

common description. The proposals are rounded conversions and are acceptable to the industry.

Three of the vessels—that is, hogshead (52 gallons), barrel (35 gallons), and half-hogshead (26 gallons)—are no longer used in the industry and have not been included in the converted table. However they are still Commonwealth legal units of measure although their deletion as such could occur by the end of 1975. It is proposed to retain the expression, "kilderkin", in a descriptive sense as requested by the industry. It is a Commonwealth legal unit of measure and the rounded converted expression for contents in litres merely provides a permitted tolerance for filling the container and the sale of the contents.

Clause 5: The clause amends subsection (2) of section 29 to convert 20 miles to 30 kilometres. This is a rounded figure—actual is 32 kilometres—but rounding off will cause no inconvenience. The section allows exemption to be given to the verification of weighing and measuring instruments every two years, subject to conditions, where they are situated at a distance greater than that mentioned, 30 kilometres from the office of an inspector.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Harman.

BILLS (2): MESSAGES

Appropriations

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills—

1. Wheat Marketing Act Amendment and Continuance Bill.
2. Official Prosecutions (Defendants' Costs) Act Amendment Bill.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 6th August, on the following motion by Mrs Craig—

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 LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [5.55 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to speak for the first time in this House and to support the motion moved with such charm and grace

by the member for Wellington. I wish to add my sincere congratulations to those already received by you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to the lofty position you now occupy. You have given ample evidence in the first few days of this Twenty-eighth Parliament of the sense of justice and impartiality with which you will preside over the conduct of this House. I wish to extend congratulations also to all other members elected to high offices in this Parliament. I am sure they will carry out their duties with distinction. I offer my thanks to the members of the staff of Parliament House for the welcome they have accorded me and the wonderful assistance they have all been so quick to provide. I offer best wishes and congratulations to all fellow new members of this Parliament on both sides of the House and look forward with pleasure to being associated with them in the future.

Sir, to become a member of Parliament brought me a great deal of personal satisfaction, as it was the realisation of an ambition that I have harboured for many years and now, on the first occasion that I speak in this House, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to a number of members, both past and present, who have encouraged me and nurtured this ambition. I should like to commence with you, Mr Speaker. It is 17 years since I walked the two streets from my parents' home in Cottesloe to your home and you counselled me with regard to embarking on a career in the teaching profession. I sought this counsel following your own experience in that direction before you came to this House. Your interest and friendliness on the many occasions we have met during the intervening years have been a constant source of encouragement.

I acknowledge indebtedness and pay tribute to the late Mr C. C. Perkins, who was the Minister for Transport, Police, Labour, and Native Welfare in the early days of the Brand Government. As a very young man at the time, I was associated with his family and he invited me to this House on a number of occasions to be his guest and to listen to the debate. I also wish to place on record a debt of gratitude to my father-in-law, the Hon. G. W. Berry, one of the members for Lower North Province, for his continuing interest and encouragement over recent years. There are many others, including the Hon. Sir David Brand, the Hon. Arthur Griffith and the Hon. Ian Medcalf, to whom I am indebted. To them all, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

In looking ahead—presumably, in this business, one can never tell how far ahead to look—I will be hoping to gain a measure of both the statesmanlike vision displayed by my Premier and the political longevity of the Leader of the Opposition. I wish to express warm and sincere thanks to the area of Gascoyne and its people who elected me. I am deeply honoured by

the faith and confidence shown in me by the electors of Gascoyne and I assure them I will be unstinting in my efforts to justify that faith and confidence.

The area has been particularly good to me since I was first appointed to teach at the Carnarvon school in 1961. Although I have not spent all the intervening years in Carnarvon, it has provided me with a great deal of experience; a number of close friends; a charming wife; a politically oriented father-in-law; the first of my two children; and, a handsome absolute majority! My thanks go to all those supporters and friends who worked so hard in achieving this electoral result.

My predecessors in this seat have left a lofty political accomplishment to inherit. The Hon. Frank Wise held the seat from 1933 to 1951. During that time he held many high offices, including a period as Premier of this State. The Hon. Dan Norton represented Gascoyne from 1953 to 1974 and was the Speaker of this House at the time of his retirement earlier this year.

I pay tribute to these men who have set an impressive precedent which is a challenge to try to emulate.

It is truly a wonderful area, the electorate of Gascoyne, which has smiled so favourably upon me. It is a major, and I believe a vital region of this State. In area it is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the size of Tasmania and just marginally smaller than the State of Victoria. On this basis I refute the remarks made by a member of the fairer sex in another place a few days ago who said, and I quote—

This quite monstrous inequality between the representation of city people and that of country people.

I wonder if that honourable member would not think it nonsensical to say to a Tasmanian resident, "If your island grows $2\frac{1}{2}$ times you can elect one member of Parliament"; or conversely, tell the same resident that on an area basis the island is entitled to elect four-tenths of a politician!

Obviously in an enormous State such as ours, some rationalisation is necessary between area and numbers of electors. I believe my electors in this vast area are surely entitled to have reasonable access to their member of Parliament.

It is my fervent wish that I could talk more favourably regarding my electorate on this my first occasion in this House. I class myself as a supreme optimist. However, I must be realistic and recognise that things are certainly not as I would have them, at the moment, and I beg the indulgence of members while I outline some specific problems confronting my area at this time.

The plantation industry on the Gascoyne River is in a critical position. The industry, which provides the metropolitan area with

almost all its out-of-season vegetables and some 70 per cent of the State's banana requirements, had an income last year in excess of \$5 million. This industry, in common with other primary industries, has been emasculated by rampant inflation. Growers have survived the cost-price squeeze that has been a continuing problem for some years.

They have done this mainly by increased production and greater efficiency. However, in the last 12 months or so, costs have skyrocketed at an alarming rate and no further efficiencies can be squeezed out of the industry to counter them. Beating costs by increasing production is also out of the question at present, due to lack of water.

Transport for this industry, and, indeed, for the area in general, is an extremely vexed question. It is a manifestation of the general problem of escalating costs in the north and, in the case of Carnarvon, the problem is compounded by the requirements of transporting perishable produce to Perth markets.

The effect of these difficulties on the plantation industry has been, firstly, that a significant number of growers have taken employment elsewhere and run their properties on a part-time or after-hours basis; and, secondly, that there is now a dearth of share farmers and plantation labourers. Share farmers can no longer make an economical living and planters cannot afford to employ labour. These factors are having a detrimental effect on the whole area.

Traditionally, share farmers, after several seasons of hard work, have been the purchasers of properties. With virtually no share farmers now, no properties are changing hands and consequently property values have dropped. The industry is not being kept virile by the exchange of properties from the older grower on retirement to the younger purchaser taking up the challenge.

To be constructive before leaving this problem area, I recommend a number of measures.

I strongly urge more unity between growers and grower organisations. I recently returned from the Eastern States where I studied grower organisations, such as the Committee of Direction in Queensland and the Banana Growers Federation in New South Wales. Improvements to our industry could be made along lines adopted by these organisations, particularly with the assistance of departmental officers, in such areas as standardisation, quality control, transport, and product promotion.

Greater unity would also enable the industry to market directly to the areas further north, particularly the Pilbara region. With the imminent completion of the sealing of the North-West Coastal Highway to Port Hedland, marketing

direct would be to the benefit of both the industry at Carnarvon and the people of the Pilbara.

The second major area to look to in trying to overcome the problems of this industry is water. I draw the attention of members to the Speech made by Her Majesty the Queen when opening the Federal Parliament on the 28th February this year, and I quote a passage from that Speech, as follows—

Legislation to provide financial assistance to Queensland for the Ross River Dam and to Western Australia for water supplies for the Gascoyne plantations and Carnarvon will be presented.

This statement, which heralded the expenditure of some \$6.4 million on implementing the Carnarvon and Gascoyne groundwater scheme was warmly received in the area. However, apprehension has now crept in as no further statement has come from the Federal Government and, indeed, no mention was made of the proposal when the Governor-General opened the Federal Parliament again recently.

I call on the Commonwealth Government to reaffirm its intention to proceed as the development is vital not only to the progress of the plantation industry, but also for the growing needs of the Carnarvon township. In fact, in the last fiscal year the irrigation scheme supplied the plantations with 1.15 million cubic metres and the town of Carnarvon with 1.56 million cubic metres.

So at the moment the needs of the town are outstripping the needs of the plantations, although many more plantations are to be connected to the scheme once the Commonwealth money has been expended.

I know I will have the support of both sides of the House on this question. The present Government is involved since the previous Liberal-Country Party Government established the pilot scheme to provide water for a number of growers as early as 1963. I am confident the Leader of the Opposition will strenuously support the proposition because of his enthusiasm when, as the Premier, he made the announcement to a public gathering in Carnarvon where, by a "coincidence"—to use Mr Tonkin's own word—he happened to be holding a Cabinet meeting at the time of the Queen's Speech.

Finally on this matter, an urgent return to a stable economy is required for this most vital industry to remain viable.

I pass to other problems confronting the electorate. The closure of the tracking station at Carnarvon is a bitter blow to the area. At its peak, the station supported some 561 people, including employees and their families. The final close-down is expected within the next few months.

As a result, over 100 accommodation units will be left vacant which could cause considerable problems for the local building industry.

As an alternative to having a large number of houses lying idle, I ask the Housing Commission to consider urgently the acquisition of a number of these accommodation units, bearing in mind that there are some 100 applicants currently on the State Housing Commission list at Carnarvon.

I welcome the Government's stated intention to assist in finding a suitable alternative use for that station.

The salt operation at Lake McLeod, operated by Texada Mines Pty. Ltd., is the second largest evaporates operation in the world. Whilst it is a great boon to the area and the largest employer of labour, it is not without its present difficulties. These seem to lie in two main areas.

Firstly, the current liquidity situation and restraints on overseas capital are certainly not assisting the company to expand its potash operation as it intends.

Secondly, the company has been subjected to a number of industrial confrontations. One such dispute arose when the company became involved almost by default as the dispute originally arose over "body-snatching" between unions.

Another ended tragically for the area when one industrial group refused to reach a point of compromise and the company was left with no alternative but to contract the work out and, as a result, approximately 40 employees and their families left the district.

I move to the position of roads within my electorate. I wish to record my dismay at the disastrous position being forced upon country areas generally by the present wrangle over road funds.

Earlier I indicated the size of my electorate. Roads are its life blood. We depend upon road transport for our industries, for our tourist flow, and for almost all goods. The North-West Coastal Highway needs continually to be graded and maintained and the policy of the present Commonwealth Government of directing funds to anywhere except towards rural arterial roads, strikes particularly at two areas in my electorate—those of Exmouth and Shark Bay—which lie at the end of the arterial roads.

The only consolation on a very bleak horizon is the Premier's recent Press statement which reads—

A balanced programme between local authorities and the Main Roads Department will operate throughout the State, maintained broadly on last year's money level, but inflation will reduce the physical volume of road works that can be undertaken.

I wish to dwell for a moment on these two areas that will be most affected by any cut-back in the roads programme. Exmouth is a delightfully modern town, boasting many tourist attractions and recreational facilities.

Pressing problems for this community revolve around a changed attitude from Canberra towards our traditional friends, and difficulties for the United States operating the base, following the revaluations against the U.S. dollar. In addition, the disbandment of No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron is threatening personal hardship and causing anxiety to personnel involved and will be detrimental to the town.

A recent series of articles in *The West Australian* posed the question, "Is W.A. worth defending?" My answer to that is an emphatic "Yes" and North-West Cape is the place to do it. It should be done by placing a continuing reliance on, and by having respect for, the U.S. Navy Communications Base and the establishment of an operational Air Force base at Learmonth. The purpose of the base would be ideally suited for a maintenance and reconnaissance situation over the Indian Ocean.

Whilst mentioning Exmouth, I wish to pay a tribute to the Civil Commissioner (Colonel J. K. Murdoch) for his untiring efforts and dedicated loyalty to the promotion of the township of Exmouth since its inception.

With his military background and his authoritative position at the confluence of the three tiers of Government, he is certainly a strong character. I believe if he met the Almighty face to face, each would be waiting for the other to genuflect!

Be that as it may, I have the greatest respect and admiration for him as do almost all who are associated with him. Colonel Murdoch, and the town generally, urgently require Government assistance with their desperate attempts to make the town and the local authority viable.

The other area urgently requiring work on roads is Shark Bay. This is a picturesque and unique area of the State and its future would be brighter and its attractions shared by more if the access road was improved. I take this opportunity to applaud the present Government's decision to provide a desalination plant for the supply of potable water to the town.

The pastoral industry in my area is of great importance to the State and it faces problems similar to those faced by wool-growers throughout the country.

I have the greatest admiration for these people who live in the remotest of areas and always seem to have to battle against some dilemma either natural or, as at the moment, emanating from Canberra.

Very briefly, I wish to deal with two other problems confronting the area.

The first is that mining exploration companies are leaving in droves, due to current Federal policy. The pity is that we have not just had a curtailment of production in our area but by discouraging exploration, the Gascoyne area, for the moment, has lost the opportunity for discovery which I believe is a lamentable situation.

Finally, the removal of the petrol subsidy is iniquitous. It not only deepens the divide between country and city people into a chasm, but it sets one locality in the country against another, because there will be substantial differentials in each town.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr LAURANCE: Following the tale of woe I was delivering before the tea suspension, one could not be blamed for thinking all was "gloom, gloom, gloom" in my area. Fortunately, that is not so.

My election to this House has been heralded by excellent general rains in the area, and pastoralists face a wonderful season. The Gascoyne River has had one of its best flows since the 1961 flood and, despite some personal hardships brought about by the flooding of the river, it has replenished the aquifers, which will carry the area for some months, bringing us closer all the time to the expenditure of Commonwealth funds on the Gascoyne groundwater scheme which I mentioned earlier.

I applaud action by Governments, previous and present, in bringing on stream the development of a boat harbour at Carnarvon, to coincide with the closure of the tracking station and thus minimise the impact of that loss on the town.

Fortunately, also, excellent prawning seasons are being experienced. This industry is providing a great deal of employment in the area and millions of valuable export dollars.

Tourism continues to grow in importance and offers increasing benefits for the area. Further realisation of tourist potential will require considerable investment and management in the future. Pressing needs in the tourist field are for additional economy-class accommodation and recreational facilities, and the commercial development of items of interest which will increase the stop-over time of the average tourist unit in the area; that is, a family in a motor vehicle.

I applaud the development of the Vlaming lighthouse and museum at Exmouth, and urge commercial development of a tourist facility in connection with the plantation industry at Carnarvon, which is of interest to people coming to or passing through the area. So far it has been handled on an amateur basis and tourists have to run around the town trying to find somebody to give them a lead as to

the places they should visit. While many people in the industry have given their time very willingly to show tourists around banana and vegetable plantations, great benefits could be derived from a tourist facility along the lines, perhaps, of the "Big Banana" development at Coffs Harbour in New South Wales.

May I say in closing that the Gascoyne area welcomes the reintroduction of the zone development councils and looks forward with confidence and anticipation to the establishment of a regional centre at Carnarvon.

Mr Speaker, I thank you and members for your indulgence while I placed the current problems and aspirations of my electorate before this House.

MR McIVER (Avon) [7.34 p.m.]: Before speaking to the motion now being debated, I take pleasure in joining with previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your appointment as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. In the short time you have been in the Chair you have already demonstrated that you will attend to your duties very conscientiously. You have had a long and distinguished parliamentary career, having served in Government, in Opposition, and as a Cabinet Minister, and there is no question that the experience you have acquired over the years will be beneficial to this Parliament.

I also congratulate the new members on both sides of the House and wish them well. I am sure they will find this place very interesting, as the rest of us have done over the years.

In March this year it was the wish of the people of Western Australia that they have a change of Government, and in many quarters this was looked upon with regret. Some who do not support us politically were extremely sorry that the present Leader of the Opposition was not able to finish a very long and distinguished parliamentary career by being given a further opportunity to serve the State as Premier. Regardless of political philosophies, I do not think there is much argument about that.

It is quite obvious to all that, with the Liberal-Country Party Government in power once again, democracy will be set aside and hypocrisy will take its place as it did during the 12 years the Liberal-Country Party Government was previously in office.

Mr Nanovich: That is not so.

Mr McIVER: Good grief! What was that?

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Shoot when you see the whites of his eyes.

Mr McIVER: The honourable member has either been caught in a trap or is in grave pain.

In the Liberal Party's penny dreadful—the pamphlet it distributed dealing with the various policies it intended to implement—we have already had evidence of the secrecy which will cloud State issues. No-one has yet been able to find out what the policies are, and I refer specifically to those on education and traffic control. The policies will require money for their implementation, and hardly a day has passed since the Government came to office that reference has not been made to the Federal Government, in an endeavour to throw a smoke screen around the policies. When the present Premier was Leader of the Opposition, all he could say was, "The Federal Government did this and the Federal Government did that; it should go to the people and hold an election."

That is exactly what the Federal Government did. There was a double dissolution of the Federal Parliament, chiefly brought about by Mr Anthony and his colleagues. However, 49.3 per cent of the Australian people returned the Labor Party to Government. To be more specific, the Labor Government was returned by a majority of 700 000 people, that being the number of votes polled by the Labor Party in excess of the total figures of its political opponents. Yet Mr Snedden and Mr Anthony continually claim that the Australian Government does not have a mandate to introduce its policies for the benefit of all the people of Australia, rather than just a chosen few as was the case during 22 years of Liberal-Country Party Government.

Mr Mensaros: Do you know the figures for the referendums?

Mr McIVER: I will come to that because it is allied to inflation. I inform the Minister for Industrial Development and other members of the House that the responsibility for inflation lies solely at the feet of the Federal Opposition and members who sit opposite, as well as other Liberal members in the non-Labor States, because they spent thousands of dollars in conducting a campaign urging the people to vote "No". It was a very successful campaign and full marks are due to them for the way they handled it because they put fear into the minds of the people, and there can be only one result of that; that is, rejection. If we had another referendum on the question of the control of prices and wages—because one controls the other—

Mr Rushton: You still have the option.

Mr McIVER: —in my opinion there would be an overwhelming "Yes" vote.

The SPEAKER: Order! Would those members conversing please be quiet.

Mr McIVER: We have escalating costs. I am not an economist and I cannot put forward proposals for the curbing of inflation. However, I have many ideas on the subject but they would probably be very