

Dr NAPTHINE (Portland)-I begin by pledging my allegiance and the allegiance of the electors of Portland to the Queen of Australia. I also join with the honourable member for Richmond, whom I congratulate on his maiden speech, in congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on achieving the high office of Speaker.

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be interested to know about the similarities in our careers. We are both graduates in veterinary science from the University of Melbourne, where we had the honour and privilege of being lectured in pathology by the honourable member for Dromana. Mr Speaker, you and I both worked in the field as veterinary officers with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs; and we both served terms as president of the Veterinary Officers Group of the Victorian Public Service Association. I am proud to have been both a public servant and a member of the VPSA.

Mr Speaker, I am confident that you will be true to your commitment to uphold the impartiality of the Chair, which is a key component of the Westminster system, and that you will conduct yourself in the same professional manner as you did during your veterinary career.

Our careers have taken divergent paths since our terms as president of the Veterinary Officers Group. I am proud to be the Liberal Party member for Portland. I thank the electors of Portland for electing me as their member. I assure both the House and all the people of Portland that I will work for the benefit of Portland.

Honourable members will be aware that Portland is the oldest permanent settlement in Victoria, having been settled by the Henty family some years before John Batman saw the banks of the Yarra River as a suitable site for a village. Portland is a much better city than the village of Melbourne!

Yesterday I had the pleasure of attending the Portland Cup, which was run at Hamilton. That signifies the way in which the two cities in my electorate, Portland and Hamilton, are able to cooperate to run a successful venture. Certainly, the Portland Cup was a successful venture. As an example of that spirit of cooperation, the horse which won the Cup, Majestic Apex, was bred in Portland but is raced by a syndicate of Hamilton people.

Portland and the surrounding district was developed by enterprising settlers who recognised the fertile agricultural land, the excellent river system, and the natural port of Portland as unique assets to be utilised by the people of Portland for both their families and the fledgling colony of Victoria, not as assets to be locked up forever.

I believe firmly in enterprise and reward for effort. I am reminded often of Vroom and Yetton's contingency theory of motivation which states that there are two components of motivation: firstly, the size of the reward; and, secondly, the likelihood of the reward being attained. For example, someone purchases a Tattsлото ticket because the reward that is promised for winning the lottery is large, even though the chance of attaining the reward is extremely slim.

When I examine the state of small businesses in my electorate-and I remind the House that small business is the largest employer in the State-I understand why employers in small business suffer from a lack of motivation. Firstly, any rewards they attain are heavily taxed and, therefore, devalued; secondly, the other component of motivation-that is, the likelihood of attaining a reward-is made more difficult because of high State taxes and charges, high oncosts, such as Workcare, and a bureaucratic system that stifles initiative and incentive.

Governments have a clear role to play in creating an economic environment in which employers can confidently invest and reap a just reward for their investment of capital and labour. I shall work both inside and outside the House to ensure that in all endeavours, whether in the sporting field, the classroom, the Public Service, or the business sector, those who achieve reap the benefit of their achievements.

I wish to acknowledge the contributions made to the House, the people of Victoria, and the electorate of Portland by two former members for Portland. The late Donald McKellar was the member for Portland from 1967 to 1970 and from 1973 to 1985. He was an unassuming man who was more content to see a job done and done well than to seek praise for what he did. He was a tireless worker who was well-respected in the electorate. I am pleased to have known Don McKellar, to have been one of his constituents, and to be able to follow in his footsteps as the honourable member for Portland.

My immediate predecessor was the Honourable Digby Crozier. Although he served only three and a half years as the member for Portland, he was previously a member of the Legislative Council, where he represented Western Province for twelve years. He was a Minister for six years, serving as the Minister for Decentralisation, State Development and Tourism from 1976 to 1979, as the Minister for Local Government from 1979 to 1981, and as the Minister for Minerals and Energy and the Minister for Mines from 1981 to 1982.

Not only was Digby Crozier an excellent Minister; he was also a man of the people. As I was campaigning I was amazed to discover that when I introduced myself all I had to say was that I was taking over from Digby Crozier and his name was instantly recognised. Not only was his name instantly recognised by the electors, but also, in 99 per cent of cases, an elector whom I met would say "Digby achieved this for me. Digby did that for me." That was the type of person he was. I am sure all-honourable members will join me in wishing both Digby and Jill a long and happy retirement.

The electorate of Portland covers approximately 14 000 square kilometres and includes some of the best agricultural land in Australia. Hamilton is not only currently Victoria's premier town but also is justifiably known as the wool capital of the world. There are 6 million sheep and 280 000 cattle, both beef cattle and dairy cattle, within the electorate. Last year, the electorate produced \$272 207 000 worth of agricultural produce.

I have listened with interest to many of the maiden speeches made by honourable members opposite. I listened intently to comments about the need for social justice and the redistribution of wealth. I did not hear a single comment from government members about the need for the generation of wealth. Honourable members must address that question. We should not be arguing about how to divide the cake but, rather, how to produce a bigger cake.

In his Speech the Governor highlighted the fact that Victorian agriculture earns more than \$4 billion annually, which is 20 per cent of the State's gross domestic product. Therefore, it is unfortunate that the government has so badly neglected agriculture in the past six and a half years. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs is now faced with a Minister who knows nothing about agriculture and also senior management with little or no knowledge of agriculture. This is disappointing for people involved in agriculture in Victoria.

The Budget has increased agricultural funding by only 4.7 per cent, which all honourable members know is less than the expected inflation rate. It represents another cut in real terms on

top of drastic cuts in recent years. The government must re-examine urgently its role in agriculture. One area in which I suggest the government reconsider its position is in the improvement of agricultural education and skills training.

Agriculture has a proud record of achievement. For example, in the high rainfall zones, such as the area which I represent, this industry has achieved, on average, a growth in productivity of 3 per cent a year since the mid-1950s, compared with a 1.1 per cent increase for the economy as a whole.

Agriculture is not a sunset industry but a progressive and productive industry that generates more than 40 per cent of Australia's exports annually. To maintain and increase this progress it is necessary to capitalise on Victoria's world-class research. I refer particularly to the research being conducted in the electorate of Portland at the Hamilton Regional Veterinary Laboratory and the Pastoral Research Institute. That research must be integrated with agricultural extension and education. There is a need to improve skills training for farm workers, shedhands, shearers, and farm contractors. In the years to come, Victoria's agricultural produce will not sell just because the State produces huge quantities; the government must look at the quality of agricultural products. The only way to improve the quality is through improved training and education.

I strongly recommend that the Minister for Education and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs study closely the proposals to develop a wool industry training centre at Hamilton. That centre would be not only a centre for agricultural and skills training, but also a base for tertiary education and TAFE training in the area that I represent.

The Portland electorate includes the centres of Hamilton, Portland, and Casterton, which provide an excellent range of secondary schools, both private and public. The provision of a system to deliver tertiary courses in a supported off-campus mode would enable students to undertake tertiary education in the Western District without having to move from their home towns. I am not suggesting another university but a modern educational institution providing an off-campus system of education for students in my electorate.

I refer to the other city in my electorate, Portland, which has one of the best deep water natural ports in the world. Last year the total tonnage through the port exceeded 2 million tonnes and growth has continued in the past decade. The main exports from the port are grain, especially wheat, aluminium ingots from the Portland smelter, woodchips from the local forest industries, which are by-products, and live sheep. Last year more than 2 million live sheep were exported through Portland. The trade through the port is growing at the expense of other ports such as Adelaide.

Those ports are closer to the Middle East and one would expect exports from them to be cheaper, but Portland has developed a reputation in the live sheep industry as being the best port in Australia through which to handle live sheep, which is a tribute to those who handle the stock at Portland. It is also a tribute to the wharf labour, which is excellent, harbour management, and the live sheep industry. The industry is worth more than \$100 million a year to Victoria, and I am proud that it operates in my electorate.

The port is also the base for a fleet of more than twenty deep-sea fishing trawlers, which fish for orange roughy and more traditional deep-sea fish. The honourable member for Doncaster will be interested to know that there is also a significant crayfish industry out of Portland. Government encouragement and support for the continuing development of the port and associated facilities

would be a sound investment for the future.

The aluminium smelter at Portland employs 800 people and produces 300 000 tonnes of aluminium annually now that both the first and second potlines are fully operational. Honourable members must remember that the smelter was located at Portland because of hard work by local Liberal members, led by Digby Crozier, who is remembered as the "father" of the smelter.

Members of the House will learn that I am prepared to give credit where credit is due. I acknowledge the role of the Cain government in assisting the smelter when help was needed. However, I emphasise my contention that the government should now sell its 35 per cent share in the smelter. The government should allow private enterprise to bring in the necessary expertise and capital to allow the third potline to be built as soon as possible, which will best be achieved through private enterprise.

The government should not forget its responsibility to help with the infrastructure; it must provide the necessary roads, schools, and health care facilities which will be needed as the smelter develops and Portland expands.

While on the subject of infrastructure, I indicate that I shall be monitoring closely the promised redevelopment of the Portland and District Hospital, which is needed and must be completed down to the very last nail. I shall not stand by idly if funds for this project are delayed or curtailed.

The Portland community health facility is in need of new premises. As a veterinarian interested in prevention rather than cure, I maintain that the same applies to health care for people—prevention is always better than cure. More of the health dollar should be directed towards preventive medicine and the promotion of healthy lifestyles than at the curative end of the spectrum.

One of Portland's major employers has been Borthwick's export abattoir, which is now owned by Australian Meat Holdings. The abattoir has been closed for several months because of changes in ownership and a lack of stock numbers. Portland is uniquely situated close to an export port and major livestock producing areas. There is available skilled labour. It can be successful for years to come as the abattoir industry is restructured. Therefore, I am working towards the reopening of these works.

I urge the new management and the unions to work together in an atmosphere of honesty, openness, and goodwill, to negotiate satisfactory working conditions for the workers and to allow management to operate the abattoir at a profit. It is unfortunate that there is not enough flexibility in Victoria's labour and industrial relations system to allow more free workplace negotiations between management and workers. Greater flexibility would allow many industries to benefit at both management and worker level from workplace negotiations, rather than the rigid arbitration system we are stuck with at the moment.

The area I represent also boasts a significant forestry industry and an excellent range of tourist venues, including the Grampians, the Lower Glenelg National Park, the great south-west walk, and our unique western Victorian redgums. However, there is a continuing need to provide funds for vital road networks and for increased activity to combat dryland salinity, soil erosion, and pest plants and animals. Victoria needs an agriculture system that will be productive not only for the next ten years but also for the next 200 years. A sustainable agricultural industry is something all honourable members need to work towards.

In conclusion, I ask that all honourable members consider seriously the needs of rural Victoria and the development of programs, whether in services for the intellectually disabled, education, health, or transport.

All honourable members have a duty to work for all Victorians and I dedicate myself to that task.