

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Fourth Session of the Twenty-seventh Parliament

Parliament was prorogued on the 7th February, 1973, to the 15th March, 1973, 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 15th March, 1973

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Legislative Council met at 8.00 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 fourth session of the Twenty-seventh 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 8.06 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 meet here today for the Fourth Session of the Twenty-seventh Parliament of Western Australia.

The Opening has been convened in the evening to take advantage of the cooler conditions.

During 1971-72, the State's population increased by 2.2 per cent to 1,053,200.

For ten days beginning October 7, 1972, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, and The Earl of Snowdon, paid an outstandingly successful visit to Western Australia.

A by-election in Blackwood in December 1972, occasioned by the retirement of Country Party Member, Mr. D. D. Reid, resulted in the election of the Liberal Party candidate, Mr. A. A. Lewis.

Following the resignation of the sitting Liberal Member, Mr. M. C. Williams, a by-election will be held for the seat of Bunbury on April 7.

Ill-health caused the recent retirement of the Honourable W. F. Willesee as Minister for Community Welfare and Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council. The Honourable Ronald Thompson was elected to fill the Cabinet vacancy.

With profound regret, I record the deaths of six former Parliamentarians who served this State well.

They were: The Honourable Sir Keith Henry Watson and the Honourable James Gordon Hislop, both formerly Metropolitan Province Members; Mr. Thomas George Hart, a former Member for Roe; Mr. Harry May, a former Member for Collie; Mr. Leslie Charles Nimmo, a former Member for Karrinyup; and Mr. Joseph Neon Rowberry, a former Member for Warren.

The \$5,077,000 deficit anticipated by the 1972-73 Budget has been enlarged subsequently by increased costs.

Nevertheless, a substantial recovery and advance by the economy is expected during this year, and the Government is experiencing considerable success in attracting investment.

Later in this session, the Revenue Budget and the Loan Estimates will refer in detail, to the State's economy, prospects and employment situation, and to current and projected works programmes.

Western Australian agriculture shows a continually increasing stability, with fewer applications for Rural Reconstruction assistance.

Given a favourable season, it is expected that improved wool prices, wheat quotas and markets will make 1973 a record year for our rural industries.

Parliament has passed 180 of the 228 Bills presented in the Labor Administration's heavy legislative programme during the past two years.

The legislation, much of it of a very far-reaching nature, is designed to benefit the State and the people in accordance with the policy on which the Government was elected.

I now refer in broad outline to legislation to be placed before Parliament during this session.

It is proposed to present the Weld Range Iron Ore Agreement for ratification.

Negotiations for variations to a number of other mining and mineral agreements are progressing, and these will be brought before Parliament as they are finalised.

Members will have the opportunity, during the session, further to debate the Mining Bill.

To comply with election policy, it is proposed once again to introduce legislation for State-wide traffic enforcement by the Police.

My Government also proposes to establish a Department of Motor Vehicles to administer traffic safety, accident research, registration of motor vehicles, and the licensing of drivers and driver examiners.

A Road Traffic Safety Authority will co-ordinate the new Department's activities with Main Roads and Police traffic safety responsibilities.

The Government proposes to control land prices, initially in one area north of Perth, and another north of Geraldton.

Complementary legislation will provide for establishment of a Development Corporation to administer about 32,400 hectares to be excised from Gingin and Wanneroo Shires for the Government's proposed new port site, industrial complex and ancillaries.

Amendments to Land Tax legislation will be directed towards encouraging the flow of residential blocks on to the market.

Extensive amendments are proposed for the Building Societies Act regarding recommendations of the Inquiry Committee commissioned last year by the Honourable the Premier.

It is also proposed to introduce new legislation establishing an Authority to house industrial and commercial workers.

A Bill to be presented during this session will seek statutory authority for the Trustees of a special fund to assist persons not qualified for help from any other Government or charitable source.

The fund derives from refunds of Receipts Duties payments generously donated for the purpose by a number of claimants entitled to such refunds.

Both Government and people are concerned by substantial and wide-ranging price-rises, particularly among foodstuffs.

The Government will seek to legislate for power to control such excessive prices, for which legislation the people gave their mandate at the 1971 election.

Authority will also be sought to amend the Wheat Products (Prices Fixation) Act, permitting review of flour prices in conjunction with consideration of the price of bread.

The Government will also legislate to provide for establishment of a single Dairy Industry Authority; for the introduction of daylight saving on an experimental basis; and to permit State Government Insurance Office operations in all fields of insurance.

Major amendments will be brought forward dealing with conciliation and arbitration processes, and other matters covered by the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The Government proposes to repeal the Inspection of Machinery Act, and to bring forward a new Act to be known as the Machinery Safety Act.

Honourable Members will be asked, also, to consider providing improved long service leave conditions for members of the Western Australian workforce; improved compensation and other related benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act; and minimum sick leave provisions for all workers.

A Bill will be brought forward also, to provide for four weeks' annual leave for State Public Servants who now qualify for only three weeks' annual leave.

The Government proposes to introduce legislation providing for payment by the Crown, of legal costs of persons acquitted of summary offences by Courts of Petty Sessions.

Legislation will be introduced to re-enact the Indigenous Flora Conservation Act. It will feature improved controls covering the picking, sale and export of native flora.

A Bill will be introduced to establish an Estuarine Conservation and Management Authority. This will deal with matters of policy determined by the Environmental Protection Authority.

Another legislative measure to be brought forward will revise administrative procedures in National Parks and Reserves, provide for supervision, parking of vehicles, and the protection of natural features.

I am also advised that the Government will bring forward for the Consideration of Members, a Bill which will incorporate major amendments to the Child Welfare Act. The amendments will introduce new processes, and methods of approach to present-day problems.

Other legislation will include Bills—

- To amend the Hospitals Act permitting loans for approved non-profit private hospitals to be guaranteed by the Government;
- To delete from the Administration Act, those provisions dealing with the assessment of death duties, and to re-enact them in a Death Duties Assessment Act;
- To provide for Civil Service Association representation on the Public Service Board;
- To amend provisions of the Land Agents Act; Sales of Land Act; Strata Titles Act; Auctioneers Act; and Companies Act;
- To provide for extensive amendments to the Adoption of Children Act;
- To amend the Electoral Act to provide for Joint Commonwealth and State rolls; and for designation of political parties to be printed on ballot papers;
- To implement certain proposals of a Royal Commission in regard to the Hire Purchase Act;
- To amend the Metropolitan Market Act, extending membership of the Board to include the Director of Consumer Protection and the Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industry;
- To amend the Western Australian Prevention of Pollution by Oil Act, increasing penalty for oil spillage and extending the liability of ships' agents;
- To establish a statutory board to deal with all matters concerning Pre-school Education;
- To amend the Education Act in respect of the Board of Secondary Education; of increasing per capita Grants to non - Government Schools; and of non-bonding of student teachers;
- To update the Firearms and Guns Act, and to provide for safari licences and permits;
- To authorise Trans-Australia Airlines to establish in Western Australia the two-airline policy now in force in other Australian States;

To extend legislation dealing with misleading advertising;

To amend the Government Employees' (Promotions Appeal Board) Act; the Hairdressers' Registration Act; the Door-to-Door Sales Act; and the Factories and Shops Act;

To amend the Police Act to provide for improved supervision and protection of children in relation to the operation of pool-rooms and amusement parlours;

To repeal and to re-enact the Employment Brokers' Act to provide for more efficient control of the licensing, operations and charges of such brokers.

It is likely also that legislation will be introduced to—

Protect used-car buyers;

Formally to establish a Department of Tourism;

Provide for licensing of Travel Agents and Tourist Guides depending on Commonwealth Government action in this matter.

This is the last occasion when I will have the honour of opening a session of this Parliament.

I wish to record in this House the deep satisfaction I have experienced in serving as Her Majesty's representative in Western Australia.

Both my wife and I will look back on our ten years in this State as the most rewarding of our lives.

They have been filled with deep consideration, kindness and loyalty from all with whom we have been associated . . . from my two Premiers, from all Ministers, from both Houses, and from the people everywhere.

We have been with you in Western Australia during the most exciting, and the most rewarding, period of the State's development.

It has been one which, in fact, has brought the greatest expansion of any single decade to date.

In the agricultural, mining and commercial fields, development has been outstanding.

We have been privileged to witness a remarkable advancement in the cultural and social fields throughout the State, and it is with the warmest satisfaction that we have seen you become constant contenders at the forefront in all branches of sport.

We wish Western Australia continued success in the years ahead, and we will always follow her destiny with the greatest of interest.

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.

QUESTIONS (3): WITHOUT NOTICE

1. NORTHAM TOWN AND SHIRE

Amalgamation

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Minister for Local Government:

Before I ask the question, I would like to explain briefly that two local authorities; namely, the Town of Northam and the Shire of Northam, made an approach to the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Charles Court, upon a matter of very great importance to these local authorities. As the Minister for Local Government is in this House, I have been asked to direct the following questions to him—

- (1) Has the Minister received a request from the Town of Northam, supported by the Shire of Northam, for the withdrawal of the formal petition made on the 4th October, 1972, to amalgamate these two local authorities?
- (2) Has he also received a conjoint petition from both local authorities dated the 2nd February, 1973, relating to a mutually agreed upon adjustment of boundaries between these two local authorities?
- (3) If the answers to (1) and (2) are in the affirmative, and since a mutually agreed upon petition for boundary changes between local authorities does not need to be considered by the Boundaries Commission, will he ensure that the hearing of the petition set down for the 20th March, 1973 (next Tuesday) is discontinued?
- (4) Will the Minister also expedite his consideration of the joint request for mutually agreed upon boundary changes between the two local authorities?

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.
- (4) The Boundaries Commission has been requested in accordance with section 12(6)(i) of the Local Government Act to examine the proposals contained in both petitions and to submit a report and recommendations. The hearing has been scheduled for the 20th March, 1973.

Additional Information: I am concerned about the financial stability of the council of the Town of Northam and believe that the Northam Shire Council's contribution to mutual functions should be examined, and I have resolved that the Boundaries Commission report to me on the basis of the original petition, as well as the joint petitions of the Northam councils.

I am concerned with the provision of the most effective and satisfactory form of local government in the area and believe that, if the proposals of the councils are designed to produce the best situation, the two councils will have the opportunity of presenting evidence to this effect to the commission.

2. NORTHAM TOWN AND SHIRE

Amalgamation

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Minister for Local Government:

I have in my possession an opinion given by a Queen's Counsel upon the matter at issue. Without going into a long discourse this opinion indicates what the Queen's Counsel considers is the legal position. I understand the Minister has been provided with a copy of this legal opinion. I would like to know whether he has a copy of the legal opinion and, if so, does he intend to ignore it as he has indicated that he will do?

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS replied:

I have a copy of the opinion which I am having examined at Crown Law level, but in spite of that the hearing will go on on the date fixed.

3. NORTHAM TOWN AND SHIRE

Amalgamation

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Minister for Local Government:

Does not the Minister think that in view of a request received from two local authorities which concerned the affairs of those two bodies that the least he could do would be to take steps to see there is an adjournment of the hearing beyond Tuesday's date in order that he may give consideration to the legal opinion which he has before him?

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS replied:

I was told that this matter was going to be heard and the hearing will be held next Tuesday.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Legally or otherwise.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Leave to Introduce

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [8.53 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 Traffic Act, 1919-1972.

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by The Hon. J. Dolan (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Distribution of Copies

THE PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) [8.54 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. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [8.55 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.

No doubt all present will have noted with regret the reference His Excellency the Governor made to this being the last Speech he will make before this Parliament I will not expand on that aspect at the moment; more appropriate occasions to do so will occur in the future.

In general His Excellency's Speech outlined an extensive programme of social legislation which those listening will have noted. A topical issue is that of road safety. It is to be hoped the measures announced in the Governor's Speech in respect of State-wide traffic enforcement by the police, the administration of traffic safety by the proposed department of motor vehicles together with the proposed road traffic safety authority will constitute a step in the right direction in helping to curb the dreadful road toll. Such measures will reinforce those the Government has already taken.

The Government intends to take action concerning industrial safety, in regard to which Australia has a very sad record indeed. It is to be hoped that this action will improve the situation.

Various other aspects of the legislation which is to be presented could be commented upon but that, too, I will leave until a more suitable occasion.

Reference was also made in His Excellency's Speech to the resignation of Mr. Willesee from his appointments in this Chamber. I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Willesee. I believe he enjoyed the respect of all members for the manner in which he performed his duties. The measure of the man and the esteem in which he is held are evident by the extent he was able successfully to negotiate Government legislation through this House. Except for members of Parliament present, very few people would appreciate the burden his job thrust upon him; because apart from the fact that the Government party is outnumbered two to one—and five out of the 10 Labor members were newly elected—Mr. Willesee has suffered severe health disabilities. It was this last factor which made it impossible for him to continue at least at the level he thought the task required. The Labor Government owes Mr. Willesee a debt of gratitude for a job well done.

It is also fitting to congratulate the Ministers here on their increase in status since we last sat—in particular we know Mr. Ron Thompson was recently appointed the Minister for Community Welfare. I believe he has already demonstrated his ability to administer his portfolio successfully.

Members of the Labor Party are justifiably proud of the Government's record during its short period in office. It is a record which has been achieved in a time of economic difficulty, the effect of which was proportionately far more serious in Western Australia. This state of affairs arose because of the emphasis which had been given to the development of our minerals.

It is hardly necessary to detail the elements which contributed to the State's economic problems. They originated in America and the effects are still being felt around the world.

The difficulties which resulted for our mineral industries were compounded by the fiscal policies of the former Federal Liberal-Country Party coalition Government.

The downturn in employment which began to show in 1969 was aggravated by a considerable migrant inflow, and a steady movement of people from country areas to the city areas because of the drought and marketing problems being experienced by the rural sector.

The State has been fortunate to have John Tonkin as its Premier to steer it through this period. I doubt whether any other member in our Parliament today

could have provided the qualities of experience, ability, and leadership—which the situation demanded—in the measure these qualities are possessed by our Premier.

I venture to assert there is not one sector of the community which has not gained from the benefits of good Government, wise planning, and a concern for the welfare of the whole community—which the Labor Government has provided.

No Government would have all its actions uniformly well received and free from criticism. It is to be expected that entrenched interests would fight to preserve their privileges. Nor does the Labor Party pretend to have the political support of those who, through their control of finance, largely control the economy of the State. Where such groups feel that their interests are threatened it is natural that they should attempt to enlist public support on their side.

I will refer to several areas where Government action has been effective in resolving matters which were troubling the electorate. I refer to these not necessarily because they have a greater importance than others, but because of my own particular interest in them.

I will first refer to what is really a set of related matters; that is, the central railway station, the cultural centre, city traffic, and the public transport system. The railway through the centre of Perth, while providing convenient access to the city for many, has created a barrier to the northward growth of the city and the integration of the cultural centre with city life. By limiting points of access from the north the railway has also contributed to congestion on the access roads.

The decision of the Labor Government to underground the railway is a bold and imaginative one, but nonetheless logical. It is the only decision which could remove the railway barrier, prevent stagnation of the inner city, and prevent its spread laterally into Victoria Park and Nedlands. The decision has allowed the building of the Wellington Street bus station, and has helped to resolve the conflict of buses and private cars on city streets.

The same decision gave the Government the opportunity to negotiate with the company which proposes to build a stadium and theatre facility on the land now occupied by the Perth Railway Station. The decision will eventually restore to the railways an important role in the transport system and provide a more efficient and convenient service to its patrons.

If it is true to say that the nature and pattern of transport services shape and pattern our cities then it is obvious that the undergrounding of the railway will bring about a fundamental change to the city of Perth.

Decentralisation of the city is a desirable objective, and it is the central aim of the Corridor Plan. The need to pursue the

objective of decentralisation remains but it is also essential that the city core be a viable and living entity. It is in this respect that the Government action on the railways has importance. The decision on the undergrounding of the railway is basic to the long-term co-ordinated planning of the city and the metropolitan region as a whole.

It will be remembered that education was a foremost issue during the 1971 election campaign, so much so that Mr. Tonkin stated he would make education the first priority on Labor's becoming the Government. That promise has been faithfully kept.

The policy followed by the Government has meant an increase in spending which I believe was well warranted because of the results it has achieved. As a former teacher I find the pace of change dramatic. Those who sought action in the field of education, as a result of a change of Government, should be well satisfied with the results.

The new open-area classrooms are a credit to the Government, the Education Department, and the planners. I would comment at this stage that changes in designing of schools began while the previous Government was in office. I am not giving the Labor Government credit for that. The liaison with practising teachers during the design stages of schools appears much improved although problems still seem to arise where private architects who may never previously have designed a school are employed.

With respect to those who see good only in private enterprise, I see little value in a system of contracting out school design work, as it is a specialised field in which the Public Works Department has built up expertise over a long period.

If the stimulus of fresh ideas is sought, then engaging an individual consultant architect to work with the Public Works Department team on specific projects could be of benefit to both parties.

Where new schools are opened in rapidly developing districts, they often undergo rapid changes of headmasters, which can be extremely disruptive to the organisation of the school. I would suggest to the Government the creation of a category of "commissioning headmaster." This would be a person who, because of his promotional standing, could expect to remain in the school over its growth period and would be in a position to carry through a consistent policy in the administration and development of the school.

New schools, it will be agreed, lack the amenities that can only be provided over a period of time. In the light of this, it would not be unreasonable to make some compensatory provision in the way of staff.

Such a decision would, in fact, be in line with the policy adopted by the present Labor Government of a more generous allocation of staff to schools. There is, indeed, among headmasters in my electorate general satisfaction with the ratio of pupils to staff. This more generous allocation includes an increased number of remedial teachers. For the first time, class sizes are at a level at which teachers may adequately deal with their pupils as individuals.

The free book scheme, while not yet fully implemented, is also making its contribution. The quality of the books provided is of a high standard. If any delay in delivery of books to schools has occurred, no headmaster has brought it to my attention. I mention, incidentally, that I have seen nearly all the headmasters in my electorate.

Primary education had, for a long time, been the Cinderella of the education system and I am more than pleased with the attention the Government has accorded to it. The importance of an adequate primary schooling to the child cannot be too highly stressed. His success or lack of it at this level can colour the whole of his life. It is important, therefore, that schools are adequately staffed with well-trained teachers having available to them a sufficiency of facilities and aids needed to perform their task, and responsible for a group of pupils small enough to teach to their potential.

This does not exhaust the forms of assistance extended to schools by the Labor Government. Besides upgrading the quality of education, it has moved to equalise educational opportunity. This has meant, for example, increased boarding allowances for country children.

The granting of autonomy to teachers colleges has been achieved and among the benefits of this reorganisation I would expect to see better trained, more professional teachers. The separation of teachers colleges from the Education Department I have believed to be fundamental to making the system more responsive to change and for an intelligent discussion of the problems facing it. Full marks must go to the Government for these achievements.

Criticism has been levelled at the Government for not immediately implementing a policy of preschool education for all. In refusing to be bulldozed on this issue, the Government has shown a better appreciation than its critics of the problems involved. The problems are chiefly those of buildings and staff. The Nott report on preschool education indicates quite clearly how much better the kindergarten movement has fared under Labor Governments. From the figures given in that report on the proportion of children at present attending kindergarten—15.06 per cent. in

1972—it is apparent the existing number of buildings and staff would need to increase at least six times for all eligible children to be catered for. The cost of buildings alone would be above \$30,000,000 and at least an extra 1,000 teachers would be required.

The present Kindergarten College would be stretching its resources to turn out 100 graduates a year, and a realistic figure would be nearer to 50. The maximum number of graduates available over the next two years would be 80.

Those who would suggest that primary infant teachers could be utilised to fill the void lack an appreciation of the differences involved. It would be doing a disservice to preschool education as such, and perhaps also to the children concerned. Any primary trained teacher turning to preschool education should be required to undergo at least 12 months' retraining.

Having seen accomplished so much of what I believed, when I entered Parliament in 1968, should be done in education, I am tempted to give my views on further innovations which I see as desirable. However, this is not an appropriate occasion, except perhaps to pay tribute to Mr. Dettman, who recently retired from the position of Director-General of Education. He must be given credit for many of the improvements that were achieved during his period of office.

The Labor Government has shown itself worthy of the people's confidence in what it has already achieved. It is nevertheless presenting another extensive legislative programme which will continue to bring important and fundamental changes in our lives.

THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North) [9.12 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

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

House adjourned at 9.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 15th March, 1973

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at 8.00 p.m.

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

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. J. C. Bartlett) 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 fourth session of the Twenty-seventh Parliament.