

FOOTBALL

It is no good Mr. Burke protesting that he is not nationalising the football industry just because the League has come cap in hand begging that the taxpayer carry its burdens for it;—most industries get nationalised that way. He who pays the piper will call the tune, and should not only call the tune but specify the salary, who plays, where and when; otherwise extravagant piping will run away with ~~the~~ <sup>the payer's</sup> substance.

It is no good protesting that the industry is not nationalised, on the specious grounds that the proposed board will have a predominance of non-government members. So has the Wheat Board, Egg Board, Lamb Marketing Board, and Dairy Corporation. Each of these is but an instrument of nationalised marketing of the various products, specifying varieties, prices, quality and delivery points, and prosecuting people who fail to comply.

Right from the very beginning it is proposed that "player payments be controlled strictly to a formula that reflects the WAFL's ability to pay." The proposal is to set maximum, in lieu of the normal minimum wages, for the only indentured labour which seems to have escaped the wrath of the unions. It is no good Mr. Burke protesting that he is not agreeing to a maximum wage formula. I would have thought that a Labor Premier, steeped in the tradition of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, would have found cause for second thoughts.

The task force, apparently without putting its tongue in its cheek, says that future football planners and administrators will have to be more entrepreneurial in their outlook, but it recommends controls which will make genuine entrepreneurial activities illegal. Entrepreneurial risks and rewards are to be stifled by regulation and mistakes subsidised by transfers prized out of, for the most part reluctant, taxpayers.

Neither is it any good Mr. Burke protesting that all taxpayers are rich and can therefore afford to subsidise "the people's" sport. If 170,000 West Australians attend some sort of football each week, that is just another way of saying that about 1,300,000 prefer not to. That most of the 1.3 million would prefer to do something else with their money is so obvious as to be incontestable.

The defence of subsidising people who are not poor which is most often advanced is that, since everybody gets his snout in the trough sometimes, the process is therefore fair.

Apart from the utter and obvious futility of handing a \$20 bill around a circle of people until it comes back, that is not what happens when governments subsidise. What happens is the articulate and well organised lobbies get their snouts established at the end of the trough where the feed comes in and there isn't much left for everybody else. It is ironic that in the same week that Burke agreed to subsidise the WAFL, the paraplegics were refused assistance to run the Disabled-Olympics, - admittedly by another arm of <sup>Labor</sup> government, but the same taxpayers.