

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SECOND SESSION OF THE SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT:

The Parliament was prorogued to the 25th July, 1940, on which day it met for the despatch of business.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 25th July, 1940.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 3 p.m.

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 second session of the Seventeenth Parliament.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.2 p.m. and, 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—

The second session of the Seventeenth Parliament of Western Australia has been summoned for the transaction of important public business.

The British Empire is facing the greatest crisis in its history. Successive events have left the Empire to fight alone for freedom and against tyranny and aggression, but the colossal burden has been shouldered with resolution and confidence.

The people of Western Australia are determined to employ all their resources in fighting with the rest of the Empire until victory is achieved. There is every reason to be proud of the magnificent and continued responses to the call for men and money to carry out this purpose.

State Co-operation in War Effort.

When war was declared, Ministers proffered the Commonwealth Government the fullest co-operation and assistance of the State in all war effort. Consultations are constantly held to determine the best means of rendering all help possible, and opportunity has been sought to translate this pledge into vigorous action.

It is particularly the desire of Ministers that this State should participate to the fullest possible extent in the expanding programme for the manufacture of munitions and other war requirements. Unremitting attention has been given to this problem, and a committee representing this State is now operating. It is confidently expected that orders for more than one and a half million pounds worth of munitions will be given to Western Australia, and substantial orders for various requirements have already been received.

All existing machinery and labour are being organised to enable the complete marshalling of available resources, and additional facilities required will be provided with the

greatest possible expedition. Active consideration is being given to the erection of an annexe at the Midland Junction railway workshops. A large proportion of the many machine tools required will be manufactured locally, and the provision of the necessary equipment will be put in hand at the Midland Junction workshops concurrently with the erection of the buildings.

Secondary Industries.

My Ministers expect that the activities resulting from the manufacture of munitions will more than fully occupy all our skilled workers and will make a permanent contribution to the secondary industries of the State after the war is over. The Minister for Industry has been appointed to co-relate the functions of the committee and the Government in connection with this work. In the meantime the department is actively according its encouragement and assistance to secondary industry.

Employment and State Requirements.

Despite the large numbers who have enlisted for service with the various forces there are still some six thousand men dependent upon the State Government for relief work or sustenance. The necessity for conserving the financial resources of the nation for war purposes has reduced the amount of loan money likely to be available to the States and has made much more difficult the problem of providing satisfactorily for these people.

As this problem affects every State in Australia the Loan Council has agreed to a plan under which the requirements of all States will be dealt with concurrently and in conjunction with the defence expenditure of the Commonwealth Government. It has been agreed that the necessity for State civil works is not so great in those States where the Commonwealth Government is expending large sums on defence work, and this aspect of the situation will be given full consideration. Emphasis has been laid upon the fact that the nation cannot exert a complete war effort unless the greatest numbers possible are in employment, and every precaution is being taken to safeguard the interests of those who are on relief work. The Loan Council has appointed a co-ordinator to examine proposals submitted by each State. Complete information is now in his hands, and a further meeting of the Loan Council will be held

shortly to consider his recommendations and make decisions.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

Finance.

The Governments of the various States have willingly undertaken, of their own volition, to exert every effort to preserve the financial stability essential for the conduct of the war, and to order their finances in every way so as to facilitate the task of the Commonwealth Government in financing its war programme. As a means to this end they are endeavouring to establish and maintain budgetary equilibrium. The deficit of Western Australia for last financial year was kept within the lowest possible limits, and would have been of almost nominal dimensions but for an unforeseen failure to secure the passage of legislation contemplated when the budget was introduced. The same policy of strict economy will be rigidly enforced this year, but desirable projects which would be sanctioned in normal times will have to be subordinated to the vital needs of the war effort.

The Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment Act passed last session has been proclaimed and deductions at the source for income tax on salaries and wages will commence from the 1st August. The financial emergency tax ceased to operate on the 30th June. You will be required to give consideration to the rates of income tax to be levied during the current financial year.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

Primary Industries.

Progressive development of the primary industries of the State has been maintained, and the production and export of several of our agricultural commodities last year reached record figures.

In existing conditions, however, it is necessary to regard the stimulation of agriculture in a light far different from the viewpoint of a few months ago. The loss of markets due to the war has caused serious reactions in some of Australia's primary industries, but it is hoped that close co-operation on an Australia-wide basis will to some extent spread the effects between the States.

The State Government is fully appreciative of the difficulties with which the export primary industries in particular are faced, and is exerting every effort to preserve the interests of the producers and afford every opportunity for the fullest development to meet the immediate requirements of the Empire.

The Commonwealth Government has received the earnest co-operation of the State in arranging for the disposal of exportable commodities, particularly those for which the United Kingdom has immediate need. It is recognised that the export of certain products is limited by the capacity of the United Kingdom to take them and by the shipping available.

The Australian Agricultural Council has been requested by the Commonwealth Government to take special steps to guide Australian agriculture at this juncture, and it has been suggested that the first objective should be the stimulation of production in those industries the output of which is most needed by the United Kingdom.

Timber Industry.

The timber industry is dependent to a very large extent on export orders. Up to the present full production has been maintained largely as a result of orders received from the United Kingdom and other parts of the Empire. Authorities controlling shipping in Australia and in the United Kingdom, after careful consideration and strong representations by the Government, have co-operated in providing the necessary accommodation. This matter will continue to receive the closest attention. It is hoped that a greater volume of the timber trade of the Eastern States may be obtained in the immediate future as a means of conserving foreign exchange.

Gold Mining Industry.

One of the greatest problems with which the nation is faced is the provision of overseas exchange for the purchase of essential war commodities. This emphasises the necessity for assisting and expanding the production of gold in this State. Every effort has therefore been made to offset the difficulties of the gold mining industry created by the war, and to increase production as much as possible. Following strong representations by Ministers concessions have been made in the Commonwealth gold excise tax to enable

refunds to be made to low-grade mines and other assistance to be provided for the general expansion of the industry.

Legislation.

Additional duties arising out of the war have made great demands on the time and energy of my advisers and they solicit your co-operation in an effort to expedite the business which lies before you.

Precedence will be given to legislation connected with the war situation, to necessary financial measures and to measures relating to industry. At the same time other legislation will be required to enable the State to carry on its normal functions.

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.]

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

Members of the Legislative Assembly having retired, the Clerk announced the return of writs for the election of members, showing that the following had been duly elected:—Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch (Metropolitan), Hon. G. Fraser (West), Hon. F. R. Welsh (North), Hon. E. H. H. Hall (Central), Hon. V. Hamersley (East), Hon. H. Tuckey (South-West), Hon. H. L. Roche (South-East), Hon. H. Seddon (North-East), Hon. H. S. W. Parker (Metropolitan-Suburban), Hon. C. B. Williams (South). These members, with the exception of Hon. E. H. H. Hall and Hon. C. B. Williams, took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

BILL—HARBOURS AND JETTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [3.27]: 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 "A Bill for an Act to amend Section 2 of the Harbours and Jetties Act, 1928."

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 that he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament. These will be distributed amongst hon. members.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [3.29]: 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 to Parliament:—"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 should like to preface my remarks by saying we are meeting in extremely difficult times, and it is not easy to bring the mind to bear on matters of State politics. Events in Europe have moved so quickly that the whole map of Europe has been altered since we last assembled here a few months ago. So far as I can judge the situation, it seems that while the British-speaking world and the democracies generally were thinking and hoping that there would be no war, another section of the people in Europe took advantage of that attitude to perfect a very formidable war machine, so much so that we witnessed the collapse of country after country as that machine advanced. Not only have small States in Europe collapsed, but also the great fighting forces of France have gone down, and this must bring home to our people generally the fact that we are confronted by a very formidable war machine. There are still some people who believe, or are led to believe, that the fifth column has played an important part in the happenings in Europe. I wish to express my view of this matter because I believe that some of us are too prone to adopt that suggestion, or to accept it as something that matters a good deal. I cannot bring myself to believe that it matters much at all. My personal experience of the last war has caused me to realise that from the termination of that conflict Germany made up her mind that on the next occasion she might

meet our forces, she would put up a formidable machine. The Germans have done that. The very fact that such devastation was wrought in several countries within a short space of time proves that extensive preparations were made by Germany. Country after country has gone down. The point I wish to make is that we should not allow people to become imbued with the idea that the fifth column played any important part at all. In my opinion, the results were brought about by the wonderful machine that was put together for the devastation of countries. That, I emphasise, is my view. Now it seems that only the English speaking portion of the world is standing up against the Germans and their war machine. We know that Britain to-day is hard put to it, and is doing everything possible to ensure that whatever can be done shall be done in the way of fighting back. We cannot sit down without doing anything, when the enemy is right at the gates of the Old Country. The ports of France are now in the hands of the enemy, and Britain is just across a small strip of water. On that account we find to-day throughout Britain and her Dominions a wonderful unanimity. That unanimity is evident in every country where the English tongue is spoken. Certainly it is perfectly evident in Australasia, and especially in Western Australia. Every one of us in this Chamber feels that the time when this danger overhangs the British Empire is one in which we must concentrate more on winning the war than on achieving any comparatively small matters which we have striven for in the past.

As regards the war, we must realise that time is the essence of the contract. We must move quickly. I do hope there will be a rapid continuation of the work that is going on here now, so that the utmost possible supply of munitions may be made available in the shortest possible space of time. That is no easy matter, but it is appreciably facilitated by the fact of the necessary money being available. Money is undoubtedly what we need during these times—plenty of money. So far the Commonwealth Government has had a plentiful supply of money coming in. But I hope that supply will be doubled, and even trebled, for we have to take account of the position in which we find ourselves to-day. It is a possibility that we ourselves may be attacked in this country in which we now live. Some time ago that

would have been an absurd suggestion to make, but we have to take the opposite view of it now. I urge that we should try to send as much in the way of munitions of war as we possibly can to Britain. We must send planes, and we must also send Australian airmen. In years gone by I spoke in this House on the subject of what ought to be done in view of the possibility of circumstances such as the present. I regard the young Australian airman, given suitable planes, as equal to any other country's fliers. In my opinion, he will not only be of great assistance to Britain in her present struggle, but will also prove highly valuable here. If the necessary preparations had been made years ago, at the time I offered the suggestion, and if airmen and planes were ready here now, our position would be much better.

Another note I desire to sound at this juncture is that the present is no time for persons to argue about the means by which the war is to be financed. Some people who are enthusiastically desirous of winning the war are yet prepared to argue about how the necessary finances are to be raised, and suggest this course and that course. I am strongly of opinion that the time is too serious for such argument. The Commonwealth Government now in power instituted a certain system of financing the war, and it behoves each and every one of us to get behind that Government and to ask all the people of Australia to support it, without any argument about other ways and means of financing. If we indulge in such arguments, we shall retard the progress which can be made and which I hope will be made. It can be stated without fear of contradiction that the State Governments have done all they possibly can in co-ordination with the Federal Government towards getting under way the great work that has to be undertaken. Since we have had this war thrust upon us, we have seen only the fullest measure of co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth. I am sure it will be admitted by everyone that the State Governments have done all in their power to assist the Federal Government to the fullest extent in this war which, I repeat, has been thrust upon us.

We have evidence that much has been done and that much is now under way in connection with the Midland Workshops, which are very fine works. I understand that as regards the Technical School, while

there has been some little criticism as to its not having been used to its fullest capacity, nevertheless the best possible is being done. Undoubtedly the Western Australian State Government is doing its utmost. It is up to each and all of us to assist our Government with all our strength in the perilous time ahead to render every possible aid to the Federal Government. That is the position to-day as I view it.

Now turn to our own State. Our industries are not in too good a position. We know that the wheat industry has had a very rough spin for some years, and that many of the growers are hard hit because of bad seasons and bad prices in years gone by. Further, there is the alarming prospect of a tremendous surplus in this State of wheat which, if it could be shipped overseas now, would be readily saleable. However, the fact that shipping is hampered to so great an extent implies that a great deal of that wheat will have to be held here. In the country districts we find many farmers who do not know what to look forward to. That is a very bad complication for them. The farmer having a bad spin during the past four years and therefore being in a bad way, is now wondering what will happen next. Therefore the State Government and the Commonwealth Government must grapple with the wheat problem. Along with our wheat industry, another of our great industries—the pastoral industry—has unfortunately experienced a very bad time. Even yet the devastating drought is prevailing throughout a large portion of our pastoral areas. I am pleased the Government has appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into this industry. I had the pleasure of meeting the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Fyfe, when he was amongst the pastoralists in Cue some time ago, and I feel convinced that in the selection of Mr. Fyfe for that office the Government has chosen a most competent man for the job. As a result of his work I feel that the position will be clarified and that when the drought breaks we shall have proposals put forward to establish our great woolgrowing industry once more on a sound basis.

Our mining industry has been said to be the one industry that has carried the State on for the last few years. We are indeed fortunate that the goldmining industry is thriving owing to the advance in the price of gold. Our Government assisted the industry by pointing out to the Common-

wealth Government the effect that the gold tax would have on low-grade mining propositions, and I am pleased to note that the Commonwealth Government has now seen fit to permit low-grade mining to be carried on at the full rate, so that such propositions can obtain full value for the gold won. Still another very important industry is our timber industry, which has been seriously affected owing to shipping difficulties. It is an industry that creates a lot of employment and I sincerely trust that it will not meet with the same fate that it met during the last war. That would be very bad. I desire to point out to members exactly how we in this State are situated and what we have to do to cope with the bad times that are upon us. Even now we unfortunately still have 6,000 unemployed men; that is a very serious state of affairs, as those men have to be supported by the Government. We still have those 6,000 unemployed despite the fact that many of our men have enlisted. I shall not, however, weary hon. members by repeating what I have said in the past with regard to the unemployment question. We certainly should not have had any unemployment problem; undoubtedly, there should never have been any unemployed in this State at all. It is a disaster for which we must blame ourselves. Every man in this State should always be fully employed. We should not have men still on half-time employment at all; but we realise it is a very serious problem for the Government, whose finances will be very much upset by the Commonwealth having to raise so much money for war purposes. The prospect is a bad one, so far as the State Government is concerned, for making better the conditions of the 6,000 unemployed men to whom I have referred. I hope, however, Mr. President, that as time passes we will get over our troubles. I am one who believes that the darkest hour precedes the dawn, and there is no doubt that the hour through which we have been passing just now is a very dark one. I trust the clouds will lift and as time proceeds we will surmount the difficulties confronting us and emerge into even greater prosperity than that which we have enjoyed in the past.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [3.45]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.46 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 25th July, 1910.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. G. Steere).

SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-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*), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS ACT AMENDMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [3.20]: 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 "A Bill for an Act to amend Section 2 of the Agricultural Products Act."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER: Accompanied by hon. members of this Chamber I attended His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [3.22]: I move—

That the following Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to:—"His Excellency, Sir James Mitchell, K.C.M.G.,