

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Second Session of the Twenty-sixth Parliament

Parliament was prorogued on the 23rd June, 1969, to the 31st July, 1969, when it met for the despatch of business.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor (Major-General Sir Douglas Anthony Kendrew, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.)

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 31st July, 1969

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Legislative Council met at 3 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Parliaments (Mr. J. B. Roberts) read the Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor (Major-General Sir Douglas Anthony Kendrew, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.) summoning the second session of the Twenty-sixth Parliament.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Delivery

His Excellency the Governor (Major-General Sir Douglas Anthony Kendrew, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.) entered the Council Chamber at 3.9 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:

You are gathered here today to begin the Second Session of the Twenty-sixth Parliament of Western Australia.

It was with pleasure that we recently welcomed Australia's new Governor-General, His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Paul Hasluck, and Her Excellency, Lady Hasluck, on their first official visit to this State. His Excellency is the first

Western Australian to have been elevated to the high and distinguished office of Governor-General, an appointment which crowned a long and outstanding career of public service.

We are delighted that Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Kent will begin a visit to the State on the twenty-sixth of August.

The people of Western Australia have received with pleasure the announcement that Her Majesty The Queen, has conferred upon the Premier the honour of Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.

Sir David Brand, created political history this year when he became the State's longest serving Premier, eclipsing the record held previously by Western Australia's first Premier, Lord Forrest.

The Premier will return to Western Australia next month from an overseas tour which he has undertaken to encourage further overseas investment in the State and to study development methods in other countries.

It is with deep regret that I refer now to the death in August last year of a former President of the Legislative Council, the Honourable Sir Charles Latham. At various times in his political career he was a member of both Houses of the Western Australian Parliament, Leader of the Country Party, Leader of the State Opposition, and a State Minister of the Crown. He also served as a member of the Commonwealth Senate.

FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

Transactions on the Consolidated Revenue Fund during the last financial year resulted in a deficit of \$1,056,000.

The balanced Budget as forecast earlier for 1968-69 was not possible, due mainly to award variations arising from the National Wage decision and a substantial reduction in Railway revenue because of a fall-off in wheat haulage.

Expenditure from the General Loan Fund on capital works amounted to \$64,503,000 in 1968-69, exceeding the previous year's figure by \$3,910,000.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

For the past six years Western Australia has attracted large sums of private investment. There has been a flow-on to almost every sector of the economy.

Western Australia's population now exceeds 939,000. The increase last year of 4.3 per cent. was more than twice the average for Australia. Almost two-thirds of the gain came from migration.

The State has one of the lowest rates of unemployment in Australia.

A major continuing need in our rapid growth situation is housing. The building and construction industry is experiencing the highest level of activity in its history. With a record of more than 16,000 houses and flats completed last year, the rate of growth of home building in this State is more than twice the national average.

Honourable Members will be aware of Government measures to release additional land for housing and to restrain land prices. There is already evidence that these actions are proving effective.

Expansion and development of the metropolitan water supply system to meet increasing housing and industrial demands are being maintained, and site preparation is proceeding at the North and South Dandalup River damsites. Construction will begin later this year on the trunk main to connect these proposed new sources of supply to the Serpentine system.

Work continues on the Comprehensive Scheme and during the year another 184 miles of mains were laid to reticulate an additional 350,000 acres of farmlands. New water supply schemes were constructed and commissioned during the year in another five country towns.

Sales of electricity and gas increased by 15 per cent. last financial year and the State Electricity Commission is maintaining an extensive construction programme for additional generating plant and transmission services to keep pace with increasing demands.

A Cabinet committee and an inter-departmental committee have been set up to investigate Western Australia's demands for fuel and energy. This investigation will help the Government in its review of the State's future fuel and power needs in relation to natural resources, including coal, oil, gas, and uranium.

During the past decade enrolments in Government schools increased by 41 per cent., from 120,000 to 169,000. The importance that the Government has placed on education is reflected by a 207 per cent. increase in revenue expenditure during the period 1958-59 to 1968-69. A record 471 classrooms were built last year, and this number will be exceeded this year.

The Government has set up a commission which will advise on the development of tertiary education and co-ordinate the activities of tertiary institutions.

Hospital services are being expanded to meet rising demands. Work continues on the Perth Medical Centre. The Northam Regional Hospital will be completed in 1970. Work has started on a new hospital at Wyndham and on major extensions to the Swan District Hospital. Contracts have been let for new homes for nurses at Royal Perth and Fremantle Hospitals. The multi-storey ward block at Princess Margaret Hospital has been completed.

An historic event took place in June this year with the arrival at the new East Perth Railway Terminal of the first Trans Australian Express direct from Port Pirie. Goods services on this new standard gauge railway began operating in November last year.

Another major development which will also help to place Western Australia in the forefront of Australia's transport system was the opening of the \$5,000,000 Container Berth and associated installations at Fremantle.

A total of \$50,000,000 will be spent this financial year on the road programme. The sealing of the Western Australian section of Eyre Highway will be completed in September. About 215 miles of the Carnarvon-Port Hedland road have already been "black topped", and further major construction work will be undertaken this year.

Another record wheat harvest of 112 million bushels was achieved last season. The build-up in Australian wheat stocks and falling demand overseas has made it necessary to introduce wheat delivery quotas for the 1969-70 season.

The State's sheep numbers now exceed 33,000,000 and last season a record 358,000,000 pounds of greasy wool were produced.

Research programmes within the Department of Agriculture are directed at large scale, long-term trials concerned with efficiency of soil, crop and livestock enterprises.

Progress continues in the North with new projects developing and existing industries being expanded. In the Kimberley there has been an increase of interest in the pastoral industry and in irrigated agricultural projects. Work began during

the year on the construction of the main Ord Dam and this should be completed by the end of the 1971 dry season.

We have seen further spectacular development in the mineral fields. In the last calendar year production was valued at a record \$235,390,000. The value of the State's mineral production will continue to rise as the major iron ore, bauxite, oil nickel, salt and other mining enterprises work towards their optimum production rates.

During the year the Mount Newman iron ore project, including its 265 miles of privately constructed railway and its port, became fully operational.

The State last year contributed 16 per cent. of Australia's exports and absorbed only 6 per cent. of its imports. It continues to be an important market for goods manufactured in other States. It is in this latter field that we seek to attract manufacturing industries to help off-set some of this interstate deficit.

On the industrial front the Government is encouraging companies to break new ground in processing. Its aim is to change progressively from a high percentage of exports in their raw state to a position where the greater share shipped from Western Australia will be partly processed. We have already had some success in these fields, especially at Kwinana with alumina, sinter and pig-iron production, and the establishment of a nickel refinery. There are also the Hamersley Iron commitment to produce metallised agglomerates in addition to its current oxide pellet production, and the proposed woodchip industry with the ultimate objective of a paper pulp industry.

The alumina, woodchips and fruit and vegetable canning industries currently under negotiation for the South-West, with export through the planned deep-water inner harbour at Bunbury, are typical of regional development the Government is fostering.

The Government views with considerable concern the loss of life on our roads. The new measures introduced as part of its continuing programme to improve road safety are designed to reduce this toll.

LEGISLATION

I now refer to the Government's legislative programme.

It is intended to provide additional relief to home owners and to protect them from the effects of sudden increase in land values and this will be reflected in amendments to land tax legislation.

Another measure will provide for the setting up from July next year of Western Australia's own State Taxation Department under the control of a Commissioner of State Taxation who will be responsible to the Treasurer. The new Department

will take over from the Commonwealth the assessment and collection of land tax and associated property valuation work.

A number of Bills dealing with new and expanding developmental projects will be introduced for the consideration of Honourable Members. These will cover an agreement for the establishment of a solar salt industry at Exmouth Gulf. Another agreement will be between the State and W.A. Chip and Pulp Company Proprietary Limited and Bunning Timber Holdings Limited relating to the establishment of a woodchip industry near Manjimup. It may also be necessary to introduce an Amending Bill to deal with the proposed expansion of Western Aluminium operations to the South West.

You will also be asked to consider measures to authorise a direct rail connection between the South West Railway and the proposed new inner harbour at Bunbury, the closure of the existing railway between Tambellup and Gnowangerup, and extension of the Standard Gauge Railway southward from Kwinana to Rockingham to serve bulk grain facilities and further industrial and port development in the Cockburn Sound area.

Legislative authority will also be sought for the establishment of a new Port Authority at Port Hedland.

It is anticipated that amendments to the Licensing Act will be brought forward before the close of the Autumn Sittings of this Parliament.

Amendments to the Education Act will be introduced to provide for the establishment of a Board of Secondary Education which will be responsible for the supervision of courses of study in secondary schools, and for the awarding of Certificates of Secondary Education based on internal school assessments.

Proposals for amendment of the Local Government Act this Session will include a review of electoral procedures in respect of absentee voting.

A Bill will also be brought forward for an Act to give effect to the Wheat Quota Scheme as prepared by the Australian Wheat Growers' Federation and agreed to by the Commonwealth and the States of Australia.

The State Housing Act will be amended to enable an interest rate subsidy scheme to be introduced. Under this scheme Housing Commission applicants may be assisted to purchase homes through Permanent Building Societies.

Other legislation will include various Bills—

To amend the Health Act to make it compulsory for manufacturers to indicate on cigarette packets that smoking does constitute a hazard to health.

To re-enact the disciplinary provisions of the Architects Act relating to the conduct of registered architects and to re-establish a Committee of Architectural Education and to state its functions.

To repeal the existing Museum Act and to legislate for the control and management of the Western Australian Museum, to authorise the Museum Board to open a branch in Fremantle, and to assist local authorities in developing local museums.

To amend the Water Board Act to permit women who are ratepayers to become members of Water Boards.

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

His Excellency and the members of the Legislative Assembly then withdrew from the Chamber, and the President resumed the Chair.

WOOL EXPORTERS ROYAL COMMISSION

Tabling of Report

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [3.36 p.m.]: I wish to table the report of the Royal Commission into Wool Exporters Pty. Ltd., and may I say that the usual number of copies, of course, will be made available to the House.

If any member wishes to have a copy for his own edification he should make application to the Under Secretary of the Premier's Department. If any member of the public requires a copy it will be available, henceforth, at the Parliamentary Papers Office, Treasury Building, for the sum of \$3.

The report was tabled.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT FUNDS

Expenditure on Urban Roads

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE, without notice, asked the Minister for Mines:

Can the Leader of the House advise if the differences between the State and the Commonwealth Governments regarding the spending of Main Roads Department funds on urban roads have yet reached a conclusion satisfactory to the State Government, and in line with the terms and conditions of the recent amending State legislation covering such expenditure?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

I understand from my colleague, the Minister for Works, that satisfactory arrangements have been made with the Common-

wealth Minister in regard to his accepting in principle the plan for delineating urban-arterial and sub-arterial roads, and that a declaration regarding these roads will be made when it becomes known that the Commonwealth money will be spent on them.

LEGAL CONTRIBUTION TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Leave to Introduce

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Justice) [3.41 p.m.]: 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 Legal Contribution Trust Act, 1967.

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Justice), and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Distribution of Copies

THE PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) [3.42 p.m.]: I have to announce that for the sake of accuracy I have obtained copies of His Excellency's Speech which will now be distributed to members.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIRST DAY

Motion

THE HON. J. HEITMAN (Upper West) [3.43 p.m.]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency:—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament 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.

Mr. President, it is with pride I accept the privilege of moving the Address-in-Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia on opening the second session of the twenty-sixth Parliament of Western Australia.

I join with the people of the Greenough electorate in saying how delighted we are that Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, has conferred on our member and Premier the honour of Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.

It was interesting to listen to the account of the growth of this State over the past decade, and the importance the Government has placed on education by increasing revenue expenditure by 207 per cent. during this period, and the building of 471 classrooms last year. Despite these and other improvements in education, one still hears of there being a crisis in education.

At one time those in the teaching profession were well respected in the community as being dedicated to their work, and they were admired by most. This image has lost ground, despite the many aids to education supplied by both the Education Department and the parents and citizens' associations. This makes one feel that perhaps professional trouble-makers are employed by the union to encourage discontent with the education system in this State.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Did you say "employed"?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes, that is what I said. The crisis in teacher housing that we hear about is not as acute as we are led to believe. In one town a three-bedroomed house was completed for six weeks before being occupied by the head teacher, who wanted curtains set up before he moved in. Normally curtains are supplied after the occupant moves in, to give the wife the opportunity to choose colour and type. The fact that the Government Employees' Housing Authority had lost six weeks' rent, and that another teacher was waiting to go into the house he was to vacate, did not worry this teacher.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I hope you have been doing your homework on this.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: In the same town, the local shire built a house with five single bedrooms and one double bedroom to accommodate seven single female teachers, but at the present time there are four vacancies. The word "crisis" is being used out of context with the present position of teacher housing.

It was interesting to hear His Excellency say that the number of sheep in this State now exceeds 33,000,000. I have recently returned from a visit to some of our agricultural areas with members of the Liberal Party Rural Committee. The area covered by this visit extended from Northampton and Mullewa in the north, down to Esperance in the south, and we returned through the Lakes district to Hyden and Quairading, and then back to Perth.

Rain is badly needed in most of these areas, especially where small dams are used for stock water supplies. Rain is also needed to boost pastures and cereal crops. I feel sure the stock will not survive the next summer unless heavy falls are experienced over the next month.

I am surprised at the lack of soil and water conservation in many of the agricultural areas of the State. Water conservation, by retaining as much water as possible on a property with the use of grade banks, and turning the balance into key dams for storage, is becoming a must in farm economy. It would be better still, of course, if soil and water conservation could be carried out on a district or watershed basis.

To make this a reality, section 22(5) of the Soil Conservation Act would need to be repealed. This is an escape clause which is often used by a farmer at the top of a watershed to evade his obligation during a district effort to conserve soil and water.

It is interesting to hear that a State taxation department will be set up as from July, 1970. I am hopeful that a new method for assessing vermin and noxious weed taxes will be adopted. At the present time those taxes are assessed on the unimproved capital value of a property. The valuations are carried out on a shire council basis every 10 or 12 years by Commonwealth valuers.

Perhaps at this stage if I read out some of the revaluations which took place in 1967, it would give the House some idea of how steeply the valuations rose, and how they affect the farming community.

We find that the valuation in the Shire of Boddington in 1961 was \$535,750, and that in 1967 the shire was revalued to \$2,034,615; an increase of 280 per cent. In the case of the Shire of Mt. Marshall, the valuation in 1960 was \$733,388, and in 1967 it was revalued to a figure of \$4,726,490, which is an increase of 546 per cent. In Mukinbudin the valuation in 1959 was \$377,402, and in 1967 the revaluation was \$2,671,136; or an increase of 600 per cent. In Nungarin the valuation in 1958 was \$387,344; in 1967 it was revalued to \$1,399,780; or an increase of 261 per cent.

It will be seen from these valuations that one's tax can vary in any one year and be up by 600 per cent., because the rate is 7/16th of a cent in the dollar, and the higher the unimproved value the higher the tax. Properties closer to the metropolitan area—at least those with higher values—pay up to \$1 per acre vermin tax and noxious weed tax even though they have neither weeds nor vermin to contend with.

In my opinion a vermin tax and a noxious weed tax should be imposed on an acreage basis with a minimum charge on small farms and a fraction of a cent per acre charge on all other farms. There could, perhaps, be a maximum loading on those farms which may be larger than the normal. This tax, of course, would exclude the pastoral holdings.

The Agriculture Protection Board knows what is required to run its department so it would have no difficulty in assessing the fraction of a cent per acre which is required to cover that cost. If this proposal were adopted farmers would be able to budget from year to year, because they would know what tax is required of them.

Shire councils could also adopt the principle of rating on an acreage basis in lieu of the system of unimproved capital value. This would be fairer to all concerned than is the present method; and perhaps special rebates could be allowed for new settlers.

THE HON. S. T. J. THOMPSON (Lower Central) [3.52 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 3.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 31st July, 1969

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m.

The **SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. L. P. Hawley) read the Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor (Major-General Sir Douglas Anthony Kendrew, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.) summoning the second session of the Twenty-sixth Parliament.

SUMMONS FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber; and, having heard His Excellency the Governor (Major-General Sir Douglas Anthony Kendrew, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.) deliver the opening Speech (*vide* Council report *ante*), returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

WOOL EXPORTERS ROYAL COMMISSION

Tabling of Report

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Acting Premier) [3.35 p.m.]: I wish to table the report of the Royal Commission into all aspects of the trading activities of Wool Exporters Pty. Ltd. and associated companies and into the conduct of individuals and companies in certain respects and into certain complaints.

I wish to say that copies of this report may be obtained by members upon application to the Premier's Department and they are also available to the general public at \$3 per copy through the Parliamentary Papers Office in the old Treasury Building.

The report was tabled.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr. Guthrie) [3.37 p.m.]: In calling for questions without notice I must observe that, owing to a delay in another place, we are somewhat behind time and I can allow only a few questions.

WEEBO STONES

Tabling of Report

1. **Mr. GRAHAM**, without notice, asked the Acting Premier:

- (1) Has the Government yet received the report of the committee appointed to investigate matters relating to the Weebo stones area?
- (2) If so, will he lay a copy of the report on the Table of the House, and when?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) and (2) The report is in the hands of the Government and consideration is being given to it. When a decision has been reached, the report will be laid on the Table of the House.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Government Action

2. **Mr. YOUNG**, without notice, asked the Acting Premier:

Is the Government aware of the rapidly deteriorating condition of pastures and crops due to insufficient rainfall in certain agricultural areas; and, if so, what action is being taken in this matter?

Mr. NALDER replied:

I hope the depression that is approaching the State will bring the necessary rain. However, I want to report that the Farmers' Union made some information available to me last Friday and, as a result, I have requested that reports from every office of the Department of Agriculture in the South-West Land Division be made available immediately. I have also set up a committee of officers from the Department of Agriculture to process these reports.

The person in charge is the Assistant Director of Agriculture (Mr. Burvill). Those reports will be processed as soon as they become available and will, we hope, be placed before Cabinet at the first opportunity.