

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, September 16, 1971

The Council assembled at 2.15 p.m.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY PRESIDENT

The Clerk having announced that, owing to the unavoidable absence of the President, it would be necessary to appoint a Deputy President,

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Minister of Lands) moved:

That the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill be appointed to the position.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition) seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

The Deputy President took the Chair and read prayers.

DEATH OF GOVERNOR

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Minister of Lands): It is with deep regret that I have to announce to the Council the death of His Excellency Major-General Sir James William Harrison, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, and Governor of the State of South Australia. It is with extreme sadness that I move:

That the Legislative Council express its profound regret at the death of His Excellency the Governor of South Australia, Major-General Sir James William Harrison, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., and offer its deepest sympathy to Lady Harrison and family in their sad bereavement and place on record its appreciation of his distinguished service to the State of South Australia.

We all know that Sir James had a most distinguished Army career. He was General Officer Commanding Eastern Command from 1966 until he became the first Australian to be appointed Governor of South Australia. Earlier, he held many other important Army appointments as a member of the Australian Military Board, Quartermaster-General, Chairman of the Services Joint Planning Committee and General Officer Commanding Western Command. He also served with distinction during the Second World War. His Army service was recognized when he was made a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1958 and a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath in 1968.

Sir James assumed office as Governor of South Australia on December 4, 1968. He applied himself most diligently in making himself familiar with all spheres of State activity, and he did not spare himself in visiting country areas. During his term of office he suffered a serious illness but, upon recovery, returned to office to serve the State as energetically as before. His death, while on a short period of leave, is most tragic. To Lady Harrison and her family we extend our deepest sympathy in their time of sorrow. It is with extreme regret that I have moved this motion.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): I support the motion, with deep regret. As the Minister has said, Major-General Sir James William Harrison was the first Australian-born Governor appointed to this office in South Australia. He endeared himself to all sections of the community in this State. Before his unfortunate illness in May last year he travelled extensively throughout South Australia, and took a very keen interest in every activity in which this State engages.

As a previous Minister of Mines, I knew very well His Excellency's deep interest in this question, because he was constantly inquiring of the possible mineral development in South Australia and asking me to arrange tours for him to the outback parts of the State where possible mineral development could take place. I know that he saw the future of South Australia very much in line with the amount of activity that could be developed in this field. Not only in the State's mineral resources, but in all other activities, he took an abiding interest. After his illness, although he was not as active as previously, he still maintained an extremely keen interest in the welfare of the State.

As the Minister of Lands has said, Sir James had a distinguished Army career. Prior to taking the appointment of Governor of South Australia he was General Officer Commanding Eastern Command.

His death, occurring at the beginning of a period of leave, is most tragic. To Lady Harrison and his family we extend our deepest sympathy. Again, it is with regret that I support the motion moved by the Minister of Lands.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This must be one of the saddest occasions the Legislative Council of South Australia has ever encountered, because we have lost a great Australian and a great South Australian Governor. As has been said, he was the first Australian to be appointed to this very high

office, and this must be a tremendous distinction.

Sir James was born at Camperdown, Victoria, on May, 25, 1912, and, as other honourable members have mentioned, had an extremely distinguished career as an Army officer and particularly, of course, as a gunner. On his appointment as Governor of South Australia he very soon proved himself capable, conscientious and courteous; indeed, his conscientiousness in the office was something that had to be recognized. He served as Governor of South Australia for only too short a time with very great distinction and commanded the respect of all South Australians.

I know that the thoughts today of every member of this Council are with Lady Harrison

and her family, and I know that every member would wish to extend to them his or her deepest sympathy. I ask members to stand and pass the resolution in silence.

Motion carried by honourable members standing in their places in silence.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Minister of Lands) moved:

That, as a tribute to the memory of His Excellency Major-General Sir James William Harrison, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., the Council do now adjourn until Tuesday next, September 21.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2.25 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, September 21, at 2.15 p.m.