

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

### THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTEENTH PARLIAMENT:

*The Parliament was prorogued on the 17th July, 1934, to the 2nd August, 1934, when it met for the despatch of business.*

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

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 2nd August, 1934.*

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### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 3.0 p.m.

#### PROCLAMATION.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. A. R. Grant) read the proclamation summoning the third session of the Fifteenth Parliament.

#### LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.6 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—*

The third session of the Fifteenth Parliament of Western Australia has been summoned for the consideration of important public business.

Early in the present year an invitation was extended by the Commonwealth Government, at the instance of the Victorian Government, to a member of the Royal Family, to attend the Victorian centenary celebrations to be conducted in the near future. Eventually, a selection by His Majesty the King for this purpose fell upon Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester. His Royal Highness will accordingly land at Fremantle on the 4th October. He will attend and open the Centenary Show of the Royal Agricultural Society, spend a few days in Perth, pay a brief visit to the country, and depart from Kalgoorlie for the Eastern States on the 9th October. The projected visit of this member of the Royal Family is hailed with general approbation, and it is evident that Western Australia will not be found wanting in manifesting the loyalty of its citizens to the Throne of the Empire.

The report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the financial position and general administration of the Agricultural Bank has been received, and is now being considered by Ministers. In due course it will be placed before members, and it is expected that you will be called upon to consider legislation in this regard during the present session.

A Royal Commission to inquire into the condition and treatment of aborigines is now sitting, and a final and comprehensive report upon this problem is expected in the near future.

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

The financial situation is still extremely grave, and requires constant attention. Rigid

economy is necessary, and no funds are available for other than absolutely essential services. The revenue for the year ended 30th June, 1934, was £8,481,697, and the expenditure £9,270,609, leaving a deficit of £788,912 on the year's transactions.

It was decided at the last meeting of the Loan Council that Western Australia's deficit for the current year should be financed up to £650,000. The limitation to this amount was only made possible by applying towards the reduction of the deficit the major part of this State's share of the special grant of £2,000,000 which is to be distributed by the Commonwealth Government among all the States.

All the State's London loans carrying a rate of interest of over 5 per cent., with an optional date of redemption have now been converted to either 4 per cent. or 3½ per cent. It is notable that Western Australia has received, in proportion to the amount of her indebtedness, less benefit from the overseas conversions than any other State, but most of our loans were originally floated on more satisfactory terms. There are still many other loans which have not yet matured and on which it has not been possible to secure a reduction of interest by conversion. Unless bondholders may be induced to lower their rates of interest in the meantime, there appears to be no escape from the continued payment of high rates upon these loans until maturity.

*Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—*

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

The problem of unemployment has received the serious consideration of Ministers at all times. Their efforts have been devoted to providing employment for a greater number of workers and thereby reducing sustenance payments.

As a result, the number of persons receiving sustenance, which stood at 6,265 on the 1st July, 1933, has been reduced to 1,196.

Twelve months ago sustenance was costing this State £7.127 per week, as against £1.787 at the present date.

The Government believes that one of the most promising avenues for the provision of employment is the extension and development of the State's secondary industries. To

this end, an active and extensive campaign has been launched to create a greater demand by the public for local goods. In this campaign Ministers have received valuable assistance from the Economic Council, which is representative of all sections of the community.

While a definite advance has been made in favour of local goods, there is still a great field to be exploited. Ministers are firmly of the belief that a proper appreciation of the value of supporting local production will go far toward solving unemployment.

#### *Mining.*

Increased activity in the mining industry continues to be the outstanding and most satisfactory feature of the State's development. The gold yield for 1933 eclipsed that of the previous year by 31,646 fine ozs., while the six months' yield to the 30th June, 1934, exceeded that of the similar period of 1933 by 16,516 fine ozs. The high price of gold has enabled companies to instal modern plants, and to do developmental work which otherwise could not have been undertaken.

Many large companies have been formed for the purpose of developing mines and examining areas, and capital is flowing in from various parts of the world. My Government, in collaboration with the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, is now preparing for an aerial geophysical and geological survey of that portion of Australia north of latitude 22°. This examination will be most thorough, and it is hoped that it will disclose further auriferous and metalliferous areas. There is no doubt whatever that the present year will see further great progress in the industry.

#### *Pastoral.*

Although the past season was dry in pastoral areas, excellent rains have been experienced this year and prospects are most promising. There are now 10,305,102 sheep in the State, in addition to this year's lambs. The quality of Western Australian lambs exported last year showed a marked improvement, and they are now in keen demand. With wheat farmers realising the advantage of keeping sheep, the industry is extending throughout the State. During the season, 159,852 bales of wool were sold for £3,333,529, the average price being 15.86d. per lb.

*North-West.*

It is pleasing to be able to record the progress in the tropical fruit industry on the Gascoyne River. Additional blocks have been taken up, and banana and pineapple suckers planted. Three thousand six hundred and thirteen cases of bananas, together with considerable quantities of other fruits and vegetables, were sent away from this area during the year.

The Onslow jetty, which was partly destroyed in March last as the result of a cyclone, is being restored. Meanwhile, the lighting of stock and cargo has been arranged to meet the emergency.

Three experimental shipments of chilled beef from the Wyndham Meatworks, each comprising approximately 1,200 hind-quarters, have been arranged this season, and two have already left. The first shipment arrived on the London market in July, and was very favourably reported upon by the trade. Although it was unfortunately landed on a weak market, due to over-supply from South America and to abnormally hot weather, it is anticipated that these experiments will prove the possibility of handling chilled beef from Wyndham on the London market in a satisfactory condition.

*Forests.*

The timber industry, in relation to both local and overseas orders, shows steady improvement and increasing promise. Several mills have re-opened during recent months, and it is anticipated that other mills, idle for the past three or four years, will shortly recommence operations. Many overseas contracts have also been let for jarrah sleepers.

Export timber prices, however, are still at a low level, and the Government has recently made a further concession to saw-millers on sawn timber exported overseas. Despite the extensive reforestation work undertaken during the past three years, the long period of uncontrolled exploitation has created a position which can only be met by reasonably restricting the output from existing forests until the second crop is nearing maturity.

*Lands.*

Under conditional alienation, 583 applications were approved for an area of 350,062 acres during the year, and under pastoral lease 124 applications were approved for

7,530,030 acres. The number of new settlers was 347.

Further increases were made in the quantities of wire provided for settlers, 1,306 miles of netting and 142 tons of barbed and plain wire being made available for 364 settlers at a cost of £55,221.

*Wheat.*

The estimated yield of wheat for last year is 37,533,177 bushels from an area of 3,182,650 acres. This is an average of 11.79 bushels per acre, a slight reduction on last year. The rainfall for the season, although equal to the average was not so suitably distributed throughout the growing period.

The present season opened well over almost the whole of the wheat belt. Though heavy rains caused some delays in seeding, the general position is satisfactory, and yields should be well up to the average.

*Fruit.*

The export of apples in 1934 was 618,274 bushels, as against 504,052 bushels for the previous year. The pear crop was lighter and exports were less by some 13,000 bushels, but the price was much better and the demand brisk.

*Dairying.*

The average price for butter fat for the past twelve months was 9.9d. For a time prices fell to 8d. In spite of this, the production of butter increased by 534,598 lbs.

Prospects for the 1934 season are bright. Weather conditions are excellent, and already the splendid pastures have induced increased production over the corresponding period of last year. The fixation of an Australian price of 140s. per cwt. for butter will enable at least 1s. per lb. to be paid locally for butter fat. This is considered profitable.

*Railways, etc.*

During the financial year 1933-34 the railway returns were £103,597 worse than for the previous year, both increased expenditure and decreased revenue being responsible. The smaller tonnage of wheat railed to the seaboard was the principal cause of the falling revenue, but, as a considerable movement of wheat is now apparent, better results should be reflected in the figures for the current year. The increase in expenditure is largely accounted for by the partial

restoration of the wage and salary cuts under the Financial Emergency Act, and repairing damages caused by the extensive washaways in March last.

Although tramway revenue declined by £1,100, expenditure was approximately £17,000 less on this utility; and the electricity supply also showed an improvement of approximately £16,000 for the year, as a result of increased revenue. The necessity for additional electricity is so urgent that it has become imperative to increase the capacity of the East Perth power house. For this purpose approval has been granted by the Loan Council for a special loan to be raised in Australia to cover extensions estimated to cost, with exchange, £560,000. Tenders have been called for the work, and these are now under consideration by the Government.

#### *Education.*

It has become necessary to re-open the Teachers Training College, which was temporarily closed in December, 1931, but its scope will be considerably curtailed. Teachers will attend the University for many academic subjects, but will be trained by the Department for subjects which are not included in the degree course, but which are essential in the primary school.

#### *Water Supply.*

The quantity of water supplied to the metropolitan area during the past year was 4,067,000,000 gallons. Nearly 3,000,000,000 gallons were obtained from hills supplies, the balance coming from artesian holes. So far as the present year is concerned, the heavy rainfall to date has assured full reservoirs at Churchman and Victoria. It will be necessary in future to restrict the use of water during the summer months until there is a considerable quantity in storage at the Canning reservoir, the construction of which was commenced recently.

#### *Sewerage and Drainage.*

Sewerage works continued in satisfactory operation during the year. Extensions to new areas in the Subiaco districts were proceeded with, and the sewerage of Claremont-Cottesloe was commenced.

Large drainage works at Subiaco and Maylands were completed, and further work is in hand at Maylands.

#### *Legislation.*

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

Metropolitan Public Utilities.

An amendment of the Administration Act.

Renewal of Financial Emergency legislation.

State Lotteries.

The Agricultural Bank.

An amendment of the Constitution Act.

I now declare this Session of Parliament open, and trust that Providence may bless your labours in the interests of this State.

### **BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.28]: 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 continue the operations of the Industries Assistance Acts, 1915-31."

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

### **LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.**

**THE PRESIDENT**: I have received from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor printed copies of the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament. These will be distributed amongst members.

### **ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.**

*First Day.*

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [3.31]: 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 us:—"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."

His Excellency's Speech is similar to those that have been delivered to this Parliament for a good many years past. In that Speech we have a recital of many things of interest to the people of the State, which have taken place, particularly during the past 12 months. But before dealing with that Speech I desire to say how pleased I am to see you, Mr. President, back in your old place once more. We are satisfied that during the time you were away from the State you were indeed a good ambassador for Western Australia. On several occasions we noticed in the Press, reports of some of your activities whilst in the Old Country. But although we know that you were doing a large amount of good in the Old Land, we are very pleased to see you back here again. I, personally, am pleased that you appear to be in a much better state of health than when you left here, and I sincerely trust that your appearance does not belie your actual health. During the period which elapsed while you were away, we were ably presided over by the Deputy President. However, there is one little complaint I have to make against the Deputy President, and I am sorry he is not in his seat just now, for I was hopeful that, in consequence of my remarks, he would remedy the defect the next time he occupied the presidential Chair. What I have to say is that he is not so considerate as you, Sir, when he is going to let the axe fall on members; he gives us no warning whatever. You, Sir, do give us a little consideration for, by a slight movement forward in your Chair, you indicate that you are going to deal with us.

Hon. H. Seddon: It is the same old axe, though.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but the President gives us a chance to guard against the blow, whereas the Deputy President gives us no such warning. However, I hope he will remedy that in future. There are several bright features in the Speech, one being the references to the mining industry. To read of the progress of mining, and the way it has helped this State in every crisis with which the State has been faced, is very gratifying. We see evidence in our daily walk of life that there has been an improvement in the mining industry, but it is always refreshing to be reminded of it in the Lieut.-Governor's

Speech. By the special mention it gets there, much greater publicity is given to it, and so the attention of the average citizen is caught. It is pleasing to note that some of the success achieved in that industry can be credited to the present Administration. They have never failed to do everything possible for the improvement of the industry. On many occasions they have taken action which, I am prepared to say, has materially assisted the industry in reaching the pinnacle of prosperity it occupies to-day. I do not say the present Administration are wholly responsible for it, but at least they have done much in putting the industry in its flourishing condition. I give special credit to the Minister for Mines for having initiated the prospecting scheme. Some goldfields members do not entirely agree with that enterprise, but I have knowledge of a number of people whose outlook in life was very black until they were given places in that prospecting scheme, as the result of which they now have something to look forward to. Among those people are many who had never previously seen a mining field. While they have not made fortunes, they have been lifted out of the rut in which they were for some years before going out prospecting. The Government that can bring about such a result are doing something for the benefit of the citizens of the State, and therefore of the State itself. That is one of the bright features in His Excellency's Speech. It shows that for the year ended on the 30th June last, 31,000 additional ounces of gold were won, as against the result of the previous 12 months. Also it shows that during the first six months of this year 16,000 ounces were won, over and above the record of last year. It makes one wonder how high these increases in the production of gold will go. The figures I have quoted show the wonderful amount of wealth that is being brought to the country by means of the goldmining industry. Another very bright feature of the past year is the improvement shown in the unemployment figures. The Speech we have just heard delivered is one of the best from that point of view that we have listened to in this Chamber in recent years. It is quite a change from the tone of the Speeches we heard when the previous Government were in office. There is no doubt

a much healthier tone exists in the community to-day. By their activities the Government have considerably decreased the number of unemployed persons and provided them with work. Not only have they decreased the number of those who were out of work, but have shown a considerable decrease in the vote that comes under the heading of the sustenance department. This decrease has been considerable. It appears to me, therefore, that the present Administration have given a good answer to the critics who were so loud in their complaints at the time of the last elections, when they said that a Labour Administration could not govern in adverse times. I would point out that when Labour was previously in office, they had a better record than any Government which preceded them in this State, but the critics said, "That was in good times; let us see what will happen when we have a sample of their administration in bad times." If one compares the record of the past 12 months with the record of any previous Government for a similar period, one will find that the Labour Administration have proved that the critics of that time were wrong.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: They had more cash at their disposal.

Hon. G. FRASER: They made the cash, and did not have a printing machine, either. They made the cash by the additional confidence they gave to investors by reason of their administration whilst they occupied the Treasury bench.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: They did it by heavier taxation.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member may think that by taxing oneself heavily, one can tax oneself out of financial difficulty, but I take a different view.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: That is what the Labour Government did.

Hon. G. FRASER: Far from it. Those people who could bear the tax, have been taxed, but in the case of those who could not bear it, the burden has been removed. Because of that fact, the people generally are in a much happier and healthier position than they have experienced for many years.

Hon. H. Seddon: Wages have gone up, you know.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope they will go still higher. The figures show that the number of men who were drawing the dole, as it may be called, has shrunk from 7,000 a week

to less than 2,000. This indicates that something like 5,000 heads of families have a happier home to go to than they had in the previous 12 months. It is the womenfolk of the country who will bless the Labour Administration because of the fact that their husbands have been given the opportunity to earn money instead of coming home with ration tickets.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do not you think that private enterprise has done a little, too?

Hon. G. FRASER: Private enterprise has done a good deal, but it has been spurred on by the efforts of the Government. Can the hon. member point to any time in the history of the State when a full-time Minister for Employment has been detailed to devote all his energies to spurring on private industry, as the present Minister for Employment has done?

Hon. W. J. Mann: The country was never before saddled with that expense.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the hon. member thinks it has been an expense to the country that the Minister for Employment should have done all he has done to push on local industry, he has been sadly misled. We have only to take into consideration the improvement in employment figures.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Are the Government not paying him?

Hon. G. FRASER: He is drawing a salary, just as every other Minister does, but in the case of other Ministers they have not taken on that particular work. There is no doubt the campaign is showing good results. The hon. member must know that by the extra work which has been thrown into the industry with which he himself is connected. He must know that a large amount of this additional work has been brought about through the efforts of those who have stood at the back of the local products campaign.

Hon. A. Thomson: It would be of interest to know if the suit you are wearing is an Albany Woollen Mills' suit.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is, and I have never worn anything else, since I had the opportunity to do so.

Hon. A. Thomson: I am pleased to hear that.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope many other people will follow that good example. When I refer to the Minister for Employment and the good work he has done on behalf

of local industries, I must at the same time bracket with his name the Economic Council. Members of that council have given up a lot of their time and their work in the interests of that organisation, and I desire to associate their names with that of the Minister in any praise I may shower in connection with this matter. It is pleasing to know that 5,000 fewer people are drawing ration tickets to-day than was the case 12 months ago. Most of those 5,000 people have been provided with work. There is, however, one fly in the ointment. All are not engaged in full-time work. I trust that in the coming year some improvement will be effected in that respect, so that those who are not working full time may be enabled to work more nearly full time than is the case to-day.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope something will be done for the boys and girls.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, and I am prepared to assist the hon. member in bringing about any improvement he can suggest in that direction. It is very nice to know that extra employment has been provided for so many people. Some of them, no doubt, have nearly reached the stage of being employed full time. There is one section of employed persons who are kept at work for six weeks and have one week off, so that the gap between part-time and full-time work is not very great. There is one phase of the question to which I would like to draw the attention of the Government. The man who is on the top rung of the ladder in the matter of employment has his six weeks on and one week off. That is the maximum. Amongst these people are some who have two or three members of their families not provided for, because they have the maximum amount of employment. A man with a wife and five children is on the top rung; he receives only the same consideration as is given to a man with a wife and seven or eight children. There are not many of the latter, and I hope that in the coming year some improvement will be effected in the situation so that the man with a number of children in excess of the maximum provided will be given additional work. Another section of the community I desire should receive some consideration is made up of those who are on the bottom rung of the ladder, namely those with only a wife, or with a wife and one child. Those people have to meet the ordinary overhead expenses comprehended in rent, etc., but

their hours of employment are very much shorter than is the case with those who are higher up in the scale. Whilst I desire that all should receive consideration, I feel that those at the two extremes should receive more during the coming year than they have had.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Are you also considering single men?

Hon. G. FRASER: They represent the tragedy of to-day. I hope that the Government will give more consideration to single men than has been given in the past, although there is no doubt they have given more consideration to them than their predecessors did, because the number of single men who are working, and the amount they are being paid, indicates that greater consideration has been given to their interests. I am sure that the Government will, without any urging from anyone, do all that is possible for single men. I also desire to say something on a matter which is of vital importance to the people of the State. Some three or four years ago I was successful in getting through the Chamber a motion dealing with compulsory third party insurance risks. The only objection raised at the time of the debate on the motion was that the cost of the scheme upon motorists would be heavy, and would constitute a burden. In reply to criticism, I was able to satisfy the Chamber that it would not be a costly business. I told the House of the scheme I had in mind whereby this additional risk could be carried on the basis of a payment of £1 a year. The motion was carried, but we have heard nothing more of it. On nearly every day of the week some person is injured. Generally it comes about that the person responsible for the accident is not covered by any third party risk. In many cases of this sort there are no assets behind the person responsible for the injury, the result being that the unfortunate individual who is hurt has no redress, and sometimes has to carry his injuries to the grave. Other considerations are that the injured party may be out of work for a long time, and the family may be thrown into poor circumstances. It is an alarming state of affairs that the individual should be unable to get any redress for injury of this sort. Many people think when they ride in a vehicle that is covered by third party risk insurance that, if an accident occurs, the expenses associated with hospital and medi-

cal treatment and compensation for the injured will be paid. I am afraid they will be disillusioned. If the accident is brought about by the carelessness of the person in whose vehicle they are riding, and that vehicle is covered by third party risk insurance, they are provided for, but if the accident is brought about by the vehicle of some other individual running into the insured one, and it is proved that the other person is responsible, although the injured person may be travelling in a vehicle that is insured, he has no hope of recovering anything. It is an alarming state of affairs, and one to which the attention of the public should be drawn. I have been very pleased during the last month or two to see the references that have appeared in the daily Press to this matter. Unfortunately, however, the articles have never been followed up. With the increasing motor traffic on our roads, it is absolutely essential, that something should be done by the Government to protect the public from risks of this kind. I hope during the coming year the Government will give some attention to the matter. It is nothing new. It may be new in Western Australia, but there is an Act governing all this in New Zealand, and I notice that quite recently some of the Eastern States have been turning their attention to it. I believe that attention is already being given to the matter in England. I hope we shall soon be able to learn that this State is taking an active interest in this important question, and making a move in the direction of placing an Act on the statute-book. I am afraid if I speak any longer I shall be unpopular. Therefore, I feel obliged to defer to some later period of the session the opportunity to discuss other matters of interest. I have much pleasure in moving the motion with which I opened my remarks.

**HON. E. H. GRAY** (West) [3.55]: I formally second the motion.

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

*House adjourned at 3.56 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 2nd August, 1931.

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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 Assistant (Mr. F. E. Islip).

### 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 report *ante*), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

### BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [3.32]: 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 for an Act to amend Section 18 of the Electoral Act, 1907-1921.

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

### LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER: I beg to announce that, accompanied by hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Lieutenant-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.