

considering these cases, the service the settlers are rendering to the State in bringing these areas into production.

These increased costs do not only apply to land settlement. The whole rural community, and more particularly the man on the land, are alarmed at the continued upward trend of costs over which they have no control.

I contend that the farmer has now reached the stage when he can no longer absorb these costs. To support this contention I quote figures given us by the Rt. Hon. John McEwen. He said that, although there had been an increase of 11 per cent. in production, there had been a fall of 11 per cent. in the return to the producer. This position cannot continue, and I appeal to the Government to explore every avenue of reducing costs. One avenue I suggest that it should consider, as one way of countering these rises, is the possibility of further economy in the transport service.

I would also suggest that an inquiry be held into the possibility of establishing killing centres in some country areas, preferably on a weight and grade basis, and a report made on same. This would relieve the present congestion at Midland Junction; and if rail transport were used between that centre and the port, a lot of trucks would be taken off our main roads.

Just one further point: We in the country areas have watched with interest the efforts of the Minister for Industrial Development to attract new industries to the State, and we congratulate him on the success he has achieved. I hope the same generous terms will be available for the advance of industry in the rural areas. One suggestion I would put forward is that the present vermin fencing scheme be extended to cover all types of boundary fencing on new land. This would help considerably in the early stages of becoming established.

In regard to proposed legislation, having had a long association with local government, I note with satisfaction that the Local Government Bill is to be brought forward in this session, and I am sure I am expressing the feeling of the majority of those in local government when I say that I hope it will be acceptable on this occasion.

While on this subject, I would like to make some mention of the Main Roads Department and the excellent work it is doing in the country. There is one request I would like to put forward in that respect, and that is concerning what we in local government call the fifty-fifty bitumen scheme. This is a very satisfactory scheme so far as local government is concerned, and it is doing a great deal to seal quite a lot of the secondary country roads. But in local government, attempts to make the best use of the scheme would be greatly advantaged if it were altered to a two-thirds—one-third basis.

Mr. President, I do express the hope that my term of office will enable me to contribute to the further advancement of this great State it is our privilege to serve.

THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [3.52]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 28th July, 1960

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at noon.
The SPEAKER took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. F. E. Islip) read the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor summoning the second session of the Twenty-third Parliament.

MESSAGE: OPENING BY COMMISSIONER

A Message from His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honour Mr. Justice Virtue) requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber. Members, having accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and heard the Commission read, returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER

THE SPEAKER: I have received the writ issued for the by-election for the electoral district of South Fremantle, and from the returns endorsed thereon it appears that Mr. Henry Curran has been duly elected to serve in the Legislative Assembly as member for the electoral district of South Fremantle. I am now prepared to swear in the honourable member.

The honourable member took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance and signed the roll.

Sitting suspended from 12.16 to 3 p.m.

SUMMONS FROM THE GOVERNOR

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT

Issue of Proclamation

1. Mr. HAWKE asked the Attorney-General:

Does the Government intend to issue a proclamation in the near future, or at the latest during the present year, under the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act, 1947?

Mr. WATTS replied:

I desire to thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving me some prior notice of this question. The Government has no present intention of issuing a proclamation this year unless the Legislative Assembly otherwise resolves.

RAILWAY FREIGHTS AND FARES

Proposed Increase

2. Mr. SEWELL asked the Premier:
- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to raise railway freights and fares at an early date?
 - (2) If so, do members of the Government realise the detrimental effect that such an increase would have upon country people, particularly those living in areas far distant from Perth and Fremantle?

Mr. BRAND replied:

(1) and (2) Consideration is being given to this matter; and in the event of a decision being made, the Government is mindful of the impost which it places on people living away from Perth. Nevertheless, it imposes the same problem as has always been placed upon them whenever there has been an increase of railway freights and fares.

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF SCHOOLS

Commonwealth Financial Assistance

3. Mr. BRADY asked the Premier:
- Has the Government made any representations to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance in dealing with the educational problems of primary, secondary, and private schools?

Mr. BRAND replied:

A case has been prepared regarding primary, secondary, and technical education methods, and its presentation is at present being considered.

STATE BASIC WAGE

Reduction by Amending Legislation

4. Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Premier:
- Will he give the House an assurance that the Government will not attempt to reduce the basic wage declared under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act either directly or indirectly by way of amending legislation?

Mr. BRAND replied:

The Government has not given any consideration to this matter.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Payments to Dependents

5. Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Labour:
- (1) Is he aware that under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Acts of New South Wales and

Tasmania, the amount payable to dependants of a deceased worker exceeds by about £1,000 the amount applicable in Western Australia?

- (2) Is he aware that in the States of New South Wales and Tasmania, the amount allowed by the Act for medical and hospital expenses to injured workers far exceeds that under the Western Australian Act, the sum of £1,000 being allowed in Tasmania?
- (3) Is he aware that under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Acts of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria, workers are entitled to insurance cover while travelling to and from their place of residence to their place of employment?
- (4) Does he deny that the foregoing provisions in the Acts referred to are more generous than those existing under the Western Australian Act?
- (5) Does he recollect that on the 30th September last, he stated that the whole question of amending the Workers' Compensation Act was under consideration, but no decision has yet been made (vide *Hansard* page 1862)?
- (6) As nearly ten months have passed, can he indicate whether a decision has yet been made and the nature of such decision, if any?
- (7) Will appropriate amendments to the Act be introduced during this session; and, if not, why?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) The matter is still under consideration.
- (7) Yes.

NORTH-WEST

Appointment of Administrative Officer

6. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for North-West:

Would he acquaint the House with the latest developments concerning the proposal he made during the last session of Parliament when the North-West Estimates were being considered in regard to the appointment of an administrative officer to control Government departments in the North-West?

Mr. COURT replied:

No decision has been made to call applications for the position of administrative officer for the

North-West. The idea has not been abandoned, but it has been felt desirable to obtain some further experience in regard to the problems of administration in the North-West in the light of the many projects that are being carried on in the North. I anticipate some announcement will be made in connection with this matter in the near future.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

Preventive Measures

7. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Is he aware of the article which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 27th July, headed "Victims Buried as Town Mourns"?
- (2) If so, could he advise the House as to what preventive measures are taken by the W.A.G.R. in regard to such an accident in this State?

Mr. COURT replied:

I have to thank the honourable member for giving me notice of this question before the House met. The answer is as follows:—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Rules and regulations are already provided in this State; and if they are followed by all concerned, such an accident should not occur. For the information of members, the accident referred to is that which happened on the Trans. line. The staff of the W.A.G.R. are constantly enjoined to observe all rules for the safety of themselves and others.

NATIVE WELFARE

Commonwealth Financial Assistance

- 8 Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

Has the Government received any financial assistance for natives arising from the recommendations made by the committee in 1958 for the Commonwealth Government to provide financial assistance through the State Government?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

No. I would like to amplify that answer by saying that other negotiations have resulted in Commonwealth Government Social Service benefits being made available to natives in this State in accordance with certain safeguards being applied.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [3.48]: 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 Land Act, 1935-1958."

Leave given.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Distribution of Copies

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

First Day

MR. O'NEIL (Canning) [3.50]: 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 Legislative Assembly 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 address to Parliament.

I intend to follow somewhat the lead given by His Excellency in that I shall look back on some of the aspects of this Government's activities over the last 15 months, and then take a brief view of the legislation which his address indicates will be placed before us. We know that the debate on the motion before us is one of the only two opportunities given to a private member to take what we could call a verbal perambulation around his specific electorate and through the electorates of other members generally in matters which, in his opinion, appertain to the welfare of the State. However, on this occasion—it being a formal one—I do not intend to avail myself of that opportunity, but rather to confine my remarks to amplification of what I consider to be some salient points in His Excellency's address.

It has been pointed out that the past financial year has been one of notable progress. You will recall, Sir, that when the

Treasurer brought down his Budget during the last session of this Parliament, he budgeted for a deficit of something in the nature of £1,500,000; and, by April of this year it was, with some trepidation, recorded that this deficit may amount to nearly, or a little more than, £2,000,000. This, of course, was expected because of increased margins, increases in the basic wage, and additional costs outside the control of the Government. It must have been very gratifying, therefore, to the Treasurer, and to the people of Western Australia as a whole, that the final figures for the financial year ended the 30th June 1960, indicated that the ultimate deficit was, in fact, £110,000 less than that originally budgeted for.

In my opinion, this very meritorious result may be accredited to many factors, not among the least of which are, firstly, a sincere and successful endeavour on the part of the Government departments for increased efficiency and economy of operation; and secondly, an increase in revenue brought about by the undoubted restoration of confidence in this State and its consequent upsurge of economic activity.

You will also remember, Sir, that during last session members of the Opposition spoke at great length, and with great feeling, on what they considered would be the adverse effect of this Government's policy of private enterprise on employment in Western Australia. The Premier regularly produced figures during last session which indicated that the unemployment position was improving.

Mr. Graham: Have a look at last month's figures!

Mr. Brand: They are still below last year's. We will give you the figures. Don't take any notice of interjections!

Mr. O'NEIL: Whenever these figures were unpalatable to Her Majesty's Opposition, just as they appear to be today, we were led to believe that any improvement in the employment position was due to the drift of population from Western Australia to the Eastern States where, it was said, opportunities for employment were much more attractive. We have got to remember that the legacy of unemployment bequeathed to us by the previous Government was in the nature of 2.6 per cent. of the work force. It is therefore very interesting to note that whilst His Excellency has reported that unemployment has fallen substantially—in fact, employment is at a record level—the latest statistical reports available on interstate movement of population indicate that the drift to the Eastern States—evident in the last years of Labor administration—has been stemmed; in fact, it was reversed in the first quarter of this Government's period of office.

To substantiate my remarks, I refer to the *Quarterly Statistical Abstract* No. 376 dated the 31st December, 1959—the last official figures available to me. Table No. 2 gives the migration picture; and I will refer to that section of it which deals with interstate movement of population.

In the year 1956, this State lost to the Eastern States 4,730 people; in 1957, the figure was 2,344; and in 1958, it was 2,454; Those three years were the last full years of Labor administration. In 1959, the figure was 3,382; and we took office at the beginning of the second quarter—the April quarter. It is interesting to note, therefore, that of the 3,382 people who left the State last year for the Eastern States, 3,239 left in the quarter ended March. In the next quarter, ended June, the figures are in our favour; we showed a net profit of 440.

Mr. J. Hegney: It must have been all the Liberals coming back!

Mr. O'NEIL: Such figures as these are never palatable to the Opposition.

Mr. Wild: The truth hurts sometimes.

Mr. Hawke: Kindergarten stuff!

Mr. O'NEIL: That is where you should be.

Mr. Graham: That is where we are at the moment.

Mr. O'NEIL: I feel that these figures significantly indicate the efficacy of the Liberal policy; and I feel equally certain that this Government will not be lulled into complacency by such successes, but that further reports will indicate further success.

It is unfortunate that increases in loan figures for this financial year, which are slightly less than £1,000,000, will, as the Governor's Speech indicates, be absorbed by increased costs, and therefore be unavailable for any major extension of our public works programme. However, the continuation of the policy of public works by private tender—and this is a sore point again to the Opposition—should reflect the most satisfactory position of last year, when a reported saving of 10 per cent. by the private tender system enabled the Government to get more value for its money.

This is strikingly evident in the field of education, in which I am particularly interested. A record number of classrooms were built last year—namely, 238—and I am told this is nearly 40 more than would have been built with the same amount of money available under the old system.

Mr. Graham: Who told you?

Mr. O'NEIL: At this stage, I would like to express the gratitude of my electorate to the Minister for Education in seeing his way clear to agree to my representations to

have the Applecross High School elevated to a fifth-year or senior high school in 1961.

So much for the past. Let us look briefly at the legislative programme for this session. I am sure that you, Sir, and all members, will agree with me that whilst the legislative programme, as outlined by His Excellency, would appear light, as the session proceeds we will find that we will come up with the usual century.

Perhaps the major pieces of legislation to be dealt with, if size and scope are any indication, are the redrafted Local Government Bill, and the Bill for uniform company law. The undoubted complexity of these two measures would lead me to suppose they will be introduced in this session of Parliament and deliberation of them perhaps deferred until next session.

I say that because some very important legislation has recently been before the Federal Parliament. The Matrimonial Causes Act was introduced in such a manner; and, when it was brought before the House for discussion, it was found that the Minister had something like 84 amendments to his own legislation. Therefore, in these matters it is sometimes advisable to leave the legislation lie, to enable it to be given due consideration, for perhaps a longer time than this House is normally in session. These matters are of such importance that they lead me to advocate, perhaps following the Commonwealth line, two sessions of Parliament during the one year.

Mr. Nulsen: I do not think anybody on this side would disagree with that.

Mr. Brand: Nothing much was done about it when you were over here.

Mr. O'NEIL: Perhaps the piece of legislation which will arouse the most interest will be that relating to betting control.

Mr. Graham: That is only *The West Australian*.

Mr. O'NEIL: The existing law legalising S.P. betting shops expires at the 31st December this year, and we all recognise that Cabinet must have given serious consideration to the recommendations made by the Royal Commissioner in his report on this extremely controversial subject. The Royal Commissioner pointed out an aspect of the existing set-up about which I feel that all political parties—and, in fact, everybody in the State—should be concerned.

Mr. Hawke: The only Minister who looks happy about this is the Minister for Works.

Mr. Wild: Can you hear the pennies dropping?

Mr. O'NEIL: It is my hope that the legislation, when placed before us, will in principle be based upon the recommendation to replace the existing system by off-course totalisators.

Mr. Graham: You are not making the Premier happy when you say that.

Mr. Jamieson: Do you think you will be able to walk by next session?

Mr. O'NEIL: The disturbing feature of the present legislation, as pointed out by the Royal Commissioner, is the fact that in the existing set-up there is a possibility of a very small group of people, by financial and other pressures, dictating as to who shall govern the State. I think that point should be borne in mind by all political parties, and the people of the State as a whole.

Mr. Hawke: Like the big traders who are crushing out the small businessmen.

Mr. O'NEIL: We must be prepared to accept the fact that the adoption of the recommendation to institute totalisators will, or could possibly, mean a reduction in revenue from the field of legalised betting. Personally I have little doubt as to the advisability and ethics of tying the State's economy, even in a very small way, to such a field.

MR. CRAIG (Toodyay) [4.2]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Mr. Hawke, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: SPECIAL

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier): I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 2nd August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.4 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 2nd August, 1960

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

COST OF LIVING

Legislation to Prevent Increases

1. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

Because statistics show that higher house rents and steep rises in charges for meat continue to grossly inflate the costs of living which justify increased wages and salaries, the Minister is requested to inform this House whether the Government intends to introduce legislation to prevent undue rises in the prices of essential services and goods?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

While it is difficult to form an appreciation as to the meaning of the word "undue" in the honourable member's question, I can say that the Government is giving consideration to the problem that appears to be implicit in his inquiry.

METROPOLITAN RAILWAY PASSENGER SERVICES

Curtailment, and Effect on Staff.

2. The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to curtail metropolitan railway passenger services?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes," will the Minister inform the House—

- (a) the details of the proposed change;
- (b) whether this will involve any reduction in railway staff; if so, how many employees will be affected and where are they employed at the present time?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) and (2) The metropolitan railway passenger service is being examined by the commissioner to see what re-organisation and economies are desirable and practicable, consistent with maintaining a satisfactory service.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Silicosis Provisions

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Minister for Mines:

What progress has been made by the committee appointed by the Government last year to inquire into the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act relating to silicosis?