

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

THIRD SESSION OF THE SIXTEENTH PARLIAMENT:

The Parliament was prorogued to the 30th June, 1938. It was further prorogued to the 4th August, 1938, when it met for the despatch of business.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th August, 1938.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon pursuant to Proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. L. L. Leake).

COMMISSIONER.

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

Members of the Assembly having arrived accordingly, His Honour requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in his name for the opening of Parliament. The Commission was read.

The Commissioner then made the following statement:—

Hon. members of the Legislative Council and members of the Legislative Assembly—

I have it in command from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator to inform you that he will in person in this place declare the reasons for his calling this session

of Parliament, so soon as the members of the Legislative Council shall have notified him that they have elected their President.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The members of the Legislative Assembly having retired, the Clerk of Parliaments read the Commission appointing Mr. Justice Dwyer to administer the oath of allegiance to newly-elected members.

The Clerk announced the return of writs for the election of members, showing that the following had been duly elected:—Hon. J. Nicholson (Metropolitan), Hon. E. H. Gray (West), Hon. J. J. Holmes (North), Hon. T. Moore (Central), Hon. C. F. Baxter (East), Hon. W. J. Mann (South-West), Hon. H. V. Piesse (South-East), Hon. W. R. Hall (North-East), Hon. J. A. Dimmitt (Metropolitan-Suburban), Hon. Sir John Waters Kirwan (South). These members took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

The Commissioner then left the Chamber.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

The Clerk of Parliaments reported that the office of President was vacant.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.20]: I propose that the Hon. Sir John Kirwan do take the Chair of the Council as President.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [12.20]: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

HON. SIR JOHN KIRWAN (South) [12.21]: I have to express my sense of the honour proposed to be conferred on me, and submit myself to the will of the Council.

No other member having been proposed,

The **PRESIDENT ELECT** said: Hon. members, I desire to express my thanks for the very great honour that you have conferred upon me. This is the third occasion on which I have been elected to the honourable position of President of this Chamber, an honour that I greatly appreciate. The Chamber is the oldest institution in Western Australia; it is the parent of all the other official bodies of the State; and since I have been President I have done my utmost to maintain its traditions. I know that if I achieved any success in the past as President, that is due not to any merit on my part but to the earnest desire of hon. members to assist the President in attaining the object he has in view, and that is to make this House worthy of its importance, to make this House a House that will stand well in the estimation of the public because of the way in which we carry out the work of the country. I thank hon. members not merely for the honour that they have now for the third time conferred upon me, but I also thank them for the very great assistance that they have rendered to me in the performance of my duties. I must also thank individually some members of this House who rendered me special aid. I would like to refer particularly to my friend the Chairman of Committees, the hon. Mr. Cornell, who is Deputy President and who has assisted me in many directions over and over again. Furthermore I wish to thank the three deputy Chairmen of Committees, the hon. Mr. Nicholson, the hon. Mr. Hammersley, and the hon. Mr. Fraser. To all those gentlemen I feel a very deep debt of gratitude. Furthermore, whoever has been leading this House—whether it is our present leader, the hon. Mr. Kitson, and his assistant, the hon. Mr. Gray, or the hon. Mr. Drew, who preceded the hon. Mr. Kitson, or other members, the hon. Mr. Baxter—each of them has helped me in the work; and it is to their assistance that I attribute any success which I achieved during the years that I have been President. Once more I thank hon. members, and shall use my utmost endeavours to do what is best in the interests of the Council, to make it worthy of the Parliament of Western Australia; and in these days when Parliamentary institutions are subject to

severe criticism, we cannot be too careful to maintain the highest traditions of Parliament which is the best instrument that has ever been devised for democratic government. I thank hon. members.

The President elect having been conducted to the Chair,

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.24]: I wish to offer you, Mr. President, my hearty congratulations on your re-election to the high and honourable position of President of the Legislative Council. During the many years that you have occupied the position, you have conducted the proceedings of the House in a way which has met with the approval of members at all times, and you have worthily maintained the traditions of the Chamber in a manner of which no one can complain. I feel sure that your re-election to the office, being an expression of the confidence of the House, simply means that in your further term the conduct of business in this Chamber will be satisfactory to all hon. members, a credit to yourself, Sir, and such as will meet with hearty approval throughout the State of Western Australia.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [12.25]: May I, as one of your colleagues, Mr. President, extend to you my congratulations and thank you for your kindly remarks concerning me as Chairman of Committees. There will be no need for me to dwell upon the one remark I am about to make, namely, that you may rest assured that the co-operation I have given you down the years will be continued in future.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [12.26]: I desire to support the remarks of the Leader of the House and of the Chairman of Committees in congratulating you upon your election for the third term as President of this Chamber. It has been my pleasure to have served under four different Presidents, each and every one of whom has set out to establish this House on a very high plane and, at the same time, to assist Ministers and members generally to put into effect the legislation that has been presented to the Chamber. You, Sir, have excelled in that direction. Further, you have gone out of your way to assist those acting

in an official capacity. More especially do I refer to the assistance given to me when I was Leader of the House—able and kindly assistance that I greatly appreciated. I trust that you will long be spared to occupy this honourable position and that good health will favour you to the end that you may continue your services for the benefit of this Chamber and of the State generally.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [12.27]: May I, as one of the deputy Chairmen of Committees to whom you have so kindly referred, join in the congratulations that have been extended to you and express my pleasure at your once more having been accorded that high mark of favour and confidence by members of this Council. As you have very properly observed, this Council is a very august body, and I believe that no one can be said to have possessed in a higher degree those qualities so essential to the satisfactory discharge of the duties of the high office to which you have now been elected for the third time. You possess those qualities in abundant and outstanding degree, and I am sure it is the wish of every member that you will long be spared to continue in the office, the duties of which you have discharged with such credit.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [12.29]: I also wish to join in offering congratulations to you, Sir, on your re-election as President of the Council. This Council at all times has stood for consistency, and I hope that you will long be spared to preside over its deliberations. During the period you have been President, you have given members much help, and I feel sure that we shall continue to receive your advice and guidance when dealing with the work that from time to time is placed before us. I heartily wish you long life and good health to continue the work you have carried on for the preservation of the rights and privileges of this Chamber.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [12.30]: I also desire to offer you my congratulations, Sir, on your re-election as President. I endorse the many complimentary remarks made concerning you. I wish further to thank you for the advice and assistance you have given me on the many occasions when I have been called upon to fill the

position of deputy Chairman of Committees.

THE PRESIDENT: I deeply appreciate the kind remarks made by various members concerning me, all too flattering remarks, I am afraid, and I only hope that I shall be able to prove worthy of them. Once more, I thank hon. members.

PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT ELECT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.31]: I desire to announce that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor will be pleased to receive forthwith the President elect and such hon. members as desire to accompany him.

Sitting suspended from 12.32 to 2.55 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT [3.57]: I desire to report to hon. members that I have presented myself to the Lieut.-Governor and that His Excellency has been pleased to express approval of the choice of the Council.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.5 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 Third Session of the Sixteenth Parliament of Western Australia for the transaction of public business.

I desire to record profound regret in the passing of the Honourable S. W. Munsie, M.L.A., Minister for Mines and Health, who rendered many years of valuable service to the State as a member of Parliament and Minister of the Crown. He was held in the highest esteem by all sections of the community, and this State is poorer for his going. The consequent vacancy in the Ministry has been filled by the appointment

of the Honourable A. H. Panton, M.L.A., as Minister for Mines and Health.

Since last session, also, Parliament and the State have suffered the loss of Mr. E. V. Broekman, M.L.A., member for Sussex, and the Hon. C. G. Elliott, M.L.C., member for the North-East Province. Both of these gentlemen rendered faithful service to the people of Western Australia.

It is with great sorrow, too, that I refer to the death of two other distinguished citizens, Sir Charles McNess and Lieutenant-General Sir Talbot Hobbs. Sir Charles crowned a life of industry and self-sacrifice by magnificent gifts to charities and public institutions, and Lieutenant-General Sir Talbot Hobbs, respected universally and renowned as a soldier, has justly earned for himself a niche in the temple of fame.

During the year just past the congestion of arbitration and other legal work before the Courts reached serious dimensions. This condition has been met by the appointment of Mr. A. A. Wolff, K.C., formerly Crown Solicitor, as a Judge of the Supreme Court and Deputy President of the Arbitration Court. The pressure, which had become acute, will thus be relieved.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

Finance.

The revenue for the year ended 30th June, 1938, was £10,819,042, and the expenditure £10,829,735, leaving a deficit of £10,693.

The improvement of £118,162 on the deficit estimated in the Financial Statement is extremely satisfactory, and it is very gratifying that the State has now virtually regained financial equilibrium.

It is hoped that this progress will be maintained during the current year, but the financial position compels the closest supervision. Prices for some of our export products are at present unsatisfactory, and the State will be called upon to meet substantial new commitments, including the contributions required under the National Health Insurance Act, and the welcome rise in the basic wage. It is confidently anticipated, however, that the resulting expenditure which the State will be called upon to bear in respect of the latter will be out-balanced by the advantages thus conferred in more equitably distributing the spending power of the community.

The continuance of the financial emergency tax is a matter which has received close attention. It is recognised that the form of the tax, while it could be justified during an emergency such as the recent world-wide depression, is not one that can be continued indefinitely without some radical alteration. My Government will submit proposed legislation combining the financial emergency and income taxes, which, while embodying the system of collection at the source, will provide for the assessment of the tax on the basis of ability to pay.

There has been a further curtailment of the amount of loan money allocated to the State. The funds available will need to be expended most judiciously in order to supply the developmental needs of the State and to maintain a reasonable volume of Government employment.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

Employment.

The number of men depending upon the Government for relief work or sustenance has been fairly steady at the figure of 6,500 during the last twelve months. The system now in operation gives to a married man with three children or more, full-time work until the completion of the particular work on which he is engaged. Those with a lesser number of children have also received an increase in their working periods. Progressive improvement has been effected during the last five years, and the Government aims to continue this policy.

A greater volume of work has been organised and carried out during the last twelve months. At the present time 94 per cent. of the relief workers are employed, as compared with 88 per cent. last year. This has reduced the expenditure necessary for the provision of sustenance only, and has greatly improved the standard of living of the families involved.

Mr. Justice Wolff presented a comprehensive and informative report on the youth employment and apprenticeship questions early this year. This has received the careful consideration of the Government, and some of the legislation recommended will be submitted to this Parliament.

Industry.

In recognition of the fact that the prosperity of the State is dependent on the stimulation of industry, both primary and secondary, my Government has rendered financial assistance to projects which will beneficially affect the development of the State. With a view to the expansion of industry generally, and feeling that even more effective results could be achieved, Ministers propose to seek authority for the establishing of a Bureau of Industry and Economic Research, and legislation to this end is being prepared.

Exhibitions.

During the year the State has participated in exhibitions arranged in connection with the Glasgow Empire Display, and the Sesqui-centenary Celebrations in New South Wales respectively. The literature of the State, its products, illustrations, and general publicity were recognised with wide commendation.

Displays of the State's products have been conducted in various local centres from time to time, a notable example being a special effort made this year in conjunction with the local committee at Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

Housing.

The provision of proper housing accommodation for the people is vital to the economic and social life of a community, and in recognition of this need my Government made available during the year additional funds for the work of the Workers' Homes Board.

Suggested legislation affecting the Workers' Homes Act will be submitted this year, whereby the housing requirements of those on the lower incomes may be satisfied with greater ease and simplicity.

Mining.

The gold yield for 1937 was the highest since 1916, 1,007,289 fine ozs. being produced, valued at £8,743,755, only a few thousand pounds short of the record value established in 1903. Progress figures give every indication that during this year the record will be eclipsed. The industry employs 17,136 men. It is pleasing to report considerably increased activity in the north-western portion of the State. Facilities at the Schools of Mines at Kalgoorlie and Wiluna have been extended to improve

instruction concerning various phases of the industry.

Prospecting.

Six hundred men are now being assisted under the prospecting scheme inaugurated in 1933, and 7,012 men have received help since its inception. Crashings reported by those assisted total 45,653 tons for a return of 23,214 ozs., valued at £203,122.

Public Health.

The unsatisfactory conditions prevailing at the Perth Hospital have been receiving the urgent consideration of Ministers, and it has been decided to reconstruct the public hospital on its present site. The complete scheme, which provides for a nine-storey structure, is estimated to cost about £765,000. The first section of the work to provide additional bed accommodation and facilities for the treatment of out-patients will involve approximately £445,000, and will be initiated as early as possible. Preparation of the comprehensive plans and specifications will occupy some time, after which immediate construction will commence, and will take approximately 2½ years. Upon completion Perth will have a splendid modern hospital, adequate to meet the needs of the community.

A new block, at a cost of £65,000, is being built at the King Edward Memorial Hospital, and the new Infectious Diseases Hospital is nearing completion. The Alexander McCallum memorial block is in course of construction and the new nurses' quarters at the Fremantle Hospital have been finished. Tenders are being called for the erection of new hospital buildings at Kalgoorlie, and in country centres many additions have been made to hospital accommodation and equipment.

North-West.

Particular attention has been accorded to the requirements of the North-West portion of the State. The M.V. "Koolama," a modern liner of 4,026 tons, has been built and placed in commission on the coast. With the M.V. "Koolinda," she will amply provide for the passenger, cargo and live-stock trade offering. The M.V. "Kangaroo," no longer a sound financial proposition to operate, has been sold, after a useful life in the North-West trade, and in opening up markets in the near East. This was only made possible by the advent of the

"Koolama," but at the same time provision has been made for the continuance of her trade.

The reconstruction of the Point Samson jetty has been completed. Jetties, tramways, buildings and water supplies have been maintained and improved, and the construction of various roads and bridges is in progress.

Whaling operations were conducted during 1937 by two factory ships and their chasers. One ship has been licensed for the current season.

Ministers have been deeply concerned by the decision of the Commonwealth Government to prohibit the export of iron ore from Australia. Great expectations had been born of the prospect of developing the iron deposits at Yampi Sound. In addition to its commercial value to the State, the industry would have proved a focal point for much needed development in the North-West. My Government has protested strenuously against this embargo, and members will be given an early opportunity in the present session to discuss the question.

Wyndham Meatworks.

Extra accommodation has been provided at Wyndham Meatworks. This, coupled with improved market conditions, has enabled the handling of larger quantities more economically, and with better returns to the growers. Thirty-eight thousand head of cattle are being treated during the 1938 season.

Wheat.

The total crop harvested last year was 35,868,000 bushels, averaging 11.9 bushels per acre. This was the highest yield since 1934.

Preliminary figures indicate that the area sown for cereals this year will be approximately 9 per cent. above that of last year. Early anxiety concerning the season has been considerably relieved by recent excellent rains.

Pastoral.

It is pleasing to record that the long and disastrous drought has definitely broken in the Port Hedland, Marble Bar and Roebourne districts, although it unfortunately still persists in some of the pastoral areas. The decrease in the production of wool due to the drought has been to some extent offset by increased clips from the southern and agricultural districts.

Substantial progress has been made in the production of fat lambs, and an excellent season resulted in a record export of 269,000 carcasses, representing an increase of no less than 125,000 over the previous year. The quality has excited favourable comment from overseas authorities, who have frequently stated that the lambs from this State are the best from the Commonwealth. Every possible encouragement is being afforded this industry, and its prospects are extremely bright. An expert officer of the Agricultural Department is devoting the whole of his time to it, and the Chapman Research Station will include lamb breeding experiments in order to demonstrate correct methods. A loan of a further £35,000 has been made to the W.A. Meat Export Company for extensions to its treatment works, the capacity of which was so severely taxed last year. It is confidently expected that the time is not far distant when the present record output will be doubled.

Fruit.

After producing three successive heavy crops, apple trees had a comparative rest, and in consequence export fell to approximately 530,000 cases. A brisk demand and satisfactory prices have been in evidence.

Increased activity is being exercised by the Department of Agriculture in a continued endeavour to prevent and control any possible diseases.

Dairying.

Excellent seasonal conditions, combined with good prices, made last year particularly satisfactory for the dairying industry. Butter production amounted to 15,309,000 lbs., an increase of 21.2 per cent. over the previous year.

Renewed interest is being displayed in the south-western portion of the State, and the effect has been an increased demand for properties throughout this area.

Lands.

During the year, 716 applications for an area of 718,253 acres under conditional alienation were approved, while under pastoral lease 78 applications for 3,395,160 acres were granted. The Land Board allotted 158 blocks and there were 369 new settlers.

At 30th June, 1938, Trustees of the Rural Relief Fund had finalised 2,522 applications, giving relief to

farmers amounting to £2,391,873, which included the sum of £868,639 written off by the Agricultural Bank. The amount distributed from the fund was £766,790, and the total number of applications received from farmers was 3,292.

Debts written off last year by the Agricultural Bank, under all its activities, amounted to £2,201,532. During the same period the Lands Department wrote off £50,751 for repurchased estates, and £47,354 for ordinary conditional purchase leases, due to the continuation of the policy of repricing; £58,015 was written off for remission of pastoral rents in areas affected by rain shortage.

Railways.

Railway finances last year showed an improvement of £200,000 over the previous year, mainly due to an increase of £177,285 in revenue, derived principally from wheat, timber and livestock, and the steady flow of traffic to the goldfields.

The diesel-electric cars, which have been in service a little over six months, have greatly improved railway travel, particularly on branch lines, where they have eliminated long and vexatious delays inseparable from mixed train services.

Tramways.

The extension of the West Leederville trolley bus route to Wembley Park and the conversion of the Claremont tram route to a trolley bus service have provided comfortable, fast and cheap transport to the areas served. So popular has this form of conveyance proved that five additional buses are being ordered, which should minimise some overcrowding now in evidence at peak periods.

Ferries.

Tenders are at present being invited for the propelling machinery of a new ferry boat of the latest type. It is proposed to construct the hull and fittings locally. The choice of vessel proposed is one that should appeal strongly to those who will use this form of service.

Electricity Supply.

Satisfactory progress is being made with the installation of the new plant at the East Perth power station. The extensions are now in the final stages of testing, and it is hoped to announce soon the date of the official opening.

Goldfields and Agricultural Water Supplies.

Renovation of the water supply main from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie has been continued throughout the year. The lining with cement of reticulation pipes in various towns, with a view to prolonging the life of the pipes and improving the quality of the water, has commenced; and the capacity of the line to serve the Golden Mile has been increased by the substitution of 21in. cement-lined steel pipes for 16in. cast iron pipes.

Extensive work has been carried out on the construction of tanks in the northern and north-eastern wheat belt.

Preliminary investigations have been made in regard to a comprehensive scheme for the supply of a large portion of the wheat belt and country towns from the South-West rivers.

Bulk Handling.

At Bunbury, wheat silos to hold 250,000 bushels and the installation of plant for bulk handling at the jetty were completed and put into operation.

Metropolitan Water Supply.

New mains laid during the preceding year enabled increased supplies of water to be brought to the city last year to meet the summer peak demands, and the whole of the metropolitan requirements, amounting to 4,761 million gallons, came from hills sources. The construction of Canning Dam, which at the end of last winter held 4,370 million gallons, is progressing vigorously with the object of ensuring at least one year's reserve storage.

Sewerage.

Further progress has been made with sewerage the metropolitan area, and it is anticipated that in March next the large scheme which has been undertaken will be completed within the original estimated cost. Perth will then be numbered among the up-to-date cities of the world in sewerage and water supply. Investigations regarding the sewerage of the eastern suburbs as far as Midland Junction have been completed, and a report is receiving the consideration of the Government.

Forests.

The value of timber exported last year was approximately £1,000,000, representing an advance of about £250,000 on the figures of the previous year, but the industry is at

present passing through a difficult period owing to lack of forward overseas orders.

Considerable progress in reforestation work has been made and the area regenerated is now 461,500 acres. The fire control organisation of the department has been extended by the construction of further towers, roads, tracks and firelines. Although last summer was long and dry, fire losses were negligible.

Native Affairs.

Increased expenditure has been devoted to the medical requirements and the establishment of hospitals for natives. In addition to the Leprosarium at Derby, four native hospitals and two clinics are now operating in the North.

Steps are being taken to establish another native settlement in the southern section of the State.

Education.

The Education Department has provided school facilities in many goldfields centres, consequent upon greater mining activity generally. In the country new schools have been opened, and a policy of consolidation, which seeks to instil a wider outlook into the minds of country children by affording greater knowledge and experience, has been pursued.

Guided by the considered opinion of its experts, the Government has decided to retain the existing site in St. George's Terrace for the Perth Technical College. Technical education generally is being still further extended.

Roads.

During the year an amount of over £900,000 was expended on improving and extending the roadway system of the State.

The construction of a new bridge over the Swan River at Fremantle has been started, and the bridge over the Canning River on the Canning Highway has been completed.

Caves House.

The rehabilitation of Caves House at a cost of approximately £25,000 has been commenced, and it is expected that the work will be completed before the Christmas season.

Public Service.

It has been decided to introduce a five-day working week into the Civil Service and Railway administrations as from Monday, the 15th August, 1938. Essential services

will be maintained. The time allowed on Saturdays will be worked through the week, and increased efficiency and better health throughout the services affected are expected to result.

Legislation.

You will be asked to give consideration to measures dealing, among other things, with:

Fair Rents.
Firearms and Guns.
Industrial Arbitration.
Workers' Compensation.
Municipal Corporations Act.
Navigation Act.
Land and Income Tax.
State Insurance.
Superannuation.
University Buildings (Agricultural College).
Scaffolding Act.
Profiteering Prevention Act.
Bureau of Industry and Economic Research.
Workers' Homes Act.

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—LIGHTS (NAVIGATION PROTECTION).

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [3.39]: 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 relating to lights likely to be a danger to marine navigation."

Leave given; Bill introduced, and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNORS' SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*First Day.***HON. W. R. HALL** (North-East) [3.42]:
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.”

I have been informed that it is not etiquette to speak for a period of longer than 15 minutes in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply. As I shall not be able to speak again during this debate, I ask to be excused if my remarks should be a little parochial. At this stage I wish to make a few observations concerning the late Hon. C. G. Elliott, formerly a member for the North-East Province. I think the late gentleman's loss will be regretted by all assembled here. Mr. Elliott was a man respected by all with whom he came in contact, and we all deplore his passing.

In the North-East Province, of which I have the honour to be a representative, the chief industries are gold-mining and pastoral. I do not think the value of the gold-mining industry to Western Australia can be over-estimated. It is employing approximately 12,000 men, and there are many times that number employed in its subsidiary industries. One can therefore realise the tremendous value of the industry to the State. During this year we have taken from the bowels of the earth an amount of gold very nearly equal to that which was produced in 1903, the peak period of gold production in this State. This reminds me that the present Government assisted the gold mining industry by guaranteeing certain gold mining companies during the period of the depression, when it was feared that many of those companies would go out of existence. The present Government guaranteed the account of the Sons of Gwalia Ltd. to the extent of £76,000. Had that assistance not been rendered to the company, it would have been wound up and many men would have been thrown on the labour market. As a result of the guarantee, however, the company was able to continue operations and, instead of being a non-producer of gold, it is to-day a

paying concern employing hundreds of men. I desire to mention this one instance this afternoon, because I feel I should not at present worry the House with a multitude of figures.

The Government has, of course, assisted this important industry in many other ways. The industry, indeed, is entitled to such assistance, since it is the backbone, not only of Western Australia, but of the Commonwealth. Any legislation affecting the industry that may come before this House should receive the very earnest and deep consideration of members, because the industry is disadvantageous to the men working in it. To make it possible for mining companies to continue operations, and thus enable the industry to flourish, men have had to sacrifice their health and even their lives. Therefore, when legislation dealing with workers' compensation and miners' phthisis is brought forward for the consideration of members, I wish them to bear that fact in mind. By allowing legislation to pass that will be of benefit to workers in this industry, hon. members will be doing a humanitarian service to their fellow men. I know of men on the Eastern Goldfields who are suffering from that dread disease, tuberculosis, contracted by them while working in the mining industry. Those men have but a very short time to live; their days are numbered, and so I repeat the hope that members will give sympathetic consideration to the legislation to which I have referred. Much prospecting is being done in the North-East Province, which I have the honour to represent.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Where is it?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The hon. member knows. It is in the north, not the south. Down in the south is the cocky. Prospecting to-day is different from what it was 40 years ago. The assistance afforded to the prospector by the Government is appreciated, particularly the recent increase of 5s. from 15s. to £1, per week. However, I think the genuine prospector should be given further help in the work he is undertaking. The day of the old pioneer, who battled his way and walked from Southern Cross to Kalgoorlie, is gone. A new generation has arisen and times have changed. Prospecting is an essential part of the gold mining industry; if it were not for prospectors, there would be no goldfields. The Government should extend every consid-

eration to the prospectors, who battle through the heat of summer and the cold of winter chasing the elusive weight.

Another important matter I wish to deal with this afternoon is fair rents legislation. I understand a Fair Rents Bill has been twice defeated in the Legislative Council. The Workers' Homes Board has built approximately 50 houses in Kalgoorlie, and hundreds of houses have been built in the metropolitan area. On the goldfields, where it is necessary for the miner to have ample room and healthy conditions, we find he is being taken advantage of by exploiting landlords, who charge anything from 25s. to £2 10s. a week for a flat. It is time the Government gave more consideration to a Fair Rents Bill. The housing position on the Eastern Goldfields is acute, and so I was pleased to note a reference in the Speech to the Workers' Homes Board. In view of the limited amount of capital available, I realise it is not possible for the Government to erect as many houses as it might wish to build in Kalgoorlie, but the fact remains that the Workers' Homes Board is building only four houses per quarter there. To show how acute is the shortage of houses in Kalgoorlie, I would point out that 200 houses are required immediately. As I say, workers on the goldfields are being exploited by landlords and I think the time has come when the Government should stop that sort of thing.

Dealing with the pastoral areas that come within the boundaries of the North-East Province, I am pleased to express appreciation of the Government's action in deferring the payment of land rents, owing to the lean period, due to drought conditions, for the past six or seven years. The pastoralists of the north-east appreciate that concession, and I was pleased to hear that there is a possibility of the Federal Government replenishing the stock of the pastoralists of the North by importing cattle and sheep from South Australia. I consider that that would be an excellent move on the part of the Federal Government. It would show a realisation of the position and of the plight of the pastoral areas of the North.

Another point I should like to mention relates to water supplies. The Government should set aside a sum of money for

the provision of water supplies in the agricultural and pastoral areas. The provision of such supplies would mean much to the producers. Of course, I realise that between Mundaring and Kalgoorlie we have one of the finest water mains ever constructed. Still, the time is opportune to extend the main to the pastoral areas, and also to give the farmers an opportunity to enjoy the benefits that such a water supply would afford.

I was pleased to hear the reference in the Speech that approximately £900,000 had been spent on main roads.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Up our way?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Not too much of that sum has been spent between Merredin and Kalgoorlie. I claim to have a fair knowledge of our main roads—I shall call them main roads. The statement has frequently been made that when considering the construction of workers' homes, roads and other public works, one matter that should always be borne in mind is the stability of the goldfields. That is something about which we need not worry. The goldfields will be in existence for another 40 or 50 years at least; in fact, I believe that we shall never see the time when they will become exhausted.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. R. HALL: It is quite time that the Main Roads Department concentrated its attention on the eastern goldfields. Not long ago the Main Roads Board wrote to the local governing bodies throughout the State inviting suggestions for a name for the road from Perth to Laverton. Eventually it was resolved to name that road the Great Eastern Highway. I could suggest another name for it, though in this Chamber I must not say anything that would be out of place. The fact remains that residents of the goldfields are not receiving the consideration to which they are entitled.

Hon. G. Fraser: Tell us your name for it later.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I shall be prepared to do that. Successive Governments have taken ten years to get the road bitumenised to within 37 miles of Merredin, and if we have to wait while similarly slow progress is made on the remaining section to Kalgoorlie, we shall not be here to see it completed. In any event, we shall, by that

time, have aeroplanes providing for transport and they will need landing grounds, not roads. As a motorist, I claim that the motoring fraternity is entitled to greater consideration because, from that section, a great part of the money applied to road construction is derived. In return for the taxation that motorists pay, they are certainly entitled to good roads. When I mention that during the recent torrential rains that fell in the space of a few days, no fewer than 52 cars were bogged on that road, members will realise that I did not undertake the journey by motor with any feeling of pleasure. In fact, I felt rather perturbed about it. The statement has been made that although £900,000 has been expended on main roads, another three years will elapse before the bitumen surfacing is extended from Merredin to Southern Cross. In my opinion, some of the unemployed could, with advantage, be engaged in order to expedite that work. We have been told that a million of money will be required, and I certainly hope that the next £900,000 made available will be spent on that road.

I should feel that I was lacking in my duty if I failed to mention the continued prevalence of unemployment in this State. At present I understand there are over 6,000 on sustenance in Western Australia. I appreciate what the Government has done for the married men, but much more could be done for the single men. In the metropolitan area, single men are provided with rations, but for single men on the goldfields, the Government is not disposed to provide rations. Presumably the goldfields are considered to be so prosperous as to make that provision unnecessary: perhaps it is considered that people can pick up gold in the streets. I am prepared to admit that the present Government has done more for the unemployed than has any other Government. Yet unemployment is a problem that must still be faced until we succeed in eliminating it.

In conclusion, I express the wish that the various industries of the State will experience a very successful year. Recently all of us have been on our toes, as the saying goes, lest the crops should suffer through lack of rain. From that point of view, I felt very pleased that my car became bogged two or three times on the journey to the goldfields, because I realised that the

farming areas had received bountiful rains of which they were in such urgent need. I hope that the gold-mining, dairying, farming, pastoral, timber and other industries will enjoy a season of unprecedented prosperity during the coming year. I have pleasure in moving the motion.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [3.57]:
I formally second the motion.

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

House adjourned at 3 58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 4th August, 1938.

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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, returned to the Assembly Chamber.