

prospectors who are still in the bush, and that the Government's assistance scheme will be enlarged and improved. Money spent in this direction is likely to be returned a hundredfold because, one new mine usually means the growth of a new township, the employment of hundreds of men and so on.

While on this subject, I would like the Minister to inquire into the possibility of installing modern facilities at the Kalgoorlie State Battery for the treatment of sulphide ore. In pre-war years, prospectors could have their sulphide and other refractory ores treated at the South Kalgurli Mine, but these facilities no longer exist. The position is that when a prospector reaches the sulphide zone, further mining is almost beyond him and he is forced either to give up or to sell out to a company, if he has the opportunity. Modern treatment methods at the Kalgoorlie State Battery for sulphide ore would be a great aid to prospectors and of general benefit to the mining industry.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 26th July, 1945.

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

ELECTIONAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the Victoria Park electorate caused by the death of Howard Stirling Raphael, showing that William Raymond Read has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear in the hon. member.

Mr. Read took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTIONS.

NATIONAL SECURITY REGULATIONS.

As to Release of Building Materials.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Is the Minister aware that within a radius of half-a-mile of the Town Hall of the City of Perth numerous eating-houses have come into existence involving the consumption of a huge quantity of material for the purpose of renovating and fitting-out such premises, also involving huge quantities of rationed goods and labour, these places being controlled principally by foreigners, while people of British origin and Australian-born subjects often find it necessary to restrict their hours of trading and to close during certain days of the week because of the impossibility of securing rationed goods and labour?

The MINISTER replied: I have no exact knowledge as to what quantities of materials and rationed goods may have been so used. I think, in addition, members are aware that no Minister of the State Government has any control over matters of this kind, but if the member for Murchison is prepared to make available some specific information as to the people concerned in the operation of these business undertakings, I will be quite pleased to have the necessary inquiries made for the purpose of ascertaining whether the building materials and rationed goods have been made available on justifiable grounds.

Mr. MARSHALL: I would like to ask the Minister a similar question which, this time, will be specific. Is the Minister aware that a firm of opticians, foreign in name, has secured a permit and is now in the process of reconditioning elaborately a building in Barrack-street to house the firm in the post-war period, again involving a huge quantity of material and labour, while ordinary citizens of Western Australia find it difficult to secure such material and labour to maintain their homes at a decent standard?

The **MINISTER** replied: No, I am not aware of such circumstances, but if the hon. member will give me the name of the firm now or later—

Mr. Marshall: Laubman & Pank.

The **MINISTER:** —I will have inquiries made.

Mr. MARSHALL: Will the Minister give this House an assurance that, provided I submit the information, he will take the matter up seriously with the appropriate Minister in Canberra with a view to having a strict investigation made in regard to the granting of these permits and the granting of rationed goods to these people? If so, will he make the results of his negotiations with the Minister in Canberra known to this House at a later date?

The **MINISTER** replied: Yes, if following an investigation of the position that course is found to be justified.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Transport Facilities.

Mr. RODOREDA (without notice) asked the Minister for the North-West: In view of the fact that for some time past shipping has been totally inadequate for North-West requirements, and is rapidly becoming more so, will the Government at once arrange for another ship? If not, is the Minister prepared immediately to inaugurate a regular road service for the ports as far as Roebourne?

The **MINISTER** replied: Every endeavour has already been made to secure further shipping space for the North-West ports without success, owing to war necessities. In reply to the hon. member's suggestion regarding road transport, consideration will be given to any scheme that may be submitted.

Mr. MARSHALL: Is the Minister aware that there is available motor transport from the rail-head at Meekatharra which is sufficient amply to supply many of the very necessary requirements of the people in the North-West portion of our State as far as Port Hedland?

The **MINISTER** replied: I am aware that there is a motor service which, to the best of my knowledge, is fully taxed for the purpose referred to by the hon. member.

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.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [3.38]: 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 amend the Administration Act, 1903-1941."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [3.40]: 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."

This Assembly meets today under far happier auspices than at any time during the period it has been my privilege to be a member. The war clouds in the European sphere have been rolled back and we look

forward confidently and hopefully to an early and victorious conclusion of the conflict now raging in the Pacific. I say we look forward hopefully because I feel—and there is abundant evidence to support my point of view—that there is a war weariness and a sense of depletion of our assets entailed in the struggle thus far. The workers are feeling the strain of intense work, of long hours, of overtime, and in very many cases, of no relief and no holidays. Capital assets have substantially depreciated, and there is very definite evidence that many of the capital undertakings of this Commonwealth both directly and indirectly associated with the war effort, apart from those appertaining particularly to the civilian population, are in need of a complete overhaul and, in many cases, re-establishment.

Because internationally there has been a trend for the better, notwithstanding that there is still a tremendous job to be done in the Pacific area, of necessity our thoughts must be turned more and more to the days of peace. We must make absolutely certain that plans are fully prepared and ready to be implemented, awaiting that day when so many thousands of our fellow-men in the Forces will seek to return to normal civil life. The term usually applied is that of reconstruction. I feel that there should not be too great an emphasis on the first syllable of that word. I am appreciative of the fact that there are many fine things pertaining to our pre-war system of life and living, but I am, at the same time, however, aware of the fact that there were far too many inequalities and injustices, and I want no reversion to those bad old days. There were, as there still are, extremes of riches and poverty, and there were always considerable numbers of people without work to perform. There has always been in Australia a fair percentage of the people without suitable housing facilities. Whilst we speak of British justice and the equality of the law, it is a well-known fact that those facilities are only available to the utmost to those who have the finance in order to avail themselves of the facilities provided. I trust, therefore, that there will be an entirely new outlook—so far as legislation is concerned—in dealing with the post-war days.

I am delighted that the Commonwealth Parliament has introduced a measure—or

rather two measures—dealing with banking in the Commonwealth. It is not my intention, of course, to traverse the details of those Bills or any aspects of them other than to say that to my mind they constitute the most important pieces of legislation that it has ever been sought to have placed upon the statute-book of the Commonwealth Parliament. What I do want to make reference to are some of the tactics and doubtful practices being employed by certain interested parties with a view to intimidating members of Parliament with the ultimate object, of course, of having them vote against that all-embracing and all-important legislation. I refer, in the first instance, to the fact that life assurance companies have been using their funds—or should I say the funds of those who pay the premiums—for the purpose of compiling literature which is a complete distortion of the facts and the realities as affecting that legislation. I, as one who has an insurance policy, protest against any portion of my premium being utilised for such a purpose. I feel that that sentiment will be echoed by the vast majority of the people, which means practically everybody who has a life assurance policy of one sort or another.

Then again I am aware of the fact that bank managers have received certain private and confidential instructions as to what they should do. I am aware, also, that clients who are in the grasp of those financial institutions were handed certain forms already prepared for them to be signed and forwarded to the appropriate Federal member for the district concerned. Of course, with the manager of the bank standing over the person who was indebted to that institution, it was inevitable that the individual under those circumstances could do nothing less than forward the protest to the Federal member. Attempts have been made, through employers, to intimidate the workers who gain their livelihood in certain establishments. I say this is an exceedingly doubtful practice, because here again it becomes well nigh impossible for a worker, who desires to retain his position or in any case not to suffer any discredit in the eyes of his employer, to refuse to sign and forward the petition or document to his Federal member. Therefore I do resent the employment of tactics which to my mind are not in the interests of the people of Australia, but are in the interests of conserving for a cer-

tain section that hold, control and influence that they have exercised far too long in this Australian Commonwealth.

Because the day of peace is dawning, consideration, as I have stated, must of necessity be given to the days that are to follow the declaration of peace. Because of the unfortunate defeat of the Referendum proposals last year, there is accordingly imposed upon the State Parliaments a greater burden of responsibility, under far greater hazards and difficulties, than would have been the case had the people of the Commonwealth granted those powers to the Federal authorities.

Mr. Thorn: This is just the Parliament that can do the job; the others are lot of messers.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Provided someone else pays for it.

Mr. GRAHAM: On account of the limitations of the Commonwealth Constitution, it will become necessary, at the cessation of hostilities, for the majority of the munition factories and other establishments set up by the Commonwealth Government to be sold or practically given away—that has been the experience in the past—to private traders, because the Commonwealth Government is unable to proceed with that form of activity outside of war requirements or unless it is directly for defence purposes.

Mr. Watts: That is a policy of despair.

Mr. GRAHAM: Therefore in regard to that matter it becomes the duty of the State Government to become active immediately for the purpose of taking over many of the munition establishments set up by the Commonwealth Government, when those establishments are no longer required for the production of munitions of war, in order that we might have within the borders of Western Australia secondary industries capable of supplying many necessities and articles generally for use and consumption by the people of this State.

On a previous occasion I made some observations with regard to the inadequacy of the basic wage as applying right throughout Australia, and particularly in Western Australia. I gave the opinion on that occasion that it was a responsibility of the Government, not necessarily to define a figure, but to lay down a specific formula to be followed by the Arbitration Court. I feel that it is a responsibility of the elected representatives of the

people to declare what standards shall be the minimum under which the citizens or workers of this State shall operate at their work benches, in offices and in other places. I go further today and suggest that in conjunction with that question of wages some consideration might be given to other aspects that affect working conditions. I see no reason whatsoever why there should not be a declaration, embodied in legislation, as to what shall constitute a maximum working week.

Mr. Cross: Do you think fire brigade employees should work seven days a week?

Mr. GRAHAM: I think it is an anomaly and a very definite fault in our industrial legislation when some workers, by working 38 hours per week, have completed a full week's work and others, still subject to the Arbitration Court, are compelled to work 84 hours per week; and there is a range between those two extremes. I say, therefore, that a maximum working week should be instituted—whether it be 40, 48 or 56 hours—after full investigation, but there should be no extension beyond that period except at penalty rates.

There is, too, the matter of annual leave. At present some workers receive one week, others receive a fortnight, some three weeks, and some even a month a year of annual leave. I think there should be some uniformity or, at any rate, some approach towards uniformity, but in any event a minimum annual leave period of a fortnight should be granted to all workers. I am pleased to notice that the State Parliament of New South Wales last year passed legislation to this effect, and accordingly in that State there is now an annual leave period of a fortnight for all workers. In the same way consideration should be given to the matter of paid public holidays. Certain workers at present receive no paid public holidays whatsoever. On the other hand, though I am not aware of the maximum allowed to workers, I do know that when I was employed in the State Government service there were 15 or 16 paid public holidays annually, which were granted in addition to annual leave and long-service leave. I feel that nobody can justify such extremes—no paid public holidays in the case of certain classes of workers and 15 or 16 paid public holidays in the case of others. At the same time I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am not advocating

a reduction in the number of paid public holidays granted to public servants or to any other group of workers. What I contend is that there should be a minimum number of paid public holidays that should be the right of all workers throughout the length and breadth of the State.

Similarly, there are many and varied conditions pertaining to sick leave, not only as regards the period allowed to workers, but also the manner of qualification entitling workers to payment while on sick leave. Finally, as regards payment for overtime, it is well known that some workers are compelled to toil for a period beyond the normal working day at ordinary rates of pay, while others receive time-and-a-quarter or time-and-a-half, and some receive penalty rates of double time and so on. There should be a minimum rate for overtime which might be fixed at one-and-a-half times the ordinary rate. In this direction Parliament should lay down a principle and declare that here is a common standard below which no worker will be required to work. I feel that this is an obligation of Parliament.

Another matter related to the working conditions of which I have spoken is that of providing amenities for workers. It is practically only since the outbreak of the war that this question of providing proper facilities for workers has received any considerable attention. It has been found that money thus expended by Governments and by private enterprise has not been wastefully expended; it cannot be regarded as expenditure to provide luxuries for workers in order that they might enjoy something extra, but it has in fact paid handsome dividends to employers by making the men feel more satisfied and by enabling them to work with greater vigour and energy at their appointed tasks. I appreciate that we have before us a tremendous responsibility in the matter of housing, hospitals, schools and public buildings. I believe that these should be priorities in any building programme, but at the same time I am of opinion that there should be a definite plan or set of proposals laid down to ensure the provision of amenities for workers generally. Here is an opportunity for the Government as an employer to set an example and ensure that a certain amount towards this end is done each year. If we proceed in future as we have done in the past, working to no plan

whatsoever, then certain things will be done only haphazardly and more often than not will be left undone. I sincerely hope that the Government will give attention to these matters.

I am also hopeful that the Government will again take the necessary steps with a view to ensuring, if possible, that democracy shall reign supreme in Western Australia. I am referring, of course, to the legislation introduced last session dealing with the franchise for the Legislative Council. If similar legislation is re-introduced this session, all of us will have an opportunity to express our opinions of it, but I say that it is a reflection upon the country or portion of the country to call itself, in this year of grace, 1945, a democratic country when the representatives in the second Chamber are elected not by men and women but by blocks of land and buildings—some men and women merely acting as the medium to exercise the votes in respect of those properties.

Mr. Thorn: You have a big enough job before you to attend to your own property without worrying about the Council.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Thorn: You are heading for Socialism.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: I desire to pay a tribute to the Leader of the House, the Premier, Mr. Willecock, on the long and successful term during which he has served with such distinction in the Parliament of this State. It is a matter of regret to all members that the health of the Premier has been such as to lead him to contemplate resigning that all-important post which he has held for so many years. It is the sincere wish of all of us that before long he will be fully restored to health and vigour and enabled to pursue the various activities associated with the work of a member of Parliament. During the time the Premier has occupied a seat on the Treasury Benches the finances of the State have shown an improvement, and I think I am right in saying that, since the first Labour Government was elected in this State, every budget surplus that has been achieved has been achieved by Labour Governments and Labour Governments only. During the term of Mr. Willecock's leader-

ship I think a record has been established in the number of budgets where he has succeeded in that direction.

I am pleased that the Government intends to bring down legislation to deal with the question of soil erosion. Those who have had the opportunity of witnessing the situation existing in the Eastern States of the Commonwealth during the past summer must be impressed with the necessity of every part of Australia getting on with the job now. Even though it may be said that the problem is not so acute in Western Australia, nevertheless it would be tragic for us to wait until inroads have been made into some of our fertile soils before we take appropriate action. When one visits the other States of the Commonwealth one sees during the dry summer season by day and by night vast clouds of red sand constantly drifting through the skies. The movement of the sand itself is so noticeable that when travelling people find that considerable layers of dust accumulate in closed railway compartments. There is also the spectacle of hundreds of sheep lying dead in paddocks because of lack of water and feed. The paddocks themselves are bare as billiard tables, being absolutely devoid of vegetation of any kind. Fences have been completely covered with banks of sand, and dwellers in those areas have had to leave their homes to proceed to other places because of the choking dust. When the rains come there is a flood of brown water flowing through the creeks, streams and rivers carrying to the ocean the top soil that is lost to the country for ever. This is a most serious problem and I am pleased that the Government will be tackling it.

I conclude on the note that with regard to the days lying ahead there devolves upon all members of all Parliaments in Australia the need to become venturesome and progressive in their outlook and not to concentrate on a desire to return to the days that existed before the outbreak of war. In our young undeveloped country we should not be afraid to experiment. Surely we can learn from the pioneers and explorers of not so many years ago that there are new paths which can be traversed and new courses which can be followed. Even in our short period of living memory we must be seized of the fact that there was much at

fault with the old order of things and accordingly we should pledge ourselves that the days following this war will be a substantial improvement on the days that went before.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 31st July.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.10 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 31st July, 1945.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "B," 1944.

THE PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1944. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT— PREMIERSHIP OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Resignation of Hon. J. C. Willcock.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I desire to inform the House that the Hon. J. C. Willcock has,