



Bruce John Goodluck

House of Assembly

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Electorate: Franklin

Mr SPEAKER - The honourable member for Franklin, Mr Goodluck, and may I remind members that although Mr Goodluck has made some comments in this House, this is really his first principal speech and I am certain that members would be pleased to give him the courtesy of hearing him without interruption.

Mr GOODLUCK (Franklin) - Thank you, Mr Speaker; I do not really mind: if somebody wants to interject that would be fun.

First of all I would like to congratulate you on your elevation. I feel certain that you will do a very good job, a difficult time but you will do a good job. I would also like to congratulate the Premier on his elevation of course and to the former Premier, my old friend, and to the member for Denison, my old friend also.

When I look back over the years one changes, and thank God we do change, thank God we can change from being sometimes bitter towards a particular party or a particular person. It is true what the young lady, Paula Wriedt, said a few minutes ago - it was a very fine speech incidentally - she said, 'Let's get on with the job and let's start working for Tasmania' and I think that is what we have to do.

I would like to continue my congratulations because I believe that we have had some very fine speeches in the House and I would like to comment on them. Mr Best, the young gentleman from the north west, I think it was a very, very good speech, an earthy speech right down to the ground. I have mentioned Paula Wriedt of course and Mr Jim Bacon. I have had certain views about Jim Bacon but I have changed my mind, he is not a bad bloke; I think we might get on all right.

Then I will turn to my colleagues on the left, the Liberal Party - Mr Cheek, a very good speech and Rene Hidding, a very good speech also. I am overawed by these speeches; they were great, were they not. We can criticise and we condemn certain people but they were good speeches and we can listen to them and form good opinions from them. Denise Swan, that was a very fine speech too, and I have a lot of admiration for Denise and I believe that she will be a very good minister.

I will come back to the member for Denison and I hope you do not mind but I want to say things as they are. Great ability, the member for Denison. A lot of people criticise Michael and myself over the years but I have always thought Michael had a lot of ability and I believe he should go a long way. I believe he still has the chance to make a mark on this -

Mr White - The further the better!

Mr GOODLUCK - I had better be careful what I say, had I not.

Mrs James - You'd better hurry up.

Mr GOODLUCK - No, no, there is plenty of time. I believe that he has a very good future and he will be able to make a great contribution to this Parliament in due course - and that is meant nicely too. Who else do I have to congratulate? I think I have just about done everybody.

Yes, of course - and the new government. I believe that the Liberal Party have a very hard job to fulfil but I believe that they will be able to do it, with the assistance of the Labor Party and that small Independent. I believe that if we all work together - I am not grandstanding either - we can make this Parliament operate and work for the betterment of Tasmania. Yesterday was subdued sort of day, was it not - we were all very distressed at what happened down at Port Arthur - but there was a realisation that if we work together we can cooperate together and we can overcome some of those little trivial things that worry us at times.

I had certain preconceived ideas about the Greens.

Mr Polley - Don't tell me you've changed those.

Mr GOODLUCK - I have not changed but I believe that the Leader of the Greens has the same birthday as myself - well, what can I say!

Mrs Hollister - Next week, Bruce.

Mr GOODLUCK - The fourteenth of May - what can I say!

But anyway, I had preconceived ideas; I probably will not change but we have to work together, do we not; we have to overcome some of those preconceived ideas if we are going to make this a good State to live in. We can all talk about what we want to do for the State and all of a sudden we verge away from it, we say certain things that are deleterious towards the State, do not help the State at all, and people get subdued out in the streets and they worry about what we are going to do. We have to overcome that and we have to - I think my family are here, I forgot about my family.

I stood as an Independent; everybody, except the member over there, Mr Polley, said that I would not win the seat but he stood by me and said that I would. It was very difficult and I did not realise at the time how difficult it was to win a seat in this House as an Independent. You have not got party support from anybody, you are just on your own. But my family, my wife is here in the House today, Cynthia, and Catherine and my little grandson Isaac; oh no, my wife is not here. Never mind my grandson Isaac is here. They stood by me and they helped me and they gave me that support I needed. I have got nothing against political parties, Labor or Liberal, there are a lot of good members on both sides, and the Greens, I am sorry - good members and they do their best and they work very hard, but unfortunately, and I say this quite sincerely, political parties attract some very unusual people. Very unusual.

Members laughing.

Mr GOODLUCK - I won a seat for Franklin for seven terms. A Labor seat, would you agree - if I can term it a Labor seat - was a very hard seat to win but I could not satisfy the people that supposedly wanted to support me all those years. They did not turn away from me but they said certain things that I did not like. That is the reason I am Independent. I have got nothing against individuals, I never have. I am not one of those bitter people who hold grievances and grudges but those unusual people that political parties attract - some of them worry me. They change political parties and they influence political parties sometimes not in the best interests of the people that they are supposed to represent and support. That aside, let us forget about that - they are all gone now, I am an Independent. I am by myself, and I have found the role of an Independent very unusual to be quite truthful.

To be an Independent I have found most unusual but I believe that if I keep my head and forget about the past and use the brain that I have, if I have any, I believe that I will be able to help and assist both sides of the House and the Greens. I believe all together we can work in the best interests of Tasmania. I was a bit worried about this Parliament. I heard that the backbenchers were treated like troglodytes: they were buried away and the backbenchers did not contribute. I have always worried about the executive arm of government. I have always thought that they dominated the scene and sometimes the backbenchers did not have a say.

Mr Polley - More like mushrooms I think.

Mr GOODLUCK - Yes exactly, and that is wrong. Backbenchers certainly aspire to be ministers and if they are going to come up the tree they have to be given encouragement and given the resources all the things that are necessary to make their job easier. A lot of people are jealous that I have got one staff member. They should not be. Remember, I am by myself, I have not got the facilities of a party, Labor, Liberal or the Greens; I am just by myself. But I believe every backbencher should have a staff member. How the dickens can they operate and look after their constituents if they have not got somebody to do the little things - not the little things but to answer the phone, ring constituents and so on and do all the little things that are necessary to be a good backbencher? I would hope - I have got off the track a bit, I believe - that this House has been noted for the way they have treated the backbenchers, and that is not pointing the finger at anybody in particular. But I believe over the years backbenchers have been treated not too well. They have been buried away in little offices, sometimes sharing offices with somebody else and that does not subscribe to being a good member. Would you agree? Am I right or wrong - tell me. Of course I am right.

I believe we have to work together and make certain that everybody has an equal chance in this House, an equal chance, an equal share in facilities and so on. That is the only way we can make everybody happy and operate efficiently.

What else was I going to say. One of my failings, I never prepare a speech. There are lots of things running through my mind at the moment. I got up this morning and asked a question and I could not read my daughter's handwriting. But never mind I got the facts mixed up a bit. The cycle turns. In one of my old speeches - I am not referring to any material but it was interesting that in 1978 I asked the minister at that time, Bob Ellicott - do you remember Bob Ellicott, he has gone up the tree. I said: is the Minister for Home Affairs aware of legislation recently introduced in the United Kingdom

Parliament protecting children from the exploitation of child pornography? I asked that question and he looked at me. He said, 'I don't believe it', and I said 'Well, you go and have a look, that is the legislation that has been introduced'. Has it not turned, now all of a sudden there is that sort of exploitation throughout the world, we are all starting to worry about what is going to happen. Paedophiles in certain countries and so on, we are worried about it.

The point that I make, we have some grave problems in the world today. We saw what happened down at Port Arthur and we naturally understand the problems that are going to come from that: how people are going to heal and how people are going to cope with the problems that are attached to that. The point that I make again, I repeat that silly statement: that we have to be acutely aware that we are in a troubled world. There are many, many problems. Ms Wriedt said that we have to have a conscience, we have to work and feel for people. I agree entirely. That is what we are here for, to try and make absolutely certain that we can assist people with all their problems and all the problems that are associated with living today, and there are many. Of course that is one of the reasons that I am here, I hope in some small way that I will be able to contribute to assisting people to cope with their problems that are so difficult today.

I mentioned LPG this morning in a question. I did it very seriously because we are all talking about petrol prices at the moment and over the years I have said the oil companies have treated their re-sellers and treated the public of Australia in an atrocious way. They have lifted the prices to suit their own whim and fancy and we the ordinary motorists have suffered. I mentioned LPG this morning because in fact in Tasmania we are paying twice the price of what they are paying for LPG in Melbourne. We went to import parity, I forget what year it was but we went to import parity years ago, meaning that the price of crude is the same price as imported crude. That lifted the price of petrol to a higher level and subsequently all Australia has suffered as a result of it. I was one of the backbenchers at the time that opposed it because I thought that they used the argument that was going to be used for exploration, conservation of petrol, conservation of oil. But in fact it did not occur that way. One of the alternatives that were offered in those days was the alternative to LPG. As I said this morning, cars do run economically and efficiently on LPG - and incidentally the Greens Party would like it, it does not create any problems in the atmosphere. But it did not occur. How many cars are running on LPG now - not very many, taxis do, they assist in that area, but really the price was lifted high, we were all charged for it but the results were not there. It is unnecessary as I can see it that we are charged in Australia that high price for imported crude, import parity. Petrol should be far cheaper. You look at the price in America - it is far cheaper. I think it has been exploited to suit certain industries, particularly the oil industry. One could talk about them but I will not.

The Labor Party said that they would try and reduce the price by 7 cents per litre. I did say it was impossible. The Liberal Party said that they would bring another player into the market, ACTU or whatever they call themselves. They said that they would be able to reduce the price of it. I do not think it will occur incidentally, I do not think so. So therefore we have a problem, the lot of us, all of us together will have to try and sort out and make certain that the motorists of Tasmania receive a better deal with petrol pricing. We all have to do that to get it. You cannot do it, the Labor Party cannot do it and the Liberal Party will not be able to do it, I can tell you now. So therefore we are faced with that problem, number one.

Another problem that I want to get on to just very briefly. I have had a fair bit to do with welfare housing in this State. And we have not got the minister in the House but I will be asking him a few questions because I am particularly worried about it.

Mr Polley - You will have to go up to the Legislative Council to do it.

Mr GOODLUCK - Yes. They tell me that is the independent House but I do not know - anyway we might have to do that.

I have had a fair bit to do with welfare housing over the years as a Federal politician and I was quite proud to do it incidentally. There are some very fine people that live in welfare housing and they should not be condemned for just a few that get into a home and think they have the right to destroy it and wreck it and make it difficult for the taxpayers, number one, and make it difficult for the tenants that live around them. I have seen a couple of houses that have been left by people in a disgraceful manner, absolutely, well, it is hard to describe. I think that we have to have a good look at the policing of homes that are rented from the taxpayers. That is what they are, they are rented from the taxpayers. We have to make certain that the people that live in them, that rent them, have to look after them and have to keep them in good condition.

We have a real problem there and we have many people that want welfare housing. There is a whole list of people that want them, so we have to make certain that they have the ability to be able to get them. That is one problem.

The other problem that I see, and the nursing homes tell me that I am wrong. I am not wrong. They say that if you want to get into a nursing home you can. I say that you cannot. I have used the argument -and a lot of people do not like me using the argument - that if you are a Catholic you can get into them - I am a Catholic incidentally - and if you are a Mason you can get into them. If you are a member of another church you can get into them. It is not true. The ordinary person that may not be a member of those groups, the poor person, if you like to term it that way, cannot. So therefore we have a mammoth problem there. We are getting an aging population, we are getting people that want to get into nursing homes and they find it difficult to get into nursing homes so we have a problem.

What I am trying to say is that we have human problems that are of mammoth proportion in Tasmania and we have to try and overcome them. The only way that we can overcome them, to quote Ms Wriedt, is to work together, and, in conclusion, I will be one that will be trying to work with both sides of the House and the Greens.