

equitable water charges in general and for Norseman in particular, the provision of a regular, fast, modern diesel transport service, with the development of our exports by the utilisation of the productivity of the hinterland and with the development of Esperance as the port for the Goldfields, then the decentralisation policy of the present Government would begin to be an accomplished fact, and not a recurring dream of post-atomic ideology.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.46 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22nd July, 1948.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at noon, pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. E. Islip).

The SPEAKER took the Chair.

MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONER.

A Message from His Excellency's Commissioner requested the attendance of

members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber. Hon. members having accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and heard the Commission read, they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the Guildford-Midland electorate caused by the death of the Hon. W. D. Johnson, showing that John Joseph Brady has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear in the hon. member.

Mr. Brady took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

Sitting suspended from 12.12 to 3 p.m.

SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

Mr. Speaker and hon. 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.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

As to Report on Redistribution of Seats.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the Premier give the House an indication of when he expects to make available, either by publishing in the "Government Gazette" or of his own announcement, the report concerning the redistribution of seats?

The PREMIER replied: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, I made inquiries today as to when this report is likely to be available and I understand it will be ready in about a week's time. As soon as it comes to hand a copy will be posted to each member.

PRICE FIXING, ETC.

As to State's Assumption of Control.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Attorney General: Has his attention been drawn to the statement of the Deputy Premier in "The West Australian" of the 28th May, 1948, that he sees no diffi-

culty in the State's taking over the control and handling of price-fixing, etc.? If so, seeing that he will be in charge of this department, does he agree with the Deputy Premier's statement?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: It is the intention of the Government to introduce certain legislation in connection with this matter in the near future.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is side-stepping the issue.

A.S.G. ENGINES.

As to Number Modified and in Traffic.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: What number of A.S.G. engines have passed through the first phase of the Railway Commissioner's recommendations and are now in traffic? What number of A.S.G. engines have passed through the second phase as recommended by the Railway Commissioner and are now in traffic?

The MINISTER replied: I regret I cannot supply the information the hon. member requires without notice being given, but I can tell him that 24 engines have been completely modified up to date and that the 25th is expected to be in traffic at the end of this week.

MIGRANTS FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

As to State's Voice in Selection.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: What authority, if any, has the State Government in regard to the choice of persons from foreign countries as migrants to Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied: None.

Mr. Marshall: That is the pity of it.

RAILWAY BUS SERVICES.

As to South-West Costing System.

Mr. REYNOLDS (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Has the Railway Department a costing system for each new bus service established in the South-West? If so, will he have tabled a statement indicating the income and expenditure for each service?

The MINISTER replied: I thank the hon. member for sending me a copy of the question. Unfortunately I have not the information here for him, but I will endeavour to get it here by Tuesday.

BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

THE PREMIER: 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 "An Act to amend the Brands Act, 1904."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

MR. SPEAKER: In company with 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 members of both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of accuracy I have caused printed copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

MR. NALDER (Wagin) [3.35]: 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 Assembly 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."

The people of this State have received with enthusiasm the announcement that Their Majesties the King and Queen and Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret will visit Western Australia. This no doubt will be a memorable occasion and one on which Western Australians will demonstrate in no mean fashion their affection for the Royal Family and their loyalty as members of the British Empire.

I would be failing in my duty if I did not pay a tribute to two late members of this Parliament who have passed on. I refer to the Hon. W. D. Johnson, M.L.A., and the Hon. L. B. Bolton, M.L.C. Both these gentlemen worked strenuously and gave unstintingly of their time and energy in the interests of industry in this State.

My congratulations are extended to the member for Nedlands, Sir Norbert Keenan, and the member for Leederville, Hon. A. H. Panton, as well as to Sir Charles Latham, M.L.C., for the honours that have been conferred upon them by His Majesty.

Throughout the world the task of reconstruction is being marred to a degree by the unrest that is so evident in many countries. The uncertainty as to the tide of events in the Middle East and Europe leaves cause for anxiety. Much faith is placed in the efforts of the members of the United Nations Organisation to do all within their power to stave off any major struggle that may be forced upon the peoples of the world. The fact that the ties of Empire are greater today than at any time in the history of the nation gives us in this country cause for satisfaction that the British people the world over are lovers of peace. They stand for the rights of the individual to express his or her views on any subject. This is the foundation of true democracy and it was never more forcibly demonstrated than on the 29th May last. The negative majority that was recorded at the referendum on the Commonwealth Government's proposals to secure permanent power over prices, rents and charges was overwhelming.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We will see how you people get on with it.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He is talking about peace.

Mr. NALDER: The Commonwealth Government's decision to cease responsibility almost overnight is, I think, regrettable. The system of price control, with all its complications, its restrictions on exports and imports, its rationing and so forth was, to a degree, borrowed from the States for the wartime emergency, though part of it was permanent authority in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. When the time comes for relinquishing these controls, it should be done gradually and in a systematic manner so that the economic position and business stability shall not be interrupted to any extent. Controls were brought into existence by the Commonwealth Government as a wartime emergency, which was unavoidable, but I consider it to be the responsibility of the Federal authority to show the utmost co-operation in handing over those controls to the States.

It is indeed gratifying to know that the State Government is alive to its responsibilities, and, as may be gauged by His Excellency's Speech, is already in the field and is preparing legislation to meet such necessities as may arise.

I should like to speak for a few moments on the water supply position as it affects country areas. Considerable satisfaction has been expressed at the announcement of the Government's intention to give special attention to districts outside the comprehensive agricultural water supply scheme. The announcement has been received with enthusiasm by the people in the eastern districts of the Wagin electorate. The urgent need for an all-the-year-round water supply, I feel sure, will be generally recognised and, as I have remarked, the action of the Minister in putting forward this proposal is heartily endorsed by those who are affected. I hope that no time will be lost in making the necessary improvements to the existing water tanks already installed in the districts that need the water.

I now feel it fitting to bring forward a matter that has been mentioned in the House on a previous occasion.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We have many matters to bring forward.

Mr. NALDER: I refer to the deplorable conditions that exist at the Lake Grace hospital. Quite a number of members on the opposite side of the House are acquainted with the position. I trust that the Minister for Health and the Cabinet as a whole will do their utmost to ensure that a new building is speedily erected, because I consider that the health of the people in this very large district is at stake.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think the Treasurer is the stumbling block in that case.

Mr. NALDER: Many of our agricultural districts are suffering considerably owing to the light rainfall registered so far this season. Never in the history of the State have many agricultural districts faced such a position as exists at present, but hope is still entertained that sufficient rain will fall during the next two months so that enough water may be impounded and that feed may grow in adequate quantities to tide stock over the summer months.

In concluding, I wish to say in all sincerity that I believe there is an urgent need for the strengthening of the moral and spiritual forces of our people. Never in the history of this great Australia has this need been so urgent. It is my considered opinion that, as surely as night follows day, the rise or fall of this nation will depend upon this important issue. The statement that righteousness exalts a nation was never truer than it is today; it is certainly applicable in our day and generation. We claim to be a Christian nation. Let us practise the principles of the Christian belief in our national life.

Mr. Fox: Whisper that to some of your broadcasters over the air.

Mr. NALDER: I wish to extend my best wishes to the members of the Government at the beginning of this second session of the nineteenth Parliament, and express the hope that the efforts of the members of this House will be rewarded by a fair measure of success.

MR. YATES (Canning): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday next at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.47 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 27th July, 1948.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

• Section "B", 1947.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1947. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTIONS.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Government Charge to Municipalities.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What were the conditions made by the Government when it entered into a contract to supply electric current to the City of Perth and the price per unit?

(2) What were the conditions made by the Government when it entered into a contract to supply electric current to the Fremantle municipality, and the price per unit?

(3) What is it costing, per unit, to generate electric current?

(4) What is the estimated loss, if any, that has resulted from these contracts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Conditions of supply and the basis on which the price per unit is calculated are as set out in Act. 34 of 1913.