

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

First Session of the Nineteenth Parliament.

The Legislative Assembly was dissolved on the 31st January, 1947.

The Nineteenth Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 31st July, 1947, and the First Session was commenced on that day.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 31st July, 1947.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon.

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 first session of the Nineteenth Parliament.

COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honour the Chief Justice, Sir John Dwyer) having entered the Chamber at noon, a message was sent to the Legislative Assembly requesting the presence of members in the Council Chamber.

Members of the Legislative Assembly having arrived accordingly, the Commissioner requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in the name and on the part of His Majesty the King or in the name and on the part of His

Excellency for the opening and holding of the first session of the Nineteenth Parliament.

The Commission was read.

The Commissioner read the following statement:—

Mr. President, Hon. Members of the Legislative Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

I have it in command from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor to inform you that, at 3 o'clock this afternoon, His Excellency will declare to you the causes of his calling together of this Parliament; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should first be chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, the members of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and having been duly sworn by me in accordance with the terms of the Commission granted me by His Excellency, you do elect your Speaker and notify the same to His Excellency.

The Commissioner and members of the Legislative Assembly retired from the Chamber.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The Clerk of Parliaments then announced the return of writs for the election of members at by-elections, showing that the following had been duly elected:—Hon. C. G. Latham (East), Hon. R. J. Boylen (South), Hon. H. S. W. Parker (Metropolitan-Suburban—Ministerial re-election), Hon. L. A. Logan (Central), and Hon. E. M. Davies (West). These members took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

Sitting suspended from 12.20 to 2.55 p.m.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3 p.m., and, the 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 First Session of the Nineteenth Parliament for the transaction of public business.

Since last Session, Parliament and the people of the State have suffered profoundly by the deaths of the Honourable J. M. Drew, a Member of the Legislative Council for the Central Province, and Mr. W. H. F. Willmott, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Sussex, both of whom rendered many years of outstanding public service.

In the great task of reconstruction and development which confronts the State, Ministers are keenly desirous of co-operating with the Commonwealth Government, local authorities and all sections of the community. It is their intention, however, to resist firmly any further incursion by the Commonwealth Government into the State's constitutional functions.

A satisfactory feature of our post war economy is the rapidity with which discharged members of the forces have been absorbed in industry. Unemployment is at a minimum and, unfortunately, the progress of many important projects and industries is delayed through scarcity of labour. As a consequence the community continues to suffer shortages which it is the constant endeavour of Ministers to rectify as rapidly as possible.

Every effort is being made to increase production and for this purpose it is essential to maintain harmonious industrial relationships. Ministers firmly believe in the principle of conciliation, with speedy access to arbitration tribunals, and the staff of the Arbitration Court is being increased to facilitate this policy.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

Although revenue for the year 1946-47 was less than expenditure by only £47,552, an amount of £1,873,000 was received from the Commonwealth Government by special grants recommended by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, in addition to the sum of £3,384,000 paid under the uniform tax scheme. The dependence of the State to such an extent upon the Commonwealth indicates an unsatisfactory situation, and it is the intention of the Government to press for a more equitable allocation of financial resources so that the State may be in a stronger position to meet its financial obligations.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

Ministers are determined to increase the production and prosperity of our great primary industries. Scientific research is being extended, and marketing schemes are under consideration. Primary industries still suffer from shortage of machinery, vehicles and materials, although considerable progress is being made in overcoming these difficulties.

The season so far has been excellent. Good rains have assured plentiful supplies of feed throughout the State. Crops are healthy, pastures have made good growth, and in many districts lambing percentages have been higher than usual.

The Government has carefully considered the report of the recent Royal Commission on Wheat Marketing and Stabilisation and proposes to introduce legislation as recommended, to become operative in the event of the Commonwealth legislation not being continued.

The tuberculin testing of cattle supplying milk to the metropolitan area has been commenced.

In order to expedite the settlement of ex-servicemen on the land, it has been decided to supplement the Commonwealth-State agreement by a collateral State scheme.

It is proposed to continue for a further twelve months the operations of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act.

A Bill will be introduced to amend the Rural Relief Fund Act to empower the Trustees to write off the balance of the charge when a farmer has repaid not less than 20 per cent. of the advance, and to make provision for the waiving of the statutory charge against assets subsequently acquired.

Although gold production has increased, many difficulties still confront the industry. Departmental advice and assistance are being provided wherever practicable.

Production of coal is increasing, but the demand continues to exceed the supply, and close attention is being given to the necessity to meet the expanding needs of industry, and improve the quality of coal provided. Industrial conditions and amenities are receiving special consideration.

Every assistance is being rendered in connection with the development of other minerals for which there is a market, and encouragement is being offered to companies with the necessary capital and facilities to engage in the search for oil.

Labour shortages continue to delay full timber production, and supplies are being distributed to the best advantage. The establishment of new mills and the training of additional fallers should assist to increase output. Forest protection and regeneration are being maintained.

The operation of fishing vessels manned by ex-servicemen and financially assisted by the State has helped to increase fish production to a record level.

Despite difficulties of power supply and building materials, factory employment has increased and new industrial enterprises are being established. All buildings at the former Small Arms Factory at Welshpool have been leased and the title to the 70 acres of adjoining ground acquired from the Commonwealth to accommodate industries requiring large areas has been obtained.

In order to ensure that the best possible use is being made of the resources available, an eminent engineer has been appointed to make an investigation into and report upon the Wood Distillation and Charcoal Iron Plant at Wundowie.

Research work at the Lake Chandler industry has been satisfactory and it is expected that the industry can be developed to supply potash and sodium sulphate on

a fully competitive basis. It is felt, however, that the Commonwealth Government should help the State and application for financial assistance has been made to meet the losses incurred by development as a war measure.

The Government recognises that housing is one of the major problems and is determined to effect an improvement and to increase material production which is the foundation of the building industry. The material position, although still very difficult, has recently improved, particularly in the two basic materials, bricks and cement. While accommodation remains so acute, a major proportion of materials will continue to be directed into housing.

This question can best be solved by co-operation between all parties interested in the building industry, and an Advisory Panel, on which the Government has invited all sections to be represented, has been created to assist with problems and to increase production.

In regard to Eastern States' supplies, which are dependent upon adequate shipping, a Minister has been given the responsibility of watching the position closely and arranging special priority for building materials.

It is intended to amend the State Housing Act to provide for a woman member on the State Housing Commission.

Because of the necessity to divert our limited resources to more pressing needs such as housing, it has not been possible to make the desired progress with many public works. The more important projects, however, are proceeding as rapidly as conditions permit.

The construction of Stirling Dam is nearing completion and during this winter it is proposed to store 3,000 million gallons which will enable irrigation areas to be extended. Work is proceeding on the raising of Mundaring Weir and on reclamation for a new Causeway.

Consideration is being given to the report of the Royal Commission on the Outports. Preliminary works in connection with the development of Bunbury Harbour are in progress, and plans are in preparation for the construction of wharves and berthing facilities at Albany. Improvements are being made in port amenities.

As a social service, the Government is prepared to instal sewerage in townships of more than 600 dwellings where water supply is available, provided the annual loss does not exceed one-third of the annual expense.

The decision of the Commonwealth Government to extend the Federal Aid Roads assistance for only three years has hampered planning of road programmes. Despite plant and labour difficulties, however, nearly 1,000 men are now employed by the Main Roads Department, and expenditure last year amounted to over £775,000.

Consideration is being given to the modified proposals regarding country water supplies received from the Commonwealth Committee, and negotiations with the Commonwealth Government in this regard are proceeding.

A proposal will be placed before you to establish a Parliamentary Standing Committee available to investigate public works costing more than £75,000.

A Royal Commission is to undertake a complete enquiry into the working and management of the State railway system, and the investigation regarding the Workshops and the supply of local coal has already begun. The railway rehabilitation programme is proceeding as rapidly as manpower and material shortages permit and the provision of improved services will be expedited to the fullest possible extent. Heavy expenditure will be involved.

Legislation will be introduced to provide new and separate management for Railways and Tramways.

The Transport Board is engaged on a careful examination of North-West conditions to ascertain where transport improvements may be effected.

To facilitate the administration of local government, the responsibilities of which have been steadily increasing, the various Acts concerned have been placed under the jurisdiction of one Minister. It is recognised that every assistance and co-operation must be extended to local authorities in carrying out their important tasks. To assist in overcoming the housing shortage, legislation is being prepared to extend to Road Boards the power possessed by Municipalities to build houses from loan funds for sale or letting.

It is the desire of the Government that equal educational opportunity be given to all children to the fullest possible extent. To this end, every effort is being made to provide adequate school accommodation and equipment, and as soon as the overcrowding in primary schools has been eased, the provision of higher and better education in various parts of the State can be commenced.

Supervisors' allowances have been extended to the South-West Land Division and consideration is being given to other forms of assistance to country children. Special attention is being given to technical and visual education and to education for the physically handicapped child. Acknowledgment is made of the helpful co-operation of the Parents and Citizens' Associations and it is intended to encourage their interest and assistance.

Although the Commonwealth Government has power to take control of public hospitals, the State will nevertheless proceed as rapidly as possible with the improvement of hospital services. To overcome the nursing shortage, large country hospitals will be improved to establish them as training schools. It is hoped that new and improved conditions will attract competent medical officers for the North-West service, and every effort is being made in Australia and the British Isles to obtain suitable medical practitioners. A building opposite the Royal Perth Hospital has been purchased in which an X-ray plant will be available for those who, as a precautionary measure, wish to be examined regarding the possible presence of tuberculosis.

Re-organisation of the Mental Hospital services is contemplated and additional buildings have been approved.

A commencement has been made with the construction of a new and modern home to provide improved facilities for aged women.

Measures contemplated to extend and improve the functions of the Child Welfare Department include the re-organisation of the Children's Court and the appointment of qualified staff. You will be asked to consider amendments to the Child Welfare Act and the Adoption of Children Act.

A greater interest is being displayed by the community in the problems associated with aboriginal natives, and Mr. F. E.

Bateman, R.M., has been appointed to survey the native question.

Advantage is being taken of improved travel facilities to encourage the State's tourist trade.

An enquiry has been authorised to consider the question of betting.

Although the paramount needs of housing have enforced a postponement of the building of a University Medical School, discussions are taking place regarding the possibility of making a commencement with temporary premises.

Preparations have been made for the reception of migrants, but for the present it is considered that immigration should be restricted to those for whom accommodation will be provided on arrival.

In the development of the North-West special attention is being given to water supplies, refrigeration, roads, and stock routes. To assist in determining policy for North-West development, a Committee has been constituted which includes North-West representatives. It is hoped that the acute shipping position will be alleviated before the end of the year by the addition to the State Shipping Service of another ship of the Dorriggo class. Authority has been given for the preparation of plans for a new State vessel.

In addition to the measures already indicated and a considerable number of Bills to continue the operation of existing Acts, a comprehensive programme of legislation has been prepared for your consideration.

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

His Excellency then withdrew from the Chamber.

[The President took the Chair.]

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: 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 "An Act to amend Section 59 of the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1921."

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. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [3.38]: 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:—"May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council 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 afternoon I would like to refer to the death of the late Hon. J. M. Drew who, for many years, was a familiar figure in this House. I am sure he will be remembered, not only as a stalwart of the Labour Party and not only as a member of this House, but also as a worthy citizen of Western Australia. Another familiar figure who will not again be seen in this Chamber is Mr. E. H. H. Hall.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He is quite all right where he is.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: For 19 years he was, as I have said, a familiar figure in this Chamber. Evidently the dignified and austere atmosphere of this House was a little too much for his virile nature, and the opportunity of getting into the Legislative Assembly probably appealed to him more than the idea of remaining here.

It is only two years since the war finished, but unfortunately the world today is still in a state of turmoil. Britain is fighting an economic battle—probably the worst in her history. America is going through a reconstruction programme and is fighting high production costs. Europe is in much the same position, and the Eastern States of our own country are troubled with industrial strife. Although

some of these countries are a long way from us, their conditions have a bearing on the people of this State, and hamper, to a certain extent, our Government in its efforts to govern Western Australia as it should be. Fortunately, the industrial position in Western Australia is satisfactory; there is very little turmoil compared with conditions in the other States of the Commonwealth. In fact, we can say that the industrial outlook in Western Australia is excellent. I am sure the people appreciate that, and the Government recognises it.

In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, housing was mentioned as one of our main problems. It is; but we must commend the Government on the excellent progress it has made during the short space of time it has been in office. Although hampered all along the line, it is definitely making progress. No permits have been issued since last March for private brick buildings.

Hon. G. Fraser: Since January.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Very well, since January. But from now on a limited number of permits will be available. The supply of bricks, which has retarded the building of houses in this State, is definitely improving. Not only is there increased production from the older workings, but new ones are coming into operation. There will be a big improvement in future. Cement supplies have also been badly neglected, but now they have become a No. 3 priority, which means that the man on the land, including the dairy farmer, will be able to go ahead with long overdue repairs, lack of which has retarded production. We have, in housing, one big problem. I consider that the provision of good houses and decent living conditions will do more to arrest the Divorce Court list than anything else.

Education plays a very big part in our life. Fortunately, the adults of today have been educated a little more as to what is needed than were the people in the past. Today they are clamouring for what they think is right, and that is all to the good. The more they clamour, the better will be the education provided. This matter has been badly neglected in the past. Probably much of it has been due to war-

caused conditions, but not all. If it had not been for the assistance rendered by the parents and citizens' associations in different areas, I hate to think what some of our schools would be like today! Those associations can rest assured that from now on they will get some help, but just what it will be I do not know. They will, however, get assistance in recognition of the valuable work they have done in the past and for the work they will undoubtedly do in the future.

The progress of our industrial undertakings is a matter for congratulation. I refer not only to those started recently but also to the undertakings assisted by the previous Government. Their progress will be watched by the citizens of the State generally, and I am sure that they will be as pleased as I shall be if those undertakings make good progress. Although a farmer, I realise that every section of the community represents a spoke in the wheel of State, and if the country is to be governed in the democratic way we all desire, we should see to it that the needs of the country are satisfied. Speaking of industrial undertakings, I am reminded that we have the Wundowie project, concerning which an inquiry is being conducted. I have every reason to believe that the result of the investigation will be favourable although the conduct of the operations may be subject to certain alterations.

Then there is the Chamberlain tractor factory at Welshpool, which is another big industry that has been opened up in this State and we all hope that it will prove successful. At present the factory is being held up because of industrial strife in the Eastern States, in consequence of which it is unable to obtain the necessary equipment and machinery to enable it to operate fully. That is most unfortunate at this juncture because the absence of a supply of tractors for use by farmers and road boards is definitely retarding the progress that the State should make. It is to be hoped that production will commence shortly so as to relieve the situation in that regard. I desire to impress upon the Government the need for a sound rural policy in the interests of Western Australia generally. Anyone who has read H. V. Morton's book entitled

"In Search of England" will recollect the passage that states—

The towns should understand the problems of agriculture, because as the life of a countryside declines and city life flourishes, the character and physique of a nation deteriorate.

I do not think that any truer words were ever written, and it is definitely essential that a sound rural policy be inaugurated whereby the country people will be supplied with the necessities and the essentials of life. Unless the man in the city realises the necessities of the man in the country, industry will be hampered and the economy of the State will deteriorate. There are many matters grouped under that heading including good housing and adequate ways by which that can be obtained. Then there are electricity supplies, telephone services, water supplies and I will go so far as to say refrigerators as well. These are definitely necessities in the rural areas. Until the needs of the country with respect to these essentials are supplied, the drift to the city will continue.

In years gone by we often heard the slogan "Go on the land, young man." We do not hear that slogan these days, and if we were to suggest to anyone that he should go on the land, the individual approached would probably say, "I am going where I can enjoy the amenities of life." We must have those amenities associated with life in the country areas; and the sooner that is the position the better it will be for all concerned.

Mention was made in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech of the reorganisation taking place in connection with the Child Welfare Department. A move in that direction is long overdue. I notice that the Government intends to proceed with the provision of a home for mentally deficient children and intends to reorganise the Children's Court. These improvements, too, are long overdue and the wisdom of the last-mentioned course will be realised in the near future. With the wonderful opening we have had of the present season in the agricultural areas and the glorious day we have experienced for the opening of this session of Parliament, we surely have a good omen for the future.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.39 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 31st July, 1947.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at noon, pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. G. Steere).

MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONER.

A Message from His Excellency's Commissioner requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber. Hon. members having accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and heard the Commission read, they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour the Chief Justice, Sir John Dwyer, having been commissioned by the Lieut.-Governor, appeared in the Assembly Chamber to administer to members the oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King.

The Clerk produced election writs showing the return of 50 members; also writs for by-elections for North Perth, Subiaco, Williams-Narrogin, West Perth, Murray-Wellington, Pingelly, Toodyay and Katanning (Ministerial), and for Sussex.