sailors, and I am sure that we as a country deplore this event as a national calamity. We have also the following reference to inter-colonial free-trade:—

“At the earliest possible opportunity negotiations will be opened with New South Wales and the other colonies in the direction of making an advance towards intercolonial free-trade by reciprocity treaties. In many important matters our interests are diverse, but by mutual concessions an approach can be gradually made to uniformity of Tariff without permanent injury to any existing interest.”

I am sure that we shall all hail with delight anything tending towards federation, and I believe that intercolonial free-trade is the high road to that desideratum. The next paragraph deals with federation. I have already expressed my warm approval of anything tending in that direction. We feel that at present there is a greater need for federation than there has been at any previous time, and there is no doubt it would be conducive to the best interests of the whole of Australasia. We read further

on that future railways will be constructed as needed, and that the money will be raised in the colony; but I hope that if railways are made it will be in parts of the country where we can get a return for the outlay— if not at present, at any rate in the near future. Referring to financial matters, we are told that the policy of the Government is to abstain from borrowing outside of the colony. It is stated that £750,000 was very easily raised in the colony recently, and we also know that the loan stands at a very high premium in the market. It is very pleasant to think that if, at a future time, the Government should have to apply to England for money, and it is refused, we can raise the money in the colony ourselves. There must be a great deal of gold and coin in the colony; but, no doubt, if England, where money is so plentiful that they do not know what to do with it, offered us money, we could take it, and make good use of it. The speech goes on to say that the 5 per cent. local debentures falling due in January next have been provided for, and that there is every hope of our £2,000,000 5 per cent. loan falling due in London at the end of the present year being converted into a 4 per cent. one. Then we see it stated that taxation is necessary, and we are not surprised at that; but we are pleased to learn that it will be only of a temporary character. I think that every inhabitant of the colony should pay that taxation gladly in order to enable us to get over our present difficulties. No doubt, in some shape, even if it be the inquisitorial income tax, or the much-hated absentee tax, taxation is necessary, and the sooner we make up our minds that it is necessary the better it will be for us. We have often wished that the turn of the tide would come, and yet have not acted in a sufficiently determined manner to bring it about. Generally the wish has been father to the thought, but we had better depart from that idea, and make up our minds that our finances are in such a condition that we must impose fresh taxation, and the sooner the better, in order to obtain once more the confidence and support of the British public. The approaching marriage of their Royal Highnesses the Princess May of Teck and the Duke of York is referred to, and I am sure that the loyalty of the people of this country will enable us to send our congratulations on that event to the old country when the time arrives. Reference has been made to the

future prosperity of the country depending upon the increased production of its industries. We know that recently the granting of butter bonuses has proved to be one of the best things ever done for the country. The export of butter to England, in consequence of those bonuses, has undoubtedly been very large, and I do not see any reason why a large export should not continue whether with or without the bonus. We are told that attention is to be given by the Ministry to promote the wine, fruit, and frozen meat trade by ascertaining, through experts, the most approved methods of treatment of these products, and by endeavouring to arrange for cheap freights to foreign markets, so as to bring about assistance to the farmers and others to cultivate the land they occupy. We must remember that sooner or later the wealth of the colony must come from the land. Reference is made to the returns of our gold mines. During the depression our gold mines were the one bright spot in our firmament. They have continued their output, and we know that in Bendigo, Ballarat, and other places in the colony the deep mines are still showing that they possess an enormous amount of wealth. A great deal of gold obtained in other parts of Australia seems to come to Victoria, and we should use all our powers to continue that. There is a gentleman coming from Western Australia who is bringing about 3,000 ounces of gold to be coined here, and I do not know how we could encourage importations of that kind unless by lowering the cost of coinage at our Mint. The working of our gold mines is an industry that nothing should interfere with. It has made the colony in the past, and it looks as though it would go a long way towards bringing it back again to prosperity. Our coal mines are also being assisted in every way possible, both by the construction of railways, by low freights, and various other means. There is no doubt that everything possible should be done to aid the development of our coal industry, and I am pleased to hear that the Government intend to act on that principle. Reference is also made to a Water Act and other important matters to be brought before the Legislature during this session, and I am quite sure that all the subjects submitted to our consideration will receive the earnest attention of honorable members. I think that, perhaps, for a new member, I have already trespassed sufficiently on the time of the House, and

Hon. E. Miller.

I will therefore conclude by thanking honorable members for their kind attention.

The Hon. N. LEVI.—Mr. President, I have very much pleasure in rising to second the motion which has been proposed in a most effective and satisfactory manner by my honorable friend (Mr. Miller), in his maiden speech. I feel that the honorable member's speech has been couched in such a strain as must commend itself, not only to members of this House, but also to the entire community. There is no doubt that when the present Administration came into power they did so under the most inopportune circumstances we have experienced, and the difficulties they have met during their period of office have been unparalleled in the history of this country. I have no hesitation in saying that every effort has been made on their part, so far as my judgment extends, to do all that they could do to ameliorate the unfortunate position that Victoria has been placed in. With regard to the present state of the finances, I may express the opinion, after a period of from 35 to 40 years' residence in the colony, that there is no member of the entire Victorian community who could have foreseen the misfortunes which have overtaken us. As to the efforts which have been made to stem the tide of misfortune and restore prosperity, it was, I think, far better to leave the financial institutions to work out their own salvation than to act in the way suggested by some portions of the press of the colony. I am satisfied that some institutions which, through a want of confidence, were called upon to restore funds placed in their charge, that they were unable to restore in consequence of having assisted in the construction of the buildings in and around the city, would have been enabled to obtain that amount of support which was necessary to continue confidence in them if it had not been for the crisis that occurred—a crisis which was due, in my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of a great many people of the community, to the feeling that existed as to the privacy which was preserved in connexion with certain clandestine arrangements that had taken place in the settlement of the financial affairs of this colony. I believe that in a great measure these were the chief causes of the want of confidence which caused a panic to take place in connexion with our banking institutions. But I must confess that, in connexion with the efforts that have