

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Amendment to Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON M.J. CRIDDLE (Agricultural) [5.36 pm]: I had been discussing the country community action plan put out by the National Party, and I suggested that it may be a useful document in the future. I had pointed out that the north eastern wheatbelt is suffering pretty badly from drought this year. I had also indicated that I wanted to say a few words about the HMAS *Sydney* memorial in Geraldton. I read in the local paper that the local member for Geraldton had indicated the Government may contribute the remainder of the contribution of \$85 000, to complete the full requirement from the local people. I am pleased that indication was made and that the funding may be available in October. Members may not be aware that I had led a delegation to Hon Bruce Scott, the federal government minister, with representatives from the Rotary Club, along with other members of the Geraldton community. This was followed by a visit from Deputy Prime Minister Anderson to look at the development from Mt Scott, which is an absolutely fantastic viewing point. It has a 180-degree view across the ocean. It will be a great memorial to those people, bearing in mind that they visited Geraldton during their term of action. A cheque for \$200 000 was presented by the federal Government. Hon Hendy Cowan, through his department, had earlier given \$75 000. The present Government has also contributed \$40 000. I welcome the news from the local member. In November the commemoration will take place for the 645 sailors who were lost, somewhere between Geraldton and Carnarvon, in that action with the *Kormoran*. The spot where the vessel went down has not been identified. Quite a few suggestions have been made as to where it might be, but nobody has located it. Of course, that is an ongoing mystery in the area. Certainly, the people of Geraldton who are assisting with that memorial will be delighted to hear that news. I hope that the Government comes forward with that contribution.

I will also comment on a couple of other issues. While the Minister for Agriculture is present, I will touch on the talk of the Midland stockyards closing and the need for the development of other stockyards. Muchea, and Northam previously, had been the two areas being investigated. I met with some people in Moora recently - I think the minister knows that - and they have put forward a comprehensive proposition for the development of infrastructure for the yards. However, the spin-off from that is that there will also be the opportunity to have holding yards for export, a feedlot, and maybe in the future - who knows - the development of an abattoir in that area. I wonder about Muchea from the point of view of environmental issues and the development of the City of Perth, as it is likely to expand up the coast. It seems that there may well be some conflict about the spread of metropolitan Perth into that area, and in the not too distant future the problem will be similar to that in Midland. If substantial amounts of money are to be spent, we must look at a contribution in the vicinity of maybe \$10 million. However, we must also look at it in the context of a saleyard feeding onto a holding yard, a feedlot or an abattoir, and the efficiencies involved in having them all close by so that stock do not have to be re-trucked. In other words, if stock is trucked in there, and it has to be loaded and unloaded again - that has happened at Katanning, because the abattoir there is not very far away from the saleyard - that is an additional cost. That matter should be considered.

I hope that the chairman of the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority will give due consideration to this, because other factors are involved. One such factor is transport coming from the east down Greenmount hill to Muchea; or there is the possibility of developing the road across from Toodyay, which is the old lime sand route about which so much discussion is going on. I understand that has been put off; it is not in the budget for the near future. If there is to be transport into those areas, it must be efficient road transport. In the present circumstances, I could not envisage road trains being allowed to go down Greenmount hill to travel to Muchea. Maybe I would have a different view of that, but I am not sure that that would be permitted to happen.

Triples already come down to Wubin, and if the yards were in the Moora area, the opportunity for triples to go further south when that major highway is upgraded is well and truly worth consideration. Therefore, economies are involved in those yards being located in Moora. Northam is more of a possibility for sheep than anything else, because it is closer to the eastern wheatbelt. If the yards were not located in Northam, consideration should be given to Katanning, which is a major centre. I have heard talk about the funding not being spent in Katanning. I hope that when the facility in Midland is sold and some of the funds are released - there are various ways to sell that facility, I understand - the value could be between \$14 million and \$30 million, depending on how it is sold. It could be sold in lots, for building, or in one allocation, which would mean perhaps not getting as much for the land as would be possible if it were sold in individual lots. However, that will have to be considered in the future. There is the possibility of spending some of that money in Katanning. In the long term, consideration should be given to whether that facility should stay in that spot or go to where the abattoir is located. A reasonable, rational decision must be made on that matter. Double handling of stock leads to all sorts of penalties, and those issues must be considered.

Hon Kim Chance: There are issues about the Shire of Plantagenet and the City of Albany as well at Mt Barker.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: Those issues at Mt Barker should have been considered. The yards there are absolutely fantastic. However, they are not next to an abattoir. It is very much like the local sports pavilion that does not have the golf club, the tennis club and a few other things close to it; other infrastructure must be built.

Hon Kim Chance: In respect of those issues you raised, the MIA's report dealt with only the Muchea and Northam sites, I understand. The Moora site was raised too late for the Government to look at it. However, the process that will follow the release of the MIA's report, which I expect to receive as soon as tonight, will include the infrastructure issues that arise from the decision. I believe that will allow Moora to have a chance of reconsideration.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: The minister understands the issues about Moora as well as I do. We are giving a country area the opportunity to have a substantial amount of employment. The Government should be considering that.

A number of people are involved with yards. If there is a holding facility for export cattle as well as an abattoir, it can only enhance the possibility of more employment in a regional centre.

Hon Kim Chance: I am prepared to look at that in some detail in the context of the infrastructure debate.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Moora also has a water supply, whereas Muchea does not.

Hon Kim Chance: He nods.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: A number of issues are important. Perhaps the Environmental Protection Authority will reflect on what Hon Bruce Donaldson just said. It is a serious issue. We would not want a cattle facility or yards like that to be built in a spot that would cause difficulty in the future. That means that the facility should be well away from metropolitan Perth, and perhaps it will be off a water mound - I am not too sure of the water issue involved.

We should also consider the Katanning facility at the same time, and perhaps funds should be made available to make that a good facility in the long term. I am pleased to hear the minister talk about giving consideration to the Moora proposition, because the people of Moora have put a lot of work into it. Certainly, they will be pleased to hear that.

I will touch on the issues regarding the port and developments in the Geraldton area. I know that people have various ideas. There has been a suggestion of conveyor belts coming in from Narnagulu, which in itself is an interesting proposition, because something like 60 different segregations of product would go through the port. In any talk of a conveyor belt being the best way to shift product in there - I do not favour the proposition, which came up about eight or 10 years ago - it must be remembered that quality assurance needs to be considered. As soon as minerals and food products are mixed, all sorts of difficulties arise. At present, a quality assurance process must be gone through when products such as Shoshu barley are sold to Japan. That will not decrease. There will be quality assurance of products in our shipping facilities more and more, and those products must be guaranteed off the property to the destination.

The proposition of deepening the port of Geraldton has been raised. There are various opinions on that. The savings will be amazing if a Handimax vessel can be loaded out of that facility. It will cost a lot of money. However, the simple fact is that there will be major savings if that facility can fully load grain, and more grain can be drawn from the northern wheatbelt onto the rail through the whole handling system. The savings to producers will be across the board from farm gate to plate. The facility will provide the opportunity of reducing the cost. Because of two-port loading, vessels must leave Geraldton not fully loaded and travel to Kwinana, Fremantle or another port for a top-up of maybe only 5 000 tonnes. A less efficient port means that fewer vessels can be loaded. That is a difficulty in the handling of the product.

The Geraldton port facility would have to accommodate a Handimax vessel with a draught of about 11.5 metres. This means that the basin of the harbour at Geraldton would need to be deepened to 12.1 metres. Access to the channel would have to be about 12.4 metres at the inshore end and 13.9 metres at the offshore end. Quite a deal of work would have to be done. The dredger operators have told me that cutter-suction dredgers can do the job, which means there will be no blasting.

Funding has caused some concern to the Government. However, we put in infrastructure such as that in Esperance. One of the major benefits has been that an industry, such as the Koolyanobbing Iron Ore Joint Venture, has been put in place. The 150 000 tonne Capemax vessels have enabled that industry to go ahead in leaps and bounds. I understand that production will go to something like 8 million tonnes in the near future from what was 2 million tonnes, so the development has been substantial and exciting. Savings as a result of efficiency have meant that the whole exercise has been fruitful. The Government will receive the feasibility study for the Geraldton port project later in the year. I hope that the Government will look favourably upon it. I

understand the project is self-funding, which is a very good proposition. It needs the opportunity for the required funding to be raised.

The subject of the Cervantes-Lancelin road was raised the other day when Hon Kim Chance was in Geraldton. If the road project goes ahead, a great deal of infrastructure can immediately be put into the area. The putting back of the project has cut into the confidence of people in that area. The talk is that seven projects, valued at some \$200 million, being put at risk in that area, is of real concern to anybody who lives in rural Western Australia. Some \$31 million had been committed and some works will go ahead, but the main project will not start until 2003-04 and finish in 2005-06. There are more benefits than the infrastructure that would be built. Separating heavy haulage traffic from tourist and lighter traffic would benefit road safety quite substantially. A new road to complete Indian Ocean Drive would substantially cut the amount of time for people travelling to Perth. The federal Government has committed funding to the promotion of Indian Ocean Drive, but one wonders whether it will fulfil that commitment. I think the figure involved is in the region of \$100 000. The completion of that road would be of great benefit, as would the completion of the Hyden-Corrigin road. A great tourist attraction at Hyden means that tourist traffic intermingles with heavy haulage traffic. Unfortunately, quite a substantial number of accidents have occurred in that area, which causes me a great deal of concern.

Hon Kim Chance: The road is certainly overdue for attention.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: It is very narrow, yes. I was pleased to hear people telling tourists to get off that road and give way to heavy haulage vehicles. The problem with that is dust, because a vehicle might pull over and get hit by the next truck.

Hon Kim Chance: The road also has the potentially dangerous mix of heavy transport and passenger buses as a result of the Hyden destination.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: The rock at Hyden is an icon for the Western Australian tourism industry. People certainly like to go there. I am surprised that such an icon can attract so many people. The number of people going to see the rock is quite extraordinary.

Hon Kim Chance: It draws 180 000 visitors a year; in comparison Kalbarri draws 109 000.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: It is a great attraction, hence the point I make about the road.

Another road that could be put in place is the bypass at Geraldton, which would join the Pell Bridge. Hon Kim Chance might know the road. It would go to the Allanooka Springs Road. Then heavy haulage vehicles would be driven almost around Geraldton and just inside the airport. They would therefore not mingle with local traffic at all. Many people say that 90 per cent of the traffic on those roads is local traffic. However, the removal of any heavy haulage vehicles from those roads would once again reduce the possibility of any danger.

A road in Hon Norman Moore's electorate also needs to be fixed. It joins Derby to the mines. Gulf Transport (WA) Pty Ltd vehicles travel on it.

Hon N.F. Moore: Unfortunately there is more than one, Hon Murray Criddle. You and your predecessor did a marvellous job in getting it fixed.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: We also made dedicated road funding available. I hope the funds remain there and are not put into other areas. We road users have funded many of the projects.

I wanted to take the opportunity of the Address-in-Reply to touch on some of those issues and the amendment that Hon George Cash has moved. I thank him for doing that. I hope that the Government will take on those issues that are vital to the infrastructure of Western Australia.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon B.K. Donaldson.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm