

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 16th August, 1977

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### HANSARD

#### *Availability*

**THE PRESIDENT** (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): Members may have noticed that their copies of the last two volumes of *Hansard* have not arrived. I wish to advise that the Government Printing Office has installed a new printing device which is operated by a computer; and, as apparently frequently occurs with computers, something has gone wrong. The Government Printer expresses his sincere apologies for the inability to have *Hansard* Nos. 2 and 3 ready but he has assured me we should have both volumes at this time tomorrow.

### QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FOURTH DAY

#### *Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 4th August, on the following motion moved by the Hon. R. G. Pike—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

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.

**THE HON. W. M. PIESSE** (Lower Central) [4.58 p.m.]: Mr President, I address myself to the House for the first time with a sense of duty and of high responsibility, and with a sense of obligation to the traditions of services which have been so faithfully observed by those who have preceded me as the representatives of Lower Central Province.

I thank the electors, who supported me on the 19th of February last. I am well aware of the fact that it is my responsibility to represent all the electors of the Lower Central Province.

I take this opportunity of extending my

congratulations to you, Mr President, on your appointment to the high office you now hold. I am aware of the great esteem in which you are held by your colleagues of long-standing, and in the short time it has been my pleasure to know you I can understand why this is so. I trust your term of office will be both stimulating and rewarding for you.

I congratulate the Leader of the House and his fellow Ministers, and also the Leader of the Opposition.

I wish to thank honourable members, both old and new, and the officers and members of the House staff, who have assisted me in so many ways and with such kindness since I was elected to the House.

I take this opportunity also to pay tribute to my predecessor, the Hon. T. O. Perry, who did not seek re-election because of ill-health. Tom Perry worked very hard to understand the needs of the people whom he represented. That understanding, coupled with his sincerity of purpose, often forced him to take the less popular decision, which is not an easy thing to do. I wish him a long and enjoyable retirement.

It is with pleasure that I take my place in the House, and I do so in the full knowledge of my responsibility as a member of the Legislative Council, as the first National Country Party woman member of State Parliament, and as the first woman member of a family which has been associated with the representation of a province since the late C. A. Piesse was elected as a member for South-East Province in 1894.

It goes without saying that many changes have taken place in this State since 1894. However, in studying the history of our early development and the ambitions and disappointments of our pioneers, two things clearly stand out.

One is the courage and determination with which they set about spreading the population throughout the length and breadth of this great State. They worked hard and for long hours under harsh conditions, laying the foundations for the material comforts of today and the far easier circumstances which we now enjoy. Their labours would have been in vain were it not so.

The other factor which shines through the early history of this State is the reason for their efforts—the underlying vision which those early pioneers cherished. That vision, Mr President, was not just to make a quick quid, or should I say a fast buck; not just to gather more creature comforts about themselves. The vision was for the future generations who would follow.

Our pioneers found great satisfaction in their



individual efforts in the shaping of our inheritance. There are times when it seems to me that we have lost that vision. There are times when it seems to me that we have forgotten that the greatest responsibility of any civilization is in the care and the training of its young. In this we must ensure that the foundations already put down for the quality of life must be continued for the benefit of the next generation.

Maybe the goals were easier to identify a generation or two ago when our forebears were engaged in opening up and developing this country of ours. We have progressed far during the intervening years. If we believe that there are no further advances to be made and that we have reached the ultimate, then we have indeed lost the vision.

We have a great responsibility in preparing our children for life. We must give them the incentive to progress. We must encourage them to work on the traditions of their forebears; and to lift their thoughts beyond the immediate future. We must give them the vision splendid.

I was greatly impressed by His Excellency Sir Wallace Kyle who, when opening Parliament, placed stress on the importance of education and particularly on the early childhood branch. It is fairly well known that much harm can be done to the expanding mind of a child if that child is pushed too soon into a formal school situation. Yet, because of our much wider knowledge of child development, we know that much can be done in early childhood to assist the development of confident and well-balanced citizens. This is a very specialised field and I am pleased to see it is being recognised as such.

There are a great many areas within the broad spectrum of education which require close attention. It is not my intention at this stage to elaborate on the specific areas, other than to comment on one or two aspects of concern.

At the present time there are very limited opportunities for country children to obtain an understanding of music. I feel the resources of the department should be utilised at least to bring courses for musical appreciation to classes at all levels. In today's conditions, when life is but a mirage for many young people, an affection for music could well open up a broader avenue of diversion for them.

Another area of education which I would like to see expanded in country areas is technical education. It is true that in most instances people wishing to acquire technical skills have to travel to the metropolitan area, and once having travelled there it is very difficult for them to

return. Others who are already working in country areas find it very difficult to locate a venue at which they can study and improve their skills. Many country towns are in need of a variety of skilled technicians, and it is my hope that planning for expansion of technical education in country areas will be done on a more practical basis.

Referring again to the Speech of His Excellency, I commend the Government on its establishment of a water resources council. The people of Western Australia are most conscious of our vulnerable position in relation to water supplies.

I am concerned that, despite everything, in a normal winter millions of gallons of water escape to the sea. I would suggest we should find better ways of increasing our capacity to conserve water where it falls on the land. I hope, also, that the Water Resources Council will give attention to the recycling of the vast quantities of water now lost in the metropolitan area.

People in country areas still tend to regard scheme water and electricity in the category of luxury items. On the other hand, communications and transport are essential in their life patterns. Costs of the former are prohibitive, and freight charges can almost be described as punitive. The greatest problem confronting country people is the high level of freight costs. Western Australia depends very largely on primary production, yet it calls on the producer to meet freight costs both ways.

Mr President, I am thinking not only of farmers. The greatest handicap imposed upon the small businessman in a country region is the high cost of freights. It is in-built into the high cost of living in the country. If we are going to keep people in the country—and we agree that we must—then we must make living in the country attractive. We must make it possible for the small man who wishes to remain so, to continue in his chosen lifestyle.

Serious consideration must be given to practical support for our decentralisation policies by the introduction of a system of freight equalisation. It is part and parcel of decentralisation programmes in other countries, such as South Africa, and I say this on good authority as it is only a few years since I visited that country and was told that was part of that country's policy. It should not be beyond our resources to subsidise freight, particularly on consumer goods.

We seem to be reversing the endeavours of our State pioneers. They pushed transport lines out in all directions to facilitate the development of the



country and the spread of the population. Now we are contracting and withdrawing those facilities.

Communication in sparsely populated areas is a matter of tremendous importance. Greatly improved telecommunications have been developed, but the cost is such that they cannot be afforded by people in isolated areas.

Mail services costing 18 times as much as they did in 1900 are delayed in some areas because the offices once established there to receive mail have now been closed.

I acknowledge I am intruding into a Federal field, but I am concerned that the dramatic advances which have been made are washing over so many country people.

The matters of which I have spoken are of concern to our whole State. Briefly, I would like now to mention some matters concerning Lower Central Province. One of the problems confronting some areas within the Lower Central Province is the loss of population. In Warren, for example, a contributing factor is that much farm land has been purchased by the Forests Department and planted to softwoods. The circumstances behind this were that rising costs forced many off the land and they welcomed the opportunity to sell out to the Forests Department which, I must add, made the purchases on a very fair basis.

However, there has been an unfortunate snowballing effect. Those still remaining on their properties are becoming more and more isolated, a factor which in itself could well hasten their own departure from the land.

The communities are thinning out and there is a loss of revenue for local government authorities; and, in turn, services are becoming more difficult and more expensive to provide. The swelling burden of diminishing population and an increasing level of costs can only be alleviated by a Government.

I believe there are a number of ways in which a Government can assist. One is by allocating grant moneys to local shires, which have been disadvantaged in the way I have mentioned. However, it would be rather difficult for shires to budget on this unless they have had notice sufficiently in advance to allow them to do so.

Another way that a Government could assist these shires is by encouraging industry within those areas; and surely there must be a potential for forest-associated enterprises, particularly in places like Kirup, Donnybrook, or even Nannup.

The encouragement of industry is a long-term project, of course, but an immediate fillip could

be given to local shires by the Government paying normal rating on Forests Department land under softwood production. I realise this suggestion may be viewed as something of a heresy, but the land of which I speak previously paid rates to local government and is now being utilised for a commercial venture. This places it in a different category from virgin forest or national park land.

I applaud the Government on its action in assisting fruit growers to undertake a replanting programme designed to produce canning varieties of stone fruits for the Manjimup factory, and I congratulate the Manjimup factory on the quality of its products. I have consumed and enjoyed the Manjimup products frequently and I hope other members have given similar support to these products.

In the lower area of Warren, we have some quite unique areas to further tourism, but unfortunately we lack some very necessary facilities, one of which is a reliable, clean water supply in the Pemberton area. Caravans in increasing numbers from the Eastern States are bringing tourists to the trout hatchery, and I believe we have a potential for a great deal more development in the tourist industry down in that area.

In the Collie area, a problem has been created by a lack of foresight resulting in the under-capacity of water storage and increasing salinity. I am in full support of the moratorium imposed by the Government on further clearing in the water catchment area.

An undertaking for the payment of compensation has been given in instances where the restriction has resulted in hardship. However, I consider the Government should offer to buy back undeveloped land at a reasonable price, which a property owner cannot now develop. This would relieve some people of the state of suspense in which they find themselves because of the moratorium on clearing.

Collie has the potential for steady, continuing development in the coal and alumina industries.

The eastern side of Lower Central Province is well known for its production of stud stock, high quality wool, meat and grains. Fortunately, this area of the State has now passed through the drought conditions experienced by the remainder of the State. In Wagin, we have the Pederick Engineering Works, which is the largest private enterprise of this type outside the metropolitan area. It attracted a completely new manufacturing industry to the area; but, here again, the facilities which these works fostered in the area have now been lost, as that new industry



eventually had to move to the metropolitan area because of freight costs and communication problems.

Finally, Mr President, may I say I am mindful of the limitations on the public purse, and it will be my aim to ensure that Government expenditure of a supportive nature be so allocated as to bring the best results for the people of Western Australia.

I thank you, Mr President, and honourable members for your indulgence during this brief address. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**THE HON. G. E. MASTERS** (West) [5.14 p.m.]: I rise for the first time this session to congratulate you, Mr President, on your appointment to the high office of President of the House. It is a position I am sure you will hold with great distinction and impartiality, and I am certain you will enjoy it. We shall miss your contributions; however, I am sure your sense of humour will not be lost while you sit in the President's Chair. My congratulations go also to the new Leader of the Government, the Hon. Graham MacKinnon, to the Hon. David Wordsworth on his election to the Cabinet as Minister for Transport, and to the Hon. Ian Medcalf on his appointment as Attorney-General.

Further, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Des Dans for again being appointed to lead the Opposition in this House. I congratulate the Hon. Robert Hetherington who has gained a position on the front bench at his first entry into Parliament. I am sure we will hear a great deal from him.

It is with sadness that we saw a number of members retire and particularly I would like to mention my former colleague, the Hon. Roy Abbey. Roy Abbey served for many years in this House. Although he was quiet, and possibly did not speak often, he was a very sincere and genuine man. It was my privilege to serve with him and to have him as my co-representative of the West Province.

I would like to mention again the Hon. Jack Heitman. I extend my sincere condolences to his wife and his family. The Hon. Margaret McAleer ably expressed the thoughts of all members in relation to our former colleague, and I completely endorse her remarks.

I would like to congratulate the new members in this House, and in particular, my new colleague, the Hon. Neil Oliver, who will be serving with me for many years to come. We both intend to stay here for a long time. In the main the other new members are members of the Liberal Party and the National Country Party

who were swept into this House on a crest of anti-socialist fervour throughout this State, and indeed throughout the country.

**The Hon. Lyla Elliott:** Fixed boundaries!

**The Hon. G. E. MASTERS:** At the last election the voters showed that the Liberal Party and the National Country Party were very popular, and we will continue to be popular for many years to come.

**The Hon. R. Thompson:** Why don't you acknowledge the rigged boundaries?

**The Hon. G. E. MASTERS:** There is no such thing. I know beyond any shadow of doubt that there are no rigged boundaries. If members opposite look at the results of the last election they will see that the Liberal Party and National Country Party candidates would have romped home whatever boundaries might have applied.

**The Hon. R. Thompson:** Of course the boundaries are rigged.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon:** He is casting aspersions on a judge.

**The Hon. G. E. MASTERS:** I am now sitting on a different side of the House. While I was sitting amongst the Opposition during the last session, interjections were often made very softly. Now that I am over here it is possible for the *Hansard* reporter to hear these interjections.

We have heard the word "conservative" used in this House on a number of occasions in the last week. I am a Liberal, and proud of it. If, by standing as a Liberal member and by attempting to uphold the traditions of this House as well as the freedoms and rights of the individuals in this State I am labelled a conservative, I am quite happy to accept the tag. Members opposite may do that as frequently as they like.

In the past Opposition members have squirmed under the term "socialist". Mr Hetherington now states he is a democratic socialist. This is an interesting new label and no doubt we will hear those words very often in the future.

Needless to say, Opposition members are obviously left-wingers, otherwise they would not hold their positions and operate as puppets of Trades Hall. As long as we realise the true situation, we will not be misled by anything they say. I do not want to be controversial tonight, so I intend to dwell on a subject that affects my electorate, and particularly, some of the businessmen in my electorate. It affects also members of the trade union movement and members of the public. I refer to the dispute