

Tourist activity continues to grow and will be further expanded when it is possible to provide additional accommodation.

The Royal Commission appointed to report on a Bill to consolidate the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act has made good progress and will submit its findings at an early date.

A Bill will be introduced to empower local authorities to establish a reserve fund to invest and accumulate funds realised from the sale of capital assets.

The maintenance of satisfactory industrial relations between employers and employees continues to receive the constant attention of Ministers. The appointment of a Conciliation Commissioner has enabled the work of the Arbitration Court to be brought up to date.

The administration of price control by close collaboration between the State Governments has prevented unjustified price rises in many commodities. While my Ministers desire to discontinue the regulation of prices wherever this can be done without detriment to the consumer, it will be necessary in the public interest to continue price control for the time being and legislation for this purpose will be placed before you.

With the constantly expanding development of the State and increasing demands upon the time of Ministers, it is felt that the number of Ministers should be increased from eight to ten and an amendment to the Constitution Act for this purpose will be placed before you for consideration.

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 took the Chair.]

#### **BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.**

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** 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 Section 65 of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

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

**THE PRESIDENT:** For the sake of greater 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 among hon. members.

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

*First Day.*

**HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [3.35]:** 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 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."

In his Speech, His Excellency mentioned the late Hon. C. F. Baxter, who was a member of this House, and pointed out that he was a great loss to this Chamber, in which he had given many years of service. I would like also to couple in this vein the remark that, in his retirement, we have lost the services of Hon. A. Thomson. It is indeed fitting that these two gentlemen, after serving their country for so long, should have their sons elected to occupy seats in this House. I think that is an extremely fine tribute to the work those gentlemen did and indicates the esteem in which they were held by their electors.

It is certainly most distressing, Mr. President, that the opening day of this Parliament should see the world experiencing such troublous times. In his Speech, His Excellency remarked that the Government had promised the Commonwealth every assistance necessary in carrying out the duties attached to the government of this country and its obligations to the United Nations Organisation. We have already Air Force and Naval personnel serving in Korea, and only in this morning's press it was announced that ground troops would be supplied. It is indeed regrettable that we should have this circumstance confronting us so soon after the completion of one war. Unfortunately, it seems that it is the only way that we can restore peace in the world, and I feel proud that this State and the Commonwealth of Australia have supported and honoured their obligations to the United Nations Organisation.

His Excellency mentioned quite a number of matters the Government intends proceeding with and some legislation which it proposes to bring before Parliament this session, the chief of which, I think one can say, concern water supply, education and hospitalisation. Those undertakings, affect all the people throughout the State. He did mention that the Fisheries Department was given consideration, together with mining and forestry. We are pleased to know that those matters are receiving the attention of the Government.

I propose to confine my remarks to those subjects that affect all of the people and to leave aside minor subjects; that is, minor as compared with the three phases I have mentioned. The installation of the comprehensive water scheme, which is now in progress, has been held up for some time due to lack of materials. His Excellency has told us, however, that materials are now being forwarded from oversea. It is gratifying to know that this scheme is going ahead and will eventually serve a large portion of the State.

The Speech indicated that several key dams have been constructed in the agricultural areas, and that this work will be continued. As a representative of the people in the northern agricultural areas, I feel that we should receive greater consideration in the matter of water supplies for that extensive part of the State. We are looking forward to the time—and hope it will not be too long—when a definite and comprehensive water scheme will be undertaken for those districts. During the last 12 months, a survey has been made and good water is available, but it is a matter of pumping it to that part of the State. We realise that while the existing shortage of materials continues, there is not much chance of our getting a scheme quickly, but we ask that the Government should consider our claim and provide a comprehensive scheme as early as possible.

I wish to make light reference to education, not that I consider it a light matter, but there is need for improvement of educational facilities throughout the State. During the last three years, the Government has done a considerable amount of work in the way of erecting new buildings and renovating existing schools, so that throughout the country the facilities are much better than they were years ago. His Excellency mentioned that a record sum had been expended on education last year and it is pleasing to know that the education of the children, particularly in the outback areas, is receiving increased attention.

I have a suggestion to offer the Government that might be of benefit. It is that a mobile unit should be provided to visit the smaller schools and introduce domestic science and manual training courses. I think the idea is worthy of consideration. We look to the time when the children of the country will be able to pass from the primary schools into the high schools in the larger centres.

Hospitalisation is a subject that has been exercising the minds of all the people, particularly since the war years. It is pleasing to know that the Government intends to build three regional hospitals—one at Albany, one at Bunbury and one at Geraldton. Extensions have been made to various hospitals throughout the State.

The only comment I wish to make on this subject is that we in the northern part of the State feel that such wide areas are entitled to greater consideration and that one regional hospital should be built there. We hope that the present and succeeding Governments will bear in mind that, if we are going to develop those areas, we must provide the people with the facilities they need and that adequate hospitalisation must be readily available to them in the country and so obviate the need for their coming to the city for treatment.

Let me now touch upon what I consider is one of the most important needs of the State. Someone has suggested meat. That might apply to the Goldfields, but I have in mind the agricultural industry. Of all the wealth produced throughout the length and breadth of the State, 90 per cent. comes from the soil. It is true that the products of mining also come from the soil, but I am referring to agriculture. On account of the importance of this industry, I claim that the Department of Agriculture should be raised from the lowly position it has occupied throughout the years to that of "the" department of Western Australia.

All Governments over the last 25 years have shown lack of foresight by not creating a department such as was warranted by the development of the industry. Such a department as I advocate should result in more work being done on an economic basis. Too long have we left people to go out into new areas and grope about without knowing whether produce could be raised there or not. They have had to experiment and expend their money, and many are the disillusioned people who have thus been broken in health and in every other way. I consider that the Government should give early consideration to building up this department to the important status it deserves.

The only way in which this can be done, in my opinion, is by placing a Minister in charge and making agriculture his sole responsibility. If we are going to build the department in size and staffing, we must make it attractive for men to join. In this department, I would include the Soil Conservation Committee. Over the years, some of our most able men—men born and bred in the State, men who have gained their degrees at our University—have joined the department only to leave because greater remuneration was offered them in other States or oversea. Thus we lost the services of good men who understood the problems of agriculture in this State. This should never have happened, and Governments over the last 25 years have been lax in allowing it to happen.

Endeavours should be exerted to build up the department by making the remuneration of officers commensurate with the work, so that this loss of staff shall not continue. We should even offer sufficient remuneration to attract good men from other parts of the world, particularly to deal with soil conservation. We are fortunate indeed that soil erosion has not been so serious in this State as it has been in America, China and other countries where millions of tons of soil have been lost through this cause. I recall having read that 10 to 20 per cent. of the topsoil—that is, the fertile soil that produces the food we eat—has been washed into the sea. So I consider that if we spent £1,000,000 in setting up a department with the men and machinery necessary to conserve the topsoil in Western Australia, we would be justified.

I have been told that the honour that has been bestowed on me today is one I should not abuse, and that people like to have their afternoon tea. As it is now afternoon tea time I shall conclude my remarks, and have much pleasure in submitting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

**HON. H. K. WATSON** (Metropolitan): I formally second the motion.

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

*House adjourned at 3.53 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 27th July, 1950.

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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 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.

### 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 His Majesty the King.

The Clerk produced election writs showing the return of 50 members.

All the members elected, with the exception of Mr. Needham, 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** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray): The House being duly constituted I move—

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