

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIFTH SESSION OF THE SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT.

The Parliament was prorogued to the 5th August, 1943, on which day it met for the despatch of business.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 5th August, 1943.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 2.58 p.m.
The PRESIDENT took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. L. L. Leake) read the proclamation of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor summoning the fifth session of the Seventeenth Parliament.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.2 p.m., and, members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

It is with pleasure that I open the Fifth Session of the Seventeenth Parliament of Western Australia at a time when recent magnificent victories of the United Nations have inspired the hope that the war may be brought to a successful conclusion earlier than was previously thought possible.

The past year has been one of great anxiety and peril. Our territory has been subjected to assault from the air, and we have lived under the constant threat of enemy attack.

The feats of our Armed Forces, in conjunction with the generous assistance so freely rendered by Great Britain and the United States of America, and the production of munitions, food and supplies of all kinds, have combined to save Australia from invasion. We are justifiably proud of the State's outstanding record of enlistments of men and women, and of the many distinctions our Forces have gained for their valour.

Since the outbreak of war the people of Western Australia have subscribed approximately one million pounds through 340 patriotic organisations registered under the War Funds Regulation Act.

The civilian population has faced danger with the steadfast courage which the exploits of our troops have led the world to expect. The partial dislocation of peacetime services has been accepted as necessary for victory, but cannot be compared with the privations suffered by the Fighting Services and by the peoples of many Allied Nations.

The colossal task of driving back and defeating the enemy still remains to be accomplished. It will require all our reserves, all our energy, and all our courage. The grievous price in the loss of gallant lives is mounting still higher, and our heartfelt sympathy is extended to the relatives of those who have made the supreme sacrifice.

Co-operation with the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of defence has been maintained as the keynote of the State's policy, and Ministers have continued

to make all the resources of the State Government available for important war work.

The Government has taken every step to ensure the maximum possible protection for life and property against air raids, and civil defence has attained a high standard of efficiency. With the valuable assistance of local authorities and volunteer citizens the organisation of the Civil Defence Council is prepared to provide the fullest possible protective measures should the necessity arise.

While it is still vitally necessary to exert all our energies for the total defeat of the Axis powers, democracy is committed to the task of ensuring that the world must be a better place for those who have sacrificed so much in its cause. Therefore our thoughts turn more to the vast and complex problems inevitably associated with the change over to peace-time economy.

For this purpose the Commonwealth and the State must continue the same close co-operation which has characterised the war effort, and already detailed plans are being evolved. My advisers have appointed Committees which are energetically engaged upon the preparation of reports regarding many aspects of the problem, and direct collaboration is being maintained with the Commonwealth Department of Post-War Reconstruction.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

For the third successive year the financial operations of the State have resulted in a surplus, a feat not previously achieved since Federation.

The revenue for 1942-1943 exceeded expenditure by £24,436 after meeting expenditure of £164,000 directly attributable to the war and after making some provision for arrears of maintenance postponed because of war difficulties.

Loan Expenditure was again kept to a minimum, only works of an essential nature or required for defence purposes being undertaken. Borrowings were less than contributions to the Sinking Fund, with the result that once again a reduction was effected in our Public Debt.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

The policy of developing the State's secondary industries has been actively pursued,

the main attention being directed towards those industries which contribute to the war effort.

A site has been selected for a charcoal iron blast furnace, and modern wood distillation plant. Complete working drawings have been prepared and the Commonwealth Government has been requested to grant the project a suitable priority.

The plant being erected at Lake Campion to produce potash from alunite is nearing completion, and the crushing of alunite ore will commence almost immediately. A large scale pilot plant is being constructed to determine the economics of producing refined alumina from alunite residues after potash has been extracted.

Development is proceeding of a local deposit of phosphatic rock and of pyrite for the production of sulphuric acid for use in the manufacture of superphosphates.

The production of processed foodstuffs has increased and dehydration and vegetable canning plants have been established.

The State Shipping Priorities Advisory Committee, the purpose of which is to ensure that shipping space between Eastern and Western Australia is used to the best advantage, has arranged for severe restrictions to be imposed on the importation of those goods which are manufactured locally in sufficient quantities to meet the State's requirements.

The agreement with regard to gold mining reached last year between the Prime Minister and the Premier has been strictly observed, with the result that approximately 4,300 men are still employed in this industry. With the exception of about 100 essential key men, these are all military rejects or are married men over 35 years of age. It is anticipated that production for 1943 will be approximately 500,000 fine oz., worth over £5,000,000. Every endeavour is being made to preserve this great industry, so that after the war it will be able to play the valuable part expected of it in absorbing men and producing wealth.

Commercial exploitation of our huge deposits of blue asbestos is proceeding and this will constitute a useful and profitable new industry. Deposits of other minerals are now being developed on a large scale, and antimony, arsenic, beryl, felspar, mica, pyrite for sulphuric acid, scheelite, tantalite and tin are already in production. Many of these will continue as large producers after the war.

The State's coal deposit at Collie is of inestimable value at the present time and every endeavour is being made to increase output.

Ministers have continued to work in close co-operation with the Commonwealth Government for the production and marketing of our primary products.

Through the activities of District War Agricultural Committees farmers are enabled to play a greater part than ever before in the planning and organisation of production in their own districts. These Committees may well become a permanent feature of our agricultural organisation.

Favourable seasonal conditions are offset by manpower difficulties and by serious scarcity of commodities needed for production.

Large stocks of wheat are still held throughout Australia, and the restriction of our planted areas by one-third, imposed by the Commonwealth Government, will be continued during the present season.

A serious outbreak of swine fever occurred during the year, but it was quickly eradicated by vigorous action, and arrangements were made to compensate those farmers who suffered losses as a result of this disease.

Reports upon the excellent quality of the fibre produced in this State indicate that the flax industry will become permanent in Western Australia.

Attention is being given to plans for the rehabilitation of agriculture and the services of the Minister for Lands have been temporarily made available to the Commonwealth Government as Chairman of the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission. Legislation to deal with this important subject will no doubt be recommended.

Despite the difficult and hazardous conditions under which the citizens of the North-West are living, their production of beef, wool, and minerals compares favourably with that of pre-war years. A commencement has been made in restocking pastoral districts where flocks were depleted so seriously during the recent drought years. The major problem in this area is the provision of transport, and no effort has been spared to provide the best possible service.

Heavy defence traffic, to which first priority has been given, has imposed a great strain on the railway system, but civilian traffic has been handled as expeditiously and

efficiently as problems of rolling stock, manpower, and coal, have permitted. These conditions have compelled the deferment of much necessary maintenance work, which will require to be overtaken at the earliest possible opportunity.

Extensive and varied defence work is being undertaken at Railway workshops. The tool-room is supplying a variety of tools and gauges for defence works and locomotives are under construction for other parts of Australia.

The Public Works, Water Supply, and Main Roads Departments have continued to utilise practically the whole of their resources on defence works, and aerodrome, harbour, oil storage, railway, road, hospital, ammunition stores, and other similar projects have been carried out by various State Departments.

The State Engineering Works have fulfilled satisfactorily a considerable volume of munitions orders, and are catering for shipbuilding and for the ship repair requirements of the Australian and Allied Navies. An up-to-date shipbuilding yard has been established for the construction of wooden vessels and the first two hulls should be launched within a few weeks.

The Fremantle slipway has been completed and is in continuous use.

Departmental works carried out during the year include the new Chemical Laboratory, the Technical High School at Fremantle, and an Egg Dehydration Factory at the Metropolitan Markets.

Work on the Perth Hospital has been resumed, and the construction of a water supply at Boyup Brook, to provide water for the flax mills, is in progress.

It is recognised that education is one of the greatest instruments of reconstruction, and it is proposed to initiate legislation to enable the school leaving age to be raised to 15 years at a convenient time. A Bill will also be introduced to amend the University Act.

More than 5,000 trainees have utilised the State's technical education facilities for war purposes. The extension of technical education and the further improvement of schools in rural areas will be undertaken as soon as circumstances permit.

The great majority of the Surveyor General's staff has been continuously employed in the preparation of plans and maps for war purposes, and extensive surveys

have been effected for all branches of the Defence Forces.

A general stock-taking of land available for post-war settlement and the regrouping of holdings in outer areas is in progress. The systematic revaluation of holdings in the outer areas was continued throughout the year.

The Pastoral Industry Debt Adjustment Advisory Committee has already dealt with a number of applications from pastoralists, and substantial reductions in their debts to financial institutions were obtained in the majority of cases.

The war has made very heavy demands on the timber industry, and large shipments of our hardwoods have been sent overseas for military use. Western Australian timbers are being extensively used for munition boxes, butter boxes, dried fruit cases, and packing cases for other locally produced foodstuffs.

Considerable assistance has been rendered by the Forests Department in augmenting supplies of firewood.

A year's operations of the Public Trust Office have shown that it is meeting a long felt public need. Its services are being widely sought and its transactions have shown a gradual but substantial increase. It provides facilities for the handling of deceased soldiers' estates.

Wartime conditions have produced an acute housing shortage, and investigations into this problem have been made by a representative committee. Legislation will be introduced to provide housing accommodation on a low rental basis.

A Bill will be introduced at an early date to provide facilities for members of the Fighting Services to vote at State elections.

Measures dealing with industrial, health, and local government matters will also be placed before you for consideration.

I now declare this Session of Parliament open and trust that Providence may bless your labours.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: In order to assert 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 Sections 3 and 6 of the Legal Practitioners Act,

1893, and to insert two new sections and a schedule."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

The **PRESIDENT:** For the sake of greater accuracy, I have obtained from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, copies of the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament. These will be distributed among hon. members.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East)
[3.28]: 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 Council 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."

I listened with great interest to the Speech His Excellency has just delivered and I am glad to have the privilege of moving the motion that I have submitted. It is true, as His Excellency has just stated, that the past year has been one of great anxiety and peril. I think it would be correct to state that at no previous time in its history has our Empire passed through such a dangerous period and acquitted itself so well. Without doubt the efforts of our Armed Forces, in conjunction with those of our Allies, have succeeded in keeping Australia free from invasion. Our sailors, soldiers and airmen have upheld the highest traditions established by the first A.I.F., and it is a proven fact that they have no superiors anywhere in the world. We can indeed be proud to belong to a nation which has produced such warriors, and our hopes and prayers will be with them in the grim struggles which lie ahead. Colossal tasks await Australia before the enemy is finally vanquished, but the result is assured provided we as a nation stand up to our responsibilities and pool all our reserves of energy and courage. I share His Excellency's sentiments in extending sympathy to the relatives of those who have made the supreme sacrifice. You, yourself, Mr. President, are

now included in that select sad company. I can only hope that your grief will be assuaged by the proud knowledge that your son gave up his life so that others might live and in the confirmed belief that a far better world will emerge as a result of the sacrifice that he and countless others have offered up.

The paramount task which confronts this nation is to wage the war to a successful conclusion and to win safety and security as soon as possible. At the same time it is very comforting to know that the Commonwealth and State Governments are planning for the time when hostilities shall have ceased and reconstruction will take place. At the present time over half of our adult male population is serving with the Forces or engaged in war industries. Sooner or later these men will be demobilised and will have to take their places once more in civilian life. Useful employment and security for the future must be awaiting each one of them, and it is our duty to formulate plans so that these goals will be completely accomplished. This country should have a marvelous future provided it is well organised and its people restored to a sense of discipline and the ideals that have been set forth in the Atlantic Charter.

I am very pleased to note that the Government proposes to bring in a measure extending the school leaving age to 15 years. When we talk of the new order with all the ideals and aspirations that it implies, I always come to the conclusion that the best hope for its accomplishment lies in education. At the present stage of our evolution, war is the symptom of a grave defect in human character. The aggression of the Axis Powers, their dishonesty, and their policy that might is right, are a dreadful indictment of the character of modern man. These qualities exist and are displayed among men throughout the whole world in peace times, and are the causes of most of the unhappiness in human life. A drastic change therefore must be effected whereby these characteristics of human nature are eliminated, and a new and better system of education seems to be the only answer. I am glad therefore that this Government proposes to make a start by raising the school age—it will only be a start—but I earnestly trust that far greater steps will follow in its course. In the last analysis a healthy State can exist only when the men and women who comprise it lead

clean decent lives, and when the children are trained not to shirk difficulties but to overcome them; not to seek ease but to wrest triumph from toil and task; not to flout God but to honour Him. A new and better system of education may enable us as a nation to attain this ideal.

Reference has been made by His Excellency to the mining industry; and he has mentioned that under the arrangement made with the Commonwealth 4,300 men are still employed in the industry. I would like to point out that previously over 15,000 men were employed, and it will be seen therefore that nearly three-fourths of that personnel has been taken from the mines. Everybody on the Goldfields realises that this is one of the consequences of the war, and that if victory and freedom are helped forward as a result it is a small price for any community to pay. At the present time we have to keep an eye on the future, with its problems of reconstruction. We have to consider what part the mining industry will play in our post-war affairs. We have to consider what effect the existing manpower shortage is having on the industry. I have been told on very good authority that the mining industry should be capable of finding immediate employment for an additional 20,000 men whenever they are available. At the same time, this prospect will be endangered if further mines are forced to close down. At present many of the mines still operating are only living from day to day, and are unable to carry out developmental work so necessary to ensure their future life. Fears have been expressed that other outback mines will be forced to close down, and if this happens they may never re-open. I sincerely trust that the Government will watch the position most carefully and do all in its power to safeguard the future of this precious industry. If men can be spared, they should be released to enable certain of the mines to remain open.

No other section of Western Australia has suffered as much as the Goldfields have as a consequence of the war. Towns which up till three or four years ago were happy and prosperous are now practically deserted. Railway and mail services have been curtailed, and the prospecting industry has disappeared. The centres I refer to have received nothing in return. No factories have been built there; no military camps are located near them; none of the plentiful money

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