

LANG HANCOCK — LEGACY

Statement by Member for Jandakot

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.58 pm]: Our great Western Australian success story is due to the vision and hard work of previous generations—great men and women, pioneers of their time, who had the foresight that Western Australia's best days were still to come. Tomorrow marks a significant anniversary in that continuing story. On 16 November 1952 Lang Hancock discovered the world's largest deposit of iron ore. In Hancock's own words, while flying with his wife, Hope —

I got into the Turner River, knowing full well if I followed it through, I would come out into the Ashburton. On going through a gorge in the Turner River, I noticed that the walls looked to me to be solid iron and was particularly alerted by the rusty looking colour of it, it showed to me to be oxidised iron.

Lang Hancock left a substantial legacy to WA. Even today his famous 1952 discovery of iron ore in the Pilbara is still the most significant in the world, while iron ore is one of this country's leading exports. Notwithstanding the Pilbara discovery, Hancock also played a critical role in other mining projects, assisted the infrastructure development of the north, and worked as a newspaper proprietor and published author. Less well known is that, like many of his generation, Hancock served his country during the Second World War and was a sergeant in the Australian Army's volunteer defence corps.

Lang Hancock was a great Western Australian. Former Prime Minister John Howard said of Lang Hancock —

He was a visionary who overcame considerable odds to lead Western Australia, and our nation, to realise its full potential in the development of our vast natural resources.

I believe on the sixtieth anniversary of that discovery of iron ore, we should acknowledge his great legacy to our state.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm