



## Legislative Council

23/08/88

### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

#### Third Day's Debate

#### Extract

**The Hon. D. J. GAY** [3.34]: In reply to the Speech made by His Excellency, Sir James Anthony Rowland, and to the Address in Reply moved by the Hon. Max Willis and seconded by the Hon. John Jobling, may I first say how honoured I am to be elected to this great House. I am sure that, like many other honourable members, as a child I dreamed how simple it would be to make the world a better place. How easy it seemed then, and how much harder it is now that we are in a position to facilitate change. Yet I am sure that, along with all honourable members, I share this common challenge. We may travel on different paths, but our ultimate destination is to better the lot of the people of this State. We are helped in this challenge by the feeling of history and dignity which those who have preceded us have bestowed on this Parliament. The challenge of the future has seen many changes to this House in recent years. I am sure we will see many more as we head towards the year 2000.

My congratulations to the Hon. John Johnson on his re-election as President. In my limited time in this place I have come to know why he retains the respect of honourable members on both sides of this Chamber. My congratulations also to the Hon. Sir Adrian Solomons on his selection as Chairman of Committees and on the role he fulfils in this place as father of the House. In both cases it can be truly said that it is the person who makes the position, and not the position that makes the person.

To my party leader, the Hon. Bob Rowland Smith, thank you for your help, both before and after the election. My congratulations on your elevation to the Ministry and on the manner in which you are performing your ministerial tasks. The same feelings must also be expressed to the Leader of the Government in this House, the Hon. Ted Pickering, and our other distinguished Minister, the Hon. Virginia Chadwick. Thanks also to my party Whip, the Hon. Jack Doohan, and the Government Whip, the Hon. John Jobling, for their patience and help in sorting out the new boy.

At this stage I must thank my fellow members from both sides of the House—and I mean from both sides—who have gone out of their way to make me feel welcome. To the Clerk of the Parliaments, Mr Les Jeckin, and his staff and the attendants, for being so helpful and, on many occasions, patient with me and the other new members, thank you. To the House in total, my appreciation for granting the privileges associated with the making of a maiden speech. I hope I bring no disrespect upon them. My congratulations are extended to the Hon. Dr Marlene Goldsmith, the Hon. Paul O'Grady, the Hon. Ian McDonald, the Hon. Richard Jones, the Hon. Elaine Nile, and the Hon. Dr Brian Pezzutti, who have made their maiden speeches already. The quality of their speeches has left no doubt what a great contribution they will make to this House and to this State.

I am honoured to be numbered amongst this group. My only worry is to be able to match their high standards of mind and debate. From here, the bench-mark seems so unattainable. Those yet to make their maiden speeches, I am sure, will continue to show how worthy the new members of 1988 are. We must remember that this is the group that will be in the House at the year 2000, with the extra responsibilities that that will bring with it. The Liberal and National Party ticket was already a team before the election. On our many trips around the State we were moulded into a cohesive force. And we miss the members of that team who are not with us here in Parliament—yet they did as much as any one of us to deserve election. I refer, of course, to Michael Bames and Carol Raye.

One of the fine traditions of a maiden speech is that it sets in concrete one's general philosophy, for people to look back on during one's term in Parliament. In some ways that is good in showing us how we may have lost direction and in others it shows us how our perspective may have matured. My own overriding belief is that Government should reflect the views of the people whose franchise we all hold and most definitely not lead in the direction of our own philosophies. The lessons of history, of what happens

when governments do not reflect the true feelings of the people, should be acknowledged. Too often in the recent past we have seen social engineering performed in this State and in the Commonwealth. In some appalling cases we have had major changes to our society just to expedite a personal situation. Bearing this in mind, I am very pleased to find I have been placed on the social issues standing committee of this Council.

My belief in the family unit as the cornerstone of our society, I suppose, puts me very much on the traditional side. In this and in many other matters I sit very comfortably in my party, the National Party, in which I am also honoured to serve as State vice-chairman. In the area of economics I return very much to the origin of my party and could quite properly and proudly be described as an agrarian socialist. My fear is that the dry economists on the conservative side of politics have lost touch with the problems and aspirations of the people nearly as much as the Chardonnay socialists and the Bollinger Bolsheviks on the other side. In my own rationale I find it equally obnoxious for a person with a comfortable middle-class background to go straight from university to a high position in the trade union movement, never having actually worked as such, and then claim to represent the workers, as it is to see one large food chain be able to dominate the market in Australia. Even America, the so-called home of free enterprise, has proper anti-monopoly legislation.

During the Address-in-Reply debate the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. J. R. Hallam, managed to have comments incorporated in *Hansard* through interjection with which I strongly disagree. To be fair to him I shall not reply to him during my maiden speech. He may rest assured that my friend and colleague the Hon. R. T. M. Bull will take him to task. Though my ideals and beliefs will be very much on the right side of politics, if we are to put tags on everyone, I hope I can bring to this House much of the compassion that has been traditionally displayed by the left.

Along the way many people have unselfishly given of their time to advise, and to give encouragement and criticism, to help place me before the House today. Most importantly to my wife Kate and my children Anna and James I extend my thanks and this belief that it is not worth saving the world if it means losing your family along the way. To my parents, thank you for the sacrifices you have made for your children. Although we probably do not say it enough, we appreciate it. My sister Elaine and Kate's mother and family have been most supportive.

Many people in my party have helped me, but I must single out Robert Webster and his wife Libby. Their help and friendship have been critical. I should also like to thank Mrs Alison O'Brien, John Sharp and his wife Victoria, Senator David Brownhill and his wife Julia and Jenny Gardiner for their help and support. To our mates, the Fletts, the Mayos, the Carrs, the Tancreds, the Kellys, the Meckiffs, and the Savages, thanks for still remembering us and keeping us on the mailing list. Ken and Dick Kelly were two of the most respected men in my district. They encouraged me to enter politics. The only sad thought is that they and my wife's father, Bill Doolan, are no longer with us. I am sure many honourable members have heard me speak with pride of Crookwell, the area where I was born and still live. To the best of my knowledge I am the first person educated at Crookwell Rural School to be a member of any of the Australian Parliaments. I am sure I will not be the last.

In the broad areas of policy direction, as articulated by the coalition parties, I have three main areas of interest apart from my allocated areas in this Parliament. I have already mentioned social issues as the committee on which I am pleased to be serving. To this add decentralization, country roads and the very fast train—VFT—link between Sydney and Melbourne as my special areas of interest and commitment. The other areas of interest in which I am pleased to be serving on ministerial advisory committees and acting as party spokesman are environment, minerals and energy and tourism.

Decentralization or, as it is more properly described, de-urbanization is rightly one of the higher priorities of this Government. I am pleased that we seem to have matured from the approach that the only way we would stop people clinging to the eastern seaboard was to move whole government departments to rural areas. All that this managed to achieve was to transfer a group of very dissatisfied public servants from one part of the State to another. Of course, as soon as the opportunity presented itself they moved straight back to the city and their families and friends.

Instead of forcing people who do not want to live there into non- metropolitan areas of the State, we should look at the basis of the problem. This is, first, to stop the drift of young people from the country to the city. These young people are our greatest resource and we are not looking after them. We need to address the fact that they need education and employment potential in the country. They already have their families there, their friends and a desire to stay in the country. All we have to do is to give them proper training and work. To this end I was pleased to hear in the Governor's Speech that the Government is committed to ensuring that all children in rural areas will receive the same quality education as do those in the metropolitan area.

Business should not need huge grants to establish in country areas, but should be encouraged by the availability of comparatively cheap land and a stable work force. The problems of often unfair fuel, power and telephone costs in non-metropolitan areas must be properly addressed before any real progress can be made for new and existing country businesses. A Journalist at the *Goulburn Post*, Ray Williams, quite properly summed up the case to me, by maintaining we should more aggressively sell the positives about living and working in the country. For example, the fact that you are not more than ten minutes from work, which means in many cases you can go home for lunch and have more time with your family, the relatively cheap price of a house and land, and the fact that life is more relaxed and there is not as much crime and violence, are all positive reasons for people to move to country areas.

An organization I am pleased to serve on is the Goulburn city council's very fast train task force. I give that project my full backing, as have the New South Wales and Victorian Governments. The very fast train proposal is to build a completely new high speed railway between Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Speeds of up to 350 kilometres an hour will allow non-stop travel times of one hour between Sydney and Canberra and two hours between Canberra and Melbourne, giving an overall time of three hours between State capitals. The proposed line will be built and operated by private enterprise. The present feasibility study of the project has been funded by a joint venture of Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, Elders-IXL Limited, Kumagai and Thomas Nationwide Transport Limited.

The introduction of the VFT to Australia follows the successful and profitable operation of high speed railways in Japan, France and Germany. The proposed route from Sydney to Melbourne is 876 kilometres long—84 kilometres shorter than the existing rail route. In Sydney the VFT will terminate underground at Central station, with its own platforms and facilities, with easy interchange to suburban trains. In Canberra the station will be located on the eastern side of the city in the airport area. That promotes the sensible ideal of having Canberra as another international airport. The reasons are numerous. They include the fact that Canberra's the only national capital in the world without an international airport and the other important fact that the people of Canberra want it, unlike the people of other areas of New South Wales.

Fares on the VFT will be substantially less than air fares. As well as carrying passengers, the VFT also will carry express freight with the same transit times as passengers. The VFT will create some 25 000 jobs during the construction phase. It will divert cars from the Hume Highway, thus helping to reduce road accidents. It will also mean major development in the centres adjacent to the route in rural New South Wales. Those of us who were worried about the greenhouse effect on the environment will be pleased to learn that the VFT is powered by electricity. A full feasibility study is now under way and, if it is given the go ahead, the VFT will be in operation by 1995 or 1996.

Roads are probably the greatest problem facing the people of rural New South Wales in their daily lives. It has always been essential that we provide a comprehensive all-weather road network for the safety and development of this State. I am pleased to know that our Government will be giving a greater priority to linking areas of major economic and social importance. Many country people have been unfairly disadvantaged in the past, by a disjointed approach taken by all tiers of government to roads. Keeping this in mind I have taken on a co-ordinating role for three major road links in the south of the State, as my major push on roads for this term of Parliament. They are, first, the east-west link from Goulburn passing through Crookwell and Boorowa to Young. The second is a north-south link between Canberra and Bathurst. The third is a link between Canberra and Nowra travelling through Braidwood and Nerriga.

I have found that in the environment debate, people also tend to want to put labels on one. So if we have to be given colours I would hope to rate at least a pale green. I take exception to people who feel because of this label I would be at odds with my party and its philosophies. Indeed, amongst many rural people one will find the vanguard of the movement to make us more responsible for the environment in which we live. If parts of the conservation movement continue in an us-and-them mentality, the aims they strive for will be lost. A classic example of the bigotry—and I am sure this is the right word—occurred in the Monaro electorate during the last election. The Monaro Conservation Group presented the National Party candidate, Peter Cochran, with an environmental questionnaire. Yet before the due date to answer—and in fact before we had even had a chance to look at it—they published a stinging criticism of our policy and our probable answers in the *Queanbeyan Age*. No wonder we often feel that our attempts at open, frank dialogue fall on closed minds. I ask, are we not on this side of the House by very definition conservative? I am confident that the Greiner-Murray Government will bring a new commonsense to an area that in the past has relied too much on emotion and has been far too politicized. In this area—environment—more than any other, sensible sound decisions are needed.

My involvement on the minerals and energy advisory committee has proved to be the busiest and most challenging of all the areas in which I am involved in this House. The problems that face this particular area of the State are enormous. Yet the new Minister is bringing a positive approach to an area that has dogged previous administrations for decades. The huge debts and work practices that date back to the middle of last century are not going to disappear overnight. We will ensure that the natural resource advantage of New South Wales is utilized to provide a safe, reliable, economical and adequate supply of energy at the lowest practical cost. This, in turn, will allow the people of New South Wales to enjoy a good and improving standard of living and will encourage development and employment generation in the State. The Government will also ensure that the development of all energy sources is based on sound economic, environmental and technical grounds.

The maximization of local private sector involvement in energy development will be sought to enable industries to reduce energy and electricity costs through economic private generation, including co-generation and or the use of renewable energy and waste fuels. The Minister is also anxious to encourage and support private enterprise initiatives in achieving the most effective and economic use of energy in industry, commerce, the home and the public sector. I am committed to the belief that the State's energy utilities, be they gas or electric, should be the equal in efficiency and effectiveness of any in the world. I am looking forward to being involved in the vast challenge that minerals and energy will present.

I am pleased that this Government recognizes tourism as one of the great new horizons of economic and social opportunity in New South Wales. It is our fastest growing service industry providing a vital source of foreign income and employment opportunities, particularly in my region. Due to the development of new global markets centred in the Asia-Pacific region, tourism's importance will continue to be significant across New South Wales and Australia generally. However, it is essential that the whole of New South Wales benefits from the growth in tourism. Our Government committee on tourism considers this can best be accomplished by encouraging more visitors to experience our environs outside metropolitan Sydney.

The growth of experience-related, as opposed to destination-related, travel has been identified by the Minister as a significant change of preference travel in both our domestic and international tourism markets. In order to capitalize on this change in the consumer demand and encourage more interstate, intrastate and international visitors to New South Wales, the Tourism Commission has been encouraged by the Greiner-Murray Government to adopt a product-oriented or lifestyle approach to marketing the State's many attractions. This new plan will appeal to a wide variety of interests and should persuade our visitors to experience the many varied activities that New South Wales has on offer. This, in turn, will compliment the cosmopolitan, highly urbanized environment of Sydney.

Statistics show that of the 77 per cent of international tourists visiting Sydney, only 3 per cent spend a night outside Sydney. More Australians are holidaying in Australia than travelling overseas. Japanese arrivals this year have increased by 72 per cent compared with those in the same period last year. New South Wales continues to be the major destination for our international visitors, attracting 73 per cent while Queensland attracts 24 per cent of international visitors. They are the 1987 figures. The 1988 figures might be slightly different with the advent of Expo.

In my own area of the Southern Tablelands there are many activities available for the visitor to enjoy and participate in. The Goulburn area is famous for its wool industry, and the big merino complex is representative of this. The southern area is also justly famous for its gardens, the enormous crowds that visit Bowral for tulip time, and Cowra for its world famous Japanese gardens. As well, the Moss Vale, Goulburn, Crookwell, Yass area is one of the oldest settled areas in New South Wales, and its man-made heritage is set to become one of the main tourist attractions over the next few years. The National Parks and Wildlife Service manage the Wombeyan and Jenolan Caves and the Bungonia Gorge. The Bungonia Gorge is known as a mini-Grand Canyon and is a feature of the magnificent Shoalhaven River environment. For those who are fossickers, we have the sapphire fields between Crookwell and Goulburn, and gold panning at historic Tuena.

In line with my Government's new competitive approach, a private sector driven strategy has been implemented within the tourism area. This will encourage a robust and aggressive approach to counter rival States and the adoption of a pro-active, hands-on program to its tasks. I am sure the future is positive for tourism in New South Wales. A new government with fresh ideas and a market driven approach will serve the tourism industry well for both now and into the new century. Sir Winston Churchill once said:

Many forms of government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.

The Greiner-Murray Government, in which I am proud to serve, has a mandate to govern from the people of New South Wales. But we must always keep in mind that we are here to represent the hopes and aspirations of all citizens of this State, not just those who voted for us. Equally, there are those of us in this House who may claim a mandate for change with less than 5 per cent of the vote. Those honourable members should remember that they also have to represent the 95 per cent or more who voted against them and or their policies. In conclusion, I thank honourable members of this House for extending to me the customary privilege of being heard in silence. I am sure that with the joint good will that I have seen exhibited in my short time here we will be able to make many of the challenges facing us seem insignificant. I now look forward to future contributions in debate with eagerness.