

Mr RUNDLE (Braddon) - I am also honoured, as a newly-elected member of this House, to second the motion for the Address-in-Reply and in so doing to express my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and particularly to her representative here in Tasmania, Sir James Plimsoll. I would also begin by congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on your election to that office and I would also congratulate the mover of the motion, the member for Bass, Dr Madill, on his very eloquent entry into debate in this Chamber.

My recollection of State governors extends as far back as Sir Ronald Cross who served here from 1951 until 1958. Since that time there have been five governors of Tasmania - all of whom have served the Crown with distinction. Having observed Sir James Plimsoll during his travels around the State, I believe he will be remembered as the Governor who has taken particular pride in making himself available to all Tasmanians, not only in the pomp and ceremony of occasions such as we have participated in today, but also by his presence in the tiny hamlets of rural Tasmania. I know that his visits there have been greatly appreciated and I thank him for that on behalf of the House.

Government members - Hear, hear.

Mr RUNDLE - I hope this will not sound pompous, but I will seek the House's indulgence. On an occasion such as this it is as well to recall that many institutions are being challenged today; yet the Westminster parliamentary system has stood the test of time and, although imperfect, it still offers the people of any nation the fairest and most incorrupt system of government. It has been abandoned by many former members of the Commonwealth - especially in Africa - and we can see the disorder which has resulted from the disintegration of the Westminster system there and, in many cases, its replacement by dictatorships and one-party systems.

Therefore I think it is as well to reflect on this day - the opening of State Parliament - that the people of Tasmania have the security of knowing that we have a stable political institution in this House which has served our needs since 1856.

For a political candidate on the hustings it is somewhat disconcerting to observe the widespread lack of interest and lack of understanding of the institution which we all represent. I see that as very undesirable. I am not sure what the answers are but there certainly exists in the electorate a great ignorance of what we are about. I believe the political institution we represent imposes great responsibilities on the 54 members of both Houses. Complacency poses a threat to our institutions and I believe that it does exist, as I have previously mentioned.

The Australian flag, which has served the nation well, is under threat at this moment. I understand that we are now going through another of those competitions for a new Australian flag. I am not ashamed of Australian history or of the origins of the nation or of this State; they are represented by a flag and I have no idea what this is all about.

We have others who are seeking to replace the monarchy with a home-grown republic. I do not oppose change but I do object to change for its own sake. It is a form of collective boredom where, forgetting our history, we rush on to something new.

In the Federal sphere we have a government which seeks to impose a bill of rights on Tasmanians and the rest of the nation. It seems to me to be an absurdity in a country where, through the process of common law and other redress, we have more rights than most other nations on the face of this planet. What would make more sense to me would be a 'bill of responsibilities' in a society where more and more people are demanding their rights and fewer and fewer are saying, 'What can I do for my country?' but rather 'What can the country do for me?'. I think that is evident in our national life and it is a great tragedy.

This brings me to the Governor's address today. It follows the Gray Government's 1982-86 program which was notable for delivering to the Tasmanian people practically every election undertaking. I can recall few State governments in recent history which have satisfied the expectations of the electors. If proof is needed, the 5.7 per cent

swing to the Liberal Party in the election on 8 February ought to be sufficient evidence. That does not mean to say that the Government has a mandate on all wisdom. The Leader of the Opposition said this morning - and previously - that his Party will adopt a constructive role this session. I think those citizens who take an interest in proceedings here would perceive such an attitude would be uplifting not only for him and his colleagues but also for the Parliament.

It has been said that the 8 February election has seen more widespread changes than practically any other contest. I agree there is a very clear implication in this for all of us, from the newest member to the most seasoned. If the mood of the electorate prevails, banality and non-performance will bring its own rewards to the practitioners of those dubious arts. Not only have the electors signalled a new set of guidelines on electoral performance by members, but I believe many of them expect a higher standard in the House - and other speakers have already mentioned this earlier today. My only observation would be that if articulacy is to a politician what a trowel is to a bricklayer, many readers of Hansard would be thankful that some practitioners of politics practice that art rather than building.

I come here today as a representative of the electorate of Braddon. It stretches from Devonport in the east to Cape Grim on Tasmania's north-western tip and north to Cape Wickham on King Island. I am a fourth generation Tasmanian. My forebears carved their farming properties from the forests of the north-west coast. In those days there were no bulldozers, no chainsaws, no protesters, no police and no dole cheques; it was simply plain hard work - an ethic I believe is becoming quite alien to many people in Australia today. I therefore take my place here today with a deal of pride. As I say, I come from people who were born and bred on this island and, although I have lived away from it for ten years, I believe it is a place which would be absolutely inundated with people from the rest of the world if only they knew what we had here.

As a member of the Port of Devonport Authority since 1977 I have served some sort of apprenticeship in the public life of the island. As a result I intend to take a great deal of interest in matters relating to transport which Dr Madill, the member for Bass, has already told us is of vital importance - the very lifeblood of our State in fact.

I have now been involved in ports and sea transport as an elected member for almost a decade and will remain an advocate of the State's decentralised port system. It operates under the Marine Act through a series of statutory bodies and I believe the Tasmanian four port system, with assets totalling about \$140 million and spending about \$25 million annually, as well as other money on capital works from additional loan borrowings, plays a very important role in the economy of the State.

As governments in other parts of Australia begin to stifle their own ports through doctrinaire desires to encompass them in the bureaucracy, I believe Tasmanian ports are becoming the envy of other States and I should point out that most of the States which are stifling their port systems are the socialist States of mainland Australia.

The ports of Tasmania have served the State well. They have survived inquiry after inquiry by committees of experts. Our ports charge shippers less than the mean average of other Australian ports for their services and, more importantly, they operate at no cost to the Tasmanian taxpayer.

The electorate of Braddon is served by two major successful authorities at Devonport and Burnie. The latter has developed a strong interstate and overseas service while Devonport has maintained its sea passenger role established in 1959, when the first roll-on, roll-off vehicular ferry - the 'Princess of Tasmania' - was introduced on the Bass Strait run. As has already been mentioned, the port now plays host to the TT-Line's 'Abel Tasman' which is contributing not only to the growth of the Port of Devonport Authority but also greatly boosting tourist traffic into the island - some of the figures have already been given by the member for Bass. The influx of visitors into Devonport, Braddon and other areas of Tasmania as a result of the TT-Line vessel 'Abel Tasman' is having a marked effect on the small businesses and the back-up services in those regions.

In addition the Devonport airport, controlled by the Port of Devonport Authority, is also boosting the State's tourism. For the twelve-month period ended December 1985, passenger traffic through Devonport airport showed an increase of 31.6 per cent over the previous year. This compares with a 1 per cent increase at Wynyard, 5.9 per cent at Launceston and 7.8 per cent at Hobart. The figures do not include Air Tasmania and they are to be compared with a national average of 8.3 per cent. So what is happening at Devonport is really quite spectacular, not only by Tasmanian standards but by national averages as well.

There is no doubt that the upgrading of the State's airports will have a beneficial effect on the economy, particularly international flights through Hobart which should provide incentives for high value exports to Asia and beyond and boost our percentage of international tourists which I think is currently about 3 per cent.

There is one matter I would like to place solidly on the record of this House this afternoon and that is the promise by the Hawke Government to upgrade the airport at Wynyard. I would like it to be a matter of record that on the day Mr Hawke delivered that promise he stood next to me, the Master Warden of the Burnie Marine Board, Mr Loane, and various other people in the boardroom of the Port of Devonport Authority and in unequivocal terms told those people present that if elected - it was prior to his election to government - Wynyard Airport would be upgraded. I heard the statement and let it be a matter of record that I was there and it was stated in the boardroom of the Port of Devonport Authority.

I will do whatever I can to assist the Government in the development of facilities and policies to boost tourism and movement of goods to and from Tasmania. I am particularly concerned to ensure that Braddon increases its share of visitor stopovers which at present are well below the State's average. There is no doubt that the north-west coast needs to develop man-made attractions to hold tourists in the area for longer periods. If one studies tourist patterns it will easily be seen that the visitation nights in the area of Braddon are below those in other areas in the State. I am encouraged by recent proposals which have been shown to me by local entrepreneurs. I believe if they are proved financially viable they ought to receive my backing and the backing of the appropriate government instrumentalities.

As members of the House will know, the electors of Braddon gave the Government the highest vote in the election of 8 February. There was a 60.1 per cent vote for the Liberal Party in Braddon. That was no aberration; it was in recognition that at last, under a Liberal government, the region is receiving a fair share of government expenditure.

The people of Braddon are pretty astute; they have eyes and they do not have to travel far to see the capital works initiated by the Gray Government under construction in the region. There is a very big road program, large hospital upgradings are under way and will continue, and there will be a modernisation of schools in the area as witnessed by me last week with the opening of a \$1 million gymnasium at the Wynyard High School.

That does not mean to say that all sectors in Braddon are in a buoyant situation. The rural communities, especially dairymen and vegetable growers, are facing very difficult times, principally because of competition from New Zealand exporters under the Closer Economic Relations Agreement. They deserve every support that this House can give them against the onslaught of hostile Federal policies, ranging from the Kerin dairy plan to the capital gains tax, means test and other taxes which are very savage on the farming communities. As a candidate I said that I would do everything within my power to assist the farming community of Braddon and Tasmania in the months ahead.

The people of Braddon are self-reliant and create, through their own efforts, a great deal of significant export wealth for this State. The region's economy does not have the benefits of a large bureaucratic work force as is the case here in the south, and I will be keeping this fact before the Government to ensure that the region continues to enjoy economic justice which has been the hallmark of the past four years of the Liberal Government.

Finally, I intend to take an interest in all matters on which this House deliberates. I was particularly interested to hear the member for Bass refer to the deregulation committee which has been set up by the Government. I had the advantage of listening to the chairman of that committee only last week. In past years the new minister demonstrated a significant interest in deregulation in another place. I believe the people of Tasmania can look forward to a government that will remove the red tape which is strangling people and enterprises with initiative and ideas. They find that dealing with the bureaucracy and red tape is so disenchanting that it is a disincentive. Of course without these people no government will ever be able to bring about increased employment.

I support the present policies of balanced development of the State's resources, including forestry, and the right of Tasmanians to the dignity of employment. As I said previously, I will be a constant champion of those members of the Tasmanian community with ideas and initiatives who want to put them into practice to generate jobs and wealth for the State.

Australia now faces a massive external debt, moving towards \$100 billion, and the time has now come to support the productive people who generate employment and wealth to enable governments to function. Politicians who see themselves as mere tax-gatherers and spenders of other people's money may soon become as extinct as the dwindling band of taxpayers increasingly soaked by Labor governments to pay for their extravagant social programs. It has often been said, and is nevertheless true, that one does not strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

While those members on the other side of this House may believe they traditionally represent the working men and women of this State, I have news for them: it is a role I believe they have abrogated and the workers find it increasingly difficult to identify with the Labor Party which they see as the trendy intellectual left, the centre, Labor unity and goodness only knows what other faction. The Gray Government has more relevance to the working people of this State than the ALP. I am certain that when I was elected on 8 February many former Labor voters supported me, and other members of my Party.

The working people of Tasmania are also astute. They know how many jobs will be created at Electrona. They know how vital the sensible harvesting and regeneration of our forests are to the economy of Tasmania. At Farmhouse Creek, for example, the present activity is part of a plan approved on 23 March 1983, after being available for public comment for two months.

In concluding I would like to reiterate that sensible budgetary control and the quest for new commercial enterprises and initiatives - such as the 'Abel Tasman' - are the things that help the working men and women of this State, and they know it.

The next four years of government in Tasmania will not be easy. The Hawke Government is quickly draining the lifeblood from the nation. Some commentators are already saying that, when Australia celebrates its Bicentenary in 1988, in the Federal Treasury they will be celebrating another centenary of a \$1 billion debt. This potentially disastrous national debt and its crippling interest repayments will obviously impinge on every State government and every Tasmanian. Even householders know that if one continues to spend more than he earns he ultimately goes broke, but it apparently has not dawned on the Government in Canberra yet.

I looked in the Members' Lounge and saw that politicians are allocated numbers. I am not sure what my number will be; I think I am somewhere in the 600s, since the House began in 1856. I come to this place under no illusion; I do not suggest for a moment that I will be the most outstanding member to pass through these portals, but I hope that history will not judge me to be the silliest either. Time will tell.

I congratulate the mover of the motion on the manner in which he did it, and I have great pleasure in seconding it.

Government members - Hear, hear.

Debate adjourned.