

WORK OF THE SESSION.

Ministry's Developmental Policy.

An interesting outline of the work accomplished by the Government, and legislation proposed to be introduced during the forthcoming session, which opened on Thursday, was given by the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir George Murray) in his speech to members.

The session, which is the third of the twenty-sixth Parliament of South Australia, was opened by the Lieutenant-Governor with appropriate ceremonial at noon, prior to which members had assembled in their respective Houses. The Hon. J. Jelley was the only absentee from the Legislative Council. To witness the preliminaries on North terrace outside the Legislative Council, a large number of spectators had gathered, while the galleries were crowded, and the gathering included several members of the fair sex.

Punctually at noon, His Excellency, attended by Capt. B. J. Andrew as A.D.C., and Mr. Leigh Winsor (private secretary), and having as an escort No. 1 Troop, A Squadron of the 18th Light Horse, in charge of Lieut. M. A. Walloscheck, arrived from Government House, and at the Legislative Council was received by a guard of honour, comprising members of the 10th Battalion Citizen Forces, under Capt. J. H. Hill, with whom was associated Lieuts. A. S. W. Arnold and S. O. Siscock (who was in charge of the colours), and the band of that battalion, in charge of Band-Sgt. N. C. Pearse, struck up the National Anthem. Simultaneously the firing of the royal salute of 19 guns at the Parade Ground by the 48th Battery, A.F.A., under Lieut. O. S. Hanson, was opened. The Lieutenant-Governor was joined in front of the House by Lieut.-Commander C. J. P. Hill, R.N. (Acting District Naval Officer), and H. B. Jarrett, R.A.N., and the Military Commandant (Brig.-Gen. O. F. Phillips), and Lieut.-Col. J. M. A. Durrant. Having inspected the guard, His Excellency was received at the bar of the House by the President (Sir Lancelot Stirling), and escorted to the presidential chair. When the Speaker of the House of Assembly, accompanied by the Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler) and his Ministerial colleagues, and other members of Lower Chamber had arrived in response to his request, the Lieutenant-Governor read his speech outlining the Government's proposals with respect to the business of the session.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

Honourable gentlemen of the Legislative Council and gentlemen of the House of Assembly—

1. I have summoned Parliament for the dispatch of business.

2. I have received from the Imperial Government an intimation that His Majesty has been pleased to appoint Brig.-Gen. the Honourable Sir Alexander Gore Arkwright Hore-Ruthven, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., V.C., as Governor of the State in succession to Sir Tom Bridges. I join with my Ministers in awaiting with pleasure the opportunity to welcome to the State so distinguished a servant of the Empire.

3. My Ministers view with anxiety the unemployment now prevailing and have advised me to call you together before the customary time in order that your authority for the expenditure of money on the execution of public works may be obtained as early in the year as possible, and the works undertaken without avoidable delay.

4. My Ministers are gratified to know that last year's wheat harvest is now estimated at about 22½ million bushels. Having regard to the poor rainfall during last season, this result is a striking testimony to the industry of our farmers and the improved methods of agriculture now being followed.

5. My Ministers are more than ever convinced of the importance of the State's agricultural industry. To increase the area under production they have carried out a vigorous policy of land settlement. For the year ending March, 1928, 624,119 acres were allotted to 498 applicants. The fact that in all 1,540 applicants for land were received during that period is evidence that there is a great demand for land in this State. As successful land settlement will depend largely upon transport and water facilities, my Government has invited the Public Works Standing Committee to enquire whether it is practicable to provide these facilities for certain large areas of land now unoccupied. These areas include 218,000 acres in the Counties of Buxton, Bosanquet, and Le Hunte, on Eyre's Peninsula, 175,000 acres in the County of Way, 55,661 acres already surveyed on Eyre's Peninsula, and 384,000 acres north of the River Murray in the Counties of Young and Hamley. The committee has been asked also to enquire into proposal for settling a large area near Keith in the south-east, of which a preliminary survey is now being made. My Ministers are anxious to receive the report of the Committee on these matters sufficiently early to enable them to proceed during the coming financial year with works which will develop the land to which I have referred. Should the report be favourable, it is anticipated that the Commonwealth Development and Migration Commission will co-operate with the State to bring about the occupation and utilization of this land. My Government has further augmented the staff of Agricultural instructors. The officers of the Department of Agriculture are using every effort to induce producers to aim at the greatest possible production. Given adequate rains during the forthcoming season there is every reason to hope for a greatly increased yield.

6. The erection of an agricultural high school at Urrbrae on land given for that purpose by the late Mr. Peter Waite will be proceeded with.

7. The members of my Government acknowledge with gratitude the generosity of Mr. John Melrose, who gave £10,000 towards the construction of a research laboratory at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute.

8. My Government is anxious to effect further improvements in our educational system. A scheme to give vocational guidance to parents and assist children to find suitable employment will be organized.

9. The Irrigation and Drainage Commission has almost completed the hearing of the appeals instituted by soldier settlers in irrigation areas in respect of the amounts due by them to the Crown under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Acts. Further inspections of blocks are being made, and the commission's report will be presented at an early date.

10. The Frost Relief Act, which was designed to give assistance to the settlers who suffered loss by the disastrous frost in September last, is now in operation under the direction of the board of management of the State Bank.

11. As a result of a recent conference in Canberra, an advisory committee has been appointed, representing New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, to investigate the market prospects for the fruit industry, and to advise on the co-ordination of production and future development in the irrigation areas of the three States.

12. To promote closer settlement my Government has authorized the Irrigation and Drainage Commission to investigate the possibilities of draining large areas in the western division of the south-east. The preliminary survey of the first section, comprising approximately 50,000 acres, is nearing completion, and it is intended to continue this work until sufficient data have been obtained to enable definite drainage schemes and estimates of cost to be formulated.

13. Good progress has been made in construction of the River Murray locks. Advantage was taken of the low river to push on the work and, approximately, £40,000 more was provided by South Australia for this work during the current year than in the previous year. Five locks have been completed; Locks 4 and 6 are in progress, and the site of Lock 7 has been approved.

14. The need for an improved sewerage system and a better water supply for the metropolitan area has been referred to the Public Works Standing Committee. Your authority to carry out these works will be sought early in the session.

15. The trunk main to Thevenard will be completed before the end of the current financial year. Retention mains have already been extensively laid.

16. During the past year 5,640 acres of forest lands have been planted—an area far in excess of that planted in any previous year.

17. The value of the mineral production for 1927 was £1,188,522, a total only previously exceeded under the abnormal con-

ditions of war. The production of iron ore, gypsum, and limestone during the year was the greatest yet recorded.

18. My Ministers are making efforts to promote efficiency and economy in the public service, and modern commercial practices are being applied to the discharge of Government business.

19. Good progress has been made in constructing arterial and developmental roads. My Ministers are of opinion that the most equitable method of raising revenue for road purposes is by means of a tax on petrol, which at present cannot validly be imposed by the States. Communications have already been addressed to the other State Governments requesting their co-operation in inducing the Commonwealth Government to impose such a tax.

20. Regulations have been made under the Highways Act for prevention of damage to main roads.

21. My advisers have had under consideration the report of the Royal Commission on the Pastoral Industry, and will submit to you a Bill to amend the Pastoral Acts.

22. The Government has appointed Messrs. W. A. Webb (Railways Commissioner), D. V. Fleming (Highways Commissioner), and S. Crawford (representative of motor carriers) to constitute the board administering the Motor Transport Control Act, 1927.

23. In January of the present year the State floated on the London market a loan of £2,500,000, bearing the nominal rate of interest of 5 per cent., at an issue price of £98. The terms of this loan were more favourable to the borrower than those of any Australian loan issued in London for many months, and its favourable reception by the investing public demonstrated that the State's credit overseas stands high.

24. My Government has repeatedly called the attention of the Commonwealth Prime Minister to the disabilities to which federation has subjected this State, and has requested payment of a grant to compensate the State for its heavy losses. The Prime Minister has now intimated that he will appoint a royal commission to investigate the claim.

25. The financial burdens consequent upon the decision of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in favour of a 44-hour working week are still pressing heavily upon the State, without any compensating increase in production or trade. Satisfactory arrangements have been made with State employes to accept either piecework or petty contract prices. This has been followed not only by an increase in output in favour of the taxpayer, but also by an increase in wages in favour of the wage earner.

26. The report furnished last session of Parliament by the Electoral Commission has been referred back to the commission for further investigation. Any further recommendation made by the commission will receive careful consideration.

27. The Estimates of Expenditure will be laid before you, and will be prepared with the strictest economy.

28. It is at yet too early to give the State's financial results for the year 1927-1928. The figures for the period of nine months ending on March 31 last show that the revenue for that period was £7,511,224, and the expenditure £8,637,001. This excess of expenditure over revenue will be largely obliterated in the last quarter of the year by the large amounts which will be collected from taxation during that period. It is unlikely, however, that the revenue will reach the full amount estimated, as receipts from railways and harbours show a temporary depression.

29. The figures relating to expenditure during the year show that my Ministers have exercised all possible economy in items of expenditure which they can control. This policy will be continued.

30. My advisers are considering amendments of the law relating to companies, and a Bill relating to this matter may be submitted for your consideration.

31. You will be asked to consider a proposal to relieve the Judges of the Supreme Court of much formal business and to place such business under the jurisdiction of other Court officials. It is hoped by this means to relieve some of the congestion which unfortunately still hampers the work at the Court.

32. Measures to amend the Police Acts, the Early Closing Act, the Municipal Corporations Act, the Irrigation Act, and the Registration of Firms Act will be introduced.

33. Legislation will be introduced to provide that a sum of money shall be set aside annually out of general revenue to meet depreciation on public works.

34. Proposals to amend the law relating to Crown lands, the dairy industry, pharmacy, licensed victuallers, trespassing on land, mining, evidence, indecent publications, betting, and other matters, will also be placed before you.

35. I now declare this session open, and trust that Divine Providence may bless your labours and advance the welfare of the State.

Opening Parliament

by Sir George Murray.

"Advertiser," May 4th 1928.

"Register," May 4th 1928.