

## **KING ISLAND AS IT WAS . . .**

**Federal Parliament was last week treated to several anecdotes about King Island during the debate of the second reading of the King Island Harbour Agreement Bill, 1973.**

When Mr. R. Whan, the Member for Eden-Monaro, rose to speak to the Bill he said he had the pleasure of completing his formal education on King Island at the age of 14 and spent two years there for practical experience later.

Before entering Parliament at the last Federal election, Mr. Whan was a prominent member of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

### **MR. COPE WAS HERE**

Mr. Whan prefaced his remarks with a comment to the Speaker of the House, Mr. J. F. Cope on the difficult task which he had when he was a minister on the Island.

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At that time, Mr. Whan

said, the population consumed 5.5 pints of beer per week for each man, woman and child.

"I recall that the flow of this commodity, like that of many others at that stage, was interrupted by various hold-ups in the shipping service. As a school boy I was always very pleased when these happened because the petrol ran out and the school bus could not run and I was able to stay at home.

#### **ALWAYS A WIND**

"There is always a wind on King Island, sometimes reaching gale force. I quite clearly remember an occasion — this is relevant to Currie Harbour because this is one of the difficulties in entering and leaving — when my father, rounding up cattle, crested a hill and the wind ripped every button off his coat.

"His hat took to the air

and gained altitude and has no doubt since been reported as an unidentified flying object.

## **JETTY BLOWN TO SEA**

"On the east coast, which is a sandy strip, the Naracoopa jetty was blown out to sea during a gale. So the experience of building a port on the eastern side of King Island stands as a testimony to any recommendation we should make on the episode," he said.

Mr. Whan said that whilst he was on King Island he had the very interesting experience of seeing the water run out of the harbour leaving a ship called the "Argonaut" stuck in the mud. When the tide came back in, the ship remained there for some time with water in its hold.

"I recall another occasion when a ship had been held off on the other side of the

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reef from entering Currie Harbour for nearly three weeks and finally the captain ran the ship on to a sand bar as he came through the narrow heads.

## **RAN OUT OF WHISKY**

"In the subsequent incident

"In the subsequent inquiry he claimed that he had been held off outside Currie Harbour for so long that he had run out of whisky, and in 15 years of bringing ships into that harbour he had never come in sober. He said he always thought there were three pilot lights and not two."

Mr. Whan also referred to a home-made projector constructed by well-known King Island identity, Mr. Max Gatenby.

"When the programme was interrupted and there was one flick on the lights, that meant that the audience was to wait in their seats because the repairs could be made in the

projection room.

"Two flicks of the light meant that the breakdown was a little more serious, and we all went out for coffee.

Three flicks meant we went to the dance and an announcement would be made when the projector was repaired.

We would all then come

... we would all then come  
back to see the remainder of  
the show, sometimes ending in  
the middle of a Sunday after-  
noon."