

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 2nd August, 1956.

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## MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

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

## MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONER.

A message from His Excellency's Commissioner requested attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber. Members, having accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and heard the Commission read, returned to the Assembly Chamber.

## SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour Mr. Justice Wolff, having been commissioned by the Governor, appeared in the Assembly Chamber to administer to members the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen.

The Clerk produced election writs showing the return of 50 members. All the members elected, with the exception of Hon. J. J. Brady, Hon. L. F. Kelly and Mr. Cornell were present and took and subscribed the oath as required by statute, and signed the roll.

The Commissioner then withdrew.

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The PREMIER: The House being duly constituted, I move—

That Mr. James Hegney do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I second the motion.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I submit myself to the will of the House.

There being no other nomination,

The SPEAKER-ELECT, having been conducted to the Chair by the mover and second of the motion, said: I thank members for the signal honour conferred upon me in having elected me to the very high office of Speaker. I now proceed to carry out the duties imposed upon me and assume the Chair as Speaker of this Assembly.

The PREMIER: I would like to convey congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election to the high office of Speaker of the House. I am confident that you will carry out your duties in a very fair and efficient manner. You have been a member of this House for a great many years and have had experience as Chairman of Committees. Therefore you are well informed regarding Standing Orders and general procedure. You are possessed of a steady temperament, and I am sure that even when, on odd occasions, the proceedings in the House may depart from the peaceful, you, by the exercise of discretion and restraint, will be able to bring the House quickly back to the normal balance of order. I congratulate you and wish you a very happy, successful and long term of office.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (Murray): I would like to join in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to your high office. I remember that we came into Parliament together, which I think was about 26 years ago. I know that, because of your long parliamentary experience, and your experience as Chairman of Committees, you have a practical knowledge of the Standing Orders and you will be able to conduct the debates in this House as they should be. I have no doubt about your fairness and your impartiality, and that under your guidance the high traditions of the office to which you are now elected will be upheld.

Hon. A. F. WATTS (Stirling): I would like to join the other speakers in extending our congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker. As Chairman of Committees of this House, you have demonstrated your impartiality and fairness to all members of the House, and I am sure you will extend the same treatment to all members while you are Speaker. Relying on that feeling, which has been established by your years of experience as Chairman of Committees, I heartily join in the congratulations and wish you a successful term of office.

The SPEAKER-ELECT: I would like to thank the Leader of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party for their kind references to myself. I appreciate the fact

that I follow in the footsteps of men who have adorned this office as Speaker. They have left behind traditions as examples for a humble man like myself to follow, and it shall be my highest endeavour to humbly follow in the footsteps of the very able men who have gone before me. As members have said, whilst I have always been a keen and strong party man, as a Labour member of this House, on having been elected to the position of Speaker of the Assembly, I shall at all times interpret the Standing Orders so as to be fair and impartial to all members, irrespective of whether they be on the ministerial bench, the back benches or the Opposition benches. It will be my humble duty to see that the privileges and rights of each member are maintained under Standing Orders. I thank members for the very great honour they have done me today.

### PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER-ELECT.

The PREMIER: I desire to announce that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor will now be pleased to receive the Speaker-elect and such members as desire to accompany him.

*Sitting suspended from 12.55 to 3 p.m.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that I submitted myself to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator, and on behalf of the House laid claim to its undoubted rights and privileges, and prayed that the most favourable construction 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 that 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.

(Signed) J. P. Dwyer,

Lieutenant-Governor and  
Administrator.

I also wish to report that I have received from His Excellency a Commission to swear in hon. members, and this I hand to the Clerk to read to the House.

The Commission was read.

### SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

Mr. 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.

#### TRAFFIC.

##### *Increasing Motorcar Licence Fees.*

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

Following the statement made in Adelaide by the Minister for Transport, is it the intention of the Government to increase motorcar licence fees and, if so, by how much?

The PREMIER replied:

I understand that these fees have not been increased in Western Australia since about the year 1923. The Government is in the process of giving consideration to the question of asking Parliament to approve increases, but the amounts of increases to be sought have not been decided.

#### NARROWS BRIDGE.

##### *Proposed Link Road.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) At which points will the proposed link road running north from the planned Narrows Bridge be tunnelled, and at which point will it be an open cutting as it traverses from Mounts Bay-rd. under Mount, Malcolm and Hay-sts. to George-st.?

(2) What provision is planned for vehicles to enter or leave this link road after it crosses over Mounts Bay-rd.?

(3) Have owners of property to be resumed been contacted?

(4) Is it proposed to prepare and publicly exhibit a model or models of the proposed bridge and the link road down to and including the new bridge over the railway?

(5) If, as reported, the Minister thinks it could be 10 years before the link road is completed—although he envisages the Narrows Bridge as approximately a three-year project—how is it proposed to disperse on the Perth side the heavy traffic expected over the Narrows Bridge in the interim in view of existing congestion at peak periods of traffic to and from the city in the Mounts Bay-rd.—Spring-st.—Mill-st. area and the western end of St. George's Terrace?

The Minister for Lands: Some question!

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2), (3) and (5). The definite line of the proposed route has only recently been determined and the actual requirements, about some of which the hon. member is seeking information, are at present being examined.

(4) No.

**GOSNELLS DISTRICT.***Aid for Cock-eyed Bob Victims.*

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Premier:

When can I expect what I hope will be a favourable answer to the representations made on behalf of the people who so disastrously lost their homes in the cock-eyed bob which hit Gosnells about two months ago?

The PREMIER replied:

I will endeavour to have a reply sent to the hon. member in the near future.

**HOSPITALS.***(a) Fees Payable by Pensioners.*

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

Is it a fact that aged and invalid pensioners are now being charged fees in public hospitals in view of the increased hospital charges within the State? If so, how much? Also, will he give consideration to a remission of these charges to aged and invalid pensioners.

The MINISTER replied:

The answer is quite simple. No charge is made to invalid or any other pensioners so far as hospitalisation is concerned.

*(b) Investigation of Fees.*

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the Minister's reply, will he make investigations in regard to the increased amount that is being taken from the pension of aged and invalid pensioners who are inmates of public hospitals? I am informed that the amount has been increased since hospitalisation fees were increased.

The MINISTER replied:

I will make inquiries, but I know that there has been a very small increase and the amount depends on the duration of their stay in hospital.

**BEACH EROSION.***Presentation of Report.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will he inform the House when the report on the zone project concerning erosion at the Cottesloe Beach area will be ready for presentation?

The MINISTER replied:

When the date is known, the House will be informed.

**HOUSING.***Provision for Country Pensioners.*

Mr. O'BRIEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

Is it the intention of the State Housing Commission to build homes for the senior citizens of this State—namely, the old-age pensioners—in the Murchison area similar to the homes constructed at Geraldton?

The MINISTER replied:

In conjunction with its overall programme of providing accommodation for the people, it is the policy of the State Housing Commission to take steps where necessary to provide some form of accommodation for the older members of the community. Up to date not a great deal has been done in country districts because in the country, in contradistinction to the metropolitan area, there is a special scheme sponsored by the Lotteries Commission which does something in the direction sought and at the same time places some responsibility and direct interest upon the local people and the local authorities. But I can assure the member for Murchison that if he is able to establish a case for a number of these small units in the area he has in mind, it will receive sympathetic consideration.

**RAILWAYS.***(a) Freight and Fare Increases.*

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

When is the freight and fare increase foreshadowed by the Minister to take place?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

On behalf of the Minister for Railways, I can inform the hon. member that no detailed consideration has yet been given by the Government to this matter and therefore there is no information which I can give him in connection with it at this juncture.

*(b) Raising of Standard of Efficiency.*

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

In his policy speech the Premier referred to his intention to raise the standard of efficiency of the railways. Can he say what particular inefficiencies he had in mind and what steps have been taken, or are to be taken, to implement his policy?

The PREMIER replied:

I am grateful to the hon. member for this helpful question! In all large organisations there are inefficiencies caused probably mainly by overlappings and that is the sort of thing I had in mind when the statement was made.

## BILL—PLANT DISEASES 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 for "An Act to amend the Plant Diseases Act, 1914-1954."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

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

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 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.*

MR. HALL (Albany) [3.54]: 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 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 express my first thoughts on being elected as a member of Parliament. What are the duties of a member of Parliament? By what obligation is he bound to the constituency to which he is attached? What kind of work is he expected to do and what kind of life has he to lead?

I will try to answer these questions, first by referring to some general principles and then by giving a concrete illustration. Certainly, it should be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes should have a great weight with him, and their opinions high respect; their business unlimited attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures and his situation to theirs. Above all, always, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own.

Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors with different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain as an

agent or advocate against other agents and advocates. Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the whole. We choose a member indeed, but when we have chosen him he is not just the member for his electorate; he is a member of Parliament. I shall endeavour to give effect to that policy myself.

I should like to bring to the notice of members the dangers that lie ahead of this Government and, in fact, of all democratic Governments, if we do not use the advantages we have in our power, mainly decentralisation. The maldistribution of the people of Australia is a feature of our development upon which the adverse comment of thinking people has been more or less continuous. In no other country in the world may be seen cities quite as large, or a rural population quite as small, having regard to our total area and numbers. Many factors have operated to produce this result.

The attractions of life in the city are undeniable. It is all too true that they are industrially richer and both these reasons cause the loss of youth from country areas. The convergence of roads and railways at focal points has greatly influenced the growth of the capital cities. Modern methods of quantity production and the growth of large units of secondary manufacture have had the effect of expediting the growth of the cities. By political action the great natural resources of the cities have been exploited to the comparative negligence of the countryside. The general trend has been, in short, to make more work and greater opportunity in the big manufacturing centres and less in the country. If we are to meet the threat of world trade domination by Russia we shall have to decentralise, adjust and overhaul our monetary system and make sure it is working with an honesty of purpose. If we fail to awake to these necessities, then democracy and Australia will be lost.

Albany's claim for a naval base leaves nothing to be desired. It has a water depth of from 70 to 100 feet, natural, complete protection from prevailing winds, fresh running water and good roads. Yet we hear the cry of "Centralisation," of "Emphasised Interests," of "Cockburn Sound." Our industries are becoming congested; our traffic is congested and I am afraid that our minds have become congested. Our roads are narrow but I believe we have only bituminised the cart tracks of our forefathers. We have acres of land, but we make our roads as narrow as our thoughts. I need no more proof of this than the terrible accident of last December when two vehicles were unable to pass without disastrous results to life and limb.

The Albany harbour, when completed, should serve as the natural outlet for the southern half of the State, and railways

and transport should lead to the south and not to the north. The country is fertile and fruitful and well stored with nearly all the things the people need. The people are intelligent, industrious, strong and famous for their perseverance. Their inventiveness and their resourcefulness now assert that if the labour of these people were properly organised and wisely applied, this State would in return for very little toil, yield abundance for all.

Today Australia has made much progress in her march forward as a nation. Future progress will depend on the intelligent use of our resources. If, in our selfish greed for riches, we destroy our resources and imperil the livelihood of future generations, then we shall have betrayed our heritage. Every Australian should acquaint himself with our many problems.

I should like to conclude by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your successful appointment as Speaker of this House.

Mr. O'BRIEN (Murchison): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move—

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

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.12 p.m.

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 7th August, 1956.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

The PRESIDENT: I will ask members to remain standing while I read prayers.

Prayers read.

#### QUESTIONS.

##### LONG-SERVICE LEAVE.

##### *Application to Private Industry.*

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Chief Secretary:

As it has been indicated in the Press and the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that legislation will be introduced during the current session to extend long-service leave benefits to employees in private industry—

(1) Can he inform the House whether these benefits will be on the same basis as those enjoyed by Government employees?

(2) Can he also say whether leave will be made retrospective if at the passing of the Act the employee has already served the necessary period to qualify him for leave?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) and (2) Details of the proposed legislation are still receiving the consideration of the Government and it is expected that an early decision will be made.

##### DRAINAGE.

##### *Implementation of Comprehensive Scheme.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the fact that many property-owners and occupiers throughout various parts of the metropolitan area are suffering much personal inconvenience, damage to property and financial loss, in some cases to such an extent that people have been obliged to vacate their premises due to flood waters, and in view of the fact that drainage throughout the metropolitan area has reached the stage of emergency proportion, and in recent years has become increasingly worse, will the Chief Secretary inform the House exactly what steps the Government has taken to date to implement the comprehensive drainage scheme of the metropolitan area, and also indicate the Government's intended action to prevent the position from further deteriorating, and consequently becoming completely out of control?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The Government has planned a series of drainage areas within the comprehensive drainage scheme and work has been commenced in the Welshpool section of the Bentley-Welshpool scheme. Further work in connection with the comprehensive drainage scheme is dependent upon the availability of funds. This project has been included in the schedules recently submitted to the Commonwealth Government in connection with the State's application for financial help to relieve unemployment.