

Legislative Council

Thursday, 21st August, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

LICENSING ACT.

As to Introducing Amending Legislation.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Minister for Transport:

Is it the intention of the Government this session to introduce legislation to amend the Licensing Act, 1911-1951?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

DAIRYING.

As to Production and Utilisation.

Hon. L. C. DIVER asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Will he supply information regarding statistics of the following items, for the years 1950-51 and 1951-52:

- pounds of milk produced;
- pounds of cream produced;
- pounds of creamery butter made;
- pounds of milk used in sweetened condensed milk and concentrated milk;
- pounds of butterfat used in condensed and concentrated milk;
- pounds of butterfat in cream?

The MINISTER replied:

	1950-51.	1951-52.
(a)	512,891,090	488,842,380*
(b)	31,840,767	29,924,562
(c)	15,574,087	14,639,655
(d)	32,884,789	29,242,661
(e)	1,315,391	1,169,706
(f)	12,736,307	11,969,825

*1951-52. Figures for milk consumed as milk, and milk for farm butter and cheese not yet available. Assuming these figures to be the same as for 1950-51, the total milk production is as shown above. The reduction is caused by the reduced number of cows in the agricultural areas. This is estimated as being over 5,000.

PIG INDUSTRY STABILISATION FUND.

As to Amount and Disbursements.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN (for Hon. A. L. Loton) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What was the total amount of money standing to the credit of the Pig Industry Stabilisation Fund at the 30th June, 1951?

(2) What amount was collected by levy for the year ended the 30th June, 1952?

(3) What amount of compensation was paid, and to what number of breeders, for the year ended the 30th June, 1952—

(a) metropolitan area;

(b) country areas?

(4) What was the amount of other compensation paid during the same year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £21,161 13s. 3d.

(2) £8,005 14s. 6d.

(3) Pigs condemned for paratyphoid £311 12s. 11d.; Pigs condemned for tuberculosis £3,026 14s. 11d.; Total £3,488 7s. 10d.

The majority of pigs in respect of which claims are lodged are purchased at Midland Junction and other markets. They are then forwarded to bacon factories as a mixed consignment, thus losing their identity. It is therefore impossible accurately to segregate the figures for metropolitan and country areas.

(4) No other amounts of compensation were paid from the Pig Industry Compensation Fund during 1951-1952.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. C. W. D. Barker, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. C. Strickland (North) on the ground of private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban) [4.38]: I take this opportunity of congratulating those members who have again been returned to this Chamber; and also the two new members. I trust their services will be of considerable value to the State in this and future sessions. I also wish to congratulate Hon. J. A. Dimmitt on his re-election to the position of Chairman of Committees, which he has filled so ably during the past few years.

At the outset I wish to speak on the subject of communism. As we all know, the object of the communists is to have the world ruled from Russia. They also desire that the world shall be governed by the manual worker; they regard all others as entirely unnecessary. They desire to

bring that about and feel that the only way they can do it is by revolution. Wherever they have been successful in bringing countries under their control, that result has been achieved by revolution and bloodshed. They want to destroy the economy of all States and countries, wipe out their industries and so cause considerable unemployment and general dissatisfaction. They have found that the best way to bring about unemployment and so lessen production until eventually there is a shortage of food, is by strikes. They have found, too, that the best organisations in which to commence work are those whose members produce essential commodities and transport them.

In past years, although I am happy to say not recently, we had considerable trouble in our coalmines; then we had it in our shipping industry. But because of the good sense of the unionists, the communists were prevented from achieving their objective. Recently, however, we had trouble in our transport system in this State and the strike lasted for approximately six months. We all know how it started and what it was about. We also know how futile it was because the people concerned are in exactly the same position today as they were when the strike commenced; the only difference is that they lost a considerable sum of money by way of wages and they have affected the economy of the State. Our transport system is in a fearful mess because of that strike.

All the strikers are not members of the Communist Party, not by any means, but the communists are extremely clever people. They do not, as a rule, come out in the open, but get their fellow-travellers to do that work. They make use of these fellow-travellers and the more important they are the better it is for the Communist Party. Many reputable people are fellow-travellers even if they are not communists. For instance, there is the Dean of Canterbury who visits communist-held countries and returns to England with all sorts of ideas. He commands a considerable amount of attention because of the position he holds. We recently had, in this State, Dr. Burton who held a high position in the Commonwealth Government. He was a member of the Labour Party, but because of the good sense of the unionists his endorsement for a seat in Parliament was cancelled.

These people, whether they are communists or not, assist the Communist Party to cause disruption and spread propaganda—and communist propaganda is extremely good. These fellow-travellers almost deceive themselves with what they say. They will use any means at all to gain their objective, and they will destroy anyone in their path. Just

recently a great number of workers in Western Australia were trodden into the mire. What do the communists care? It does not matter to them if they have disorganised and disrupted our transport system and consequently caused a considerable amount of suffering to everybody. Communists think that everybody will suffer except the manual workers, but that is too stupid to entertain for a moment.

I recently read a book by a man named Douglas Hyde. I recommend this book to any person with an open mind—the title of it is "I Believed." He started off by studying for the non-conformist church but he was carried away by communist propaganda and eventually became an editor of the leading communist newspaper in London. He describes how, when the war started and Russia was neutral, they had to do everything they could to prevent the production of war materials. However, as soon as Russia entered the war on the side of the Allies they had to volte face and go for their lives in an endeavour to increase production. Finally he became a member of the Roman Catholic Church. He had been at the very top of the Communist Party and he describes all the methods used in disrupting the economy of a country with a view to starting a revolution.

The unionists in this State deserve some credit because the strike did not develop any further and it will be very difficult for the communists to gain a hold in Australia because of the good sense of our unionists and other workers. I object to the use of the word, "worker" when referring to unionists. We are all workers; there are very few idle people in Australia.

Hon. G. Fraser: According to some members, we do not do sufficient work.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Unfortunately the communists appreciate only too well that if they can get matters concerning a strike dealt with in the political arena, it will be of considerable benefit to them. I think our political Labour leaders deserve some criticism in this respect because they are always trying, for political purposes, to introduce the subject of an industrial strike into the political arena. If our Labour leaders were to restrict strikes to the industrial field, I feel sure that the unionists would be better off.

Hon. G. Fraser: When have the political leaders tried to do that in this State?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: What did the political leaders do in an effort to effect a settlement of the recent strike?

Hon. G. Fraser: That was not your accusation. You said that they brought such matters into the political arena. Give us an example.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The coal strike and the railway strike. Almost every big disruption of industry is brought into the political arena immediately. That is what a lot of the unionists are fighting and desire to fight. I would like to see all these industrial matters kept to the industrial field and leave political matters to be dealt with by political parties. Do not let us bring industrial strikes into the political arena.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Is not that done because the Government is a big employer of labour?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No. If that were so, the Government would be taking an active part in the hours dispute, which is at present before the Federal Arbitration Court. The Government, as an employer, will act according to the awards of the Arbitration Court. It will allow the private employers and the unionists to settle their differences, and it will abide by the results.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is why we have the 40 hour week case.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: As to the 40 hour week, the Government of New South Wales unfortunately made provision for it in the industrial law of that State. I do not apologise for bringing this matter up because I think it is the duty of every citizen and every person in a public position to at all times point out the activities of the Communist Party and how it works.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: But do not you think when a strike begins to affect the economy of the country that it becomes a political problem and that the Government should take action?

Hon. R. J. Boylen: They did, six months afterwards.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It is interesting to hear these interjections. Surely the Labour leaders should have stepped in to prevent the strike; surely it should not be done by the Government! The Labour leaders should have been there on the spot.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: The Government is the biggest employer of labour. Would that not make a difference?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Mr. Barker has not realised the position in regard to Government employees in Western Australia. The Government employs a great number of men but it abides by the decision of the Arbitration Court. The court makes the decision and the Government is there to assist if necessary. I should point out that the Arbitration Court was set up for the purpose of fixing conditions of work in certain classes of employment.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Has not the strike been amicably settled?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am not speaking about the strike now. The Arbitration Court was set up to fix conditions for

labour. The President of that court is there to look after the interests of the people, and the representatives of the various parties also sit on the bench. At the present time, however, there is an unfortunate tendency for employers to agree with employees on an increase of wages which the employers in turn pass on to the public. The tendency has also been that such agreements are registered automatically with the Arbitration Court as a common rule. The public suffer accordingly.

Hon. H. Hearn: That position does not obtain under price-control.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Some members will recollect the time when at Collie there was an unholy alliance—as it was described by one member in this House—in which the employers agreed to increase the wages of the employees, the arrangement with the Government being that all increased wages should be added to the price of coal. The Government, in effect, was paying the piper because these increases did not affect the employers.

That practice was finally brought to an end, and the Government refused to go on paying when the agreement was due to be renewed. It is to deal with such cases that we have the Arbitration Court; the judge is there to look after the interests of the people and to protect them against any unholy alliance—if I may use the expression—between the employer and the employee. As Mr. Hearn said, it does not apply now; but I fear there are cases where it sometimes creeps in, though I do not say it is a general rule. I will now leave the question of the communists and their activities in this State and proceed to some other matters.

In the course of his contribution to the Address-in-reply debate, Dr. Hislop suggested the appointment of standing parliamentary committees in Western Australia. I would certainly strongly support the appointment of such a committee to deal with subordinate legislation. As members know, when a Bill passes this House and becomes a statute, very often regulations have to be made before effect can be given to the law. I regret to say that we do not have sufficient staff to draft those regulations properly and thoroughly. In New South Wales I think every department has two or three qualified draftsmen, quite apart from those in the Crown Law Department.

Regulations when drafted in this State are approved by some departmental officer and then by the Minister. But no one would suggest that any Minister of the Crown has the time or is qualified to go through those regulations and decide whether or not they are all correct. The Minister must rely on his subordinates. After this procedure, the regulations are gazetted and placed on the Table of each

House. We have only been in session for a very short while, and we find a tremendous number of regulations lying on the Table in front of us.

How can we go through all those regulations? We know that from time to time notice is given in the House to disallow certain regulations, but it is too late. Quite candidly I say I do not read the regulations; I have to rely on those affected by them to inform me of the position. That sometimes happens after the 14-day period. So I think it would be a very wise move to have a parliamentary committee the members of which could deal with regulations that are tabled. It would be of considerable assistance to the Minister, to the department, to members of Parliament and to the community at large.

I was very pleased to see in the Press that houses—all too few, I fear—are being provided for natives. When I speak of natives, I refer principally to the hybrid and the full-blood. If one travels round the north-west and south-west of the country, one sees that these natives are forced to live outside the boundaries of townsites; very often right away from any water supply, which means that they have to carry water in buckets and so on. They live in sheds, humpies—in fact, anything they can find. It is really marvellous how these people can send their children to school looking as clean as they do.

Great credit is due to them for that. I venture to say that white people forced to live in similar conditions would not be able to keep their children nearly so clean. I think the Government should continue to provide housing, and I am perfectly sure that the money spent will be repaid handsomely. I do not suggest that the natives be given these houses for nothing; they are able to pay rent and should be made to do so. The local authorities should see that they abide by the health laws and the police should ensure that they keep the laws of the land.

I have often heard it said that the Native Affairs Department should be responsible for the way these people behave and that that department should prevent the disturbances which break out amongst them. The Police Department is responsible for this and not the Native Affairs Department. When these people are properly housed I am sure they will be a tremendous asset to the country and will provide the labour that cannot be obtained at present.

I regret that the Minister, in reply to a question, should have stated that it was not the intention of the Government to bring forward this session the Local Government Bill that was circulated some time ago. It is high time that the Acts governing local authorities were considerably amended and brought up to date. I do not propose to speak for the country

areas, but I am satisfied that, in the metropolitan area, the number of local authorities is far too great. The result of having so many small local authorities is that they cannot adequately finance their activities or carry out the work that is necessary.

In the district where I live, there are three local authorities. One, the Cottesloe council, has plant and the other two have not, and so they have to obtain the use of the plant from the Cottesloe council. All three local authorities have to meet the overhead of town clerks, secretaries, etc., and it would be far better if we had larger bodies receiving greater revenue, because better work could then be done. These remarks apply not only to Cottesloe, Mosman Park and Peppermint Grove, but also to other parts of the metropolitan area.

We have been told by the Minister that a commissioner is being appointed to re-subdivide the metropolitan area. This is a move long overdue and I sincerely hope that this work will soon be done. Whether the Minister will take my advice. I do not know, but I suggest that it would be entirely useless to approach the local authorities and ask them whether they would agree to the adoption of this course. Naturally, none of them would agree; all of them are parochial and want to stick to what they have. I consider that it is not a matter for the Government to ask them whether they want this or that. If amalgamation would be good for the residents generally, the Minister should see that it is brought about. I understand that this course was adopted at Collie and Busselton, and I think it should be followed in the metropolitan area.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Done by co-operation.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, that is the better way. I can see where two or three local authorities in the metropolitan area could be amalgamated, and perhaps a little of a fourth district could be brought into the area and a little of the amalgamated area transferred to another district. In view of the expansion that is taking place in the metropolitan area, it is essential that action along these lines should be taken.

Another matter affecting local authorities to which I wish to refer relates to rating, and I hope that when the Bill is brought forward, provision will be made for all local bodies in the metropolitan area to rate on the same basis. On the main highway to Fremantle, we find shops on one side of the road rated on the unimproved capital value while premises on the other side of the road are rated on the annual value. This is absurd, especially in view of the fact that the Metropolitan Water Supply Department, in the metropolitan area I understand, but certainly in the district where I live, bases its rates

on the annual value. No difficulty is experienced by that department, so let us have uniformity.

In a road district, the maximum amount of the rate permissible without the sanction of the Minister is 6d. in the £ on the unimproved value of the land, but the Minister has approved of 9d. in my district, and so the rate is 9d. Even on that rate, the board cannot balance its budget. To show the absurdity of this basis of rating, suppose every allotment of land in the area carried a block of six-storeyed flats, the board would not receive one penny more by way of rates as compared with the revenue from vacant land because of rating on the unimproved value. It is absurd that such a system should be adopted in a built-up area in the metropolis. Therefore, I consider it desirable that action be taken in this direction as soon as possible.

Recently I had the pleasure of travelling to the North-West. I had seen a good deal of that part of the State in past years, and on my recent visit I found that there has been little improvement in the last four decades. I think I can say that the general feeling of the people in the North is exactly what Mr. Barker told us. They believe that they are a forgotten people living in a forgotten land. I do not agree with them, but that is what they say and how they feel.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is true.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I admit that is how they feel, but I repeat that I do not agree. There is not the slightest doubt that the development of the North will entail the expenditure of many millions of pounds. In the past, most of the jetties and other improvements have been of a temporary nature. True, portion of the jetty at Onslow is of cement, but generally speaking such works have been of a temporary nature, and it is time something permanent was provided. Wyndham, for instance, should have a permanent jetty.

How can 600,000 people in the south of the State provide all the money required up there? The feeling of people in the North is that everything is done for the South. Obviously, more money must be spent in the South-West where the bulk of the population is located than in the North-West, but we certainly cannot afford to provide the money required for the development of the North. What will happen when we no longer get the tax reimbursement from the Commonwealth and have to levy our own income tax? It will be necessary to tax the people to provide essential amenities in the North. I was interested to hear Mr. Barker say in the course of his speech that the people in the North could produce anything they liked.

The Minister for Agriculture: Perhaps they do not like all things.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: To me it is strange that they cannot, or do not, produce vegetables and other perishables, and that supplies have to be sent to them from the southern parts of the State. During the war years, there was a big market garden at Darwin that more than supplied the requirements of the army, and Darwin is not dissimilar to portions of the North-West. If the North-West were handed over to the Commonwealth, it would be more self-contained and the residents could then produce those commodities and not be an expense to the people in the South. We simply cannot afford this expense. If the North were transferred to the Commonwealth, the people there would be infinitely happier, and so would we. There has not been a Government in Western Australia that has succeeded in satisfying or even half satisfying the people of the North.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What about all the contributions to taxation made in respect of the wool, mutton and beef produced there? Do not you think the people of the North have done their bit and are entitled to consideration?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The hon. member recently told us that something ought to be done about the North because the people who produce the wealth are those who have big properties and do not live up there. That is what I am trying to point out.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That does not apply to all of them.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am glad to have that admission from the hon. member. Of course, the people of the North produce a lot of wealth and pay a lot of income tax, which the Commonwealth has received during the last few years, but they have not produced enough wealth to provide for the development of that territory.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: If the Government would only adopt a courageous policy regarding the North, it could develop that part of the State.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The point I am trying to make is being emphasised by Mr. Barker. Nothing will satisfy the people of the North. He has told us that no Government could satisfy them. I consider that we should allow the North-West to be taken over and controlled by the Commonwealth as is the Northern Territory. The Administrator of the Northern Territory is a man who was Premier of Western Australia, who represented one of the northern constituencies and who possesses marked administrative ability. Would it not be better for the people of the North if their affairs were administered by their own representatives rather than from this part of the State?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: No.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: We in this State strongly object to being controlled from Canberra and the people up north have my sympathy, but they will not be satisfied until they have a bigger share in the control of their own part of the State. We cannot afford to develop such an extensive State as this, and the time must come when its area will be divided into two or more States. I think an arrangement on those lines should be made as soon as possible.

It has been suggested that we may obtain a lot of revenue if oil is discovered in the North-West, and from the whaling and pearling industries. I have not the slightest doubt that uranium will be discovered there. If these things happen, the southern portion of the State would undoubtedly obtain all the trade and derive a tremendous benefit from the presence of the community in the North, just as we are at present benefiting from a big trade with Darwin. If the Commonwealth took over that territory, we would be saved the cost of the shipping service, the Wyndham meatworks and all the harbour works. Roads, to all intents and purposes, are non-existent in the North and must be provided. Many thousands of miles of roads are required to give communication between the various scattered centres.

The more I think of it, the more I realise that it is almost impossible for the meagre population in the southern part of the State to develop the vast area in the North, an area which is of such importance from the defence point of view and will become more important as the years go by. We are too close to Indonesia. Something must be done about the North and we in this part of the State are not able to do it. When we again impose our own taxation, I venture to say that the amount will not be as much as we have been receiving from the Commonwealth. I wonder, then, whether the Commonwealth will supply money for the development of the North and leave the Government of the State to suffer abuse on the score of the meagre amount it has been able to provide in the past. I should like members to consider just what can be done for the development of our great North-West.

I desire, finally, to draw attention to the Traffic Act. I think we have all been alarmed recently at the enormous number of traffic accidents, which have involved so many deaths, and the prevalence of so much drunken driving. The Act should be amended to provide for a longer period of cancellation of the license of any person found incapable through the effects of liquor while in charge of a motor vehicle. A term of imprisonment as a minimum penalty would not be a bad scheme.

I understand that in New Zealand, where a person is found guilty of such an offence and is sentenced to a term of imprisonment for perhaps a few weeks or a month, the magistrate is authorised to inflict the penalty over the week-ends, that is to say that the offender goes to gaol on Friday night and is released again on Sunday night, thus allowing him to continue earning his livelihood and supporting his family, while keeping him off the road at week-ends. I strongly advocate imprisonment for drunken driving and certain other offences under the Act.

The Minister for Transport: Did you say that that scheme was in operation in New Zealand?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, but my informant said that he believed the magistrates did that of their own volition with perhaps no real legal authority. Perhaps the persons who have had that penalty imposed upon them have not desired to appeal because they have preferred to serve their sentences in that way.

Hon. L. Craig: It seems like making a week-end resort of the gaol.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, but it would not be very pleasant to have to say that one was going off to the gaol for the week-end.

Hon. H. Hearn: It might be better than staying at home.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I would recommend to the Government that the imprisonment be served in some place that would not be actually a health resort. I really believe that this suggestion should be considered, as offences under the Traffic Act can have such serious results. The sooner we make our motorists conscious of their duty towards the general public, the better it will be. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir Frank Gibson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.19 p.m.