

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

## FOURTH SESSION OF THE SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT:

*The Parliament was prorogued to the 30th July, 1942, on which day it met for the despatch of business.*

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

### Legislative Council.

Thursday, 30th July, 1942.

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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 Fourth 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—*

Since last Session Parliament and the State have suffered by the loss of the Honourable J. M. Macfarlane, a Member of the

Legislative Council for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, who rendered many years of faithful service to the people of Western Australia.

The Session opens under the shadow of the gravest danger that Australia has known. This State, in common with other parts of Australian territory, has been subjected to direct enemy attack for the first time in history. The British Commonwealth of Nations, however, has successfully withstood many heavy blows and is now daily growing in strength and striking power. The prompt assistance rendered to Australia by the United States of America at a critical period is a source of great encouragement and is evidence of the bond existing between the two peoples. We have every confidence that, with the aid of our great Allies and fortified by the justice of our cause, we will emerge victorious.

In the meantime our hearts go out to those who have already suffered the loss of their loved ones or who are consumed by constant anxiety for their safety. We trust that they will be comforted and sustained by the proud knowledge that, wherever Australians have been called upon to fight, they have upheld the highest traditions of their Services and have maintained their great reputation for valour, gaining many distinguished awards in recognition of their gallantry.

Under the threat of attack, our people must derive inspiration from the magnificent example of the people of Great Britain, who have borne themselves with splendid courage, calmness and determination, and have cheerfully submitted to the deprivations which the situation has demanded.

Women are playing an ever-increasing and creditable part in releasing men from industry for the active spheres of warfare.

The time of Ministers is occupied almost exclusively with matters associated with the war. Constant efforts have been directed towards ensuring the provision of defence measures urgently required for this State. Frequent consultations have been held, and continue to be held, by my Advisers with Ministers of the Commonwealth Government and with the Heads of Fighting Services.

The fullest co-operation has been maintained with the Commonwealth Government, in order to make the maximum resources of the State available for war purposes. The endeavours of Ministers in this connection have earned a sincere expression of gratitude and appreciation from each of successive Prime Ministers. State Departments, without exception, have given priority to urgent requirements of the Commonwealth Government, and highly-placed administrative and technical officers have been placed at its disposal.

Members of Parliament have shown a keen desire to assist in the war effort. Some have enlisted in the Fighting Services, while others have closely associated themselves with various war activities. During the periods when Parliament has been adjourned the Government has maintained effective co-operation with the Leaders of the political parties.

With the entry of Japan into the war a far more active policy was undertaken in connection with Civil Defence. The Civil Defence Council was reorganised and its administration placed under direct Ministerial control. The closest co-operation has been maintained with the Commonwealth Department of Home Security, and measures have been adopted to ensure the maximum protection for the lives and property of the people.

To the end of the last financial year the State had spent no less than £68,000 on civil defence, and was committed to the expenditure of a further £150,000.

The State owes a debt of gratitude to members of the Civil Defence Council and the volunteer organisations for their untiring work, much of which has been rendered in an honorary capacity.

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

It is gratifying to record that a small surplus has been achieved in the accounts of the State for two years in succession. The revenue for 1941-42 exceeded the expenditure by £1,768, in spite of the fact that more than £133,000 was incurred on direct expenditure arising out of the war. The substantial improvement in the finances since the estimates were presented to Parliament has released for the war effort an amount of £200,000, which it had been anticipated would be required to meet the deficit.

Only works of an essential nature or having a defence value were undertaken and, as a result, loan expenditure was the lowest for many years. The redemption of debt by the National Debt Commissioners on our behalf exceeded the amount borrowed for the year, with the result that during the year the public debt was reduced by £126,000.

*Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council.*

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

The Commonwealth uniform taxation measures have a vital bearing upon the respective powers of the Commonwealth and the States. Doubt was expressed by the legal advisers of the Government whether the measures were constitutional, and both Houses of Parliament passed a motion expressing strong opposition to them. The Government joined in the legal proceedings instituted to determine the validity of the legislation concerned, but the High Court has decided that the Acts were valid.

Constant attention is being given to all possible avenues of increasing secondary industries. The production of munitions continues to expand. Many tasks allotted to Government and private workshops have been carried out in an eminently satisfactory manner, and further substantial orders have been received.

Transport difficulties associated with war conditions have forced the State to rely on its own resources for engineering supplies, and many previously imported are now being manufactured within the State.

The capacity of the State to produce steel castings has been increased and plans are now in hand for the installation of additional production equipment. Additional

supplies of raw materials will be needed for this increased capacity. Initial steps have been taken to establish a blast furnace to produce charcoal pig iron for that purpose and also to produce steel billets for forgings.

A pilot plant for research work in connection with wood distillation for the production of charcoal and by-products on a large scale has been established.

Most of the equipment required for the Lake Campion alunite deposits has been obtained in Australia, but certain small essential items have to be imported. It is hoped that the production of potash will be commenced by the end of the year. If certain tests now being carried out are successful, it will be possible, at comparatively low cost, to produce alumina from alunite for the manufacture of aluminium in large quantities.

The Gold Mining Industry has been very seriously affected by the withdrawal of men for national purposes, and production has been drastically reduced. It was apparent that the policy being enforced by the Commonwealth Government would have disastrous results, not only upon present activities but upon the capacity of the industry to resume operations after the war and to play the vital part required of it in post-war reconstruction.

A strong motion of protest was passed by both Houses of Parliament. A representative delegation, headed by the Premier, proceeded to Canberra and succeeded in having material alterations effected in the Commonwealth Government's proposals. It is extremely satisfactory that this great industry, which means so much to Western Australia, while contributing no less than 75 per cent of its total manpower to the war effort, will still be able to carry on, and will be in a position immediately the war is over to absorb large numbers of men in remunerative employment. The Commonwealth Government has provided the sum of £100,000 to enable the State to preserve intact those mines which are forced by a shortage of labour to cease production, but which are considered likely to be large producers when normal activities are resumed.

Constant attention is being given to the development of deposits of minerals likely to be of value in the war effort and financial assistance has been rendered where justified.

The Government Chemical Laboratory has undertaken special chemical and analytical work in connection with war requirements. A new laboratory, which is nearing completion will, with its modern plant and facilities, enable even greater assistance to be given.

Seasonal conditions throughout the agricultural and pastoral areas have been such that, if times were normal, we would be more enthusiastic about our prospects generally than for many years. The severity of the drought suffered by the pastoral industry in recent years has so depleted flocks that it will be a considerable time before the full benefit of good seasons can be enjoyed.

The transfer of manpower from agriculture to the defence forces, the reduction in the quantity of available fertilisers, and the restricted imports of certain agricultural seeds have made it difficult for farmers to maintain production for civil and defence needs, and to meet overseas commitments for foodstuffs.

These matters are all receiving attention and to help meet the manpower difficulty, which is likely to be our greatest in a civil sense, active steps are being taken to ascertain the extent to which labour can be returned from the defence forces to primary production.

There is still a heavy accumulation of wheat stocks in Australia and the Commonwealth Government considered it necessary to reduce wheat production in this State by one-third, which will have a serious effect upon the economy of the State. Last year's average yield of 14 bushels per acre is the highest ever recorded in Western Australia.

The flax industry, which was commenced in this State as a war measure two years ago, has continued to increase in importance. It is anticipated that the total value of the treated straw during the coming year will exceed £300,000.

The State Government is working with the Commonwealth Government in an endeavour to meet the future uncertainty regarding the disposal of some of our agricultural products.

Steps have been taken to build up reserves of foodstuffs at strategic points throughout the State to be used by the civil population in case of emergency.

All States have agreed to accept and carry out in detail decisions of the Commonwealth Manpower Authority. The Man-

power and National Service Office is directing this important aspect of the war effort.

Government employees are playing a prominent part in the war effort, and all branches have a high percentage serving with the Forces.

Enemy activity in the vicinity of our northern coastline has materially affected the lives of the people in the north-west portion of the State. Prompt action taken to evacuate the women and children from the northern coastal towns spared them the horrors of aerial warfare.

The disruption of normal shipping services to the North has given rise to serious problems, especially in connection with the supply of foodstuffs. Appropriate action has been taken to meet the needs of the people. The manner in which the men and women of the North-West have carried on in spite of difficulties and danger is deserving of the highest commendation.

In anticipation of post-war needs, investigations are proceeding into irrigation projects in the northern parts of the State. Results have already been achieved in connection with some crops under irrigation in tropical conditions.

In addition to meeting the expanded traffic caused by war requirements, the Railway Department is actively engaged on direct war production. A great variety of important equipment has been satisfactorily manufactured. An up-to-date tool-room has been constructed for the production of tools and gauges, and the shell annexe is in operation. Arrangements are in hand for further additions to buildings and plant in connection with defence works.

The organisation of the Public Works, Water Supply, and Main Roads Departments has been made available to the Commonwealth Government. Except for a minimum of maintenance requirements almost all of the activities of these departments have been diverted to defence and civil defence work. Progress on such undertakings as the Stirling Dam has been suspended in order to concentrate all available manpower and facilities on war requirements. Work on the Perth Hospital has also ceased, but the building has been made available to meet emergency cases in the event of an air raid.

Among the major defence works successfully executed were some 452 miles of new road construction, being the State portion

of the East-West road, and the building of landing grounds for defence aircraft.

The State Engineering Works have been reorganised and re-equipped for war production, including munition projects and shipping repairs.

The technical education facilities of the Education Department have been placed at the disposal of the Commonwealth Government for the training of members of the Services and other war workers. Altogether over 1,200 trainees had either completed their course or were in training at the end of last year, and arrangements are in hand for further extensions.

The danger of air attack has necessitated the dispersal of children attending schools in target areas. This was effected with a minimum loss of efficiency. The buildings vacated have in some cases been utilised by the Army.

School children, through the State Schools War Service Fund, have contributed most liberally to many appeals for aid. Their work includes the donation of an ambulance and two mobile field dressing stations, the manufacture of large quantities of woollen garments, the collection of waste products and the establishment of numerous War Savings Certificate groups.

The Lands and Surveys Department has been extensively engaged on the preparation of plans and maps for war purposes, the great majority of the staff employed under the Surveyor General's direction being engaged exclusively, both in the field and in the drafting room, on work of this nature.

This Department also made arrangements for the reception of evacuees from Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, and Darwin, as well as those from our own northern areas. Several thousand men, women, and children arriving by various means of transport were met and placed in temporary accommodation, while in some cases permanent accommodation had to be found. People in temporary need were assisted and applications for allowances were investigated. In carrying out this arduous task under great difficulties the Department was considerably aided by voluntary organisations.

In addition to its other duties, the Forests Department is assisting in meeting the serious shortage of firewood in the Metropolitan Area caused by war conditions.

The Public Trust Office created under legislation passed last session opened for

business on the 1st July, 1942, and the indications are that it will be well patronised.

Since the outbreak of war, 314 patriotic organisations have been registered by the War Funds Council under the War Funds Regulation Act, and these have raised approximately £700,000 for comforts and benefits for the men and women in the fighting forces. This is a remarkable achievement and a monument to the patriotic sentiment of the people of this State.

The Government takes great pride in this State's record of industrial peace and is gravely concerned that this should be the only State in Australia in which the workers have been deprived of the cost of living variations in the basic wage. My advisers have been in communication with the Commonwealth Government in an endeavour to overcome this serious anomaly. In any case, legislation to rectify the position permanently will be introduced at an early date.

It is considered that at this time of great stress prompt decisions in administrative matters of urgency are required rather than a normal legislative programme. It is, therefore, not intended to submit large numbers of Bills for your consideration, and precedence will be given to measures connected with the war situation.

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 resumed the Chair.]*

### **SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.**

The PRESIDENT: I have received the return of writs for the by-elections for the North and Metropolitan-Suburban Provinces and from the endorsements on the writs it appears that Cyril Richard Cornish was, on the 13th June, 1942, returned for the North Province and that Frank Ernest Gibson was, on the 11th July, 1942, returned for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province. I am prepared to swear in the hon. members.

Hon. C. R. Cornish and Hon. F. E. Gibson took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

### **BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** [3.35]: 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 the Evidence Act, 1906."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

### **LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.**

The PRESIDENT: For the sake of 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 members.

### **ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.**

*First Day.*

**HON. T. MOORE** (Central) [3.37]: 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 Parliament 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."

Before addressing myself to the subjects with which the Speech deals, I desire to refer to the death of our late friend, Mr. Macfarlane, who served this country for many years, and I am sure all members of the Chamber will deeply regret his passing away. To the new members, Mr. Gibson and Mr. Cornish, I extend a cordial welcome. I have known Mr. Cornish since he was quite a young fellow. In his youthful days he was a very active citizen in respect of the things that matter, and I am sure that he will make a highly useful member of this House. We know that Mr. Gibson has already been tried and has proved himself.

Today it is difficult to begin a speech, since we live in such strange circumstances. Never before in our history have we been called together with such a cloud over the State as hangs over it today. For the first time in our history, short though it be compared with that of other nations, we have been attacked by a formidable foe. In the past, people have told us that the Japanese made only flimsy articles and were merely a race of imitators. Moreover, those critics led us to believe that the Japanese were not well equipped. I hold, however, that the English-

speaking world has in the past through factories and workshops—and the same remark applies to Germany—afforded the Japanese opportunities to gather all that there was to be known concerning implements of war, to learn all that the British knew and all that the Germans knew. Indeed, the Japanese know a few things that neither the British nor the Germans know. We are up against a formidable foe.

In our peace-loving way, we had no idea we were likely to be attacked, and were quite unprepared. We lived in the belief that so long as the British Navy ruled the sea, we could not be assailed but, with the passing of time, we have seen that the British Navy does not rule the sea to the extent that it did in days gone by. The new air power has proved formidable against shipping. For years, I have held the belief that the time would come when aeroplanes would match ships at sea. I have been assured by men who should have known better, men who are in a position to know, that such scientific accuracy has been achieved by what are known as ack-ack guns—that is, the anti-aircraft guns—that enemy planes would be kept so high that no damage would be done to shipping. It has been proved, however, that the British Navy does not rule the waves to the extent it did in the past, and now the whole of our shores have to be guarded by a small number of troops.

There is to reassure us the knowledge that we have a formidable ally in the United States of America. At one time we were led to believe that we had a "big brother" in America. Now that we are in trouble, that big brother has certainly asserted himself and come to our aid, I am pleased to say, in a very big way. With the passing of time, we have been able to build up a line of defence, and are now in a position to resist the aggressors. To this country have returned seasoned troops who have been oversea and who know all the latest tricks of war. That is a very great advantage, for they will be able to impart their knowledge to our military forces, and in that way we shall be in a position to make an effective stand if we are attacked, should the invader attempt to set foot on our shores, which I hope he never will. The meeting of the Legislative Council seems a very small matter when we have before us a big programme of defence work with which, of

course, we as a State have nothing to do, and which has to be handled by somebody else.

On the other side of the world, Great Britain itself is menaced, owing to the fact that the German drive in Europe has meant that people in European countries that have been dominated by Germany have been compelled, whether they liked it or not, to produce munitions of war which can be used against the Allies. I was concerned when I read a week ago that a number of people in Britain were agitating for a second front. It was strange to me to find heralded to the world the fact that 60,000 people had met in London with a view to forcing the Government to open such a front. We are indeed a strange people, and I do not know why that information should have been published. In any of the countries opposed to us, such information would have been suppressed. The information should never have been released, and that it was released is most alarming. The broadcasting of the news gave food to our enemies, and was likely to lead them to say, "We have now got the British people where we want them." To start a second front in Europe would be a most difficult task, and I am surprised that there has been a clamour for such a step. All that is by the way.

There are one or two items in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech which are worthy of particular mention. In dealing with them I shall be brief because it is understood that brevity is expected on the opening day of a Parliamentary session. One achievement for which the Government deserves credit is their being able to announce that during the year the public debt has been reduced by £126,000. In the time that I have been a member of this Chamber there has always been a critic—not always, but frequently Mr. Seddon—who has maintained that if that result could be achieved, we would be doing well. I hope that on this occasion at all events Mr. Seddon will give the Government credit for having done something that he desired.

Hon. L. Craig: Which Government?

Hon. T. MOORE: Whatever Government was in power.

Hon. L. Craig: I mean, the Federal or State Government?

Hon. T. MOORE: I am referring to the State Government. At no time since 1903—

and in that period there have been successive Governments—has there been such a notable achievement. The Government has certainly looked after the finances of the State, and in view of all the circumstances its achievement is very fine. Referring to the agricultural industry, the Speech mentions that the present has been a bounteous season—and we could be enthusiastic about it if things were different. The agricultural industry, as I know it, is in a peculiar position. It is struggling under a tremendous debt incurred in the very bad years and, as a result of the acreage reduction, it will be difficult this year, even with a bounteous harvest, for farmers to make ends meet, on account of the debt to which I have referred. At a time like this, when a further acreage reduction has been forced upon us because we have not the fertilisers available to enable us to sow more wheat, the financial institutions which own the farms should be prepared to meet the farmers. I hope that something like that will be done. The farmers are faced with the difficulty of finding labour. All the young fellows have been taken away and only a few old-timers are left on most of the farms, and the industry is thus further hampered.

Farmers, as well as pastoralists, carry a large number of sheep, and they are having difficulty in obtaining the services of shearers. In a season like the present, wool must be taken off as quickly as possible, because we have in this State a fly which is causing havoc amongst flocks. The manpower authorities are endeavouring to have shearers released. They are quite anxious that the services of these men shall be made available, but it is difficult to induce the military authorities to see eye to eye with the manpower officials, and there have been hold-ups that I hope will not confront us in future. We need shearers for a limited time. Numbers of men have been in camp for a considerable period and have learnt most of what it is possible to teach them regarding present methods of warfare. A brief spell out of camp, during which they would engage in the hard work of shearing, would not reduce their capacity to carry on.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Is the Government doing anything about it?

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, the Government is doing everything possible. With the Federal member for Kalgoorlie, Mr. H. V.

Johnson, I have been in touch with the manpower authorities and I know they are placing no obstacle in the way. The difficulty is to get to the head who is able to say, "Yes, Bill Jones may leave tomorrow and go shearing for two months." In these days of rapid transport it would be possible, in an emergency, to get those men back to camp in the space of a few hours. I hope the time has arrived when the military authorities, whose attention I wish to attract, will recognise the necessity for making available the services of these men. Numbers of sheep are dying because shearers are not available to shear them. The blow-fly menace is serious, and is causing damage in a form that has been known in this State for only a short space of time.

The pastoral industry is enjoying an excellent season. I went through the Murchison areas recently and have not previously known a season to open so promisingly. I hope the Government will not press for the payment of pastoral rents until the pastoralists have succeeded in establishing themselves once more. Though they are having a bountiful season, we cannot expect the payment of rents until they have built up their depleted flocks. This will take some years; stock is not available, except at high prices in the agricultural areas, and the building-up process must necessarily be slow. In the bad years the Government was content to forego the payment of pastoral rents, and it is only reasonable that the pastoralists be given an opportunity to find their feet again.

The goldmining industry, unfortunately, is still under a cloud. A valuable mine in my district, Reedy's, better known to the public as the Triton, has recently been closed, but I am pleased to say that the workings are being maintained in readiness for the time when operations may be resumed. Endeavours have been made to get the Commonwealth authorities to face up to the position so that the industry will not suffer permanent injury in consequence of mines ceasing production temporarily. I fear that other mines will also have to be closed, but so long as the workings are maintained and the pumps kept going, they will be in a position to resume operations and thus be enabled to absorb men in the industry when the war is over.

Mention is made in the Speech of the unfavourable conditions under which indus-

trial workers in this State have been operating since February last as compared with workers in the other States. Our men have not received an increase of pay on account of the higher cost of living. Negotiations have been proceeding between the State and Commonwealth Governments. The State Government has endeavoured to get the increase; the workers are entitled to it, and it is a tribute to their loyalty that in these times of stress they have continued to carry on. For this they should receive credit. I hope the legislation referred to in the Speech will be brought down at an early date so that the workers will be given what they are entitled to receive. Undoubtedly the cost of living has risen. Those who have to purchase supplies know how the cost has gone up, and the workers are certainly entitled to higher pay in order to meet the increased cost.

In conclusion I would sound one note. The printing of "Hansard" and provision for the Legislature entail considerable cost, and if members make garrulous speeches that nobody reads—some have been guilty of talking for two hours—the time has arrived when the House should alter its Standing Orders so as to place a time limit on speeches. As I wish to set a good example in this respect, I shall conclude by submitting the motion.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday the 4th August.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 3.57 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 30th July, 1942.*

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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—COLLIE RECREATION AND PARK LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** 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 divest certain land from the Collie Recreation and Park Lands Board, to vest certain land in the said board, to amend the Collie Recreation and Park Lands Act, 1931-1941, and for other purposes incidental thereto."

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.