

As the position now stands, it is necessary to proclaim the holiday each year to coincide with the show, bearing in mind that the first Monday will fall on 3 October, 1983; 1 October 1984; 30 September 1985; 29 September 1986, and 5 October 1987.

The variance in the date shown in the second schedule—the second Monday in October—to the actual celebration has led to confusion and misunderstandings. Manufacturers of diaries and calendars and many organisations rely on the present wording of the second schedule as a firm guide in identifying the actual day of the holiday.

The amendment as proposed provides for the Governor to proclaim a suitable day each year. In adopting this approach it will ensure that the date is readily ascertainable by publication in the *Government Gazette*. As mentioned in my opening remarks, the Bill is designed to clarify the situation and eliminate confusion which has arisen in the celebration of this holiday.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. G. E. Masters.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FOURTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 2 August.

HON. C. J. BELL (Lower West) [5.03 p.m.]: In speaking to the Address-in-Reply I would like first to congratulate you, Mr President, on your re-election to the presidency of this Chamber. It is very fitting that you should continue to occupy the Chair, and I am sure you will do so in your usual competent manner. I would like, too, to congratulate the Hon. Des Dans on his appointment as Leader of the House. I am sure he will capably bring the business before the House and keep it in good order. I must thank the Opposition generally for allowing me the opportunity to speak today when my family is in the Gallery.

I shall follow the usual practice and comment briefly on matters affecting my province. I am pleased to have been elected to represent the people of Lower West Province, and I thank the electors of that province for their confidence in me.

I come to the House with a background of farming. I have worked a dairy farm since 1962 on my own account and I grew up as a dairy farmer before that.

I have represented Western Australian dairy farmers at a national level since 1974 until my election to the Parliament. I have represented the Australian dairy farmers on the Australian Dairy Corporation from 1976 to 1978 and the Australian Dairy Industry Advisory Committee from 1978 to 1983.

As a new member I am naturally very aware of the tremendous responsibility placed on me by the electors to adequately represent their interests, their wishes, and their desires for the whole community that constitutes Lower West Province. I express my very real pleasure in being able to share the responsibility of the province with such an able member as the Hon. Ian Pratt. He has already assisted me greatly in becoming more familiar with the processes that will ensure an effective parliamentary representation for our electorate. Undoubtedly, like all new members, I have much to learn and I promise to make every endeavour to continuously upgrade my learning.

It is appropriate for me to make some reference to my predecessor in the Lower West Province. Mr Neil McNeill was, I believe, a tremendous representative of the people of the province. I do not think there is any need for me to extol his abilities and the high esteem in which Neil was held by members of the House. I know since I have been here that he was obviously held in high regard by all members of the House and by the staff of the Parliament. His is a very hard act for me to follow, but, be that as it may, the Parliament will make a judgment on whether I am in any shape or form able to fill the shoes of Neil McNeill. I extend my appreciation to Neil for the work he did assisting me to achieve the opportunity to represent Lower West Province.

Recently I took the opportunity to read Neil's maiden speech to this House given on Wednesday, 4 August 1965, some 18 years ago. I think it is appropriate that I should reflect on some of the matters Neil raised at that time and to consider what has happened over those 18 years. The industries to be found in the province are really much the same. Agriculture was the foremost industry at that time, with the dairy industry, the fruit industry, the vegetable growing industry, and meat production. These industries remain in the province today in much the same form as they were 18 years ago, other than for the adoption of much technology that has occurred since Neil made his speech.

The agricultural industry has a need for substantial research and extension. The electorate contains the majority of the temperate irrigation areas of Western Australia and contains also

significant areas of low fertility soils. These two areas need to be addressed.

First, the irrigated lands of the south-west for 30 years have made very little headway in the improvement of productivity. Irrigation procedures are still the old grade check-bank layouts. There is common acceptance that as much as 25 per cent of the water currently used runs off into the sea because of the inadequacies of the system. In my opinion this is unacceptable and it is an area that requires positive action.

Recently we have seen an awareness emerge of the potential for modern technology in this area, and I speak particularly of laser land forming for irrigation areas. This is a whole new technology for agriculture in irrigation areas. I shall expand on this by referring to northern Victorian irrigation areas, where one can start to appreciate some of the possibilities, exciting possibilities, which lie in front of us.

Using laser technology with computer backup it is possible with extreme accuracy to grade land so finely that it is possible, by the elimination of highs and lows by the continuous levelling of the land, for water to traverse the land at a constant speed without any waste, so that we do not have any wet or any dry patches of land. This therefore creates a tremendous saving in the amount of water used. In fact, the assessment is that as much as 50 per cent of the water normally used can be saved and this means it is possible to use this water saving either for increased productivity on the farm or for opening up new areas to irrigation.

Further, with the computer backup it is possible to institute what is known as "whole farm layouts". No other method is available to a farmer to grade the land to such a fine degree that the water, once it is moving across the land, can be caught at the other end and recycled until ultimately it is totally used on the property. That eliminates the 25 per cent effective waste which was always involved previously. A farmer must get water to the other end of an irrigation bay if he intends to grow grass over all that bay.

The effects of this technology are quite dramatic in the area of labour. Very few people really understand the tremendous labour used by producers of agriculture in irrigation areas. Under the old system, irrigation areas might be as small as a house block. One property in northern Victoria, prior to the introduction of new technology, had 132 separate bays. This meant the farmer had to go to each of those bays either to open or to shut them every two hours, because that was

how long it took for the water to get from one end of the bay to the other, this being the result of not being able to control the length of the land form. Such a farmer had to have only small patches to use the water effectively. That farm changed from having 132 bays to just 20 bays with a minimum of 12 hours before re-attending to the water in that area. Normally on an irrigation farm the water is turned on and it runs for 24 hours a day. A farmer does not go to bed and leave everything. Under the old system a farmer would have to tear off down to the bottom of the various bays in the cold—and even in summer it can be very cold—to change the water from one bay to the next. With the 12-hour system a farmer does not have to get up more than perhaps once or twice in the night, depending on when he started.

In our irrigation areas we are still growing the same grass in the same manner as 20 years ago. We must put more effort into breeding and into research to understand the possibilities in this area. It is traditional to produce between 14 000 and 16 000 kilos of dry matter per hectare per annum and yet Victorian research has shown recently that it is possible to produce 48 000 kilos per hectare, and that is outside a laboratory. We need to examine this area; we need to review whether pasture is the most beneficial way to use the land and the water or whether the multiple crop use is possibly a viable alternative for some of our land. This means we must have varieties bred in our research institutes to fit the climatic and soil conditions. The situation is that we talk of crops for the south-west high rainfall area, but we are talking about crops bred for under 20 inches of rainfall. They suffer tremendous disadvantages when grown in 35-inch or 45-inch rainfall areas. These crops cannot cope with the high water potential in the properties.

The sand plains, which extend from the southern areas of the metropolitan area, are generally considered to be low fertility soils. They stretch right through the south-west, yet they lie in an area of high rainfall, the most valuable asset this country has. However, we have not yet managed to adapt ourselves to the south-west soils so that we get any significant benefit from them. If members look around the metropolitan area they will realise that it is generally considered better to build houses on this soil rather than to use it to produce crops, but we have too many acres of this soil in the south-west to do that.

Recently a good deal of specialised research has gone into considering the problems we have faced in the past when we have constantly attempted to grow the same pasture species grown on other more productive lands, but which have usually

failed. We are now looking at some of the possibilities associated with this problem. One solution is to look at alternative crops.

Another alternative, which is probably of more significant interest, is the new work being done with the "wettability" of soils. Many people will have noticed what happens with some soils when a bucket of water is poured on them; the water runs off. The soil is like glass. During the last 12 months research has taken place into this problem and this research will have to be followed up. It is a very extensive problem, but I see great potential where this research has taken place. We have a significant chance of benefiting from improved use of land in the high rainfall areas of the south-west. This is, however, an area of research which needs to be gone into, much further.

Eighteen years ago Neil McNeill said that the timber industry was enjoying a boom. Unfortunately the boom has passed. Over two decades the problem of dieback has emerged and has severely disrupted our timber industry.

While much research has gone into the disease, it appears that the control measures so far have resulted in only a controlled slowing down of the spread of this problem. We need to acknowledge the real importance of the timber industry, and I think it is probably fair to say that we need also to review some of our current attitudes in these affected jarrah forest areas. In areas where we have effectively abandoned any thought of jarrah reforestation we need to consider whether to introduce non-susceptible hardwoods to replace the productivity which formerly existed with our magnificent jarrah tree.

The mining industry is a relatively new industry. It was just starting 18 years ago and now it is a very important industry in the south-west coastal plain. The mining industry has made tremendous advances. The majority of the alumina industry lies in my province. With the advent of the alumina industry, many towns have expanded tremendously. I would mention Waroona, Boddington, Pinjarra, Mandurah and Harvey as areas which have felt the effect of the expansion of this industry. In the long term the electorate looks to the further processing in the alumina industry to create much needed jobs in the electorate. We will see a tremendous spinoff in the areas of Bunbury and Collie.

It was also very heartening to me to read yesterday's *Daily News* report indicating the continuing efforts of the Government to successfully conclude the previous Government's initiative for a smelter in the south-west. This is one of the most desirable things that could happen; it will

help mop up many of the unemployed and will bring more money into those towns in the south-west area.

Another issue addressed by Mr Neil McNeill was the issue of Federal-State relations and, of course, it is a coincidence that this issue is once again a burning topic among the people today. In regard to the formation of a federation I now quote from comments by the Hon. Neil McNeill reported in *Hansard* of 4 August 1965 as follows—

If I may refer to those times, not the least of the motives behind federation was the desire of the States at that time for protection, firstly from overseas influences—whether it was from military or economic circumstances—and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, from other States in terms of their commercial interests. Under no circumstances was the Commonwealth to become a dominant partner in federation; and, in the minds of those who framed the Constitution, the rights of the States were to be protected.

One of the weapons that was perhaps forged by the founders and which has since turned out to be a most effective weapon in establishing the paramount position of the Commonwealth has been the Constitution itself in one way, because a legal document does not have ready adaptability in cases of future needs and cannot necessarily meet the future needs which may not at all times be anticipated. This is so in another way because almost invariably, and by virtue of its position, the Commonwealth may attempt to exploit the Constitution for its own ends, whatever they may be; and the onus then remains on the State or States to challenge the validity. That has happened on numerous occasions.

We must have a proper rethink of the situation presently facing the people of Western Australia. Clearly, with the recent High Court decision of a majority of four to three, the position of the States is once again under threat by the Commonwealth's attempting to exploit a situation to achieve its own ends.

My province is made up of in excess of 30 separate communities. These are not communities lying side by side with a common focal point, but 30 separate communities, each with its own problems and needs, separated by significant distances. This causes considerable problems to a member of Parliament when attempting to service the needs of his electorate in an acceptable way. I believe it is essential that all electors know that

their member of Parliament is available for direct face-to-face contact. Naturally, an electorate spreading from Armadale to Australind and out to Wandering, with over 30 community centres scattered over the whole area, is a very travel-committed electorate.

It is my intention to endeavour to continue to service the electorate on a face-to-face basis and I will resist anything which will inhibit that objective.

With the very rapid expansion of the urban population in Mandurah, I think the time has now come for a vigorous move to be made towards the provision of a hospital there. Mandurah is a major population centre which currently has no hospital facility; in fact, Mandurah people have to opt to go to either Pinjarra or Rockingham for hospitalisation. That can no longer be accepted in a town the size of Mandurah with a rapidly increasing population; in fact, it presently has the highest growth rate of all non-metropolitan communities in Western Australia. That does not mean that I see the Pinjarra Hospital being phased out; it simply means that the Pinjarra Hospital will serve Dwellingup, Waroona, and Pinjarra. Those towns are also rapidly expanding and will continue to do so with the expansion of the alumina industry.

Other areas need to be looked at in terms of the provision of public services. The Waroona Primary School has been in a substandard condition for a number of years, and it is about time something was done to rectify that situation. I was recently at the Boddington school. It is clearly an old school in an expanding area which accommodates many new people; however, the classrooms and recreation facilities provided at that school would not be acceptable in a major urban population centre.

Another aim which should be considered is the need to co-ordinate the regionalisation and industrialisation in the Mandurah, Murray and Waroona communities. Please note, I say "co-ordinate", not "regulate".

Very real concern exists—it appears to be quite a legitimate concern—that the Mandurah-Murray-Waroona area will be overlooked in the enthusiasm of "Bunbury 2000".

I noted with some dismay that the announcement of the allocation of moneys for the Mandurah by-pass earthworks was made by the members for Bunbury and Mitchell and not the local member. No direct communication was made with other local members. This clearly causes me concern because the fears expressed by many people in the community may well be true.

Clearly, Lower West Province is a very productive area of our State which contributes greatly to the wealth and welfare of Western Australia. It is imperative that the industries of agriculture, mining, processing, and tourism be given incentives to increase their productivity and profitability and thus further increase the job opportunities and welfare of the region, with consequent benefits to the whole of our State's economy. These industries are the foundation of our living standards, and we must never forget it.

Members: Hear, hear!

[Applause.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. G. J. Edwards.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.23 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 16 August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.24 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WATER RESOURCES

Agaton: Government Policy

74. Hon. W. G. ATKINSON, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) What is the policy of the Government in relation to the Agaton water scheme proposal?
- (2) What is the present position in relation to the development of that proposal?
- (3) What action does the Government propose to take in relation to the scheme, and what consultations are being undertaken in relation to its future development?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) The Government has not yet formally considered its policy in respect to the Agaton project but since becoming the Minister for Water Resources, I have become conversant with details of the project and the difficulties of funding its construction.
- (2) and (3) The previous Government concluded that the \$60 million cost of the project was of such magnitude that the