

I believe the overwhelming desire of the Tasmanian people is for a government of men and women of vision, principle, purpose and ability who are able to lead, capable of reforming society and willing to use their wide range of talents for the benefit of this State. The challenge to this Government, so strong in numbers and youth, is to meet that need, to provide the Tasmanian people with practical solutions to the difficulties of our time, and to inspire them with hope for the future, and Mr. Speaker, we accept the challenge.

Mr ADAMS (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to second the motion moved by my colleague, the honourable member for Bass, Mrs Willey, that the Address-in-Reply be presented to His Excellency the Governor.

I join her in expressing loyalty to Her Majesty and in thanking His Excellency for the speech he addressed to both Houses of this Parliament in which he so clearly outlined the progressive policies of this Government.

Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate you on your election to that high office. In this Address-in-Reply I wish to speak on two matters. One concerns industrial relations and the problems that conservative governments are causing in this area. I will also deal with the meat industry in Tasmania and some of the problems with which it is faced.

Firstly I wish to say that the people of Tasmania returned a stable, moderate, experienced and progressive government. In Australia today the old pastime of conservative forces is being revived. It is the pastime of union-bashing - blaming the trade union movement of Australia for all the ills of our society, and for all our economic and social problems. The conservative forces blame the unions for inflation, for lack of growth in manufacturing industry, for the fact that companies are not buying raw materials and manufacturing them into goods. They say the social problems of unemployment are caused by the trade union movement and not by conservative politicians. However disagreements between labour and capital will not be solved by governments' blatantly legislating for division, passing laws that will, if in force, cause division between trade unions, governments and employers. These laws are being made in Queensland; they have been enforced in Western Australia; and the Federal Government has enacted these laws.

These governments claim these laws are industrial relations legislation. They have nothing to do with industrial relations! They have nothing to do with solving problems between workers and management and between workers and governments. The sole purpose of these laws is to try to win elections. When the conservative forces of this State consider any particular dispute they should think about the contribution being made to enlarge the divisions between unions, employers and governments by their conservative friends. Industrial relations is a sensitive and emotional area. Enacting laws which divide for the sole purpose of winning elections shows that these people's priorities are not to put Australia first but to aid their own self-preservation no matter what the cost. In New South Wales and South Australia, the governments have close ties through their parties with the trade union movement. In this State we also have a government which will work with the trade union movement and the Employers Federation for the benefit of the State and will not be legislating to divide the community.

The meat industry in Tasmania has some problems which are even contributing to the price of meat. The biggest problem is the loss of livestock from this State to the mainland for slaughter. The stock farmers of this State are now gaining, like farmers in other parts of this country, a fair return for their labour and capital through increased prices for their livestock. The large shipments of livestock from Tasmania and Australia to the Middle East countries, to meet these countries' demand for protein, have created a great shortage of sheep in Australia and indirectly forced up the price of meat. Approximately 5 million live sheep were exported from Australia in 1978. That must leave a gap in the Australian sheep flock. The problem that Tasmanian meat processors are now faced with is the difficult task of trying to keep their plants viable and their skilled workforce intact with the big reduction in the number of stock available for slaughter. There are enough plants and skilled workers to process all the stock that we can produce but over the last two years no plant in this State has operated at full capacity. If plants were to close and the workforce dispersed, there would be, besides the social problems that this would create for those people

retrenched, far more serious problems. The farmers of Tasmania would, if these plants closed, be in a difficult situation in years to come. When stock numbers increased to the point where another plant was needed to process the amount of stock coming forward for slaughter, there would be no plants available and no skilled workforce. The price of livestock would fall through over-supply, thus lowering farmers' incomes.

At the present time the problem of shortage of livestock in Tasmania is being magnified by a scheme designed to benefit Tasmania. It does so in all areas other than the meat industry. I speak, of course, of the freight equalisation scheme which is a good scheme overall. It is of great benefit to most Tasmanian industries but its clauses dealing with the transport of meat on the hoof and on the hook need rectifying. To maintain the viability of this valued industry and to keep the skilled workforce in Tasmania there must be modifications so that the costs of transporting carcass meat to the mainland are equal to the cost of transporting livestock. The difference which exists at the moment has caused much stock to be bought by mainland buyers and taken to Melbourne for slaughter. This is of no benefit to Tasmania or to the workers in the meat industry.

Some people argue for the continued flow of stock from Tasmania by saying that the Constitution of Australia gives the right of free trade between the States. And so it does. If we had free trade that argument would be sound and would help counter the stock going out. But there is, of course, no such free trade at the moment. We could say that the Constitution is being breached. The quarantine restrictions placed on bringing livestock into Tasmania are very stringent with stock spending approximately two months in quarantine. The freight equalisation problem can only be rectified by the Federal Government. The State Government is doing its part to rectify the problem. It will be bringing in legislation to help save employment in the meat industry and will, in the long term, keep farmers' incomes at a viable level. I hope that the Tasmanian Federal members do their bit to protect the jobs in Tasmania and to stabilise meat prices and keep farmers' incomes viable in the long term.

Debate adjourned.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Mr LOWE (Franklin - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I turn to the appointment of various standing and sessional committees. Because of events that all honourable members are no doubt aware of, there are doubts about one of the listed nominees on two of those committees - the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Printing Committee. But it would be appropriate for the other committees to be appointed.

Mr MATHER (Denison) - Mr Speaker, could I ask the honourable Premier what his proposal is in relation to the other two committees. Is he proposing to appoint such members as may be able to act?

Mr LOWE - The situation is that I want to clarify Mr Aird's position. If he is not able to accept nomination, it will be necessary to provide an alternative. That should be done in time for tomorrow's sitting.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The following members were appointed to standing committees:

Public Works Committee

Mr Adams, Mrs James and Mr Braid.

Subordinate Legislation Committee

Mr Green, Mrs Willey and Mr Baker.

Privileges Committee

Mr Speaker, Mr Lowe, Mr Holgate, Mr Pearsall and Mr Gray.