

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Third Session of the Twenty-First Parliament.

Parliament was prorogued on the 21st May, 1954, to the 17th June, 1954, when it met for the despatch of business.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 17th June, 1954.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon.

PROCLAMATION.

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

COMMISSIONER.

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

Members of the Legislative Assembly having arrived accordingly, the Commissioner requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in the name and on the part of Her Majesty the Queen or in the name and on the part of His Excellency for the opening and holding of the third session of the Twenty-first Parliament.

The Commission was read.

The Commissioner read the following statement:—

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly—I have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to inform you that, at three o'clock this afternoon, His Excellency will declare to you the causes of the calling together of this session of Parliament; and it being necessary that a President of the Legislative Council be first chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, Honourable Members of the Legislative Council, after those who have been newly elected have been duly sworn by me in terms of a Commission granted to me by His Excellency, do elect your President and notify the same to His Excellency.

Members of the Legislative Assembly retired from the Chamber.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The Clerk announced the return of writs for the election of members at the biennial elections showing that the following had been duly elected:— Hon. H. Hearn (Metropolitan), Hon. G. Fraser (West), Hon. W. F. Willesee (North), Hon. L. A. Logan (Midland), Hon. Sir Charles Latham (Central), Hon. C. H. Henning (South-West), Hon. H. L. Roche (South), Hon. J. D. Teahan (North-East), Hon. R. F. Hutchison (Suburban), Hon. J. J. Garrigan (South-East).

These members took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

The Clerk reported that the office of President was vacant.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—
That Hon. A. L. Loton do take the Chair in the Council as President.

HON. H. L. ROCHE: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

No other member having been proposed, the Clerk declared Hon. A. L. Loton elected, and he was conducted to the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT-ELECT: I wish to thank members for the honour they have conferred upon me.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: May I offer you my congratulations, Sir, on your elevation to the office of President of this Council. I trust that your occupancy of the Chair as President will redound to the credit of both yourself and this Chamber. I know that right through the years you have been a student of the Standing Orders of this House, and I hope that during your term of office you will not be too severe on the Chief Secretary at all events. I feel sure that you will conduct the business of this House in a manner that will be looked upon as a pattern by all who have dealings with it. As I have said, I trust that your occupancy of the Chair will be a credit to both yourself and this Chamber, and that at all times you will uphold the dignity of the Legislative Council.

HON. L. CRAIG: As a defeated aspirant to the office of President, I offer my congratulations to you on your election to that high office, Mr. President. I am sure you will do your best, with the help of the House, to maintain the dignity of this Chamber and its traditions. For my part, I can promise you at all times the support that your office demands.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: May I also offer you my congratulations, Mr. President? We both belong to the one political party and evidently the better man won.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I wish to advise members that the Governor will be pleased to receive the President-elect forthwith, together with any other members who wish to accompany him.

*Sitting suspended from 12.28 p.m.
to 3.3 p.m.*

PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT-ELECT.

THE PRESIDENT: I desire to inform the House that I have submitted myself to His Excellency the Governor and that His Excellency has been pleased to express satisfaction at the choice of the Council in the following terms:—

Mr. President:

It is with much pleasure that I learn that you have been elected by the members of the Legislative Council to the high and honourable office of President of that House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner.

(Signed) Charles Gairdner,
Governor.

I have also to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a Commission to administer the oath to members, which will now be read by the Clerk.

The Commission was read.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.10 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 Twenty-first Parliament of Western Australia has been summoned earlier than the customary time to enable urgent consideration to be given to legislation dealing with rents and tenancies. Ministers view with concern the large numbers of notices to quit served on tenants following the expiration of the protection previously afforded.

The State is enjoying good seasons and satisfactory prices for most of its primary products. The vast new industrial enterprises at Kwinana are proceeding according to or ahead of schedule. The value of our mining production is rising and the discovery of oil has resulted in extensive further searches for that commodity. Harmonious industrial relations prevail. There is full employment. Population is rapidly growing and the number of nominations for British migrants is rising.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

For the eleven months ended the 31st May, revenue amounted to £37,766,450 and expenditure to £38,780,646 leaving a deficit of £1,014,196.

The June figures are expected to show a substantial surplus, and the deficit for the financial year will probably approximate the Budget estimate of £88,095.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

The excellent rains which fell in late May throughout most of the State's agricultural areas have relieved anxiety regarding the opening of the season.

The Department of Agriculture is constantly engaged in scientific research into the problems of primary production and in improving farming standards.

Progress continues to be made with the utilisation of light lands. Valuable increases in production are also being achieved in the older settled parts of the South-West from the increasing use of trace elements.

Owing to the very high cost of repurchased estates, the settlement of ex-servicemen is confined almost entirely to areas being developed from virgin land.

Sufficient dairy farms are being developed but there is still unsatisfied demand for wheat and sheep and grazing properties.

Attention is being given to the opportunities for settlement on a strip of several million acres along the South coast from Albany to Esperance.

The proposal to develop for War Service Land Settlement an area of approximately 500,000 acres immediately East of Ongerup and stretching down to the South coast has been submitted to the Commonwealth Government.

An option has been taken over an area of 55,000 acres of timbered land between Bakers Hill and York. The land would be suitable for closer settlement purposes.

Legislation will be introduced to enable perpetual leases to be granted to ex-servicemen under the conditions which govern the provision of funds by the Commonwealth for Land Settlement.

Bills will be submitted to consolidate the Closer Settlement Act and to enable the Board to investigate and report on large properties deemed to be unutilised or capable of much better use, and to amend and consolidate the Bush Fires Act.

Careful attention is being given to Argentine ant control. It is intended, with Government funds supplemented by contributions from local authorities, to conduct a campaign involving an expenditure of £500,000 over a period of five years.

The value of the State's mineral production last year reached the record figure of £19,000,000. Gold contributed £13,300,000, coal just over £3,000,000, and other minerals slightly under £3,000,000.

The search for oil has been intensified and additional deep drilling plants have arrived in the State or are on order. Many field survey parties are engaged on ground and air work. The results of this year's operations may have a great influence on the future of the State.

Manufacturing activities continue to expand. The number of factories increased during the year by 158 to 3,444, giving employment to 46,000 people.

Proceeds from the whaling industry last year amounted to £1,200,000. The weight of crayfish taken was over 8,000,000 lb. Legislation to amend and consolidate the Fisheries Act and Fauna Protection Act will be introduced.

The number of homes erected during 1953 was 7,642, of which 3,218 were provided under the various schemes administered by the State Housing Commission.

Special attention is being given to the provision of a greater number of homes in North-West towns. A programme has also been prepared for the erection of houses for the native population. The Kwinana housing programme is nearing completion.

The Government has established a Housing Advisory Bureau in the State Housing Commission premises, where plans and specifications can be obtained at a low cost, and advice on a wide range of building problems is given to self-help and owner builders.

The State Housing Act will be amended to provide a new scheme of advances for home builders.

The production of sawn timber last year reached record figures and serious shortages of seasoned timber have been eliminated.

Rehabilitation of the railways has reached the stage where they can cater without difficulty for the volume of traffic offering.

New diesel locomotives are being put into service at the rate of two per month and over 1,900 new wagons were commissioned during the past year.

The preparation of the Metropolitan Regional Plan is expected to be completed shortly, and to give effect to it amendments are proposed to town planning legislation. More attention will then be given to planning country towns and areas.

Inquiries into boundaries of metropolitan local authorities have been completed and a report is expected at an early date.

A Bill will be introduced to amend and consolidate the law relating to local government.

Many improvements have been effected in country water supplies. The capacity of the Northern section of the Comprehensive Water Scheme has been increased by the completion of a new pumping station at Mundaring Weir and enlargements of sections of the main pipeline. A contract has been let for new pumping stations at Cunderdin and Kellerberrin. Limitations of finance and steel plate have slowed progress on the Southern section, but approximately 45 of the 80 miles of 30in. pipe between the Wellington Dam and Narrogin have been completed.

An extensive works programme is being undertaken to meet increasing demands for water and sewerage in the metropolitan area.

During the year maintenance and construction of the State's road system have proceeded on a large scale. In the country more than 400 miles of road were surfaced with bitumen.

The State Electricity Commission has successfully floated two further public loans totalling £2,000,000.

The electric power position is satisfactory and work is proceeding on new units to meet the constantly increasing demand. Work has commenced on the foundations of the Bunbury Power Station. Steady progress has been made in extending supplies from the South-West Power Scheme.

In the North-West, mining activity is greater than at any previous time. Production of industrial minerals, such as asbestos, columbite, chrome, iron, lead, tin and wolfram, is proceeding on a large scale.

Although a new vessel of 2,400 tons, with accommodation for 70 passengers, has been ordered for the State Shipping Service, it will not be delivered before the end of 1955. Inquiries are being made for suitable additional tonnage to meet immediate increased requirements.

The Onslow Jetty has been repaired and the Derby Jetty is being strengthened.

A survey of the North Kimberley district is proceeding. Examination of this unoccupied far Northern region should give an indication of its pastoral and other potentialities.

Water supplies on the Kimberley stock routes have been augmented.

Many major hospital works have been completed during the year, and sites are being reserved for further hospitals to meet the needs of our rapidly increasing population. The construction of the second section of the Royal Perth Hospital has been further advanced and tenders will shortly be called for the new Chest Hospital.

Measures were taken to restrict the incidence of poliomyelitis and the outbreak which occurred earlier in the year has now subsided.

Maternal and infant health services are being extended and provision has been made for a programme of health education for the general public.

A special division is to be set up in the Child Welfare Department to concentrate on the care and training of children, particularly on the mental side.

Although 191 new classrooms were erected during 1953, the large annual increase in school enrolments renders the provision of adequate school accommodation a continuing and pressing problem. New high schools will shortly be commenced at Fremantle, Midland Junction and Mt. Lawley, and one is being planned for Armadale.

Over 800 students are undergoing a course of training at the Teachers' College.

Amendments designed to remove some of the punitive and restrictive sections of the Native Administration Act will be placed before you.

To permit the education of a large number of native children in the North and North-West the Department plans to accommodate these children at suitable centres.

The Land Agents Supervisory Committee has been constituted, and the requirement that Land Agents' Trust Accounts be audited by approved auditors is being enforced.

Following the defeat of price control legislation last year, the price level has risen considerably. The basic wage has been pegged by the Arbitration Court. Wage and salary employees are now 6s. 3d. per week worse off than they were six months ago. An appropriate price control measure will be introduced, and also a Bill to provide for the automatic quarterly adjustment of the basic wage.

Other legislation will include Bills—

To enable the State Government Insurance Office to undertake general insurance for the public.

To alter the franchise for the Legislative Council.

To increase benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act.

To amend the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act; and the Traffic 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 resumed the Chair.]

BILL—SHIPPING AND PILOTAGE ORDINANCE 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 Shipping and Pilotage Consolidation Ordinance, 1855 and Act 37 Victoriae No. 14 entitled "An Act to Alter and Extend the Provisions of the Shipping and Pilotage Consolidation Ordinance, 1855."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*First Day.***HON. R. F. HUTCHISON** (Suburban)
[3.35]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—

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 pleasure in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidential chair and hope you will have a fruitful, calm and pleasurable sojourn in office. As the first woman to raise her voice in the deliberations of the Legislative Council of Western Australia, I feel keenly my position and my responsibility to the women of this State and those who will, in general, follow my footsteps. I shall endeavour to live up to the standards of truth and integrity that they would expect of me.

For too long has this House been silent for want of a woman's voice but now one might as well, like the historical figure, King Canute, attempt to hold back the rolling waves as try to keep women from their rightful place in the Legislature and public affairs of this State. I hope I shall not be long without female company here. While I am in this House I shall do my utmost to help in the government of this State, and will do everything possible to be worthy of my position. Science and the recent war have thrust woman forward from the kitchen, where she was supposed to belong, and she has now taken her rightful place in society. A great many women have played a worthy part in history. I hope to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before, and play my part in the future.

After all, government really depends on good housekeeping, and it is women who have the correct views on good economy and good housekeeping, and the way in which to keep the family together in order that men and women may be complementary to each other. I think that applies in the sphere of government also. I hope that we shall have more women's voices in the Parliament of this State in the not far distant future.

One of the planks of the platform on which I was elected to this Chamber was adult suffrage, and I want the people of Western Australia to know that I shall fight untiringly to obtain adult suffrage for this Legislative Council. We know

that this is practically the most powerful Legislature in the British Commonwealth, yet its suffrage is definitely against women. This House has a very narrow franchise—a property franchise and a householder's franchise—and I hope to see that widened considerably. I noted with pleasure last year that one non-Labour member of this House, Hon. Leslie Craig, spoke in favour of adult suffrage. I hope that when a Bill is brought down this year to liberalise the franchise for this House, members will take note of the fact that the people have given a decided answer that democracy has reached the stage where we can expect to attain fair and just representation in both the halls of legislature in this State.

The Government has called the session together earlier than usual for the purpose of reconsidering the rents and tenancies legislation. As a woman, I can inform the President and members of the widespread suffering which prevails at present as a result of the irresponsible action of this Chamber last session in throwing out the Bill dealing with rents and tenancies. Only yesterday a woman came to me and asked me what she would do with her furniture if she could obtain only a room in which to live, as she had been evicted from a house in which she had resided for 13 years. Therefore, I am hoping that something will be done to help people such as her in the future.

I think the time has arrived when humanity should take precedence over monetary matters. The cause of humanity means a great deal to the people of the country today, and the time has passed when we could overlook the suffering of our neighbours and have no care about them. There is no doubt that our neighbours are suffering at present as a result of the Bill dealing with rents and tenancies having been defeated at the last special session of Parliament.

I maintain that a country's greatness is governed by the happiness of its people; and, to me, housing is a first essential to make our people happy. Since the war, we have seen young people grow up and come face to face with the problem of when they can get married, a situation which has been brought about because of insufficient housing. It has not been because they could not buy a house but because, as a result of the war, there have not been sufficient building materials with which to erect the houses. Every father and mother knows only too well what it means when their son or daughter grows to maturity and wishes to get married and rear a family which, in truth, is the basis of society. However, not being able to find accommodation, these young people have not been able to realise their ambitions. Whilst the housing shortage exists, protection should be afforded to those who are already occupying houses. I commend the Minister for Housing for the worth-while job he has done since he

has assumed office, but there is still a long way to go before we reach that happy stage where one can buy a house at will.

I shall now speak on the subject of child welfare and education. To me education is the keystone of society, and it goes hand in hand with child welfare. In a country such as ours, with its expanding economy and development, which is proceeding so rapidly at present, we shall have to pay special attention to education in the very near future. I should like to see scholarships established whereby all children would be given an equal opportunity to fit themselves for the future. At present a public fund is being raised in order to send abroad for further studies one of our gifted young Western Australians. This matter is one that should receive the consideration of the Government and we should try to foster more scholarships so that every man may reach his right place in the sun. There is no doubt that education is most necessary for our future prosperity.

I hope that we shall do more than we have done in the past for our under-privileged children. At present we are extremely short of homes and the essentials which are necessary for the development of these children. It is my hope that homes will be built so that these children may be segregated in their proper categories in order that they may receive our help and obtain their education more rapidly and in a wider sense than they have done in previous years. In my opinion our best investment is in the cultural, physical and spiritual welfare of our children. I hope that our children will have a big share in the shaping of our State's future and that the Government will give every consideration to this question when legislation to deal with it is brought before the House.

It is my hope that today will prove to be a happy augury for the future. I think that this House will live up to its commitments and the name it should hold. At present I do not know that I should feel as proud as I do when I think of the actions of the members of this Chamber during the last session of Parliament. This State can look forward to great things, but it is my earnest desire that the members of this Chamber will consider that it is a duty to have regard for the welfare of those who look to them for consideration.

I am conscious that I have to watch the clock. When I came here I was warned that people would soon be shuffling their feet if I continued speaking too long. I am aware that today is an occasion for festivity, and that we have afternoon tea to look forward to and an opportunity to meet friends, old and new. Therefore, I do not intend to delay the House much longer.

I trust the session will be fruitful; and, being the only woman of this Chamber, I hope I will become more experienced as I go along and that I will do justice to

that which I am expected to do. I cannot expound any more on what I have already said. I will now be true to name and close my remarks by wishing this Chamber all it would expect of itself in the coming session.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): A page has been written into history today; a lady has spoken in the Legislative Council. To us mere males that is quite a shock. Therefore, in order to give us an opportunity to recuperate, I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 17th June, 1954.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 12 noon.