

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 25th July, 1968

## MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at noon.

## PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. L. P. Hawley) read the proclamation of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator (The Hon. Sir Albert Asher Wolff, K.C.M.G.) summoning the first session of the Twenty-sixth Parliament.

## OPENING PROCEEDINGS

*Message from the Lieutenant-Governor's Commissioners*

A Message from His Excellency's Commissioners requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber. Members accordingly proceeded to that Chamber; and, having heard the Commission to do all things necessary for the opening of Parliament, returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

## SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS

His Honour, Mr. Justice Negus, having been commissioned by the Lieutenant-Governor, entered the Chamber to administer to members the Oath of Allegiance to Her Majesty, and was conducted to the Chair. The Commission to swear-in members having been read, the Clerk produced the writs for the general election, showing the names of the members returned. These members—with the exception of Mr. M. C. Williams (Bunbury)—took and subscribed the Oath and signed the Roll.

The Commissioner then retired from the Chamber.

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER

**MR. BRAND** (Greenough—Premier) [12.46 p.m.]: The House being duly constituted, I move—

That Mr. Hugh Norman Guthrie do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning—Deputy Premier) [12.47 p.m.]: I second the motion.

**MR. GUTHRIE** (Subiaco) [12.48 p.m.]: I submit myself to the will of the House.

There being no other nomination, Mr. Guthrie was conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the motion.

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) [12.49 p.m.]: I thank members for the signal honour they have bestowed upon me, and I will now assume the Chair of Speaker of this House.

**MR. BRAND** (Greenough—Premier) [12.50 p.m.]: It is my pleasure to offer congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to this very important post in the Parliament of Western Australia and, in particular, in the House of Assembly. It has been our experience, and I believe even before I came on to the scene, that Speakers generally have proved themselves to be quite impartial and have endeavoured to control the House in order that legislation might be put through without undue delay, but at the same time to continue to ensure a good atmosphere and decorum within the House.

I am sure this will be your objective and that we will continue to sit in the Assembly of Western Australia where the members—though having conflicting views, having political differences, and having differences in the matter of voting—will show general goodwill and maintain a good example of decorum. It is my pleasure to heartily congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the Assembly.

**MR. TONKIN** (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [12.52 p.m.]: On behalf of Her Majesty's Opposition I am pleased to join with the Premier in extending to you congratulations on your appointment to this high office. By education and by experience you are well fitted for the task with which you will be confronted. We know from the attitude which you have adopted during the discussions on the new Standing Orders and on the formation of those Standing Orders that you are conscious of the need to preserve the rights of private members. Because of that appreciation we have the utmost confidence that you will be able adequately to discharge your duties as Speaker of this House, and I can assure you of the complete co-operation of the members on this side.

I trust that during the sessions of Parliament which lie ahead of us the association between you, Mr. Speaker, and the members will continue on a very cordial plane, and that at all times we will be able to depend upon you for a fair and impartial judgment on those matters of conflict and disputation which inevitably arise from time to time. We are delighted at your election and we support you with confidence.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning—Deputy Premier) [12.53 p.m.]: I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in offering congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and I can say without any hesitation that we feel you will carry out the

duties of your office as Speaker in this House in the same manner as those who have preceded you. I can assure you that you will receive the full support and co-operation of members in carrying out the duties of your very high office.

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) [12.54 p.m.]: I thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Deputy Premier for their kind words. I am very conscious, indeed, of the responsibilities that are thrust upon me. I have one regret; and, as has been mentioned in this House, there cannot be changes unless there are election casualties. It is therefore with some regret that I succeed to this position through the misfortune of a very old friend of mine, the former Speaker (John Merrifield Hearman). Nevertheless that is the way politics goes.

I can assure members on both sides of the House that it is my desire and wish to live up to the high standards that have been set by my predecessors. I am aware, and have read, that one of the responsibilities of the Speaker is to make sure the Government gets its legislation through with reasonable speed, but not with undue haste, and at the same time to preserve the rights of the Opposition and of minorities to express their views fully. That is one of the rules laid down by some of our Speakers, but they have never told us how to achieve that objective with the utmost satisfaction to everybody. It will be my earnest endeavour to reach that happy conclusion where everybody is satisfied. As I said earlier I am conscious of the honour that has been bestowed on me and of the responsibilities that have been thrust upon me as a result of my election to this office.

#### PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER

**MR. BRAND** (Greenough — Premier) [12.56 p.m.]: I desire to announce that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator will now be pleased to receive the Speaker and such members as desire to accompany him.

*Sitting suspended from 12.57 to 3 p.m.*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) [3 p.m.]: I desire to report that I submitted myself to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator and, on behalf of the House, laid claim to its undoubted rights and privileges and prayed that the most favourable construction might be placed upon its proceedings; and that His Excellency has been pleased to express his satisfaction at the choice of the Assembly in the following terms:—

Mr. Speaker:

It is with much pleasure I learn that you have been elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly

to the high and honourable office of Speaker of that House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner.

(Sgd.) A. A. Wolff,  
Lieutenant-Governor and  
Administrator.

#### SPEAKER'S COMMISSION

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) [3.2 p.m.]: I also wish to report I have received from His Excellency a Commission to swear in honourable members, and this I hand to the Clerk to read to the House.

The Commission was read.

#### SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening Speech (*vide* Council report *ante*), returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

#### QUESTIONS (4): WITHOUT NOTICE

##### HOUSING

##### *Country Centres: Priority*

1. **MR. HALL** asked the Minister for Housing:

Can he advise—

- (1) The priority listing in respect of the building of State Housing Commission homes at the following centres:—

Albany  
Bunbury  
Geraldton  
Kalgoorlie  
Northam?

- (2) The number of homes to be erected at these centres during the coming financial year?

**MR. O'NEIL** replied:

- (1) and (2) No one country town receives any special priority over another in the commission's country building programme. When the programme is being determined the needs of all country towns are assessed and within the capacity of the commission those needs are met. The programme of the Housing Commission is in the process of being drawn up in connection with houses to be built, and if the honourable member will consult me later on the matter, I will give him the answers he seeks.

**ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES***Mains: Underground and Overhead*

2. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Electricity:

Before I ask my questions of the Minister I would point out that these questions were asked of him and were answered on the 15th November last year. My questions are—

- (1) Has he arrived at any conclusions, or has Cabinet made any decisions regarding the placing underground of cables particularly in cases where the developer of an area is prepared to pay the difference between underground and overhead cables?

The reply given to that question last year was "No."

- (2) If not, what are the reasons for the delay and when can a decision be expected?

Last November the answer given was—

A decision will be made when Cabinet can give consideration to a report received last week.

Mr. NALDER replied:

A considerable amount of information has been sought as a result of requests by developers for the undergrounding of electric cables, and agreement has been reached where the developer is prepared to pay the difference between overhead power lines and underground power lines. There is also an amount to be paid by the developer which is an amount similar to that being paid by farmers and others outside the metropolitan area under the contributory scheme. This arrangement has been agreed to, and if developers are prepared to pay the difference the cables can be placed underground.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT***Assessment Committee: Recommendations*

3. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Premier: Is it the Government's intention to implement all, or any, of the Local Government Assessment Committee's recommendations?

Mr. BRAND replied:

The position is that the Government has not yet considered the report to the extent of reaching a conclusion on it. It must be recognised that the recommendations of the assessment committee purely set out the problem as that

committee sees it, and it makes certain suggestions as to the action that might be taken by the Government in the redistribution of local government boundaries. I do not imagine that all the recommendations will be implemented, but, recognising the impossible situation which has been reached in this regard, the Government will be able to take this as a guide in its future thinking. It seems to me that some of the recommendations could be implemented, but I would like to emphasise that no decision will be taken immediately, because the whole of the recommendations require a great deal of study.

**ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES***Northern Towns: Cost*

4. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Premier: Is he aware that the cost of electricity at Roebourne is 18c per unit, and that this is also the approximate cost to towns such as Onslow, Wittenoom, Marble Bar, Hall's Creek, and Wyndham? Will the Premier give an assurance to the House that he will have the matter investigated with the idea of having the cost reduced, particularly in view of the amount of money being obtained by way of royalties from minerals in those areas?

Mr. BRAND replied:

This matter was raised with me by the various authorities when I recently visited the places referred to. We recognise the problem of providing a cheaper electricity service, and already the Director of Engineering, who heads the North-West Advisory Committee, is having the matter examined. I think it would be unwise for me to give an undertaking that the cost will be reduced, but our object will be to provide cheaper power within these northern towns.

**SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT BILL***Leave to Introduce*

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier [3.36 p.m.]): In order to preserve the privilege of the House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice—

For leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, 1938-1967.

Question put and passed; leave granted.

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. Brand (Premier), and read a first time.

## LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

### *Distribution of Copies*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) [3.37 p.m.]: Accompanied by members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency, the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator 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 amongst members of this Chamber.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIRST DAY

### *Motion*

**MR. RIDGE** (Kimberley) [3.38 p.m.]: 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.

At the outset let me say on the occasion of this, my maiden speech in Parliament, how grateful I am to the electors of Kimberley for giving me the opportunity to serve them as their member in this Chamber. It has been a source of great encouragement to me to know that during my election campaign I had the support of a very wide cross-section of people. It was my first experience in this type of campaign and I realise how dependent a member is on the loyal support of citizens in all walks of life who are prepared to encourage and assist him.

I would also like to express my thanks to the staff of Parliament House for the help they have given me since my election. Likewise, I wish to thank members on both sides of the House for the advice and help they have given me as a new member.

There are many new faces in this Parliament, due largely to a number of retirements. These retirements include men who made a monumental contribution to the parliamentary and community life of this State.

My predecessor represented Kimberley for some 15 years and I know he always did his best to serve the people of the area well. As an old Kimberley identity Jack Rhatigan left political life with a great many friends in the region.

I am deeply conscious of the honour of having the opportunity to move the Address-in-Reply—a procedure which is very deeply rooted in our Parliamentary tradition.

His Excellency said, "This is an historic meeting of our Parliament... the first in a new era for our State." These are two very plain but important statements of fact and we should all be proud that the Government has taken the opportunity to break free from the bonds that tied us to the Grants Commission. In electing to stand on our own two feet, so far as the Consolidated Revenue side of our finances is concerned, we have accepted the task and the responsibilities that follow of being able to determine our own destiny. Although this may have been done on the basis of the expansion that has taken place in Western Australia, there is every indication that the current trend will continue.

That we entered the arena of financial independence with a surplus of \$829,000 for the year under review reflects well on our State's housekeeping. The State is no longer what some people branded it—the backward State.

A very significant feature of our expansion is the fact that Western Australia's population growth is double the rate for the rest of Australia. This growth rate has been largely augmented by the State Government in mounting its own recruiting campaign for skilled and semi-skilled labour from overseas; but still our unemployment rate is the lowest in the Commonwealth.

As His Excellency mentioned, agricultural expansion is still breaking records and I consider this is reflected in all sections of our economy.

But the most remarkable feature of our prosperity is attributable to mineral development in Western Australia. This industry has risen quite dramatically and its worth to the nation can be judged by the fact that by 1975 the value of mineral exports will exceed the combined value of our State wool clip and wheat crop.

This is only one of the many important developments that have given rise to the State's being responsible for directly supporting about 450,000 people in the Eastern States. Naturally, many problems were created in encouraging this very desirable activity, but the problems were accepted with the knowledge that they could and would be overcome.

As a Parliament we have some very challenging tasks ahead of us, and I, as a new member, feel I have a great deal to look forward to. I have been given the proud task of representing one of the most exciting and potentially rich areas in Western Australia. I have been given the task of striving for the people of Kimberley where the will to win has been engendered from the colourful history of our pioneers.

Above everything else, I have been given the task of helping a dream to materialise, a dream of the thousands of people who have followed in the footsteps of Alexander Forrest and put their faith and fortunes in the Kimberley.

When we look around us and see the great and splendid development that is taking place right throughout the State, perhaps we wonder where we can turn next in the field of endeavour. To me, the immediate answer is Kimberley, and I boast that we have attractions and resources that show every prospect of disgorgeing tremendous wealth for our nation.

However, let me assure the House that the Government is far from being inactive in its endeavours to exploit these treasures. At almost every point in the electorate one can meet engineers, hydrologists, surveyors, oil-exploration crews, mining geologists, agronomists, and, in fact, people conducting research into every conceivable project which holds a glimmer of hope for our future. They are all people who are probing for answers to the unknown. They all have one point in common—optimism.

And what do they hope to prove? They hope to prove that Kimberley will become highly productive and economically viable—that the inhospitable elements can be overcome if we have faith and belief.

I believe that in the future we will see a great fishing industry established on our northern coastline and that Western Australian boats will offer competition to the many overseas vessels which currently reap a harvest of wealth right from under our noses.

I believe that Kimberley is one of the largely unexplored mineral treasure houses in the world; and the geological formation of the country is such that we can hope and expect to become world suppliers of many important industrial commodities.

Before long, the U.S. Metals Refining Company should announce, with the State Government, its plans to develop the bauxite deposits at the Mitchell Plateau. If, as we hope, the decision is in the affirmative, something of the order of \$100,000,000 will be injected into the economy of the State, and there is little doubt that greater projects will follow. What is more important is the fact that a town of 2,700 people will be established in an area that is currently unoccupied.

Pickands Mather International has stepped up its field exploratory programme in East Kimberley; and I consider the oil companies still believe that Fitzroy Basin has prospects of becoming a producing oil field. However, in this modern age of ours we still find that it is the untiring prospector, who has contributed so much

to our economy, who turns up with mineral samples that make the experts sit up and take notice.

Weather-wise, the last three seasons have been a bonanza for the pastoral industry, and the markets have favoured the lean beef which is produced in the area. Growers have shown desirable signs of their willingness to effect station, pasture, and herd improvements. This augurs well for the future of the industry.

Last year alone, more bloodstock was introduced into the area than ever before in the history of the region. Significant progress is being made in the introduction of tropical legumes, and the area is well served by three modern meatworks and a road system that is constantly being upgraded under the beef roads scheme.

The green light for the construction of the major dam on the Ord was cause for jubilation throughout the State, but most of the people in Kimberley look upon the project as a proving ground for bigger and better schemes in irrigated agriculture. The resources by way of irrigable land and water are nothing but fantastic; and the optimism that is prevalent in the area is the type of optimism which has been responsible for launching many great Australian schemes.

Contrary to some beliefs, the Ord farmers are not a group of rebel headline hunters: they are mostly young men who are seeking to build a future for their sons, but they express their views in order to protect their investments, which are quite considerable.

Unfortunately, unseasonal rains have given cause for concern in the area, but the spirit of the farmers has not been dampened. The fast-changing attitude of pastoralists to irrigation, and the acceptance of the need for a partnership between irrigation and pastoral industries, is one of the brightest signs in the area. This project will succeed and, what is more, I consider it will become the symbol of what can be done to harness water and use land in our north.

It is quite conceivable that in a relatively short time our biggest industry could be tourism. In my electorate we are endowed with some of the finest natural attractions in the world. Naturally we would like to share these attractions with the rest of the world; but, at the same time, we would like to share the growing fortune that travellers are prepared to spend.

These are only a few of the exciting challenges in the Kimberley. Every way we turn there is a prospect of creating something great; and, if in our endeavours to succeed we become discouraged, there is only need to look at what has been done and remember that nothing is beyond the powers of our will.

If I have given the impression that my electorate is without problems, I hasten to correct this, because no area is without problems; and, as with a lot of other things, ours are bigger and better.

The main object is that the people of the area appreciate that none of our problems is insurmountable and they have charged me with the task of keeping the Government informed of ways and means to overcome the disadvantages and particular peculiarities of northern living.

A short while ago I made a brief reference to some of the proposals that will one day help to transform Kimberley into a financially stable area, but I omitted to state the greatest asset which the region has—I refer to the people, of course. The people live in the area of their own free will and they accept its problems as part of the challenge to provide a better way of living for future generations. They do not seek gifts or handouts but they seek an assurance that housing, education, medical, and cultural facilities will be provided at a pace at least equal to development. Those people seek an assurance that public services will be maintained at prices that are equitable when compared with those in the southern areas; and they seek understanding and co-operative assistance when they express their fears and doubts.

On behalf of my constituents, I appeal to this Government—and to successive Governments—to remember that in developing our vast resources we should not overlook or neglect the fact that successful exploitation of any commodity is only possible if the people engaged in the task are able to feel that their endeavours are appreciated.

Our faith in their efforts can be easily displayed by ensuring that in our quest for greatness and financial stability we do not neglect to provide the all-important basic necessities that make life tolerable for the individual. The adequate provision of these necessities—which I choose to call “basic”—will breed contentment, a stable population, success for people with vision and initiative, and, ultimately, greatness for Western Australia.

We live in exciting times, both at home and abroad, and I feel privileged to be elected to our State Parliament in these times. It is my fervent wish that I prove equal to the task.

**MR. KITNEY** (Blackwood) [3.52 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Tonkin (Leader of the Opposition).

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

**MR. BRAND** (Greenough—Premier) [3.53 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 30th July.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 3.54 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 30th July, 1968

The **PRESIDENT** (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS (7): ON NOTICE

#### HOUSING

##### *Leasehold Blocks*

1. The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Mines:
  - (1) Has the Government given consideration to making land available under leasehold conditions in order to assist married couples and to arrest the rising costs of land to such people?
  - (2) If not, could the Minister undertake to investigate the possibilities of releasing land under leasehold conditions in the near future?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) The leasehold provisions of the Act have not been very much used for some years because of the limitation of the house cost provided in the Act (\$6,000).  
By disposing of homes under contract of sale conditions the commission is enabled to accept deposits as low as \$200, including fees.
- (2) Under the Act leasehold land must be appraised (valued) and lessee is charged an annual ground rent based on  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the appraised value. The additional cost to purchase the house and land is not very material and it is considered that applicants prefer the contract of sale conditions.

#### *Waiting Period, Completions, and Outstanding Applications*

2. The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Minister for Mines:
  - (1) What is the waiting period for the allocation of homes to—
    - (a) rental applicants;
    - (b) State Housing Act purchase homes;