

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Second Session of the Twenty-ninth Parliament

Parliament was prorogued on the 8th February, 1978, to the 9th March, 1978, when it met for the despatch of business.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor (Air Chief Marshal Sir Wallace Kyle, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.B.E., D.S.O., D.F.C., K.St.J.).

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 9th March, 1978

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Legislative Council met at 8.00 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Parliaments (Mr J. B. Roberts) read the Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor (Air Chief Marshal Sir Wallace Kyle, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.B.E., D.S.O., D.F.C., K.St.J.) summoning the second session of the Twenty-ninth Parliament.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Delivery

His Excellency the Governor (Air Chief Marshal Sir Wallace Kyle, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.B.E., D.S.O., D.F.C., K.St.J.) entered the Council Chamber at 8.10 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 Second Session of the 29th Parliament.

Since I addressed you in July last year, the earlier visit by Her Majesty the Queen and His

Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, has been followed by a visit by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. These visits gave the people of Western Australia a rare double opportunity to demonstrate respect and affection for the Crown in Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee Year.

It was pleasing to note that the sincere and enthusiastic response to these visits left no doubt about the affection of the people of our State for the Royal Family.

The December 17, 1977 Legislative Assembly by-election ordered by the Court of Disputed Returns for the seat of Kimberley resulted in the election of the Honourable K. A. Ridge.

The Government deplors the recent bomb incident in Sydney connected with the visit of Heads of British Commonwealth countries in the Asian/Pacific Region, and has undertaken to cooperate with the Commonwealth and other State Governments in the development of further security measures.

The Economy

The national economy shows signs of recovery.

Difficulties persist, but lessening inflation and lower interest rates clearly indicate improvement.

Western Australia is well placed to influence the rate and extent of the nation's return to better times.

Developments such as our extensive North-West Shelf natural gas deposits and other mineral projects, will attract essential foreign exchange, while related investment in technology, materials and manpower will expand career opportunities.

Nationally, this will assist in returning

industries to full production, and the workforce to full employment.

Brighter economic prospects accompany signs of a revived Federal spirit.

The Commonwealth has acknowledged in principle the merits of the Western Australian Government's proposals to update Loan Council procedures to enable the States to provide support facilities for major resource projects, and to expand essential services such as water and electricity.

The Commonwealth has accepted also Western Australia's stand on increased State responsibility in daily administration of Australian territorial waters.

We are creating new jobs faster than any other State, although the unemployment level remains unacceptable.

Both the Western Australian and the Commonwealth Governments continue to pursue policies aimed at stimulating activity in the private sector as the only effective means of creating sufficient employment opportunities in the longer term.

State Finances

The Government presented a balanced Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget to Parliament in which some \$17 million was allocated to activities specifically designed to stimulate employment.

The mid-year Budget review showed a slight improvement on the forecast result. This permitted additional funds to be provided to the State Housing Commission.

Authority was also given to the Education Department for an early start on next year's building programme. This should further assist in reducing unemployment.

Rural

The two-year drought still bears heavily on certain of our rural areas.

In the northern, north-eastern and eastern sectors of the wheatbelt, 32 shires have been declared totally or partly drought-affected.

2 650 farms covering 4 million hectares are involved.

Despite record 1977-78 sowings, wheat deliveries fell to about 2.9 million tonnes, some 400 000 tonnes below the 1976-77 yield.

Livestock numbers are estimated to have declined by nearly 5 million sheep and 400 000 cattle due to drought and economic circumstances in the last 2 years.

State Government help to farmers and graziers

continues through this troubled time. Aid during the past financial year totalled \$3.6 million in drought relief and grants to Local Authorities for job creation projects in drought affected areas. The Commonwealth has supported the extension of the State's drought relief scheme.

The State Government has greatly liberalised the Farm Water Supply Loan Scheme to help to establish assured water supplies in drier areas.

A move of considerable significance to the State's rural industries was the Government's appointment of a four-man agricultural mission to study long-term prospects for our rural produce in Japan.

The Government also acted quickly to fulfil its election undertaking for a Rural and Allied Industries Conference to help those industries plan their growth into the next century.

The Minister for Agriculture recently visited Middle East Countries with which Western Australia has valuable trade relations.

He was greatly encouraged by discussions on future trade, particularly agricultural products.

Industrial and Resources Development

Government planning is well advanced to ensure maximum economic benefit to the State from natural resource development.

The North-West Shelf gas field is an instance.

Investment and development opportunities arising from this and other projects have featured in talks both in Australia and in many overseas countries with industrialists, financiers and business leaders.

The Minister for Industrial Development recently led Government and industry representations in Britain, Europe and Asia to publicise imminent opportunities for investment in Western Australia, and for co-operation with local industries.

Concurrently, the Western Australian off-shore petroleum exploration programme is expanding rapidly.

Inevitably, this will benefit local suppliers and service industries.

The first Australian deep-water exploration permits were issued late last year to five consortia on the Exmouth Plateau.

The projected \$300 million five-year programme will establish the Plateau as a deep-water exploration area of world importance.

The mining industry retains its importance to our economy.

1977 mineral production was valued at \$1 700

million. This was some \$200 million more than in 1976.

Increased gold prices allowed continued working of Kalgoorlie's only operational underground mine at Mt. Charlotte.

Despite a recession in iron ore markets, Hamersley Iron and Mt. Newman are expanding facilities to upgrade iron ore production. Robe River is also considering further expansion.

Over-supply in world nickel markets has depressed the State's nickel industry.

Work is expected to begin this year on two new alumina refineries in the South West.

The Government has strongly supported the Stanford Research Institute's projected June/July world resources conference in Australia. This conference will focus the attention of the overseas mineral industry on Australia.

Fuel and Energy

The first 200 megawatt generating unit at Kwinana Power Station has been converted to burn either oil or coal and is now in operation.

It is expected that the second unit will be converted to coal-firing and will become operational by March, 1979.

Construction is progressing satisfactorily on the Muja Power Station's 200 megawatt units and the associated transmission lines. The Government expects the first unit to be operational early in 1981; the second, one year later.

Education

The demand for technical education is emphasised in continually expanding enrolment in this area.

In 1978, work will begin on the Carine Technical College and the new Perth Technical College.

In addition, planning is well advanced on the Rockingham Technical College and on redeveloping the Eastern Goldfields Technical College.

For the current school year, two new high schools and eleven new primary schools were opened, with extensions and alterations to 100 schools.

The Western Australian Post-Secondary Education Commission continues its co-ordinating and planning activities.

Consumer Affairs and Industrial Relations

Proposed amendments to the Factories and Shops Act would permit one late shopping night weekly.

To conform with Government policy the Senior

Industrial Commissioner is reviewing the Industrial Arbitration Act.

Other legislation under scrutiny includes the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act; the Builders Registration Act; the Consumer Affairs Act; the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act; and the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act.

Local Government and Planning

The Government fully appreciates personal contributions made by almost 1 400 councillors in administering 138 Western Australian municipalities.

Land development for home building proceeds at an encouraging rate.

In 1977 more than 10 600 metropolitan residential allotments were created—the second highest annual total on record.

Lots available in every urban corridor provide a wide choice of location, setting and price. The Government will continue to encourage this.

In country areas the number of residential lots produced in 1977 was in excess of 3 000—more than twice the number for 1976.

Detailed planning in the four urban corridors and associated sub-regional centres is advancing toward presentation of amendments to the Metropolitan Region Scheme.

An important feature of this forward planning is to provide adequate metropolitan public transport routes and facilities.

Lands and Forests

The Bush Fires Board and the public generally deserve congratulations for their success in minimising destruction by bushfires despite the worst conditions for years.

Training and co-ordination of volunteer brigades has been improved.

The timber industry and the economy of the South West generally will stabilise under a major pine-milling undertaking projected for the 1980's.

The Government anticipates continued demand for Crown land for agriculture, homes, industry and conservation.

Conservation areas have been increased substantially, and National Parks now extend over nearly 4 million hectares.

Conservation and Environment

The State/Commonwealth agreement on joint environmental assessment procedures for proposals requiring joint Government approval is a significant development for Western Australian environmental management.

While satisfying both State and Commonwealth statutory responsibilities, the Memorandum of Understanding emphasises the Western Australian Government's primary responsibility in managing the State's environment.

A Waterways Commission has been established under the Waterways Conservation Act, and a fact-finding study of the Peel and Leschenault Inlets is under way.

Police and Traffic

It is pleasing to note that during last year, road fatalities numbered fewer than 300 for the first time since 1967.

State-wide, the incidence of deaths per 10 000 vehicles has fallen from 7.5 to 4.5. The Government will continue its vigorous campaign to minimise the road toll.

The Government is studying proposals to increase categories subject to registration under the Security Agents Act.

Fisheries

Two British deep-sea trawlers have arrived at Albany to fish southern waters. A third will join them later.

Because improved efficiency has greatly increased pressure on the valuable rock lobster fishing industry, the Government decided to shorten the current season by six weeks.

Planning is proceeding on the assumption that the off-shore limit will be extended to 320 kilometres.

Transport

Work will begin in early 1979 on the five-year, \$65 million rehabilitation of the standard gauge railway between Kwinana and Koolyanobbing. Some tenders have already been let for the supply of materials for this project.

The Main Roads Department's Budget this financial year will be approximately \$112 million. However, due to overall constraints imposed by the shortage of Federal road funds, there will be considerable difficulties in servicing the State's growing needs.

Major port developments include construction of a \$2.9 million extension of the Fremantle Port Authority's bulk cargo jetty at Kwinana and a general purpose berth costing \$3 million at Bunbury's inner harbour. A \$3 million programme is proposed next financial year to further develop the port of Albany.

Legal Affairs

The Western Australian Legal Aid Commission will begin operating next month following

State/Commonwealth agreement on its establishment and funding.

Satisfactory progress is being made in the study of aspects of Aboriginal tribal law in the Kimberley.

Health and Community Welfare

Major works are in progress at principal metropolitan hospitals and at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre.

A new hospital is being built at Wanneroo, and planning is well advanced for the proposed Leonora Hospital. Other new works, alterations and extensions are proceeding at country centres ranging from Broome and Derby in the north to Busselton in the south.

The Mental Health Services new Sussex Hostel for the profoundly retarded has been opened, and work will begin this year on a similar hostel at Bull Creek.

Government policy in Community Welfare continues to concentrate on upgrading rural services.

The Government is considering draft amendments to legislation which will enable the recognition, in this State, of children adopted in overseas countries, and proposals have been developed to involve some juvenile offenders in supervised community work.

An undertaking to help homeless Aborigines in and around Perth is proving successful.

150th Anniversary Celebrations

The Government has allocated \$3 million for the State's 150th Anniversary Celebrations next year.

The programme will be broad and varied, but Government spending will concentrate on achieving the greatest impact throughout Western Australia.

The Anniversary programme is creating considerable enthusiasm. Communities and individuals keen to participate in a year of major historical importance are submitting ideas and plans from all over Western Australia.

Cultural Affairs

Construction of the new Art Gallery, in the Perth Cultural Centre, is well advanced. It will be opened next year as part of Western Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations.

Planning is proceeding for the construction of a new State Library building in the Cultural Centre complex which it is hoped can be started following the completion of the Art Gallery.

His Majesty's Theatre is being restored and refurbished.

Tourism

In view of social and economic benefits generated locally by international tourism, the Government will continue vigorously to advocate lower air fares and to impress upon the Commonwealth the urgent need for major improvements at Perth Airport.

Housing

The Government proposes to repeal and re-enact the State Housing Act.

Sustained strength in permanent building societies loan approvals is evident.

Greater flexibility will accrue to funding through building societies under the new Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement to operate from July 1, 1978.

Public Works

A comprehensive programme has been announced to increase, and improve, water supplies throughout the State.

Nevertheless two successive dry winters have necessitated a complete ban on the use of sprinklers in the metropolitan area. I should like to congratulate Perth residents on their excellent co-operation with these very necessary restrictions.

The Government has received the Binnie Report into the future financing of the Metropolitan Water Board, and is now considering possible amendments to the appropriate Acts.

The \$20 million De Grey River Scheme in the Pilbara is one of several major water projects under way in country areas. Another will meet future demands at Geraldton.

Regional Administration

The Government's regional administration programme is gaining recognition and acceptance among communities and local Government with Administrators and staff resident in the seven regions.

Legislation

I now refer to some of the more significant legislation it is proposed to put before Parliament.

These include Bills—

to repeal the Land Agents Act and replace it with a new Real Estate and Business Agents Act;

to overcome defects in the Workers Compensation Act pending a thorough review of the legislation;

to remove anomalies in the Prisons Act pending a complete revision;

to amend the Sutors Fund Act to permit the Fund to pay costs awarded against infants in some legal actions;

to control the prescription and supply of addictive drugs as part of the Government's overall effort to control the abuse of such drugs.

Some other proposals to be brought forward for the consideration of Honourable Members will deal with Parliamentary Superannuation; Parliamentary Privileges; the Public Service; Death Duties; Censorship of Films; the Criminal Code; Youth, Community Recreation and National Fitness; Inventions; and the Local Government State Grants Commission Act.

In addition, following the Judicial Inquiry into the Electoral Act, it is hoped that amendments will be introduced during this Session.

Mr President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council; Mr Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly; 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.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [8.44 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday, the 15th March.

Question put and passed.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Leave to Introduce

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [8.45 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 Aid Commission Act, 1976-1977.

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Distribution of Copies

THE PRESIDENT (The Hon. Clive Griffiths): 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. W. M. PIESSE (Lower Central) [8.47 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, I appreciate the honour of being granted this opportunity to thank His Excellency and to initiate the debate on the Address-in-Reply.

I have noted that at the commencement of his address His Excellency reminded us of the demonstrations of genuine affection and respect which the people of this State showed to our Royal visitors—namely, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales—during their visits in Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee Year.

It is unfortunate that, so soon after the delight of the jubilee celebrations, we joined the list of countries that have suffered fatalities due to what can only be described as "world hooliganism", and I refer, of course, to the bomb incident in Sydney during the visit of heads of British Commonwealth countries in the Asian Pacific region.

The Federal Government should be commended for its tough stand on anti-terrorism measures and I am sure my parliamentary colleagues will join with me in the House in expressing the hope that we can keep our country apart from further wanton destruction of human life.

Although people living in Western Australia embrace a variety of cultural groups, the ultimate aspiration of the community at large is for "quality of life". We are at the crossroads in terms of economic and social development—the two most important factors influencing "quality of life". The degree to which we will realise this

aspiration will depend largely on the direction we travel in the near future.

Economic and social development are dependent upon each other and both affect, and are reliant on, the individual. Ultimately, economic development—as the funding agent—determines the rate and level at which social development will take place. Given an intelligent approach to the pursuit of economic growth, and appreciating its importance to social development and vice versa, there is urgent need for us to consider social problems currently causing concern among other advancing nations.

Largely because of our geography, Western Australia has not been exposed to many of the social problems now being experienced in other societies. But I am afraid that this happy situation may not remain for very much longer, because in Western Australia in fairly recent times improved communication and growing opportunities for people from widely divergent social and economic backgrounds have seen the emergence of a more complex social fabric.

Within our own State we still have problems in keeping law and order, and His Excellency has mentioned the progress being made in the study of aspects of tribal law in the Kimberley area. However, in the southern half of our State some of our Aboriginal people are experiencing great difficulty in settling into their homes because of the disruptive behaviour of other Aboriginal people.

I commend our local police officers for their endeavours to keep law and order in these areas, but I wonder whether there is some way that the police can be given more support by the public and the courts. By this I do not mean that we should impose more or longer gaol sentences. Apart from drying out an inebriate, there seems to be little value in gaoling; nor do I think that our system of monetary fining is effective. So I am wondering whether we should not look more seriously at occupational therapy in the form of work orders to awaken offenders to the fact that they must accept an obligation for the disruption of the peace of their fellow man.

I feel very strongly about this because I have been petitioned by Aboriginal people within my own province. These Aboriginal people are good citizens who want to remain in their employment, to live in peace with their neighbours and, above all, to live in harmony with their own people. The Aboriginal must relate to our way of life without losing his identity and his self-respect. But I feel that there must be one law for all people in this State.

Our Government, social workers, and others are to be commended for their efforts to assist people, but the ultimate mandate for laying the guidelines for basic law and order rests with the community in general and with parents in particular. Parental responsibility is a moral obligation and not an option. There can be no doubt that our children are—and always will be—our most valuable asset and our greatest investment. But our younger generation are finding it increasingly difficult to accept their responsibilities and thus retain their independence in this complex and competitive environment.

As I have said, we are at the crossroads in terms of economic and social development. In other words, an incredible opportunity is before us and one thing that we must do at this critical stage is to reinstate a sense of real values. We must encourage young people to shoulder their responsibilities in order that they may retain their self-respect and, to this end, it is encouraging to know that we are creating new jobs faster than any other State.

We must reconstruct the fabric of our society to allow people fully to realise and accept their obligations. We have that opportunity and we must take it. If we do not, we run the risk of further aggravating the situation which has slowly evolved—a system where someone else takes over the problem, thus diminishing personal responsibility and taking away self-respect.

I am sure we all look forward to our 150th anniversary celebrations. From the Empire Games held in Perth in 1962 came useful and lasting facilities, such as Perry Lakes Stadium and the magnificent Beatty Park Aquatic Centre. It is to be hoped that similar long-term benefits will result from our 150th anniversary celebrations. Now that the planning is well in progress, we must make sure that the money allocated is spent to the best advantage. It goes without saying that the results of the deliberations of this Parliament could be evidenced throughout the next 150 years.

We are almost at the end of our summer season and during this time half of our State has suffered badly from the effects of drought and from the devastating effects of flood. These two factors alone must surely alert us once more to the vital role that water plays in this State.

Perhaps of all States, Western Australia needs to be more judicious in its preservation of its water resource. We have no control over weather conditions and the long-range forecasters paint a gloomy picture of what rainfall we can expect over the next 10 years. During the last session of Parliament the Government was instrumental in

setting up the Water Resources Council which has made an excellent start by initiating investigation into the State's most pressing water issues. Among these are rural water supplies, catchment salinity, assessment of resources, planning future supplies, and waste recycling.

With our present water problems and the devastating and projected effect of jarrah dieback, I feel it is necessary for the Government to formulate some guidelines in relation to land use within our populated areas. We have the opportunity now of developing our bauxite mining areas, which obviously offer the State vast financial benefits and employment possibilities.

Government policy is produced largely by public pressure combined with government discussion. Therefore, the community should seek full information in relation to the matters it is concerned about and the Government should be co-operative in seeing that all sides are fully aware of the facts.

The Government is to be commended for having commissioned the services of the Stanford Research Institute of California to undertake a review of land-use planning for the Darling Range area. I wish, however, that the whole of the funding for this project had come from the Government.

With the Stanford report due, hopefully at the end of May, and the recent CSIRO findings, a comprehensive assessment will be possible so we may be able to obtain the best of both worlds.

This should enable us to weigh carefully the advantages of generating a return on our natural resources and the job opportunities which accompany such development, in conjunction with the need to preserve our national heritage. This kind of issue should be above petty politics.

I am sure I reflect the attitude of my colleagues when I point out that we are about to enter into an important session. We hope that all members will conduct themselves with the propriety and dignity that the office of Parliament demands and that the community has a right to expect.

In this second session of the twenty-ninth Parliament, we have the opportunity to demonstrate that the profession of politics can raise its head with dignity and show it has an increasingly important role to play in advancing the best interests of our State of Western Australia.

THE HON. N. F. MOORE (Lower North) [9.00 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 9.01 p.m.