

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - The honourable member for Denison, Mr Barker. I remind all honourable members that this is the honourable member's maiden speech and therefore he will be extended by me - and I trust by all honourable members - the courtesies applicable to such a speech.

Mr BARKER (Denison) - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. What a hard act to follow.

I am honoured to represent the electors of Denison in this House and wish to speak on their behalf. Denison embraces a major part of Australia's most southerly city - an area uniquely placed to capitalise on its position, its beauty and its resources. I believe that after years Denison is beginning to capitalise on this uniqueness.

The Antarctic Centre represents a major new industry for the future. The remodelled Hadleys Hotel and the new Sheraton Hobart Hotel - which has 200 people working there - represent the strides we have made in jobs and tourism.

The forests which lie so close to Denison represent a renewable resource which, carefully managed, will sustain employment and economic growth in the region. With the Government, I believe that conservation and jobs go together.

I have been following the budget debate with interest, and once again I am disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition has failed to produce an alternative budget. The members opposite repeatedly demand funding for this and funding for that, and they make extravagant promises. They have even suggested that compulsory AIDS testing of visiting United States' sailors be undertaken and that King Island be repopulated with elephant seals. They also want to freeze all government taxes and charges. I suggest the latter is nothing more than political opportunism.

How can this irresponsible economic approach be condoned when there are simply insufficient funds available? I do not propose to detail the level of cutbacks Tasmania has received from Messrs Hawke, Keating, Walsh and company; it has been repeated many times in this House. However the Opposition's attitude indicates that it has not learned one thing from its disasters of 1980-81 and, more specifically, 1981-82 when it ran up a \$34.4 million deficit.

Where are the positive suggestions and the constructive - not destructive - criticism which I believe is incumbent upon any opposition? What influence does the Opposition have on its Federal colleagues to help reduce the unfair and biased treatment they have handed out to Tasmania - none, I suggest. I believe the members of the Opposition are abdicating their responsibilities to the electorate; it is time they had a hard look at themselves.

I now turn to the constructive, positive initiatives that this Government has already implemented and proposes to implement in Denison in southern Tasmania.

The proposed international Antarctic Centre is very exciting. This \$9.7 million centre will house the national Antarctic museum and provide administrative officers and secretarial facilities for Antarctic Treaty delegations. It will be a great asset to Denison; it will attract the attention of all nations associated with Antarctic and marine living resources and it will be a significant addition to Hobart's waterfront attractions. I am delighted \$500 000 has been set aside in the Budget for preliminary works to begin and I am appalled that the Federal Government has seen fit not to provide 1 cent for this development.

The \$12.8 million Derwent Entertainment Centre will commence construction this month. This marvellous concept will be used primarily as an entertainment centre and will have the flexibility to be used for exhibitions, sporting events and conventions. It will have a minimum seating capacity of 5 000 and will be able to cater for audiences of up to 7 500.

This facility would not have been a reality without the wonderful support and cooperation of the Glenorchy City Council which will be providing \$2.5 million towards its cost. The Federal Government is providing from bicentennial funds only 10.6 per cent of the total cost. I propose to comment further on the Glenorchy City Council later.

The recently completed Sheraton Hobart Hotel is a great addition to this State. Located in a superb setting, it will accommodate many overseas tourists and provide a much needed facility in Denison. This development would not have been constructed without the initiative and assistance of the State Government.

Other developments initiated by the Government in southern Tasmania include the new Police Headquarters, the Southern Outlet improvements, the Glenorchy City bypass and the Fricker Carrington building. All of these projects have provided added employment and injected much needed capital into southern Tasmania.

I now turn to the electorate of Denison and its people. I commenced my speech by indicating that I am honoured to have been elected to represent the people of Denison. To some my victory in last week's recount was completely unexpected; the result has, however, vindicated my faith in the people of Denison who indicated their support during the campaign. It is evident that they believed I had ability by their placing me in a higher preference than my competitors last week and I thank them for that confidence. I look forward to continuing to communicate with the many groups, organisations and individuals in the Denison electorate and take this opportunity to thank my friends and acquaintances particularly at the Glenorchy Branch of the Returned Services League of Australia, in the Greek, Croatian and Lebanese communities, the Tasmanian Pacing Club, the Moonah and Glenorchy Business and Professional Men's Association and the various elderly citizens and sporting contacts for their support and cooperation.

I specifically wish to thank for their hard work and dedicated support my wife and children, my campaign director and committee and the very willing band of helpers during the 1986 election campaign. I am also overwhelmed by the number of supportive telephone calls, telegrams and cards I have received since the result of the recount.

Mrs Jackson - And flowers.

Mr BARKER - And keep those flowers rolling.

Denison is fortunate to be well represented in local government. I have had the pleasurable opportunity of having a close association with various local councils throughout Tasmania and I am confident that the Glenorchy City Council, aldermen, city manager and staff are the most imaginative and helpful of them all. I am also delighted to observe - particularly since the beginning of the term of the current Lord Mayor - a most positive and helpful attitude from Hobart City Council. The council's civic square proposal, which will be developed on one of the most beautiful sites anywhere in the world, is very exciting and deserves the support of every Tasmanian.

I cannot let slip this opportunity to express my concern at the very poor attitude of the member for Denison opposite, Mr White - who is not in the House to listen to this unfortunately - who recently effectively used a Hobart City Council proposal to provide improved pedestrian facilities in Salamanca Place and promoted the proposal in the media as his own idea. It is about time people woke up to the member and his antics of promoting second-hand ideas.

One action that I believe is necessary at local government level in Denison and southern Tasmania is a more unified cooperative approach to matters affecting the area in development proposals. Too often in the past good ideas and proposals have not advanced because various councils were competing to obtain an advantage. In these times of limited financial resources a unified approach is necessary. In this regard I was delighted to see the Hobart Metropolitan Councils' Association recently advertise for an executive director to help coordinate these activities.

I understand that the current political climate in Denison in respect to the Government is not as good as it should be. I do not propose to dwell on the reasons for this. The purpose of this comment is to inform the electors of Denison that I am aware; I recognise there is a problem and I intend to work towards its resolution with my Denison colleagues, the Honourable Ray Groom and the Honourable John Bennett.

My major priority will be to represent the people of Denison by personally visiting them, promoting their views to the Government, speaking on their behalf in this House and generally working hard. It is not an objective of mine to seek cheap publicity. My employment background - initially as a public servant in the Transport Commission and in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and more recently as Senior Private Secretary to the Premier and Senior Government Liaison Officer - has constantly required that I deal personally with people from all walks of life. I will continue to do this.

There has been regular criticism of the government liaison officer service by the members opposite. Government is about adequately representing and informing the people and that is precisely what the liaison officers do. They are providing a public service; they provide a focal point and constantly help to resolve problems people encounter with government departments. By travelling their areas the liaison officers obtain a good understanding of the attitudes of Tasmanians and are able adequately to communicate this to the Government. They also act as information centres to various government departments and liaise regularly with municipal councils. To suggest they are purely political is rubbish.

I take this opportunity to thank the liaison officers for their hard work and dedication during my time with them. I also express my thanks to the many contacts I have made throughout the State during that time.

As far as policy is concerned, my major interests are in job creation, small business, tourism and the utilisation of our natural resources. While the Government has created 16 100 jobs since it came to office in May 1982, it has much more to do. Unemployment in this State is still high and it has been seriously contributed to by the Federal Government's reduction in funds to Tasmania.

Major contributions in job creation have flowed from the Tasmanian Development Authority, an example of which is the employment of up to 300 people by Gazal Industries Pty Ltd at its factory to open in Glenorchy in the near future. I welcome the initiative of the introduction of the Tasmanian Employment Program. So far it has employed 2 259 people in Tasmania. Of these, 906 have been employed in southern Tasmania and, very important, 65.5 per cent of those are aged between fifteen and nineteen years. It is the objective of the Government to create an extra 800 jobs under the scheme this year and I am delighted to have been involved in this initiative since the outset. The creation of the Department of Employment and Training should also be applauded.

Small business is the backbone of Tasmania's economy and employs many Tasmanians. Small business performs and it must be allowed to continue to perform. I might add that 630 people have been employed in the retail sector under the TEP scheme.

I applaud the recent changes in tourism introduced by the Government and believe a continued effort must be made to ensure tourists obtain cheaper travel to the State either by charter or fare subsidisation.

For a long time Tasmania has required a regular event which has the potential to attract major interstate and overseas visitors. I believe the proposed 'Constitution 500' car event is the answer, and I am reminded of Monte Carlo, the Adelaide Grand Prix, and the Bathurst 1 000 and I will give that proposal my full support.

This Government has a balanced recognition of conservation and the protection of the environment; any government which did not have a balanced view would not be re-elected. For example, this Government replaces every tree taken from crown land; and this Government has a larger percentage of its land in national parks - 12.6 per cent of Tasmania's land compared with the Australian average of 3.73 per cent. This Government seeks public comment on forest management plants; it has introduced a forest practices code - the first of its kind in Australia - and the fight this Government has endured in relation to forests is likely to be repeated in mining.

I wish to emphasize that Tasmania relies heavily on its natural resources. In fact over 20 per cent - or \$1 billion annually - of Tasmania's gross domestic product is derived from forestry, mining and electricity generation. I have mentioned my interest in job creation and retention and I will fight to retain jobs in these industries.

The next few months will be very exciting, particularly in Denison. Many events of the Australian Masters Games will be conducted early in December; the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race is the final race in the Southern Cross series and has a record entry; and of course the Bicentennial Tall Ships race will be magnificent. All of these events will attract many thousands of visitors and the boost to the local economy will be enormous. But it is very important that every visitor is extended a warm welcome by us all.

I believe the five years of Liberal government have seen more changes in Tasmania than twenty years of Labor administration. This Government deserves the reputation of being the most reformist government in Tasmania's history. Tasmania needs to become more self-reliant and I am delighted to have joined my parliamentary colleagues to assist in achieving this aim.

Government members - Hear, hear.