

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

## FIRST SESSION OF THE EIGHTEENTH PARLIAMENT.

*Pursuant to Resolution passed in the Legislative Assembly on the 29th September, 1943, and under the provisions of the Legislative Assembly and General Election Postponement Act, 1942, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor issued his warrant for a general election of the Legislative Assembly, this being held on the 20th November, 1943.*

*The Eighteenth Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 27th July, 1944, and the First Session was commenced on that day.*

### Legislative Council.

Thursday, 27th July, 1944.

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### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon.  
The PRESIDENT took the Chair.

### PROCLAMATION.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. L. L. Leake) read the proclamation of His Excellency the Lieut-Governor summoning the first session of the Eighteenth Parliament.

### COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honor Mr. Justice Dwyer) having entered the Chamber at noon, a message was sent to the Legislative Assembly requesting the presence of members in the Council Chamber.

Members of the Legislative Assembly having arrived accordingly, the Commissioner requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in the name and on the part of His Majesty the King or in the name and on the part of His Excellency for the opening and holding of the first session of the Eighteenth Parliament.

The Commission was read.

The Commissioner read the following statement:—

*Mr. President, Hon. Members of the Legislative Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

I have it in command from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor to inform you that, at 3 o'clock this afternoon, His Excellency will declare to you the causes of his calling together of this Parliament; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should first be chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, members of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and having been duly sworn by me in accordance with the terms of the Commission granted me by His Excellency, you do elect your Speaker and notify the same to His Excellency.

The Commissioner and members of the Legislative Assembly retired from the Chambers.

### SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The members of the Legislative Assembly having retired, the Clerk of Parliaments announced the return of writs for the election of members, showing that the following had been duly elected:—Hon. J. M. Drew (Central), Hon. G. B. Wood (East), Hon. L. B. Bolton (Metropolitan), Hon. F. E. Gibson (Metropolitan-Suburban), Hon. G. W. Miles (North), Hon. E. M. Heenan (North-East), Hon. J. Cornell (South), Hon. A. Thomson (South-East), Hon. L. Craig (South-West), Hon. W. H. Kitson (West). These members took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

*Sitting suspended from 12.20 to 2.58 p.m.*



### LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3 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—*

Since last Session, Parliament and the State have suffered by the loss of Mr. R. S. Sampson, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Swan, who rendered many years of faithful service to the people of Western Australia. It is with great regret also that I record the passing of the Honourable W. C. Angwin, who served the State with distinction in a number of important positions.

The successful invasion of Western Europe, combined with the magnificent victories of the Allied Nations on other fronts, has added to our confidence in certain victory.

The removal of the imminent threat of enemy attack has made possible the relaxation of some of the Civil Defence restrictions. Nevertheless the organisation and training are being maintained to meet an emergency should the necessity arise.

Enlistments of both men and women from Western Australia remain the highest per capita of any State in Australia. Contributions to war savings certificates and war savings bonds continue to be above the Australian average. Subscriptions by the people to patriotic funds have been maintained and approximately £1,250,000 have now been collected for this purpose.

Ministers have maintained the closest co-operation with the Commonwealth Government in matters associated with the war and post-war planning. State Departments are still carrying out much important war work and, in collaboration with Commonwealth Departments, are making considerable progress in the preparations for reverting to a peacetime economy.

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

For the fourth year in succession the State has experienced a surplus, the revenue

for 1943-44 exceeding the expenditure by £38,021. It has again been possible to make a limited provision for arrears of maintenance which will have to be made good when war conditions permit.

Loan expenditure is still restricted to works which either have a defence value or are of an essential character. Our Public Debt has been further reduced, borrowings for the year being less than contributions to the Sinking Fund.

*Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—*

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

Despite the many difficulties inseparable from wartime conditions, intensified efforts to improve and increase the scope of Secondary Industries in Western Australia have been rewarded by a gratifying expansion.

A notable example is the production of potash from alunite, which has already made a valuable contribution to the State's fertiliser requirements. Substantial progress has been made with the construction of the large State pilot plant to produce alumina from the residues.

Complete details of the availability of necessary utilities such as electric power, fuel, process water, rail and harbour facilities, are being compiled to aid the regional planning of selected areas.

As part of a plan for the post-war development of basic industries, a large State wood distillation and charcoal iron pilot plant is now being erected. The Commonwealth Government has made a grant of £30,000 to the State to assist in the development of this industry. The grant will ensure its successful operation and should therefore hasten the day when the iron and steel and associated industries are solidly established in Western Australia. The latest grant of £30,000 is additional to a Commonwealth grant of the same amount made to the State some time ago for the establishment of electric steel furnaces.

Gold mines which have ceased production because of manpower shortage and other war causes are being maintained to permit of early re-opening once the existing difficulties are removed. Approximately 4,500 men are still employed in the industry and for the year 1943 nearly 550,000 ounces



of gold were produced, valued at over £5,700,000.

The State is supplying important strategic minerals essential for war purposes, including tantalite, beryl, mica, antimony, arsenic, asbestos, and red ochre. A mine to produce pyrites has been brought into production with State Government assistance, and phosphatic rock is being obtained from a deposit within the State. The continuance of production of these minerals after the war will materially assist in the development of the State, particularly of the North-West.

The production of coal at Collie is being considerably increased by the operation of the Stockton open-cut and the Wyvern Colliery, which were both sponsored by the Government.

The opening of the present season was not promising, but the opportune rains which have fallen generally throughout the agricultural districts of the State, although very belated, have somewhat relieved anxiety. The result of the season will depend to a greater extent than usual on good finishing rains and heavy intermediate falls to replenish water supplies. Seasonal circumstances in many of our pastoral areas are far from satisfactory.

Manpower shortages have caused acute difficulties in most of our rural industries. Much has been achieved in reaching production goals in spite of many war-caused disabilities, and District War Agricultural Committees have assisted in both State and Commonwealth spheres to make production and manpower problems easier of solution. The State Government is taking every opportunity to protect the wheat industry from any further shrinkage and to plan for its re-establishment in its proper place in our economic life. Steps are being taken to ensure permanency in our rural economy of such new industries as flax. Initial experiments in the Kimberley district with fodders under irrigation have given promising results, and other examinations which will be links with successful settlement are at present under investigation.

In spite of heavy demands and the disabilities caused by shortages of materials and labour, the stock population of the State has not diminished.

An extensive examination has been made of unalienated areas in the South-West portion of the State likely to be suitable for land settlement. The provision of further

farms from Crown lands is being preceded by exhaustive examinations and soil surveys and investigations into the economic possibilities of drainage extensions.

The plans for the re-valuation of Conditional Purchase holdings in our outer areas are nearing completion.

Hundreds of natives who were previously unemployed are now engaged in profitable occupations, principally in pastoral and farming pursuits.

The resources of the Railway Department have been fully taxed to cope with the heavy demands of defence and civilian traffic. The construction of additional locomotives, carriages and goods wagons is proceeding. Five Standard Garratt locomotives have been placed in service, and an additional five are being constructed. Tenders for six Diesel trains to cost approximately £150,000 have been received and are now under consideration. Provision is being made for expenditure on deferred maintenance and improved services, which will be undertaken as soon as conditions permit. Progress is being made with the construction of a deviation to eliminate the working of trains through the tunnel at Swan View.

Information is being prepared by the Railway Department in connection with the investigation by the Commonwealth into the standardisation of railway gauges in Australia.

Tenders are being called for the plant for the new Power Station to be erected at South Fremantle.

The Public Works, Water Supply, and Main Roads Departments have been substantially engaged in carrying out defence works. It is anticipated that these will gradually reduce in volume. It will then be possible to undertake some of the arrears of maintenance works.

The State Shipbuilding Yards have successfully launched five vessels built of local hardwoods, and war work of considerable magnitude, including shipping repairs, has been successfully carried out at the State Engineering Works.

It is anticipated that the report in connection with the inquiry into the proposed development of an electricity supply scheme for the South-West will be submitted later in the year.

The Boyup Brook reservoir which has been completed, will materially assist in the processing of locally grown flax.



Surveys and investigations are in progress in connection with post-war public works, particularly a scheme for the reticulation of water to serve 12 million acres of the State's agricultural areas.

As a first step towards meeting the acute housing shortage, a programme of 75 houses has been approved for Western Australia. Construction has already commenced on 10 houses at Boyup Brook and 15 at Collie, while tenders have been called for 50 to be erected in the metropolitan area. The second allocation to this State will be 90 houses, and it is intended to build 50 in the metropolitan area and 40 at various country centres.

In addition to relieving the immediate shortage, this programme, which it is hoped to expand from time to time, will establish the nucleus of the organisation necessary to undertake the huge task of meeting post-war housing requirements. Great difficulties are being experienced in securing the necessary manpower. A conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers will be held shortly to consider financial and other details of the scheme, and in the meantime arrangements for the necessary funds are being made by the Commonwealth Government.

Action is being taken to obtain land for the post-war housing programme, and legislation will be introduced conferring the power to execute compulsory land resumptions where necessary for this purpose and for slum clearance.

Far-reaching developments are in progress in connection with the health of the community, and recent conferences between Commonwealth and State authorities have been most encouraging. A review of hospital activities and organisation within Western Australia, particularly in the light of post-war requirements, is being made by a departmental committee. War conditions have greatly restricted the extension of hospital facilities, but work on the Perth Hospital is in progress. Amendments are contemplated to the Health Act and the Nurses Registration Act, and it is proposed to introduce a Bill dealing with the Physical Fitness Committee.

Plans which are now being formulated to give effect to the amendment to the Education Act passed last year, include the selection of sites for new schools and the enlargement of existing areas to meet the demands of the post-war period. A measure will be introduced to increase the annual grant to

the University to £40,000, and to make other amendments to the University Act.

The technical educational facilities of the State have been used by the Commonwealth to train 7,300 men and women of the Armed Services. Preparations are being made to meet adequately the demands of pre-vocational and vocational training of discharged soldiers, and the vocational guidance of children leaving school is being further developed to include students in larger country centres.

Consideration is being given to the establishment of facilities for dealing with sub-normal and delinquent boys and girls. Measures will be introduced to improve the Adoption of Children Act and the Guardianship of Infants Act.

The Government has approved of the principle of establishing free country lending libraries with limited Government financial assistance. An honorary committee is being appointed to recommend a scheme suitable to Western Australian conditions.

The demand for timber continues to exceed production capacity, which is limited by manpower and machinery problems. A substantial post-war programme is in preparation to make up the leeway of forest development and regeneration.

The quantity of firewood supplied through the Forests Department during the past six months was 85 per cent. greater than for the corresponding period last year. For the twelve months ended June 30th, 1944, approximately 60,000 tons have been supplied to woodyards, State Schools, Hospitals and other institutions.

The fisheries research programme initiated in 1941 has been steadily pursued, and valuable information relative to many phases of the fishing industry has been obtained.

The Public Trust Office in its second year considerably increased its business and has rendered valuable service in handling deceased soldiers' estates.

A measure will be introduced to create a Promotions Appeal Board for Government employees.

A Bill will be placed before you to liberalise the franchise for the Legislative Council.

Other measures dealing with industrial, agricultural and social matters will also be placed before you for consideration.



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

His Excellency then withdrew from the Chamber.

*The President took the Chair*

## **BILL—GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** 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 entitled "An Act to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Guardianship and Custody of Infants."

Leave given: Bill introduced and read a first time.

## **LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.**

**THE PRESIDENT:** For the sake of greater accuracy, I have obtained from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor copies of the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament. These will be distributed among hon. members.

## **ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.**

*First Day.*

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [3.25]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver:—"May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the State 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."

I have moved a similar motion on so many occasions that I am beginning to wonder whether I am moving it again—or yet! I am deeply grateful for the honour accorded me.

Hon. J. Cornell: It may have been Hobson's choice!

Hon. G. FRASER: Things have not reached that stage yet. We meet this year in a much happier frame of mind than that in which we have assembled in the previous two or three years. We can congratulate ourselves on the position that we, together with the Allied Nations, hold today. As recently as this time last year our country was in very grave danger but, owing to the wonderful manner in which the Allies have car-

ried out their task during the past twelve months, we can today feel that we are safe from any possibility of aggression. The feat accomplished by the Allies recently is one of which the people of Australia are immensely proud. It must easily have been the greatest military feat in history. I refer to the landing on the French coast, and not only the landing but also the successful retention of the bridgehead established at that time. Progress since then may not have been as rapid as many would have liked, but nevertheless we can be satisfied that the bridgehead was successfully established, and we feel confident there will be no retrogression.

I do not attempt to set myself up as a prophet as to when the war will end, but, that bridgehead having been established, it is not too much to hope, perhaps, that our next assemblage will be the first after the declaration of peace. I compliment all sections of the people in Australia on the excellent manner in which they have conducted themselves during the years of war through which we have passed. Particularly would I express gratitude to the large band of voluntary workers who, in many ways, have helped Australia's war effort. Many of them have done their ordinary day's work and then tackled another job in the interests of the nation. To those people we must take off our hats. Many of our services have had difficulty in carrying on, and I would pay a particular compliment to the various transport organisations, particularly in this State. I am taking into consideration both Government and privately owned transport systems when I say that if we appreciate the enormous responsibilities thrust upon those in control of them, the shortage of manpower and, what is even of greater significance, the shortage of parts required for the renovation of the vehicles concerned, we must indeed take our hats off to those concerned for the excellent manner in which they maintained the several services in running.

Having dealt with aspects of the war to that extent, I suggest that we must now look forward. One of the greatest weaknesses of Australia—probably it is realised today as never before in our history—is that the country has found itself with insufficient people successfully to defend its shores. I was surprised to note from the reading of His Excellency's Speech that the theme that is so popular with the Lieut.-Governor—I refer