

I could speak at length about our pioneers; but I feel that whatever praise I heaped upon them would not be enough, because I am sure they have left us a wonderful heritage. This spirit is continuing through my electorate, and I am sure it is continuing throughout the State.

I am looking forward to working with the shires and local voluntary organisations, and people in my electorate; and helping the electorate to progress in every way.

His Excellency mentioned the necessity for flood relief in the south-west and this brought to my mind the necessity for such relief in my own electorate. This problem will have my constant attention to see that in the flush years we are able to store some of that flood water. This will give us some relief.

In my growing electorate we are looking forward to improved transport—and this is natural when one considers the growth of our State—and also to an extension of employment, and an increase in facilities. In a growing State such as ours there is always constant need for improved drainage and the extension of services.

In my brief submission today it has been my intention to convey the thought that our future and strength is in our people; that we are all dependent one upon the other. We have a wonderful opportunity to enrich the lives of all by our continued growth through our enthusiastic and optimistic work for Western Australia and our continued wholehearted loyalty to the Crown.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [4.5 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Hawke (Leader of the Opposition).

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [4.6 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 3rd August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.8 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 3rd August, 1965

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The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (6): ON NOTICE

HOUSING AT MANJIMUP

Commission Homes

- The Hon. V. J. FERRY asked the Minister for Mines:
 - How many houses are there now under construction or contracts let for the building of new State Housing Commission houses in Manjimup?
 - What is the future building programme for State Housing Commission houses in Manjimup?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- Ten under construction.
- It is proposed to build a further 10 houses during 1965-66, and this number will be subject to review, depending on funds available and demand.

GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY

Elimination of Winter Flooding

- The Hon. J. DOLAN (for The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs) asked the Minister for Local Government:
 - Is it the intention of the Main Roads Department to place work in hand on the roads at Baandee,

Nangeenan, and other places on the Great Eastern Highway, and so eliminate winter flooding which causes much disruption to road traffic on the highway?

- (2) If so, when is it anticipated work will commence?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

- (1) There are many sections of the department's main road system which are subject to short periods of flooding in times of heavy rain. This problem has largely been brought about by increased run-off due to extensive clearing of land. Remedial action will be taken as quickly as finances and manpower can be made available.

Specifically, Great Eastern Highway has had improvement work carried out on several sections including that near Baandee. However, due to increased run-off greater volumes of water have caused recurring flooding.

Pending further improvement work, through traffic can use alternative routes between Northam and Merredin, one via Wyalkatchem, and the other via Bruce Rock.

The department has provided in the 1965-66 programme for the reconstruction of nearly two miles of the highway near Woolundra and for the installation of additional culverts about four miles east of Merredin. This work will be put in hand before next winter and should eliminate flooding at these places.

- (2) Answered by (1).

THIRD PARTY INSURANCE

Widening of Scope of Compensation

3. The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Justice:

In view of the inadequacy of the third party insurance system to meet the problem of accidents in which people injured through no fault of their own cannot receive compensation under the law—

- (a) Will the Government institute investigations with a view to compensation for all road victims?
- (b) Would such investigation give consideration to the widening scope of responsibility between the public and the motorist in regard to traffic accidents?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The whole question of third party insurance is being given consideration by the Government at the present time, and the point raised by the honourable member will be given consideration.

SOUTH-WEST POWER STATION

Linking of Power Supply to Merredin, Kondinin, and Kulin.

4. The Hon. J. M. THOMSON asked the Minister for Local Government:

Regarding extension of the 132,000 volt power link from the south-west power station to Merredin:—

- (1) What preparatory work on the proposed route has been carried out to date?
- (2) Can an approximate date be given as to when this increased power will be turned on at Merredin?
- (3) Is it proposed to supply the towns of Kondinin and Kulin with power from this source?
- (4) Can an approximate time be stated as to when power will be available to the two towns mentioned in (3)?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

- (1) Some gates have been installed in fences and the route has been cleared from Perth to Merredin.
- (2) 1968, subject to availability of capital.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No.

PRIMARY EDUCATION AT ESPERANCE

Erection of an Additional School at Castletown

5. The Hon. J. DOLAN (for The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs) asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is an additional primary school to be erected at Castletown in Esperance?
- (2) If so, when is it intended that building will commence?
- (3) In what streets is the land that is set aside for this purpose situated?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not known as yet but it is planned to open the school in February, 1966.
- (3) Eaton and Matthews Streets.

PROJECTS IN THE NORTH*Frustration by Canberra*

6. The Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Minister for Mines:

Concerning its arrangements for the development of, in, and about, the Pilbara iron ore deposits and other mighty projects in the north, will the Government take vigorous steps to ensure that such projects as carefully formulated by first-class brains in Western Australia, are not thwarted or frustrated through arrogant and pettifogging interference by third-class brains in Canberra?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Since the lifting of the embargo on the export of iron ore, the Government has concluded a number of agreements involving the development of certain iron ore deposits, and Parliament has ratified such agreements.

These projects are now under way and will result in great benefit for the State of Western Australia and for the Commonwealth as a whole.

Success of the projects will be the result of mutual understanding between State and Commonwealth Governments, both of which must apply themselves to the task using the best brains available for the ultimate good of all concerned.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES*Election*

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [4.59 p.m.]: I move—

That The Hon. N. E. Baxter be elected Chairman of Committees.

Question put and passed.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION FUND*Appointment of Trustees*

On motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines), resolved:

That pursuant to the provisions of the Parliamentary Superannuation Act, 1948-1964, the Legislative Council hereby appoints the President (The Hon. L. C. Diver) and The Hon. H. K. Watson to be Trustees of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SECOND DAY*Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 29th July, on the following motion by The Hon. E. C. House:—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver:—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (North—Leader of the Opposition) [5 p.m.]: I think it would be a fairly safe assumption that this will not be the only time during this session I will catch your eye, Mr. President. I hope that is to be the situation.

Since we last met, the change in the number of provinces and the provisions under the electoral laws of last year turned out as we, as a party, forecast—that it would be very much to our detriment. We have six new members replacing those who had served in this Chamber for some time. Four of them retired voluntarily, one retired involuntarily, and the other was defeated.

Never before in the history of the Legislative Council have six changes occurred at one election. Not many years ago four changes occurred, but there have never been six in the recorded history of this Chamber. It is true to say that changes are infrequent in the Legislative Council. Members who serve provinces, and serve them well, can usually expect a long term in Parliament.

We as a party are still not the minority; and I think we could say that in every respect—and we hope to continue, in spite of depleted numbers—we shall make contributions to debates and assist in the provision of principles—in which we believe and which are for the good of the State—in the legislation that is presented to this House.

It should be said that while we all, I would think, have some feeling in regard to personal changes under the system of the elections and the methods used in the elections—and we do regret the changes, especially those brought about by defeat—one would be churlish indeed not to express a welcome to the new members, and to wish them well and hope that their time in Parliament, however long it may be, will give to themselves satisfaction, and

to the State some benefit from the contributions they make and the actions they may take.

No matter how well equipped an honourable member may be considered to be when he is a candidate for Parliament, there is such a great responsibility upon him that if the job is done well it is no sinecure and it is one which will make demands upon him to equip himself for this very important task of a life of service in Parliament.

There is, I suggest, no room in Parliament for lazy people if they expect preferment. That can be shown in any Parliament. The person who is indifferent to his responsibility, who is lazy in the carrying out within Parliament, and without, does not get anywhere. To make a mark in public life it is very important initially to be studious and to be anxious to serve.

I would say that I am merely musing, not lecturing or preaching. I am merely expressing thoughts as they occur to me in regard to the responsibility of new, as well as old, members. There is a lot to do in addition to serving the parish pump, which to very many onlookers and electors appears to be considered as the first responsibility of all members. It may be the first, but it is by no means the beginning and the end of the responsibilities of members of Parliament.

Just a word to the new members: I would, if I may by virtue of my grey hairs, suggest that they apply themselves strenuously to a study of parliamentary procedure and practice and the history of Parliament, and also a study of our Standing Orders and all that that book contains in regard to the Constitution Acts and the like. I am sure they will gain much satisfaction from becoming well versed in parliamentary practice and procedure.

Another change has occurred in this Chamber following the election. The three seats of the front bench opposite are filled. I feel very sorry for the Minister for Local Government. He now has nowhere to put his surplus papers. What he will do by the end of the session, goodness knows!

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is why I got here.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: To the Honorary Minister—the gentleman who is to be Minister of two or three departments in the very near future—I would say that we congratulate him. It was almost obvious that he would, as time went on, take his place in the Government, if the Government did not change. We can say that he has been a very active member—not in any way a lazy member. He is one with whom I rarely agreed, but nevertheless I always had a great respect for his energy as well as the manner in which he presented his subjects. I am fully prepared to respect his views and to wish him well on his preferment.

To the honourable Mr. Baxter, today's appointee to the position of Chairman of Committees, I would, on behalf of those with whom I am associated, offer congratulations. He has a very serious task to live up to to emulate those who have gone before, as well as to carry out that office in a manner satisfactory to Parliament.

I would commend The Hon. Mr. House for his speech on opening day. That is not an easy task, but is one which many of us have enjoyed, or not enjoyed, in past years in moving the Address-in-Reply. I feel sure that the thoughtfulness of The Hon. Mr. House and the manner he adopted in the delivery of his speech indicates to us that he will be a very useful member in this House.

During the course of his speech, the honourable gentleman referred to the kindness which he had met. Of course that is legion in this House. Irrespective of party, if one honourable member can help another with advice in matters of procedure, or in any other respect, he will do so.

It is pleasing, too, to see that it is not time for you to depart from your seat, Mr. President. I am sure that all members, and especially the new ones, will find that from you they will receive the greatest consideration and generous treatment. All of us are conscious of the fact that with the kid glove you extend to us there is also the grip of steel when it is necessary.

I would like to express my satisfaction and pleasure that an Australian-born has been appointed Governor-General of Australia. Lord Casey is the second person in a comparatively short period who has come from an active political life to the highest position in this nation. He is the third in Australia's history to hold such a position after having formerly been a political partisan. The gentleman who was Mr. Alfred Isaacs, member for Indi, and afterwards, Sir Isaac Isaacs, also had a political background. Members present will recall that despite the criticism from many sources of the appointment of Sir William McKell, formerly Premier of New South Wales, he acquitted himself with great credit and for the betterment, in my view, of this nation.

In Lord Casey we have an international figure, and I think there would not be many in his political field better equipped and more suitable from within Australia than that gentleman. Not very many could come from overseas to do the job for Australia, and also maintain the link with the United Kingdom, as Lord Casey will do. Few Australians would know more than the Governor-General-elect of the Asian situation—the problems within Asia and the troublesome periods within Vietnam. He is an acknowledged authority on such matters as the Colombo Plan, including its creation and its working.

The confused situation in Vietnam is, as well as being hard to understand, truly frightening in its prospects. It is a strange thing that two world conflagrations, two global wars, have commenced from very minor incidents—one by the shooting of a man in Central Europe, and the other by the walking of an enemy into neutral territory. And here we today, have a set-up: Two nations, at least, with men, arms, equipment, warships, and aeroplanes in the territory and waters of a nation far removed from the nations who are defending, so we are told, the peace of the world.

The war in Vietnam is not on any small scale. It has, in a provocative sense, brought about a situation which, if history is to repeat itself, must shortly take a turn to the advantage of the side which is fighting for peace—which is fighting an enemy said not to be the enemy of communism. Unless the situation is markedly successful soon, it could indeed lead to something very serious in a global sense.

It has been reported in the Press that families are divided in the forces fighting in Vietnam. Some sons enlisted initially for the northern area and then at a later stage others enlisted to fight with the south. Villagers are living in fear—fear of what? In many, many instances they do not know what the fighting is all about. It has further been reported that infiltrators by the thousands have in the past been in trusted positions—the friend by day and the foe by night.

What a confused situation and what a change since the last world war terminated! Australia, as a nation, has for a very long time, been seized with the possibilities of the situation, and I should like to quote from a book written by R. G. Casey, *Friends and Neighbours*. Eleven years ago the right honourable gentleman, in speaking of South-East Asia and South-East Asian countries wrote this—

They are all proud of their independence and determined to safeguard it. But they are the first to admit the enormous difficulties of trying to build a modern State with limited resources of skill, experience and equipment, and with their people burdened with poverty and illiteracy. The devastation caused by the war and the unrest that followed it make their task all the harder. Above all, they are under constant pressure from Communism, which posed as their ally when they were seeking independence and which now threatens to crush them under a new form of imperialism.

The countries of South and South-East Asia will need all the help and sympathetic encouragement that can be given to them. Material help will be of the first importance—equipment to restore and develop their agriculture, factories and public utilities,

training facilities to create the necessary skill for the efficient conduct of industry and government, and food-stuffs in time of emergency. Scarcely less important to their morale, however, will be the assurance that vigorous and successful resistance is being offered to Communist aggression wherever it occurs.

In Australia we have given a good deal of thought to ways in which we might help, and have begun to make a contribution calculated to relieve, if only in a small way, as many as possible of the assorted pressures that bear upon these countries.

It was obvious at the time those words were written how interdependent the South-East Asian countries were. They were countries which depended upon each other, not merely for the use of the resources—for the food produced by one or the other—but in the domestic relationships between Governments; and I think it can safely be said that when the economic needs of those countries first gained prominence, at the time when Lord Casey wrote the words to which I have just referred, Australia was to the fore, not on her own behalf, but in an endeavour to assist the less privileged.

From that sort of thinking the Colombo Plan developed; and it was in January, 1950, that the first indication came from an assembly of many nations that something would be done, and the Colombo Plan was evolved. It became a fact at the end of 1950, and Australia showed much anxiety as to the economic needs of those communities. When the Colombo Plan is referred to, many people think that the acceptance of the peoples of those countries by our schools and universities is our major and main contribution. But Australia has spent tens of millions of pounds through the years in supplying foodstuffs, machinery, all sorts of manufacturing appliances, and technical assistance to help those countries realise their independence and, between them, interdependence.

I think it is pertinent to observe that in the areas affected there is one third of the population of the whole world. Pakistan, India, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, and Malaysia have all received assistance from Australia through the Colombo Plan in its many forms. The Commonwealth countries have spent nearly £1,000,000,000 in an attempt to bring about better conditions and a better way of life in those countries—to help improve the production in places which are still relatively undeveloped—but the endeavour to alleviate their immediate distress and trouble has only in part been successful.

This assistance has not prevented the intrusion of other elements intended, by design, firstly to disrupt and secondly to keep the people in those countries away

from thinking that western civilisation can help them. All of the efforts and the assistance provided by Australia and the other Commonwealth nations have not improved much the stability of any country, and certainly that assistance has not brought many kindly thoughts in our direction.

Burma today is communistic; Pakistan is very luke warm; Indonesia is aggressive and disdainful of the west, but has accepted very much from this nation and from others.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: And is still accepting.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, still accepting and still abusing us. So with the social changes—the internal changes—being so infinitesimal without the proper development which was envisaged as being achieved, it is a very strange circumstance that Australia must still continue to believe that the countries which have received the most help as her neighbours have lessened in their friendliness towards her. It is a very sad matter in contemplation. It has been said, I think initially by Sir William Slim, that 1,200,000,000 pairs of eyes in the Asian countries to the north of us look hungrily southwards for land, and they see to the south of them 1,000,000 square miles occupied by 100,000 people—100,000 Australians—and sooner or later they may decide not to be content with just looking.

Of course, in a rational world—and that is not the situation today—the sparsely settled north of this State would not be a provocative challenge merely because it was sparsely settled. It could only be provocative if the latent assets were not being used by the nation—were not the media for safe investment, and the employment and enjoyment of labour. However, it does seem that emptiness or sparse settlement is provocative whatever the facts may be regarding resources.

I have noted that one of our State Ministers had a sharp difference of opinion with a Federal Minister (The Hon. Shane Paltridge) on the question of peopling our north, and in the matter of defence. I have the record here where Mr. Paltridge said he would be prepared to go some part of the way with Mr. Court in regard to financial matters, but he could not tolerate his opinions in regard to defence. Of course, I can imagine many competitions that could be held between the two gentlemen. I can imagine a few that Mr. Court would not win—very humble things perhaps, like pulling beer, or other simple things—but I can imagine a lot that Mr. Court would win, and I can imagine many enthusiastic opinions which the State Minister holds which would be victorious by any analysis.

I hold the view that even 500,000 people—if we can envisage that number in our north through the stimulus being given to

population by the activity of industry, the preparation of iron ore for export, and the like—would not matter very much from the point of view of defence in these days of modern warfare if there was a serious intention by any nation to invade the north. Indeed, that area might be easier to take when it is peopled, when amenities are prepared for a population. They would be available for the invader.

There is one thing which I express as more than a passing thought in regard to our defence: With the interest that foreign nations—and I refer particularly to Japan—have now in our north-west, can we imagine, in the case of a challenge to the occupancy of the north-west of Australia, or the north of Australia, Japan being disinterested in regard to the main source of her iron ore supplies? Could it not be contemplated that Japan would be a very active and interested nation if there is in the future—the near future, or distant—a challenge to the north-west of Australia? It is surely a situation providing for a lot of thought, and it is a very strange circumstance.

Those of us who believed that when a stimulus in population was to be given to our north-west it would come through mining, and not through any then existing industry, have been amazed at the changes which a few years have brought about in that scene. Some of us who for a lifetime have been close to north-west circumstances have, for example, given a lot of thought to the well-being of the pastoral industry—to which I shall refer a little later—but we have always held the view that if a step-up in the population were to be made practical and satisfactory it would come through mining operations.

The change in the last nine years in regard to iron ore is rather amazing. In 1956—just nine years ago—a permit was sought to export 50,000 tons of iron ore from Koolyanobbing. That request was refused on the grounds that the iron ore deposits of Australia were insufficient to waste in such a manner. In 1957 a permit was sought to export 1,000,000 tons. The matter was brought before Parliament by way of a motion and defeated. In any case the Commonwealth refused a permit for export; and it had its complete answer in the protection which section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution gives to it, and it was buttressed by part 3 of the Customs Act which gives to the Commonwealth the right to refuse the export of any commodity no matter what it may be. In a few years—in 1962—a remarkable change occurred.

In 1962 it was reported that 10,000,000,000 tons of iron ore was the assessed quantity in the Pilbara district. In that year the 21-year old embargo was removed, and by 1963 the estimated quantity of iron ore was 15,000,000,000 tons. It would appear that

we have got to the stage where adding another naught does not matter, because of the enormity of the deposits in that region. We are all aware that now, in 1965, vast deposits of the highest quality iron ore are known to exist.

This Parliament has passed legislation sanctioning the export of such deposits and giving the companies the responsibility—I will not say the right—to develop harbours, towns, ports, and railways in preparation for the export of this commodity. Whether or not honourable members have been there recently, they will know that the north today is a scene of great activity. We find that new ports, new towns—some of them inland—and new railways have been built, whilst some of the old towns have been considerably enlivened.

Speaking parochially, as well as in a State sense, we in the north hope that this development will be of the soundest kind and that it will bring great activity to the north; that it will mean happy populations firmly established; and we hope it will bring to Western Australia and to the Commonwealth some recompense, particularly as it is an area that has for so long been so sparsely settled and has contained wealth only of a latent kind.

I suppose members would expect me to make some reference to another feature of the north that has been glamorised over the last few years. I refer of course to the Ord River project. Reference has been made in the Speech to the fact that there are 27 farms now operating on the Ord River. Hardly a day passes without the Press referring to the Ord; hardly a day passes without some newspaper reviewing in a special feature article what the north now promises through cotton. The project has attracted a number of tourists; it has brought about in very quick time a lot of authorities on the subject. It is marvellous how many people in recent years have discovered the north; they are able to go away and speak authoritatively on it after, perhaps, one visit.

There are some of us, however, who do not have to apologise for speaking about or commenting on the north. Not liking the personal pronoun in its use, or abuse, very much, I will simply pass by my interest in the north—quite apart from the few years I have lived in it—by saying that I did have an association with the production of the first cotton in the north-west of Western Australia, and also in the founding of the research station on the Ord River. I have had more than a passing interest in what has happened under the previous Government and also under this Government. I have at least been an interested observer.

I recall sitting out in the sun—that is where I was told to sit, I think—at the opening of the Ord River diversion dam by the Prime Minister. I heard what he said, and I listened very intently. I am not

one of those who would say—in spite of the comments made on what the Prime Minister said—that he committed himself irrevocably to the continuation of the scheme. In his choice of words—and they are almost unlimited—he used very pleasant sounding phrases as to what had been achieved by people; as to what had been the remarkable foresight of those who had, at some time or another, been interested in the development of the Ord against popular opinion at the time. On that day Sir Robert said—

We are not at the end of something here today; we are at the beginning of something

If this were just a matter of opening a dam of this particular size—if this were just a matter of opening something that deals with a relatively few acres of land—somebody might say that intrinsically that is a matter of no great moment.

That kind of thing must be duplicated in many places in the world. But it is more than that. This is a most symbolic occasion. Man has here conquered nature in the most spectacular fashion and has done it in a part of Australia in which it was needed desperately for the future of our country.

But it has happened and, having happened, it will go on.

Sir Robert also drew attention to the fact that there were more important things happening at the Ord than anything that was happening at Toorak or at Bellevue Hill.

Those of us who have watched the right honourable gentleman through the years cannot say anything derogatory about his great ability in his use of words. But to us, the critical part of the audience, I think one can say there was discernible then, and has been since, a marked lump in the cheek of the right honourable gentleman where his tongue was often so firmly placed.

Since that time there has been considerable pressure by the Government in an endeavour to get the Commonwealth to approve the next stage, which is to cost £30,000,000. *The West Australian* has written many stirring articles on the subject, though I will not read them. For instance, we have the headline, "Canberra Lays Heavy Smoke-screen on the Ord." This appeared in the issue of the 7th May, 1965. We also have the headline, "Ord Debate Reflects Canberra's Apathy."

There are many more headlines on leading articles written by *The West Australian* in an endeavour to prod the Commonwealth Government into giving assistance to the State and to get it to agree to go on quickly with the major scheme. The subject was debated in the Federal House recently, and I think some of the members of Parliament from this State do not

deserve full marks for the expressions they used in that debate. The Hon. Mr. Fairbairn, as Minister, replying to Mr. Collard, made a most specious speech and ran away from the points at issue. The Hon. Mr. Cleaver made it very clear that in the Commonwealth mind there was the desire to be generous; and he used these words—

The Government said in effect, "We are not without doubt in approving the £5,000,000 to be used for the Ord River diversion dam. If we, the Commonwealth Government, were spending the money ourselves we would need more positive information and research. Nevertheless, because of your insistence, because of your enthusiasm, we will approve £5,000,000 to be spent for this purpose."

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who was he addressing?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: He was addressing the Federal Parliament.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Which member?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: He was speaking on a motion moved by Mr. Collard for further finance for the Ord. If anyone in this Chamber knows how the first £5,000,000 was granted, it is the honourable Mr. Strickland. He was Minister for the North-West at the time, and the Commonwealth Government agreed to a grant of £5,000,000 to develop the harbour works, in particular, and to assist other industry in the north-west. It was the Government that preceded the present Government which commenced and almost concluded that wonderful example of Western Australian harbour development, the Wyndham harbour jetty.

Since that time a lot of the money first granted for harbour development has been transferred to the Ord. Approximately £5,750,000 was granted by the Commonwealth towards the project I have mentioned. In the course of the debate to which I have referred, other members from Western Australia made statements which will be found on page 1385 and onwards of the Commonwealth *Hansard* of the 12th May. All that we were told by the Government members of Western Australia was that the Commonwealth had been very generous; that it had not sufficient proof; and that when it did have enough proof it would undoubtedly support the State proposal. The Minister, Mr. Fairbairn, said—

We will require some proof regarding the sugar proposals before we can agree to the proposition.

Dealing with questions that require proof, I would like to say that very recently, within the last few weeks, I have seen a crop of 3,500 lb. to the acre being harvested at the Ord. I saw a whole area of 100 acres averaging nearly 3,000 lb., many

crops going over 2,000 lb. weight of seed cotton per acre. At the ginnery, thousands of bales were awaiting shipment. They were to be carted to Wyndham for shipment.

I think it should be pointed out that an average yield of 2,000 lb. is sufficient to render the application of a subsidy unnecessary in so far as a profitable return is concerned. This is far in excess of cotton crops anywhere else in Australia—conceding the fact, of course, that most other crops of cotton in Australia are produced under dry conditions and are not irrigated. The fact remains, however, that the average obtained this year at the Ord is in excess of what all economists analyse as being the best return to be grown without a subsidy.

It is all very well for economists to say that if we take away the prop of subsidy industry cannot survive. How would we apply that rule to all other industries? We saw Victoria develop to such a stage of consolidated wealth by the very tariff protection for which all Australia paid. We saw the sugar industry of Queensland and Northern New South Wales develop by protection—by touching the hip pocket of all taxpayers to the tune of about 30s. per year. Has anyone felt it? How has the wheat industry, the dairying industry, and the dried fruits industry been supported in past years?

I think the happy thought is that the purpose of the subsidy is to render a subsidy unnecessary. That is the ultimate objective; but, of course, the taking away of a subsidy once granted is a very difficult matter and very rarely obtains. In this case, if the first point of requirement by the Commonwealth is to be based on economics, the answer is now provided; but if it is to be based on whether sugar will grow at the Ord, it is not so easy.

This year at the Kimberley Research Station, 70 tons per acre of sugar over several varieties has been produced, which is a very high yield—a high yield in any country of the world. The minimum cane sugar content assayed week by week at the Ord has been 50 per cent. more than the average obtained and used in most mills in Queensland. I would say that the success of sugar at the Ord is likely to be the greatest deterrent to the Commonwealth making a friendly decision, because there is politics in this—politics of a very pressurised kind.

The honourable Mr. Strickland will remember very well his experience in a delegation to Canberra seeking activity in the north of the State. What would have been the reaction of The Hon. Sir Arthur Fadden to any suggestion that sugar might grow in the north of Australia? He would fight to the finish to prevent it; and so would many other Queensland legislators.

To size up my views in regard to the prospect of getting added money for the Ord, there would be three or four categories. The first one would be the economic basis, the answer to which is supplied. The second one would be the difficulties associated with a political decision in regard to sugar. The third one would relate to manpower and the serious position which the addition of a £30,000,000 project in the Kimberleys at this stage would create for other works in Western Australia, notably the central north. Fourthly, I really believe that Mr. Court dropped a brick on a very sore spot in Canberra when he said, "If you do not give us the money we will get it somewhere else." I can imagine Harold Holt saying, "Charles, my boy, you go and get it."

I think those are the things which have prevented an early Commonwealth decision on this matter; but I hope for the sake of Western Australia, and for the many people who have invested their all in the Ord—the many people who have put £30,000 capital into 600 acres—that a decision will soon be made. Representatives of farming districts will know what an over-capitalisation that could be. An amount of £30,000 on 600 acres is the minimum. One can imagine the concern of these people if the scheme does not go on. One can imagine the concern of the business people who have been attracted there.

As I have said previously in this Chamber, if it can be shown that eroded areas of the Ord River catchment will not constitute a threat, there is not much else in the way; and I hope we may soon have a very favourable decision from the Commonwealth Government that this work may proceed. The yields are there and the prospects are there; and there is, for sugar, an area of 40,000 acres made to order in the Ninbing plain, flowing over into Commonwealth territory. If we can only get the Commonwealth to think in terms of a national partnership for the use of that country we might get along more quickly.

For the time being, the most important industry in the Kimberleys remains the cattle industry—the industry which has a prospect of great assistance from the by-products of cotton. California is producing about 480,000 tons of cotton seed per year which is used to fatten tens of thousands of cattle on the desert edge of Arizona and in California. I saw at the town of Shafter in California a few years ago nearly 500,000 tons of cotton seed in one heap. This year at the Ord there will be between 4,000 and 5,000 tons of cotton seed awaiting use in collaboration with the cattle industry. I do not wish to weary the House with figures which I can supply at length, but the trials that

are taking place at the research station are almost unbelievable. These relate to the use of a pound or two of cottonseed meal per day and the effect it has had on cattle.

Surely the cattle industry in the Kimberleys needs some help. In my view it had its greatest setback in the extension of pastoral leases to the year 2015 under existing conditions. Mr. President, that has no reflection on a vote of this House; but an opinion strongly held by me and many others is that the worst legislative enactment for many years was the granting of extensions of leases to rapacious absentee landholders of country they had despoiled, denuded, and ruined. Be that as it may, we still have a situation where 50,000 cattle per annum are marketed in the Kimberleys and 50,000 die at the waterholes, or near them, every year. That is a very serious situation.

Last year's calves and this year's calves are on the one mother. In many cases there is no weaning. Over millions of acres there is no segregation; and 50,000 head per year are marketed and 50,000 head per year die.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is conservative.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I know it is conservative, but I wish to be safe. The time has come when perhaps the greatest thing in the north in a pastoral sense is the appointment of an authority to have very wide and very great powers on the husbandry side to endeavour to see that some justice is done to our national heritage; to see that the Land Act, with its specious plans, will be implemented properly and rigidly enforced; and to see that encouragement is given in the use of modern equipment and modern marketing.

We have the spectacle this year of the Wyndham kill being down to 20,000, and cattle being walked from within 100 miles of Wyndham to the Katherine, 200 miles south of Darwin, where higher prices are being paid. Lessees who use the country of the Kimberley are pleased to send their cattle out of Western Australia to be treated.

I make no critical comment of the management of instrumentalities, but the Wyndham works are about 48 years old. The Broome works were bulldozed down and new works erected to conform to all the American standards, and heralded by some Ministers with a great flourish; and it was said the works would save the Kimberleys. I venture to forecast that the Broome works will have to write down 50 per cent. of their capital before many years pass, if they are to continue as a profitable undertaking. Therefore, we need urgently some highly qualified and highly paid authority to take stock of the situation—an authority more important

indeed (and I cast no slur in what I am about to say) than that of Administrator of the North-West. Something extremely urgent needs to be done in an endeavour to salvage the industry which has carried the north along since the 1880's.

I would speak for a moment in a direct sense on the activities of the Administrator of the North-West. He is a very energetic and capable gentleman, and I think he is becoming fully seized of the north and its problems. However, I think his department should be attached to that other purpose.

We have distressing cases of local tradespeople in some north-west towns being owed sums of money for trading by Government instrumentalities, such as hospitals and the like. They wait months to have their accounts paid. I would like to see instituted an arrangement whereby the clerk of courts acts as Treasury pay officer, and payment is made on the spot to local tradesmen—men who are working on overdrafts. The present position is driving some tradesmen in the north to a very serious state of mind in their endeavour to meet their obligations because the Crown is their slow-paying debtor. This is extremely unfair.

What happens to any of us if we owe the Crown 30s. or a tanner? We get a final notice within 14 days of not paying our account; but in the north-west, and maybe in other districts, small business people are allowed to languish while the Crown owes them money. I have received many final notices as the Crown will not wait five minutes if one owes it money.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: It cuts off your water.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes; and it is a serious thing to have your water cut off. The Crown will insist upon payment; and yet the people I have referred to are the ones who keep the communities going. The smaller businessman is suffering.

I will not delay the House any longer, and I appreciate the kindly hearing given me by honourable members.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. N. McNeill.

House adjourned at 6.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 3rd August, 1965

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