

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 24 AUGUST 1976

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THIRD SESSION OF THE FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1976

TUESDAY, 24 AUGUST 1976

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Pursuant to the proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 22 July 1976, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 1.56 p.m. in the late Legislative Council Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. E. H. Houghton, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

At 2 p.m. His Excellency the Governor came in state to Parliament House, was announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms, received by Mr. Speaker, and accompanied to the dais.

Honourable members being seated, His Excellency read the following Opening Speech:—

“HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In the 18 months since I last formally opened this Parliament the State has continued to grow and prosper, and I am sure will continue to do so during this Third Session of the Forty-first Parliament which I am about to open.

I feel I cannot let this opportunity pass without paying tribute to a man who has contributed so much to the present healthy economic state of Queensland.

I refer, of course, to the Honourable Sir Gordon Chalk who retired earlier this month after serving in this Parliament for 29 years, 19 of which were in ministerial posts, the last 10½ years being as the Treasurer. Queensland owes much to the hard work, foresight and dedication of Sir Gordon.

I am delighted, and I am sure you are too, that The Queen will visit us early in March next year. I am certain that Her Majesty will be made extremely welcome by all of us here in Brisbane, and indeed by the entire population of Queensland.

We will look forward to her visit to strengthen our bonds with Her Majesty and to re-affirm our loyalty and allegiance to Her as our Queen.

Queensland will be represented at the Plenary Session of the Australian Constitutional Convention scheduled for Hobart later this year.

My advisers have assured me that the interests of the people of Queensland, as a unit of the Federation, will be fully protected.

Last financial year ended with a small surplus of a little over \$700,000 in the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This represented an improvement of \$6.3 million on the budgeted deficit of \$5.6 million and, I would suggest, reflects the high degree of expertise in financial management that has been a feature of this Government.

This surplus was attained in an overall expenditure program of nearly \$1,349 million during a year of continually increasing costs and fluctuating revenues.

I am informed by my Ministers that the cost of salary and wage increases granted in 1975-76 alone cost some \$72 million and this had a severe impact on the State's finances.

The main business before Parliament in this Session will be the 1976-77 State Budget to be presented next month.

I know that it is my Government's aim to present a budget which will provide for a continuation of at least the present levels of programs and services. It will also ensure that available funds are directed to areas of priority and need which will provide the maximum benefit from every dollar.

As always, the positive development of the State continues to be the main and principal objective of the Government and its policies are directed to this end.

Construction of a dam on the Brisbane River at Wivenhoe has been planned by the Co-ordinator-General's Department to augment water supply to the Brisbane area in the 1980's.

Approximately 75 per cent. of land needed for the dam has been acquired to date. Work will begin this financial year on the relocation of roads and a number of bridges which will be submerged when the dam begins to store water by mid-1981.

The Queensland mineral industry is again expected to maintain record levels of production in most of the traditional areas.

The total value of all minerals produced throughout the State last year was \$892.4 million, which was \$202.4 million more than in 1974. This was due mainly to the major increase in the price received for export coal.

During the coming year the export coal industry is expected to gear up for expanded levels of production following the recent State Government decision to upgrade export levels.

Although the production of base metals, in some instances, showed a downturn in value during 1975-76, it is expected to stabilise this year following increasing world demands and prices after a period of depression.

The Government, in its active pursuit of greater efficiency and economy in the electricity supply industry, will introduce legislation this Session to reorganise the industry throughout the State.

On the development side, the industry has sufficient works in hand, as well as at the approved stage, to ensure adequate power supplies to all consumers to 1984.

Among major works under way are the 1,650 megawatt Gladstone power station and the 500 megawatt Wivenhoe pumped storage hydro-electric scheme on the upper reaches of the Brisbane River.

Following completion of new Court buildings at Townsville and Dalby, funds have been scheduled by the Justice Department this financial year for the construction of three new Court Houses.

A review of the operation of Magistrates Courts throughout Queensland is being undertaken. It is proposed to streamline procedures such as the use of tape recorders, the utilisation of computer facilities for registrations of births, deaths and marriages, as a means of improving Government services in all areas of the State.

The volume of claims lodged with the Small Claims Tribunal has continued to grow. To enable claims to be heard as quickly as possible, a second full-time Referee has been appointed.

During this financial year, the Licensing Commission will open two new district offices. This will allow more frequent inspections of licensed premises and should result in improved facilities for the public.

The Law Reform Commission is presently working on such items as the Rules of the Supreme Court, anomalies in criminal law, civil liability for damage caused by animals, and an Associations Incorporation Act.

The Government's scheme for assistance and encouragement to sport, which was first introduced in 1972, has received wide acceptance from sporting associations and clubs generally, and playing facilities for sport have been improved to a marked degree.

The Queensland National Fitness Council for Sport and Physical Recreation continues to provide excellent facilities.

Work is continuing on the various building projects within the prison service. Planning is under way for a new female prison within the Brisbane prison complex.

The Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind continues to provide an avenue for blind persons in the community to undertake a worthwhile occupation. Work has started on a new administration block which will include a showroom.

Facilities provided by the Department of Children's Services have been further extended and improved in an effort to cope with increasing community needs and demands.

The Department of Commercial and Industrial Development will provide more personalised service to decentralised industry with the appointment of three regional industry Officers.

The program of assistance to small business will be continued during 1976-77 while further small business seminars will be held in provincial centres as well as Brisbane.

Industrial estate development is proceeding. Construction work scheduled or under way will release three more Crown industrial estates in provincial areas—two on the Sunshine Coast and one at Innisfail.

The Department of Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs is considering the introduction of a long service leave scheme on an industry basis for the building and construction industry.

Escalating costs are a continuing problem for rural industries. To reduce the heavy cost of placing produce in the market place, the Department of Primary Industries is expanding fruit and vegetable research, while completion of new entomology laboratories at Indooroopilly will facilitate investigations into grain storage pests, fruit flies and pesticide resistance.

Advances approved by the Agricultural Bank last financial year totalled \$27.7 million. This included \$221,857 approved under the Flood Damage Relief Scheme.

The re-organisation of Police Regions and Districts is continuing and planning is well under way for alterations in the metropolitan area. A new Police Headquarters building is under construction.

The development of a self-contained driver training complex is also envisaged and land for the project is being secured.

Work is continuing on the Queensland Police Academy Chapel and the Learning Resources Centre and it is expected the buildings will be completed in the near future.

It is proposed to expand and consolidate the State Emergency Service in all communities by providing facilities and equipment at local level.

A planned five-year communication program has been implemented and has moved into its second year of development. The larger provincial centres in cyclone-prone areas along the coast will be equipped with UHF radio facilities. When the program is complete, a comprehensive radio network will provide emergency communication facilities for all communities at times of disaster.

My Ministers advise that some \$39 million was spent in the past year by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission on the development of water resources.

With the commencement of storage in Julius Dam at Mount Isa and Glenlyon Dam in the south-west, Commission storages comprising 15 dams and 63 weirs for irrigation, urban, mining, and power generation are holding a record capacity of 97 per cent.

The Joint Commonwealth-State study for the development of water resources in the Burdekin River basin should be finalised early in 1977.

Investigations by a new Forward Planning Branch will include the examination of some 29 major storage sites, five diversion and regulating weirs and two tidal barrages.

The Government will accelerate its multi-million dollar program to upgrade public transport.

The Railway Department, in association with the Metropolitan Transit Project Board, will concentrate on the electrification of the suburban network.

Contracts worth some \$30 million will be let for air-conditioned electric rail cars, overhead wiring and signalling.

Work will continue on the cross-river rail link between Roma Street and South Brisbane Stations which will provide a direct connection between north and southside rail systems.

Interchange facilities at many suburban stations will also be provided in the form of car parks and bus and car set down areas.

The Department will buy additional diesel-electric locomotives and wagons, signalling and communication systems, further upgrade the permanent way with heavier rails, and reconstruct a number of major bridges.

The Department of Local Government will encourage effective town planning by Local Authorities.

The Department will also be involved in water supply and sewerage schemes for some 13 Local Authorities and a number of Government Departments.

The Main Roads Department is planning a balanced road and bridge construction and maintenance program throughout the State this financial year, expected to cost some \$129 million.

Completion of the bitumen surfacing of the Flinders Highway later this year will provide a bitumen sealed link from Darwin, through Mount Isa, to the eastern seaboard at Townsville.

Major works are being undertaken on the Bruce Highway, particularly on the Bald Hills-Burpengary deviation and between Marlborough and Sarina.

I had the privilege recently of opening the Riverside Expressway, while work on the South-east Freeway is progressing steadily.

The success of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau's publicity campaign is reflected in the record takings of over \$12 million for 1975-76.

Despite the economic situation, there have been continued developments in the provision of modern tourist complexes in North Queensland.

The seventh Biennial Tourist Seminar, organised by the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau, will be held at Cairns in October.

In the coming year an Aboriginal and Islander Commission will be established with representation from Aborigines and Islanders throughout the State.

A new Fisheries Bill will be drafted and introduced to Parliament. The Queensland Fisheries Service will be re-organised to improve service to the commercial fishing industry, sports fishermen, and the public.

A Bill to constitute an Authority for the Port of Brisbane has lain on the Table of the House since last Session and will be again presented to Parliament. It is anticipated the Authority will proceed at a very early date to upgrade the Port of Brisbane by developing facilities on Fisherman Islands.

The Government will continue with its program of providing facilities for small craft and undertake research into the preservation of our beaches.

Port facilities throughout the State will be further improved to handle increasing quantities of minerals and bulk primary produce.

The development of Crown residential estates by the Department of Lands will proceed in some 34 cities and towns throughout the State between the Gold Coast and Port Douglas.

State and Commonwealth programs for reconstruction assistance for the dairying industry will continue.

During the year, it is intended to invite applications for the development of cattle grazing lands in North Queensland totalling some 377,800 hectares and about 677 hectares suitable for cattle fattening and agriculture.

The Department of Forestry will continue to provide forest-oriented recreation facilities for use by the public. Picnic grounds have been provided in a number of forests from the Brisbane area north to Lake Tinaroo.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service plans to gazette many major parks particularly in the Cape York region and funding has been set aside for purchase of other areas throughout the State. National parks will be managed from four regional centres in Brisbane, Warwick, Cairns and Rockhampton to provide better control and ensure better service to the public through further development of recreational facilities.

The maintenance and expansion of health care will be continued at a high standard while major capital works on public hospitals worth over \$90 million are proceeding in 12 major centres throughout Queensland and include projects from Weipa to the Gold Coast and west to Mount Isa.

The school dental therapist training scheme is well advanced; eight school dental clinics are operating and a further 18 are under construction. These will be supplemented by 10 mobile clinics and rail dental clinics.

Improvements in psychiatric service accommodation at hospitals and centres will continue. A re-organisation of this Division aims at the development of services for the intellectually handicapped and alcohol and drug dependent persons.

A major undertaking in 1976-77 will be the implementation of a comprehensive data collection system for monitoring and evaluating the network of health service centres in the Division of Community Medicine.

The task of providing educational services and opportunities throughout the State demands a steadily increasing share of available resources.

My Government will continue its objective of providing free pre-school education to children aged four to five years and a minimum of 70 additional pre-school units will be constructed during the year to bring the total to an estimated 420.

This financial year will see the beginning of changes in the pattern of secondary education. New building designs will necessitate changes in teaching techniques and will encourage greater student involvement and wider use of libraries and audio visual resources.

The major activity of the Department of Works this financial year will be the provision of education buildings. Seven new primary schools and five new high schools will be established.

Although funds for welfare housing are not available to the same extent as in the last financial year, it is anticipated that some 1,350 houses will be constructed during 1976-77.

The Commission's architectural staff is planning new designs for the future. A team approach has been adopted and a new range of standard rental houses is emerging. Other concepts being developed include town houses and multi-unit dwellings for inclusion in attractive landscaped areas.

The need for a rational co-ordinated mapping program is recognised by my Government as essential for the proper planning and future development of this

State. To help achieve this it is proposed to introduce new legislation repealing the Land Surveyors Act and providing for the application of modern practices and equipment within the survey profession. Initiatives have already been taken to streamline Government mapping and survey activities.

During the past year the Department of the Valuer-General converted over 830,000 records from manual to a computer system. Because of this change some 275,623 valuations came into effect at June 30, 1976, the highest number for any single year.

Honourable Members, included in the legislative proposals you will be asked to consider during this Session are:

- A Bill to constitute an Authority for the development of a new port at the mouth of the Brisbane River;
- A Bill providing for the planning, development and control of bulk supply of water in the Moreton region;
- A Bill for the registration of home builders and provision of protection for home owners;
- A Bill to amend the law relating to succession duties;
- A Bill to amend the law relating to the generation, distribution, supply and use of electricity in Queensland;
- A Bill to establish a Board of Nursing Studies;
- A Bill to provide housing for certain Crown employees.

I now declare this Session of Parliament open and pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels."

His Excellency then left the Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER announced that the sitting would be continued in the Legislative Assembly Chamber, where he took the chair at 2.24 p.m.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Leader of the House): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11 a.m. tomorrow."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.25 p.m.