

ELECTORAL ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr AULICH - Mr Speaker, I lay upon the Table of the House the Electoral Act Advisory Committee Report and move -

That the report be printed.

There are 63 copies available for honourable members and other people in the community who may be interested. I think it would be in order at this stage to move that it be printed simply so that other States which may be interested in this particular important report can have it made available to them.

May I also make the point briefly at this stage, Mr Speaker, that I am making it available about a week or so before any bill is brought into this House so that honourable members on the other side may peruse it at leisure. I would welcome any comments or discussions they may wish to have with me, either through the honourable Leader or as a group, in order that their viewpoints on the Piggot Report can be made known to us before a bill is brought in.

Mr Gray - You have already made a decision.

Mr AULICH - In answer to the honourable member, a decision has not been made on all the issues raised here. In fact a decision has only been made on one point and that is a matter that will show itself when the bill comes in.

Motion agreed to.

POTATO INDUSTRY AMENDMENT ACT 1980

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Cornish and read the first time.

ADDRESS - IN - REPLY

Resumed from 6 March 1980 (page 56)

Mr SPEAKER - I remind honourable members that this is Dr Sanders' maiden speech and I will ask them to accord the member the normal courtesies.

Mr SANDERS (Denison) - Mr Speaker, I wish to indicate my support for the motion before the Chair. In supporting that motion, I wish to join with the mover and seconder in their expressions of loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and Her Majesty's representative in this State, His Excellency the Governor. Mr Speaker, I would also like to congratulate you on your elevation to the Chair. I know you will serve this Parliament with the dedication you have shown in the past. My warm congratulations also go to the honourable member for Bass, Mrs Willey, on her new job which I am sure she will do with great skill. Finally I wish to congratulate the honourable member for Wilmot, Mr Lohrey, in his new capacity as Minister for National Parks and Wildlife. With the pressure on our dwindling wild areas increasing daily, it is reassuring that a person of the honourable member's ability and integrity has been given this important portfolio.

Mr Speaker, there were a number of reasons for my election to Parliament, but I feel that they can be broken down into two main categories: firstly the dissatisfaction with the behaviour of Parliament itself; and secondly concern over Tasmania's future and the lack of firm planning policies to assure that future. The events of the last six months, as traumatic as they were, have nonetheless had a healthy effect. At the recent declaration of the polls in Denison, honourable members from both sides of the House expressed the view that, if behaviour did not improve, even more Australian Democrats would be elected in the future - thus destroying stable government in Tasmania. Actually, although I agree with the overall analysis, I wonder if a little more

uncertainty in government may not be a good thing. The fear of being thrown out of office brings a needed ray of humility into the heart of the politician. Furthermore there is nothing essentially evil about instability in government - quite the opposite. Both Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin had stable governments of many years' duration. Mr Speaker, I have every confidence that the honourable members will heed the message recently sent by the people and will behave in an exemplary manner. If they do not you have my pledge as one who also sits on the dividing line between the major parties to assist you in your efforts to enforce order.

Now, Mr Speaker, I wish to draw your attention to the second major issue - Tasmania's future. The standard way to predict the future is to project from what has happened in the past. This of course is what the Hydro-Electric Commission does in forecasting electricity demands, so it ought to be good enough for us. Let us take a look at Tasmania's past in the area of resource exploitation. Even a cursory glance reveals that Tasmania historically adopted a position of colonial subservience to overseas interests and that position has remained unchanged up to the present day. Because of their lack of appreciation of Tasmania's true worth, our leaders habitually sell Tasmania short.

Let us examine the forestry situation in this State. This is a perfect example of selling off our precious assets to the first shrewd operator who sails over the horizon with a shipload of mirrors and beads. Look at woodchips. Japan is covered with trees. Sixty per cent of Japan's land mass is forested, but they cherish those trees. They do not mine them; they husband them; they replant when they must cut, but they do not abuse their forest. They are mining our forests to preserve their own. They are taking valuable saw logs for woodchips. I think any small sawmiller in the State will agree with me that saw logs are being woodchipped. This is at a time when hardwoods are in so much demand around the world that helicopters are being used to poach trees individually in the United States - hardwood trees.

The environmental damage from woodchipping is so great that the Australian Army found it necessary to halt further woodchipping activities on its firing range at Buckland because the woodchippers were actually doing great damage to its firing range, far more than a mock battle would have done.

Let us look at royalties. I am sure they have been mentioned many times in this place, but the royalties we have seen are inadequate to pay for the road damage that the trucks cause; they are inadequate to pay for the management cost to the Forestry Commission - the commission itself says that royalties should rise by 25 per cent - and they are even inadequate to furnish a living wage for the man who hauls the logs. As a matter of fact, we are paying the Japanese to rip up our forests and ship them to Japan. It simply does not make sense. We need a full inquiry into timber royalties. We need it now and it must be held for the good of all Tasmanians in spite of the opposition - and it will be the fervent opposition - of the woodchippers themselves. In addition we need a comprehensive management plan for the entire forest resource.

Let us look at mining. Once again it is a giant giveaway program. According to the Mining Amendment Regulations of 1975 companies mining Tasmanian minerals pay 5 per cent of their net profits as royalties - 5 per cent for the minerals extracted from our soil. The Mount Lyell Company, however, according to the information I can get, has yet to pay any royalties for all the wealth it has taken from Tasmania.

Zambia, which we might consider to be a rather under-privileged, impoverished third-world country, has the good sense to extract 51 per cent of the net profit from the mining of its copper in royalties. We get 5 per cent, if that. Now the Government is poised on the brink of another giveaway of Tasmania's assets, this time to Amoco, the American oil company that wishes to explore the vast wilderness area between Gormanston and Port Davey. Is mining the best use for this area? We do not really know; there is no plan.

How about energy, the third great giveaway? Tasmania has long attempted to attract industry here by furnishing cheap electricity, a process which went under the unwieldy name of hydro-industrialisation. This program succeeded, which was all right at first. We had full employment - we did not mind that most of these firms were automated, that they really wanted our energy; they did not want our work-force. But now these chickens are coming home to roost. These industries are highly automated and the unemployment rate is rising in line with the amount of energy they use. As the energy demand goes up, so does unemployment - a one-to-one relationship. And yet our attitude towards these energy-gulping industries remains unchanged, in spite of the job reality. Look at the carbide works. It burns 13.5 megawatts when the furnace works. It also creates great pollution in the area - a side effect. People who live in the Coningham area have complained to me that the new carbide works is even more polluting than the old one, that the noise is worse, the soot, which is a black material, is affecting them more than the old plant and yet the Government keeps pumping money into this. The jobs, according to the local people, will amount to 83 when that plant is finished. That is 83 jobs for an investment of we do not know how many millions.

But the carbide works is insignificant next to Comalco, Commonwealth Aluminium Company, at Bell Bay. It burns 237 megawatts of power, approximately one-third of the entire State's consumption. What does it pay for that power? I do not know; I cannot find out. The HEC has finally admitted that Comalco gets its power at an average of about 0.7 cents per unit, perhaps less. We do not really know. The cost of producing this electricity at the generator, before distribution, before the 6 per cent transmission loss, appears to lie in the range of 0.8 cents per unit to 1.34 cents per unit - more than we are charging Comalco for this power. We are subsidising Comalco. The residents and the small industries of Tasmania are subsidising this giant firm. The little people Mr Speaker, are paying this multi-national to take our energy away.

We have often heard that Tasmanian electricity is the cheapest in Australia. Let us take a good look at that statement. Let us examine the HEC charges for a family living in a five-room house in Tasmania, burning 1100 power units and 1700 units of hot water per quarter. This is a fairly typical Tasmanian home. Adding up all the tariffs, adding on the 5 per cent surcharge, the Tasmanian cost is \$81.04 a quarter. Let us see what they pay in metropolitan Sydney. Under the current rates - and these are the current Tasmanian rates - in Sydney that same household would pay \$73.84, which is \$7.20 less than in Tasmania or 9 per cent less. Where now is the cheap Tasmanian power? What about when the new rates come in, when the rates have risen? Then it will cost that same family in Tasmania \$90.86 per quarter which will be 23 per cent more than for the Sydney family. That is not all.

Let us take a look at the electricity charges for a labour-intensive small business in Tasmania - the kind of business that we must encourage if Tasmania is to prosper. Let us see what it pays. I think a thing we have to mention time and again is that the Tasmanian cost for commercial lighting is very prohibitive. It is very difficult for youth groups to meet in lighting their sports grounds and it is also difficult for industry largely because of this high cost. The rate for a labour-intensive industry in Tasmania will be \$462.47 a quarter on average. In Sydney the same industry would pay \$406.58. That is \$55.89 less per quarter or 12 per cent less in Sydney. After the rates rise this gap will widen. The Tasmanian charge will go up to \$491.05 which will be \$84 higher than the Sydney charges, or 18 per cent. This is no way to encourage people to set up labour-intensive industry in Tasmania.

Mr Speaker, residents and small labour-intensive businesses are supporting the multi-national giants. They can afford to pay more for their power. Comalco profits have risen a staggering 358 per cent between 1975 and 1979. Their profit after tax last year was \$23 731 000. Temco which is actually a part of BHP - they furnish ferro-manganese to Broken Hill Proprietary Limited - which had profits up 119.4 per cent last year. Its total profit was \$186 million. Electrolytic Zinc at Risdon has a total consumption of 108.2 megawatts. Its profits were up 377 per cent this year to \$33,096 million.

Mr Speaker, it is high time that these companies shared their good fortune with the rest of us. Bulk industrial power charges should be based on the capacity to pay. All power charges should have their rates inverted. This means the more you use, the more you pay. This would encourage conservation. This is not an unusual occurrence; this happens in America. Power from the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State, which incidentally produces about three times the entire output of the entire Tasmanian hydro-electric system, is sold in Seattle at 0.78 cents per unit, residential rate for the first 1 440 units. It rises to a final rate of 1.20 cents per unit for over 7 500 units. All of these rates are far cheaper than the HEC's 3.95 cent rate, I may add. But the major point here is that the more you use the more you pay, and this, I think, is what we should do with our Tasmanian rate structure. At present, retail sales provide about two-thirds of the revenue and consume one-third of the power; bulk industrial sales provide one-third of the revenue and burn two-thirds of the power. There are those who say that the major consumers of our electricity may pull out if we raise the charges. Let them! We need this power for industries that will employ people. Tasmania can no longer afford to subsidise the multi-nationals.

Mr Adams - Tell them that in George Town.

Mr SANDERS - I will - you are not supposed to do that by the way.

Mr Adams - Sorry.

Members laughing.

Mr SANDERS - If they refuse to pay a fair price for our power, they can go. As a matter of fact, Comalco will pull out anyway. It has a \$29 million expansion program at the moment. But examining this program, in the first place it is 3 per cent of its investment in Gladstone. It is building two new smelters in Gladstone at a total cost of \$1 billion, so \$29 million is chicken-feed to Comalco. Then, too, this expansion program

will pay for itself because of the high price of aluminium which is about \$1 500 a tonne at the moment. This will pay for itself in four years. After four years Comalco will have paid off this investment, written down the rest of the plant and will be able to walk out - and will. As soon as those smelters come on line in Gladstone, which are right next to its aluminium smelter, all it will have to do is put its alumina on a conveyor belt rather than ship it to Bell Bay. It would avoid the shipping problems. The coal power that Mr Bjelke-Petersen is giving the company is so cheap; it is the overburden of the coal being shipped to the Japanese, and this power is far cheaper than anything we could ever furnish. Comalco is pulling out. When it does, it actually removes the need for further HEC expansion and the attendant crippling financial burden.

The HEC is pricing its Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme at approximately \$1.3 billion but we have seen from past experience we can at least double this to \$2.6 billion. The existing loan is approaching \$1 billion, that is almost \$3 billion in loans, which we must pay off somehow or other, in the State of Tasmania. An accountant rang me the other day and said that I must stop this Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme. I asked him if he was an arden conservationist. He said he was not, that he was an accountant and a businessman but he had been doing his sums and we could not afford to service this loan. At the moment 45 per cent of the gross revenue of the HEC goes to paying off interest on past loans and this is rising astronomically every year. The interest rates are up again. The HEC is now seeking new money at 11.6 per cent for four to seven years; 11.7 per cent for 10 to 15 years - a crippling interest debt.

The rates demand new dams; these are all tied together. The rates are so important that we need an inquiry into the HEC's rate structure as a matter of utmost urgency. At the same time we must catalogue the State's energy requirements and resources, then we need a plan.

The fourth giveaway in Tasmania is Tasmania's people. In many respects this is the most serious giveaway of all. We see daily business and labour locked in a ritual ballet, an old-fashioned ballet, fighting each other with strikes and lock-outs and secondary boycotts, but both of these groups have turned their backs on the kids and the elderly; they have turned their backs on those who are outside the work-force. The State Government attempts to pawn off the issue to the Federal Government. It is time for the State Government to take positive action itself and stop Fraser-bashing. The gap between the dole and the basic wage must be closed. We must be able to allow a person to work - and people do want to work - and raise the dole at least to the poverty level to use it as a basic support, thus allowing people to earn up to the basic wage without any penalty. This would have great benefit in the rural areas. There are plenty of farmers who need help. They cannot afford to pay the basic wage but they could afford to hire people who are now unemployed, who want work but are afraid of losing their dole payments because of the system at present. If we allow these people to work and earn money, everyone will benefit.

Another thing we must do is eliminate the payroll tax. This is really an anti-employment tax and ours is the harshest in Australia. It is no coincidence that Tasmania's unemployment rate is also amongst the highest in the country.

What about housing for the unemployed? The State Government could help here. The State has a number of houses which are at present purchased but unoccupied, waiting demolition or waiting road-widening. These houses could be made available to the unemployed. The unemployed could fix them up and make them habitable. It is something that could be done very easily. There are myriad programs which must be implemented but again we need a plan.

This one will be particularly difficult. Over the past few centuries the puritan work ethic has been fighting it out with the industrial revolution and the machines have won. We have to restructure our entire thinking about what constitutes work and this is our problem. The puritan work ethic does not really hold any more. People have to be considered to be doing worthwhile work even if they wish to live in the Huon and make pottery, or if they wish to paint. This is all work and should be remunerated. The 35-hour week and compulsory retirement are really just temporary bandaids.

The fifth great give-away, Mr Speaker, is Tasmania's fish resource. We must be very wary of the so-called joint fishing ventures. What do we get in return for our fish? Theoretically, we get some knowledge and we learn how to use the techniques, but last year eight Japanese boats were evaluating our squid resource. This year 24 are evaluating our squid resource and there are three feasibility studies. Next summer the joint ventures really start. Our fishermen have known the potential of the squid industry for years. There is nothing new here. We may now learn how the squid catch will dwindle under the intense fishing pressure but that knowledge is not of much use. The Japanese boats can go somewhere else to fish in a new area. Our fishermen have to make a living here. The joint fishing ventures may ultimately demonstrate to our fishermen how the Japanese caught all of our fish. What we really need is not information on how to catch fish but how to market them. Specifically we need access to the Japanese market without the limitation of the Japanese 10 per cent duty. We have a strong bargaining position, Mr Speaker, but our submissive give-away mentality will not let us use it. Once again we need a plan based on self-confidence and strength.

The sixth great giveaway is Tasmania's wilderness. Tasmanians do not realise what they have here. If a group of people live in a place where the streets are paved with gold, they feel that all streets are paved with gold and I think it is the same with Tasmanians and their wilderness. This wilderness in Tasmania is a very rare thing in the world today. People in America treasure this wilderness. People in South America are destroying their wilderness as fast as they can. They think there is still some left in Tasmania or somewhere else, but I am here to tell you that the wilderness is a very scarce item around the world and we should treasure it. Unfortunately we do not have any real protection for our wilderness. Even the wilderness which is in a so-called national park is not protected because the national parks in Tasmania are not national parks in the true sense of the term; they are State preserves in which the resources are held in store for anyone who can figure out a way to exploit them. We have forestry, mining and the HEC. It will be a measure of our standing as a civilisation if we can recognise the rights of the wilderness itself and the plants and animals in it to exist. Primitive societies knew this all the time and it is what kept them alive. As soon as we admit this right to exist we, too, can survive. If we do not, if our arrogance is so great we do not admit the value of our environment, we simply will not survive.

We must have some tools to fight for the wilderness. The first is freedom of information. We have witnessed question time here, in which questions have been asked and questions have been answered. This really is the only mechanism, as far as I can see, for getting information out of government agencies, and it is a slow, tedious and really unworkable situation. What we need is the right, as individuals and citizens, to walk into any government agency - where we have actually paid for the information to be collected - and find out what that information is. We need a freedom of information act. We also need the ability to use this act in a court of law. We need standing to sue in a court of law. This is a very important point. It has come about in the United States due to repeated legal action, bashing on the doors of the court - and I was a part of those actions. In Tasmania that simply is not taking place. Legal action is too expensive here. So it looks as if we are going to have to pass laws to guarantee the citizens access to the courts. These two courses of action I intend to take later in the year.

We must also put some backbone into the National Parks and Wildlife Act and into the Environment Protection Act. I have read these acts and they are very much like the ones in the United States except that all the teeth have been taken out. We must put the teeth back in. Mr Speaker, there are many other areas where Tasmania and Tasmanians suffer because of a lack of awareness of the State's true value and I will mention them in later debates.

I wish to move on and briefly outline some of the solutions to Tasmania's problems. The most basic point - and I repeat it over and over - is that the Government must make a whole-hearted commitment to putting a human face on development programs, not a mechanical, profit-motivated face. I am sorry to say that at the moment the Government is not doing so. I see that the Government is exploring the possibility of a petro-chemical plant in the Huon - bringing tankers into the Huon to put the oil through a petro-chemical plant and presumably ship it out again in tankers. I have lived near a petro-chemical plant in Los Angeles. The air pollution is something that has to be breathed or seen to be believed. The industrial squalor in such an area makes Tolkien's Mordor look like the botanical gardens and the oil pollution potential is downright frightening. I have lived through an oil spill at Santa Barbara, California - a fishing city; a town dependent on tourism and a town that valued its wildlife. All three of these areas suffered and are still suffering from oil spills. We simply cannot have that type of development anywhere in Tasmania. What we really need is the kind of commitment towards labour-intensive industry that the Government has traditionally had towards hydro-electric development and the encouragement of industries like Comalco and Temco. The HEC, incidentally, will be extinct itself if the Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme goes ahead, because the whole system after that will be run by 14 men and a computer in Moonah. Then what of the Moonah shops? What of all the people who work in the HEC? There will be no jobs for them. But the HEC could be the nucleus for innovative programs in energy, housing and transportation. It has the expertise and it certainly has the skilled work-force. We have to put them to work.

But what are some of the things we could be doing with or without the aid of the HEC? If we wanted to we could be self-sufficient in 10 years in the area of liquid fuels. At the moment we are exporting to Japan the equivalent of 800 million litres of bunker oil per year in the form of woodchips. If this tonnage of woodchip were made into bunker oil using a process of catalytic liquefaction which has recently been developed, we could go a long way towards fulfilling our entire demand in Tasmania of 1 billion litres of liquid fuel per year. Ethanol from sugarbeet will, I predict, be available for our cars within five years if we act now.

I have been in contact with Dr Kevin Kirby of the CSIRO. In the last few days he has submitted his plans to the Legislative Council select committee on the ethanol industry for building a pilot plant in Smithton. This pilot plant will use wood waste from the timber mills for the distillation process and will produce ethanol at 24 cents per litre. This is a very good price for ethanol. I believe in Dr Kirby and the CSIRO and I think this plan is worthy of our support.

Transportation in general requires a vast array of programs ranging from short-term solutions to long-term goals. In the short term, we can encourage people to use public transport by eliminating car registration and replacing it with a fuel tax. This has been debated in this place. It would eliminate the feeling in people that they have to drive their car because they have paid the registration and it would give them some incentive to use other forms of transportation. Another thing we could do - these are small things but they all add up - is to synchronise the traffic lights in this city and in all cities. There is nothing new about this; synchronised traffic lights are known all over the world. The stopping and starting as one drives through the Tasmanian city adds to the air pollution and increases the consumption of fuel. It is entirely unnecessary. Turning off the lights at the roundabout, of course, is another way of saving fuel.

Another way - I think this would be a very attractive way of saving fuel and getting our transportation system moving - is to make buses free. This is not even my idea. This is the idea of a retired Metropolitan Transport Trust employee who actually worked out the figures and found that the MTT in Tasmania would lose less money per year if it did not collect fares. The reason lies in the high overheads in collecting the fares - printing and guarding the tickets, putting the tickets in sequence, dealing with the money, et cetera. If the buses were free they would be on the road; the overheads would stay the same. At the moment they sit in that dinosaur park near Victoria Dock half the day. They could be out carrying people around this city.

Talking of carrying people around the city, the handicapped, because of the present lack of public transport are extremely disadvantaged. For them even to go to the doctor means perhaps a \$7 taxi charge. Something should be done immediately to subsidise taxi fares for the handicapped.

Ferry services should be encouraged in Hobart. They use a highway which needs no paving and which is always there - the Minister for Main Roads and Transport would not have to deal with it. But they do need jetties at places like Howrah, bus services to meet the ferries at each end and bikeways. The honourable Minister for Main Roads and Transport said that he is observing the bikeways in Launceston to see how they are going to operate, if they are going to be viable and if people really use them. This is like watching the skies for an airline service without building an airport. If you provide the bikeways, the cyclists will use them. There are plenty of bicycles being sold in Tasmania. In the rest of the world, including the United States, bicycle sales are outstripping car sales. Bicycles will be used if they are safe to ride and people have found they are not safe on the streets. They must be used on bikeways. As a matter of fact there is an excellent potential for a bikeway right here in Hobart. It is the third railway track that goes from the town out to Moonah and then over to the zinc works. It is the third right of way; it is unused; there are weeds growing through it. All it needs is a board fence between that and the other two rights of way and a bit of pavement. That could be a bikeway that would run clear through the northern suburbs.

Coupled with this, there is another labour-intensive industry, a bicycle factory in Tasmania. Ken Self out in Moonah already builds racing bicycles. He cannot get enough parts, he cannot make enough finished bicycles to meet the demand for finished bicycles for the average person. Here is an industry which would fit in with the transportation goals of Tasmania - or should - and would also furnish employment.

The second stage of a transportation plan, I believe, should include the elimination of parking in our city centres and the making of the parking structures which exist into covered bicycle racks - I see a smile or two around the Chamber on those who are still awake. The rationale behind eliminating parking depends on the free bus system and perhaps satellite parking in the suburbs. But think of what a city we would have - a city for people, not for cars; a city where we are no longer going to tear down buildings on Burnett Street to satisfy the whims of some traffic engineer; a city where we will not have to spend \$47 million on our roads. I think it would be a great mistake to spend so much money on a road system which will patently be unusable in the future because we will simply not be able to afford petrol for our cars anyway.

The railways should be encouraged at all costs. The commuter sections of them should be reinstated and we should encourage, not the electrification of the rail system, but steam trains. There are two types of steam trains. There are the reciprocating, old-fashioned steam trains which are now used by tourist firms like the Don River Tramway. There is also a new generation of steam trains coming on line - the fluidised bed coal steam trains burning coal in a new manner, using steam turbines which are far cheaper than oil, using Tasmanian coal. This could be investigated.

What about industrial development? Here I think we should adopt a policy of appropriate industry. There is a thing called 'appropriate technology' - that includes technology which is appropriate to the need. Appropriate industry should be appropriate to the needs of Tasmania. We can cash in on new concepts and developments. Solar Cal, which is a program of the Government of California, is giving tax incentives and official encouragement for insulating homes, for putting in solar heating and cooling units and heat pumps. Through this program the state of California intends by 1990 to cut its unemployment rate by half through this one program of promoting solar power. What do we see here? We see the HEC discouraging the use of solar power - discouraging anyone who wishes to do anything but burn electricity. It is obvious that at the very least we need an independent energy advisory service.

Extension of time granted.

We could well establish a facility like the National Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth in Wales. That is a tourist attraction; amongst other things, it is a demonstration centre for all forms of solar power and wind power. They actually install commercial units and see how they work. But they have also attracted tourists - 250 000 tourists have visited that centre since it was started in 1977. This would be a wonderful thing for Tasmania. In all this, incidentally, I would recommend very highly the work, 'An Energy Efficient Future for Tasmania' by C.E. Harwood and M.J. Hartly and I think many of the honourable members have already seen this.

Another thing we could do is to set up a solar water heater industry in Queenstown, to use Mount Lyell copper. There is no reason we cannot use that copper here. Solar water heaters using Mount Lyell copper are exported from South Australia to America at the moment. We could do this here. We can build heat pumps, LPG conversion kits, solar cells and silicon chips. We can build windmills. 'Southern California Edison' says:

'Windpower is competitive with anything. Ten per cent of California's total electricity demand will be met by the wind by the year 2 000'.

There are a number of things we can do. We can build furniture from native woods, we can put in farm-size hydro-electric plants and co-generation units. But we need a government commitment and development capital. The voters will see that we have the commitment. The development capital will be available only if we do not bankrupt the State with further HEC schemes.

Mr Speaker, I will not subject honourable members to any more of this refined torture. I appreciate their traditional silence for this my maiden speech and I realise that it must be a great strain on them. I hope the House can function in the future in an area somewhere between this rather tomb-like atmosphere and the barroom scenes which have been reported in the past. We have the opportunity to guide Tasmania into a prosperous and well balanced 21st Century. Notice that I said 'guide'. We must act like the leaders the people elected us to be. Tasmania is well endowed with all the necessary resources to become a model for rational living for the rest of the world. I mean that. The world could look to us. Tasmania is in a position to influence the whole world by its enlightened action. Look what we have to build upon. We have wilderness to keep us in touch with the realities of life. We have a well developed rural sector to clothe and feed us. We have minerals which, if used wisely, can contribute to meaningful development of appropriate industry. We have wonderful sources of energy in existing hydro-electric schemes, coal, wood, wind and wave and we have potential to grow our own liquid fuels in the form of ethanol from sugar beet. Fishing, forestry, tourism indicate that the list goes on and on. Just as importantly we have healthy, skilled, well educated people. But what we have been lacking is strong, enlightened leadership. Mr Speaker, this is our job. If we do it well our children will prosper and our reputation will spread world-wide. If we dodge the issue, if we shirk our responsibilities at this crucial turning point, following generations will curse us. Mr Speaker, we must not fail, and we will not fail.

I support the motion.

Mr ROBSON (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I was hoping that the Speaker would have been here because I would have liked to accord my congratulations to him personally. I look forward to working with him again in this session of Parliament.

I will not talk about those who have been elected to Parliament but rather about those who are no longer with us. I refer to Mr Baker, the ex-honourable member for Denison. I believe we will miss Mr Baker on this side of the House. He is a wonderful man who gave us advice on bills that came before this House and as a young member of Parliament I relied on his advice many times. We are also going to miss Mr Green from the opposite side because -

Mr Gray - For somewhat different reasons.

Mr ROBSON - Yes, for somewhat different reasons. We miss the Aunt Sally effect.

For this debate I always try to make a pot-pourri contribution. Before I do I would like to comment on one part of the previous speaker's speech tonight. I would like to say here and now that I believe the speaker is irresponsible in saying we should let Comalco go. I believe that is one of the most irresponsible statements I have heard for a long while, particularly when the honourable member says he would let 1 250 families go from that area for the sake of capturing a bit of energy which, as he says, we can get from other alternative schemes, with the glowing future we have before us. Therefore I