

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
TUESDAY 05TH JULY 2016
CONSTITUTION (DEMISE OF THE CROWN) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 22 June 2016.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:29): I rise to speak to the Constitution (Demise of the Crown) Amendment Bill 2016. Like the deputy leader, I certainly do not wish any ill will on Her Majesty in debating this legislation. I note the comments that the deputy leader made around the possible treasonous effects of the Attorney-General's bringing this to the house, but I hope he has no ill effects, apart from perhaps a session in the stocks. I would hope to see nothing higher than that.

This bill refers to the transfer of sovereignty from one queen or king to another upon their death, resignation, abdication or being deposed. You have to wonder whether we have to go through this process. As the deputy leader has outlined, certainly Western Australia and other jurisdictions have gone at a snail's pace. I certainly believe The Queen will live for quite a long time yet, and long may she reign. She has done an excellent job over her time as Queen.

I want to give a little bit of history on Queen Elizabeth II. She was born on 21 April 1926 and was the daughter of Prince Albert, Duke of York, who later became King George VI. As has been indicated in the house, she became Queen in 1952 but was not crowned until 1953. She is now the longest serving monarch in British history, having reigned for 63 years. Queen Elizabeth II is the 40th monarch since William the Conqueror obtained the crown of England. In June 2012, Queen Elizabeth celebrated her 60 years on the throne with the Diamond Jubilee.

Prior to ascending to the throne, Queen Elizabeth had the life of a royal family member. However, in 1939, during the Second World War, both Elizabeth and her sister were relocated to Windsor Castle for the majority of the time. It was at age 14 that Elizabeth made her first radio broadcast, when she reassured children with the words 'that in the end, all will be well, for God will care for us and give us victory and peace'. Furthermore, Elizabeth's father, The King, appointed Elizabeth Colonel-in-Chief of the Grenadier Guards. Her first public appearance was in 1942 and it was to inspect the troops. Elizabeth also participated in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in an attempt to help the war effort.

Queen Elizabeth is certainly extremely well travelled, and an example of this is her Silver Jubilee tours. It is estimated that The Queen travelled some 56,000 miles that year, which is somewhere a bit over 90,000 kilometres, as she wanted to mark her jubilee by meeting as many of her people as possible. It was noted that no other sovereign had visited so much of Britain in the short period of three months.

Events to mark The Queen's Golden Jubilee began in 2002, and six key themes surrounded these: celebration, community, service, past and future, giving thanks and the commonwealth. The Queen again travelled great distances for this jubilee and visited countries such as Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, as well as every region of the United Kingdom from Falmouth, in Cornwall, to the Isle of Skye.

The Queen has provided royal assent to more than 3,500 acts of parliament. Queen Elizabeth has attended every opening of parliament, excluding two as she was expecting her children. She has a well-known love for corgis and has owned more than 30 corgis during her reign. She introduced a new breed called the dorgi which is a corgi-dachshund cross. She now only has two corgis, Holly and Willow, and two dorgis, Candy and Vulcan. The corgis and the dorgis have played a significant role in her reign.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You know of course, member for Hammond, that we are being really lenient here this morning, but we should put on record that her first corgi was actually from South Australia—well, not from South Australia, but the woman who bred the first corgi, the late Thelma Gray, actually came to South Australia. So, we have a connection to the corgis that perhaps people do not realise.

Mr PEDERICK: Well, that is fantastic news, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am glad you added to that great history of the corgis—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, it is about as relevant as everything else that we are hearing this morning.

Mr PEDERICK: —and The Queen. Getting to what happened in Western Australia, it was the Western Australian parliament that concluded that demise of the Crown provisions were required in that state to put beyond doubt the legal effect of the demise of the Crown, and it has been noted that they still have not moved down that path. This bill, no matter what happens, will ensure the continuity of parliament, public offices and legal proceedings. I guess it faces all of us, and obviously we are not sovereigns, but on the sovereign's demise all the functions, duties, powers, authorities, rights, privileges and dignities are transferred to the sovereign's successor but has no other legal effect.

Essentially, this would prevent parliament being immediately dissolved or a litigant challenging current court proceedings at the time of the sovereign's death. Certainly, I agree with the deputy leader that it is probably highly unlikely to have a legal case, but we have seen cases where there have been issues around GST funding in this great country, and that has been challenged and has caused effects down the line. I guess at the very least this blocks out litigants who may decide that they have a case and they want to push it. In closing my brief remarks, I wish The Queen all the best. Long may she live and long may she reign.