

CROWN AGENCIES BILL*First Reading*

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [3.39]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of the House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill for "An Act to remove doubts as to and to determine the status of certain statutory bodies and for other purposes."

Leave given.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH*Distribution of Copies*

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*First Day*

THE HON. S. T. J. THOMPSON (South) [3.41]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the 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 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."

I am very conscious of the privilege that has been granted to me, on this my first appearance in this Council, in being entrusted with this important motion expressing, as it does, the loyalty of the members of this Council to Her Majesty the Queen; and I thank those responsible for giving me this privilege.

Mr. President, I take this opportunity of congratulating you on being elected to that most dignified position as President of this Council, and I trust that your term of office will be of much distinction and pleasure to yourself, and of benefit to the House. I would also congratulate those members who were re-elected at the recent Council elections.

I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation to the members and officers of this House for the expressions of goodwill and the assistance I have received during the brief time I have been in office. Also, to the electors of the South Province, I wish to express my thanks for giving me the opportunity to represent them in the Legislative Council;

and I assure them that, although I fear I have been set a very difficult task to live up to the standard set by my predecessor, I shall do my utmost to promote their interests, believing, as I do, that at this stage of the State's development we must have a prosperous rural community if we are to have a great deal of progress on the industrial side.

At this point I would pay a tribute, on behalf of the people in the South Province, to the work done on our behalf by the retiring member. The hon. Mr. Roche represented us for 20 years, and, being a man who expressed his opinion in no uncertain manner, there was never any room to doubt where his loyalty was placed. His retirement is a great loss not only to the South Province, but to the State as a whole. Having been associated with him for many years I most sincerely regret that ill-health caused his retirement at this time when the wisdom and experience acquired over his years of service could be so valuable.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without adding to those sentiments, which I am sure have already been expressed by other members, concerning the retirement of Sir Charles Latham, who has served his State and his Party with such distinction. I wish both these gentlemen good health, and I trust that they may enjoy days of relaxation to the full.

In view of my brief experience, I propose to confine my remarks to those subjects in His Excellency's Speech with which I am most conversant. I congratulate the Government on the progress it is making in providing the additional facilities for education that are so badly needed. I noticed, with interest, that His Excellency referred to the record number of classrooms built in one year. It is very pleasing indeed in one's travels to see these improvements spread over such a large area of the State. There is much the same state of affairs with regard to hospitals. New buildings or extensions are going on in many centres.

Regarding land settlement, in his Speech, His Excellency made reference to the fact that one phase of land settlement has been brought to a successful conclusion. While this may be so, I have no hesitation in saying that there is still much to be done before all farms are on a sound economic basis.

I congratulate the Minister concerned for the improvements he has brought about during his term of office, and I hope they will be accelerated, particularly with regard to valuations. I am confident that these land settlement projects will develop into very valuable producing areas of the State, but, with the present low wool prices and increasing costs, some settlers are going to find it difficult to get established. I feel that we should keep in mind, when

considering these cases, the service the settlers are rendering to the State in bringing these areas into production.

These increased costs do not only apply to land settlement. The whole rural community, and more particularly the man on the land, are alarmed at the continued upward trend of costs over which they have no control.

I contend that the farmer has now reached the stage when he can no longer absorb these costs. To support this contention I quote figures given us by the Rt. Hon. John McEwen. He said that, although there had been an increase of 11 per cent. in production, there had been a fall of 11 per cent. in the return to the producer. This position cannot continue, and I appeal to the Government to explore every avenue of reducing costs. One avenue I suggest that it should consider, as one way of countering these rises, is the possibility of further economy in the transport service.

I would also suggest that an inquiry be held into the possibility of establishing killing centres in some country areas, preferably on a weight and grade basis, and a report made on same. This would relieve the present congestion at Midland Junction; and if rail transport were used between that centre and the port, a lot of trucks would be taken off our main roads.

Just one further point: We in the country areas have watched with interest the efforts of the Minister for Industrial Development to attract new industries to the State, and we congratulate him on the success he has achieved. I hope the same generous terms will be available for the advance of industry in the rural areas. One suggestion I would put forward is that the present vermin fencing scheme be extended to cover all types of boundary fencing on new land. This would help considerably in the early stages of becoming established.

In regard to proposed legislation, having had a long association with local government, I note with satisfaction that the Local Government Bill is to be brought forward in this session, and I am sure I am expressing the feeling of the majority of those in local government when I say that I hope it will be acceptable on this occasion.

While on this subject, I would like to make some mention of the Main Roads Department and the excellent work it is doing in the country. There is one request I would like to put forward in that respect, and that is concerning what we in local government call the fifty-fifty bitumen scheme. This is a very satisfactory scheme so far as local government is concerned, and it is doing a great deal to seal quite a lot of the secondary country roads. But in local government, attempts to make the best use of the scheme would be greatly advantaged if it were altered to a two-thirds—one-third basis.

Mr. President, I do express the hope that my term of office will enable me to contribute to the further advancement of this great State it is our privilege to serve.

THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [3.52]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 28th July, 1960

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at noon.
The SPEAKER took the Chair.