



Jean Mary Moore

Legislative Council

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Electorate: Hobart

Mrs MOORE (Hobart) - Thank you, Mr President.

Mr President, with your leave I would like to take a few moments initially to acknowledge the compliments that have been paid to me over the past week. I would like to thank honourable members of the Council for their welcome and the support which has been given me since my election. I am impressed with the standard of debate and the independence of members and I hope I can emulate both.

Many honourable members would be aware that my concern and my career commitment has been to the provision of quality essential services - health, education and law and order - and it was on this platform that I was elected to the Council.

It is a truism to say that education is the future of our nation and over the years Tasmania has had a very high standard. It should be of concern to every individual in this State if those standards are diminished and in recent years we seem to have seen that happening. It is essential that we maintain educational opportunities in all the areas of remedial, pre-school, primary and secondary education and in our colleges and universities, and that cognisance is taken of the class sizes and contact hours. This is an area I intend to monitor very closely.

Mr President, law and order is yet another essential service with which I personally have had an affinity because of my very close association with the police, mainly through our emergency department at the Royal Hobart Hospital over the years. All too frequently the police are criticised because of a perceived lack of responsiveness to community needs when in fact it has nearly been 'mission impossible' to respond appropriately due to the reduction in the number of available officers. We should not underestimate the value of the work performed by members of our police force, yet I understand they have not had a pay rise since 1980 whereas their workload and responsibility have increased and their numbers have markedly decreased. This unfortunately appears to have been a deliberate agenda over the past few years and once again this will be an area I will be keeping under close scrutiny and I commend the current Government for its commitment to restore police numbers in this State.

In addressing the bill before the Council, Mr President, I will now speak to the health needs of the community. It was with great sadness and at times anger that I watched events unfold prior to the recent State election. I refer to

the 'Save the Royal' campaign and I would like honourable members to know, make no mistake, that this movement was spearheaded from the grassroots by busy, clinically-oriented people. For them to take the action they did was totally alien to these very dedicated and professional people and I believe that to see such a public plea for understanding by the staff at the Royal Hobart Hospital was an indictment on the minister and the Government of the day. For the then Minister for Health and his cabinet colleagues to fail to recognise the inadequacy of the Royal Hobart Hospital budget, despite advice, in my view was reprehensible and it left the State with an additional burden of debt to the tune of up to \$10 million or so.

Mr President, honourable members would be aware that the health services of this State have been bedevilled by parochialism over the years and I am happy to see that this very serious issue has been embraced by the current Minister for Health. I am referring of course to what is known as the Tasmanian Resource Allocation Model. This model of resource allocation is based on objective criteria such as population, age and sex distribution and so on and the resource allocation model also has to take into account those highly specialised services - such as neurosurgery, cardiology, neo-natal intensive care and so on which are provided by the Royal Hobart Hospital for all Tasmanians, regardless of where they live.

It was disappointing to see that the previous Government suspended this formula despite overwhelming evidence of the need for it to continue, and the result was the debacle at the Royal Hobart Hospital. It must be recognised in this economic climate that the Government cannot always be the sole provider of services and a spirit of cooperation with the private sector must be fostered so that each service provider can complement the other. In future I believe we will see more joint ventures between the private and the public sectors. This is good and it would lead to more efficiencies and enhance quality to see more completion in the marketplace. For example, cleaning and catering services should be put out to tender. However I believe the hospital departments should have the right to tender as well, and in this way we can truly achieve the most value for the taxpayers' dollar.

Another area which urgently needs to be addressed is that of duplication of services and functions between the Commonwealth and State governments. Is it really necessary for Canberra to adopt the watchdog role it does and to interfere in the affairs of this State to the extent it does? Canberra does not know what is best for Tasmania; only Tasmanians can truly address that issue and a particularly abysmal example of the treatment meted out by the Commonwealth to the State is the funding for aged care. Why is it that a State government-run nursing home attracts a subsidy of only \$27.80 a day, yet a Victorian State Labor government can attract \$48 a day. There is no equity or logic in that as far as one can see. The same nursing-home bed in the private sector can, I believe, attract up to \$90 a day.

Mr President, with regard to aged care in 1983 I attended an international hospitals conference at Lausanne and it was interesting to see that much of the information given then is still relevant today, and it is a sad indictment on

the system and how slowly we have progressed. In fact I would say that over the 1990-91 calendar year we have probably regressed. Papers were given from eleven different countries from around the world, and speakers presented different ideas and solutions, and the solutions that were suggested at the time were mainly to try to deal with the high cost of institutional care. The problems are similar throughout the world and it was agreed that the following actions should be taken. We should look to transferring hospital beds to geriatric or nursing home beds; that nursing-home beds should be provided with a more home-like atmosphere; that there should be an increase in home-care nursing services; that we should be looking more to collective housing with or without medical nursing support; and there should be a great deal of encouragement and commitment to families to assist in the provision of care.

How much of this have we achieved? Funding in real terms has been continually decreased in the acute hospital settings; nursing-home beds close without an adequate increase in health support services, and the discharge planning position at the Royal Hobart Hospital was made redundant by the then regional general manager. One aspect that is pleasing to see is that the health unions also recognise the plight of Tasmania in this inequitable funding situation and share the concern of the Government and all Tasmanians at the cavalier attitude of the Commonwealth in this matter.

While I am on the topic of unions, let me now speak for a few moments on industrial relations. Mr President and honourable members, as you are aware one of the cornerstones of good management is harmonious industrial relations, and today's managers must be socially sensitive as well as politically aware. In today's work environment it is essential to build relationships between managers and the work force, founded on trust and a common purpose. The culture of the organisation should be such that there is a vision; that workers can and will take responsibility for and pride in company efficiency; and that they can make a contribution, always remembering that morale is a state of faith, not a skill we are paid for.

Some employers seem to think they can demand respect from their employees. However, one always has to consider with power that the only real power managers have is not that which is conferred by the job; it is the power that is given by the staff, because it is the respect they have for the managers - for what they are, what they know and what they can achieve for them and the organisation. I think that is very interesting, considering current events in Tasmania.

Mr President, one story which has always aroused some special appeal for me relates to the case of a complacent businessman who, having delivered an after-dinner speech on an important public occasion, turned to his neighbour - who happened to be Oscar Wilde - and said to him, 'Tell me, how would you have given that speech?' Oscar is said to have replied, 'I think perhaps under an assumed name.'