

RACING AND GAMING AMENDMENT BILL 1986

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Gray and read the first time.

NORTHERN CASINO AMENDMENT BILL 1986

WREST POINT CASINO LICENCE AND DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 1986

First Reading

Bills presented by Mr Pearsall and read the first time.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE AMENDMENT BILL 1986

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Bennett and read the first time.

PODIATRISTS REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 1986

MEDICAL AMENDMENT BILL 1986

POISONS AMENDMENT BILL 1986

First Reading

Bills presented by Mr Roger Groom and read the first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from Wednesday 12 March 1986 (page 68)

Mr WHITE (Denison) - Last Wednesday sitting in the Legislative Council at the opening of the parliamentary session and listening to the Governor's speech, I noted his comments and with your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to quote from page 2:

'My Government is prisoner to no dogma, bound to no sectional interest, servant to none but the Tasmanian people. Its overriding commitment is to be a government for all Tasmanians no matter where they live, no matter what their politics; and it will be first and foremost a Tasmanian government, putting the interests of Tasmania and Tasmanians first at all times.

In approaching its task my Government will again be seeking the cooperation of all sections of the Tasmanian community so that by working together all Tasmanians can share in the benefits of a stronger, more secure, more self-reliant Tasmania.'

I wish to accept the invitation to cooperate and I will raise some ideas - both practical and fanciful - for consideration by the Government, possibly for implementation during the term of this Parliament. I invite the Government to implement them and if it does not, I hope to be able to do so myself in the term of the next Government.

I want to raise these matters in the way in which I understand from precedent first speeches should be made: in a non-provocative and inoffensive manner. The areas I wish to canvass are a combination of my shadow responsibilities and also my personal interests. I make no excuses for the fact that there is no costing, very little detail

and that I am uncertain how best to implement some of the ideas. Also it is possible that some of the suggestions may already be either under way or planned for this parliamentary term. But be that as it may.

Firstly I want to deal with the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery with which - as members of the past Cabinet will no doubt remember - I was for a while closely involved. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is not separate from the complex of organisations which comprise our information and communications industry. It is an integral part of that complex. In fact museums are the primary source of all information about our physical environment and cultural history.

Like its counterparts in other States, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery cannot stand aside from the revolution occurring in the rest of the information and communications industry. Methods of collecting, preserving, curating, researching and educating must keep pace with changing technologies in other sectors. This means the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery must have access to adequate space, modern equipment and skills.

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has an obligation to provide Tasmanians with the opportunity to share in the cultural and physical heritage of Australia and the world. The art gallery's collection of Australian paintings is a glaring example of how inadequately this obligation is being met, as opposed to the Tasmanian colonial collection which is of world class. At the same time the value of some of the collections held by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery - not only for Tasmanians in particular but also for Australians generally - is becoming more obvious as time goes by. Items in the anthropology collection once regarded as curios, particularly in relation to the south sea island nations - who now want them back - are, with developing awareness and more educated perspectives, assuming a much more important role in the story of human civilisation.

Funding is urgently needed to provide the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery with proper collection, storage, preparation, display and research space, facilities and expertise. I do not make a criticism of the present Government in relation to the lack of funding; it is a matter that has gone on for a long period.

For many years the trustees and interested members of the Tasmanian community have expressed concern about the financial position of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. During the past decade, major museum buildings in all States have been renovated, remodelled and fitted out with modern storage, curatorial and display facilities. In many cases, major new art galleries and museums have been built. This has heralded a spirit of optimism from museums and art galleries around Australia. This renewal must also take place in Tasmania, both for the sake of Tasmanians and for other Australians on whose behalf we hold important, often unique, collections. In common with other State museums and galleries, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's function is to collect, safeguard, display and study physical evidence of the natural and man-made heritage of Tasmania - together with relevant material from beyond the State - for the education and enjoyment of the public.

As we are all probably aware, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is the second oldest museum in Australia. It was founded by the Royal Society of Tasmania and its first building was completed in 1863. It was handed over to the Tasmanian Government in 1885 and is still housed in the original building. In fact the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery houses the principal State collections of art, decorative arts, crafts, history, anthropology, applied science, coins, geology, invertebrate and vertebrate zoology and botany. It is recognised as one of the thirteen major museums and art galleries in Australia and consequently becomes a provincial museum and art gallery of note in a world sense.

One of the problems we have in our community is that we simply do not appreciate the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for the gem it is. Some of its collections - including colonial art, elements of zoology, botany, decorative arts, history and anthropology - are unique and unequalled. They cannot be valued in monetary terms; in

fact, some of the collections are beyond price today. Simply for security reasons, it is not a matter spoken of widely by the museum people themselves, but those collections are priceless. Every year some 110 000 to 120 000 people visit the museum; that is equivalent to a quarter of the State's population. Displays are also toured to some 20 000 school children each year and the Trustees of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery also administer what is one of the important minor museums in Australia today - the West Coast Pioneers Memorial Museum at Zeehan.

Within the present limited resources the curatorial staff are carrying out important research on items in Tasmania's unique collections, providing facilities for local, national and international research projects and exchanging information with other public organisations on important applied research projects.

Because of Tasmania's unique physical environment and human heritage, the State's museum and art gallery has inherited heavy responsibilities. Tasmania's physical makeup and its flora and fauna are distinctly different from the rest of Australia and the world. Whilst it has parallels with the early history of New South Wales, its colonial history still plays a distinctive role in the story of Australia's growth. The State's Aboriginal population and its pre and post-European settlement cultures are equally distinctive.

These circumstances conspire to impose upon the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery a significant national - and more importantly, an international - role. Many of its collections are unique and internationally important, while others potentially just as important can be satisfactorily completed and curated only in Tasmania. Most suffer from lack of proper preservation and storage, insufficient research and accessibility, and inadequate display facilities.

The art gallery has one of the largest and finest collections of colonial art in Australia, but its collection of Australian art from the Heidelberg impressionists to the present day is one of the poorest in any Australian gallery.

The State's craftspeople - many of them amongst the most significant in Australia - are virtually neglected.

The history department has relied for years on casual gifts of clothing, furniture and other artefacts and has never had sufficient funds to consolidate what should be an internationally significant collection of colonial artefacts.

The botany department has succeeded in surveying only 50 per cent of the State's flora and an estimated one-third of Tasmania's higher plants remain unrecorded.

The art gallery has more than 50 per cent of its collection in storage in offices - some here at Parliament House - in passageways, stairwells and in fact in any place where paintings can be 'safely placed'. The department's storage areas are not accessible to large paintings or sculptures.

Facilities for the storage of large vertebrate zoology specimens are unworkable and pose a health hazard to staff. Valuable invertebrate zoology type specimens are stored in a strongroom which is subject to damp and occasional flooding.

The history collection is inadequately housed. It includes some 31 000 photographs and some of the first photographs ever taken in Australia, which are irreplaceable and in danger.

None of the museum's departments have adequate preparation space. There is no store for general equipment - lifting gear, display cases, panels and so on - and the museum workshop is totally inadequate. These shortcomings are particularly critical for the art gallery where visiting and other temporary exhibitions are staged with more frequency.

There is also an urgent need for skilled curators in many areas. The museum and art gallery has important collections of clothing, furniture and photographs which are deteriorating through lack of appropriate curators. The art gallery's unique collection

of colonial drawings, prints and watercolours has deteriorated through lack of a paper conservator. However there is one advantage to the print and watercolour collection: the inability to display the paintings has meant they have simply been placed in storage and have not suffered to the extent that they may have if they had been displayed and received no curatorial attention.

There is no curator of education to underpin what should be the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's aggressive role in servicing the educational needs of the general community. All departments lack adequate curatorial assistance. Zoology has a particular problem because of its specimens which are perishable and must be preserved as they are collected.

On the mainland the number of curators varies between four and ten and support staff from four to nineteen. In Tasmania, by contrast, there is one curator of invertebrates and one curator of vertebrates and they share a single assistant. The present curator of invertebrate zoology is the Australian authority on one suborder of invertebrates but has no time to undertake personal research work.

Botany has one curator to deal with the whole plant kingdom, from algae and fungi through mosses and ferns to the flowering plants. This means there is no identification service for the lower plants - for example, mushrooms and toadstools - and no capacity to carry out in-depth environmental impact studies. Technical staff cannot keep pace with current acquisitions.

Some geology and history displays have not been substantially altered since the mid-1950s. Anthropology, applied science, crafts and decorative arts are unable to mount satisfactory displays through lack of space. Botany has no public display at all.

Space is not the only problem. Updated display cases and other equipment are urgently needed. The nineteenth century presentation techniques cannot compete with those of other communications media in the 1980s.

Gallery lighting is archaic and the absence of modern ceiling fixtures to control space by the use of flexible screens and lighting prevents the museum from varying displays with any frequency and from making them interesting.

A more critical problem relates to the lack of proper air-conditioning to control humidity. This poses a real threat to the preservation of some of the museum's own collections. It also imposes strict limits on the range of major touring exhibitions the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery can accept. In the past ten years Tasmania has been denied at least eight major touring exhibitions because its facilities were inadequate: the Chinese Exhibition of 1977; Master Drawings of Albertina, 1977; El Dorado - Columbia Gold, 1978; USSR - Old Master Paintings, 1979; Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Century of Genius, 1980; Chinese Paintings of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, 1981-82; Leonardo - Anatomical Drawings from Windsor, 1982; and Japanese masterpieces from the Idemitsu Collection, 1983.

One of my very major recommendations to the Government would be a separate start on a State art gallery - to be called, for example, the 'Art Gallery of Tasmania' - to signify the art and artists of Tasmania, past, present and future, through its permanent collection. The gallery should be well appointed, staffed and funded to an international standard. This would free space and revitalise the Tasmanian museum by emphasising its other collections. Without an art gallery we lack the focus for art in Tasmania which is so obvious in other State capital cities.

Recently I had the privilege of visiting the Queensland Museum and the Queensland Art Gallery. The art gallery is a separate complex built at some major cost to the Queensland Government - and with respect I do not believe the Queensland Government has the reputation for appreciating art that we have in Tasmania. It has built a magnificent art gallery but it is interesting in that one of the features of the gallery is a large indoor watercourse. It is wonderful to look at but it has created major problems for the curators of the paintings within the gallery because of humidity. In other words, one of the problems with creating new art galleries is that, while the ideas might be good at the time, experience frequently shows that some of the innovations do not necessarily work.

I believe that the art gallery of Tasmania should be created immediately in a new building not necessarily built as new but on a site that is either hired, rented or taken over - a revamped building - somewhere in the Sullivans Cove area. There are places of note; for example, the Elizabeth Street Pier or the City Hall. Once the gallery has been set up and has been working for a period, we should then set about the process of building a new art gallery. There are sites available within Sullivans Cove; for example, the Montpelier Retreat site overlooking the cove. I believe that once the gallery is set up and working we can then take the experience of the people running it to be the basis of the new State art gallery. This will attract the local public and especially tourists and visitors. It will also provide us with a collection of Tasmanian art to go into the future.

We are very proud of the colonial collection and that is a freak of nature, as far as it was simply collected as the art of the time - it was the modern art of the day. Because it was so thoroughly collected in Tasmania it is now a unique collection. I believe that we should be creating a unique collection for the future by purchasing and hanging paintings by Australian artists and, in particular, Tasmanian artists.

I do not make any attempt to say how it should be costed but I believe consideration should be given perhaps to some form of art lottery or increasing the taxation at the Wrest Point Casino. I do not endeavour to detail the way whatsoever but I believe our nineteenth century legacy is of great importance, not only to us as a community but it is also a great attraction. Like our classified buildings, the art of Glover, Bock, Bull and Pignuenit cannot be underestimated. It has certainly been under-utilised in promoting the State, and its attraction is like the Tasmanian people and its landscape - it is in fact unique.

Whilst dealing with the collecting of items, I believe a Tasmanian heritage fund should be created to which bodies such as the Tasmanian museum, the proposed art gallery of Tasmania and the National Trust can apply to purchase works of art, buildings, and objects of historical or scientific value to the State to be maintained in the State.

There should be a Tasmanian travelling arts scholarship for artists resident in the State to live and work overseas for, say, twelve months. It should be provided annually or biannually. The scholarship should cover visual artists, musicians, composers, singers, authors, poets, dramatists, actors, scientists or any other Tasmanians, with a unique facility that can be assisted by travelling overseas.

There should be a Tasmanian art bank, a separate fund set up to purchase the work of Tasmanian artists for Tasmanian public buildings which should be additional to the art for new public buildings program and should eventually replace it. That would mean there would be a collection of paintings to be hung in Parliament House, Government House, ministers' offices and, most importantly, backbenchers' offices. I do not know how many of us sit and look at bare walls if we do not provide our own artwork.

We also should recognise our own artists and encourage and support annual lectures in honour of important Tasmanian artists in visual arts, music and literature by encouraging important overseas and interstate identities to visit Tasmania and lecture at places such as the Tasmanian museum, the conservatorium or the university. There should be a Tasmanian exhibition fund for visual arts to attract and encourage major exhibitions not normally made available to public institutions - for example, from overseas and other Australian States - and to encourage major important Tasmanian exhibitions to travel outside our State.

The general principle which I think should be applied is one which has been used frequently in public debate, and that is Tasmania as a centre of excellence. In relation to music we cannot compete in every field with the quantity of support that there is in other States but we should be encouraging and financing areas of excellence and quality which are unique to Tasmania. The community at large should be encouraged to ensure that selected areas of expertise are developed with specific emphasis on what is unique to Tasmania and important to the nation. One example is the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra which is of national importance and a cornerstone of Tasmanian music. It was originally

financed by a £5 000 grant in 1949 which was increased to £6 000 in 1955. It is now an orchestra of world standard and national importance. It has a budget of \$1.2 million annually of which \$60 000, or 2 per cent, is provided by the Tasmanian Government. Other States contribute between 8 per cent and 11 per cent for their orchestras.

Further, I believe a music bowl concept should be developed within the State with private enterprise funding, along the lines of the Sidney Myer Music Bowl in Melbourne, for outdoor concerts of all types - from pop, punk through to classical.

I was very impressed when Premier Don Dunstan in South Australia reported to the South Australian Parliament concerning the fiasco which took place in relation to the first Arts Festival in South Australia. The press comment at the time was that the Government would be defeated over it. The Arts Festival had lost \$2 million. Premier Dunstan simply said, 'We have done this; we have achieved that. It has cost us \$2 million and next year it will be better than ever.' Who now would dare question the cost of the Arts Festival to South Australia?

I believe the problem of theatre in Tasmania is more complex than the simple criticism being made that the theatre has simply lost its audience. In particular the Theatre Royal's function, I think, should be effectively divided into a number of categories, with the State Government taking over a landlord role in relation to the theatre itself, treating it in the same way as it does a school or hospital and carrying the costs of that particular building, the fabric, the rates, the insurance and so on. That should be separated from an entrepreneurial role; it should be a small professional theatre company which combines both interstate and local actors along with amateur actors. There should be an essentially local program employing local people and there should be encouragement of alternative theatre. It is said that the only way to gain a full theatre today in Tasmania is to have the vice squad attempt to close it.

Specifically, there should be a theatre centre around the Theatre Royal which includes a new theatre containing some 200 seats and there should be a similar theatre built in Launceston, again holding approximately 200 seats. Further, there should be a full-time local theatre company with a professional base, incorporating local and amateur artists to travel not only to these two small theatres, but also to go on a second theatre circuit to the smaller venues in Tasmania. That means that there should be extensive regional touring to each and every town of any size in Tasmania which can support a hall and these halls should be raised to the standard which will allow a touring professional company to play there.

There should be continuation of the developing of the Theatre Royal complex to exploit its tourism and entertainment potential. This should take into account that there is a Theatre Royal Hotel next door to the theatre, there is 'the Shades' - the area underneath the theatre - and there is the area around the theatre which should be developed.

I do not wish to go into tourism to any extent today because I have not had the privilege of reading the report which was tabled by the minister some few moments ago. But by way of anecdote, I would like to refer briefly to an incident which happened to me in a northern town during a Senate campaign a couple of years ago when I went to a café for a meal. I arrived at the same time as a bus load of tourists; we all walked in and sat down, and every seat in the café was taken. The waitress was placed under some pressure and she came to the table where I was sitting and asked, 'What are you, hot or cold?' I queried the question and was again asked rather tersely, 'What are you, hot or cold?' Everybody at the table was amazed. We sat there overawed by the intensity of this young lady and the pressure she displayed. And, very tight-lipped, she said, 'Listen, mate, lamb and beef are 'ot, chicken and salad are cold. Now what is it?' Now, if the people at the table had not laughed and taken it in a pleasant manner, they could have been offended. I believe that sort of person - a person waiting part time in cafés or whatever - is a very important aspect of the tourist industry. They represent the front line. If a bad response is elicited from there, people go home and say, 'Tasmania wasn't bad, but this happened; this was bad'. They report it to others and we lose the flow-on effect that should result from effective tourism at that level.

I would like to see Drysdale House extended to the north with subsidies for food and beverage courses and in particular part-time staff training subsidised throughout the State. Also I believe assistance should be given to training people who work in hotels throughout the State. If one is not a person who regularly goes to hotels and who looks for a counter lunch, the hotels have a system of taking numbers which are then shouted to the kitchens - especially in country hotels - and at some stage a meal arrives which is then brought to the diner by the waitress or the waiter shouting a number. I believe that it is not the most impressive of methods of getting a meal, and if it were used here in Parliament House it would be very quickly brought to an end.

One of the most important tourist aspects of the State is Sullivans Cove, and I want to touch very briefly on it because a number of points in relation to it cause me some concern. It exists today because of the fight that went on over a period to save Battery Point and Salamanca Place in particular as historic areas. The campaign was carried through mainly by local residents who recognised their importance but it was only with some luck that those areas were preserved. Originally Battery Point was planned to be demolished. The Hobart City Council had a plan that would put a major road through the Kirksway Place extension, meeting Runnymede Street outside Lenna hotel. Then there was to be a large T-junction with a large supermarket in the area of Kelly Street and the Prince of Wales Hotel and a major highway to proceed through Battery Point, down the Napoleon Street hill and joining Marieville Esplanade.

I believe the role of the Hobart City Council causes concern. Originally Hobart had the finest examples of Georgian sandstone architecture in the Southern Hemisphere and now very little is left. Lip service is now being paid in relation to our historic areas, which are to some degree the basis for tourists' coming to Tasmania.

Salamanca Place was preserved within the Battery Point planning scheme and the Jones and Co. building was purchased by a State Labor government following a campaign which I ran in 1977. I do not wish to claim credit for the Government's purchasing the Jones and Co. building, nor do I wish to claim credit for the preservation of Battery Point and Salamanca Place, but I do want to say that these areas are unique to Tasmania and they must be given priority of preservation or tourists will come to Tasmania and there will be very little for them to see. Frequently tourists get into the middle of Battery Point, to Arthurs Circus, and say, 'Well, where is it? Where is the rest of it?' Within a short distance of Arthurs Circus, Battery Point as a historic village zone does not exist.

There is criticism of the silos. The silos are an interesting subject. They were built in the 1950s to prevent Tasmanians being held to ransom by the Waterside Workers Federation, a very militant union. In those days bagged wheat was unloaded from the ships by waterside workers. With the advent of bulk carrying, the silos were considered to be an integral part of the State's economy with the important task of providing wheat and bread for the citizens of southern Tasmania, because Tasmania was the only State in Australia which imported wheat.

It has now been proposed that the silos should be removed or, alternatively - during the height of the tourist season, or on Saturday nights during the summer - have a light show so that beer-can labels can be displayed on them, or be painted with a fantasy concept - dragons, fairies or whatever. I believe if we allow our imaginations to run riot, a number of things could be done to add status, dignity and substance to what exists in Tasmania today as a tourist industry.

In finishing, I will refer very briefly to a comment made by the member for Braddon, Mr Rundle, in relation to roll-on roll-off ferries. He said he would do his best to endeavour to keep them in Devonport. I would like to remind him that the person responsible for placing the roll-on roll-off ferries in Devonport was a previous minister for shipping by the name of Alf White. He was a member of this House from 1942 until his retirement in 1959. He went on an overseas trip in 1955, saw the roll-on roll-off ferries and got a copy of the plans from British Rail, which was using what was then a unique form of shipping between France and England. He obtained a copy of those plans, returned to Tasmania and spent five years trying to persuade the Federal Liberal

Menzies Government to finance the 'Princess of Tasmania'. It was based on the plans of a ship called the 'Lord Warden' and much criticism was directed at the then minister when he placed the 'Princess of Tasmania' into Devonport instead of Launceston. I also support Mr Rundle's intention to keep that ship going into Devonport.

I would like to mention one or two other ideas at random. An arrangement could be made between the owners of vintage boats in southern Tasmania and the Marine Board of Hobart for the vintage boats to be moored in either Constitution Dock or Victoria Dock to provide a little more atmosphere for tourists.

I do not wish to continue further. I appreciate the fact that for once in my life I have been given an audience which has not interjected or interrupted. I have said some things which are more important than others but in ending my first speech tonight - with respect, Mr Speaker - I draw your attention to the fact that I have used non-sexist language.

I support the motion.