

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

## Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament.

*Parliament was prorogued on the 19th March, 1954, to the 6th April, 1954, when it met for the despatch of business.*

*Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.*

### Legislative Council

Tuesday, 6th April, 1954.

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#### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 3 p.m.

The **PRESIDENT** took the Chair.

#### PROCLAMATION.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. A. B. Sparks) read the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor summoning the second session of the Twenty-first Parliament.

#### GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.3 p.m., and, the members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber, obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following speech:—

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

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

Although subjected to many last minute alterations, the visit of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal

Highness The Duke of Edinburgh to Western Australia was a deeply impressive and memorable occasion.

The demonstrations of welcome given by our people to the Royal Couple were spontaneous and full of loyalty and enthusiasm.

Her Majesty and His Royal Highness both expressed their grateful thanks to the people of the State for the wonderful reception given to them.

The Second Session of the Twenty-first Parliament has been summoned for the transaction of public business in order that consideration may be given to legislation relating to rents and tenancies and to any other measures which might be introduced.

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 resumed the Chair.]*

#### BILL—PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: 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 the Public Works Act, 1902-1953."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

#### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

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

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.***First Day.*

**HON. E. M. HEENAN** (North-East)  
[3.21]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the 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."

It was only recently that we, in common with the people of Western Australia, had a great opportunity to express our loyalty and affection to our most gracious Sovereign and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh. The motion which I am now moving will give us a further chance to give vent to our feelings in that regard. The Governor says in his Speech that the demonstrations of welcome given by our people to the Royal couple were spontaneous and full of loyalty and enthusiasm. I am sure that no one will say that that statement is in any respect an exaggeration.

The recent visit of the Queen and Duke was an event which will long be remembered by the citizens of this State, and I congratulate the Premier, and all associated with him, on the outstanding success of their efforts. I thought the Premier did an excellent job under circumstances which, at the outset, to say the least, must have been very annoying and irksome to him and those working under him. The Queen's visit should prove a great inspiration to all the people of Australia, especially the younger generation of whom she and the Duke will rightly be regarded as the true leaders of the future. The future of mankind depends as never before upon the attitude of the younger generation to the world problems of today, and their responsibility and need for wise leadership, therefore, are very great indeed.

Before I move on to the other few remarks which I propose including in my brief speech, I would like to extend my congratulations to the following members who have been returned unopposed within the last day or so:—Hon. Sir Charles Latham, Hon. C. H. Henning, Hon. H. L. Roche, Hon. H. Hearn and Hon. L. A. Logan. I am sure that every member of this House will genuinely congratulate each of those gentlemen, because we know that in the past they have all served this State well. Each one of them is, in every respect, a true member of Parliament, and I think this State is fortunate in having men like them in its legislative halls.

This special session of Parliament has been called to enable members to give consideration to the imminent serious state of affairs relating to rents and tenancies which is likely to arise after the end of this month when, to all intents and purposes, any effective control will cease to exist. The situation is so serious that the wisest councils should prevail; and therefore it is my earnest hope that some effective legislation can be passed which will give some measure of security and protection to deserving tenants while, at the same time, allowing for the just requirements of landlords and property owners.

Situations like the present one are always rendered more difficult by the attitude of unscrupulous persons on either side, but it is our duty to legislate for the great majority who are fair and decent people. Events are making it abundantly clear that the time has not yet arrived when the control of rents and tenancies can be safely lifted altogether. The plain fact is that there are not sufficient houses or other accommodation to go around. Although thousands of houses have been built, the general position is that the shortage is only slightly less than it was when the war ended. Against this must be reckoned the large increase in our population due to immigration and to higher marriage and birth rates.

The State Housing Commission is doing a splendid job to cope with the housing position in this State; but if the flood-gate should open at this stage, the outlook, especially with the approach of winter, will be very grave indeed for a great number of people.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Did you say the approach of winter or the approach of the elections?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I think everyone heard me clearly enunciate the word "winter".

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Playing cheap politics already!

Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are a good judge of what is cheap!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is all I propose to say on the subject in connection with which this special session has been called. I cannot anticipate the measure that will be placed before us, but I am confident that all members are aware of the serious situation which confronts a large number of our people, and I am sure that we will all do our best to find some wise solution to a problem which is a grave one indeed.

My electorate is largely dependent upon the mining industry, and perhaps it is appropriate that I should have a few words to say in that connection. The outlook for mining generally is most interesting, and this year could easily be one of the most momentous years in the history of the State. The search for oil is to be intensified and millions of pounds will be

spent in the process. Apparently searching for oil is a great gamble, but the fact remains that oil has been found at Rough Range; and, to the layman at any rate, it seems feasible that a great deal more remains to be discovered. The search for uranium is also being intensified, and at the present time there is a certain locality which shows reasonable promise as regards the discovery of uranium in worthwhile quantities.

The position regarding gold is not so bright, although it is interesting to note that the State's gold return in 1953 was an all-time record, the value of the yield being £13,299,092. This happy state of affairs was largely due to the greater mechanisation of the mines, and also to the fact that the Great Western Consolidated came into production. At the present time, the Lanceville mine is being opened up at Laverton, and the Boomerang mine at a place called Burtville, which is a distance of about 20 or 30 miles from Laverton. It looks very much as though again this year gold production will be pretty high. The industry still has to face rising costs, however, and the fact that premiums on sales abroad have practically disappeared. What a valuable asset the goldmining industry is to the State, however, can be realised when we consider last year's record being established in the face of these difficulties.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What amount was sold last year?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It has been diminishing all the time, and I am sorry I have not got the figures of the amount sold last year.

One major occurrence in the field of goldmining has been the sale of gold by Russia on the European market. This may have far-reaching consequences on the future price of gold. The attitude of Russia will probably at least mean that the price of gold on the free market will not again rise above the official price. Furthermore, it may well have a deterrent effect on the International Monetary Fund in listening to those countries that are advocating an increase in the price of gold. The capacity of Russia as a gold-producing country is not known, but several good authorities hold the view that she is about on the same level of production as South Africa, whose production we all know is by far the greatest in the free world. Those few facts indicate the importance of the goldmining industry to the State of Western Australia.

The fact that mines are opening up in far-distant places like Laverton shows what the goldmining industry does for outlying portions of the State, and how it can be responsible for maintaining railway communities in certain parts of the State which otherwise would not exist. It is therefore a really important industry. In recent years, costs have been rising,

but the industry has done its best to minimise those costs by mechanisation. Science is helping all the time to reduce costs. The industry has also been able to sell a fair percentage of its production on the free market in recent years. The price received was a good deal higher than the official price of 35 dollars, and the quota sold on the free market brought in additional revenue which was of great assistance to the industry.

As I have pointed out, however, that has now practically gone. Apparently the demand has been satisfied, and on top of that Russia is now coming in with her gold, and it looks as if the mining industry in future will have to get along without any revenue from that source. To my mind, this raises the question that the Commonwealth may have to take up the challenge and do far more than it has in the past for the goldmining industry, for the people who work in it, and for those who have money invested in it. For instance, greater tax concessions could be permitted, and possibly a premium on production. The Commonwealth Government should at least take some cognisance of the obvious facts I have related this afternoon, because the goldmining industry is of the utmost importance, particularly to this State.

I would like to congratulate the Government, the Minister for Mines, and the Mines Department on their decision to erect a battery at Menzies. The erection of a State battery there will greatly encourage prospectors in the district, will give them up-to-date facilities for treating their ore, and will do a great deal to revive the northern part of the Eastern Goldfields. Members may recall that only last year, or the year before, strong rumours were current that the railway line from Leonora to Laverton was to be pulled up, and that the same was to be done with the railway line from Meekatharra to Wiluna. I think I am right in saying that those were the recommendations of the Railway Commission. What has happened at Laverton and is about to happen at Menzies, helps to illustrate the argument that goldfields members used at the time. We have to be very careful about pulling up railway lines. One year mining towns may seem to go completely out of existence, and the following year they revive, with a consequent revival in the district.

I hope that, as a result of the erection of the battery at Menzies, new finds will be made, and that before many years have passed we shall have more famous mines that will have been discovered indirectly as an outcome of this wise decision on the part of the Government to erect the battery. This is not an occasion for making a long speech in support of the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply and so, without further ado, I submit the motion.

**Hon. C. W. D. BARKER (North):** I have much pleasure in formally seconding the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 3.42 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 6th April, 1954.

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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 GOVERNOR.

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and having heard His Excellency the Governor deliver the opening Speech (*vide* Council report *ante*), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOUSING.

(a) *As to Financing Proposed Flats, Subiaco.*

Hon. SIR ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) From what source is the Government providing the finance to construct the proposed flats at Subiaco?

(2) If loan money is being used, is the amount available because funds have been withdrawn from other urgent public works?

(3) What is the rate of interest?

(4) If, as a consequence, he is short of loan funds next financial year, is it proposed to enter into fresh contracts of this nature?

(5) Was any authority obtained from Parliament for the expenditure involved in these contracts and, if so, when and in what part of the Estimates?

The TREASURER replied:

The question of financing the construction of the proposed flats at Subiaco has not yet been decided by the Government.

(b) *As to Tabling Papers, Subiaco Flats.*

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

Five months having elapsed, according to the report in the paper, and as proceedings are not now to be continued, will he lay on the Table all relevant papers in connection with the Subiaco flats proposal?

The MINISTER replied:

The question of the Subiaco flats, as I announced when Parliament was last in session, is the subject of litigation between the State and the Commonwealth, and the relevant papers are at the present moment in the hands of the Crown Law Department.

(c) *As to Inspecting Files.*

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

Further to my previous question about the Subiaco flats, will the Minister make arrangements for me to look at the relevant files at the Crown Law Department?