

Responding to a request for a contribution to the cost of a new bitumen road,

Charlie B Pidcock wrote, on the 22nd November, 1957:

Dear Sir,

We have received your letter of the 18th instant concerning our contribution towards the cost of a bitumen surface on the road adjacent to our Jackadgery sawmill. We are compelled to reply that the present state of our bank account makes this quite impossible. Our shattered financial position is due mainly to laws, taxes and regimentation through over-government generally.

We are beset on every side with a complexity of restrictive and irritating federal laws, state laws, city laws, shire laws, union laws, and – to a lesser degree – mother-in-laws and outlaws.

By virtue of these laws we are compelled to pay income tax, company tax, payroll tax, sales tax, road tax, petrol tax, diesel tax and amusement tax (of which we enjoy none).

Because, some years ago, we outlaid a considerable amount of money on the purchase of diesel powered lorries which were then most economical to operate, we recently had forced upon us by a greedy state government, the privilege of paying a 700% increase in registration tax so that on each of our diesel powered vehicles using the Jackadgery road, we pay £20 per week registration alone.

More recently we suffered the imposition of an additional one shilling per gallon tax on diesel fuel which will cost us an additional £24 per week to use the road under discussion, and the latest ton-mile tax is just around the corner.

The insultingly bureaucratic departments spawned by our country's system of government require us to obtain and maintain a factory licence, a shop licence, building permits, a vehicle driver's licence, a crane driver's licence, a boiler attendant's licence, a scaffolding licence, a licence for all boilers, an inflammable liquids licence and - to a lesser degree – a marriage licence, a dog licence and a radio licence.

Furthermore, just because we are in business and therefore presumably making a fortune, we are expected to contribute generously to every charitable organization in the country as well as to every society, committee, club and organization which the genius of man is capable of bringing to life

The harshly literal translation of our laws, and the sometimes harsh application of them by unions and government departments, compels us for our own protection to carry excessively high fire insurance, burglary insurance, robbery insurance, property insurance, workers' compensation insurance, public risk insurance, boiler explosion insurance, third party insurance, life insurance, accident and sickness insurance and old age insurance in the form of superannuation.

In fact, our business is so governed and regimented these days that we do not know, nor shall we ever find out, who owns it. We are being inspected, suspected, disrespected, rejected, examined, and re-examined, informed, required, fined, summoned, commanded, compelled, kicked about, spat upon until we provide an inexhaustible supply of money for every known need, desire, or hope of the human race: and this supply we are to raise from the debtors who, because of the same circumstances, are unable to pay their accounts.

Now, on top of all of this, we are requested by your council to contribute towards the cost of a road for which work your council levies rates to the maximum capacity of the ratepayer, and for which we somehow feel we have paid five times over.

Sir, believe us when we state with trembling voice that should we ever be able to contribute more than 18 pence to the cost of this road it will be in the nature of a major miracle.

Despite all of the foregoing, please be assured that we are normal, healthy Australians – hard to keep down – and as such we wish you and the individual members of your council a very Happy Christmas and a most prosperous New Year.

Yours faithfully,
The Northern Sawmills Pty Ltd
CB Pidcock
Managing Director.