

mediate building and will commence the work without delay. It is not that they have built all the houses that they previously had on their lists, but that a number of the prospective owners have dropped off the lists as they can no longer finance the erection of homes.

With a lessening of home building and an increase in production, it is inevitable that there will be a greater demand on existing accommodation and with that increased demand we can expect considerable pressure upon rentals. In view of that if controls were removed we could expect trouble.

Mr. Griffith: I hope you do not think I was suggesting the lifting of controls?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. I have all along had in mind members of another place. I do not expect difficulty in the passing of the legislation through this House as the Chief Secretary has made it clear that he knows exactly what the situation is. He said that if the legislation were allowed to lapse there would be a general increase in rents, and there is not the slightest doubt about that. I hope that realisation is in the minds of members of another place and that this legislation will not be allowed to lapse because, as I have said, if it does there will inevitably be an increasing pressure for the raising of rents. While we might be against controls generally and would prefer a free economy, this is not the time to remove these controls. I am glad that the Government has seen fit to introduce this continuance Bill and I hope it will be passed.

On motion by Mr. Graham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.14 p.m.

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## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 17th September, 1952.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill.

### QUESTIONS.

#### DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

(a) As to 1,000-Farm Scheme.

Hon. C. H. HENNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Concerning the statement of the Director of Agriculture in "The West Australian" of the 15th September, 1952, under the heading "Aim of 1,000 Dairy Farms," will the Minister amplify the statement?

(2) Which scheme takes preference in the Government's plans—the improvement of existing farms or the 1,000-farm scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Details of the scheme for the establishment of 1,000 new dairy farms in Western Australia are still under discussion with the Commonwealth Government and will be made available as soon as finality is reached.

(2) The schemes for the development of new farms and the rehabilitation of existing farms are regarded as separate proposals. Neither can be commenced without financial assistance from the Commonwealth. The Government regards the re-establishment of existing dairy farms as of the greatest importance.

(b) As to Price of Wholemilk.

Hon. C. H. HENNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is the price of wholemilk paid to the producer, as determined by the Milk Board, based on the cost of production?

(2) Will he make public the costs table as is done in Victoria?

(3) If the answer to (2) is in the negative, why?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The price as determined by the Milk Board is based upon the inquiry by the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the financial and economic position of the milk industry between November, 1947, and January, 1948, with suitable adjustments for increased costs since that date.

(2) and (3) The findings of the Royal Commission have been published, but consideration will be given to making available the adjustments made due to increased costs. The determination of the price is the function of the Milk Board.

## RAILWAYS.

*As to Reinstating Services.*

Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What number of passenger trains using steam engines are run each week from Perth to the following places and return:—

- (a) Albany;
- (b) Bunbury;
- (c) Kalgoorlie;
- (d) Wiluna?

(2) What lines have not yet had goods and stock services reinstated?

(3) Is the haulage of coal from Collie back to normal?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

- (1) (a) Nil.
- (b) Two.
- (c) Two.
- (d) One. (To Meekatharra only.)

(2) Meekatharra-Wiluna, Malcolm-Laverton, Dwellingup-Narrogin, Mukinbudin-Southern Cross, Wyalkatchem-Meredin, Collie-Bowelling-Wagin, Donnybrook-Katanning, Margaret River-Flinders Bay, York-Bruce Rock, Brookton-Corrigin, Clackline-Miling, Bonnie Rock branch, Hyden branch, Ongerup branch, Pingrup branch, Denmark branch, Nanup branch.

- (3) No.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Eleventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [4.38]: I would like to join with other members in extending congratulations to the new members in this Chamber, and also to those who were successful in being re-elected last May. From the way the new members have spoken, there can be little doubt as to their worth, and I am sure they will represent their provinces and carry out their work in this Chamber at the same high standard set by their predecessors.

In supporting the Address-in-reply I want to express some concern, because, despite the seeming prosperity of some rural industries, both at present and in the immediate past, the position is not as satisfactory as some people may think. We see the world passing at the moment from a seller's economy to a buyer's economy, and under such conditions we are faced with the demand of the buyers of the world for cheap food for the masses and cheap raw materials for industry. Whilst we have in this country, as far as we can gather, almost unlimited prospects for further development of the production of food and raw materials, we

find Governments and others howling their heads off for more food production and more export production.

I must confess that I hope they will be allowed to continue to howl about the matter until there is a good deal more realism in their approach to the subject and a good deal less humbug and political opportunism. Under conditions as they are now, I think it is inevitable that a reduction in development will continue. Both Governments and people in Australia will have to get into a frame of mind whereby they are content to see the rural industries and population prosperous. When I use that word "prosperous" I use it in its full sense. There is no need for them to worry overmuch if a farmer has bought himself a new motor car, or if he has installed an electric lighting system, or a septic tank. These amenities are provided as a matter of right if one lives in the more densely populated areas.

Whilst recognising that it is difficult to take action, either governmental or otherwise, to provide these amenities for the people, isolated as they are in the farming areas, we must remember that they need those amenities just as much as the city people do and they have to be assisted, if necessary, into a position where they can provide those facilities for themselves. There is no other source from which they can obtain them.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They are more entitled to them than the city people.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: We will say that they are at least as entitled to them as are the city people. If we are to achieve the desired increased production, which we can all see that Australia needs, then I think one of the first requirements is a realistic approach to the matter of the restoration of incentive. Whilst our industries, with reasonably high prices, can perhaps carry high costs or maybe high taxation, they cannot carry both; and I am firmly of the opinion that much of the reduced production and much of the indifference among the rural community towards the extra effort that is needed to increase their production is caused by the lack of incentive which has been taken away from them.

The stage has been reached where in some of our major rural industries the producer is in the position of feeling that the more he grows the more he owes to the tax gatherers. Whilst that continues, public men and Ministers or anyone else have a hopeless job ahead of them if they think they are going to restore the level of production, which this community needs, by platitudes and political humbug. While talking on this subject, I think we can take that aspect of it even further and say that Australia, as a whole, is faced with a need for the reversal of the policy we are following to still further develop secondary industries.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Put a Labour Government in and you will get that.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It has never done it before but a leopard may change its spots, of course! Over the last 30 years, the settled policy of this country, which has been publicised as such, has been the development of secondary industries. I think we have reached the stage where the so-called settled policy is about to pay off in a still further reduction in what we are now coming to regard as essential industries, with consequent still greater difficulties unless the Fates are kind and provide sufficient oversea funds to meet our commitments to the rest of the world and permit us to purchase those raw materials which are needed.

To me it seems that public men, as well as Governments, can be of assistance to this country by bringing that home to the people affected. I am convinced that for the time being, at all events, we cannot afford both. We cannot have a further development of the secondary industries if we are to achieve any measure of worth-while development, or, even further development, in the primary industries. I cannot for the life of me visualise Australia ever being able to pay her way with secondary industries. We may be able to provide for our own needs; we may even reduce the position to the stage where we shall be taking in each other's washing.

But with industrial development taking place as it is, I understand, in India, and with similar development in China, and also the fact that it has taken place in Japan, I am convinced that, in our natural markets, being the countries nearest to us, it is impossible for our secondary industries to compete successfully. We can grow food and produce raw materials. The world is short of food and we need the oversea balances from the sale of our raw materials. We have got to recognise the facts as they are and not try to build an economy based on secondary industries which can never hope to carry it.

The community is prepared to accept—as a result, perhaps, of education over the years—the drift to the cities. The people feel that they would like to live in the city with its amenities and the community is prepared to accept the responsibility of assisting secondary industries with tariff protection for those engaged in them, and with arbitration awards to protect the employees in those industries. They are also assisted with the social services we have developed in this country.

It is too late to complain or to turn back the clock, but we shall have to call a halt to this line of development. Otherwise, not only will this generation be confronted with a shortage of food, but the problem will be continued into the next generation also. If we pursue the course we are taking we cannot but experience a

progressive decline in our rural industries. Even if a halt were called now, and world prices were to recede to any considerable degree, we would be faced with the necessity of resorting to something along the lines of the American price support programme for our primary industries.

To me, that is not an ideal. I think it will become an absolute necessity, and that the community will have to accept responsibility for maintaining its primary industries at such a level that those engaged in them will find them worth while and will be given sufficient incentive not only to continue, but also to increase production. It is extraordinary that while we have a declining wheat industry in this country, the United States of America, year after year, as a result of the incentive given to wheatgrowing under the price support programme, is reaping tremendous crops. If we are going to maintain our rural industries, something along the same lines will be inevitable.

At the moment, all that our Governments seem to see in the rural industries are broad shoulders on which to heap further burdens to help them whenever their policies have got them into difficulties in other directions. The people of any country, if they care to work hard enough and live frugally enough, can develop a manufacturing industry. Japan is a case in point. With very little raw material of its own, it has developed a tremendous manufacturing capacity.

On the other hand, there are not many countries in the world that can go on increasing their production of foodstuffs. To do this they need favourable climatic and soil conditions. Australia is one of those favoured countries, and with the world crying out for food and with our urgent need of a greater export trade to maintain our place amongst the nations of the world, it is ridiculous that we should be concentrating so much upon secondary industries that will have to compete against the cheap labour countries of Asia and neglecting our opportunities for the development of the food-producing industries.

It seems that nothing short of a complete reorientation of thinking amongst the great mass of the people as well as amongst our leaders is necessary. If such propositions as those at Kwinana and the Snowy River, are to be given first place in our thoughts and are to be given top priority and become major objectives, I see no hope of maintaining our rural industries even at their present level. We shall have to be prepared to resort to something along the lines of the price support programme being applied in America.

It is ridiculous that while Ministers and others were pleading for greater production of food and stressing the vital importance of the rural industries the Prime

Minister oversea was contending that Australia's primary needs were the hydro-electric scheme, water schemes and transport.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Is not the Snowy River scheme intended to aid increased production?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: As I understand it, the main purpose of that scheme is to provide power for industry. We have the public relations officer of our own State emphasising what has been done in the way of developing secondary industries, the effect that the Kwinana project will have on the State and the certainty that still further secondary industries will be started.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: And none of them in the North.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: As against that, Lord Boyd, the late director general of the United Nations Food Organisation, told the farmers of America that if Australia tackled properly the question of food production, it could become one of the wealthiest countries of the world. Consequently, it seems that we have permitted ourselves to be diverted from what for the next hundred years, I imagine, should have been our true aim in developing this country.

Before leaving this subject, I should like to commend to the notice of members a little booklet that a friend of mine gave me recently. It is entitled, "Food or Famine" and has been published with the authority of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic Church in Australia. I do not necessarily agree with all it contains, but I believe that these good people have done a service to the country in setting out the position as clearly as they have done. I shall quote only one sentence from this booklet and conclude my remarks on this particular subject. The sentence reads:—

The first and basic change in public opinion must be the conviction that agriculture is the very centre of our national living, the completely indispensable industry.

I regret that the Minister for Railways is not in his place because some remarks I have to make may be of interest to him.

The Minister for Agriculture: He will read the report of your speech.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: As a result of the metal trades strike, a strong case can be built up for the people in the country, who pay freight on everything they buy and on everything they sell, and the railway authorities should take a realistic view of the services and administration of the railways generally. Where there is a will there is a way, but I am afraid there is no will existing in the higher administration—and the higher we go the more evidence there is of this lack of will. I have in mind conditions in some of the

country areas. In one place we have a branch line serving a certain number of townships, and before the strike the normal service was six trains a week. During the latter period of the strike there were no trains at all—and no one was inconvenienced.

A couple of carriers who catered for the towns could not find enough traffic offering in or out to run two trips a week to the metropolitan area. Yet, during the so-called normal times, that line was served with six trains a week. Surely if the will is there, it is possible for the railway administration to provide some sort of semi-maintenance services on lines of this kind. Admittedly we must have railways for the haulage of heavy traffic—super, wheat and timber—but a good deal of it is seasonal.

It should be possible to work out some system which would cater for this traffic and still effect extensive savings compared with the cost of running the present services. It almost seems that we have reached the stage where the railway administration, from the Minister downwards, thinks that its job is simply to run trains. The fact that there is no traffic offering beyond, perhaps, a few brown paper parcels, does not seem to matter.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: How would the freight charges compare?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The freight charges would in most cases be heavier, I think, but the losses on the railways fall on the shoulders of the community. The portion of the losses which the Government carries, is borne by the community, but other portions have to be reimbursed through ever-increasing rail freights. We are justified in asking the administration to face up to this matter.

The metal trades strike, disastrous as it was, has provided us, and the administration too, if it is prepared to learn, with sufficient evidence to show that our railway finances could be considerably improved. I am concerned about these losses because of the ever-increasing freights that the people who use the railways are called upon to pay. The administration is not realistic in some ways. We find a Government bus service alongside a railway line—one competing with the other. The losses are becoming a tremendous incubus, and should there be a marked recession in the prices of primary products, freight charges would constitute a considerable handicap to people in the country.

I was pleased recently to see an announcement that the Department of Native Affairs had decided to provide some homes for selected native people, or half-castes. Unfortunately, it has been able to start only in a modest way. I said here a couple of sessions ago that in order to try to improve the status of these people, selected natives should be given reasonable accom-

modation in the areas where they elected to live. But I am quite convinced that, apart from a few isolated cases, the department will have to exercise considerable powers of direction and control if this development is to be extended successfully.

There is much to commend the proposal that was put before the Minister by a deputation a few months ago for the creation of farm schools, or farms, where vocational training could be given to the younger natives. But again, in connection with any of these proposals, there will have to be control. If there is a further extension of social services for these people, as I understand is possible, I hope the Department of Native Affairs—although I am not enamoured of its successes up to date—will have some say in the disbursement of such moneys as become available.

As I see it, the greatest difficulty is in the control of the parents, and without control of the parents our chances of dealing with the children are pretty remote unless power is given to control the money made available for these people. At the moment the department, and some persons, do a lot of wailing, and indiscriminately blame all and sundry because more is not done for our half-caste population. Sympathy and sentiment without realism will get us nowhere. I do not think the best interests of either the department or the natives are being served by departmental officers, who, if they are not drawing on their imagination—

Hon. A. R. Jones: I do not think any of them has any imagination.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: —are accepting evidence from quarters which are obviously doubtful, in order to publicise what these officers seem to think is the hostility of the white people in certain areas to the half-caste population. I do not think the granting of citizenship rights to these people is the cure—all that some people believe it to be. To my mind, the end to aim at is to get these people to the stage where they are not only worthy of citizenship rights, but are able to maintain them so that they can be worth-while citizens of the community.

When all is said and done, the granting of citizenship rights gives them little more than the right to vote and drink. I do not think politics and plonk will clear up the half-caste problem. We have to look further than that. Unless we are realistic about this matter, the problem will continue to drift. It is a social question now; it will become a social tragedy before we finish with it. This is a job—as it cannot be achieved overnight—for the people of this country to deal with over a period of several generations. I think we can make worth-while citizens of these people.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We have been waiting two years to—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: As I said at the outset of my remarks, the department is to be commended for making a start with respect to housing, but it will have to do much more. Up to date I do not think the Department of Native Affairs has much to be proud of in its achievements. It is costing the community £160,000 to £170,000 a year. If it develops the ideas that it now seems to have, it will need to recognise the necessity to direct, help and control the older ones of these people; and if it does that, it may get somewhere. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [5.12]: I express personally my sincere appreciation, and also that of the residents of the North Province, of the recent visit made to that area by His Excellency Sir Charles Gairdner. Within nine months of arriving from England, he found time to visit the North, meet its people and study the industries they pursue. We are fortunate indeed to have as Governor such a man as His Excellency, who is so anxious to look at the country and meet the people. They deeply appreciate what he has done, and wish him well.

To the new members of this Chamber and those who were re-elected at the last election I also offer my best wishes and thanks for their able assistance and contributions to our debates. The people in my province felt some disappointment at His Excellency's Speech, which was delivered here only one or two days after his return from the North. Of course, the people understand that the Speech is prepared by the Government, and the Governor would not have had time to deal with it as he would perhaps have liked to do after seeing the North.

The people are greatly disappointed because of the Government's apparent lack of interest and its failure to rehabilitate the State Shipping Service which serves the North. Families in that area consider they have been neglected in that regard. In effect, they are left with no alternative but to use expensive air services and are forced to pay high plane fares which they cannot afford. They consider that as no passenger ships are operating along the coast as they did prior to the last war, they are being badly treated, and I agree with them.

Today I rang the State Shipping office to inquire as to the number of berths available and I was told that there are 200 applications for berths from people who desire to travel south in time for Christmas. Those 200 applications are in excess of the number of berths allotted as being the full capacity of ships operating for passenger travel. What encouragement is there for people to live in the North if they have to spend all their

savings on plane fares to travel south for a much-needed holiday or to obtain medical or dental attention? They have no alternative but to accept travel by air.

Strangely enough, the more isolated people are, the more severe are the rates charged by the air companies. As an instance, I know of a woman who lived at Yampi and who desired to travel to Darwin. The fare from Yampi or Derby to Darwin is £10 by ship, but this woman was forced to go to Derby in order to catch a plane to Darwin and the fare is £13 10s. When travelling by air one is allowed to carry 35 lb. of luggage and anything in excess of that weight costs 1s. per lb. which makes such travel pretty costly. To Darwin, the plane takes four and a half hours, whereas the boat takes six days.

The boat would not accept the woman as a passenger because apparently the days of shake-down berths are past and the ships definitely refuse to take any passengers unless proper berths are available. I can remember the days when teams of 50 or 60 shearers would congregate at the port and the boats used to race to get them as passengers. The Blue Funnel line, the Adelaide Steamship Company's vessels, and the old "Bambra"—all raced to get them. Even the State ships paid their way up till about 1922.

The Minister for Agriculture: What! They have never paid since they have been on the run.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It is on record that State ships did pay.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, but they were not our State ships at that time.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: In support of my contention that the air companies are more severe with their charges to the people who live in the more distant parts, I will tell the House what the fares are. From Perth to Derby, a distance of 1397 miles, the fare is £28 or 4.81d. per air mile. From Derby to Darwin is a distance of 625 miles and the fare is £17 10s. or 6.72d. per air mile. It can be seen, therefore, that there is no reduction in fares for anybody who lives in the North. They are penalised merely because they live there.

People living at Fitzroy Crossing, and particularly at Hall's Creek, because it is further away, now have to pool their postage because all surface mails have ceased. No matter to which point they wish to send a letter, the postage rate is still 6½d. per oz., that being the minimum charge. In my opinion, the extension of air services in the North is being overdone and the people have no alternative but to accept them. The cost of postage on small packages, and large ones also, to those people who are forced to send them by air, is very expensive.

I have heard a lot said in this House about freight costs, but I will give an indication of how uneconomical the air services are. Recently I sent a paper weighing 2oz. to Derby and it cost me 2s. by air mail, which works out at the rate of £1,778 per ton. The average price along the coast, in places such as Port Hedland, and further inland as well, at Wittenoom Gorge, Nullagine, Marble Bar or at any of the stations, is 1s. 8d. per lb., which works out at £180 per ton. At Wyndham, the charge is 2s. 10d. per lb., and that port is the worst served along the coast, as far as shipping is concerned. Sometimes no boat calls at that port for six or eight weeks at a time, although vessels call at Yampi on every occasion for small items.

The air freight rate to Wyndham, where the people are forced to use air services, is £316 6s. 4d., based on the rate of 2s. 10d. per lb. The minimum charge for the despatch of a small parcel to the North by air is 2s. It does not matter whether it weighs only 1oz. or 15oz., the charge is still 2s. If it weighs 16oz., it will go to such places as Carnarvon for 1s. 6d. The numerous small packages which are definitely essential to the people in the North and which are urgent, generally cost about 2s. For instance, I sent some spectacles back to a person in the North who had asked me to have them repaired. The parcel weighed 6oz. but it still cost me 2s. by air, which I consider is very uneconomical.

It is all very well for the people in the North to be penalised in this way merely because they live there, but let us see what happens to "The West Australian" newspaper. It can be bought daily at any of the ports along the coast at a cost of only 3d. Goodness knows what expense is involved in distributing that newspaper around Western Australia, but nobody seems to quibble about it. But when we ask for a subsidy from the Government for the carriage of perishables such as baby foods and green vegetables for people who live in places where such commodities cannot be produced, the Treasurer cries poverty.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Does not the hon. member think the proprietors of "The West Australian" pay for the freight on the newspapers in order that they may be sold in the North at the same rate as they are to other parts of the State?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I know that "The West Australian" is carried by air at a reduced air freight rate. I do not know what the rate is because I have not inquired.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course, the Government has made contributions to air freights on such commodities as vegetables.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The greatest contribution the Government is making to air freight is to Air-Beef Pty. Ltd., which is operating from Glenroy station. It seems to me that two or three pastoralists, the air-beef company—which of course is mainly owned by A.N.A. which, in turn, is mainly owned by the Orient Steamship Coy., among others—are able to obtain unlimited funds. The more bullocks they carry, the bigger the subsidy.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It is 1d. per pound.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Yes, 1d. per pound as a Commonwealth subsidy, and the State Government has granted it £10,000. If one looks at the Auditor General's report it will be seen that it cost three thousand some hundreds of pounds to provide equipment to handle the beef at the Wyndham port.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Does the hon. member disapprove of that?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: On that basis it will be found that it will cost about £4 per head to move a carcass from Glenroy to Wyndham—a distance of 150 miles. The project does not produce anything. It is idle to say that the air-beef scheme will increase production. It will not do so any more than bullock or camel transport will.

Hon. A. R. Jones: It will save a great deal of loss.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It will save nothing. Any increase in production rests solely with the management. All that the air-beef scheme has done is to clean up all the rubbish off the stations such as old cows and bullocks which the pastoralists themselves say are too feeble to walk to Wyndham. That demonstrates bad management for a start. However, what is to happen when they clean up all the old cattle? Everyone knows the air-beef scheme has been of great assistance during this particular year.

The bullocks have been driven into Glenroy this year and even last year, when there were good pastures, they were driven in. However, I doubt whether that will happen again for the simple reason that the air-beef company pays a much lower price for the beef than is paid at Wyndham or at the market in the metropolitan area. If the Government is anxious to assist the producer in the North, it should build good roads so that he can move his stock economically. Let the Government spend some money to grass the stock routes and to build ships such as the "Koolinda," which will carry both passengers and cattle, and thus give everyone in the North a fair chance.

I know that the air-beef scheme was an experiment. In the first speech I made in this House I mentioned that I did not think it was economical. I am still of that opinion because it gives a low return

to the producer; it costs the taxpayers much money; it is a heavy dollar drainer, and it does not increase production. No matter how attempts may be made to pass it off, we cannot get away from cold facts. If people have to pay £4 a head to shift old cattle down here—that is where the old stock go and the good cattle are taken elsewhere to be consumed oversea—

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is why we get such tough meat here.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If the poor quality stock were brought down south, we should have evidence of it in the shops. Where is any such cheap meat to be seen in the shops here? I maintain that the North is over-supplied with very expensive air services and is very badly neglected as regards the provision of roads and adequate shipping facilities. Until steps are taken to remedy that position, I am afraid conditions in the North will continue to deteriorate. There are too many taking out and not enough putting in.

I believe the North should be viewed in much the same light as the development of suburban estates is regarded. In my opinion, a plan of development for the North should be formulated, just as the authorities here prepare plans for the development of, say, Floreat Park, or holiday resorts such as Waikiki Beach, Mandurah, or some other place. Until something of that sort is undertaken, I do not think the North will go ahead.

When the development of a district is to be undertaken down here, what is done? The first step is to subdivide the area into residential blocks, and then good roads are constructed. Provision is next made for water supplies, and only at that stage are people allowed to take up blocks. They flock in when all that is done, and certainly there is no holding them back. Most of the money spent on providing roads, gardens and so on comes from the North, or at any rate a very large share of it is derived from that source.

During the course of his speech, Mr. Parker asked how the people who reside down south could be expected to provide all the money required for the development of the North. I do not know if Mr. Parker really believes that is the position. He probably does not; I feel sure he knows it is not quite true. Rather is the boot on the other foot. I have gone to a lot of trouble to prepare some figures relating to the North and the North-West, and I propose to examine them in the course of my remarks. I think they will provide quite a different story.

It would be impossible to secure accurate figures for the North, so I have been very conservative in those I have compiled. Even so, they serve to indicate that the North is a very satisfactory producer of

goods and a good money-spinner for the South. The market value of the known production during 1951-52 is as follows:—

	£
Wool, over 60,000 bales	5,500,000
Sheep 38,500 exported	77,000
Cattle, 50,000 live price @ £15	750,000
Blood and bone	13,000
Whaling industry, two factories	1,500,000
Pearling	166,000
Shark Bay, local fish catch only	59,500
Mining	770,700
Carnarvon agriculture	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,196,200</b>

It is interesting to examine those figures, which disclose the following totals under the respective industries:—

	£
Pastoral	6,346,000
Fishing	1,725,500
Mining	770,700
Intense culture (Carnarvon)	300,000

We may next examine the mining figures for the same financial year. The principal return came from asbestos, Wittenoom Gorge providing £323,867 worth of blue asbestos, and Nunyerry was responsible for the greater proportion of £28,936 worth of white asbestos. Gold ranks next, with a production worth £168,675, followed by silver lead, the production of which was valued at £96,951. Iron-ore from Yampi Sound was worth £51,191. That annual production of iron-ore will be stepped up from now on to at least £1,250,000 worth. The production for 1951-52 represented three boat-loads only. Both Wittenoom Gorge and Nunyerry will also step up production of asbestos because bigger mills are now being operated. The rest of the production is represented by the output of copper ores and rare metals.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Is not the figure you quote of £4 per head for cattle rather low?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I have endeavoured to be as conservative as possible in taking out these figures, and what I have given represent the primary and basic industries. Certainly, the details I have submitted are by no means complete.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: For what year were the figures?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: They are the figures for 1951-52, and are very conservative. For instance, take the position regarding the fishing industry. Fish caught elsewhere than at Shark Bay, such as those caught by Geraldton and Fremantle boats, have not been included, nor have all particulars regarding skins, hides and tallow. Cattle taken to the Northern Territory and sheep that were overlanded have also

been omitted, because the figures are quite unknown. Therefore it will be readily agreed that the figures are conservative. Certainly I have been unable to secure complete figures for Western Australia, but the State average for 1950-51 as regards production per head was £210. On the other hand, the production per head of population in the North on the figures I have quoted was £1170.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You have not taken into consideration the black population.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If we take into consideration the black population at 7,000, which is indicated in the report of the Department of Native Affairs, and regard the total population as 15,000, even on that basis the per capita production is £600. During the financial year 1950-51, the gross national production for Australia as a whole was £3,593,000,000. Over the wireless today, I heard Dr. Coombs say that the production would be slightly higher for the current year.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Did you include in your figures the value of crayfish tails?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That does not affect us in the North, because crayfish tails are not exported from there, and so nothing is included in my total in that respect. The gross national production represents the total income of the whole nation, and includes all wages and incomes. It also covers high wool prices, full employment and galloping inflation, and this, of course, has meant much more business generally and provided the nation with a record income. The value of production per head of the population of Australia, excluding full-bloods, was near enough to £428.

As members will observe, if we take everyone in the North into our calculations, the production per head there amounts to £600 whereas the average per capita for the nation as a whole is £423. It would be very difficult to analyse the gross production of the North Province. In fact, it would be impossible to compile it. We do not know exactly just what goes in or out, so it would be extremely difficult to assess the position. To remain on the conservative side, however, I will say that the gross production of the North may be valued at £14,000,000.

When we take into consideration the wages earned in the North, the business incomes of oil companies, pastoral agents, stores, the cost of shearing, air lines, shipping companies and road transporters. I think that sum of £14,000,000 will still be low, but it will serve as a basis to work on. On that basis we can proceed to find out just what each person in the North contributes to the revenue of the country.



The Minister for Agriculture: But you are duplicating your figures badly because all labour charges would be included in the figures for mining shows.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The figures I have given are the market values obtained from the Mines Department and they are very low. According to the 30th report of the Commissioner of Taxation, he states on page 2—

The total tax levied by Government authorities, as a percentage of the gross national product, was 21 per cent. for the year 1949-1950.

That was the year when the Federal Labour Government was defeated and the Liberal-Country Party Government took charge of the Treasury Bench. Despite a record income and promises to reduce taxation, the incidence of taxation has risen very steeply.

Then again, in the No. 31 issue of "Facts and Figures", it will be seen that when Mr. Chifley handed over the reins of Government, the incidence of taxation per head of the population was £62 13s. 2d. In the following year, 1950-51, it was £86 9s. 2d. and the present Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, says that for 1951-52 the incidence of taxation will be £112 4s. 6½d. per head of every man, woman and child.

The Minister for Agriculture: Now give us details of the national income, and you will get your figures more accurate.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I have only the gross figures and when I indicate the market value of products from the North, it will be seen that they do not favour that part of the State in relation to the national income.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But you can make figures do anything.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I could not make these figures worse for the North.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: And Mr. Parker wants to give the North away.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Certainly, and so does he.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The figures I have given show an increase in the incidence of taxation per head from £62 in 1949-50 to £112 for 1951-52. It is reasonable to assume that where the incidence of taxation has almost doubled, the percentage of gross income must have risen, we will say, 25 per cent. It will not be less than that for certain. So if we regard the value of the gross products of the North at £14,000,000 and the percentage increase of taxation is taken as 25, it means that the North contributed £3,500,000 to revenue.

If we take the population into consideration, we find that so far as the whites and half-castes are concerned, the revenue is £445 per head; and if we included

the aborigines and spread it over 15,000 inhabitants, the amount is £233 per head more than double what Sir Arthur says the average Australian would pay in taxation. Therefore I claim that people who say that the North does not do its fair share and pull its weight with regard to production and contribution to revenue speak falsely, and what they say is very misleading and dangerous to the North. The North is full of blood. The trouble is that there are too many leeches.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No one suggested that it does not pay. You are the only one, so far as I know, who has suggested that.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am answering the hon. member's question as to how we can expect people of the South to provide all the money that is required for the North. That is the thought that has ruined the North. It is said that we cannot afford this and we cannot afford that. That is quite a wrong attitude. What is going to be done with the country? Let it rot! That is what is happening.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You complain that it is rotting.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. members know very well that fortunes have been made and are still being made in the North, only to be taken south, east or overseas to England. I know that there have been losses and that there have been depressions and droughts and cold-hearted financiers. That happens in all rural areas, and the North is no exception. The trouble is that the present Government just will not recognise the urgency of the need to put more people into the North. It is all very well taking money out of it, but it is time that something was put back.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Did the previous Government put many people in the North?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is the trouble. The present Government has encouraged nobody in the North since it took office. That is indicated by the census figures. In 1947, the population of the North excluding full-blooded aborigines, was 7,063. The number last October, according to our Government Statistician, was 7,852. Roughly 800 more persons have gone to the North since 1947. The principal increase has been at Wittenoom Gorge. Approximately half of the increased number have gone there, the other half are divided between the banana plantations and the two whaling stations.

There is a small productive community of about 80 people on the lead mines at Kooline. They have been battling very hard to obtain roads and an air service in case of emergency, and also a school teacher. They are prepared to erect buildings themselves and all they want is

a teacher to keep their families together. Up to date their representations have not met with much success.

That is the sort of people we want in the North—people who are prepared to go out and establish themselves and produce something. I refuse to believe that the people of today are not imbued with the same spirit as the pioneers of the North possessed. Most of the expenditure in the North is on roads and air services. I have already explained the position with regard to air services. So far as roads are concerned, in my opinion money will have to be spent again unless good roads are laid down in the first instance.

It is no good grading earth and rubble together. We want real solid metal roads which will carry the traffic. I am very surprised that the Commonwealth Government, or at all events the Defence Department, has not stepped in and insisted upon a good solid road into the North. Consider the value of the East-West road and the one that runs through Central Australia from Alice Springs to Darwin! Such roads bring people to the country. They see the country by that means and desire to settle in it. There is a different attitude regarding water supplies for residents in the towns of the North as compared with that adopted towards the cattle-owners in the Kimberleys. For instance, the Government is going to spend £500,000 putting down bores—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Millionaires!

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: —for the cattle people in the Kimberleys. Many of the lease holders have never seen their properties. Some of them live out of Australia.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But all that money has been provided by those people.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I do not know whether it has been provided by them.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You were saying so. I said some would have to come from the South and you said it was not so.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: They have taken a lot out. Every other farmer in Western Australia has to find water for himself. Men have gone broke in the sheep country looking for water and have had to leave their stations. Not so with these other people, who refuse even to look for water. They are to be paid on a £ for £ basis. Such a proposal helps the wealthy. It can only help them for the simple reason that after the watering point is established, the Government will pay half the cost. How is the little man to get on who has not anything to start with?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That all comes from money up North provided by the people in the North.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: How will the little man get on?

Hon. G. Bennetts: How has he ever got on?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: What a different attitude is adopted towards people who live in big towns. The Government adopts the principles of Shylock. At Carnarvon meters have been installed at the camps of old-age pensioners.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Did not the present Government reduce the price of water to country people whereas the previous Government had kept it up for 15 years?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Government has done nothing to my knowledge for the people in the North regarding water.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: It has promised things.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It made a concession to Carnarvon for the first six months for excess water when meters were installed; but, speaking generally, nothing has been done for townspeople in the North, and even the tiny camps of old-age pensioners are being provided with meters. The Government is putting the boots into old men who have spent their lives in the North, back to the early days of the water bags.

The Minister for Agriculture: Pensioners are not subject to water rates.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I know that they cannot be charged. But why waste money installing meters?

The Minister for Agriculture: Probably to make some check.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Those are the facts. There are old men camped near the jetty who are not growing a thing and are not likely to do so. Mr. Parker asks why people do not grow vegetables in the North. He knows very well that the climate will not permit that, except for a few months in the year.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: When I was in the district, there was a Chinaman who grew vegetables at Marble Bar all the year round.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course they do!

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It is all very well to say, "Of course they do."

The Minister for Agriculture: They do it in New South Wales where the climate is hotter.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: They cannot do it in the North.

The Minister for Agriculture: Can they not? They have the soil.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Why does not the Government do it on the research station at Wyndham?

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not a trading concern but an experimental research farm.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Why do they not experiment with vegetables?

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not what the station is established for. They can experiment down here much more cheaply.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Let the Government prove that vegetables can be grown on its own experimental farm on which thousands of pounds are being spent! Let the Government try to grow vegetables on it! I suggested two years ago to the officer-in-charge that vegetables should be grown and distributed from there and he told me that some company from Central Australia had been given land to grow vegetables. What has happened to it I do not know; but I do know there are no vegetables in the North.

The reason that people in the towns cannot grow them is that water is too dear. At Wyndham the flat rate is 6s. 6d. per thousand gallons; it is 3s. in most other towns. I believe Mr. Parker said that it had been reduced from 3s. 6d. to 3s. in some towns. At Port Hedland the flat rate is 20s. per thousand gallons or 2s. per hundred. The long-suffering residents have been hoping for a water supply, the provision of which was started four years ago. The installation of 19 miles of pipeline was entailed, but only half of it has been laid. That indicates just how much the Government cares about the ordinary individual in the North.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What did the previous Government do in 15 years? Nothing!

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The present Government promised that water supply and started it four years ago but has got only halfway with it. Yet in nine weeks it put a pipeline into Kwinana. But that is a different proposition; that was for a big company. Who are the people in the North?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Has it been installed at Kwinana?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: People have to be in the North, in any case. They are there, so let us leave them there!

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Is the pipeline installed to Kwinana?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The pipeline is down.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Is it?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Most of it. The Government shows no consideration for townspeople and other residents in the North. They are merely cogs in the machine. It forgets that town water supplies have to meet the needs of more than just the residents. They have to supply industries as well as stock passing through

the towns; and ships need water at times. The climate in the North is very humid and trying, quite different from the conditions down here. I remember the Minister writing to "The West Australian" and referring to the 3s. rate applying throughout the wheatbelt, but that country has a different climate altogether.

The summer up North is a very long one and the weather is very humid. It is nothing uncommon for people to get up in the night and take a shower with a view to inducing sleep. If the Government gave water to the people in the North, it would not be giving away too much. To provide all the water required in towns there at cost would represent an expenditure of about £25,000 per annum. There is no argument about supplying the South-West irrigation areas with water at less than 1d. per thousand gallons. That scheme resulted in a loss of £25,000 last year, but there is no argument about it. People there can rear baby beef and vegetables and undertake share-farming and breed horses. But it still costs only 1d. per thousand gallons in an area that receives 30 or 40 inches of rain spread over anything from 120 to 160 days in the year.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: How many inches of rain fall at Wyndham?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Twenty-seven inches, on the average, and it falls in 27 days. Broome gets 22 inches, in a period of 26 days and Port Hedland averages 10 inches over 17 or 18 days. I have seen five inches of rain registered at Carnarvon in one night and at three or four o'clock in the following afternoon one could not see the town for dust.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It dries out too quickly.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Yes. If the Government can afford to supply very cheap water to the irrigation areas, it must be able to afford to supply water at a cheaper rate to people who live in much more trying parts of the State.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There should be a flat rate for water throughout the State.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: There are flat rates for telephone charges, postage, third party insurance and even for "The West Australian"; but in the North no consideration is shown in the charges made for water to people who vitally need it. Various views have been expressed by members with regard to that part of our State. Some advocate Commonwealth control, but I think any move in that direction will wane now that the Commonwealth has reimposed taxation on the primary producers of the Northern Territory. Very few of the people in our North want to be tax-free. The great majority of them are content and satisfied to contribute towards the defence and

development of Australia and there is among them no widespread desire to be tax free.

I am inclined to believe that our North, if it were constituted a new State, would be much better off than it is today or has been under other Governments, though it must be admitted that the Government which preceded the present one did rescue the pastoral industry from complete collapse following the depression, the drought years and the war. During the drought years and the war, over £500,000 was written off in rent remissions and contributions towards interest on debts. There are in the North today many pastoralists who possibly would not have been able to remain on their properties had it not been for the consideration shown to them by the Government, various firms and some, but not all, of the banks.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That was the Labour Government.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I have already said that the present Government has done nothing to develop the North. It has only followed on. The industries at Wittenoom Gorge and Yampi Sound were both established during the term of the previous Government, but what worries me most is that the present Government does not seem to have any plans at all for the North.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I think Wittenoom Gorge was established by the present Government.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It was assisted and started off during the regime of the Labour Government.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That may be so, but it was put on its feet by the present Government.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It was put on its feet by the previous Government and the present Government has helped it along. It is all very well to claim the fruit when it is ripe, but someone must sow the seed.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And the seed must be watered, and that is where all the complaints against this Government have arisen.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Under this Government there has been too much doodling about with plans for new ports in the North, and that sort of thing. What is behind it all is hard to say or to see. Surely to goodness, members realise that it is no use letting old towns rot while drawing up plans to build new ports, when there is no produce there for them to handle! Is it not reasonable that before establishing new ports we should see that there is produce for them to handle? The present ports could deal with all the cargo likely to be available from the Kimberleys for the next 10 or 15 years if the jetties and other necessary facilities were put in order.

A start should be made now to cut up the large holdings, because that is the only way in which we will get more people to go to that part of the country. It was never more urgent than it is at present to have more population in that section of the State. Fears have been expressed about the emptiness of the North and the closeness of millions of people in the islands not very far away—and they are justifiable fears. Now that the great iron-ore deposits at Yampi Sound have been assessed, and the uranium fields at Rum Jungle and Edith River in the Northern Territory have disclosed their treasures, our North cannot be populated too quickly. I have no doubt that it is capable of supporting infinitely more people than it now does, but they must first be given the opportunities that will induce them to go there.

I do not believe that the scheme of the present Government to put down bores on the cattle stations in the outback country will be of any use at all unless we can increase the population of those areas. Without that, the new water-points will simply breed many millions more kangaroos and other vermin that will eat out the country round the water points, just as has been the experience round the natural watering places in the past. The small kangaroo found in the Kimberleys is not shot at all because the hide is not worth marketing and would not return the price of a bullet. That kangaroo is allowed to go unmolested unless the pastoralist himself does something to control it.

Unless the C.S.I.R.O. can find some means of wiping out that vermin, I am afraid the only other answer to the menace lies in closer settlement. Even in the sheep country those kangaroos have multiplied to astronomical figures. Now, with all our agriculture protection boards, fauna legislation and so on, the kangaroo shooters are required to take out a license costing £2 per year—

The Minister for Agriculture: They are not.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Then that provision has only recently been removed.

The Minister for Agriculture: The amended regulations are on the Table of the House at this moment.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I was not aware of that. I would be interested to know from the Minister whether the royalty has been lifted from the red kangaroos.

The Minister for Agriculture: It has been lifted in all areas where they are a pest, and, in fact, it has never been applied to those places.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: When I was in Carnarvon recently, kangaroo shooters approached me on that subject. They were rather perturbed, not so much

by the £2 license fee, as by the formalities involved in signing declarations and so on, and the 3d. royalty on the red kangaroos. If that royalty has now been done away with, the red kangaroos should be declared vermin in the northern parts of the State. If the royalty were changed to a bonus, I believe the number of kangaroos would diminish rapidly and there would be much more mutton produced. The kangaroo shooters will not shoot the small marsupials because ammunition is too costly to waste on them and a somewhat similar position exists in the case of wild dogs. A full-grown dog—unless the position has been altered—is worth £1 and the puppy is worth 10s. The result has been that it paid the native or anyone else to allow the animal to grow to full size.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He would be losing the interest on the 10s. in the meantime.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I think I have dealt with most of the problems of the North and I trust the Government will give particular consideration to the shipping service to that part of the State. At present the service is inadequate and imposes extreme hardship on the people of the North.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 17th September, 1952.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

#### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill.

#### QUESTIONS.

##### BUILDING SUPPLIES.

*As to Government Purchase and Disposal of Materials.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Housing:

In reply to my question of the 10th instant, paragraph (2), "If the goods were not used by the Government, were they sold at less than market price?" answered "Average price was charged," will he state—

(1) Was average price less than market price?

(2) Were goods released to non-Government builders at average price?