

meet. Not only is that standard of living lowered, but there is a psychological effect upon the young people who should be our future farmers. They have no security and no hope of independence, and any chance of success for them is most remote. These men, the best we have in the country, are drifting away from the land through lack of opportunity.

I consider that it is necessary for us to undertake a plan that will cost millions of pounds. I am not concerned in the slightest about the cost, because I feel that if we do not develop this country the day is not far distant when somebody else will come in to do it. The solution of the problem is reasonably simple. In the first place, we require a pool of 50 heavy tractors, not 40 or 50 horsepower tractors, but tractors of from 110 to 140 horsepower. The cost of those would be about £500,000, because they are worth about £10,000 each. That, however, would be only the start of the undertaking. The effective life of the tractors would be approximately 15,000 to 17,000 acres per tractor. With 50 of them we could clear without any trouble 250,000 acres of existing farms and could undertake the clearing of another 500,000 acres of new land.

We have also to consider the ability of the farmer to pay for these things. That is not possible on most sub-standard farms except on a long-term basis. This State receives a disabilities grant from the Commonwealth because of its disadvantages in relation to the other States. The dairy industry, in comparison with other industries, is in the same boat as that in which this State finds itself in relation to the other States. Money should be available for payment to private enterprise which should be encouraged in every way to open up this country. The farmer should be allowed terms as liberal as those which are granted him when he takes up conditional purchase land. I hope that at a later date I shall be able to elaborate on this suggestion. We have just lost our greatest son of the twentieth century. What would be a more fitting tribute or a better memorial to Sir James Mitchell than to develop the land he loved so well?

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central): I formally second the motion.

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

House adjourned at 4.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 2nd August, 1951.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. E. Islip).

SUMMONS FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR.

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.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of writs for the vacancies in the Maylands and the South Fremantle electorates caused by the death of Mr. H. V. Shearn and Mr. T. Fox, which show that Edward Peate Oldfield and Phillip Richard Lawrence have been duly elected.

Mr. Oldfield and Mr. Lawrence took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTIONS.

BUTTER.

As to Price Increase.

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is it a fact, as reported in "The West Australian" on the 18th July, 1951, that the State Government has decided to urge the Commonwealth Government to increase immediately the price of butter to consumers?

(2) What attitude does he propose to adopt at the forthcoming conference of Ministers for Price Fixing in connection with this matter?

(3) What will be the probable amount, if any, of the increase?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1), (2) and (3) The Government has agreed to accept the Commonwealth scheme for stabilisation of butter. Until the meeting of the Prices Ministers is held, it will not be known to what extent it will be necessary to increase the price to the consumer. There will undoubtedly be some increase.

FREE MILK SCHEME.

(a) As to Eastern Goldfields Children.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the fact that a scheme for the provision of free milk for schoolchildren has been promised for about three years and some children in the metropolitan area commenced last week to receive it, will the Minister indicate what progress, if any, has been made in having milk supplied to the schoolchildren of the Eastern Goldfields?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member is addressing his question to the wrong Minister. It should be asked of the Minister for Education, as the Education Department is distributing the milk.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the statement made by the Minister for Health that the distribution of milk to schoolchildren does not come under the jurisdiction of her department—although I would have thought that the distribution of food would come under the Minister for Health rather than the Minister for Education—I now ask the Minister for Education the question whether, in view of the fact that a scheme for free milk for schoolchildren has been promised for about three years and some of the children in the metropolitan area commenced last week to receive it, will he indicate what progress, if any, has been made to have milk supplied to the schoolchildren of the Eastern Goldfields?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. gentleman starts off on wrong premises by referring to a period of three years. The proposition first came to my notice approximately 18 months ago.

Mr. Styants: A lot longer than that!

The MINISTER: In that regard, no concrete proposition was placed before the Government, and even then the proposition submitted was not a very complete one from what I gather, but the distribution is fixed by a committee of representatives from the Health Department, the Education Department, a Commonwealth department, the Parents and Citizens' Association, the Teachers' Union, and one or two similar organisations concerned. No arrangements have been made for the distribution of milk that is not pasteurised and available for distribution in bottles. As a matter of fact, as the hon. member probably knows, the whole of the metropolitan area has not been served because there are 40,000 children affected and I think the figures are 19,000 at the present time. I understand the Commonwealth declines to proceed with distribution unless the milk is pasteurised and bottles are available, and therefore a start could only be made where those facilities were provided, and the remainder had to be delayed pending negotiations with the Commonwealth. Steps are being taken to that end.

(b) As to Provision for Country Centres.

Mr. MAY (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is the State Department of Education administering the Commonwealth Free Milk Scheme for schoolchildren?

(2) If so, what is the position regarding country schools already providing free milk to schoolchildren?

(3) Will the Education Department arrange for a recoup from the Commonwealth scheme to country schools having a free milk service until such times as the Commonwealth scheme is put into operation in country centres?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) I think my answer to the member for Kalgoorlie covers the point raised by the member for Collie. I stated that there were difficulties in the way in instances where pasteurised and bottled milk was not available, and that negotiations would be proceeded with.

INFLATION.

As to Steps for Curbing.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he in a position to indicate any of the steps likely to be taken by the Government of this State to deal with the very serious problem of inflation?

The PREMIER replied:

As the Leader of the Opposition is aware, I returned from Sydney only last night and have not had opportunity of discussing with my colleagues matters that were discussed at the Economic Stability Conference in Sydney, though I hope to have early opportunity of doing so. The hon. gentleman also knows that I have to leave again in a few days for the Premiers' Conference and Loan Council meeting which will be held in Canberra. It is expected that at those conferences the important question of inflation will be discussed and certain lines will be indicated to the Premiers on which they can take action to combat inflation. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that any decisions reached by the Government with regard to the curbing of inflation will be made known to him.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

(a) *As to Collie-Bunbury Link.*

Mr. GUTHRIE (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

When will Bunbury and Collie be linked up in connection with the supply of electric current by the State Electricity Commission?

The MINISTER replied:

It is anticipated that the Collie power house, which will supply both the centres mentioned, will be opened towards the end of this month.

(b) *As to Annual Reports of Commission.*

Hon. E. NULSEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will the Minister make available to members of this House copies of the State Electricity Commission annual reports which have already been circulated outside of this House?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Accommodation for Evicted Tenants.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware—

(a) That the Chief Secretary was recently reported in "The West Australian" as giving an assurance that accommodation would be found by the Government for persons evicted from their homes and who are unable to obtain other accommodation?

(b) That the Minister for Education, as Acting Premier, recently informed the Metropolitan Council of the A.L.P. that he had confidence in the steps being taken by the State Housing Commission to cater for those persons evicted from their homes under the new rent legislation.

(2) Is he aware that the State Housing Commission will not guarantee that accommodation will be found in all such cases?

(3) Will he confirm the assurances given by the Minister referred to in 1 (a) and 1 (b)?

The PREMIER replied:

I know that certain statements have been made by Ministers with regard to evicted tenants and I understand the Minister for Housing did state that accommodation would be found for evicted tenants.

The Chief Secretary: Not for all evicted tenants; several of the more urgent cases only.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I merely wish to inform the member for Mt. Hawthorn that the Government is finding alternative accommodation for evicted tenants. So far, I understand, 17 evictions have been made and the persons concerned have all been housed. The magistrate has issued orders on 71 people altogether and quite a good percentage of those evicted have found accommodation for themselves. My colleague, the Minister for Housing, has informed me that he has the keys of 32 houses ready for tenants who have been evicted. In the circumstances, the claim that the Government is meeting the needs of those evicted persons may be substantiated.

(b) *As to Proposed Regulation against Landlords.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

When the Minister was Acting Premier, he made a statement that some landlords in this State were going beyond what was considered to be reasonable conduct and that the Government would bring down a regulation to deal with the situation that had arisen. What happened to the regulation?

The MINISTER replied:

The regulation was prepared in accordance with my statement at the time, but subsequently we were advised by the Crown Law Department that it was not *intra vires* the Act and therefore it had better not be promulgated. Consequently, no further action was taken.

TRANSPORT.

As to Bassendean Service.

Mr. BRADY (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In view of the unsatisfactory road transport service operating in the Bassendean district, will he ask the Minister to give consideration to running railway buses from the Stirling-street depot as an auxiliary service?

The **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION** replied:

I shall be glad to discuss the matter with the Minister for Transport.

WIRELESS SETS.

As to Alleged Extraordinary Transactions.

Hon. J. T. **TONKIN** (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) Will he cause inquiries to be made amongst traders who deal in wireless sets in order to ascertain whether there have been any extraordinary transactions in recent days which would tend to confirm a rumour that is current that some traders have been placed in an advantageous position because of an alleged leakage of information from Canberra to the effect that the Budget will provide for an increase of 33 1/3rd per cent. in sales tax on wireless sets?

(2) If inquiries indicate that the rumour is not unfounded, will he bring the matter under the notice of the Prime Minister?

The **ATTORNEY GENERAL** replied:

(1) and (2) I will have the position inquired into and, after having done so, consideration will be given to the matter by the Government.

GOVERNOR OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

As to Appointment.

Mr. J. **HEGNEY** (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) In view of the outstanding and distinguished service rendered by the late Sir James Mitchell as Governor of Western Australia, why was it necessary to go outside the State in order to get a successor?

(2) The Government having gone outside the State to get a successor, on whose recommendation was the appointment made or did the Government authorise the Premier to make a selection?

The **PREMIER** replied:

(1) and (2) The term for which the late Governor was appointed had expired. Representatives of His Majesty the King are appointed by His Majesty with his approval.

TIMBER.

As to Shannon River Mill Production.

Mr. **GRAYDEN** (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

Will he state when the Shannon River mill is expected to come into production?

The **MINISTER** replied:

A pilot plant has been operating for some months, and the week before last No. 1 bench was put into operation. I

understand that on Thursday last 17 loads were cut. It was hoped that that quantity would be increased this week to 20 loads per day.

BILL—UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT.

The **PREMIER**: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "A Bill for an Act to amend the University of Western Australia Act, 1911-1947."

Leave given: Bill introduced and read a first time.

ADMINISTRATOR'S OPENING SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Accompanied by hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Administrator in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [4.5]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Administrator in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—"May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament."

We are met today in the shadow caused by the death of our late Governor, Sir James Mitchell, the first son of this State to attain the high office of Governor of Western Australia. Sir James, in his many years of office, served this State well, and he fully justified his appointment, first as Lieut.-Governor and then as Governor. I feel that the people of Western Australia will long retain memories of him and will continue to enjoy the fruits of his endeavours. I furthermore believe that in Sir Charles Gairdner we have a man fit to assume the mantle left by Sir James.

May I now pay tribute to my predecessor, the late Mr. Harry Shearn. Mr. Shearn represented the Maylands electorate for 15 years. During that time he gave distinguished service to the electors

of that constituency, setting a very high standard in representation. I trust that I shall serve the electors of Maylands as faithfully and as well as did the late hon. member. I thank the electors of Maylands for the confidence they have placed in me. It will be my earnest endeavour to justify that confidence by sincere application to my parliamentary duties and responsibilities.

His Excellency the Administrator has made reference in his Speech to the proposed visit next year of Their Majesties the King and Queen, and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret. I am sure that this visit, the first of any reigning monarch to the Commonwealth, can only result in a further welding of the bonds of empire at a time when that is so vitally necessary.

Much benefit will accrue to the State from the recent visit of the Premier to the United Kingdom. The success of his mission will do much to overcome the scarcity, in Western Australia, of materials and labour, two of the great problems confronting us today. The Premier has not only arranged for the supply of urgently needed materials, but also for shipping space for the transshipment of those materials. Among other things, this will greatly assist the housing programme, and I believe that the Government should be congratulated for stepping up the home building rate until a figure of almost 6,000 houses per year has been reached.

In connection with education the McLarty-Watts Government has made amazing strides not only in the provision of new schools but also of additions and renovations. The Minister for Education should be congratulated for his encouragement of suitable young men and women to adopt the teaching profession for their means of livelihood. It is upon the character developed as the result of their work and the education which these teachers impart to the young, that the future of this State will rest.

Western Australia is a land of opportunity and the Government is doing much to ensure that the opportunities awaiting are realised. We need a greater population in this State; the Government is sparing no endeavour to gain that population. We require new industries in this State and the Government is doing everything possible to encourage their establishment and growth here. Also, we need capital in this State; again, the Government is doing all that is humanly possible to promote that influx of capital.

I know, from personal experience, that the people of the Eastern States little realise not only the physical extent of this State but also the vast resources it contains. Indeed, there are many Western Australians who know little of the vast area that lies above Geraldton and

Meekatharra. There is an abundance of mineral wealth and I believe it is upon the basis of that mineral wealth that the northern part of this State will be developed. I believe, too, that the position of the goldmining industry must be causing much concern to the Government, and I trust that some solution will be found that will enable this great industry of ours to continue to flourish.

The Government should also give consideration to developing the other minerals which are present there in appreciable quantities—minerals such as lead, tantalite, copper, tin, manganese, chromium and scheelite. If ever these minerals are to be developed, now is the time to do so. Our allies are desperately short of many of these metals which are vitally needed in their defence programmes. In addition, these could prove to be dollar earners for Australia.

The Premier has just returned from a meeting convened by the Prime Minister to deal with the problem of inflation in Australia today. I hope and trust that some solution can be found to this problem, but I believe that if it comes to a choice, then the greatest problem confronting Australia today is not inflation but defence. I have no doubt that those who attended the conference discussed the question of public works and their contribution to the inflationary trend which is evident in Australia today. There comes a time when every nation must cut its cap according to the cloth available. I believe that such a time of crisis has been reached in Australia today, and it may prove to be that we are trying to develop over-quickly. But I know that the people of Western Australia will be in accord with the view I express—the hope that our necessary developmental works will not be curtailed.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that this is no time to touch upon parochial matters, so I shall leave, until the debate on the Estimates, matters which affect only my electorate and the areas bordering upon it. In conclusion, may I express the hope that all Parliaments, such as this one assembled here today, lawfully constituted and freely elected, will long endure.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 7th August,

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.16 p.m.