

Mr RAE (Bass - Minister for Education and the Arts) - I would like to congratulate my colleagues, the member for Bass, Dr Madill, and the member for Braddon, Mr Rundle, for moving and seconding the motion for the Address-in-Reply. I not only wholeheartedly support that but I wholeheartedly support what they said and congratulate them upon the way in which they delivered their maiden speeches in a House of Parliament. I also congratulate my colleague, the member for Denison, Mr Bennett, on the speech which he has just so ably given to this House.

I welcome the opportunity to speak as a newly-elected member for the State seat of Bass. Bass has been my home base for a very long time and it is a very great honour to be able to serve that area as a member in this Chamber. It is also a great honour to have been given the second-highest vote in the State, which carries with it an awesome responsibility which I shall do my utmost to fulfil and which will, I wish to assure the electors of Bass, be borne uppermost in my mind at all times. I believe it is something which will help me to seek the development of the whole of Tasmania and its economy, the opportunity for people to enjoy the fruits of their labours in a remarkable lifestyle, to ensure that the people of Bass have their fair share of the opportunity for that development and enjoyment.

I believe Launceston to be one of the most glorious cities in the world; I have seen many of them, and the more I have seen the more pleased I am to find that it is the place where I most wish to live. I find it is a city which is big enough to have all the things a city can provide yet it is small enough for one to be able to enjoy them - something one cannot do in many cities of Australia and other parts of the world. It is basically a safe city and it is a clean city - except for something, to which I will come in a little while, which flows nearby with unfortunate circumstances at the moment. It is a city I am proud to represent, as I am the whole area of Bass.

I am also proud to be in the Parliament of Tasmania. Ours is a State which has beautiful, vastly-changing scenery - from the wild coast on the west, with the rollers which come around the world from South America before they crash onto that coast, to the beautiful east coast with its white beaches and blue waters and its vastly different climate. From one of the wettest climates in Australia to one of the driest; from the north to the south between Bass Strait and the beautiful D'Entrecasteaux Channel, the Derwent and the Tasman Peninsula; from mining to manufacturing; from agriculture to viticulture - this State has it all. We have the mountains and the plains; the infinite variety and - I would wish to remind members - it has but 3 per cent of the population.

To give members some idea of the spread of land and opportunity we have available to us, it is a State which is twice the size of the island of Taiwan and it has a population of less than 440 000, whereas Taiwan has a population of over 18 million people. We have 3 per cent of the population of Australia but we have 16 per cent of the water resources of Australia and that is a responsibility we must manage carefully so we do not take for granted the fact that we are blessed with a plentitude of water. That is something to which I will return later when I am talking about our policy in relation to the River Tamar, the North Esk and the whole of the northern river schemes.

But first let me refer to someone in whom I have found inspiration and from whom I have received the value and warmth of support and assistance. I would like to refer to John Steer, a former member of this House and a former representative of Bass. Despite having lost a leg during the Second World War, he was as active as anybody. When dying of cancer, for the fifteenth or sixteenth time he placed before this Chamber a bill for the introduction of daylight saving and not only did he go from the stage where he could not get a seconder to where it was carried unanimously, he went on to evangelise around Australia - in the last few months of his life - about the benefits of daylight saving. I only wish he could have seen the situation which has arisen now, where the rest of Australia is ahead of Tasmania by the accident of our not being able to extend the time to give even more value than we have had before. The quality of courage, dedication and representation that man showed was an inspiration to those of us who knew him and I see in him an inspiration which was important to me.

Another important inspiration to me was that of the founder of the Liberal Party, Sir Alfred Deakin, and his successor, Sir Robert Menzies, who was the founder of the reformed Liberal Party. Having broken into a number of disparate groups, it was reformed into one cohesive force put together to ensure not only that the socialism raging in the thoughts of many in Australia at the time could not be implemented but to put forward positively a program of belief in the importance of many principles, and I would like to quote some of those principles because I believe that all too often they are forgotten. The principles of the Liberal Party were prepared in the latter period of the 1940s after the reformation of the Party, originally in 1944 and through to 1946. This is a short statement of what we, as Liberals, believe:

'WE BELIEVE IN AUSTRALIA, her courage, her capacity, her future and her national sovereignty, exercised through Parliaments deriving their authority from the people by free and open elections.

WE BELIEVE IN THE INDIVIDUAL. We stand positively for the free man, his initiative, individuality and acceptance of responsibility.'

I emphasise the words 'and acceptance of responsibility'.

'WE BELIEVE IN THE RULE OF LAW. Under it, there is freedom for the nation and for all men and women. Democracy depends upon self-discipline, obedience to the law, the honest administration of the law.

WE BELIEVE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE VOLUNTEER. This does not mean that we reject compulsion in matters in which a uniform obedience is needed by the community. But it does mean that the greatest community efforts can be made only when voluntary co-operation and self-sacrifice come in aid of, and lend character to, the performance of legal duties.

WE BELIEVE THAT RIGHTS CONNOTE DUTIES ...'

Again I want to emphasise this because many people in our community tend to forget it, particularly some of those who support the Party represented on the other side of this Chamber.

'WE BELIEVE THAT RIGHTS CONNOTE DUTIES and that sectional and selfish policies are destructive of good citizenship.

WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE SUPREME FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY; that today's dogma may turn out to be tomorrow's error and that, in consequence, the interests of all legitimate minorities must be protected.

WE BELIEVE IN LIBERTY, not anarchy, but an individual and social liberty based upon, and limited by, a civilised conception of social justice.

WE BELIEVE THAT LIBERALISM MEANS FLEXIBILITY AND PROGRESS.

WE BELIEVE IN THE GREAT HUMAN FREEDOMS: to worship, to think, to speak, to choose, to be ambitious, to be independent, to be industrious, to acquire skill, to seek and earn reward.

WE BELIEVE IN SOCIAL JUSTICE ...

WE BELIEVE IN RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL TOLERANCE ...'

We believe that with these principles a great Australia can become a greater Australia. We believe these are the principles by which Australia should be governed.

We also believe in the importance of federalism in the rights of the States, the importance of those States and the ability of the people of those States to retain equal opportunity within the operation of the parliamentary process in our federated nation. My great privilege to serve for 18 years in the Senate brought home to me the importance of federation. My privilege of serving in the Senate as a House of review and as a States' House left me with the firmest belief possible that this institution is one of the greatest institutions in the world. It is one of the great institutions in the safeguarding of federation. It is not, as so many people who want to denigrate it and reduce its powers suggest, only a House of party hacks. It may be so far as the caucus members of the Labor Party are concerned but it is not so far as the majority of the Senate is concerned, as I will show in a moment.

There are many things which can be done in the Senate which could not be done by a caucus system. It is a House of review which serves the purposes of reviewing and acting as a States' House. It protects the balance and the interests of the smaller States and particularly it protects Tasmania. I believe that when the voting power is similar as far as the smaller States are concerned we have the influence which can ensure that Tasmania has as much say in the review of legislation as does the State of New South Wales which, of course, swamps us in the House of Representatives but does not swamp us - it has only the same number as Tasmania - in the House of review. It is a House which can, through its powers and influence, ensure the accountability of government to the people of Australia, the State of Tasmania and the individual electors of Australia. It is a House which has developed a committee system which I believe is one of the best committee systems so far developed in any parliamentary democracy in the world.

It is a system which includes the scrutiny of delegated legislation through the Regulations and Ordinances Committee which has been in existence now for more than 50 years. It also looks to the protection of the rights of the individual and the checking of the necessary powers to make legislation so far as the scrutiny of bills is concerned.

It has developed a system of estimates which enables the scrutiny of what is happening in government through the automatic production of full explanatory notes in a detailed form, which ensures that the members of the Senate Estimates Committee are now able to obtain automatically a large part of the information which used to be sought during the Committee stage of the appropriation bill.

It has also developed a system of standing committees. It has an interlocking system covering the total area of parliamentary activity. It has the legislative and general purpose standing committees which cover the various fields of legislative and parliamentary activity. Through its committees, both standing and select - which are sometimes chosen, having a smaller membership, for a particular purpose and perhaps a shorter and sharper inquiry than may be possible through a standing committee - I believe it has benefited the State of Tasmania in particular.

What it has been possible to attain for this State through the Senate committee system is particularly important. In fact it is curious to look back to find that the first Senate committee ever established was a select committee to look into the problems of Tasmanian shipping. It was established in 1901 and it reported in 1902, as did another committee in 1970. This led, incidentally, to the introduction in 1970-71 of the Freight Equalisation Scheme. There have been many parents of that particular child but - as I am sure former Senator Wriedt, now the member for Franklin, would confirm - the original suggestions for the Freight Equalisation Scheme came from a Senate committee in a bipartisan report.

There was also a bipartisan report, about ten years later, in relation to passenger fares and services as opposed to freight. I am assured this was helpful, too, to this Parliament and this Government in facing some of Tasmania's problems but it was also of great assistance in obtaining for Tasmania something which has since been taken away - the air-bridge subsidy which was provided by the former coalition Government in Canberra. This provided 10 per cent assistance for air travel to Tasmania but that was unfortunately taken away by the Hawke-Keating Government.

It was a clear responsibility of the Commonwealth because so many of the costs imposed on Tasmania have been because of that stretch of water over which the Commonwealth really has control. It is Commonwealth legislation which controls waterfronts and shipping. Commonwealth legislation has controlled ship building for a very long time in Australia and has added tremendously to the cost of building ships to operate services across Bass Strait. The seamen are the most expensive seamen in the world and all of that is the result of the Commonwealth. Until recently it was not something Tasmania had the opportunity to do anything positive about, and I congratulate the Government on the steps which have been taken to endeavour to overcome some of the disadvantages. I look forward to other steps being taken to ensure the continuation of the major freight port at Bell Bay as well as the continued operation of the four-port system in Tasmania.

It was a great honour to me to have served in that House as a Tasmanian Liberal - a Tasmanian Liberal who was democratically elected, which so many of those who serve in upper Houses are not. If we look around the world, it is hard to find a fully democratic upper House, but it is also hard to find an upper House which has exercised its powers as clearly and as firmly as the Senate has done. It is hard to find one which has contributed to a total legislative and parliamentary process more firmly than the Senate has done.

As an institution with traditions, pride and a devoted staff, the Senate bears all the hallmarks of one of the world's great second chambers; one of the world's bastions of federalism; and one of the effective Houses of reform and innovation in its reports and in its recommendations to government in areas where it has initiated as well as those where it has reviewed, improved and corrected. It is extraordinary the number of times a contentious bill has been referred to a Senate committee which has brought back a unanimous recommendation on a bipartisan basis for as many as 130 amendments to it, all of which have been subsequently accepted by the Parliament. I believe that is a process which is important when one is endeavouring to obtain the best sort of legislation, the most successful legislation, the legislation which will best serve the people of Australia.

It is even possible to introduce legislation in the Senate and the occasion even arises where private members' bills can be initiated there and then go on to run the gamut of both chambers and become legislation.

I look back with some pleasure upon an amendment to the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905, which I managed to get through both chambers a couple of years ago, which brought us from the early age of spark wireless to the space age. We did seem to be in need of some improvement.

Whilst talking of the Senate let me refer to the honour of having participated in the Constitutional Conventions. I not only participated but also had a proposal carried by the convention in Adelaide from which was developed a bill for a referendum which was presented to the Senate by me and supported, I am glad to say, by a cross-section of the Senate. It was to ensure that the Senate's powers were retained but exercised with due accountability to the people. It was to ensure that there was the power to refuse money bills or supply but, if the Senate does that, the whole Senate - not just half of it - becomes immediately available to be judged by the people in any election which follows. That seems to me to be fair. If we have a situation where we have a House of review - a check and balance system - it ought to be possible for it to ensure that the people in a democracy have the ultimate choice as to who is right and who is wrong, and all of the people who brought it about should be subject to that form of judgment by the people. That is, I believe, the ultimate in democracy. Let the people judge.

Going back to that particular bill, whilst it was carried by the Senate - with the aid of the other members of the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Democrats - it was opposed unfortunately by the Labor Party in the Senate, but fortunately it did not have sufficient numbers and it passed that House. It was not even introduced for consideration by the Labor Party into the House of government - the House of Representatives.

I would particularly like to pay tribute to the dedication of some of the senators and all of the staff - they are too numerous to mention - to the protection and development of the Senate. The names of senators through the years come to mind one after another and I do not wish to pick out any particular one, but let me refer to the late Jim Odgers who was in effect the fount of all wisdom - the Bible, so far as the Senate and Senate practice was concerned. At the time of his death last year, 'Australian Senate Practice' by Odgers was in its fifth edition and preparation had been made for the sixth edition, with the assistance of Miss Anne Lynch, a senior officer of the Senate. She was the first woman to receive senior status in the Senate and she did a tremendous job in assisting Jim Odgers in the preparation of that work. I pay my tribute to both of them. I believe that they contributed greatly to the operation of parliamentary democracy, particularly Jim Odgers over many years as Clerk of the Senate. I will remember my friends in the Senate and in the House of Representatives - on both sides of the Chambers - for the remainder of my life. I am glad to say that I found that I had friends on both sides in both Chambers. I am in a sense sorry I did not have the opportunity to say farewell before I left, but I must express my gratitude to those who did say some few words when the Senate resumed earlier this year, particularly to my colleague, Senator Chaney, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate; to Senator Grimes, the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate; to Senator Chipp, the Leader of the Australian Democrats; and to the others who spoke and who were so generous in what amounted to the nearest one could come to hearing his own condolence motion. I am glad I was not in the Chamber -

Mr Polley - You probably stayed too long and they thought you had died.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr RAE - I do not regard this as a maiden speech in which I should be protected, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER - I think I will give you that protection though, Mr Minister.

Mr RAE - How much more did I feel the tearing and the wrench from the Senate when the next day it carried unanimously Senator Townley's motion of congratulations and gratitude for my services to the Senate and its best wishes for my services in this State. I hope that its wishes will be borne out.

May I wish my successor, Senator Jocelyn Newman, the experience which I enjoyed in putting to the forefront the interests of Tasmania and Tasmanians and the Liberal Party in this State. It is a great responsibility and an honour which I am proud to have had.

Let me now turn back to Tasmania and the future we are facing. We need to do better than others because we suffer at the hands of the Hawke Government and its high debt, high interest and big spending policies. One thing is certain so far as the smaller States are concerned: we have to get by with less. We must do exceptionally well - not just well, but exceptionally well - and I believe we can. The Gray Government has shown the way; we must now get on with the job of cementing that which has been achieved so far and building on the foundations which have been laid.

I will refer to only a few items, because I am conscious that to refer to all the things one might like to talk about would take a long time. Let me refer briefly to technology and pride in Tasmania and Australia. I believe we have suffered from the 'cringe mentality', to an extent. We have suffered from the idea that Australians are not the best at anything to do with manufacturing or technology. We have developed this attitude - which seems to pervade the media, the policy makers and many of those who are involved in manufacturing industry - that we will never be able to do it because our costs are too high, our technology is not sufficiently advanced and others will beat us. Let me just tell members a few of the good news stories - of which one can find a multitude - to show what Tasmania and Australia have achieved.

I wonder how many Tasmanians think about the fact that in Germany, the home of exquisitely fine motor vehicles, there are some 400 000 Germans driving around in motor vehicles whose engines were made at Fishermens Bend, Australia, and with bearings made at Launceston by Repco Bearings Co. -

Members - Hear hear.

Mr RAE - How many people have thought about the fact that London taxis - the object which most demonstrably conjures up London and Britain - have their transmissions made at Albury-Wodonga? Guess where the radios were made - in Melbourne. Do we hear about that? Do we hear the good news stories in the media? No, we do not; we hear the bad news stories about the downturn in manufacturing. Of course there will be a downturn if we keep denigrating it all the time instead of talking about the success stories and what we can do.

Two brothers were involved in a family company which made cricket and hockey balls and similar types of products. One of the brothers ran the factory while the other - with one of the assistants - spent five years developing an automatic system of stitching. After five years' technological research and development they are now the world leaders whose products are used for championships in cricket and hockey the world round. They have developed the most economic means of producing the finest quality in their product. That was because they applied themselves and did not say, 'We can't do it because our costs will be too high or we are not sufficiently well advanced in our technology'.

Let me talk about the clothes dryers which are manufactured in Adelaide and sell in South Africa - just one market we can use as an example - against Japanese, European and American products. They undercut in price and can beat their competitors from Europe, Japan, the United States and Taiwan in sales.

Let me talk about the Rolls Royce filters. Does anybody know how many companies in the world are allowed to manufacture and put the stamp on a Rolls Royce filter? I can assure members that there are not many, but one of them is in Melbourne - the only one in the Southern Hemisphere; one of the only ones outside Britain. That company makes the filters for all of the Boeing jets; it makes the filters for the F111s; and it makes the filters for all of the specialist requirements in this part of the world.

That is something of which we can be justly proud but the Morgan family did not complain that technology would cost them too much to implement. They improvised. They developed their own. They developed their own CAD/CAM - computer-aided design and manufacture. The Leader of the Opposition would probably need to have that explained to him; he did not understand much about MICs. They developed their systems. Some of them were at first a little primitive as they experimented in design but they have achieved one of the great achievements in Australian manufacturing.

One can go to all sorts of places in Tasmania, and in the rest of Australia, where we have achieved at the forefront of the world, and we can go on doing that. I believe we can go on taking Australia - and this State in particular - to the leadership of the world in many areas of technology, manufacturing and applied skills and services. I believe that the Tasmanian technology and engineering corporation is one of the things which will encourage the development of that.

I look forward to seeing that we can bring together our hydro engineering skills, which have been developed to a very high grade in this State; our skills in the Precision Tool Annexe, which is known not just Australia wide but worldwide; and our skills which are available in a whole variety of specialist areas of development in this State of ours. I believe that by using those skills, the experience and the contacts of the Tasmanian Development Authority, and the experience and contacts of the private sector, we can find ourselves leading in many areas of technological and engineering development and able to take on not only those things which are for consumption in this State but which can be exported overseas and to other States of Australia on a competitive basis with the rest of the world.

I believe that we have skills in using our temperate climate and our excellent soils and waters around us for everything from agriculture, aquiculture, horticulture and floriculture to viticulture and so on - the various types of developments all of which are available in this State to a greater degree than in any other State available as a percentage of the population. In other words, this State is very rich. It is a State which has an opportunity to be able to use its resources to advantage to place the State at the forefront of economic development in this country rather than the place where the former Government had it, which was at the tail gunner position - tail-end Charlie.

Yet as so many have recently shown, I believe we are only scratching the surface in developing new plant varieties, new species of organisms and animals, and new breeds which can all perform better the function they are designed to perform. Seeds from Tasmania can be sown in the rest of the world. They are now; they can be developed further. We can produce for the rest of the world a whole variety of products from the various areas of primary production and food production generally. We are highly efficient and we need to be to contain the costs which are imposed by the policies of Canberra. The automatic adjustment for inflation on the costs of those who are producing in the primary sector is just one example of the sort of problem they face, but notwithstanding that they have shown their resilience in the past and I am sure with some encouragement they will show it in the future.

Through the inventive, entrepreneurial, adventurous, experimentive and developmental attitudes which can prevail in this State we can bring together our skills and resources to become a world leader in food technology. One of my dreams for many years has been to see this State develop to the stage where it fully utilises all of its opportunities. One of the ways in which we can do that is by bringing together the resources of the university; of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation; of the Tasmanian State Institute of Technology - which has such exceptional aquiculture development amongst other things of a specialist nature; of the Department of Agriculture and its research farms, its research laboratories and all the skills which are available there in food technology; and of the Australian Maritime College - the only one of its type in Australia, and a very specialised college with specialist equipment and knowledge in relation to various aspects in the food chain.

We have the seed growers who have done well in establishing this State as one of the major seed development States and, when plant variety rights have been provided to encourage and protect them, we will find they will develop all the further and the State will attain greater reward for what it does. We have the new vegetable oil developers who have done an excellent job in recent years and for whom I think there is a great opportunity in the future. We have the private manufacturers and processors in this State, all of whom have been developing new technology and new methods of being able to remain competitive and develop their skills and their opportunity to participate.

We have a tremendous depth and breadth of skills, of experience, of ideas and of technological development. We have even the possibility - one hopes if the Commonwealth will cooperate - of gaining the assistance of the Armed Forces Food Science Establishment at Scottsdale which is one of the great food research establishments of the world. It has done an excellent job and I hope that a Federal government anxious to gain the utmost from such an establishment will play its part in the development of a centre of excellence in food technology proposed by the Gray Liberal Government before the last election, which I am sure will be implemented in the near future by the recently re-elected Gray Liberal Government. Cooperation can achieve that. We could achieve a position of being the acknowledged centre in Australia and one of the world centres in food technology. There is no reason at all that we should not.

We also have the position where we are attempting to overcome the problem of some years of neglect near where that centre of food technology will be sited. This is the problem of the pollution of the North Esk River, the River Tamar and, earlier, of the South Esk River. What we have now is a scheme to bring the northern rivers together, to clean them up and to make them more useful. Let me start with the fact that steps have been taken to overcome some of the problems which existed so far as the South Esk River was concerned. The South Esk now has fish returning to it. It now has the life returning to it and is becoming a clean and safe river.

We have the Meander scheme with the Warners Creek Dam proposal, promised at the last election by the Gray Liberal Government - and to be implemented by the Gray Liberal Government - which will store water from the huge catchment at the Great Western Tiers. This water will ensure the flow in the Meander River, coming down as it does to join the South Esk. It will ensure that at dry times as well as other times of the year there can be sufficient water to keep the flow in the river, to keep the river clean, to keep the silt out of it, to keep the irrigation opportunities available to the many farmers along its banks and in its area and to keep the water in the creeks around about so that the whole of the system through there will be flowing clean water.

We also have the program of cleaning up the North Esk River which, until it gets past Corra Linn, is one of the most beautiful and clearest of rivers. Unfortunately, as it flows past Killafaddy to Hoblers Bridge it becomes polluted by the effluent from the meatworks, the saleyards and the overloaded sewerage treatment plant at Hoblers Bridge. So we will provide funds to help clean that up so it no longer looks like an open sewer.

One of the great steps forward in improving the lifestyle of the people in that area and its huge number of visitors - one of the major tourist areas of this State - will be the improvement of the appearance of that section of the river. I look forward to the day when it could be possible for a vessel of the size of the sailing ships which used to sail past the Customs House to go there and turn around if it needed to do so. Unfortunately there is a bridge which would block it at the moment but we imagine that, if the river were clean, we could look to that day.

Mr SPEAKER - The honourable minister has only two minutes left.

Mr RAE - I am saying my last few words, if I may, Mr Speaker.

I would like to go back and refer very briefly to some of the other aspects of technology. I wish to refer to the developments in the education computer area as something else of which we can be justly proud. I would have liked a little more time to develop that and I will no doubt do so at a later date. I think it is extremely important.

I think it is extremely important that we have services available to export from this State. One of the things possible to us as a small State is the ability to develop a high percentage of special skill for hiring out to those who do not have the same standard of skill. We can build our education industry into an export industry by providing education to those from other countries who would like to avail themselves of the opportunities here.



I believe we have every opportunity in Tasmania. It is a place which 'Time' magazine described as one of the ten best places in the world to live. The only problem I had with 'Time' magazine is that I think it was wrong in naming the other nine. I think it should have left it as saying that Tasmania is the finest place in the world to live. Let us not only keep it that way but make it more so. I hope we can all work together to develop all the opportunities which are available in this State.

I am delighted to be back home. I am delighted to be able to participate in that and, in concluding, I would like to make just one other remark - I would like to thank the members of my family for all the years they have put up with my being away from home almost all the time and for the assistance they have been to me throughout my political career. I would like to thank those who assisted me to become a member for Bass and to renew my pledge that I will do everything in my power to honour the trust which was placed in me at the last election. I thank the House for the opportunity to speak.