

Have shades of difference on certain aspects, but do not knock the whole program simply because you may disagree with some aspect of the submission which is being made on behalf of the State. Most of all do not spoil the faith of our people by resorting to the sort of thing which we witnessed here today, when the Leader of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition stands up, holding a copy of a confidential submission that I sent to the Prime Minister as a result of the Prime Minister's leaking it to him. I support the motion.

Mr CLEARY (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the messages of loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, and I would like you to convey my congratulations to Mr Speaker on his election to the position of Speaker of this Parliament. At this stage I would like to express my appreciation to the electors of Franklin who saw fit to elect me to this Parliament and I would convey to them that I intend to try my best to fulfil the great trust which they have placed in me to elect me to this Parliament.

The topic I have chosen to speak on today is housing. I would ask the question - is the Department of Housing and Construction bankrupting this State with its continual establishment of new housing areas outside the greater Hobart urban area? Continuing these policies must be costing the taxpayers dearly. The present policy of buying cheap rural land on the periphery of Hobart is saving money on land costs, but what is happening with all the other costs - the hidden costs, the infrastructure costs? Do all the affected government and semi-government departments have input into the decisions of the Department of Housing and Construction? Do they discuss policy with State Government departments like the Education Department, the Metropolitan Transport Trust, the Metropolitan Water Board, Health and Welfare Departments, the Department of the Environment, the Hydro-Electric Commission, police, ambulance and fire authorities; with the Federal Government departments of Telecom and Australia Post; with local government authorities for the provision of services such as roads, sewerage disposal, water and water storage, recreation needs, street lighting, refuse disposal; and finally with the future occupants as to the desirability of these places to live?

At the moment Hobart's population is not increasing at a significant rate, but the average occupancy per house is decreasing. In 1966 the figure was 3.6, in 1971 the figure was 3.4, and in 1976 the figure was 3.17. This shows a spread in population due to many factors, the main ones being that people are living longer, there is a decrease in the size of the family unit and increases in divorce and separation rates. This shows that there is a need for housing and one would have to be a fool to deny that. But do we need to house people in remote areas away from all the services which our community has become so reliant on? One alternative would be to infill and redevelop the urban areas. This is only a short-term alternative, but in these times, when finance for housing is not what we would like, surely the most sensible thing to do is to look at the cheapest alternative.

I can quote as an example the residential allotments available in the Municipality of Clarence for building at 30 December 1978. Those that were available with sewerage and water were 837; with water only, 613; and with no services, 840. This gave a grand total of 2 290 allotments. A brief analysis of these figures shows that in the urban services area - that is, the area possible for infill - 837 allotments are now available. The past trends in the last two years show that 100 to 150 houses per annum have been provided by the private sector. The Housing Division's objective in Clarence has been 150 houses per annum. So combining these figures there is about three years' supply available. Non-urban areas where water and only nil services are available - that is, generally rural residential subdivision areas - show a vacant stock of 1 453 allotments.

The building trend is difficult to establish. In Clarence from December 1977 to December 1978 there were approximately 90 in these areas. This relates to approvals, but not all have necessarily been erected. This cannot be assessed without physical inspection. However assuming, say, 90 per annum as a rough guide, there is 16 years' supply of land without further subdivision. The example I have just given you shows in one area a three years' supply at current trends of fully serviced allotments for both the private and public sector. But these figures relate only to the building allotments which are subdivided within these areas and there is also land available that has not yet been subdivided so that supply would be in excess of three years - possibly anything up to five years. I am sure these figures can be reflected throughout the State. The purchase price

for these allotments would be more expensive than for those currently being developed by the division, but the total costs, including the infrastructure costs must be less. Moneys that are currently being spent on school buildings, roads, water and sewerage, et cetera and all the infrastructure costs could be redirected into additional housing and at this time of need this would solve some problems in this area.

Is the demand for housing going to last? There will always be a demand but I cannot see this excessive demand or need lasting forever. The population in Tasmania is not increasing at any significant rate. If this continues, and all signs and indications seem to reaffirm this view, we must, in the future, be able to satisfy the demand. As mentioned earlier, our population is not increasing significantly, but it is spreading. The average home occupancy rates are decreasing. As I quoted earlier, in 1966 the rate was 3.6 and in 1971, 3.4. This trend has continued. Sooner or later we must reach a plateau or a minimum in home occupancy figures. For example the figure could not drop below one. Possibly there will be an increase in that figure then. The simple business-like approach to this problem is surely the full utilisation of services currently provided. Can we continue to be able to afford the great cost of new services in new areas when the services in many of the urban areas are under-utilised at the moment? This is probably part of the reason for the financial difficulty some local government bodies find themselves in today.

At the moment, for example, schools in some of the outer suburban areas are bulging at the seams while those in the older areas are reducing teacher numbers and are expecting a drop in student numbers. Can we afford to keep chasing the demand in education by building new schools in these areas when other schools and classrooms are emptying? The Tasmanian Education Next Decade Report of June 1978 shows that the future projection on school population is not increasing at the moment and over the next few years the report predicts a decline. We are continuing to spend more money and very substantial amounts of money on new buildings on a total school population that is not increasing. Can we afford this? The real demand in education at the moment appears to be the reduction of teacher-pupil ratios and the provision of more specialist teachers in the problem areas, for example in remedial teaching. Surely the money that is being spent on education at the moment should be in this direction and if new schools have to be built - and they will in some areas because of the decisions that have already been made - let us reduce some of the frills and 'mod cons' that seem to be mushrooming in all our new schools at the moment. It is nice to have them, but are they absolutely necessary? There should be a reduction in expenditure in this area until the basic needs are met - that is an increase in staff numbers to meet the real needs.

To emphasise this point I use as an example a simple retail establishment. The owner of such a business would be foolish if, instead of providing adequate staff to cater for the needs of his customers, he spent all his available capital on elaborate equipment in his business. When talking of facilities and equipment within schools, I acknowledge that some are very deficient in this area and that there needs to be some equalisation of these services in both new and older schools. We need to give all our children equal opportunity.

I would also like to make the point that the area of education is similar in this respect to the area of health. The great escalation in health costs which we have experienced over the last few years has been largely attributed to equipment in the use of elaborate and expensive diagnostic processes. I return to my earlier points on housing areas. At the moment to establish a new housing area, the services which are needed have to be provided, and I know that sufficient consultation with all authorities to provide these services is not happening. Two examples have recently been brought to my attention - the purchase of land in the Lilydale municipality by the Housing Division for the future provision of 600 homes. The land has no water, no sewerage or storm water, and no consultation was held with the council before the purchase actually took place. The other is in the same area and was reported in the 'Examiner' on 4 September:

'Alanvale College could sit vacant.'

The council was informed by the Education Department of its refusal to contribute the \$43 000 sewer main required to serve the college complex. These examples show that other authorities are not being consulted. One of the authorities which should be consulted before any decisions are made is the local government authority. Most of the basic essential services - water, sewerage and roads - have to be provided

by this authority. Without these housing developments cannot occur. These services have to be provided, but without proper consultation the cost of provision and maintenance of these services can become a burden on the local council and all the ratepayers.

The logical choice is first to utilise the services which are already provided, then to look at developing the areas which are easy to service cost-wise. Another major problem is the lack of community facilities. It has been evident in the past that the division's main concern is purely to build houses for people with little or no provision for community facilities. These facilities are most essential in these communities. People need recreation facilities, swimming pools, golf courses, and playing areas for children. By this I mean developed and non-developed areas, not just small pieces of land that are not suitable for anything. People need places where groups can meet and social and other community functions can be held. Clearly the local authority, coping with the physical and engineering problems, finds it impossible to direct funds to provide such facilities however important they may be considered. The State Government must accept responsibility by the provision of adequate funding to ensure that these basic infrastructure costs are provided. However the provision of buildings is not an end in itself.

Next, and most important, are the social problems that seem to be prevalent in these areas. The grouping together of people who, because of the guidelines laid down by the division, all belong to the lower socio-economic group is causing and will continue to cause tremendous social problems. What is the cost of social welfare in these areas? They must be immeasurable. Some, but not all, of these problems could be solved by a greater social mix and this could be achieved by using infill or a greater mix of public and private sector housing.

In closing, I urge the Government seriously to take stock of the housing situation at the moment. Can we continue to afford duplication of services which are under-utilised when our population is showing little increase. Let us look seriously at an infill situation and ensure that all bodies affected by departmental decisions are fully consulted. The right hand must know what the left hand is doing.

My final comment is on the state that our country and Tasmania will find itself in, if not now, in the immediate future. Our population is not increasing significantly. We have a large group of unemployed at one end of the scale and a larger group of older people - aged pensioners - at the other end of the scale. The latter group, because of increased life expectancy, is increasing. Finally we have a group of income earners in the middle. There will be, and there is now, a limit to what this group can afford to support. The problems of the future will increasingly be the ability of governments to cope with the unemployed and pensioner groups. The tax dollar has to be spent as effectively as possible. Can we afford to continue the great duplication of services in these housing areas? I support the motion.

Mr GREEN (Denison) - Mr Speaker, I rise to support the motion. I would firstly like to say, Mr Speaker, that the great victory the Lowe Labor Government had at the recent elections is an indictment of the policies of the Federal Liberal Government which has persisted in a continual cutback in essential government services such as pensions, housing and health. The people of Tasmania showed, with their votes, that they totally reject these policies, and it is pleasing to see that they endorsed the courageous and firm stand taken by the honourable Premier to oppose these policies.

Looking through the Governor's speech, the first thing that strikes one is that it is a very short speech. This reflects the policies of the Federal Government which continually cuts back the funds available to the State Government so that the ability of the Government to institute necessary programs is limited. I was particularly pleased to notice that, among other things the Government will do this year, it will legislate to erase juvenile offences from police records after five years. It is a most commendable policy and will ensure that these offences cannot be dragged up and used against people in the future.