

NEW SOUTH WALES.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

THIRTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 23 July, 1941.

Opening of Parliament—Administration of Oath—Leave of Absence—Temporary Chairmen of Committees—Legislative Council Vacancy (Writ for Election)—Law of Evidence Bill (*formal*)—Governor's Speech: Address-in-Reply—Special Adjournment.

In the absence of the President, the Deputy-President took the chair at noon.

The opening prayer was read.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Clerk of the Parliaments read the Proclamation convening Parliament.

His Excellency the Governor entered the Chamber, and was received by the Deputy-President, accompanied by other members and officers of the House. A message was forwarded to the Legislative Assembly that his Excellency awaited the attendance of hon. members of that House.

The Assembly having come, his Excellency was pleased to deliver the following speech:—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

In calling you together for the Second Session of the Present Parliament, I am deeply conscious of the heavy responsibility which rests upon

you in these critical times for the right fulfilment of your important duty to legislate for the present and future benefit of the citizens of New South Wales.

Your task is twofold: to ensure that the war effort in this State rises to the utmost of which we are capable, and, at the same time, to enact such measures as may, without weakening the war effort, improve the present lot of the people of New South Wales and contribute to the building of a better social order when this tragic struggle shall be over. You will have to show that a real and virile democracy can fight victoriously against the retrograde social theories, and the brutally destructive practice of Nazism, and still continue its march along the road of social progress.

Australia—and New South Wales as part of Australia—has shown emphatically that she realizes intensely the vital issues involved. As in 1914, so in 1939 the call to arms brought an immediate response. The new Anzacs have already earned battle honours which will be forever part of the National heritage. And just as in 1914-18 common suffering and loss led to a larger sympathy with the people of Great Britain and the other Dominions, so now the sadness that has already fallen on so many Australian homes will bring us closer to

the heroic people of the Mother country who are facing ghastly perils with that indomitable spirit which is of the very essence of the whole Empire's tradition.

In the factories and on the land, Australian men and women are fighting as strongly for the right of the peoples of the world to live according to their own lights as are their fellow-countrymen overseas. It is the responsibility of each one of us to support those efforts to the utmost extent of which we are capable.

While the Commonwealth Government is charged with the responsibility for the defence of Australia; my advisers feel strongly that New South Wales should not only collaborate, but should play an active and a prominent role in furthering the war effort to the fullest possible extent.

In pursuance of this policy, one of the earliest steps taken by my Ministers, after assuming office, was the constitution of the State War Effort Co-ordination Committee. Although it has been in existence only a short time, this body has achieved valuable results in many fields. It has organised the full resources of the State Government, so that they may be available to the Commonwealth for the prosecution of the war; it has concerned itself with the provision of homes for munition workers, and has undertaken negotiations with the Commonwealth as a result of which my Ministers have agreed that New South Wales shall build and assume full financial responsibility for between 400 and 500 homes for munition workers in this State; it has undertaken services for the Federal authorities too numerous to mention at this moment; it has taken far-reaching steps to organise the production and distribution of charcoal so as to conserve petrol stocks and help maintain essential transport services; it is, in col-

laboration with the Shipbuilding Board, formulating the necessary plans to re-establish the shipbuilding industry in New South Wales; and, finally, it is in constant touch, through its executive officers, with the Commonwealth, exploring possibilities of increasing the New South Wales war effort. Suggestions made by the committee, at present under Commonwealth consideration, will, if adopted, augment still further, and to a very great degree, the production of munitions of war in New South Wales.

Having in mind their responsibility adequately to protect the people of this State against the dangers of possible enemy air-raids, my Ministers have acted promptly and vigorously to promote a complete and efficient organisation to safeguard the civilian population in the event of attack. An officer of the New South Wales Government has been recalled from London to give expert advice and assistance in A.R.P. organisation. His services will be made available to the Commonwealth Government.

So far as the war effort is concerned; much has been done in a little time; much more remains to be done. You will not fail to bring to the great task with which you are confronted all the determination and all the ability of which you are capable; in addition to an inextinguishable faith in final victory.

Nor will you approach in any lesser spirit the duty of bringing to the people of New South Wales such measures of domestic reform as may be possible at such an abnormal time as the present.

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

You will be asked early in the session to consider the Budget for the present financial year and financial taxation measures associated with the Budget.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

During this session, my Ministers propose to introduce various important measures designed to give effect to their policy as put to the people of New South Wales and approved by a majority of them at the general elections.

A Housing Bill to authorise the setting up of a Housing Commission to co-ordinate and supervise all housing activities throughout the State will be placed before you. The need, in New South Wales, for vigorous action to overcome our housing shortage and to provide all our people with adequate and healthy homes has long been evident. The proposed Housing Commission, in addition to giving its attention to the housing of munition workers, already referred to, will be responsible for completing a survey of housing requirements throughout the State, for preparing a long-term programme of slum clearance and housing, and for carrying out such other housing activities for which loan funds may be made available.

You will be asked to consider a bill to provide a pension scheme, on the lines suggested by the Royal Commission, for workers engaged in coal and shale mines.

Other industrial measures to be submitted to you will include a Workers' Compensation Bill, to revise entirely the basis of the present Act and to bring it into line with modern requirements, and a bill to provide for the establishment of a Factory Welfare Board charged with the responsibility of promoting the well-being, health and safety of workers engaged in industry.

Measures designed to protect the people against exploitation by unscrupulous individuals or bodies will be submitted to you. They will include a bill

to amend the Moneylenders and Infants Loans Act, to provide for the licensing of moneylenders, to give the court wider powers to deal with harsh transactions and to afford greater protection to the borrower, and a bill to protect persons entering into hire-purchase agreements.

My Ministers are desirous of giving full powers to the Government Insurance Office, and a bill to give effect to this policy will be submitted to you.

Other general measures you will be asked to consider in the first part of the present Session will include a bill to provide for compulsory third party insurance of motor vehicles; a bill to extend the Local Government and City Council Electoral Franchise; an amendment of the Co-operation Act to increase the limit under the Indemnity Provisions of the Act from £900 to £1,000; a bill to amend the Supreme Court and Circuit Courts Act; a bill to amend the Liquor Act; a Technical Education Bill; and a bill to fix the maximum trading hours for petrol-filling stations and garages.

My advisers feel that urgent attention must be paid to the State's rural problems, and, with this in mind, will place before you, early in the Session, several bills designed to carry out sections of their rural policy. Bills relating to settlers' debts which you will be asked to consider will include a Farmers' Relief Amendment Bill to reconstitute the Rural Reconstruction Board so as to provide equal representation to farmers and creditors; to omit the provisions of the Act relating to disclaimers, and to provide for a measure of compulsory debts adjustment. An amendment of the Crown Lands Act will also be submitted to you to provide powers for the waiving of postponed and funded debts and arrears of Crown dues and

to provide for the conversion of settlement and group purchases into leasehold tenure.

A Western Lands Amendment Bill, designed to provide for the immediate withdrawal of the whole of the areas noted for withdrawal in 1943 and 1948 from large leases in the Western Division, and to provide for the resumption of the best of the large holdings in the Western Division which have only a short time to run, will be introduced. My Ministers have in mind that sections of this land will provide for the settlement of men at present in the armed forces.

A War Service Land Settlement Bill, the purpose of which will be to reserve further suitable areas for men now serving overseas, will also be submitted to you.

You will be asked also to repeal the provisions of the Crown Lands Act which permit of the holding of irrigation lands substantially in excess of home maintenance standards and to consider proposals designed to assist in the administration of the irrigation areas.

An Agricultural Holdings Bill, to improve the conditions of tenant farmers throughout the State, will be put before you.

For the early part of the Session, my Ministers have concentrated on preparing those measures required to correct conditions demanding immediate rectification and which are capable of being placed before you without delay.

Other Bills of importance, in the preparation of which more time is necessary, will come before you later in the Session. These will include measures concerning food and marketing, which will cover reforms in the distribution and prices of such essential commodities as meat, milk, fish and fruit; a

Greater Sydney Bill; an Industrial Arbitration (Amendment) Bill; a Monopolies Bill; and Bills relating further to rural problems.

The Bills mentioned are those my Ministers are desirous of introducing in this Session of Parliament. Such are the times that it may be necessary that others to meet unforeseen emergencies may have to be submitted to you.

Whatever you may be called upon to consider, whatever the circumstances under which you may meet, you will, I know, maintain the highest traditions of British democratic Parliaments.

To-day, as never before, everything for which our Parliamentary system stands is being challenged. Here in New South Wales we must play our part as men in demonstrating that, whatever may be demanded, however black the outlook, Democratic Government is capable of matching might against aggressive might, while at the same time protecting and assisting the unfortunate, the underprivileged, and the helpless, who look to it for amelioration of their condition in the present and for concrete evidences of a wider social justice in the future.

I now leave you to the discharge of your important duties with the earnest prayer that under Divine guidance your labours may conduce to the welfare and happiness of all sections of the community.

The Assembly then withdrew.

[The Deputy-President left the chair at 12.25 p.m. The House resumed at 4.30 p.m.]

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT reported the receipt of a Commission empowering the Chairman of Committees, in the absence of the President, to administer the oath to new members.

Commission read by the Clerk.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT announced the receipt of communications from his Excellency the Governor intimating that leave of absence had been granted to the Hon. Sir John Peden, K.C.M.G., K.C., President, during the session of Parliament which commenced on 28th May, 1941, and to Major the Hon. Hector Joseph Richard Clayton during the session which commences on 23rd July, 1941.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT nominated the Hon. George Stacher Archer, the Hon. Frank William Spicer and Major the Hon. Thomas Steele to act as Temporary Chairmen of Committees during the present session of Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL: VACANCY.

WRIT FOR ELECTION.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT reported the receipt of a message from the Governor intimating that, with the advice of the Executive Council, he had issued a writ for the election of a member of the Legislative Council to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the Hon. Frank Edgar Wall, M.D.

Writ read by the Clerk.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT directed that the taking of the votes of members in the Legislative Council for the election of a member to the Council be set down as an Order of the Day for the day of the ballot appointed in the writ mentioned in his Excellency's message, namely the 13th day of August, 1941, and intimated that on such day the taking of votes would take precedence of all other business.

LAW OF EVIDENCE BILL (*formal*).

Bill presented and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT: I have received a copy of the Speech which his Excellency the Governor has made to both Houses of Parliament. Is it desired that the Speech should be read, or that members should take it as read?

Resolved, by consent, that the Speech be taken as read.

The Hon. A. W. McNAMARA [4.53]: I move:

That the following Address be presented by the whole House to the Governor, in reply to the Speech which his Excellency has been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament:

To his Excellency the Right Honourable JOHN DE VERE, BARON WAKEHURST, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Captain in the Reserve of Officers of the Territorial Army, Governor of the State of New South Wales and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

May it please Your Excellency,—

We, his Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our thanks for Your Excellency's Speech, and to assure you of our unfeigned attachment to his Most Gracious Majesty's Throne and Person.

2. We beg to assure your Excellency that our earnest consideration will be given to the measures to be submitted to us.

3. We join your Excellency in the hope that, under the guidance of Divine Providence, our labours may be so directed as to advance the best interests of all sections of the community.

The Speech of his Excellency is possibly unprecedented in the history of this Parliament. The Empire, of which this State is an integral part, is at war with ruthless nations on the continent of Europe. His Excellency's Speech was made on the advice of those who were recently given an unprecedented majority for the purpose of implementing a policy of defending Australia against attack and of conducting the war effort. The electors also gave the Government a mandate for social reform. It is the considered opinion of the Labour party that a policy of total war effort must go hand in hand with a policy of social

justice for those who make that effort possible. The House should remember that his Excellency's Speech was directed to legislation that is not only indicative of the Government's determination to make common cause with the Federal authority and other authorities whose work may be associated with the total war effort, but also to giving the people of New South Wales the measure of social justice and social reform that is essential for the fulfilment of its policy.

Much has been said of a "new order," and legislation is foreshadowed in his Excellency's Speech that will give effect to it. The House will agree that the Government is to be commended upon its action in taking the steps necessary to establish the State War Effort Co-ordination Committee for the purpose of regulating and co-ordinating the activities of the appropriate State and Commonwealth departments and thus ensure a total war effort in New South Wales. The Government's action will result in the elimination of overlapping. By the establishment of this committee the Government sought a means of enabling the State to do its utmost in the prosecution of the war. It desired to ensure that its efforts would not conflict with those of the Federal authority. The Government decided that the committee should work for a complete co-ordinated effort. His Excellency made specific reference to the committee's efforts to frame a policy of home construction for the people who are engaged in the munition industries. Hon. members must be aware that a total war effort can be secured in these days of mechanised warfare only if regard is had to the wellbeing of those who are engaged in the manufacture of the sinews of war. In the past there has been a complete disregard of the demand for homes by workers engaged in war activities. It is pleasing that the committee was able to make an arrangement with the State and Federal authorities that people engaged in war work in certain defined areas should enjoy a decent standard of living.

On its assumption of office, the Government was seriously concerned with the difficulties of transport that arose through the failure of the petrol cartel to provide adequate supplies of fuel for motor vehicles, and it applied itself with zeal to the provision of substitute fuels for those who depend on motor transport for carrying on their business and for the ordinary purposes of transport. While, at the present time, criticism is levelled at the Federal authority for its failure to provide adequate supplies of fuel for motor vehicles, at least it can be said that one of the first activities of the committee has resulted in the complete re-organisation of the production and disposal of charcoal. The Hon. Mr. Spicer suggests the difficulty of procuring it. Of course, no hon. member would expect to provide an adequate quantity of substitute fuel by waving a magic wand. This Government, which has established about 100 kilns in the forests of this State for the production of charcoal, and is proceeding towards the construction of hundreds more, is taking every necessary step towards the production of adequate supplies of substitute fuel at a reasonable cost. We feel that there is an obligation upon the Government to meet the needs of persons whose commercial activity is dependent upon supplies of suitable fuel.

The Government is giving very full consideration to the provision of ship-building facilities in this State. Both the remarks of the British Prime Minister and the conditions existing in our rural industries point to the inadequacy of our shipping tonnage. We have not enough ships to lift our primary crops. The rate of sinking is considerable, and it is the duty of State and Commonwealth Governments to speed up our tonnage replacement. The Government has already taken action in that direction. We feel that the Commonwealth authority ought to carry out to the full the obligations imposed upon it; nevertheless, we are willing to give full co-operation and to take effective action in assisting the Commonwealth Government.

Another matter mentioned by his Excellency this afternoon was the establishment of a housing commission. I have already referred to the substantial activity of the Government in dealing with the acute problem of housing war workers in certain parts of the State, where special location or special plant has brought about a considerable population influx. The Government established the housing commission to co-ordinate and to supervise all housing activities throughout the State. There is no need for me to emphasise the desirability of such a step. For many years hon. members in this House have heard housing policies enunciated. Promises have been made and committees established and reports presented to Parliament, but the undeniable fact remains that a large number of our citizens are still living in sub-standard houses. In some of our closely-settled areas families are living in houses that ought to have been declared untenable many years ago. We are all agreed that such a state of affairs ought not to exist in our country, and it behoves hon. members to assist in passing any legislation that will contribute to the well-being of our citizens in this matter. The decision of the Government to set up a committee and to implement its decisions by legislation ought to commend itself to all hon. members. It is pleasing to me that the Government recognises that concurrent with the call upon our nation to make a heavy contribution towards the preservation of democracy, there is a need for us to reaffirm the principles of social justice and to promote the happiness and content of our people by improving their standard of living.

His Excellency referred to the introduction of legislation to implement the suggestions of a Royal Commission in relation to a pensions scheme for workers engaged in coal and shale mines. During the regime of the last Government a Royal Commission was established to inquire into conditions in our coal mines and to report upon this matter of a pensions scheme. Appropriate legislation was not proceeded with by the Government before the election was

held, but it is the view of the present Government not only that this should be one of its earliest pieces of legislation, but also that the bill should have the concurrence of every hon. member in this House. I hope that when the Government has passed this legislation it will not look upon its job as fully done. I represent an organisation comprising some thousands of members, who hope to see some scheme akin to this established for them. We look to this Government to apply the same pension principle to other industrial workers. The reasons that actuated the Royal Commissioners to report favourably on a miners' pensions scheme would apply equally, I am sure, in regard to other industries.

I take this opportunity, as I come now to matters nearest to my own heart, of congratulating the Government upon its determination to revise the Workers' Compensation Act. During the last ten or twelve years I have never missed the opportunity to impress upon the Government the desirability of introducing legislation designed to give people engaged in the rock-chopping and sandstone industry of this State an equitable rate of pension. On numerous occasions I have in this House brought under the notice of the Government the frightful conditions under which the sandstone workers are employed. To-day they are denied a pension under the silicosis provisions of the Act because of certain statutory difficulties. It is, therefore, pleasing to me to read in the Governor's address that it is the intention of the Government to proceed with legislation designed, among other things, to give equity and justice to those people who are ruining their health in the sandstone industry. I hope that the legislation which is designed to amend the Workers' Compensation Act will improve materially the position relating to workmen's compensation cases as they exist to-day. In view of the reference in his Excellency's Speech, the House is entitled to look forward at an early

date to legislation that will remedy the anomalies which to-day exist in relation to the Workers' Compensation Act.

The Government intends to establish a Factory Welfare Board, and that proposal will commend itself to every hon. member. Notwithstanding our political differences, I think all hon. members recognise that the question of hygiene in industry and among factory workers is of paramount importance. Another proposal that should commend itself to hon. members is the introduction of a bill to amend the Money-lenders and Infants Loan Act. Any legislation that is designed to do justice to those people who, through economic circumstances, have been thrown into the hands of the money-lenders should receive our full support. Another welcome proposal is the introduction of third party insurance. The Government need have no heartburning in that respect, because the Minister for Transport in the previous Administration had signified his intention to introduce legislation to provide for compulsory third party insurance so as to bring our laws in that respect into conformity with those of our sister States. The Government also intends to amend the Supreme Court and Circuit Courts Act, and that proposal should receive no opposition.

The Government also intends to amend the Liquor Act. Whatever may be the opinion of hon. members generally of the Liquor Act, there must be absolute agreement that the time has arrived for a revision of the liquor laws of this State. Too long has liquor reform been delayed by what might be termed the "wowsersitic" element of the community, and the Government is deserving of every credit for its advocacy of liquor reform. The existing practice of 6 o'clock closing of hotel bars is a complete farce, as it only serves to penalise one section of the community, the very nature of whose employment entitles it to the privilege of a drink in an hotel after 6 o'clock. I, therefore, congratulate the Government upon its determination to deal with the question of liquor reform and to establish a committee for that purpose. Nearly every visitor to this

country makes caustic criticism of the stupidity of the liquor laws of this State, and on many occasions we have read in the press various statements by those who are called upon to administer the Liquor Act, in condemnation of its crazy and contradictory provisions.

The Government's proposal to introduce a Technical Education Bill should also meet with the approval of all hon. members. The present war has made it crystal clear that this country is in urgent need of complete technical training for its young citizens. Too long have our young people been induced to seek employment in unskilled industry. That position has, of course, been inevitable because of the fact that unskilled industries pay higher rates than those prescribed for apprentices. Therefore, any legislation that is designed to extend the opportunity for complete technical training to the most humble of our young citizens should receive every commendation at our hands. This war has shown that there is a complete insufficiency of skilled workers in most of our trades, due to the fact that the technical educational facilities of the State have not moved with the rapidity necessary to enable us to keep abreast of the development of our secondary industry and the consequent demand for skilled workers. We are, therefore, faced with the fact that a large army of our working people are unskilled. Fortunately, the position is improving to some extent because the Commonwealth Government and other authorities are introducing a system of semi-training so as to assist in our war effort.

The Government also proposes to introduce a bill to fix the maximum trading hours for petrol-filling stations and garages. That seems to be a very necessary action, particularly in view of the system of petrol rationing that has been introduced by the Federal authorities. The Government also proposes to introduce a scheme of compulsory debt adjustment. Such legislation would seem to break new ground and should commend itself to hon. members. In the past it has been the practice of the

Government to adopt the principle of the moratorium, but it is now proposed to pass special legislation to ease the financial difficulties of our settlers, and to prevent private persons from taking all that is available from the debtor, as has been done in so many cases in the past. Surely if the Crown waives its right to recover its due debts, it is right that private organisations should make a similar sacrifice. The proposed legislation is designed to relieve many people of their financial difficulties, and it has my support.

It is proposed to amend the Western Lands Act by providing for the withdrawal of the areas noted for withdrawal in 1943 and 1948 from large leases in the Western Division, and to provide for the resumption of the best of the large holdings in the Western Division which have only a short time to run. That is a step in the right direction. Frequently Western Lands legislation has been before the Parliament of this State. Certain leaseholders in the Western Division have had the terms of their leases extended over a number of years, and there is a large area in that part of the State suitable for settlement. At the present time thousands of young Australians are fighting for democracy on foreign battlefields. Those young men are fighting for their Australian heritage, and the new legislation is designed to make land in the Western Division available to them for settlement when they return from the war. That sort of legislation is necessary and is in keeping with the times. It is novel legislation, as it presupposes the creation of soldier farms. Hon. members will recollect that after the war of 1914-1918 many difficulties arose in connection with the settlement of returned soldiers on the land in New South Wales because no action had been taken to facilitate such settlement until the war had terminated. It is the Government's intention to pass this legislation almost immediately with the object of making available suitable land for returned soldier settlement.

It is further proposed to deal with our irrigation problems, and Parliament will be asked to repeal the provisions of the Crown Lands Act which permit of the holding of irrigation land substantially in excess of home maintenance standards. Hon. members will be asked to consider proposals designed to assist in the administration of the irrigation areas. The idea behind settlement in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area is to ensure home maintenance areas, to facilitate intensive culture, and to enable small farmers there to earn a reasonable living. One cannot help feeling that Leeton and Griffith, in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, are the two most progressive towns in the State. In both towns there always appears to be plenty of money, because, when one crop is finished, another crop comes on. In the Murrumbidgee Irrigation area the fruit crops are followed by the rice crop, and the crops are worth £500,000 a year. In that area, after the Washington navel orange crop has been marketed, another variety of orange is ready for market, and then there are the fat lamb industry and the canning industry. The object of the Government is to foster intensive cultivation in the area.

The Government also proposes to proceed with measures concerning the marketing, distribution, and prices of essential commodities, such as meat, fish, and milk. Such legislation is long overdue. Frequently one reads of the exorbitant prices that people have to pay for commodities essential to life. Continually the prices of green vegetables, milk, and other essential foods, are increased. The prices of these commodities should be maintained within the purchasing power of the people. Under present conditions the public are unable satisfactorily to invoke the aid of the Federal or the State courts in the matter of increased prices of essential commodities. The increased prices of essential foods are not reflected in the wages that the working man receives.

The Hon. H. M. WRAGGE: Could not that be done in conjunction with the Price Fixing Commission?

The Hon. A. W. McNAMARA: I do not know, but it is the intention of the Government to ensure that the prices of essential commodities are reasonable. If the Price Fixing Commission can get us out of the difficulty and ensure to the consumer a fair price and to the producer a fair return for his products, that may be all right, but it is necessary to ensure that the consumer is not exploited, and I am sure that so long as our object is achieved the Hon. Mr. Wragge will not mind what machinery is used. If the machinery of the Price Fixing Commission can do what is necessary I am sure the Government will not be slow to take advantage of it.

Other important legislation which the Government proposes to introduce deals with the creation of a Greater Sydney Council, and undoubtedly that measure will be the subject of much discussion, both in and out of Parliament. I feel that it will commend itself to hon. members, because it may prove the inaugural step in establishing a tribunal which, in association with other councils, will do away with the necessity for the State Parliament. Frequently the Hon. Mr. Concannon has referred to the necessity for the complete co-ordination of our governmental activities. The Greater Sydney bill, when passed, will enable machinery to be provided that will supplant work done by this Parliament. Hon. members should bear in mind that when the Australian colonies federated we were promised a sole Parliament, but that promise has not been consummated.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: That was never promised!

The Hon. A. W. McNAMARA: It was. A Greater Sydney Council may be the forerunner of the abolition of State Parliaments. If it achieves that I commend it to hon. members. I am pleased that, so early in its life, the Government intends to deal with the problem of industrial arbitration. It is a fact that industrial organisations in New South Wales are endeavouring to preserve harmony and keep the wheels

of industry turning, but their endeavours are thwarted by the unworkableness of the existing system of industrial arbitration. As an example, let me mention that my own organisation has had claims before the State Industrial Commission for upwards of two years, and can get no satisfaction. We are told through the press that strikes are disloyal, and that the solution of industrial problems is to be effected by the introduction of "streamlined" arbitration. Despite all that propaganda, it is a fact that it is impossible to obtain an expeditious determination of the many troubles that necessarily arise when men in industry are working almost to breaking point in an endeavour to promote the war effort to the utmost.

In his Speech, his Excellency the Governor has placed before hon. members a programme of legislation that is constructive in nature, one that will expedite and facilitate the war effort, help to promote peace in industry, and also one that will permit of our continuing to give our complete co-operation to the Federal Government in its war endeavours. That legislative programme will provide the means to regulate prices and to overcome difficulties arising as a result of our inability to obtain supplies of certain essential commodities. It is a programme designed to rectify many existing anomalies, one that should commend itself to hon. members generally.

The Hon. C. B. BRIDGES [5.33]: In seconding the motion so ably proposed by my colleague, the Hon. Mr. McNamara, I do not propose to traverse categorically all the subjects that are dealt with in his Excellency's Speech. It will be admitted by all who listened to the Hon. Mr. McNamara that he dealt with the various phases of the Government's contemplated legislative programme logically and comprehensively. It is not for me to explain the manner in which the Government will give effect to its programme, and I have no wish to burden the House with my personal opinions. I merely say that, as a member of a school of thought that supports

the Government, I shall be in my place loyally to give effect to its programme, always provided that I believe it is for the benefit of the State. And that, I believe, is the attitude of hon. members generally, irrespective of the political party to which they belong. It is an attitude that has always characterised this House.

There has been a change in the Government of the State. At the last general election the people expressed their wishes in no uncertain manner, and it would be wrong for this House to refuse to support legislation that is designed to give effect to those wishes. The Governor's Speech outlined a number of measures which, the Government believes, will give expression to the desires of the community and, provided the resultant legislation conforms with those desires, I fail to see that any hon. member can take exception to it. I have the greatest respect, and I believe it is shared by my colleagues, for those gentlemen who supported the Government that was previously in office, but just as there is an obligation upon the Government to give effect to the policy endorsed by the people so, too, there is an obligation upon those who may not be political supporters of the Government to see that the progress of legislation which gives effect to the wishes of the community is not impeded by captious criticism. This is one of the most important matters to which hon. members will be asked to direct their attention. From my experience this House has invariably given the greatest consideration to the legislation brought before it. I have learned to respect the opinion of the hon. members who constitute this Chamber, and I am proud that I am a unit of it. I realise that as a general rule hon. members give fair and reasonable consideration to all the matters brought before them.

There is one subject in his Excellency's Speech with which I should specifically like to deal. I refer to the proposed legislation to extend the local government and City Council electoral franchise. After twenty years' experience of local government I have come

to the conclusion that the present system is unsatisfactory and needs urgent alteration for the benefit of the community. The time for municipal reform is long overdue, and I am certain that when the bill is presented hon. members will not deal with it in a narrow or parochial manner but will bring their sound and mature judgment to bear upon it. Municipal reform has been discussed for many years. The Government intends to embark upon very considerable reforms in that direction, and I am hopeful that when the legislation is brought down it will receive the consideration and judgment that it deserves. I pass over the many important matters referred to in the Governor's Speech, because I understand that during the debate other hon. members desire to refer to them. I do not consider that I can add a great deal to the knowledge of hon. members on these subjects, but the Hon. Mr. McNamara dealt with them sufficiently fully to represent the opinions of the party to which I belong. I second the motion in the firm belief that the Government's intentions will not be misunderstood by hon. members, and that a stage will be reached when the benefits of the legislation foreshadowed by the Government will be fully appreciated by the community.

The Hon. M. E. MANFRED [5.45]: In these early hours of the first business session of the present Government it would not be prudent to offer what might be regarded as criticism or advice. The programme of bills announced in the Speech of his Excellency the Governor is an embracing one, and hon. members will look forward with interest to the details of the bills as they become available. Some of them—as one would expect—from their titles, at all events, appear to be similar to those foreshadowed by the last Government. I have said “as one would expect,” and rightly so, because many of these matters are necessarily determined not by the political outlook of those who sponsor them, but by the occasion therefor and the needs of those who may be thereby affected, and in that respect there will be

common ground between the Government and ourselves. It will be remembered that the Government has come into power on a promise to accelerate the State's war effort and to hasten various social reforms. Our ready and active assistance will be available at all times to increase the tempo of the effort behind the Motherland, the Commonwealth and the State in the prosecution of the war and the problems arising out of it, and at the same time to further and better the conditions of trade, commerce and industry and the citizens themselves of this State, reserving at all times the right to criticise and, if warranted, amend or otherwise suitably deal with the various measures which may be placed before this House.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON [5.48]: I desire, in the first place, to congratulate my colleagues, the mover and seconder of the motion, upon their excellent speeches. The Hon. Mr. McNamara postulated his remarks by pointing out very pertinently that the Government has been returned with a majority unprecedented in the history of New South Wales. I sincerely trust that the same spirit of intelligent consideration that has characterised this House for many years will be demonstrated in the future, that the legislation submitted by the Government will be dealt with on its merits, and with the consent of the electors who have returned it with a big majority, and that if that intelligent consideration is extended to the legislative programme of the Government almost the whole of the legislation will be brought into operation in this session. It has been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Manfred that the Government has been returned on a promise to accelerate the war effort of the State in collaboration with that of the Commonwealth Government. On behalf of the party of which he is a very distinguished member, the hon. member has undertaken that any support that can be extended through his colleagues in the acceleration of the tempo of that effort will be ungrudgingly

put forward. I am very pleased to hear that statement, and I trust that the promise will be honoured in the future. We are living in very troublous times, and it is gratifying to know that we have another ally in Russia. I have no doubt that with the assistance of that country we shall gradually achieve the victory so much desired.

I am pleased to see that already the present Government of New South Wales has, by actions rather than words, shown that it is one hundred per cent. behind the war effort of the Commonwealth of Australia, and that it is doing everything possible, within the ambit of its limited constitutional powers, to further the war effort of the British Empire. Outstanding in the Speech of his Excellency the Governor is the statement that with the acceleration of the war effort there shall be a determined effort to deal with the social problems of the people. Foremost in the promise, which was also expressed in the policy speech of the Premier, is the housing of the population of the State. It is not only necessary to consider the housing problem of munition workers, but that of the whole working class community. Hon. members know that the best form of investment to-day is that offered by building societies advancing finance for the construction of workers' homes. A study of simple interest shows that when a person contracts to pay a certain deposit and a weekly payment in lieu of rent, even under the housing scheme of the Government Savings Bank's Advances for Homes Department, after completing a thirty years' contract he has paid three times more than he contracted for as the initial outlay for the construction of the property. The Government has undertaken the financial responsibility of the construction of properties for munition workers in the various centres in which they are engaged, and is endeavouring to extend that co-operation by financing the construction of houses for the working class by the inauguration of a housing commission.

Another point in the Governor's Speech worthy of commendation is that the present Government intends to extend the franchise of the Government Insurance Office. In 1927, a Labour Government introduced legislation setting up the Government Insurance Office, and, as I have previously pointed out, from 1927 to 1933 that office made a profit of £900,000, notwithstanding the fact that year by year it progressively reduced its premiums. In 1932 the Stevens Government introduced the celebrated Finances Adjustment Act, included in which was a provision that the profits of the Government Insurance Office, amounting to £900,000, should by yearly instalments be transferred to consolidated revenue. In addition to earning these remarkable profits, the Government Insurance Office compelled private insurance offices to reduce their premiums, and that was the object of the introduction of the legislation.

I congratulate the Government on its intention to restore to the Government Insurance Office its previous activities and to allow it not only to compete in the manner originally authorised, but to extend its franchise, if necessary, to embrace life assurance. I trust a bill along those lines will be introduced as early as possible.

The statement is also made that the Government intends to extend the franchise for local government and City Council elections. The restricted franchise in City Council and local government elections has long been the subject of debate in this House. My colleagues and I have divided the House repeatedly on the question of adult franchise for these elections. We have not succeeded, but I trust hon. members will see the wisdom of the decision of the people in this matter, and that whether in a Commonwealth, State, Local Government or City Council election, people will be shown the confidence to which they are entitled by virtue of their age.

Reference is also made to an amendment of the Liquor Act. I am not very concerned about that, but the policy of

the Labour movement is to control monopolies. I suggest to the Minister in charge that the time is now ripe for the Government to introduce legislation not only to nationalise banking and insurance within the limits of the Commonwealth Constitution Act, but to nationalise the liquor trade. This question may be argued from one point of view or another. If liquor were abolished altogether, the worker may be better off, but I am not prepared to express an opinion on that.

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: Prohibition in America was a tragedy!

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: I admit that. It may be said that a worker may be better off without liquor, but we must take human nature as it is. It is possible to modify, but impossible to reform, human nature. If there were complete unification in the Commonwealth, involving the abolition of State Parliaments, nationalisation of credits under one Commonwealth Bank of Australia, the right of the elected representatives of the people to legislate for the people who elected them, and the nationalisation of monopolies, to a greater extent than to-day this would be the most wonderful country in the world. Within its constitutional powers the Government should deal with the liquor trade as a monopoly. I admit that there are inequalities and anomalies in the present legislation providing for a 6 o'clock closing. Many men to-day are engaged on shift work in munition factories. They may not cease duty until 10 or 11 p.m. If they cease between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. the hotels are closed. It is most unfair that those workers should be denied the right of enjoying whatever beverage they require, when a man on a 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. shift has that right. That is an anomaly requiring rectification. The liquor trade should be regulated according to local demand in various parts of the State, but, nevertheless, I stand to my principle of the nationalisation of monopolies. The liquor trade in this State is an absolute monopoly.

I am very pleased to see the suggestion that the Technical Education Bill is to be amended. When such a bill was before the House on a previous occasion I very strongly opposed certain provisions which I believed did not coincide with the policy of the Labour movement. The Labour party wishes to give unlimited facilities to the children of the working classes from the kindergarten stage to the University. I hope that the Government will introduce a Technical Education Bill. It is well known that from time to time there are numbers of brilliant children of the working-classes who are entitled to this consideration. The case of the late Dr. John Hunter is one in point. He was one of our leading surgeons. There are also men occupying leading positions in the community, and in political life who have attained those positions through the introduction of the universal bursary system.

The Hon. Mr. McNamara referred to amendments in industrial arbitration legislation. I desire briefly to congratulate the Government on its intention to introduce these amendments. In 1926 a Labour Government introduced a bill to provide for conciliation committees. It appointed certain chairmen of those conciliation committees, and it was provided, assuming that there was agreement by the parties, that the chairman could give a decision. In 1932, the late Government introduced an amendment which, in my opinion, has been the most farcical that has ever been tabled in any Parliament in any State of Australia. Under the present Industrial Arbitration Act there is an industrial commissioner who is, by virtue of his position, chairman of conciliation committees. His only function is to endeavour to bring the parties to an agreement; he is not allowed to take evidence. He is not allowed, except by the express approval of the Industrial Commission to receive the evidence of any of the parties. I have seen the Chairman endeavouring by all means in his power to bring the parties to an agreement, but hon. members who understand

human nature will know what the position will be when the employers are not prepared to agree and the employees take a similar attitude. Putting forward an ordinary common sense point of view, I am pleased that the Industrial Arbitration Act is to be amended, and I suggest to the Minister that the amendments should take a very concrete form. I suggest: (1) That conciliation committees shall be grouped on the principle of community of interest, and that they shall be presided over by a chairman. (2) That conciliation committees or the chairman shall be entitled to take evidence and in the event of the parties appearing agreeing to allow the committee or chairman to determine the matter that shall be done, subject to final appeal by the Industrial Commission. Hon. members know that under the Industrial Arbitration Act an appeal from a decision of the Industrial Commission is not permissible in any court of judicature in New South Wales. It is final; therefore, we have in it a very fine principle. I congratulate the Government on insisting that Crown employees shall join an appropriate union appertaining to their callings. I suggest that that should be taken further and it should be stipulated that these members must be financial members. Under the rules of many trade unions, in six months a member may become unfinancial, but he loses the rights of membership only to the extent that he cannot take part in discussions at meetings, or in votes at meetings, but he can do so if he again becomes financial. I notice with satisfaction that there are other amendments of the Industrial Arbitration Act to be introduced. One of the most important is that the Industrial Commission should, to a certain extent, be comprised of laymen with a knowledge of human nature, and not only of legal problems, but of the problems of bread and butter for the working classes. I suggest with all respect that if it is desired that the chairman should be a

barrister or solicitor with five years' practice; there should also be on the Commission laymen with industrial experience who understand the problems of the working classes, and will be able to give proper determinations on bread and butter problems rather than on involved legal problems. After all, barristers or solicitors can only appear before the Commission with its consent. It is the policy of myself and my colleagues that there should be no legal representation, and I trust that this will be a provision that will be generally adopted in the State.

I regret that there is no reference in the Governor's Speech to the water supply of the metropolitan area, and the State of New South Wales generally. This House some time ago unanimously adopted a motion moved by myself to appoint an expert committee to investigate the water supply shortage in the metropolitan area, and to devise ways and means of preventing a repetition of such a position. That motion was carried seven or eight months ago. The former Attorney-General said that upon consideration it had been found that there were certain constitutional difficulties with the State of Victoria regarding riparian rights. I had hoped that something would have been done on that matter before this. Since that time there has been no rainfall on the catchment area, and it is impossible to transfer it to some other area because the sum of £60,000,000 has been spent in bricks and mortar in constructing the catchment area. Some people have said that it will cost a lot of money to bring water from the Snowy River. There are a number of experts in the State who consider that the Snowy River can be tapped at Jindabyne, and brought by gravitation to the catchment area, and that it would not only replenish the Burrinjuck dam and electricity power projects, but would also supply southern towns and augment the water supply in the metropolitan area. This is not a matter for the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board. It is of national importance and should be

dealt with, if not by the State then by the Commonwealth Government. Imagine an invasion of the coast of New South Wales. From Pott's Hill to Waterloo run two rows of pipes carrying water for the metropolitan area! They may be camouflaged. More pipes run from the Warragamba Weir to augment the supply. They, too, may be camouflaged, but the enemy knows where they are, and they would be the first points of attack. It would be "good-night" to them. As the people are being heavily taxed for the war, what more-deserving object could there be than the construction of an open channel to carry water by gravitation from the Snowy River at Jindabyne to give an independent and inexhaustible supply to the metropolitan area? I notice that the Government will deal with the water shortage as a problem of extreme urgency.

The Premier stated in his policy speech that the Government intended to augment the supply by tapping the Snowy River reserves, but no mention is made of that in the Governor's Speech. All the other matters, such as industrial arbitration, even though for nine years the workers have been suffering under restrictions, may be important. But Industrial Arbitration and Marketing Act can wait; every other proposal can wait, except, perhaps, that for the abolition of this House and unification which is the policy of the Labour movement, until the water supply to the metropolitan area is augmented and electricity is generated at Burrinjuck for the towns between Jindabyne and Sydney. I trust that the Government will immediately go ahead with these schemes and ask the Commonwealth Government to make available out of war taxation the amount necessary to bring them to fruition.

I think hon. members will agree that the outstanding problem to be faced relates to the conservation of the water supplies of the State generally. Recently, we were told that the Burrinjuck dam might collapse. The former Attorney-General not many months ago said that the Government had paid

£49,000 to Julius Poole and Gibson, consulting engineers, for progress reports and expert engineering advice as to how that problem could be solved. Nothing has been done, yet we find to-day that that firm, in conjunction with a Swedish firm of engineers, which could not carry out its contract, is being consulted by the Government in order to find a solution of this problem. I repeat what I have said previously, that there are in Australia engineers who could solve this problem. Australians can do this job, and do it as efficiently as the English consultants or the Swedish engineers, who could not supply the plan that the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission ordered from Sweden.

The time is ripe for the establishment of a water supply commission. My personal opinion is that the problem of water conservation in rural areas demands the establishment of a separate ministry of water supply, as there is in other States. In Victoria, the Minister for Water Supply controls the Water Supply Commission, which is responsible for the whole of the water supply system of that State, except in the metropolitan area. The Government would earn the undying gratitude of settlers if it tackled this problem by setting up a Ministry of Water Supply for the metropolitan area, and a commission, under the direct control of a Minister, for the supply of water to Newcastle and Broken Hill, and elsewhere beyond the metropolitan area. If that were done, we should no longer have the divided control of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission and the Department of Public Works. I have no doubt that a statesmanlike attempt could be made to solve these problems. I congratulate the Government, and I congratulate the people of New South Wales on returning it. As 99 per cent. of the people of this State are toilers, either with the hand or with the brain, it is inconceivable that Labour is not always returned to office, not merely in New South Wales, but in every State of the Commonwealth.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM [6.18]: I have watched the activities of other Labour Governments in Australia and I look forward to the time when this Government will show the people of New South Wales that by its wisdom and knowledge of the problems confronting it it is capable of looking after their interests. I wish my colleagues who have been appointed to the Ministry every success. All the help I can give them I will give ungrudgingly. The Government will show hon. members opposite that it has the ability to carry out its promises. I trust they will agree that there should be only one Government for the whole of Australia, and that a Government representing the Labour party. One question that has agitated the minds of the public is that of petrol. The Governor referred to the production of charcoal and substitute fuel, but we know that charcoal cannot supply 5 per cent. of the needs of this State. The other day a garage owner who was forced into bankruptcy and absolutely ruined said to me, "You are a politician; politicians are not fit to manage a fowl-house." I was almost inclined to agree with him. Eleven months' ago, on the floor of this House, I quoted the remarks of a responsible Minister of the South African Parliament, which were endorsed by General Smuts. He said that petrol was the breath of life to the country, and that it was essential for winning the war. South Africa to-day has petrol because its Government made sure that tankers would be available.

The Prime Minister when he returned from bombed London said that we were not pulling our full weight in the war. The facts are, however, that we are taxed higher than Britain, and our enlistments are higher than in Britain, South Africa or Canada. Only New Zealand may be higher, but this country is being wrecked from top to bottom by incompetence. How are we to win this war when we are causing starvation, malnutrition and bankruptcy in this country? If men are to be ruined by an act of stupid administration, how can we hope to win the war? I do not

claim to be an oracle, but eleven months ago, in this Chamber, I said that it was a sin and a crime, and the traitorous action of fifth columnists to tolerate a regime that advocated petrol rationing. I thought then that it would ruin thousands of people, but we find it is ruining tens of thousands of people in every section of the community. Our so-called great Prime Minister is leading us to ruination. He is not employing in war industries the men who are thrown out of employment by his unforgivable, disloyal sin of petrol rationing. He ought not to claim to be an Australian. Rather ought he to be interned. It is the greatest calamity this country has suffered, and the Ministers who are responsible with him should share the same end. If a firm like H. C. Slade, of Firezone, could charter tankers and bring out unlimited quantities of petrol, why should they be stopped by the rank stupidity of our administrators? Does it not bear out the truth of the remark made to me that our politicians could not manage a fowl-house? Knowing for eighteen months what petrol rationing would do in this country, our politicians have made no provision for it. As legislators we are failing in our duty to the people. Imagine petrol rationing in a country of 3,000,000 square miles, where our horses have long since died out! We have to fight as free men against slaves, but our Prime Minister is tying our hands behind our backs, and we are hampered at every turn by incompetence and maladministration. Why is not Mr. Menzies man enough to step down? If Labour were not ruling well I would say it should give place to someone else.

We are continually reminded of the fetish of dollar conservation. We are fighting Hitler, the dirtiest menace the world has ever known, and being told at the same time that a country 3,000,000 square miles of potential wealth must conserve dollars. Under the Lend or Lease Act we could get all the petrol we want. If we wanted 12,000,000 or 20,000,000 gallons a month we could get it. If I said I could get

it someone would want to know what ability I had to release that quantity of petrol. I was on the other side for three years and exported hundreds of thousands of rabbit skins, and great quantities of wool, which brought American dollars back into this country. The manager of the Chase Fur Company was on the verge of bringing petrol out, and cabled the other day to say that we could get all the petrol we wanted. The only thing is, who is going to pay for it? After all the taxation I cannot, but I make the offer now to pay my expenses if I fail to make available all the petrol we need. If I succeed, all I ask is that the Commonwealth Government pay my expenses. I volunteer to go to America, and most confidently assert that petrol will be out here as fast as the boats can bring it. We are not supposed to mention shipping, but we have the *Monterey* and *Mariposa* plying regularly empty. If we cannot get tankers, let us bring the petrol in drums. If we cannot get drums, let us bring it in tins—or even in bottles. Let us bring it out; that is the point. I guarantee to land petrol in this country as cheap as Atlantic or Vacuum Oil Company can bring it out. I was for three years on the other side, and I know all these financial ramifications. I know exactly what tap to turn to release a lot of credit, and I know that there is unlimited petrol to be had and plenty of tankers to bring it.

How can we win this war if we are being forced into bankruptcy? The Treasury wants £250,000,000 now, and I suppose will get it, but where shall we find a continuing source of supply for Treasury needs if we are crippling the machinery that makes the money? This calamity of petrol rationing is the result of sheer incompetence on the part of the Federal Government, and I am surprised that the people do not revolt. They have every right to express their resentment, bitterness and hatred of the regime that has been responsible for placing this country in its present precarious position. Petrol rationing is entirely unnecessary. I know of one garage on the Princes Highway in which

24,000 gallons of petrol could be stored. To-day it is storing 3,000 gallons. That one instance can be multiplied by thousands. We should be able to conserve any quantity of petrol in this country. Recently tankers were lying at our wharves waiting to be unloaded, but no attempt was made to conserve petrol in country towns. What is behind this petrol rationing? Is the Federal Government trying to push the small man into bankruptcy so that he can be swallowed by the big man? If we are to win the war the continuation of supplies of petrol to this country is as necessary as the very air we breathe.

I come now to the question of housing. There is in Victoria what is known as the Fowler system of housing, which provides for the construction of prefabricated homes. We want houses in this State very badly. In places like Dubbo there are three and four families living in one house, and that is typical of the whole State. The Fowler scheme in Victoria has been pronounced by experts to be an outstanding success. A home consisting of two bed-rooms, a living and dining-room, bath room, verandah and outhouses can be built for £485. This State has an ordinance under which only fibrolite or brick houses are allowed to be built, and I ask the Minister in charge of the House to impress upon the Minister for Local Government and Housing the need to do away with red tape and obsolete ordinances, by allowing councils to have the discretionary power of deciding whether the houses built in their areas, should be of fibrolite, brick, or concrete similar to the homes built under the Fowler system. It has been laid down that the houses to be built at Glen Davis and Port Kembla must have corrugated iron roofs, but, as most of our galvanised iron is required for war purposes, there is little chance of those homes being provided. There is no reason why fibrolite corrugated roofs should not be used. In nearly every little town in the west fibrolite corrugation, instead of iron corrugation, is used for the roofs of houses. The fibrolite is cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

I warn this Government that, if it interferes with the liberty of the subject in respect of the liquor laws it will go into oblivion, as did its predecessor. We should view the subject of liquor reform with the mentality of 1941, not of 1841. This Government will not last if it introduces harsh restrictions in respect of our liquor laws. The people are our masters, and we should give effect to their will. We should avoid any mistakes such as making jail mandatory for a second offence under the Liquor Act, and for a 2/- bet each way under the Gaming and Betting Act.

With respect to the question of water conservation and irrigation, I agree with the Hon. Mr. Concannon respecting the suggested scheme to augment the Sydney water supply at a cost of £250,000 by transferring water by gravitation from the Snowy River at Jindabyne to the Murrumbidgee River. This proposal is not impracticable, and will not cost very much. We are at war, and the Federal Government to-day requires every penny upon which it can lay its hands to further its war effort. It is inopportune, at the present time, to suggest any water supply scheme the carrying out of which would retard our war effort. When we say we are working 100 per cent. to win this war for democracy, we should do nothing to prevent all the money that can be obtained from flowing into the coffers of the Federal Treasury. We want that money to buy machine-guns, aeroplanes, and artillery, which, unfortunately, were so lacking on our side in Libya and in Crete. We want millions of pounds for the conduct of the war, because we are going to win the war. To talk about the carrying out of a housing scheme at the present time that will cost millions of pounds is absurd, because every pound is required for war purposes. But we cannot undertake a complete war effort unless we have an adequate water supply, because water is necessary for the production of munitions and armaments. There is a war on and Hitler has to be beaten. We will defeat Hitler. We will go on fighting until he

is beaten, even if every man Jack of us has to shed his blood. The men of this country are prepared to die, if necessary, to save the Empire and democracy. We are prepared to make the full sacrifice, but surely sufficient money could be obtained to carry out the scheme I suggest.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT: I have ascertained it to be the pleasure of the Governor to receive the Address in Reply to his Excellency's Speech at State Government House at 4.45 p.m. to-morrow.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

Motion (by the Hon. R. R. Downing) agreed to:

That this House at its rising to-day do adjourn until 4.30 p.m. sharp to-morrow.

House adjourned at 6.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday 23 July, 1941.

Opening of Parliament—Administration of Oath—Members Sworn—Message from Governor—Temporary Chairmen of Committees—Questions without Notice—Law of Evidence Bill (*formal*)—Leave of Absence—Speeches: Time Limit—Governor's Speech: Address in Reply (First Day's Debate)—Legislative Council Vacancy (Writ for Election).

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The House met at noon, pursuant to the proclamation of his Excellency the Governor convening Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

The opening prayer was read.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH.

Mr. SPEAKER reported the receipt of a Commission authorising him to administer to hon. members the oath or affirmation of allegiance, and also a Commission authorising the Deputy-Speaker, in the absence of the Speaker, to administer such oath or affirmation.

MEMBERS SWORN.

Mr. Sweeney and Mr. Treatt took and subscribed the oath of allegiance.

MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR.

The Usher of the Black Rod, being admitted, delivered a message from his Excellency the Governor requesting the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the Legislative Council.

The House went, and hon. members having returned,

House adjourned at 12.25 until 2.30 p.m.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER nominated Mr. W. H. Lamb, Mr. R. E. O'Halloran, Mr. E. L. Sanders, Major J. B. Shand and Mr. T. J. Shannon to act as temporary Chairmen of Committees during the present session.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

WIDOWS' PENSIONS.

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: I ask the Minister for Social Services whether it is a fact that, when the son of a widow who is in receipt of a widow's pension joins the A.I.F. and makes an allotment of pay to his mother, payment of the pension is discontinued in certain circumstances, because the allotment money is considered when assessing her income? If this is a fact, will it be possible to alter the existing arrangement to provide that the payment of a soldier's allotment to a widow shall not be taken into consideration?

Mr. KNIGHT: I will look into the matter and see whether, in circumstances such as described by the leader of the Country party, any hardship is imposed. If hardship results from the practice referred to, I will take whatever steps the law permits in an endeavour to reduce the hardship to a minimum. If it is necessary to amend the law, that step also may be taken. I might add that since I have occupied my present position the social services of New South Wales have been