

Mr PETRUSMA (Hobart) - Mr President, it gives me pleasure to address this House for the first time and support the motion for the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's speech. First of all I want to say a big 'thank you' to honourable members for making me so welcome in this House, It has made me feel very much at home very early. I would like also to pay that tribute to the staff of this House who have done the same thing.

I would like to touch briefly on the address by His Excellency the Honourable Sir Guy Green. I will not go into it at length but there are a few things I want to say. I support the concept that the Government should do its utmost to restore community and business confidence. As a little aside, I cannot quite understand this budget deficit of \$31 million when the Tasmanian people have gambled \$240 million in the last 12 months. The deficit does not seem a very big figure when one compares it with that sort of figure.

I support any move to try to assist employment although I am not sure that the \$500 that the Government is offering to employers for extra, new full-time employees is necessarily going to be the answer but if it helps, great.

I strongly support the idea of reducing pay-roll tax on small and medium-sized businesses because this is one of the most iniquitous taxes that was ever created. I do not know who the person was who created it but it does make it hard for people to employ people. Having come from a small business myself, I know. It used to be a terrible thing for me at the end of each month to get my pen out and sign a cheque payable to the Commissioner of Taxes for, say, \$500 or \$600 or whatever the figure was because I saw that virtually as being one girl's job in the little staff of about eight or nine people that I had. I am sure many business people in Tasmania feel very much the same. They would probably prefer to pay somebody that money than give it to the Commissioner of Taxes.

Unemployment is a concern and I do not believe that Parliament and all sections of the community have addressed themselves to this problem sufficiently. I believe that unemployed people have been made a political football. I would like to read just a few lines from the latest report of the Hobart City Mission which is headed up 'Unemployment'.

'It is not a very pleasant word to say. Its consequences are deep and far reaching. However the effect in our community is only breaking through our land-of-plenty consciousness. Statistics in this report show that around 46 per cent of the cases the Hobart City Mission has helped in the past 12 months have been caused primarily by unemployment alone. Recent surveys by the City Mission have revealed a growing problem of aimlessness and despair among young people, single and married. A lack of opportunity to work or receive further education means a critical point of reference is missing when it comes to finding a person's place in the community and finding meaning and direction in life. The effects of unemployment are reaching epidemic proportions.

Unless positive steps are taken to give young people constructive and meaningful outlets for their energy and a positive approach is shown to their environment, violence and despair will increase dramatically. There are hundreds of families in Hobart alone that are going under. There is no hope of catching up financially while unemployed and with no extra money to cope with emergencies. For many who are unemployed and lack basic academic skills, chronic joblessness as teenagers is often just the beginning of chronic joblessness as adults and a new generation of children. As a Christian community we have a responsibility to see that lives are not wasted; that man's technology alone does not take the place of man's dignity, and that a framework of hope, meaning and encouragement is given to those affected in order to avoid their going under emotionally, financially and in spirit'.

I believe that never before in the history of this nation has there been a time when we needed to get together as people - not just the Government, but employers, employees and the trade union movement. Every sector of the community needs to get together to deal with this problem.

The other point I want to mention briefly is about the Government initiative regarding housing, in offering to abolish stamp duty. I am not so sure whether this is really the answer, because I believe that first-home buyers - and I believe they should be helped - are already adequately catered for. In fact, when a young couple buys their very first home and saves some money, the latest Commonwealth home savings grant scheme, plus the taxation benefits, plus the saving of State Government stamp duty virtually gives them a total package of \$3 800 right now. For those who are fortunate enough to have two children that package is worth \$4 800. So I am not so sure whether this will really be an immediate stimulus to the housing industry as the Government believes it will. I would rather see the Government direct its attention more to assisting those people who currently own homes - those who have, say, a \$25 000 mortgage - and the struggling family with children and maybe the wife at home. They are the ones that are suffering badly at this time. It is not just the first-home buyer that has a problem. The first-home buyer is better off today than he was 10, 12 or 15 years ago when I bought my very first home. Maybe this is an area that needs to be looked at: some way of reducing the interest burden on the families who currently own homes in this State. Maybe we need to put a greater amount of pressure on the Federal Government to do something about that.

Let us look at Tasmania. We are geographically, economically and historically different to all other States and to all other English-speaking countries, which makes Tasmania a unique place to live in. It enjoys a unique lifestyle. We have resources that are far superior to any other State. We have a wonderful natural beauty, rich lands, forests, mineral resources, water and, most of all, our natural resources - our people. It is strange when one takes a place like Singapore, which measures about 28 miles by 16 miles, and where there are about 2.5 million people. It has no natural resources; but it has its people. Yet it gets 50 000 tourists per week in that place; 50 000 people go into Singapore which measures 28 miles by 16 miles.

This is a great place to live in. We enjoy a moderate climate; we enjoy four beautiful seasons. The spring time in Tasmania is beautiful; the autumn - which we have just had - is great; the winter is beautiful and the summer is great. Our summers are more tolerable than the Queensland summers. Tasmania is ripe for progress. But I believe it is not just up to government to progress; we have to have support from all sections of society.

We do have people in this State from all walks of life who have gifts, talents and certain abilities, who have something to contribute to the State. But something we need to do is to restore pride in this State. We have to develop a fierce loyalty; we have to get to a point where Tasmanians start believing in themselves. It is important that we implant an international image of Tasmania as a centre of gracious living. We need to encourage the pursuit of excellence in all things, developing the idea in Tasmania that only the best will do. I do not mean merely on the sporting field but in schools, in the homes, in churches, in business, commerce and the media. All must strive together for the purpose of bringing the State together as one people across parochial boundaries and political barriers. We need to create an atmosphere here for bringing out the best in people.

Sadly many people in Tasmania have an inferiority complex, 'Oh, you are from Tasmania - little Tasmania'. Even the media on the mainland takes great delight in knocking and rubbishing our State. This has got to the people in this State who do feel inferior; they are all timid about it. I was talking to somebody on the weekend in Melbourne who had just come from Tasmania. I was asked, 'How is the weather down there?' I said to her, 'Excuse me, do you know what the temperature is in Melbourne today?' She said 'No.' I said, 'It is 9 degrees; it is wet; it is damp and it is cold.' She is an ex-Tasmanian. That is one example. We are always knocking the weather. But our climate is better than Canberra's; it is better than Melbourne's; it is better than in

parts of America; it is better than in parts of Europe. It is a good climate and yet we continually knock it. There is an inferiority complex about 'poor little Tassy'. There was a young lady from Tasmania who recently obtained a job in a Melbourne television station and because she made a boo-boo on her first night on television the media said, 'What else can you expect? She came from Tasmania.'

I guess the only area where Tasmanians are recognised is on the football field. But we do have people with great abilities, gifts and talents. We are not an inferior, second-class group of people. History does show that men and women from this State have made a contribution not only to this State but to the nation and also to mankind. It strikes me when I go to other States how fiercely loyal they are. Consider Western Australia versus the east. Queensland is one-eyed. It is about time we developed that in this State as well and became a little biased towards our own State. Let us be proud of what we have to offer.

It has to start with us, honourable members; we have to bring that message out. We have to start at the top; we also have to start at the bottom in our schools. I can remember the day when I was at primary school on the north-west coast of Tasmania. Every Monday morning we would salute the flag, 'I love this country; I honour its flag.' We need to develop that in our schools. Perhaps we need to encourage our children to sing 'Advance Australia Fair'. The other morning I was awakened at 2 o'clock by my young daughter singing 'Advance Australia Fair' in her sleep. She is four years old and she had heard it at school. We need to develop this within our schools.

There was a recent computer survey which showed that Tasmania was the safest place in the world to live. I guess that is the reason why people are coming to this State to live. Do not take any notice of what was said on the media recently that it is four to one - four out and one in. That is garbage. I can substantiate from facts that there are people coming to this State from Melbourne, from Sydney, from Queensland and from overseas. But we do not hear the good news, do we?

I talked to the media a few weeks ago about the fact that a waterfront property in Blackmans Bay was sold to an English couple living in Portugal who were selling up their property to come and live in Hobart. They paid over \$110 000 for the property. I rang the media but it was not reported although it was good news. The property sold and new money was coming into the State, but it was not good enough news to report in the media.

It is time we believed in ourselves. It is time we breathed more life and activity into our State and it is time we stopped knocking our State. Let us start pointing out the virtues and the benefits of this State. We have to inject confidence back into our people. I am not just talking idealism; I am also realistic to know that distrust, fear of the future and a steadily worsening struggle to live, rob an entire community of the optimistic belief in a better future - a belief which built this country and for which men and women went to war. I believe the real issues affecting us today are the improvements of living standards and the quality of our lives. And some of these issues and the pressures and the problems associated with them can be relieved by a sincere, humane, compassionate government, which puts the condition of people first.

I listened with great interest to the honourable member for Cornwall when he spoke of the parliamentary institution. We do have to restore public faith in the parliamentary institution. Whether one wants to admit it or not the image of Parliament is tarnished, and I believe it is incumbent upon this House to tell the people of Tasmania about the positive things that this House does - its roles, functions and achievements. It is quite evident to me that this is a House of dignity. It is evident there is a great deal of good, healthy debate, free from personal vindictiveness and judgments and aspersions on fellow members; there is a respect for one another here. But the people out there do not know that. And, with respect, if I can say this, Mr President, we have a communication problem and that is one of the problems I would like to refer to the honourable member for Cornwall. In every inter-relationship, communication is the key - the relationship between man and wife, between boss and employee, and between parents and children. If I have not seen my wife for a few weeks, she gets awfully upset - when communication breaks down there are problems.

I think one problem here is that we have not communicated effectively to the masses out there about what this particular House does. Maybe - and I have heard it said by people - the media do not give this House any coverage. Well, I do not believe the other House has a mortgage on the media and maybe we need to tell it to print some of the good things we do here - and there are other ways, too, which I will not go into now, which can resolve this problem. We do need to tell people, to communicate to our fellow Tasmanians what this House does, and maybe also to initiate positive leadership-type statements under the signature of our President, which will build up confidence in this State. We need to lead by example.

Talking about the media, I believe it must also make a contribution to the positive welfare of this State. As I said earlier, it is not just up to the Government or the Parliament to make things happen in this State. I believe that in some cases the media does very little to build up confidence and edify the Tasmanian people. I believe some of the media have little respect for positions of high office. Whatever one might say about the former Premier, I saw an ABC 'Nationwide' program and the blatant disrespect shown to that person that night was disgusting. One can think what one likes about the person but I believe he still held an office and that needed to be shown respect.

The media, whether we like it or not, is a dangerous force which manipulates the minds of people and of the masses - and it can make or break governments. Sometimes - and I say sometimes - reporting is not factual; sometimes reporting by journalists is an individual impression about a fact they heard or about a particular event which is often flavoured and coloured with their own bias and, sadly enough, I have watched television programs which seem to delight in setting people against people. Unless it is sensational or dramatic, one does not hear anything. I believe the media can play a positive role in building up this State and its people.

What about business and commerce? I believe they can also play their part in building up this State. The Government should not do it simply by itself. I am aware of the struggles of the small businesses, with the high interest rates and the pay-roll tax, but I believe that in some cases small businesses have self-destructed by adopting a negative outlook. I can name a couple of businesses which because they were so busy recently listening to all the negative things in the community, think they had better get into their shells, do nothing and not advertise any more. I was talking to the well-known proprietor of one particular business house which is sitting on assets of \$1 million. I said to him to forget about it, shut his ears off, spend some money on radio, newspaper and television and start telling people about the product he is offering, and he did that. In the next two weeks he had a fantastic time and I see him smiling now. In quite a number of instances people have started listening to too many negative comments and have allowed themselves to be put into a shell. They are not doing; they are not creating, getting up and making it happen. And they can; it is an attitude of the heart and mind.

I also believe some of the bigger mainland controlled businesses could do a lot more for this State. Many of the big businesses have reaped a harvest of good profit from this State - and that is their right; I do not deny anybody the right to make a profit, which is not a dirty word with me. But I believe profit must also be accompanied by social and moral responsibility to the community. In my opinion some of the bigger organisations which are mainland controlled could employ more people without affecting their profitability at all. How often do honourable members go to the major retail outlets and find there is nobody there to serve them? If one cannot get service one walks out of the shop. How often does it happen? I am an easy person to sell to. If I go to a shop and there is somebody there to tell me about what I want, I will buy. But if there is nobody on the floor I will walk out. I believe that business and commerce can also make a greater contribution to this State.

Tourism is one of our great industries. Again, I believe we need to educate our Tasmanian people from childhood to believe that tourism is important to our State and to make sure there is always a warm welcome for people coming in. Even there, parts of the industry have got a great deal to learn. Recently my wife and I wanted to go out to Sunday lunch at a restaurant in Hobart. We went to seven restaurants and they were all closed. We ended up getting a pizza down the road. What do tourists do when they want to go out for Sunday lunch? What good is that?

Concerning tourist signposts - I love this State and I love travelling around but, boy I often get lost. One simply cannot find the way. When I tackle the people who have the little museum down the Huon or whatever, they say that they are not allowed to put signs up. This is an area that needs to be looked at. I believe tourists need to be able to find the places and areas of interest.

I mentioned to the media this week that I believed the Government needed a facilitator. One interpretation of that was an expert and another was an official, but I meant a facilitator - a person business enterprises can come to for help in developing or investing in Tasmania. I believe this would be a great thing. I read with interest an article by Keith Pybus, the man who created the successful Rutherglen resort. Medals should be struck for people like Keith Pybus, Roger Smith and Alistair Matherson. They are great people and we need them in this State. Keith Pybus spoke in his article about petty jealousy by State government officials hindering the development of Tasmanian tourism. He also says that people think that developers or millionaires are fair game. They fail to realise that they are businessmen who are taking risks. He then talked about the fact that in Queensland one department handles all the planning of developments in that State. That is written by a person who is in the field.

I believe we need to market our State better. I was fortunate enough to go to America late last year and I took with me 40 publications - 20 copies of a book by one of the government departments, which is an excellent publication, and 20 other books, 'Discover Tasmania'. It was a great delight for me to hand those out wherever I went. I believe every Tasmanian leaving this State by rail, by sea or by air needs some publications to take with him. If people go to the mainland or overseas they should be given a publication to give out to friends or to people they meet. That is a good way of publicising this State. It is interesting that the honourable member for Pembroke said that people did not know there was a link-up between New Zealand and Tasmania. I found the same thing in America. People did not realise that they could travel from New Zealand or vice versa. We need positive action to bring tourists here who otherwise would not come here. I believe imaginative self-help with the Government onside would tap the creative initiatives which are latent in the Tasmanian people.

Mr President, I believe the Tasmanian people have a great deal of goodwill, energy, a sense of fair play, enthusiasm and a desire to move ahead. These attributes need to find expression. We should strive to remove the disadvantages which make people around the State feel they suffer, particularly in transportation. Tasmania has its own strength and its own distinctive character which can be developed with government, trade unions, business, commerce, the media, and the community working together, hand in hand. Then we will have the pride and satisfaction that will come from standing more on our feet and making the most of the unique resources at our disposal.

I thank you, Mr President, and members for giving me this opportunity to speak without interjection.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr P.C.L. HODGMAN (Huon - Deputy Leader for the Government) - Mr President, the honourable member said that he did not have any interjections. I defy anyone to get a word in to make an interjection. I thought his speech was delivered in a most forceful and capable way. He certainly has brought a blast of excitement to your Council and I believe he will be a great contributor. I agreed with much of what he said although there were some areas where I disagreed. I would like to develop those at a later stage. With that in mind, I move -

That the debate be adjourned.

Debate adjourned.