

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

(HANSARD.)

First Session of the Twenty-Second Parliament.

The Legislative Assembly was dissolved on the 31st January, 1956.

The Twenty-second Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 2nd August, 1956, and the first session, which was opened by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator, was commenced on that date.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 2nd August, 1956.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon.

The **PRESIDENT** took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION.

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

COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honour Mr. Justice Wolff) having entered the Chamber at 12.3 p.m., 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 first session of the Twenty-second Parliament.

The Commission was read.

The Commissioner read the following statement:—

Mr. President, 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 3 o'clock this afternoon, His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor will declare to you the causes of the calling together of this Parliament; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should first be chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, the members of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and, having been duly sworn by me in accordance with the terms of the Commission granted me by His Excellency the Governor, you do elect your Speaker and notify the same to His Excellency.

The Commissioner and members of the Legislative Assembly retired from the Chamber.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

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. K. Watson (Metropolitan), Hon. E. M. Davies (West), Hon. H. C. Strickland (North), Hon. A. R. Jones (Midland), Hon. L. C. Diver (Central), Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (South-West), Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham (South-East), Hon. E. M. Heenan (North-East), Hon. G. E. Jeffery (Suburban) and Hon. J. McI. Thomson (South); and also the return of the writ for the by-election for the Metropolitan Province showing that Hon. R. C. Mattiske had been duly elected.

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

Sitting suspended from 12.25 to 3 p.m.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.5 p.m., and, members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber, obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It is with pleasure that I open the First Session of the Twenty-second Parliament of Western Australia.

I refer with deep regret to the death of the Honourable J. C. Willcock, who gave some 30 years of outstanding service to the State as a Member of Parliament, including nine years as a Minister and nine years as Premier.

It is with regret also that I record the passing of the Honourable H. Hearn and the Honourable C. W. D. Barker, both Members of the Legislative Council, who served the people of Western Australia with distinction.

There are some disquieting features in the State's economic outlook. Unemployment, particularly in the building industry, is higher than for some years. Rising costs continue to make more difficult the financing of necessary governmental services, and Loan funds are inadequate to meet all urgent requirements.

However, fundamentally our position is sound. Population continues to increase. With good seasons, our primary production is being maintained at a high level. There has been some recent improvement in wheat sales. The Loan Council has given the Commonwealth Government authority to make special provision to meet unemployment in Western Australia. Our special difficulties should be of a temporary nature and the State should continue its outstanding progress of the post-war years.

There is one direction in which all the people of the State can contribute to that progress—by increasing their consumption of locally made goods. The recently formed Trade and Industries Promotion Council has held its inaugural meeting and is expected to play an important part in the campaign to reduce the State's adverse trade balance and thus provide more local employment.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

Revenue for the financial year 1955-1956 was £49,612,406 and expenditure £51,443,237, leaving a deficit of £1,830,831.

To enable the Government to meet commitments in the coming year, consideration is being given to increasing charges for various State services.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

The season opened in March in the South West and good following rains fell in April. This was responsible for good pasture growth and increased output of milk and cream. In the wheatbelt above average rain fell in May followed by a period of fine weather, making cropping conditions excellent. Further general rains have since fallen and the season is very promising.

An excellent season was experienced in 1955. New records have been set for yields per acre for grains.

Construction has commenced on new laboratories at South Perth for the Department of Agriculture and a property has been purchased at Stoneville for development as a Horticultural Research Station.

The demand for Crown land remains steady.

Despite the severe conditions experienced last summer, no serious losses by bush fires were recorded.

Approximately 96,000 migrants have arrived in Western Australia since July, 1947. The Government has felt compelled to inform the Commonwealth Government that support for such an active migration programme must be reviewed if unemployment rises further.

Gold mining has been well maintained. Intense activity has been created in the Yilgarn Goldfield where ore is being treated from several mines at a central plant at Bullfinch.

Good results have been obtained from Government drilling in various districts. At Day Dawn the mineralised zone of the old Great Fingal Mine was intersected at 3,786 feet. It is hoped this will lead to the re-opening of this old mine.

The search for oil continues vigorously and an extensive programme of exploration and drilling is in progress.

There has been a revival in mining for copper in the Ravensthorpe district, and the Government is assisting in the provision of houses, roads, and water supply.

A Bill will be introduced to increase maximum compensation payments under the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

Research into alternative methods of utilising local coal has continued. An excellent metallurgical coke has been produced from Collie coal in a pilot plant at Weishpool, and investigations are being completed into the economics of a commercial plant.

The demand overseas for our pig iron is so great and the price so favourable that it is planned to increase production from 12,000 tons to 36,000 tons per year. This will be effected by the addition of a second blast furnace.

One thousand one hundred and twenty whales were taken last year by the three concerns operating at Albany, Carnarvon and Point Cloates, the oil and by-products being valued at £1,156,000. Ministers regret that the Commonwealth Government, having decided to dispose of the Australian Whaling Commission's assets at Babbage Island, did not see fit to accept the State Government's offer.

The Government has continued to press on with the provision of housing. Last year the State Housing Commission completed 3,696 homes, bringing the total number of completions since the war years to a figure in excess of 23,000.

In the last twelve months over 800 families have been allotted accommodation on account of eviction and other emergent circumstances.

Amending legislation will be introduced during the current Session of Parliament relating to the purchase of homes under the State Housing Act.

The 1945 Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement expired on the 30th June last and successful negotiations have taken place with the Commonwealth Government for a new agreement.

A Bill to approve and ratify the Agreement will be submitted to Parliament.

The activities of the Forests Department are expected to continue, in both the native forests and pine plantations, at the same level as last year. The decrease in building has resulted in some difficulties in the timber industry, which, however is increasing its exports both interstate and overseas.

Orders for new diesel and steam locomotives, rail cars and wagons for use on the Government Railways have been fulfilled, and the Railway Department is now in a position to meet more adequately the State's transport needs. The economics of operating some of the lesser used branch lines are being investigated and consideration may be given to closing those lines where the traffic hauled does not justify their remaining open.

For the last three months the Railways have been engaged in the largest movement of wheat to seaboard and mills in the history of the State and this is expected to continue until the end of the year. The quantity to be hauled is in the vicinity of 40,000 tons each week.

Constantly rising costs have emphasised the importance of eliminating wasteful competition and duplication in transport services. Two major airways companies serving our country areas have amalgamated and legislation is contemplated to combine the various metropolitan road passenger transport services to form one organisation.

The transport system of country districts is to be thoroughly investigated with the aim of providing the most efficient and economical service in the interests of the State.

Motor vehicle registrations in the metropolitan area increased by over 9,000 during the past year, bringing the total to over 104,000.

The Local Government Bill has been reprinted and will be introduced early in the session.

Following the recommendation of the Town Planning Advisory Committee, the proposals in the Metropolitan Region Plan are receiving continued investigation with a view to finalisation in a statutory plan.

The spirit of conciliation in industrial affairs has continued, with resultant industrial peace and progress in industry.

There has been no lessening in efforts to maintain industrial standards and it is proposed to introduce legislation to amend the Factories and Shops Act, the Industrial Arbitration Act, and the Workers' Compensation Act.

It is also proposed to introduce a Bill to provide for long service leave to employees outside of Government employment.

Good progress has been maintained with the expansion and improvement of country water supplies and irrigation works. The pipeline between Wellington Dam and Narrogin has been completed.

Electrically driven pumping stations have been opened at Cunderdin and Kellerberrin.

Expansion of Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage services to meet existing and future development continues at a high level in the metropolitan area. The construction of the Serpentine pipe head dam will be completed next summer. A 48-inch trunk main to Perth is now being laid.

The final stage of the dredging of the Success and Parmelia Channels was completed last December and channel beacons installed, allowing successful navigation of approaches to the Broken Hill Company Pty. Ltd. jetty.

The first bulk wheat cargo was loaded on the new No. 1 Wharf at Albany in February, 1956. The Bunbury jetty extension is practically completed and construction of the new Transit Shed at that port has commenced.

The new State Insurance building should be completed and ready for occupation shortly.

The record amount of £5,830,000 was expended last year by the Main Roads Department and 580 miles of roadway were surfaced with bitumen. Over £800,000 was spent on roads in the North-West during the year.

Progress has been made with the planning of the Narrows Bridge and tenders for its erection will be called towards the end of this year.

The South Fremantle Power Station has been fully completed and work is proceeding on the new Power Station at Bunbury. Plant now being installed at that centre will have a capacity almost equal to that at South Fremantle. At East Perth a new large Turbo-Alternator has been installed.

The Commonwealth Government has been pressed to advise if it will help the State develop the North-West and Kimberleys on the projects submitted by the All-Party Delegation appointed by this Parliament during the 1954 session.

Pastoralists are experiencing a good season in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Ashburton districts, but severe drought conditions continue in the West Gascoyne and parts of the Murchison.

Work is in hand to provide additional water supplies for the Liveringa rice project and an experimental clay barrier has been built in the Gascoyne river near Carnarvon in an effort to improve water supplies to the banana plantations.

The Wyndham Meatworks anticipate treating 31,000 head of cattle during the season.

The Time Charter from the Australian Shipping Board of the steamer "Daylesford" expires in October, but a renewal will be negotiated if the traffic warrants such action, having in mind the addition of the new passenger vessel m.v. "Koojarra" to the coastal service in September. It is expected the new vessel under construction in England for the State Shipping Service will be launched in May of next year for delivery in the following September.

A strong demand continues for insurance of those risks which the State Government Insurance Office has the statutory authority to underwrite. There is also an increasing demand for the Office to handle fire and general accident risks of all types. A Bill to extend the activities of the State Government Insurance Office will again be introduced this session.

Although 221 new classrooms were provided during 1955, a large increase in school enrolments each year (last year 6,500) makes the provision of adequate accommodation for both primary and high school children a continuing and pressing problem.

Eight high schools are under construction and five more are planned for the near future.

Substantial expansion is taking place in technical education and new buildings are urgently required to accommodate the rapidly increasing enrolment in technical subjects.

Following the outstanding success of the Medical School Appeal, satisfactory progress is being made in hospital reconstruction work to provide for the clinical teaching of the University Medical School to commence early next year.

The mass immunisation of children with the Salk Vaccine for Poliomyelitis is proceeding satisfactorily.

A Cancer Council has been formed to advise the Government on measures to combat the toll of cancer.

In the field of health education, the Health Department is being assisted by the newly formed Health Education Council.

The Government will assist financially towards the establishment of Social Centres for the Aged.

A large Psychiatric Clinic for out-patients was opened during the year and this will form the basis of a preventive service for mental ill health.

Negotiations are taking place for the acquisition of a site for a new mental hospital—plans for this hospital will be prepared as early as possible. The improvement of existing mental hospital facilities will continue.

The Government, in conjunction with the Church of England, will develop the reformatory system for delinquent boys by establishing a reform school for the more sophisticated types, thereby enabling the Anglican Farm School at Stoneville to cater for the milder type of delinquent.

The economic and social advancement of natives is continuing throughout the State. Financial assistance to religious missions working in native welfare has been granted and will be extended.

An endeavour has been made to attract to Western Australia competitors and others attending the forthcoming Olympic Games at Melbourne, and extensive advertising is being carried out in the Eastern States to increase the number of visitors to Western Australia. Country Tourist Bureaux have been assisted by an increase in the Government subsidy.

Other legislation to be placed before you will include—

A Bill to amend the Inspection of Machinery Act relating to the control of diesel locomotive drivers at North West ports and in the mining industry.

A Bill to provide for women to serve on Juries.

A Bill to provide for adult franchise for the election of members of the Legislative Council.

A Bill to provide for liquor licences for canteens in remote areas to cater for employees of Oil Exploration Companies.

A Bill to remove the time limit of six months within which a prosecution for an indictable offence, triable summarily in a Court of Petty Sessions, may be commenced,

A Bill to amend the Child Welfare Act to clarify the position of offenders against children in order that such offenders will have the right of trial by jury for serious offences.

A Bill to amend the Traffic Act, extending certain privileges to overseas motorists visiting this State.

A Bill to control the publication of objectionable literature.

I now declare this Session of Parliament open and trust that Providence may bless your labours.

His Excellency and members of the Legislative Assembly then withdrew from the Chamber.

[*The President resumed the Chair.*]

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY 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 Inspection of Machinery Act, 1921-1954."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

HON. G. E. JEFFERY (Suburban) [3.45]: 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 Parliament:—

May it Please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

I wish to associate myself with the tribute paid by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, to the late Hon. J. C. Willcock, for many years Premier of this State, and also the tribute he paid to the two late members of this House, Hon. H. Hearn and

Hon. C. W. D. Barker. They served this State well and we are all the poorer for their passing.

It is disquieting to see the symptoms of increasing unemployment among us today, and I express the sincere hope that this is only a passing phase. The problem has caused the Government grave concern, and I would take this opportunity of congratulating the Premier on his prompt and successful action in asking the Commonwealth Government to make funds available to alleviate the position.

I would also congratulate the Government on the setting up of the Trade and Industries Promotion Council. This body, which is representative of the whole of the community, has already achieved a measure of success in the short time it has been in existence, and I am sure that with the loyal co-operation of the people of the State, it will do much to relieve us of our industrial dependence on the Eastern States. Experience of goods manufactured in this State leads me confidently to predict that this Council will make a valuable contribution towards the correction of our unfavourable trade balance with the Eastern States, and that it will help to solve our unemployment problem.

I am pleasantly surprised at the amount of work that has been done in the rural areas of this State. I wish also to pay tribute to the Government for the work done in agricultural research, and I feel sure that all members of this House will be interested in the future in the activities and experiments taking place in connection with the Ord River irrigation scheme and the Liveringa rice-growing experiment. This work, I believe, will be of great advantage to the State if these projects can be put on a economic basis.

Whatever personal regrets I may have that the State Government was not able to acquire the whaling station at Babbage Island, it is gratifying to know that the industry will continue at this site and should be a permanent asset to the north. There are signs of renewed interest in the North-West of Western Australia, and a valuable contribution in that direction was to be seen in the recent Press tour of that part of the State. With the intense search for that elusive lady, oil, I believe much greater interest will be taken in the north where there exist other minerals of value also, namely, gold and uranium. I am pleased also at the sound footing that the asbestos industry seems to have achieved. I believe we are all agreed that in the near future the North-West will become what we have dreamed of for so many years.

There are promising signs on some of our goldfields, also; and with the reopening of what were thought to be worked-out mines, it is to be hoped that those areas will have a much brighter future. I am pleased to note that the Government has decided to expand our charcoal iron industry, and it is gratifying to see that a

pioneer industry of this nature has now reached the stage where it will be able to increase its production of iron from 12,000 to 36,000 tons per annum.

In the past, members have had cause to worry over the state of our railways, but I was pleased to hear in His Excellency's Speech that, in spite of its past position, our railway system has been rejuvenated to the extent indicated. I might mention at this juncture the great improvement that has taken place in suburban transport, due to the introduction of the diesel coaches. The figures show that the people of this State appreciate what has been done, and no doubt the increased suburban rail traffic will contribute towards a better state of finance in the department.

I am happy, also, to see that the Government intends introducing a Bill to co-ordinate metropolitan transport. Our transport position is a great problem, and one to which members of this Chamber should apply their thoughts. A long-felt want will be realised if some controlling authority can be set up to co-ordinate and rationalise our transport system.

One other matter that gives members of this Chamber a great deal of satisfaction is the success of the Medical School appeal. I am certain that one member present will be thoroughly pleased with the result which, I think, speaks volumes for the big-heartedness of the people of this State. The amount raised was approximately £570,000, and this achievement will play a most important part in the future in alleviating the great shortage of doctors.

I am extremely pleased about the efforts of the Government on technical education. The time has arrived in this State when the importance of technical education cannot be stressed too strongly. Where there are expanding industries, it is most commendable if the State can produce the men from within its borders to supply the technical knowledge required. It is also most pleasing to hear from his Excellency's Speech, that eight high schools have been completed and that five others are now in course of construction. There is no doubt that in these modern times, a high standard of education is a "must."

A most pressing problem, which has worried the public conscience for some time, is the state of aged people. It is therefore gratifying to hear from His Excellency's Speech that the Government has decided to grant financial assistance to establish social centres for old people. This will certainly go a long way towards assisting to solve one of our greatest social evils, for there is no doubt that the most pressing fear of aged people is loneliness. With this proposed assistance, the Government will be able to alleviate their plight.

The question of drainage is one that greatly concerns the Government and especially those members representing suburban constituencies. I am therefore most

happy to learn that the Government has decided to take action on a large scale with the object of overcoming this problem. It would only require a visit to such districts as Bentley Park, Morley Park, Carlisle and Midvale to make all members assembled here realise the urgency of the task that confronts the Government now that it has made a start on its comprehensive drainage scheme.

As a member who has just left private employ, it greatly pleases me to hear from His Excellency's Speech that the Government intends to proceed with a measure to introduce long-service leave for employees in private industry. It would be a fitting reward for the workers in Western Australia if this privilege could be granted. Workers in other States, who have not had such a good industrial record as workers in this State, have enjoyed this concession for some time, and it will indeed be a fitting reward for the industry of our workers if the Government proceeds during this session to introduce a Bill to grant them this privilege. On the same score, I am pleased to hear that amendments will be made to the Workers' Compensation Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Act with a view to increasing the maximum amounts payable. I am greatly interested to learn, too, that it is also proposed to introduce legislation to give women the same privilege as men of sitting on juries.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You call it a privilege!

Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: It is proposed to allow women the right to serve on juries in the same way as their husbands do. In conclusion, I thank the electors of the Suburban Province for the confidence they have placed in me by electing me as a member of this House, and I hope that my diligent efforts in the future will be a fitting reward for that confidence.

Before resuming my seat, I thank members on both sides of the House, the officers and members of the staff of the Legislative Council, and all those civil servants—ranging from the oldest Under Secretary to the youngest office boy—who have gone out of their way to assist me in the same manner as they would help an older member. They have been only too willing to come forward to teach me the ropes.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West): I formally second the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): Realising the strain that members have been under for the last hour—with the exception of Sir Charles Latham—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.57 p.m.