

privileges of the House to initiate legislation, I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for "An Act to Amend the Wheat Marketing Act, 1947-1969".

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier), and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Distribution of Copies

THE SPEAKER: Accompanied by members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to members of both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused printed copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIRST DAY

Motion

MRS CRAIG (Wellington) [3.43 p.m.]: I move—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

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

Mr Speaker, about two weeks ago a member of my constituency rang my secretary and said she was delighted to hear that I had been given the opportunity to move the Address-in-Reply; she was also somewhat horrified to hear that it lasted a month and she wondered whether I could make the distance. I can assure members I have no intention of trying to speak for so long.

I am a mere mortal and I represent mere mortals; it is of them and their needs that I will speak today.

Before I proceed, I would like to thank the electors of Wellington for the confidence they have shown in me. I would like to pay tribute to Mr Iven Manning for the dignity he gave to the seat of Wellington while he represented the electorate. I would like to thank the Premier, all members of Parliament, and the parliamentary staff for the assistance they have given me on every occasion. They have encouraged me at all times and have heartily agreed that I have much to learn.

Polarisation of urban and country dwellers has become much more pronounced of late. Why? Is there a general

lack of understanding of the problems confronting people in the country? Or is it that people simply do not care? Everybody has become too concerned with self and what he can achieve for self, and it no longer matters about anything else.

This great State of ours was founded and indeed prospered on primary industry. Think of the pioneers—the hardships, the heartaches, and the tribulations those people suffered. They are the stock on whom this State was founded. They exercised the right to choose their life style. I believe it is a right we all have and that it is one which has been constantly eroded.

When we remove the desire to work and strive for a goal, we remove initiative. What do we find in its place? Apathy, loss of self-respect, and a lowering of standards, which are quickly reflected in the community through decreased production, bad workmanship, and general malaise. It is very easy to receive; it is difficult to give of oneself, one's time, and one's skills.

Let me speak now about a small rural town. Why did it come into being? Who works in it, and why do the people remain there? The township grew up to serve the needs of the people in the community. Those people are farmers, and they need access to goods and services, just as everybody in the city does. They need to be able to buy food and machinery, to have their hair cut, to down an occasional beer, to be attended to in illness, to bank money and raise loans, to have access to stock firms and road and rail transport; and last but certainly not least, they need to have the facility to educate their children.

The majority of the people who provide these services choose to live in the country. It is a life style they like and they are willing to accept the disadvantages that go with it, up to a point; but once the disadvantages start to outweigh the advantages and it becomes impossible for them to maintain the life style they have become used to, for economic and family reasons those people must move to the city. That, I believe, is the real concern at the moment.

As farmers' costs increase, they, like any other businessmen, must look for ways to reduce the costs. What methods do they employ? The first thing they must do is reduce their labour. Then they must reduce general farm expenditure. Therefore, we find an inevitable lowering of production. The viability of an enterprise may be at stake and expenses must be met. We find one family unit moving from a country area. This is a blow to every business. It is a blow to the farmer, who has, in a way, conceded partial defeat; and it is a blow to Western Australia. The lifeblood of the State is export.

Let us consider what happens to the displaced family. The experts say, "There are no problems; retrain them." Retrain them for what? To work in an abattoir which is already retrenching men because of the collapse of the beef export market? Or perhaps to work for a shire which is also facing a crisis because of the lack of Federal funds for rural roads? No. These are people. They are my concern. They are not pawns to be pushed around in the game of life. There is no necessity for them to accept an urban life style.

I would like to tell members briefly some of the ways in which people who live in the country are disadvantaged. I will commence with the school children. Some of them travel long distances to both secondary and primary schools. They accept that, but when they leave school and wish to undertake technical training they cannot travel in school buses because technical schools have different hours from other schools. We therefore find parents driving 50 miles a day—sometimes twice a day—in order that their children may receive the training they desire. Other children wish to advance themselves by attending night school, and the parents of some of them are driving their children a distance of 72 miles twice a week for this purpose.

These are matters which I do not think are generally known, and great dedication is required on the part of families in order to overcome the disparities between rural and urban facilities.

As all members know, in the tertiary area there are no general facilities. Therefore, if a child wishes to progress to tertiary standard he must leave home and come to live in the city. As we all know, a number of courses at tertiary institutions in the city are subject to quota. These quotas are often based on academic results. Yet a professor told one of my children that country children are clearly at a disadvantage in their bid for entry to the tertiary level. This, of course, is another reason for the drift to the city. The above-average and brilliant children can get by. I often wonder, however, whether it is necessary for these children to be better than their city counterparts.

I would now like to tell the House something about welfare. If one is the mother of a retarded child and is living in the country and finds it necessary to bring that child to the city for professional treatment and assessment, it is necessary for that mother to pay her own fare and the child's fare; and she may also have to pay for two nights' accommodation while she is in the city. Those who live in the city pay 30c for bus fare. We all know that age pensioners in the country are allowed free travel on the bus. That is great, but it is not much good if there is no bus.

Emergency housekeeping schemes do not exist in the country areas and if a woman has to be dashed off to hospital and she rings an agency in Perth the answer invariably is, "Sorry, our ladies do not go to the country." If a person suffers a breakdown there is no specialised institution in the region that she can attend. It is necessary for her to travel to Perth where she receives excellent treatment, but when she returns home she returns to the environment in which she suffered the breakdown. There are no support facilities and no day clinics to facilitate rehabilitation.

In my electorate of Wellington there are two small hospitals both of which have a dedicated staff. It is an integral part of the community; indeed it is a community enterprise, and everybody works to raise funds to purchase new equipment. The hospitals in question are well managed and, as I have said, the staff are really dedicated; they are very much a part of the community.

I wonder how many nurses in Perth have been obliged to shower a person in their unstockinged feet while that person is sitting on a stool.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the shire councils and local government generally are beginning to concede that the welfare of the people in their areas is important. But these authorities are faced with reduced incomes. Apart from this they are losing their autonomy and are becoming like puppets on a string, and it seems that there is very little that can be done to help them.

What is the answer? I see the answer as decentralisation. My Government's decision to move the State Government administration and decision-making centres into the main regional areas is certainly a start; but we must ally these efforts with industrial development. We must plan with due regard for conservation, the environment, and the people living in the area. Without planned regional development and the consequent increase in population we will have no hope of obtaining a school of advanced education in Wellington or, for that matter, in the south-west region.

We do cling to the hope, however, of the establishment of a branch of the Murdoch Veterinary Faculty at Harvey. But it is a vain hope. I ask members to appreciate the fact that in this area we have the greatest concentration of cattle—both dairy and beef—in the State. It is only 133 kilometres from Perth and beyond the urban sprawl. The Harvey Shire Council has been far-sighted enough to purchase land close to the town. Freight concessions would greatly assist the establishment of businesses and also, of course, it would assist to encourage new businesses and narrow price differences.

The reinstatement of some if not of all developmental concessions that have recently been removed from the farming community would give a great boost to the rural areas. The rural contracting firms would be able to employ more men and, therefore, we would not see the decline in production which, I believe, could well eventuate. This decline in production will, I venture to say, be very, very rapidly reflected in the city.

The people in the country towns and those on the land cannot meet the spiralling costs and production will consequently decline, and of course, the shortage of supply will force costs up and we will all be called upon to pay appreciably more for necessities.

I ask members today to be appreciative of all our problems and those that confront the other country areas. If we do not progress with a sensible, planned, scheme of decentralisation then we might well find ourselves in the situation of the lone Elijah, and here I will borrow from Holy Writ: Elijah, seated beneath the Juniper Tree was asked, "What doest thou here?" He replied, "I even, I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away."

MR COWAN (Merredin-Yilgarn) [3.55 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr J. T. Tonkin (Leader of the Opposition).

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [3.56 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m., on Tuesday, the 30th July.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.57 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 30th July, 1974

The **PRESIDENT** (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (11): ON NOTICE

1. POLICE

Securities and Exchange Committee Report

The Hon. R. THOMPSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Western Australian Police Fraud Squad investigate Western Australian stockbrokers and companies named in the

report released by the Senate Select Committee on Securities and Exchange?

- (2) Will any investigation be subject to a Government decision?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) To date the report has not been brought to the notice of the Western Australian Police Force. No decision will be made as to possible investigations until a complete appraisal has been made.
- (2) No.

2. PENSIONERS

North-West Air Transport

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Minister for Health:

With reference to the pre-election promise given by the Premier, Sir Charles Court, to provide one return air fare per year to Perth for persons living north of the 26° Parallel who receive any type of pension, as reported in *The West Australian* newspaper on Thursday, the 21st March, 1974, will he advise—

- (1) The number of persons resident in Western Australia north of the 26° Parallel who receive pensions of any kind?
- (2) The estimated number of persons who would use the scheme each year?
- (3) The estimated annual cost of the scheme?
- (4) Has the scheme been implemented?
- (5) If the reply to (4) is "No" when is it intended to commence the scheme?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) to (5) The questions are based on a wrong premise.

The Hon. Member will find that subsequent reports to the one he quoted clarified the correct position of the proposed pensioner travel for those living north of the 26th Parallel.

I invite his attention to the following extract from the nine-page Liberal Party policy statement released by the Premier (then Leader of the Opposition) March 20th, 1974, on North West policy, as a supplement to the main policy speech—

"Pensioner Travel. We will grant eligible pensioners one free return trip from the North to the metropolitan area by appropriate means of transport once a year".