

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Motion*

Resumed from 21 May on the following motion moved by Hon Liz Behjat —

That the following address be presented to His Excellency —

To His Excellency Malcolm McCusker, Companion of the Order of Australia, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Queen's Counsel, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the commonwealth of Australia.

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 thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Agriculture and Food)** [4.11 pm]: I congratulate Madam Deputy President (Hon Adele Farina) on the role she has taken today. Being the first female member in the chair is, as Hon Sally Talbot said, history in the making.

Yesterday, I rushed towards the end of my speech because I wanted to make comments about as many of the previous members who were leaving as I could. I missed some out, so I will start by referring to them. This of course is my contribution to the debate on the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency Malcolm McCusker when he gave his speech on the opening of the thirty-ninth Parliament. Of course, my speech started in the thirty-eighth Parliament and it is continuing into the thirty-ninth. I have already mentioned Hon Jon Ford, Hon Ed Dermer and Hon Helen Bullock. I would also like to pay homage to Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm, who I enjoyed travelling with to China. I believe he will retire to his viticulture and he made some remarks to me that he will make some very good wines. As Minister for Agriculture and Food I intend to see that that member has done what he said he would do. Another member I want to touch on is Hon Giz Watson, with whom I did four years on the Standing Committee on Legislation. I have to admire her for the work she put into this place and the contributions she made in legislation. I also mention Hon Philip Gardiner and the valued valedictory speech he made, which I believe many members will refer to for some time. Hon Max Trenorden, of course, was the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Administration. I travelled with Hon Max Trenorden. The highlight of those travels was an inquiry into Western Power and its infrastructure. I have to say I learnt a lot on those travels to states like Queensland and Victoria to see how they ran their power. I believe that inquiry was extremely successful and highlighted the necessity of some of the infrastructure of the Western Power, which has now been changed. I thank those members. I know they will enjoy their retirement. It was good to catch up with a quiet glass of water last night to celebrate their retirement!

Going back to my speech, it was mainly about the Mining and Pastoral Region, which I represent, and some of the issues and things going on in that area. I got up to Ord stage 2, which was a \$355 million development of another 15 000 irrigated hectares outside of Kununurra. This project has taken nearly 40 years to get to where it will be, and I believe the potential for agriculture in that region is the future there. There is water, an assisting climate and proximity to markets. The markets I talk of are in South-East Asia and beyond. They are the key to seeing this Ord development reach its potential. To ensure that market reaches this potential we will need to invest in those roads, airports and port facilities so that exports will be able to be facilitated to South-East Asia and countries in other areas. This goes back to when I first got into opposition. It was interesting because in the Ord there was very much sugar cane and virtually no sandalwood; there were mainly crops of melons et cetera. It was interesting because South Korea owned the sugar mill, a mill that was always designed as a pilot project and never really reached fruition. That basically meant that the mill produced very low yielding sugar, but very high yielding molasses.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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*Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm*