

it. Another project of some importance is the Serpentine dam. This also serves a portion of the Canning electorate. Indeed, with the addition of a little further drainage and a few areas for playing fields, we would be content, for a little while anyway.

There is one item of proposed legislation in His Excellency's Speech that I would like to comment on, and that is the suggestion to amend the Native Welfare Act to improve the status of the natives. This is legislation of a high humanitarian order and I trust that consideration will be given to the higher education of the natives so that their leaders may ultimately be available from amongst the natives themselves. His Excellency, in his Speech today, indicated the legislation with which it is proposed to proceed this session. I would say that the announcement is a further indication that the Government will maintain its good record in respect of the legislation it introduces of governing in the interests of all the people of the State. Mr. Speaker, I count it an honour to move the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. D. Brand, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.12 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 9th July, 1957.

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The **PRESIDENT** took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PETITION—NATIVE WELFARE.

Proposed Reserve at Beechboro.

Hon. A. F. Griffith presented a petition from 138 residents of the Beechboro district praying that the decision of the Government to establish a native reserve in the area be reconsidered.

Petition received and read.

Resolved: That the petition lie upon the Table of the House.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *Freight Rates, Yuna Service.*

Hon. A. R. JONES (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is the Minister aware that freights on many items for Yuna are now much in excess of what they were when rail services operated?

(2) Will the Minister take steps to have the position brought into line with his and the Government's promise that freights would be subsidised to places where rail services were discontinued and replaced with authorised road transport?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) I am not aware that freights on many items are dearer than they were before railway operations ceased. The transport service operating in the area charges the same rate today as was charged prior to the cessation of railway operations. People were pleased to use that service then and they are using it now. I do not know, but I presume that on some items—a small volume of items overall—charges may be a little dearer; but on the great bulk of tonnage that will come out of the area I understand there will be a substantial reduction in the cost of transport.

(2) The position is in line with the undertaking given by me and the Government in relation to subsidies. The only undertaking given was that miscellaneous classes of goods would be subsidised where railway services ceased to operate.

(b) *Geraldton-Yuna Service.*

Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Was the Minister in recent weeks asked by the Upper Chapman Road Board to reinstate the railway service between Geraldton and Yuna?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes"—

(a) What were the reasons given to the Minister by the road board as to why the rail service should be reinstated?

(b) What reply did the Minister give the local authority?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) Because a 12-mile section of road remained unsealed and the board feared it might become impassable.

- (b) The Geraldton-Yuna Road, part of which is referred to by the Upper Chapman Road Board, has been carrying upwards of 50 vehicles per day in the winter time for some years, and it is not anticipated that the relatively small amount of traffic which will be diverted to this road as a result of the discontinuance of the railway will unduly affect the condition of the road; and it is certainly not anticipated that it will become impassable.

In most of these cases of anxiety concerning the ability of roads to carry increased traffic after the railway is discontinued, reference is made to heavy traffic. It should be pointed out that all these roads from time to time are called upon to carry axle loads in accordance with those allowed under the traffic regulations, and this traffic regulation of a 7½-ton axle load will continue to prevail.

It is not possible, neither is it considered necessary, for all the roads to which railway traffic will be diverted to be sealed. The sealing of roads is necessarily related to funds available to the department and the priority for treatment which is assessed in accordance with traffic intensity, climatic conditions and the nature of the materials available for use in the construction of the road.

(c) Loss on Metropolitan Coaching.

Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What was the loss on metropolitan coaching for the year 1955-56?

(2) What was the loss for the same service from the 1st July, 1956, to the 31st December, 1956?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Direct operating loss—£500,327.

(2) Direct operating loss—approximately £280,488.

CHILD WELFARE.

Home for Delinquent Boys.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Chief Secretary:

On what priority in its building programme does the Government place the proposed home for the more sophisticated type of delinquent boys?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

This proposal has a very high priority in the current year's building programme.

UNFAIR TRADING AND PROFIT CONTROL.

Number of Employees, etc.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

In connection with the Unfair Trading and Profit Control Act, 1956, will he provide the House with the following information:—

- (1) How many persons are employed at the present time in connection with the operations of the Act?
- (2) Under what categories or classifications are such persons so employed?
- (3) How many persons are employed as inspectors?
- (4) What salary is being paid to the commissioner appointed under the Act?
- (5) To date what is the total amount of expenses incurred in payment of wages and salaries to employees?
- (6) What other expenses have been incurred?
- (7) How many investigations under the Act have been carried out?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Six.

(2) Commissioner; adviser (part time); three investigators; one typist. Assistance has also been received from two senior officers of the Public Service who have been appointed advisers for specific investigations.

(3) Nil. Inspecting work is carried out by investigators as required.

(4) The commissioner is receiving his previous salary of £2,650 per annum received as a stipendiary magistrate.

(5) An amount of £3,288 14s. 8d., including a proportion of the salary of the part-time adviser.

(6) A sum of £313 18s. 9d.

(7) Twelve.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Cost.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Chief Secretary:

What was the cost to the people of Western Australia of the Legislative Council for the financial year 1956-1957, inclusive of salaries to members and staff, and other expenses, including printing and incidental items?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The cost of the Legislative Council for 1956-1957 was £87,673. This figure excludes reporting of parliamentary debates and printing for the Joint House Committee, which cannot readily be allocated.

OLD MILL, SOUTH PERTH.*Government's Intentions.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

What are the Government's intentions in regard to the Old Mill at South Perth?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

In the construction of the bridge at the Narrows care will be taken to avoid the Old Mill so that it will not be interfered with.

GOVERNMENT MOTOR-VEHICLES.*Purchase, Types, etc.*

Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What is the Government's policy in regard to purchase of motor-vehicles for its various needs?

(2) What types of cars and utilities are purchased?

(3) What number of Holden utilities were purchased during the financial year 1955-56?

(4) What number of all other makes of utilities were purchased during the financial year 1955-56?

(5) Are Holden utilities considered satisfactory for the work for which they were purchased?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Vehicles are purchased when it is considered that their use will enable work to be carried out more efficiently and cheaply.

(2) Vehicles purchased are those considered most suitable for the type of work for which they are to be used.

(3) There were 34 Holden utilities purchased during 1955-56.

(4) There were 97 other utilities of various makes purchased during 1955-56.

(5) Yes.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the 4th July.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [4.49]: Firstly, I want to say that I regret very much that Mr. Davies has been ill while on holidays. I am sure this will have spoilt his vacation. I have a great respect for the hon. member—he and I soldiered in France together—and I am sure it would have given him great pleasure to go back to the land of his birth.

The Chief Secretary: He is an Australian.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: He told me he came from England.

The Chief Secretary: His wife did.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Nevertheless, I feel sure he would have liked to go back to the old spots on the Continent where he served his country. I understand he is getting better and is on his way back to Western Australia, which I am pleased to hear.

This will be the 33rd speech I have made on the Address-in-reply, and I would say that during that long period I have covered most of the ground possible. I have been in a place where there have been six different Premiers, some of whom had quite a long period in office; and some a much shorter one. There have been four Governors, and four Lieut.-Governors, of whom one was my old colleague, the late Sir James Mitchell. He served 15 years as Lieut.-Governor and two years and eight months as Governor. There have been six Speakers and two Presidents in the Legislature in which I have served, and there is only one member of Hansard left of those who were on the staff when I first came into the House in 1921, and that is the present head of the staff, Mr. Royce.

After having served all those years I can say that debates have not varied very much in either House during the Address-in-reply. The Government states a lot of platitudes, members compliment their own Ministers, and the Opposition is always very critical where it is possible to criticise the Government. That seems to be the position today.

I do not propose to be very severe today. I would like to be severe on one point; but, if I were I would very soon be called to order, as there is a motion on the matter standing in my name on the notice paper.

The Chief Secretary: I thought you were going to start a new pattern by the Opposition praising the Government.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I could praise the Government in some respects. A Government cannot always be wrong. But sometimes it is; and, during the last session of Parliament, the Government was very wrong indeed.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: They are never bad.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I suppose, that of all the Parliaments in Australia, this is the most friendly. It has always been friendly over the years I have served, with the exception of the first time I came to Parliament, when there were two sections of the Labour Party. It was just after the war when there was a division of opinion between Labour organisations as to whether they should or should not support the progress of the war. Quite a number of good Labour men left and formed an organisation

known as the Nationalist Labour Party. That was about the worst Parliament in which I served. It was during the first three years and very soon died. As a result, the Government of the day, from 1921 to 1924, had a majority of 10 in the Legislative Assembly, and until lately members of its political complexion had a very comfortable majority in this House. Of course, more recently there has been a wider scope, or people have taken a greater interest in this House, with the result that the parties are more narrowly divided than previously.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: In your long experience you have seen members suspended.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have, Mr. President; and some of them have had a great honour extended to them immediately afterwards. I know to what the hon. member is referring, as it was when I made a reflection on the Speaker. I was asked to leave the Chamber, which I readily did. The Premier of that particular Government was the late Mr. Willcock. It was during the dying hours of Parliament and Bills were coming down of which I had some previous knowledge, which had been given me by the Government. However, there was not time for me to distribute this knowledge to members of the Opposition, so the House was adjourned for 20 minutes and a new sitting was created. That is the only occasion on which I have been suspended over a period of 33 years. I expect some have served longer than that and have not been suspended at all.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I do not think you have been put out of this House.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No; but if the Government continues to do certain things I will lose my temper and probably have to leave this House.

The Chief Secretary: We would not put you out of here.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If I were put out I would not be invited back. I have read the speech made by His Excellency the Governor and have noted how little such speeches have varied over the years. I suppose it is a good constitutional thing, but the Speech contains a lot of platitudes and a lot of things which the Government does not intend doing.

The Chief Secretary: Not this Government.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Would you like me to refer to the last Governor's Speech?

The Chief Secretary: That is too far back.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I thought it might be. I had been hoping that, on this occasion, some of the proposals would

be omitted. If the Opposition is strong enough, I hope the Government will be prevented from proceeding with them. I suppose the Speech does give the Government the opportunity of advertising what it has done during the previous session, and what it anticipates will be done in the current session.

Looking at the financial position, I saw that the Governor referred to a sum of money handled by the present Government. The revenue he cited for the financial year was £54,330,000; and as is usual with a Labour Government, the expenditure exceeded revenue. This time it was £56,243,000.

The Minister for Railways: That applies to all Governments.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No. During the term of the last Government, prior to the Labour Government regaining power there was a profit at the end of the year.

The Minister for Railways: Which year?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think it was 1953 or 1954. That Government had a Treasurer who could say "no" if it were justified. But on this occasion, we do not seem to be able to do much in that direction. I was contrasting the finance received then and now, after allowing for an inflated currency, and it can be seen what a lot of money the Government is handling today in comparison with those days. The revenue for 1923 was £7,000,000, about one-eighth of last year's. Besides the £7,000,000 the loan funds amounted to £4,475,000. The deficit was very slight indeed, even with all the heavy developmental work that was carried out in those years. It was during some of those years that the railways were extended into the agricultural areas, and quite a great deal of money was advanced to the farmers to enable them to continue with their development.

The Minister for Railways: You need to multiply that by four on present-day values.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I want the State Governments to have the responsibility of finding their own money. They will then be more careful. Now it is like the boy who can go to his father and keep tapping him for a few shillings or a few pounds, and he taps away for so long that he does get something, but has no responsibility in connection with it. In this case the father is the Commonwealth Government and the sons are the States. It is a scramble between them to see who can get the most. It is not a very satisfactory way, because it does not throw the responsibility on the State Treasurers to be very exacting and careful as to how they spend their money.

Personally, I would like to see introduced a system whereby the State Governments would be responsible for their own money. The days have gone when we got most of our money from overseas. Probably very little money is owing today for overseas loans that were obtained for the purpose of development in Australia. I suppose they would be all pretty well paid off.

I want to say a few words about the legislation that the Government intends to introduce, and I also wish to make some comment on those things that are not mentioned in the Speech, but in regard to which something should be done. The hon. member who moved the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech gave us quite a deal of information about goldmining; and while he told us that quite a number of mines are actively engaged and evidently earning substantial profits in the North-East portion of the Goldfields, some, of course, are going out of production simply because of the high costs and also because of the falling off of the gold that has been won from them. These things are inevitable because the gold just cannot be put back again. Every ounce taken out means an ounce less in the mine.

So we must expect—the same thing happens all over Australia—that eventually the goldmines must work themselves out unless a lot of exploratory work is done whereby new mines are found. It was, however, rather encouraging to listen to Mr. Hall when he gave us some information about the mines operating in his province.

The other matter that I am not so hopeful about is the statement concerning the strong overseas demand for high-grade charcoal iron which is produced at Wundowie. It is proposed, I understand, to erect a second blast furnace so as to increase the production from 14,000 to 36,000 tons per year. My one concern is this: Will it be at a loss, or will the sale price cover the cost? I do not mind the Government running any kind of business as long as it does not come on the taxpayer to meet the losses that are made.

The Minister for Railways: Would you apply that principle to the railways?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No. If the Minister is going to raise the question of the railways let us start on the buses and railways in the metropolitan area. There are only two governmental undertakings that I know of that are profitable. One is the State Government Insurance Office. After all, it handles all the State insurance work. I do not know what premiums are charged, but probably they are at least sufficient to cover the claims made against them. The other profitable undertaking is the State implement works. Of course, that does most of the Government work, too.

The Chief Secretary: The State Engineering Works.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. It also carries out any heavy work that cannot be done by any other engineering firm. It does a very good job and it makes a profit. They are the two exceptions that I know of. Wundowie lost money last year, as it has done every year it has been operating. So I am concerned about the position. Why should we go into these things when we know we are going to make a loss? It is a funny thing, but private enterprise, competing with the Government, can always make a profit when the Government cannot. I do not like seeing these concerns continued by the Government.

The Minister for Railways: Wundowie is bringing some land into production, indirectly.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It could come into production, normally, too. The trees are being removed from the land, but it will take something to remove the stumps, because they are being cut off very low down. Certainly the timber is being used, but at the same time, it is going to be very difficult to clear the land when it is handed over. Most of the stumps will sucker and there will be sucker bashing for quite a long time. There will be sucker bashing for as long as I am here, but some money will be received if the Government intends to sell the land, although in some cases the timber is being taken off private land.

One good thing is that last year we evidently did not send quite the same amount of money to the Eastern States as we did the previous year. The Speech states—

Figures for the first nine months of this year show that exports exceeded imports by £24,700,000 compared with an adverse trade balance of £14,500,000 for the same period of last year.

We are very pleased about that; it is a bit of encouragement. I suppose Western Australia can at least feel happy that it has been able to do this.

There is a complaint that the railway revenue for the year was the highest on record but still fell short of expenditure by £4,649,145. Costs have been steadily rising, but rail freights are still at the same level as in 1953. It is just a little over three years ago that they were raised. Last year, in order to help the Government, we did agree to a land tax which was imposed, I understood, to help cover the deficiency made by the railways. I will admit that the city is probably paying something towards meeting that deficiency, but I point out that the losses on the metropolitan railways are correspondingly as high as those in the country districts. Therefore they are making a contribution to the railways by the land tax.

I know that some people have been very grieved about it, but they are not paying any more tax today than they did when the Federal Government imposed a tax on land. I do not know whether there is any method left for a Government, no matter what its political colour, to tax people further. Last year we got to the bad or beastly system of getting hold of the gamblers and taxing them to assist us to make good our losses. There is a very bad principle in that; and I understand we are to have a Bill before us again this year, probably to take a little more from them.

Whether the Government is satisfied with the amount of money it is getting, I do not know, but I will be very interested to find out what the revenue has been from that source. The principle is shockingly bad—that we have to encourage gambling to get money to pay into Consolidated Revenue. I suppose it will be continued. I do not know what other sources are left. We have taxed sporting bodies and the amusements of the people.

The Chief Secretary: The one-armed bandits.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Chief Secretary will not get any support from me on that score. Fancy encouraging them to come into operation again when they have been stopped! This has been the worst piece of State management I know of. I am not blaming only the Labour Government, because there is no doubt in my mind that the one-armed bandits were against the law from the very start, but the police would not take action when it was their responsibility. They are responsible for enforcing the Police Act, and the one-armed bandits come under that Act.

For heaven's sake do not let us get so low down as to tax fellows who cannot resist putting a shilling into a machine! They lose. Who makes the profit? It is the fellow who does not do any work; make no mistake about that! This matter will get no encouragement from me. It is one of those questions that is not on our party platform; but in the case of the Labour Party, whether an item is on its platform or not, the party has an upstairs meeting and woe betide the fellow who votes against something that the meeting is in favour of.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Of course they do.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know how the hon. member fares upstairs—whether he supports the Government or not. He does not take me into his confidence in that direction. But he comes here; and, like everyone sitting in that back row on the other side, he supports everything that the Government decides on. Whether it is in the platform of the party does not matter.

The Chief Secretary: That will be the day!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They do. I would say that the Ministry is so strong and such is its hold over the members that the members dare not refuse. I just wonder how my friend, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, feels sometimes; because I suppose that when he was Leader of the Party the members bent to his wishes, but today he has to bend to the wishes of the present Government.

The Minister for Railways: The same as the Country Party members.

The Chief Secretary: The week's funny story!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am glad it is a funny one, because I know it happens. Perhaps the Leader of the House will be good enough to tell me this: I think that at the last session of Parliament we agreed there would be an inquiry into the liquor laws of this State. We have been in recess for quite a long time. What has been done about it?

The Chief Secretary: You will hear about it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is one of those things that will be in the future.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is abandoned.

The Chief Secretary: It is on the way now.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I thought we might be able to put a bit of pressure on the Government.

The Chief Secretary: If you were a good party man and attended your party meetings you possibly would have known something about it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There might be some truth in that. I know there was some story about an all-party committee to be appointed; but as far as I know, it has not yet been appointed. If it has, I am a long way behind with my knowledge.

A certain question was asked this afternoon by a member as to the cost of this House. Well, this House has cost some money over the period of its existence. I do not know why the question was asked. I can have a guess, of course. One reason is to see whether it would be advantageous to the taxpayers of this country to have the Legislative Council abolished. Might I say to the hon. member who asked the question that if she feels she is not serving a very useful purpose in the House, for the money she receives, there is no reason why she should not resign; nothing can prevent her. There is one thing about me—I think I earn all my money! If the hon. member feels grieved over the fact that she is taking money which she thinks

should not be paid to her, she would have no difficulty in getting herself out of that trouble.

As a matter of fact, the abolition of the Legislative Council has, I think, ceased to be Labour Party policy in Western Australia. If the Western Australian Government is not behind the general policy of the Labour Party throughout Australia there is something wrong. In New South Wales, where the Labour Party has had a majority for quite a long time, the Legislative Council is regarded as being very efficient.

I will also remind the hon. member of this: On many occasions this House has refused to pass immature legislation that has been passed in another place even by parties other than the Labour Party. On one occasion I heard one of the best Labour Premiers Western Australia ever had say, "Thank God for the Legislative Council!" when it sent back to the Legislative Assembly a Bill with which it did not agree. That Premier appreciated what this House stands for. I want members to understand clearly that, frequently, especially after a general election, when a Government has introduced legislation which has been in accordance with one of the planks of its party, and which has been approved by the Assembly, this House has refused to pass it, irrespective of the political colour of the party in power.

I have opposed legislation myself that has been introduced by a member of my own party in another place because I did not consider that its passing would be in the best interests of the State. I think the hon. member who asked the question regarding the cost of this House did so merely for advertising purposes. This House will remain in existence for many years yet and will continue to show the sound judgment that it has shown in the past.

It is my intention to leave the rest of the Address-in-reply to the younger members of this House because, over the years, I think I have contributed much to the Hansard of this State. I hesitate to say "to the welfare of the State" because I am too modest for that. I will therefore conclude—

The Chief Secretary: Don't do that! We like to hear you!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I thank the Chief Secretary for that remark, but I know that I would have had many interjections from him by now had it not been for the fact that he is suffering from a relaxed throat. I do not intend to say anything further.

On motion by Hon. W. F. Willesee, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 9th July, 1957.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

LONG-SERVICE LEAVE LEGISLATION.

(a) Government Discussions with Employees and Employers.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Premier:

(1) What number of discussions have taken place between the Government and representatives of employees on the Government's proposed long-service leave legislation?

(2) What number of discussions have taken place between the Government and representatives of private industry on the Government's proposed long-service leave legislation?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) A few.

(2) Some time ago I publicly invited representatives of private industry, who favoured the principle of long-service leave, to take the opportunity of making