

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.,

Lieut.-Governor in and over the State of Western Australia and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia; May it please Your Excellency: We, 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.

It is not my intention to speak at any great length on this motion, which is the customary one at the commencement of a new session of Parliament. The justification that may have existed in normal times for a long speech on this motion, does not now exist. As the Government has a certain programme of legislation that it is anxious to submit to the House, I sincerely trust that members will dispose of this motion with all reasonable expedition.

At this stage I would like to express appreciation of the action of the Government in appointing the Surveyor-General as a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the financial and economic position of the pastoral industry. In my opinion no more suitable appointment could have been made. Mr. Pyfe's field of inquiry is a wide one. Whilst it is true the Government has afforded relief to the industry in the direction of reduced rates, remissions of rent and in other ways, the problem goes far deeper than those questions. Wages in the industry, from the shearing point of view, are at a minimum figure, and the pastoral workers in the bad seasons experienced have had their periods of employment shortened. It is not my intention to go into detail on this matter, but I have no doubt that, just as the Government demonstrated its concern for the industry by appointing the Royal Commissioner, so also when that gentleman in due course submits his recommendations everything possible will be done to implement them.

Reference is made in the Speech to the mining industry and to the need for increased gold production. The gold excise tax passed by the Federal Government last year has certainly not been of advantage to Western Australia, which last year produced over 1,214,000 ozs. of gold. That is equal to more than 70 per cent. of Australia's gold production. Whilst it is true that owing to repeated representations by the State Administration and mining interests, certain concessions have been made

to the industry, the unjust nature of the tax still remains. I wish to express my sincerest thanks to the Government for enabling two Ministers recently to make a comprehensive tour of the North-West and the northern portion of the State. The Minister for Mines (Hon. A. H. Panton) and the Minister for the North-West (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley) were the two Ministers concerned. That was the first visit by the Minister for Mines to the Pilbara and other districts. I feel sure he was agreeably surprised at the vast possibilities, from the mining point of view, that exist in the Nullagine, Eastern Creek, Marble Bar and other districts. He now has a personal knowledge of the tremendous difficulties that confront small mining companies and prospectors in the outback centres, particularly in the direction of lack of machinery and water supplies. We are confident that, as a result of the Minister's personal experience, it may be possible to arrange for the visit of a competent hydraulic engineer to that area so that he may make a complete survey of the position from the point of view of obtaining adequate water supplies. At Marble Bar a deputation interviewed the Minister, who was informed that the prospectors had to wait an undue length of time for the payment of certain moneys. That was due to the fact that some of the ore crushed for them showed no signs of gold over the plates. The gold all went into the sands. Under the existing system the prospectors have had to wait many months before receiving payments from the Treasury. I feel sure that, as a result of the good case put before the Minister by the prospectors, he will do his best to rectify the present position.

Consternation was the order of the day a few weeks ago when the Commonwealth Government announced its intention to restrict the use of petrol throughout Australia. I and other members representing the North-West constituencies made representations to the Federal Government stressing particularly the need for exempting the North-West from the rationing scheme. True, wherever such a scheme may operate, certain drawbacks will be evident and injustice will be experienced by various sections of the community. The conditions in the North-West are entirely different from

those in the metropolitan area and other parts of the State nearer to the centre of government, and so we hope that as a result of our representations the mining and pastoral interests will not be further jeopardised by the additional burden that would be placed on them by the imposition of the petrol restrictions.

Some time ago the State Government—and I know a number of the engineering unions in the State shared in the desire—was anxious that the Federal authorities should make use of the Midland Junction workshops for the manufacture of munitions. We are aware that Ministers and our State representatives in the Federal Parliament made the most effective representations possible for the manufacture of munitions at the railway workshops, but at that time the Federal Government declined to accede to the request. In the circumstances it is pleasing to learn from His Excellency's Speech, as well as from reports that have appeared in the Press, that the Federal authorities have at last demonstrated a desire to decentralise operations by placing with the State Government an order representing the expenditure of £1,500,000 on the manufacture of munitions. Owing to the lack of work offering locally, a number of our skilled tradesmen went to the Eastern States. We still have in the Midland Junction workshops and elsewhere in Western Australia skilled men who are anxious to demonstrate their ability in the direction I have indicated. I sincerely trust that, as a result of the action by the Federal Government, the manufacture of munitions will be carried out with success, not only at Midland Junction workshops, but in private engineering establishments in the metropolitan area.

The statement in His Excellency's Speech that there are still over 6,000 men on part-time work in Western Australia was rather disconcerting. I realise that the State authorities have done everything possible to find work for men on a full-time basis, but as a result of the intermittent nature of the employment of vast numbers of men who find themselves in such a predicament, there is no doubt that the position is seriously reflected in the under-nourished children we see in our midst today. While the necessary money can be found for war purposes, no matter how long hostilities may continue, it is surely pertinent to remark that if unlimited millions can be found for purposes associ-

ated with war, some arrangement could be effected in times of peace to provide everyone with full-time work and decent living conditions so that men may keep themselves and their dependants in a reasonable degree of comfort. Those of us who have year in year out advocated reform along those lines, have realised that when ultimately the present hostilities cease, there must be a change. The arguments of those who always stress the claims of old-time shibboleths and methods of finance, must go by the board, for such people surely recognise that the future demands that they shall radically alter their views.

At the outset I remarked that I did not intend to delay members for long, but I feel impelled, before resuming my seat, briefly to comment on the present world position. During the first session of this Parliament, the war clouds gathered over Europe, and hostilities commenced. England and France joined issue against German aggression. The Nazis soon subdued Poland and in quick succession Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Holland and Belgium fell before the onslaught.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not Sweden.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: No, I should have omitted Sweden; but the others I mentioned fell victims to Nazi dictatorship. Now we find France reduced to a state of vassalage, due largely to the treacherous actions of those in high places. In view of all this, it must be abundantly clear to the most ardent of pacifists that the present-day situation is due to the depredations of a criminal autocracy in a powerful country. The Germans have not been content with the subjugation of their own people. They have exercised their aggression in neighbouring lands and in many instances have subdued those people and imposed a dictatorship form of rule upon them. It is evident that they seek to destroy democracy and the British Commonwealth of Nations blocks their programme. There can be no doubt that on the result of the war depends whether despotism or democracy is to be the form of government under which we shall live in future. In consequence, all sections of the community are doing their utmost to achieve ultimate victory. In this fair land of ours, which for the past 150 years has been free from devastation and whose people have never experienced the misery that is prevalent in so many countries in Europe today, every adult person has the right to participate in the

election of Australia's Government. He can exercise in a reasonable measure the cherished principle that permits freedom of speech. He can practise what religion he desires without being molested by any fellow citizen. I do not doubt that the people recognise the great heritage they enjoy, and I am convinced that they will do all they possibly can to achieve victory, whether it be soon or late. The Commonwealth Government has been given unlimited powers with which to carry on the war. All political parties, including the Labour Party, recognise the necessity in times of crisis for vesting the national Government with the extra powers that are deemed necessary, powers far exceeding those required in times of peace. On the score of authority, therefore, the Federal Government cannot in any way enter a plea that it is shorn of necessary power. The people generally have demonstrated that they are prepared to give the Commonwealth Government all the power it wishes, but in our fight against dictatorship we must be zealous in safeguarding the rights of democracy so that the powers conferred upon the Federal authorities shall be used with discretion and not for the purpose of restricting any more than is necessary the liberties of the people. We must ensure that when eventually hostilities cease, legislation and regulations passed to restrict the liberties of the people during war time are promptly repealed.

The people of Australia are prepared to help in any way they possibly can, and I am pleased to know that the State Government intends to introduce legislation to deal with civil defence. While there are faults in our system of democracy, I feel sure I voice the opinions of this House and of the people generally when I say that the worst faults of democracy are far preferable to the best system of dictatorship. Although, owing to the apathy displayed by many folk, the State and Federal legislatures have found it necessary at different times to pass legislation making it obligatory upon the people of Australia to exercise the franchise, yet when a crucial test is applied, citizens realise the stark alternative to the present form of government. On the result of this conflict depends whether we are going to be ruled as hitherto or by a dictatorship. Indicative of the unanimity of opinion that permeates the minds of the people of Australia, is the fact that the Federal Labour

Leader, backed by the whole Australian Labour movement, has co-operated and will continue to co-operate to the greatest possible degree with the Commonwealth Government. There is no doubt that tremendous responsibilities will devolve upon whoever holds the reins of office. Realising the justice of our cause, the people generally will do all they possibly can to bring about victory for democracy, which will be in their own interests and those of generations to come. Thus they will be able to face the future with complete confidence.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest) [3.42]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [3.43]: I move—

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

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.41 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 30th July, 1940.

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

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall (Central) took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.