

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

First Session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament

The Legislative Assembly was dissolved on the 15th January, 1965.

The Twenty-fifth Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 29th July, 1965, and the first session, which was opened by His Excellency the Governor, was commenced on that date.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 29th July, 1965

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MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Legislative Council met at noon.

The **PRESIDENT** (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Parliaments (Mr. J. B. Roberts) read the Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor (Major-General Sir Douglas Anthony Kendrew, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.), summoning the first session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION

His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honour Mr. Justice Negus) having entered the Chamber at 12.5 p.m., a message was sent to the Legislative Assembly requesting the presence of members in the Council Chamber.

Members of the Legislative Assembly having arrived accordingly, the Commissioner requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in the name and on the part of Her Majesty the Queen, or in the name and on the part of His Excellency for the opening and holding of the first session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament.

The Commission was read.

COMMISSIONER'S STATEMENT

The Commissioner (His Honour Mr. Justice Negus) read the following statement:—

Mr. President, Honourable Members of the Legislative Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

I have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to inform you that, at three o'clock this afternoon, His Excellency will declare to you the causes of the calling together of this Session of Parliament; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should first be chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, members of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and having been duly sworn by me in accordance with the terms of the Commission granted to me by His Excellency, you do elect your Speaker, and notify the same to His Excellency.

The Commissioner (His Honour Mr. Justice Negus) and members of the Legislative Assembly retired from the Chamber.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS

The Clerk announced the return of writs for the election of members at the elections held on the 20th February, 1965, showing that the following had been duly elected:—The Hon. J. G. Hislop (Metropolitan), The Hon. A. F. Griffith (North Metropolitan), The Hon. R. F. Hutchison (North-East Metropolitan), The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery (South Metropolitan), The Hon. C. E. Griffiths (South-East Metropolitan), The Hon. N. E. Baxter (Central), The Hon. T. O. Perry (Lower Central), The Hon. N. McNeill (Lower West), The Hon. E. C. House (South), The Hon. J. J. Garrihan (South-East), The Hon. V. J. Ferry (South West), The Hon. J. Heitman (Upper West), The Hon. C. R. Abbey (West), The Hon. G. E. D. Brand (Lower North), The Hon. F. J. S. Wise (North).

These members, with the exception of The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery (South Metropolitan), who was absent, took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance, and signed the roll.

THE PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): I will leave the Chair until the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 12.32 to 2.58 p.m.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Delivery

His Excellency the Governor (Sir Douglas Anthony Kendrew, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.) entered the Council Chamber at 3.5 p.m.; and, the 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.

You are gathered here for the First Session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament of Western Australia.

I wish to take this opportunity to refer to the deep sorrow shared by us all at the passing of Sir Winston Churchill, one of the world's greatest leaders.

Since Parliament last met general elections have been held, conjointly for both Houses. Important electoral changes were thereby implemented. The State was divided into 15 electoral provinces instead of 10, and provision was made for adult franchise and compulsory voting for the Legislative Council for the first time.

Western Australia's continued economic progress and development gives us all good reason to look ahead with confidence. Production and productivity are rising steadily. Investment capital is flowing into the State at a high rate. Natural resources

are being opened up to create new avenues of wealth and employment. Basic public facilities and services are being expanded.

The demand for labour, particularly skilled workers, has increased considerably and active steps are being taken by the Government and by private enterprise to meet this need by means of increased immigration and the establishing of special training schemes.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Revenue for the financial year 1964-65 was £90,072,000 and expenditure £92,421,000, leaving a deficit of £2,349,000.

Major factors contributing to the increase in the deficit over the budget provisions were additional costs of wage variations granted to all Government employees, amounting to approximately £1,350,000, and lower revenue collections under a number of headings.

Capital works expenditure from the General Loan Fund amounted to £25,483,000, mainly on improvements to the railway system and water supplies and on construction of schools, hospitals and housing.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Land

Land Development

Backed by research, the release of large areas of new land is proceeding rapidly and greatly adding to the State's potential for agricultural production. Attention to the development of light lands is continuing and soil classification of the Midland light lands is nearing completion. The planning of suitable areas is in progress.

Cereals

Favourable seeding conditions in most cereal growing areas have enabled record acreages to be planted this year. There are excellent prospects of a record harvest.

Wool and Sheep

While adverse conditions reduced wool production last season, the total number of sheep increased by nearly two millions in the twelve months to March this year. However, the demand for sheep to stock pastures, coupled with the increasing world demand for meat, has maintained sheep prices at a high level.

Dairying

Production of milk rose during the past season and this season has opened well in all dairying districts. It is proposed to inaugurate this year a consolidated five-year plan designed to add further to the earning capacity of under-developed dairy farms.

Fruit

Most fruit crops were very satisfactory during 1964-65 and overseas exports of apples have been well over the previous year's figure.

Ord Project

Twenty-seven farms have now been allocated at the Ord River Scheme and another seven are to be made available later this year. The current cotton crop is returning yields approaching 2,000 pounds of seed cotton per acre and successful cotton growing on the Ord River appears assured. The value of this year's harvest is expected to be in excess of £500,000.

Pastoral Research

Plans are well advanced for the establishment of a research station near Fitzroy Crossing to investigate pastoral problems in the West Kimberley.

Minerals

Value

The total value of the State's mineral production for the calendar year 1964 was £24,751,406. This was over £3,600,000 above that of the previous year. Of this, gold production was valued at £11,149,943.

Aid to Gold Industry

The Commonwealth Government has announced its intention to continue assistance to the gold mining industry for a further five years and to broaden its scope. This will be of great help to the industry and will increase interest in goldmining.

Exploration

Our mineral resources continue to attract world-wide interest and numerous large overseas organisations are carrying out extensive exploratory programmes, particularly in the search for iron, copper, phosphates, gold and tin.

Iron

Iron ore reserves in Western Australia are now assessed at more than 15,000 million tons of good grade ore. Five iron ore companies have arranged sales to Japanese buyers totalling 258.5 million tons worth £1,200 million over the next quarter century.

Oil

Oil exploration has been expanded and several experienced companies new to the State have entered the search. This year it is expected that over £10 million will be spent on oil exploration and at least six deep drilling rigs will be operating. Further discoveries of oil and gas at Yardarino and Barrow Island and the new discovery of gas and oil at Gingin are most encouraging. The search for oil has been extended to areas off the coast and a number of "off-shore" permits to explore for oil have been granted and marine seismic work is now in progress.

Bauxite, Beach Sands, Tin

The mining of bauxite and beach sands has been increased and these two minerals constitute a very valuable part of our production. Greatly increased production of tin from the Greenbushes field is scheduled for this year.

Industrial Development

Negotiations

The past year has seen the successful conclusion of additional negotiations of importance to our industrial development programme. They include an agreement for the establishment of a £10 million nitrogenous fertiliser industry in this State as an extension of the refinery activities at Kwinana. Negotiations are current for an industry to produce explosives for the greatly expanded mining activities soon to commence in the Pilbara, Ashburton, and other areas. This will be a development from the nitrogen fertiliser industry and will also offset imports which would otherwise be necessary.

Iron Ore Pellets

The contracts for the production of iron ore pellets from Pilbara and Ashburton deposits represent a major breakthrough for the early provision of important processing industries in the North and give further impetus to the Government's decentralisation programme.

Alumina

Alcoa's decision to double the present capacity of the alumina refinery at Naval Base is further evidence of the progress being made.

Diversified Industries

The Department of Industrial Development is aiming to attract a wide variety of smaller industries to fill the gaps between big new undertakings established or negotiated.

Overseas Contacts

Overseas contacts have been maintained and developed. Current policy is to plan ahead to ensure continuity of major industrial development projects to follow on those that are already negotiated and in the process of being established. Special attention is being given to expanding the processing of natural resources and goods locally grown or produced.

Progress

The B.H.P. construction programme for the blast furnace at Kwinana and the A.P.M. paper mill at Spearwood have both made good progress.

Fisheries

Production

The prime value of fish caught in Western Australia in the past year is expected to exceed last year's record figure of approximately £5,500,000. A decrease in

crayfish production was offset by an increase in the price received and the additional prawn catch will also augment the total value.

Patrols Research

A new fisheries patrol vessel will be completed and in service before the commencement of the next crayfishing season. Research programmes on crayfish and prawns are being continued, and a new fisheries research vessel is being planned.

Legislation

Amendments to the Fisheries Act will be introduced this session in regard to measures for the conservation of crayfish and providing for increased penalties for breaches of the Act.

Forests

A new Forestry Research Station at Collier Plantation will be in operation shortly. Pine planting this year will be increased to 3,500 acres. Cuttings from high quality pine trees in Portuguese forests have been successfully transported to the State and grafts have been established.

Tourist Industry

New Record

The past year has set new records in income earned from tourist traffic and in the numbers of visitors to Western Australia. Development in the North is providing access to an area of abundant interest to the visitor.

Second Biggest Earner

The tourist industry is now the State's second biggest earner of income from the Eastern States. The Tourist Development Authority is continuing its policy of subsidising development of beaches, caravan parks and other tourist amenities.

DEVELOPMENTAL WORKS AND SERVICES

To support the economic expansion of the State, the Government has engaged in a wide range of developmental activity.

Water and Sewerage

Work on the Comprehensive Water Supply Scheme will be accelerated in this financial year when special Commonwealth Loan Funds will be available to match State funds on a £ for £ basis. The provision of new water supplies and sewerage schemes in country towns is continuing. At the new town of Koolyanobbing a water supply and sewerage facilities have been installed and major works are in progress on the provision of new water supplies at Geraldton and Morawa. In the metropolitan area water supply services are being extended to Herne Hill and Rockingham and a new large service reservoir at Hamilton Hill will be completed this year. From the beginning of 1965, country water rates and prices were made uniform throughout the State.

Flood Control

In the South-West, protective works have been undertaken on the Preston River and other streams to deal with flooding. An auxiliary spillway has been constructed at Harvey Weir and it is planned to carry out extensive training of the Collie River to lessen flood risks at the town of Collie.

Transport

Throughout the State, the Government is closely examining modern transport requirements. A top level investigation is being made.

Railways

The standard gauge railway project is progressing. It is expected that the new Avon River Valley route between Midland and Northam, which will carry standard and narrow gauge, will be open for 3 ft. 6 in. gauge operation during this financial year. Railway earnings in the past financial year were £1,750,000 greater than operating expenses before the inclusion of interest and depreciation. This result was some £300,000 better than in the previous year. The railway extending from Midland to Walkaway previously owned and operated by the Midland Railway Company was taken over by the Western Australian Government Railways on the 1st August, 1964.

Port Construction

A big programme of port construction is in progress throughout the State. At Derby a new jetty is nearing completion and construction is proceeding on a new deep water jetty at Broome. Extra berthing facilities are being provided at Geraldton and Esperance and tenders have been accepted for a second land-backed berth at Bunbury. At the port of Fremantle, preliminary work is proceeding on additional berthing facilities and associated road and rail access in both the inner and outer harbours and on dredging and deepening of channels in the outer harbour. Major harbour developments at Port Hedland and King Bay are planned by private companies in conformity with agreements made with the Government for iron ore export from this area.

State Ships

To meet the growing shipping space requirements along our coast, modifications have been carried out to the State ship *Dorrig* to increase her carrying capacity. The State Shipping Service has also secured an additional vessel of 3,000 tons on charter. The fleet now comprises eight vessels.

Roads

More than £12,000,000 will be spent this year by the Main Roads Department on the State's road system. Nearly one-quarter of this has been allocated for works in the North. Planning for the relief of

traffic congestion and improvements to roads in the metropolitan area is continuing, and the first major contract for the construction of the central section of the Mitchell Freeway will be let this year.

Power

State power generating capacity has been expanded with the first 60 megawatt turbo-generator at the new Muja Power Station, now in commission. Planned addition of three more 60 megawatt units at this power station site will provide for requirements until 1969. During the past year electricity supply has been extended to Goomalling, Dowerin, Wyalkatchem, Wickepin and Quairading.

Education

Enrolments at Government primary and secondary schools now exceed 141,000 and next year a further increase of 3,200 is expected. New high schools will be in operation in 1966 at Kewdale, City Beach and Eden Hill and planning is in hand for seven new high schools at both metropolitan and country centres. The first section of the Institute of Technology was occupied this year and a further section will be completed later on in the year. A start will be made soon on the construction of a Secondary Teachers' College. 1966 will be celebrated as Technical Training Year in Western Australia. It will include the international Pan Indian Ocean Conference on technical education and training, to be held in Perth. Technical Training Year aims to increase public awareness of the need for training to give young people and the State the means of achieving a better future. It will be the only project of this nature and magnitude in the British Commonwealth.

Hospitals

Satisfactory progress is being maintained in the construction of regional hospitals at Bunbury and Geraldton and of a number of other hospital buildings in both metropolitan and country centres. Planning is proceeding for additions to the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital as the first stage of development of a medical centre at Hollywood. It is expected that the Guildford Training Centre for intellectually handicapped children will be opened towards the end of this financial year.

Homes

In the past year, 2,100 homes were erected throughout the State by the State Housing Commission from capital funds provided under the authority of the State Housing Act, the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement, the War Service Homes Act, and State Government Departments. These included homes for the new towns of Koolyanobbing and Exmouth. Homes may now be purchased on a deposit of £100 including fees. As part of its policy to assist prospective home-owners to obtain land at

reasonable prices for home building, the Government has approved of the progressive release of about 900 State Housing Commission residential lots in several metropolitan suburbs for public sale. The scheme will include provisions to prevent possible speculation in the land.

Planning

Co-ordinated planning of the Perth Metropolitan Region is being vigorously pursued, with the expectation that its population will treble in the next 30 years. To this end the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has been substantially reinforced with specialist professional staff. The Government has established a joint transportation committee representing State and local government agencies, including road authorities and public transport operators. The committee will study and advise on the most effective integration of land use controls, new roads, and the public transport system in the metropolitan region.

GENERAL

Increase in Number of Principal Offices

Legislation will be introduced amending the Constitution Act to increase the number of Principal Executive Offices of Government from ten to twelve.

Overseas Visits

The Deputy Premier and Minister for Agriculture and Electricity (Hon. C. D. Nalder, M.L.A.) is at present overseas on behalf of the State Government, investigating progressive trends in agriculture and electric power production. The Hon. Minister for Industrial Development has also carried out extensive overseas visits to the United States of America, the Far East and Europe to promote interest in trade and investment.

Native Welfare

The comprehensive policy adopted on native welfare will be continued, with particular emphasis on education, housing and community acceptance. The legislation which lifted liquor restrictions on natives within the South-West Land Division has now operated for a year and the overall result has been well up to expectations. Consideration is now being given to lifting liquor restrictions applying to natives in other areas. In all other respects natives throughout the State now enjoy equal rights and privileges with other citizens.

Child Welfare

Child Welfare work is also being extended. The Longmore Remand and Assessment Centre was opened early this year by the Child Welfare Department. Children committed to the care of the Department, or

on remand, can be physically, mentally and socially examined at the centre and plans for their future care and rehabilitation developed. A group of cottages will be built for the short-term care of children separated from their homes and awaiting return to their own families or placement with foster parents.

Civil Defence

The State Civil Defence and Emergency Service continues to make progress. One hundred and thirty local authorities have now formed Emergency Services and the development of similar organisations within the inner metropolitan area is now proceeding. With the co-operation of the Commonwealth Government a valuable operational and training headquarters has been acquired at Belmont. Training courses are continuing throughout the State and industrial Civil Defence activities are expanding within the metropolitan area.

Navigation

Navigational aids in the outports are being improved. The Government is giving close consideration to the report of the Royal Commission which inquired into the safety of boats. Legislation will be introduced to amend the W.A. Marine Act.

Traffic Safety

The Government is vitally concerned at the mounting death toll on the roads and is investigating the responsibility of traffic control, on a State-wide basis. During the session, Parliament will be asked to consider a number of amendments to the Traffic Act, including provisions dealing with penalties for driving under the influence of liquor. Provisions of this Act dealing with driving under the influence of liquor will be extended to permit testing by breathalysers.

Industrial Safety

Continued efforts are being made to reduce accidents in industry and the appointment by the Government of additional scaffolding inspectors has contributed to a marked improvement in the building industry.

Fire Stations

New fire stations have been built at Daglish and Bedford and at a number of country towns, and particular attention is being given to planning the future fire station needs in the metropolitan area.

Youth Council

A Youth Council constituted under recent legislation has presented its first report and its proposals for development of youth services are being considered.

Legislation

Legislation to be placed before you other than that already mentioned, will include—

A Bill for an Act to amend the Administration Act, 1903-1964, to increase the share of a surviving spouse when the partner in marriage dies intestate.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act, 1943-1964, to provide benefits for certain coal miners retiring from the industry because of the flooding of Hebe Mine.

A Bill for an Act to amend the State laws to provide for the introduction of decimal currency.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Education Act, 1928-1964, to give additional financial assistance to non-Government schools.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Fisheries Act, 1905-1964, to increase penalties and to provide stricter control of crayfishing.

A Bill to establish a Housing Death Benefit Scheme to help families who are buying State Housing Commission homes when the breadwinner dies.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Housing Loan Guarantee Act, 1957-1962, so that the financial assistance now available for the purchase of new houses can be extended to houses that are not new.

A Bill for an Act to amend section 143 of the Land Act, 1933-1963, to prevent trafficking in conditional purchase leases until certain conditions have been complied with.

A Bill to repeal and re-enact the Married Persons (Summary Relief) Act, 1960, to establish a domestic relations Court to deal with domestic matters now handled by the Married Persons' Relief Court, and to handle maintenance and affiliation matters now dealt with by the Children's Court.

A Bill for an Act to enable the distribution of certain petroleum products in certain country areas to be subsidised.

A Bill for an Act to establish the State Tender Board of Western Australia as a body corporate with statutory powers.

A Bill for an Act to permit the subdivision of buildings into separate units or lots, and to permit titles to be granted in respect of each unit or lot.

I now declare this session of Parliament open and trust that Providence may bless your labours.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE**DENTISTRY***Number of Clinics and Government Policy on Extension*

The Hon. V. J. FERRY asked the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many dental clinics are established in this State, permanent or mobile units?
- (2) What is the Government's policy in respect of extending dental clinic services?

Private Practices in Country Areas

- (3) What assistance can be extended to dentists desiring to set up private practices in country areas?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied: The honourable member was good enough to give me some notice of this question, so I am able to advise him as follows:—

(1) Departmental:

- 3 clinics in the northern part of the State.
- 12 school dental service caravans.

Perth Dental Hospital:

- 6 clinics.
- 3 road mobile clinics.
- 2 aerodental clinics.

- (2) The Government is concentrating on the development of mobile clinics in country districts and remote areas of the State where there are no available dental services, dependent, however, on the availability of necessary finance and staff.
- (3) There is an arrangement by which shire councils will construct surgeries and provide equipment. The Government will financially assist in providing the equipment and will consider joining with shire councils in a guarantee of a dentist's income.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL*Leave to Introduce*

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [3.48 p.m.]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Mining Act, 1904-1964.

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **The Hon. A. F. Griffith** (Minister for Mines), and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH*Distribution of Copies*

THE PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) [3.49 p.m.]: For the sake of accuracy, I have obtained from His Excellency the Governor copies of the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament. These will be distributed amongst members.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIRST DAY*Motion*

THE HON. E. C. HOUSE (South) [3.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver:—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament 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 am very conscious of the honour that has been given to me today of moving the Address-in-Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia. I am a firm believer that our Sovereign's representative should be an Englishman, for I feel this is one practical way in which we can draw closer the bonds which unite our British Commonwealth.

South Vietnam, and the fact that Australian soldiers are once again fighting on foreign shores, expresses the paramount need for such unity. Our ties with Great Britain have always been strong. Her investments, the quality of her products, and the fairness of her dealings, have been a great aid to the development of this country. We must hope that our link with Great Britain will not be weakened as other countries seek investment in Western Australia, or as new trade links are forged with countries closer to us.

No doubt our leanings towards Great Britain spring from the fact that most of us are descended from British stock. But there is a danger that the traditions and relationships which hold the two countries so closely together will diminish with each succeeding generation. In order to counteract this, a strong flow of British migrants and British capital to this country is essential. The future character of Australia will depend on the quality of its migrants. The courage of Britain in the defence of democracy is an example to all freedom-loving nations. We need these people; we need their skills in industry and on the land.

His Excellency made reference to the release of new areas of land for development. It is good news that the War Service Land Settlement Board has had a reprieve and will hold office for another 12 months. The board has been an unqualified success through expert planning and administration, though it probably has not received the recognition it fully deserves. It has been a triumph for the Department of Agriculture, which accepted the challenge, and which, with scientific experiments, brought into production land that had never been successfully farmed before. The way to develop millions of acres of light land that might have stayed dormant for many years was shown to established farmers.

The total Commonwealth expenditure was £40,000,000. Of this, £23,000,000 was spent in clearing and developing 2,000,000 acres. To date, in round figures, £16,500,000 of the principal loan moneys has been repaid by the surplus, together with £1,500,000 in interest and £1,500,000 in rentals. The money which made these farms possible has been put to good use, and the gross value of cereals, wool, meat, butterfat, etc., is approximately £8,000,000 a year.

There are vast areas left to develop, and the War Service Land Settlement Board, with this experience, could play a big part in establishing a civilian land settlement scheme. If £7,000 could be made available to each of a group of 10 to 15 farmers as a pilot scheme, the loan to be written into the purchase price of the land and repayable over a period of years, it would allow additional borrowing by the settlers through other avenues for extra development. This would mean the provision of certain structural necessities and 500 acres fully developed. The work could be carried out by bulk contract over the group of farms before the settlers were allowed on to the land. It would be similar to the war service scheme, but on a smaller scale. An area of 500 acres would ensure against undue hardship and provide income to develop the remainder of the block. This would be a gilt-edged security, because of the keen demand for land.

Should this prove successful, an approach could be made to the Commonwealth Government in the interests of national development and progress for, say, £5,000,000 through the Commonwealth Development Bank. This is not an unduly large sum on present standards, and it would help to establish 700 to 1,000 farms. The benefit to the State and the nation would be immense; and the war service scheme has proved the economics of the suggestion.

Decentralisation is a word that is frequently used, or misused. Many think of it as some magical process following the development of big industry. But in reality the most we could hope for is to encourage

our population to spread as much as possible so that the city and country may grow in better proportion by the provision of amenities and lower freight rates. Small industries would naturally follow. One of the greatest aids to decentralisation is the extension of the activities of the State Electricity Commission to as many country towns as possible, and as quickly as possible.

Country towns begin rapid expansion the moment they are connected to the S.E.C. It provides bigger and better amenities which help to prevent the drift of people to the cities. Cheap electricity is becoming more of a necessity for country areas, towns, and farms, because of increased mechanisation, and because the shortage of labour remains acute.

Shire councils are faced with heavy loan repayments and, to supply current and support those loans, have to charge prices ranging from 1s. 1d. to 1s. 3d. and in extreme cases, 2s. per unit, making the operation of many electrical appliances prohibitive.

The State Electricity Commission has made a valiant effort to meet the demand for country extensions; and not many people realise the economic problems that are involved. In the past five years, 28 country towns have been connected, and power has been made available to 3,050 farms. It is unfortunate that the present main lines will not allow further expansion to the northern and eastern wheatbelts and the southern areas; and before these towns can be connected an extensive 132,000 volt transmission system with substations is urgently needed for towns and farms beyond the present extension.

The 60,000 kilowatt generator at Muja station, mentioned by His Excellency, has now come into operation, and three more similar units are to be installed during the next four years. These will provide sufficient power for industry and eastern areas; and extensions will only be restricted by the availability of capital and skilled labour. It is doubtful if there is a full appreciation of this urgent need; and every effort should be directed towards finding the capital and the labour needed for this project.

His Excellency mentioned an important question exercising the minds of many people at this time; and I refer to a central traffic control. I do not wish to provoke any quarrels, but would like to say that one must have doubts that central control in Western Australia will be any more successful than in the Eastern States. New Zealand and Western Australia, both under shire council control, have a low country accident rate in comparison with the central police control in the Eastern States. In 1963, Auckland, a town comparable with Perth in size, population, and

car numbers, had 846 accidents for 15 fatal accidents. In that year, Perth had 1,095 accidents for 109 fatal accidents.

The appointment of a committee to investigate traffic problems is a sound move, and we must congratulate Cabinet for bringing this about. It should clear up a lot of misunderstanding, and it could lead to a more uniform standard by shire councils, which, at the present moment, are restricted by legislation to the amount they can spend on traffic; that is, to the base year of 1958-59. Inspectors' appointments are not on a State basis, as the authority of a shire inspector ceases at the shire boundary. Taking into account the vast road system of Western Australia and the difficulties which confront either the police or the shires in effective supervision, and comparing those difficulties with what obtains in the compact metropolitan network, it reflects great credit on the shire councils' appreciation of their responsibilities.

It is because of these facts that shire councils are resentful of the inference that their administration is the cause of country accidents. It would be equally ridiculous to say that poor control by the police is responsible for the high accident rate in the city. Let the shire councils and the police co-operate in a concerted effort to keep the high road toll within bounds.

Before I conclude I would like to refer to the great development which is taking place in the north of this vast State, particularly the Ord River scheme, which all Western Australians are anxious to see taken to a successful conclusion. A foundation stone has been laid which will, as time goes by, develop into a tremendous, thriving project and cause future generations to look back on it much as we look back on the goldfields water scheme—a courageous long-sighted engineering feat which has led to the comprehensive water scheme. The value of the Ord to the beef industry in the Kimberley area could be immense, especially in drought years; and the regeneration of badly denuded areas from erosion will be of national benefit.

The danger of soil erosion over the whole of Western Australia is serious. Once-thriving areas of the world which are now arid should serve as a constant reminder that we cannot overstock our land, and that we must protect our trees and natural vegetation. If we forget these things we will be squandering our national asset, the soil, and become a poor nation, instead of a rich one supporting millions of people. All avenues of water conservation must be explored from the Ord River south.

Some idea of our water needs can be gauged by the new Muja power station, which requires 2,400,000 gallons of water per hour. Much of this will be recirculated,

but 40,000 gallons per hour will be lost in evaporation. It takes 65,000 gallons of water to produce one ton of steel. If we take into account all the major projects planned, even without the domestic requirements of an ever-increasing population, we can see that water conservation will be one of our most necessary and costly needs. Australia, with an average of 16.5 inches of rain, as against a general average of 26.5 inches, is the driest continent in the world.

Finance is the key to most of the projects I have mentioned, and it is always difficult to find sufficient to adequately service the dreams of our ideals. We must guard every pound jealously, making it do its full share, and not wasting it on bad planning or bad workmanship. We should consolidate on our expansion and make sure there is sufficient finance forthcoming to service the necessities that go with development.

In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of all parties, who have been most generous in their willingness to assist in every way to make the new members welcome; and to all officers and their staff I extend my thanks for their consideration and guidance. It speaks well for the spirit that exists in this Parliament.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West)
[4.11 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. F. J. S. Wise (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 4.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 29th July, 1965

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