

Dr MADILL (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move -

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to His Excellency's speech:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the members of the House of Assembly of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled, desire to thank Your Excellency for the speech which you have been pleased to address to both Houses of Parliament.

We desire to record our continued loyalty to the Throne and Person of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, and at the same time to assure Your Excellency that the measures which will be laid before us during the session will receive our careful consideration.

I am pleased and honoured to move this Address-in-Reply. I am proud to swear allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, and to her representative in Tasmania, Sir James Plimsoll.

Since his appointment in October 1982, Sir James Plimsoll has set a fine example of dedication to, and activity in, public life in Tasmania. Despite serious illness last year he continues to be involved in all areas of Tasmania, both geographic and cultural. On behalf of members of this House and the electors whom we represent I thank him most sincerely.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to the Chair. You join an illustrious group of men who have risen to this high office in the past and, despite many of the comments made this morning in this House, I feel I should enlarge a little on how I see your role. I think it is quite ludicrous for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest that, prior to your election, you would be biased and unable to carry out the role and that, after your election, you would be a fine, unbiased Speaker. I am confident that you will distinguish yourself and rule on all matters in this Chamber without fear or favour.

I have also heard much public comment in the electorate about the conduct of Parliament, and most of it has been adverse. We will not regain the respect of the people unless Parliament conducts itself with dignity and decorum and I know that you, Mr Speaker, will be a major force in bringing a return of the public's positive perception of this Fortieth Parliament.

I would like to congratulate all members newly elected to this House and all re-elected members. I would like to congratulate my new parliamentary colleagues who have been elected to ministerial office. The responsibility for the standard of debate does not rest with the Speaker alone, or with one or two members of this House, but with all. I trust that every member feels this responsibility and will act accordingly. There is an old adage which says, 'People get the politicians they deserve'. I hope that by our actions and standards in this Fortieth Parliament, we will reverse this adage.

I would like to commiserate with the losers at the recent election, whether they did so gracefully or otherwise. It is a painful personal experience to be publicly rejected - it hurts, and it is hard to be philosophical about it. Various factors were blamed by various people. One of these was unrestricted election spending. People who could afford to spend little were intimidated by people who could afford to spend much. Candidates who usually feel disadvantaged when faced with popular sitting members felt even more disadvantaged when they perceived those members running expensive-looking campaigns.

Figures were thrown around wildly and amounts of up to \$50 000 were touted as being used for election expenses. Commercial television in the southern part of the island represented a political 'Who's Who' for about four weeks - and it was nearly as bad in the north. The garden signs grew to giant proportions - they multiplied like rabbits and appeared everywhere. But I heard no electors complain before the election, and I heard no newspaper, television or radio complaints about election spending before the election; it was only after the election that all this furore about election spending was raised.

The Government has already examined the issue of election spending. Its conclusions then were quite clear and it is firm in its decision to retain no limit on election spending. I hope that members will not waste this Parliament's valuable time by attempting to revive an old and long-dead issue because the proof that election spending limits are unnecessary is right here in this House. There are people sitting here today who spent very little money and were elected; and there are people not sitting in this House today who spent a great deal of money and were not elected. The individual initiative, performance and ability of candidates were matters upon which the electorate was asked to judge on 8 February - and judge they did, in no uncertain fashion. I have great confidence that the electorate will do so again in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier. I would like to congratulate him for his high personal poll of over 21 000 votes but, more particularly, I would like to congratulate him for his previous Government's fine record of economic management. It is now a matter of history - as was well outlined by the Governor, Sir James Plimsoll - that the economic management of Tasmania has been brought back into line; the budget has been balanced and Tasmania is economically on course again. But particularly I would like to congratulate the Premier for the future policies that he has outlined during this recent election campaign.

I would like to single out the policy of a Tasmanian community service program. This is the George Town pilot scheme, which is designed to provide incentive to young people under the age of 21; to give them the opportunity to work gainfully for money which they would otherwise receive as the dole. This is an innovative, exciting, far-sighted and even visionary program. It is designed firstly for young people. It is designed to break the dole-receiving attitude and to re-establish the work ethic. I spoke at length to Commonwealth Employment Service officers last week and they agreed that this is a realistic and a highly desirable objective. If young people can be provided with the opportunity to earn money, they will do so and will continue to look for work rather than return to the dole.

This is no fly-by-night scheme which has been proposed simply because an election was on. During a tour of George Town the Leader of the Opposition was very critical of this scheme. He said that the people thought it would not work; that the money would be better spent if we took it as a lump sum and gave it to a mainland company to come to Tasmania. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition has not heard of the Tasmanian Development Authority which has already been doing this. It has done it very successfully, and particularly in George Town. An example is Skellerup Clothing (Australia) Pty Ltd which was aided by grants from the previous Liberal Government to set up a factory to provide employment in George Town and it is doing just that. It will continue to operate in this way and provide incentive grants and opportunities for mainland industries to set up in all parts of Tasmania. Of course it will be essential that it does so in the George Town Municipality because one of the important aspects of this scheme is that, although it runs for a year, at the end of that year those young people who have benefited from it must have the opportunity to move into the regular work force.

I am confident - and I know the Government and the new Minister for Employment and Training are confident - that we can do this. I know that the George Town Council is excited and interested in this scheme. It has already produced papers canvassing various options on how best to implement it. It is not a scheme which will be entered into lightly. It is not something that is a bandaid or has a patchwork effect. It will be thoroughly researched, carefully implemented and I believe it is the sort of scheme that will provide real help and benefit for the young unemployed in Tasmania.

I would like to thank the people of Bass for their support and confidence shown in me at the recent election.

Twenty years of medical practice in the industrialised northern suburbs of Launceston has underlined to me what everyone - except some members of the Federal Government - publicly acknowledges which is that one of the greatest maladies affecting the nation today is Medicare. In February 1984 Mr Hawke said, 'This card' - referring to the Medicare card - 'will cure one of your biggest headaches'. This card has given Australia one of its greatest migraines. We have a crucial overload situation in our public hospitals right across the nation and Tasmania is gravely affected.

There are nearly 3 500 Tasmanians on waiting lists in our two major public hospitals. The Medicare budget has blown out by more than \$200 million. Our private hospitals are being under-utilised. In the past two years the admission rate has dropped from 65 to 60 per cent. One of the worst aspects of this monumental failure is that the people least able to pay - the pensioners, for whom the public hospital system was devised - are those being penalised most. At least some of the people who have transferred to Medicare are able to transfer back to private insurance, despite restrictions.

The State Government in the past two years has done all it can to offset this grave situation. Four hundred and fifty extra staff have been put on at the Royal Hobart Hospital and the Launceston General Hospital since May 1982 and this is the biggest staff increase in public hospital history in Tasmania. But this is only a drop in the ocean. Comparative figures in Victoria are appalling; there are nearly 30 000 Victorians on waiting lists.

One of my other concerns in my constituency of Bass is two of northern Tasmania's important lifelines. Firstly, the East Tamar Highway, which is one of the State's most important freight and passenger roads, is carrying an increasing volume and weight of traffic and is becoming one of our most dangerous highways. I look forward to the road program of this Government and its upgrading of the East Tamar Highway.

The other matter which concerns me greatly is the Launceston Airport which, again, is a longstanding problem in Bass. The Federal Government has backed away from it. On the day before it was due to begin consultation it called it off. We are now faced with the possibility of cutbacks in meteorological and firefighting services yet this is one of Tasmania's most important gateways. It is essential that the Launceston Airport facilities be upgraded to full international standards, and soon.

I would like to congratulate Mrs Jocelyn Newman on her nomination for the Senate vacancy. Mrs Newman is a strongly dedicated and determined lady. She is talented and committed to being a strong voice in Australia's Senate. This becomes increasingly important for Tasmania and for the rest of the country when we face the prospect of the 'Australia Card' concept being pushed forward, and the so-called Bill of Rights which is already before the Senate. We need another strong voice in the Senate to protect Tasmania's interests. Senator Sanders says Bob Hawke does not need Tasmania. We do not need voices like that representing Tasmania in the Senate.

Government members - Hear, hear.

Dr MADILL - Many of the Federal Government's policies have had disastrous effects on this State and our rural industry is suffering under many of them. High interest rates, failure to give a full flow-on of the recent petrol price cuts, Closer Economic Relations with New Zealand and so on have damaged many parts of our rural industry.

I believe there are two areas of great immediate concern to Tasmania which are under threat. The first of these is the live sheep export industry. This is critical to the maintenance of the sheep industry in this State. In 1976-77, 81 126 sheep to a value of \$962 000 were shipped live from Tasmania. In 1984-85, 143 017 sheep worth \$3.085 million left our shores. Any decrease - let alone collapse - of this industry will cause a back-up effect on sheep prices at all levels of the industry and it is essential that minority groups do not cause the State to lose this industry.

The other important rural industry is wool and the move to centralise wool sales in Melbourne and Sydney with sale by sample is to be resisted. The 1984-85 income figures for Tasmania were a record \$70.4 million and a significant proportion of this was premium fine wool sold by the bale at the Launceston auctions. If we lose this it will be lost forever and it is critical that it be retained for this State.

I would like to thank the staff at Launceston and here in Parliament House who have been of so much help to me in my first few weeks as a parliamentarian. I would particularly like to thank my secretary, Mrs Janet Dome, who has been a tower of strength in helping me to untangle the red tape and the administrative problems I have encountered.

I strongly support this Government's stand on deregulation and the simplification of administrative matters within this State. This is something which will require the cooperation of all parties. It is something to which the Minister for Deregulation, Mr Rae, is firmly committed. He has considerable experience with it in his role as a senator and he understands the great difficulties.

I have contacted the Chairman of the Deregulation Advisory Board. He assures me that previous government initiatives have set in motion a board which has already contacted over 200 professional groups and associations, and there are 40 deregulation liaison operators operating at present. I understand the enormous difficulties involved in unravelling knots of red tape but it is essential if we are to decrease costs and remove the delays and frustrations encountered by the private sector in dealing with government. I wish the people concerned the inspiration of Alexander in their cutting through these Gordian knots.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Press. Members may find this somewhat unusual as it has often been my experience that parliamentarians tend to criticise the Press. However I have found the members of the Press to be polite, accommodating and fair in their reporting of matters which I have brought to their attention and I have felt that the editorials of both Tasmania's major dailies have also been balanced and fair. I cannot say the same for some of the mainland papers, particularly with the recent controversy surrounding the conservation and forestry issues in this State.

I think it is absolutely essential for the media to cooperate in the promotion of Tasmania in the tourist area and it is vital that they paint a fair and balanced picture of the real situation in Tasmania concerning our wilderness area, our forests and our forest management.

I regard the importance of tourism as second to none in Tasmania in the long term. I think that the previous Government's initiative in establishing the 'Abel Tasman' was well thought-out and well executed. The figures speak for themselves: in the last twelve months of operation of the 'Empress of Australia' 124 664 passengers were carried; in the first eight months of the 'Abel Tasman' 132 358 were carried; and - even more important - for the next twelve months 170 253 passengers have booked to travel on the 'Abel Tasman'. This has been an unqualified success and more and more people are coming to our State using this improved facility.

I therefore also commend the Government on its establishing a feasibility study into a second ferry. Any and all links this State has with the mainland are vital and their further development should always be to the forefront of our thinking. I also hope that in this feasibility study we will look at using the facilities at Bell Bay which at present are in position but are not being used.

I would like to thank the member for Denison, Dr Bob Brown, for our previous medical associations, for his kind wishes to me prior to the election and for his good wishes to me since my election. I regret that we have basic areas of disagreement and that I find his stance of confrontation in the current forestry problem unacceptable.

I feel that the entire exercise is perceived by the majority of Tasmanians as a cynical political exercise. It concerns me that it is polarising the views of people in this State and setting Tasmanian against Tasmanian. I do not think it is moral to

use the people of this small State to influence the opinions of the mainland. I think we are toying with the well-being and the livelihood of Tasmanians if we do this. As it was said in the Governor's speech, one in seven jobs in this State is related to our forest industries. This State has a unique record of sensitive, planned forest management and we are vulnerable, because of our situation and our small population, to planned mass attacks by radical conservation groups.

The minister's recent appeal to these people to leave the Farmhouse Creek area and meet with him quietly and constructively must appeal to every reasonable man and woman. It certainly appeals to me. I would ask the conservationists to heed this and to stop this confrontation. I admire the principles of the member for Denison, Dr Brown, but I cannot agree with them. I hope the member will not put himself in jeopardy any further but if he puts his head in the lion's mouth and it bites him he cannot complain to the liontamer.

The matters I have touched on in this address have one common denominator: jobs. The public confidence and perception of this Parliament will have an effect on people's confidence, investment and development in Tasmania. The Government's previous economic record of management and job creation; the unique visionary youth employment pilot scheme; the rural crisis, with its potential to worsen the employment situation; Medicare and its impact on the Tasmanian hospitals and employment in them; deregulation by which we can increase people's confidence and desire to deal with government; the promotion of the tourist industry in all possible ways; and the very great importance of our forest-based industries - all of these things have jobs for Tasmanians as their base.

This Government is committed to restoring job opportunities for Tasmanians. Its previous record speaks for itself. It is determined on this course, despite gloomy predictions and pessimistic statements. I am proud to be part of the Gray Liberal Government and I look forward to serving in the capacity given to me.

I commend the motion to the House.

Government members - Hear, hear.