

so apparent in the city is being spent. Once the mines and the prospectors go, that is the end for them. It is a sad picture, and I can only express the hope that something will be done at an early date to relieve it. I did intend to touch on a grave injustice which a number of turned-down miners are suffering as a result of a technical barrier in the Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act, but I am satisfied that the State Government has done and is still doing all in its power to rectify the situation. I will have an opportunity at a later stage to discuss this matter, and in the meantime I am confident that other goldfields members will acquaint the House of the position.

HON. G. FRASER (West): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday, the 10th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 5th August, 1943.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. G. Steere).

SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening speech (*vide* Council and report *ante*), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

QUESTION.

PRICES, STATE LEGISLATION.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice), asked the Minister for Labour: In view of the regulations promulgated under the National Security Act of the Commonwealth Parliament, what action, if any, has been taken under the State laws with regard to the fixing of prices of essential commodities?

The MINISTER replied: The National Security regulations of the Commonwealth in respect to the control of prices over-ride the State Act dealing with prices, and consequently it is not within the power of the State Government or State Parliament to do anything more than is being done, owing to this over-riding Commonwealth legislation.

BILL—PENSIONERS (RATES EXEMPTION) ACT AMENDMENT.

THE PREMIER: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation. I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "A Bill for an Act to extend the provisions of the Pensioners (Rates Exemption) Act, 1922-1938, to widows who are receiving pensions under the Widows' Pensions Act, 1942 (Commonwealth)."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER: Accompanied by hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth): [3.32]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—"May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious

Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.''

The fifth session of the Seventeenth Parliament of the State is opening up under happier auspices than those which attended the close of last session, because of the outstanding victories that have attended the arms of the Allies in various theatres of the war during recent months, and also because of the wonderful and welcome event of the resignation or dismissal or overthrow of Mussolini. Those auspices are so encouraging as to lead us to hope that the duration of the war will be considerably shortened. The session is opening, too, within one day at least, of the anniversary of the commencement of the first World War, namely, the 4th August, 1914. That brings to us sad memories. The world was just about recovering from the effects of that terrible struggle when it was again plunged into and still remains in another shambles.

A notable feature of the Speech which has been delivered by His Excellency is that which discloses that for the third successive year there is a surplus. The financial operations of the State, under the wise guidance of the Government, have resulted for the third successive year in bringing about a surplus. That is a record during the 40 odd years of Federation; I venture to say it is a record for the 53 years since the establishment of Responsible Government. I note also that reference is made in the Speech to the secondary industries of the State. It is encouraging to know that the development of such industries will be attended to and actively pursued. An optimistic note is struck in connection with the wood distillation plant, the alunite works at Lake Campion and other important industries. Reference is also made to phosphatic rock deposits and the manufacture of superphosphate from pyrites, as well as to the production of processed foods. We learn that the extraction of potash will shortly be an accomplished fact. We have reason to be proud of that; the industry will be a most important one to this State and Australia. I am credibly informed that when we reach the stage of extracting potash, it will be the first time that that has been done in Australia. That is something to be proud of.

Despite a fair amount of criticism levelled against the Department of Industrial

Development, which is presided over by the Minister for Industrial Development, the department has put in a considerable amount of good work in fostering and developing our secondary industries. This is as it should be. It is imperative that we give every attention to the development of those industries. Hitherto we have been dependent upon primary production, but that in itself is not sufficient. By encouraging secondary industries we shall further advance the primary industries of the State. I note that the State Shipping Priorities Advisory Committee has arranged for severe restrictions to be placed upon the importation of goods which can be manufactured locally. It is imperative that those restrictions should be imposed. Certain of our secondary industries, including the manufacture of requirements for the war, were suffering because of the fact that manufactured articles that could have been made here were brought to this State from the Eastern States. I will give one glaring instance. The wire netting factory of Malloch Bros. at Leederville has some 10 machines capable of manufacturing barbed wire. Strange to say, while those machines were lying idle and men were available to work them, a shipment of barbed wire arrived here from the Eastern States. I made representations at the time to the Minister for Industrial Development, and he got in touch with the Shipping Priorities Committee with a view to preventing a recurrence of that kind of thing. So far he has been fairly successful.

Mr. Marshall: Who will be watchful of the quality and price of the article produced in Western Australia?

Mr. NEEDHAM: For the moment I am pointing out the necessity to give every assistance to our local industries, and to prevent as far as possible a continuation of the unwise policy of sending millions of pounds every year to the Eastern States for articles and commodities that can be made and are being made in this western State.

The Speech of His Excellency also refers to the very important industry of goldmining. We are advised that everything is being done to preserve this great industry so that after the war it will be able to play a valuable part in absorbing men and producing wealth. It is necessary that every attention be paid to this industry which is in great danger of disappearing altogether from this

State. Many mines are completely idle, whilst others are in danger of closing down. In view of the improved military situation that we have been told about, and of which we are conscious, it is my opinion that arrangements might be made to release some men from military occupations and put them to work on the mines, for a little while at least, so as to remove the danger of some mines closing down. It must not be thought that it is an easy matter to re-open a mine once it has closed. A goldmine, once it closes, will not be closed for the duration of the war only. A considerable time will elapse before any such mine would re-open. A vast amount of mining plant has been commandeered by the military authorities, and rightly so, for their use and to assist essential war industries.

It is only necessary to mention the Diesel engines that have been taken from the mines. Many of these engines will be hard to replace for a long time after the cessation of hostilities. So, in every way, the time is opportune for a review of the whole situation in regard to our goldmining industry. The Prime Minister is due to come to this State shortly, and before he returns to Canberra this Government should consult with him to see whether some men can be released from military duties in an endeavour to preserve this important industry to our State and to Australia. Another point, too, is that unless the industry is preserved there may be considerable difficulty after the war in placing into civil employment those men who could be usefully absorbed in mining. That responsibility will rest upon the Commonwealth Government, and it would be well to protect this State against any such calamity as losing the benefit of the goldmining industry for the future.

Another important matter mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation to increase the school-leaving age to 15 years. That is a much needed reform which has been advocated for a long time past. It will, of course, mean additional expense in the way of providing increased school accommodation and, I expect, a larger teaching staff. There is, however, another phase that must not be overlooked. It would be a good thing to see the school-leaving age raised to 15 years, but it would add to the difficulties of the parents—especially those whose incomes are not of the highest.

The Premier: The child endowment has improved that position a little.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I admit that it has improved the position, but I venture to say that something more will have to be done to help the man on the basic wage to maintain his child or children for another year. Unfortunately, owing to economic pressure, it has been that man's lot for some time past to see that his child who has reached the age of 14 years should be remuneratively employed as soon as possible in order to help with the family income. While it is quite true, as the Premier has interjected, that the child endowment scheme is of assistance in that regard, it will not, to my way of thinking, be sufficient to compensate a parent for the loss of his child's earnings for an additional year. It should be incumbent on the State to help that family to a greater extent than only child endowment until the child leaves school and is able to do something to help increase the family income.

Mr. Marshall: You have no confidence in the post-war new order!

Mr. NEEDHAM: I have heard a lot about the new order but so far it has simply been talk. I notice that when any suggestion is made to ensure that the foundations of a new and better order will be laid it becomes the source of considerable opposition from those who have spoken very much about it. The Speech also refers to housing and the fact that there is an acute housing shortage, and indicates that something will be done to meet that situation by the introduction of legislation to provide housing accommodation at a low rental. That legislation cannot be enacted too early. I hope it will be amongst the first Bills to be brought down. The position today is desperate. Here again assistance might be sought from the Commonwealth Government in the release of men and materials for the purpose of providing the necessary housing accommodation. A few weeks ago I attended a Labour conference in Melbourne and there brought up the question of housing and of labour and material being released in order to relieve the acute shortage of accommodation. The Acting Prime Minister, who was present, asked "What can be done?" I do not suggest for a moment that we should become in any way complacent because of the improvement in the war situation, but still I think that something could be done to help the civilian popu-

lation to obtain additional housing accommodation. Perhaps the services of prisoners of war could be utilised with a view to assisting in providing a solution of the problem.

It has become almost traditional for the mover of the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply not to occupy too much time on the opening day and, though young in parliamentary experience, I do not intend to delay the House at much greater length. Perhaps I might appropriately conclude my remarks on this note: We have reason to be proud of the part played by the Government and citizens of this State in the prosecution of the war; the co-operation of the State Government with the Government of the Commonwealth, and the heroism displayed on sea, on land and in the air by the men of our Fighting Forces in conjunction with the men of the United Nations. The record of their deeds will be indelibly inscribed in the pages of history. I am expressing the heartfelt wish of every lover of liberty in hoping that before many more months have passed this titanic struggle will be brought to a victorious conclusion for the United Nations, and that we shall enter upon a new era of safety and liberty under a just and lasting peace.

MR. LEAHY (Hannans): I second the motion.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday, the 10th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.53 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 10th August, 1943.

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The **PRESIDENT** took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Notice of Motion.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** I desire to give notice that at the next sitting of the House I shall move for the appointment of members to committees for the session.

Points of Order.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I rise to a point of order. I intend to ask for a ballot in order that the Chief Secretary shall name the proposed members of the committees.

The President: Will the hon. member resume his seat? The Chief Secretary is perfectly in order. It is the parliamentary custom to propose a motion that certain members shall be members of the committees for the session. If the hon. member desires that a ballot be held, he can ask for that ballot tomorrow, or whenever the motion is moved.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I shall do so, Sir.

Hon. J. Cornell: I rise to a point of order. You, Sir, intimated to Mr. Williams that he could have a ballot in this connection.

The President: I said that Mr. Williams could ask for a ballot.

Hon. J. Cornell: I submit, Sir, that a ballot applies only to a Select Committee or the members of a conference, and that Mr. Williams, if he wants a ballot, can obtain it only by nominating some other member.

The President: The hon. member is not in order. I simply informed Mr. Williams that he could ask for a ballot tomorrow instead of today. Today the question is merely a notification.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I take it, Mr. President, that tomorrow I can ask for a ballot?

The President: The hon. member can ask for a ballot tomorrow.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is to say that any one of us could be a candidate for a position on the committees.

The President: The hon. member can ask for a ballot. The other matter will be decided tomorrow. Whether a ballot shall be held will be decided tomorrow.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I understand that that is what we agreed to.

The President: Yes. Will the hon. member resume his seat?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Yes, Sir. You have given me your word.