

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 14 March 1991

## MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.15 pm.

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair.

## PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr P.J. McHugh) read the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor (The Honourable Sir Francis Theodore Page Burt, AC, KCMG, QC) summoning the third session of the Thirty-third Parliament.

## 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 (see Council report preceding), returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

## BILLS (19) – ASSENT

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills –

1. Employment Agents Amendment Bill
2. Reserves and Land Revestment Bill (No 2)
3. Education Amendment Bill (No 2)
4. Petroleum (Drilling Reservations) Amendment Bill
5. Child Welfare Amendment Bill (No 2)
6. Mines Regulation Amendment Bill
7. Credit Unions Amendment Bill
8. Totalisator Agency Board Betting Amendment Bill
9. South West Development Authority Amendment Bill
10. Workers' Compensation and Assistance Amendment Bill
11. Acts Amendment (Heritage Council) Bill
12. Child Support (Adoption of Laws) Bill
13. Industrial Relations Amendment Bill
14. Local Government Amendment Bill (No 2)
15. Local Government Superannuation Amendment Bill
16. Heritage of Western Australia Bill
17. Tobacco Control Bill
18. Corporations (Western Australia) Bill
19. Corporations (Taxing) Bill

## MEMBER FOR GERALDTON – RESIGNATION AND WRIT

**THE SPEAKER** : I report receipt of the following letter –

Dear Mike,

I hereby submit my resignation as Member for Geraldton in the Legislative Assembly.

I would like you to convey my thanks to all of the staff of Parliament House for the courtesies extended to me during my seventeen (17) years as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Yours sincerely,

JEFF CARR, MLA  
MEMBER FOR GERALDTON

As a consequence of that letter, I have caused a writ to be issued to supply the vacancy for the district of Geraldton. It was issued on 6 March 1991. Nominations close on 22 March 1991 and polling day will be 13 April 1991.

### PETITION – DUCK SHOOTING

#### *Prohibition Legislation – Support*

**MRS WATKINS (Wanneroo)** [3.02 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms –

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned petitioners of Western Australia and residents, urge you not to declare Duck Shooting Seasons and to legislate for the prohibition of any future Duck Shooting in this State because of the cruelty inflicted on our wildlife; the loss of significant waterbird breeding habitat; the pollution of the wetlands from lead pellets, cartridges and other rubbish, and community disapproval of recreational shooting of wildlife.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 1 413 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 1.]

### PETITION – HEATHCOTE HOSPITAL CLOSURE

#### *Property Preservation*

**MR LEWIS (Applecross)** [3.03 pm]: I present a petition couched in the following terms –

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned bring to your attention;

that after the closure of the Heathcote Hospital, the property (being land and buildings formerly occupied by Heathcote Hospital) be preserved in perpetuity for public use.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 17 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 2.]

### PETITION – YORK DISTRICT HOSPITAL

#### *Closure or Services Reduction – Opposition*

**MR TRENORDEN (Avon)** [3.04 pm]: I present a petition which reads as follows –

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of York, Western Australia, wish to express our extreme concern regarding proposals to either close down or substantially reduce the service offered by the York District Hospital.

To entertain such a proposal is to demonstrate a callous disregard for the well being of rural electors and the economics of a small town.

The Shire of York is one of the few rural communities in Western Australia which is exhibiting positive growth patterns, such growth being based on the fertile agricultural land and the ever growing tourist trade.

The York District Hospital serves the community professionally and efficiently, being recognised as an accredited hospital and recently being awarded the commissioner's Annual Award for excellence and innovation in health care.

To reduce an essential service at a time of growth and development would appear to be an action designed to undermine such development which has been built up through hard work and diligence. To require residents and visitors to travel to larger country centres or to the Perth metropolitan area is to deny these people an existing service and would compromise their health care.

We believe the York Hospital must not be closed or have its level of service reduced and require assurances from the Government that the York Hospital will not have its services reduced or be closed.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 121 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 3.]

### PETITION – RAILWAYS

#### *South West Suburbs Passenger Service Extension – Support*

MR THOMAS (Cockburn) [3.05 pm]: I have a petition expressed in the following terms –

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned support the extension of the suburban passenger rail service to the suburbs of the south west corridor.

This part of the metropolitan area is growing and is widely recognised as one of the most desirable options for the long term expansion of the City of Perth.

Moreover, as recent international events have shown, it is prudent to minimise dependence on oil and environmental considerations support the extension and enhancement of our public transport system.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition bears 53 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 4.]

### PETITION – FOOD ADDITIVES

#### *Supermarkets and Food Outlets – Code Chart*

MR KIERATH (Riverton) [3.06 pm]: I present a petition which reads as follows –

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned hereby petition that the Government require all supermarkets and

food outlets to display clearly a chart detailing the coding used in food additives, thereby allowing the consumer to know which chemicals are used in the product. The consumer can then exercise freedom of choice in deciding whether or not to use the product. The chart should also warn of the possible harmful effects of food colourings, especially red E123, and yellow E102, (carmoisine and tartrazine), until it has been proven that these additives are not injurious to health.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 41 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 5.]

### ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (POLITICAL FINANCE) BILL

#### *Leave to Introduce*

DR LAWRENCE (Glendalough – Premier) [3.15 pm]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move –

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for "An Act to amend the Electoral Act 1907".

Question put and passed; leave granted.

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Dr Lawrence (Premier), and read a first time.

### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

#### *Distribution of Copies*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Michael Barnett): Accompanied by the honourable 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 among the members of this Chamber.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY – FIRST DAY

#### *Motion*

MR CATANIA (Balcatta) [3.16 pm]: I move –

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to.

May it please Your Excellency –

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament 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 am deeply honoured at being given the opportunity to move the Address-in-Reply motion, and I thank the Governor on behalf of the Government for his presentation of the legislative program for the forthcoming session of Parliament.

The Lawrence Government faces many challenges over the next two years, but perhaps the most important is the creation of new and durable employment opportunities for the working population of Western Australia. The Western Australian economy has traditionally been dependent on its abundance of primary resources. If world prices for these resources decline, it affects these industries and flows on to other industries, such as construction and, in turn, to related industries and services, and generally to employment. Diversification is required to avert this decline. Diversification, especially into new areas such as downstream processing, and other areas with competitive advantages, such as high technology, biotechnology and tourism, will mean that economic growth and employment will become

less vulnerable to economic downturns. To effectively achieve this we must develop a competitive and productive culture, thereby encouraging private sector investment and, of course, employment. The appointment of a Minister for Microeconomic Reform is a very important step. It will ensure that Government services and infrastructure are provided as cheaply and efficiently as possible, and it is a positive step towards creating this competitive culture. To be more productive we must continue restructuring our industries, retrain our workers, and encourage and redirect our youth into areas which will be of greater benefit to them and to the economy. The efficient use of institutions such as the Department of Technical and Further Education, and the assistance and contribution of industry in the training process are essential.

Perhaps the most important change necessary to develop a productive culture is to change the ingrained attitudes which exist in the Australian work place – from management down to the shop floor. We should stress that the benefits will be shared: Employers with profits, employees with wages and more job satisfaction, and consumers with better quality goods and lower prices. Employers and owners of capital require better profit; employees require better wages and job security. These factors are synonymous and should be promoted as such.

Although the Government has mentioned that a number of large development projects are due to commence by the end of this year and in early 1992, there is a pressing need to take urgent and immediate action to create employment. I believe this can be achieved through the housing construction industry. The Minister for Housing has taken the first step by committing Homeswest to the development of 1 000 Homeswest lots, with major savings to be offered to purchasers of house and land packages. The required funds of \$350 million will be financed by the private sector, and this will be an avenue by which thousands of jobs will be created across the Western Australian economy. However, I urge that more pressing action be taken, and suggest strongly that all expenditure on public housing for the next financial year be brought forward immediately, to assist in providing relief to the Western Australian housing sector and in creating new jobs ahead of schedule. The assistance and support of our Federal colleagues will be crucial and vital in the implementation of this course of action. Agreement to such a course would help companies in the building sector retain present staff and prepare for increased activity.

We have heard that the Western Australian economy is defying Australian trends by achieving growth rates of more than two per cent. We need to maintain this momentum, and initiatives such as these in the housing sector should be implemented immediately to take advantage of falling interest rates and the re-emergence of home buyers during 1991. These actions should be complemented by fast tracking building approvals, as the delays experienced only hold back construction and employment opportunities. I suggest strongly the radical procedure of giving the Minister for Planning additional powers to ensure that this process exists, is encouraged, and is dealt with immediately. The small business and retail sector, which is a major employer and which has suffered greatly over the last 18 months, would be an indirect beneficiary of an active housing construction industry and would certainly benefit from and contribute to employment prospects.

In my maiden speech in this House I referred to the importance to the Western Australian economy of the tourism industry. The comments I made two years ago are even more relevant today, in relation not only to the economy but also to job creation. Tourism in Australia is a \$17.25 billion industry, and it recently topped the \$3 billion mark in Western Australia. It is a well known fact that \$1 million spent in this industry will create 20 times the jobs created in most other industries. The tourism industry is a major economic force and it has tremendous employment benefits. Western Australians live in a State with millions of years of geographic history, a beautiful climate, unpolluted coastal waters, clean air, and a secure and peaceful lifestyle which is the envy of the rest of the world. Let us show it off and rake in the benefits for all Western Australians. The tourism industry is of particular benefit to youth employment prospects. It is exciting and vibrant, and needs energy and fresh ideas. We need new international gateways into Western Australia to allow carriers to carry people into our State, to use our facilities, and to keep our population employed, less isolated and more informed about our neighbours, wherever they come from. We need to develop immediately a package of incentives for tourist oriented projects, which includes reduced rates, charges and taxes; export grants and promotions; wilderness development

concessions; special employment apprenticeships; and concessions to those employers who participate. These suggestions may seem radical but they are common practice in many countries which depend on this vital industry to reduce their national debt and to keep their populations employed. In conclusion, we have the ingredients and we know the formula. The challenge is to increase the tempo and efficiently implement the structure to ensure the result emerges more quickly so that the people of Western Australia will be employed and will be able to live fruitful and productive lives.

Government members: Hear, hear!

**DR EDWARDS** (Maylands) [3.26 pm]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

## DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

### *Appointment*

The Speaker (Mr Michael Barnett) announced the appointment of the member for Albany (Mr Watt), the member for Morley (Mr Donovan), the member for Nollamara (Mr Kobelke), and the member for Peel (Mr Marlborough) as Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the present session.

## MINISTERS OF THE CROWN – CHANGES

**DR LAWRENCE** (Glendalough – Premier) [3.27 pm]: I advise the House of the following ministerial changes: Dr Judyth Watson, member for Kenwick, joins Cabinet as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, Seniors, and Minister assisting the Minister for Women's Interests; Hon Eric Ripper, member for Belmont, as Minister for Community Services; and Hon Jim McGinty, member for Fremantle, as Minister for Housing, Construction, Services, and Heritage. I lay on the Table the *Government Gazettes* in which the various ministerial responsibilities are outlined.

[See paper No 12.]

[Questions without notice taken.]

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE – SPECIAL

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved –

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 19 March 1991 at 2.00 pm.

*House adjourned at 3.38 pm*

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## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### SMITH, MR ROBERT – LEADER'S ACCOUNT

1. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) When did the Premier become aware of the existence of the leader's account from which convicted private investigator Robert Smith was paid?
- (2) How many such accounts were or are there?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)–(2)

There is an assumption in the Leader of the Opposition's first statement about whether funds were paid from that account for certain purposes about which I have no knowledge and which will, no doubt, be the subject of further discussion before the Royal Commission. I became aware of the existence of the leader's account, or the possibility that there might have been one, when I became Premier. I immediately indicated that I thought it was inappropriate that that should occur, although it was pointed out to me that many leaders of all political parties in this country have conducted such accounts. I thought it was better that it all be handled through the party so that there could never be any suggestion that I had knowledge of moneys being donated directly to the party, and, therefore, never any implication that those funds could be linked in any way with the decisions of Government.

The additional step that needs to be taken, apart from my personal preference in this matter, is that we enact legislation in this Parliament which will allow for the disclosure of political donations. Such legislation would put beyond doubt any funds that go to political parties for the purposes of campaigning and for running their parties.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: Members opposite cannot have it both ways. Members opposite have indicated on many occasions that, for reasons which defy understanding, they are not prepared to support such legislation. When we again introduce that legislation in this session members will see that every possible loophole has been tied up, and every hole plugged – if members can suggest further ones we will be happy to accommodate them – and the legislation will ensure that every cent which goes to any political party is the subject of public disclosure to the people of Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! If members want more than a nominal question time, that can be the case. However, I draw members' attention to the fact that this is opening day, and they might behave well for at least that period.

### WOOL INDUSTRY – WHEAT INDUSTRY *Government Support*

2. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) In view of the failure of the Prime Minister's economic statement in addressing the immediate needs of rural Western Australia, what does the Government intend to do to ensure that two of Western Australia's best agricultural industries – wheat and wool – are provided with the support needed to maintain them as two of the major export revenue earning industries of this State?
- (2) As only 40 per cent of wheat growers have finance approved for their 1991 farming operations, what action is being taken to ensure that wheat farmers can secure funds to plant this year's crop?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

(1)-(2)

The first of what I hope will be many successful attempts to address the problem will occur in Sydney tomorrow at 7.00 am as I have arranged for a special meeting with the Federal Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Kerin. The approach that I will adopt with the Federal Minister will be to strongly reinforce Western Australia's position in support of the minimum guaranteed price for wheat. It is a critical requirement for the industry that the Commonwealth review the decision to remove the minimum guaranteed price.

The second matter I will be raising with the Federal Minister is the requirement for the Federal Government to quickly spell out the measures to assist the industries referred to by the Leader of the National Party. The Federal Government proposes to make the announcement in April. At the meeting tomorrow my approach will be to encourage the Federal Minister to bring forward that announcement of the assistance packages. The announcement of those measures must be within the next two weeks and the end of this month must be the deadline. In that case farmers can complete their budgetary preparations prior to mid-April as these people need to be farmers rather than financiers after that period; they should not be contemplating the ways in which their budgetary considerations can be best met. Also, I will continue to encourage the application of the recommendations of the special Rural Task Force, which were adopted by State Cabinet for urgent and immediate action by the Commonwealth.

**WESTERN WOMEN FINANCIAL SERVICES PTY LTD – RECEIVERSHIP**  
*Women's Information and Referral Exchange – Recommendations and Referral*

3. Mr LEWIS to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to recent media reports concerning the commercial operations of a group of companies which specialise in advising women in financial matters known as Western Women Financial Services

- (1) As this group has now been placed in receivership, is it true that the Women's Information and Referral Exchange, an organisation attached to the Office of the Premier, has been recommending and referring persons to Western Women Financial Services?
- (2) If yes, is it usual, or is it condoned by the Premier, for Government organisations to refer and recommend commercial organisations to the public?

The SPEAKER: Order! Before asking the Premier to respond or otherwise to that question, I seek advice from some members as to the current status of this matter. Is the issue currently before the courts?

Mr MacKinnon: To my knowledge the company is in receivership; it is not in the courts.

The SPEAKER: Based on that information, the Premier can answer the question but she should do so in a rather guarded way.

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(2)

I will do that, Mr Speaker. I am aware of the media reports of that particular group and of the subsequent actions. Also I am aware that portions of the group are being placed in receivership. As members may not be aware, the Women's Information and Referral Exchange is not an organisation which recommends things, but rather it makes available to women a range of information about services and facilities which are available in the community. Those facilities included the group to which the member referred, but that was not the only financial organisation on the books at the Women's Information and Referral Exchange. The day on which any suggestion arose of any difficulty, no further referrals were made to that organisation.



Mr Lewis: Is it usual for the Government to refer people to organisations?

Dr LAWRENCE: It is not Government referring; it is providing information.

HARRISON, MR ROSS – LEADER'S ACCOUNT

4. Mr MINSON to the Premier:

- (1) Is it correct that Mr Ross Harrison, a public servant, administered the leader's bank account for some time?
- (2) Why was Mr Harrison allowed to conduct such activity?
- (3) Does the Premier support that activity?
- (4) If not, what action does she intend to take, if any, on this matter?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(4)

It has already been indicated by Mr Harrison that he did not "administer" – which I believe was the member's word – the fund, but rather he was a signatory. When I discovered that that was so – it was done before my time – I indicated that I did not think it was prudent to involve a public servant in that way. Obviously the question of that account and the purposes to which it may have been put have been the subject of investigation by the Royal Commission; it fits under one of its terms of reference. Mr Harrison has indicated his full cooperation both with the police, who were asking questions on the matter, and with the commission. He has indicated to me that all he did at any stage was provide a signature for those accounts. Also, there is likely to be further legal action following the media accounts of the situation.

Mr Lewis: Is it proper?

Dr LAWRENCE: I said that I thought it was not prudent for that to be done by a public servant; I stand by that.

EAST PERTH DEVELOPMENT – HOMESWEST  
*Housing Commitment*

5. Dr ALEXANDER to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Can the Minister explain why the outline development plan for East Perth made no specific allowance for Homeswest housing, given the fact that the 1987 plan provided for up to one-third such housing – that is a provision in line with Labor philosophy and public demand?
- (2) Will the Minister guarantee that Homeswest will be providing an equivalent proportion of stage one housing in the final development plan?
- (3) If not, will the Minister explain to the House why the previous commitment has been broken?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

- (1) The question of Homeswest housing being provided in the East Perth development is still being considered by Government. However, the best advice is that direct involvement by Homeswest may not be the best outcome regarding the desired effect the East Perth development can have on the image of Perth as the capital of Western Australia.
  - (2) Public housing certainly will be provided in the East Perth development but it is simply a question of whether that housing will be under the control of Homeswest or provided in another manner.
  - (3) I am unaware of any breaches of a commitment. As I said, the matter is still under consideration and will be determined by Cabinet in due course.
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