

forget what members opposite have said. It is heartening to know we can look forward to some great changes after the Federal election has taken place.

I could mention a number of other matters, Sir, but I would prefer to do so at a later date. Many important issues have arisen in my electorate and I intend to do what I can to alleviate some of the problems which are being experienced.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Don't hide them.

THE HON. P. H. LOCKYER (Lower North) [5.47 p.m.]: This is an occasion on which I am sure most members of the Chamber feel some form of anxiety and I am no different from anyone else. I enjoyed listening to the speech made by the previous member, in particular the portion relating to public utilities. I have some knowledge of that matter and I should like to debate it with the member at some other time, perhaps outside the House.

I wish to take the opportunity during my maiden speech to comment on some problems being experienced in my electorate. I believe this is the appropriate time to do so. However, before referring to my electorate I should like to ask you, Sir, to convey my best wishes to the President. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members of this House when I wish him an early recovery. I am told the President is now able to accept visitors other than "relations and priests", and it is hoped that he will be back with us soon.

I should like to express my appreciation for the welcome which has been accorded me in this place, not only by members of my own party, but also by members of the Opposition and the staff. It is true that when a person enters Parliament he does so with a degree of trepidation. Some members have been here for a long time and it is not easy for a new member to adjust to the situation; but I have been made very welcome by members on both sides of the House. Were the President with us tonight, I should thank him for the kindness he has shown me and the way in which he has guided me in the right direction. I commend him on his organisation of the instruction day held in this Chamber prior to the opening of Parliament. It was beneficial to all who attended. As a result, I entered the Chamber on opening day a much wiser person than otherwise I would have been.

I should like to congratulate the members who have just been elected to the House and also those who have been re-elected. I extend my congratulations also to the Hon. Ian Medcalf on his election to the position of Leader of the House.

I should like now to turn to the situation in my electorate of Lower North Province. Some of the remarks made on opening day are relevant to my electorate, because it consists of 500 000 square miles. It stretches from Exmouth in the north to the Murchison River in the south, and east to the border. It covers a big area. The electorate is sparsely populated and it takes a great deal of time to cover it adequately. A large portion of my electorate is made up of pastoral properties, about which questions have been asked in this Chamber tonight.

I should like to point out, however, that a great number of the agricultural and pastoral properties in Western Australia have suffered a devastating drought in the last 4½ years. Fortunately we have received some beneficial rains in pastoral areas this year, and one may be led to believe that all the problems of the people in these areas have been solved. However, this is not the case.

I shall refer now to some of the devastating problems—and I use that word advisedly—faced by people in pastoral areas. In 1969 properties in the Gascoyne area enjoyed a sheep stock number of 1.3 million. The Department of Agriculture has told me that that figure has been reduced by more than half to approximately 640 000 this year. In 1969 farmers were faced with a similar problem to that which is being faced today. It was necessary for them to restock their properties and fortunately ample stock was available. The pastoralists restocked as best they could. At that time breeding stock cost from \$2 to \$4 per head. The pastoralists were charged approximately 80c per road mile for the delivery of stock to their properties. Those pastoralists who could afford to restock did so.

Today similar breeding stock costs between \$22 and \$25 a head. As a result, very few farmers can afford to restock. It costs \$2.40 per mile to employ a stock carrier to take the stock back to the pastoral properties. At the present time, because of an Australia-wide drought, these people are experiencing great difficulty finding suitable animals with which to restock their properties.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. T. Knight): There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I ask members to afford the member who is on his feet the courtesy he deserves.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: Thank you, sir. I would appreciate it if the Hon. Peter Dowding showed me that courtesy. He is a friend of mine and I went to school with him.

The figures I have quoted were given to me by Mr N. Williamson who is an Australia-wide authority on these matters. He works for the stock firm of Elders and he is familiar with the situation.

Unless we give pastoralists adequate consideration a number of them will go to the wall. This would be unfortunate, because it is undesirable for large tracts of the country to be unattended. Pastoral people have experienced criticism as a result of their mode of living. It has been claimed that all pastoralists drive Rolls Royces, and similar criticisms have been made. However, if one were to drive through a pastoral area today, it is unlikely one would see a new car. Such luxuries are things of the past. It should be remembered also that pastoralists are not able to follow the example of those who live in the city by changing from an eight-cylinder to a four-cylinder vehicle in order to reduce petrol consumption. Most pastoralists drive four-cylinder vehicles anyway. They have to travel around their properties, and therefore, they cannot reduce their mileages.

Most pastoralists have reduced their staff numbers to a bare minimum. In fact, frequently pastoral properties are now run by a husband-and-wife team, whereas formerly—10 to 15 years ago—they would have employed five or six people. One does not see pastoralists employing jackeroos today.

These people do not want hand-outs. They are strong people, but they want a little consideration. Although good rains have been enjoyed this year, more rain will be required next year before the problems can be alleviated.

Recently I spoke to Mr Eric Scott from Wynyangoo Station and he said that the trees which were devastated during the drought are just beginning to sprout. Three or four years of light stocking will be required before the trees are restored fully.

I should like to comment on the vermin problem and, in particular, the situation in regard to kangaroos. Some of my remarks may incite criticism from conservationists, but I feel it is necessary to bring the matter to the attention of the House. As a result of the good rains we have had, excellent feed will be available on pastoral stations. However, it is impossible to restock in some areas and stations will be invaded by kangaroos. As members are aware, kangaroos can breed four times in three years and one does not need to be a great mathematician to work out that, in the next 12 months or so, pastoralists will be faced with a big problem. The Minister for

Fisheries and Wildlife is in the Chamber and I am sure he is familiar with the problem. It is necessary to streamline the means by which shooters can deal with this problem in pastoral areas. We must encourage exporters, processors, shooters, and pastoralists to get together and solve the problems which exist. This must be done quickly, because as soon as the thunderstorms come in early summer and the grass sprouts the kangaroos will wipe out a property almost overnight.

I should like to turn to a matter which is a feature of most electorates and which I believe should be encouraged. I am referring to tourism. I see the Minister for Tourism is present at the back of the Chamber. I am sure he will agree that today tourism is the world's biggest business. In such areas as Exmouth, Carnarvon, and Shark Bay tourism is of great importance. These areas are known for their fishing. Areas such as Cue, Leinster, and Leonora are flourishing today. Large numbers of people travel there with metal detectors and search for gold and some of them are fortunate enough to find some. Therefore, it can be seen it is important that the public of Western Australia pay more attention to our tourists.

It never ceases to amaze me that, no matter where one goes, one sees local people being rude to tourists. Tourists are called "terrorists" and they experience rudeness in shops. I do not mean to imply that all Western Australians are guilty of this; but a certain percentage of people fail to respond to tourists in the correct manner. It does not take many rude people to frighten off a tourist. That tourist will tell a friend about the situation and the industry will suffer.

If we want to encourage people from overseas, or even people in Western Australia, to travel to country towns, it is important that we carry out a public relations exercise designed to instruct people on how to look after tourists.

Many towns in my electorate offer hospitality to tourists. Excellent facilities are available and visitors are looked after very well. It is unfortunate that an increasing number of accidents are occurring in which cars towing caravans are involved. I carried out some research on this matter and discovered that, to date in 1980, there have been 93 accidents involving cars and caravans on the roads. That figure included three fatal accidents.

It is possible an anomaly exists in the Act, because a 17-year-old can obtain his driver's licence one day and drive a car, towing a 20-foot caravan, to Darwin the next. The authorities do

not seem to be concerned about the number of vehicles he may collide with between here and his destination. This matter should be looked at.

Mining is booming in Lower North Province. I was happy to hear the Hon. Ron Leeson say he expects mining to improve in Kalgoorlie. The Agnew Mining Company at Leinster is at full strength with its nickel operation. I was in Kalgoorlie at the weekend and, according to the information given to me by some of the local people, there are no vacant homes in the Leinster area at the present time. The same situation is occurring at Laverton with the reopening of mining operations. Approximately 20 or 30 families are expected to move into the area in the next few weeks. The Hill 50 Company of Mt Magnet has announced that there will be an influx into the area of approximately 200 people before the end of the year. It is encouraging to see the signs of an improvement in the mining industry.

I should like to mention briefly the recent flood in Carnarvon. Most members will have read about it in the Press and undoubtedly they would have spoken to people who have been there. Some confusion exists as to the levee banks which were built. They were constructed prior to the 1970s to protect the residential part of Carnarvon. I am happy to say that, during the recent floods there, the residential area was protected by these banks.

Problems were experienced in the plantation areas during the floods, but it has to be accepted that this situation can arise in a town like Carnarvon, because it is situated on a flood delta. However, the people who live there are tough. They have faced the problems and, in some cases, two or three days after the floods planting was underway once more.

Quick action by the Public Works Department resulted in photographs of the flood at its height, and those photographs will be of considerable assistance towards offsetting this problem in the future. Some people asked why a dam had not been constructed in the Kennedy Range, and they claimed that would have solved the problem. However, I make the point that even if there had been a dam in the Kennedy Range sufficient water passed through that area every 12 hours to fill the Sydney Harbour, so a dam would not have been of much use in combating the problem.

The Galena Bridge, over the Murchison River, was under water on two occasions. The first time it occurred there was great disruption to the transport of plantation produce from Carnarvon to the Perth markets. In fact, the RAAF had to come to the assistance of the growers. I commend

the RAAF, and the Government, on the assistance provided to the growers. There were many happy people in Carnarvon as a result of that action. The transport industry is important to the economy of Western Australia, and the closing of the Galena Bridge was reflected in the prices which had to be paid by housewives for produce in the metropolitan area. It is important that consideration be given to the construction of a new bridge over the Murchison River to avoid inconvenience in the future. I know the Minister for Transport is looking into the situation and I hope sincerely he is able to do something about it.

Fishing in Western Australia is probably our most important undeveloped industry. Game fishing at Exmouth is second to none, and I include the blue waters around Cairns on our eastern coast. The Government has assisted the Shark Bay fishing co-operative in the construction of a new building. I am happy to note that my good friend, the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife (the Hon. G. E. Masters) will open the new building during September. That will provide a whole new concept for the small fishermen in the area. Mullet and whiting fishing already provide a thriving industry in Shark Bay. With the sealing of the access road, the industry can only improve.

I will now address a few comments to the matter of Aborigines in my area. There have been many comments with regard to Aborigines during the last few weeks, but I do not want to enter into the type of argument which has been raised. However, I want to place on record my own views with regard to the Aborigines. I do agree with some of the comments made by Ken Colbung when he stated we should be tackling the problem rather than just yapping about it.

My comments concern the early pastoralists who, at various times in the past, have come in for some criticism for not having solved their problems associated with Aborigines. I do not intend to debate the rights or wrongs of the past, but many pastoralists did considerable good for the Aborigines. I am not saying that some pastoralists did not abuse their positions; some did.

I will refer to an article which appeared in *The West Australian* of 7 August 1980. It appeared in the "News of the North" section, and I believe the comments are worth recording. The article reads—

One can hardly pick up a newspaper these days without reading about the problems of our unfortunate fringe-dwellers.

I know it is very easy to be wise after the event but, these problems have, by and large, only been created over the last 30 years by do-gooders and unions who had little or no knowledge of the Aboriginal people.

I mention, again, these are not my own words. To continue—

When I first came into the pastoral areas in the early '50s every station had a native population of upwards of 20 or 30 people.

The younger men worked as stockmen, the girls and women worked in and around the house while the older people sat round and looked after the children.

The accommodation was fairly rough but no worse than on the reserves today and everyone was well fed.

The children received a pretty scrappy sort of basic education from the governess, who was an integral part of station life.

The working stockmen received a minimal wage of about 30 shillings a week but their families, including the old people, were fed and housed.

This system was open to abuse and in a few cases, this did occur. But, in the main they were a happy people.

When it was decreed that all workers on the station should receive the appropriate award wage it was not an economic proposition to the station owners for the system to continue.

Whole families who had been born and bred on the properties were moved out into the towns to the so-called reserves.

A once proud and happy people lost their identity and became our fringe-dwellers.

Soon after this they were given drinking rights without any education in the handling of liquor and the downward trend escalated.

I am not attempting to offer a solution to the problem because I do not think there is one while current thinking, based on handouts, exists. But I think it important that newcomers to the area should know how the situation arose.

These unfortunate people have been pushed into a position not of their own making.

That article was written by Jack Haynes, a very responsible gentleman from the town of Port Hedland. I might also mention that he is a Past President of the Labor Party.

In summary: I look forward to my future years in this House. I have a strong desire to represent the people in my electorate. I do not apologise for the sparse number of electors in it, and I am quite happy to enter into debate on that subject at any particular time. I thank members for their indulgence and, as I have said, I certainly look forward to my future years here.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. P. H. Wells.

House adjourned at 6.07 p.m.