

the Labor Party puts forward to oversee and encourage development in the Latrobe Valley.

Although I congratulate the Government on its overwhelming victory at the last election, I should like to add that in some of the rural areas, and especially in the election of Narracan which I have the honour to represent, certain fears exist with which the Government would be familiar. One fear is that because the Government is regarded as a metropolitan Government some of the problems of the rural areas will not receive the attention they deserve. I notice some back chat has taken place in the Chamber about the country versus the city. I do not want to become involved in that controversy.

However, I shall draw to the attention of the House the importance of the rural sector of country Victoria. In the electorate of Narracan the value of agricultural products grown and produced is approximately \$83 million a year. It is estimated that the value of milk production is \$30.7 million a year, which is equivalent to 10 per cent of the State's production. The value of beef production amounts to \$17 million a year, which is equivalent to 3.5 per cent of the State's production. Other rural pursuits include the growing of potatoes and the timber industry.

Returning to the idea that the Government is a metropolitan Government, I point out concern about the decision by the Government to abandon the connection between the Mulgrave and the South-Eastern Freeways. Thirty-two municipalities were represented, namely, all the municipalities from Frankston to the New South Wales border. Those municipalities unanimously decided to protest to the Government about its decision.

The basis of the objection was that although they recognized that the Government had every right to set the priorities over road funding, it was considered that the decision to sell compulsorily acquired property would lose for all time the opportunity of this vital connection to Gippsland and the State.

The importance of that action is extremely relevant to Gippsland and eastern Victoria in general. The former Government decided—I am sure the Government endorses the fact—that the resources of the brown coal field and the tourist potential of Gippsland are important. Any moves to change the priority in providing adequate road access to the hinterland of Gippsland would be to the detriment of the State.

I had one fear about making my maiden speech, Mr Speaker, which has plagued my dreams over the past couple of months. After spending sixteen years as a member of a shire council I was afraid I would address you, Mr Speaker, as Mr President. I am sure that if I had you would have forgiven me! I look forward to entering debates and making a contribution, not only for the benefit of my constituents, but also for the State in general.

Mr McNAMARA (Benalla)—In formally speaking to the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, I do so with the exultation of a newly-elected member, mingled with the trepidation of one rising to speak in this august Chamber on his first occasion.

I congratulate the Premier on the success of his party at the recent State election. Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your elevation to the high office of Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly. From the comments of many long-serving members of this Chamber who know you better than I do, I am sure you will leave your mark as a Speaker of some stature.

My appearance in this Chamber is made possible only by the decision of Mr Tom Trewin to retire after 21 years as the National Party member for Benalla. After more than two decades in the "hot seat", possibly one of the greatest satisfactions for a member of Parliament is to be able to see his electorate grow and see it gain some benefits as a result of his work. There is no doubt this electorate has grown and it has achieved many benefits.

Tom often said he wished he could say that he had a win every time he went into bat for the electorate, but that just was not so. In cricketering terms one could say that he scored well a lot of the time, sometimes poorly and, like some Test captains, got the occasional "duck".

Tom Trewin made many good friends both in Parliament and outside it. He enjoyed seeing his region prosper and it gave him much pleasure to see some of his work come to fruition.

No honest politician can claim that all that has happened in his region has been solely through his own work. Some of it would have happened no matter who was the member, but I am sure Tom is particularly pleased with his work to get water storages built throughout north-eastern Victoria and his efforts towards the duplication of the Hume Highway. It has nearly reached a stage where it is a pleasure to drive along the highway to Melbourne!

Probably the most satisfying achievements have been through his involvement in legislation for the wheat stabilization scheme and the setting up of orderly wool and livestock marketing. The development of schools and the school bus system have been of deep and lasting interest to him, as have been his efforts in retaining young men on our farms. Youth activities have always been close to his way of life and he enjoyed the company of thousands of sportsmen through cricket and football. I take this opportunity to wish Tom and his wife, May, an enjoyable retirement.

The Benalla electorate is large, stretching from Woods Point to north of Glenrowan. It covers more than 13 500 square kilometres and consists of some 27 000 voters.

Benalla country is "big country"—in many ways—big in produce, big in potential and big in being a good place to live. I love the place and the people and want to see that it gets a fair go from the Government.

Every Minister takes an oath of office to deal with everyone, without fear or favour. Over the period that

the Liberal Government was in office, National Party members were able to achieve notable developments in their electorates, and never at any stage would, or should, a Minister reject or favour a particular electorate because of the political party that represented it. This was not the case in the past, and I do not envisage that being the case with the Cain Government.

It is important for areas such as Benalla that they continue the growth of industry. Benalla is a major regional centre for Government departments, and has been described by some as a mini Canberra. There are a number of Government departments at present based in Melbourne that would be more correctly located in country centres. I will be endeavouring to point this out to the Government and urge that these departments be located within the Benalla electorate.

The general rundown of rail services in the Benalla electorate is one area in which I hope to see a reversal of Government policy. Housing construction is also lacking and needs impetus.

There is a huge potential for tourist development in the Benalla electorate, which is bounded on three sides by the Goulburn River, and on the north by the Broken River. Snow fields are located in the eastern end of the electorate where there is great scope for future development.

Finally, agricultural industries are the backbone of the electorate and create prosperity in this region. A confident and expanding farming industry is an essential element in Victoria's economic stability. With limited mineral resources, Victoria remains heavily reliant on agriculture. In most country centres, agriculture remains the dominant industry, determining the prosperity of the local economy and, to a large extent, the economic wellbeing of our urban areas.

The Benalla electorate is ripe for a tourist boom. The State Government should go out of its way to give the tourist industry a real kick along. Unfortunately, we often hear of tourist plans being strangled by Government red tape.

Mr McNamara

This part of the State is well placed to become the playground of Victoria. There has been a huge increase in tourists over the past few years. We have great snow fields for winter sports and recreation and a whole host of attractions for the warmer months.

Tourism can be good for the electorate. It gives individuals with enterprise the opportunity of making a good living. Also, because it is labour intensive, it gives employment opportunities to young people leaving school. However, some people seem hell-bent on killing the goose that lays the golden egg. This has happened through the heavy penalty payments imposed on the industry for week-end work.

I strongly support efforts to get new wage guidelines for the industry. The present penalty rates are not only keeping out overseas tourists but also are forcing more and more Victorians to holiday overseas.

The benefits of tourism spread far more widely than just to hotel and motel operators and the like. They go right through the community.

We should encourage tertiary and sub-tertiary institutions to include tourism studies in their range of courses. This alone would lead to improved expertise in the planning, development and management of tourist facilities.

The Government should also provide additional revenue to municipalities which experience large, seasonal tourist traffic. These municipalities must provide additional public facilities and road systems over and above those required by their own ratepayers.

War should be declared on dry land salting. The Government should give support for the Soil Conservation Authority. This authority, which does tremendously important work in the Benalla electorate, has been relegated to the "Cinderella department".

It is time that we made a concerted effort to solve this problem. Thousands of hectares of prime farming land risk being totally ruined by salting. It is serious, and large-scale work must be done now to tackle the problem. In

the electorate I represent the areas stretch from just north of Seymour to Benalla.

Any move to reintroduce probate tax would be a backward step for Victoria. The move, proposed by the Labor Party as part of its platform for this year's election, would result in thousands of people moving to the probate-free States of Queensland and New South Wales. The National Party, which led the fight to get probate reduced in Victoria, believes the tax should be wiped out completely.

I know that, in some circles, there is the philosophical argument that it is okay to tax the dead. Even if that argument had some merit—and I don't believe it does—there is the reality of the situation. That is that, while other States are probate-free, Victoria cannot afford its reintroduction. People who have accumulated assets during their working lives will move away rather than see their families taxed on earnings which have already been taxed once.

The effect of that will hurt Victoria tremendously. Millions of dollars invested in businesses and housing projects would be taken out of the State.

There has been a rundown in rail services over recent years and I hope the Government will arrest that trend. In the Benalla electorate, the towns Violet Town, Longwood, Avenel and Glenrowan have been particularly hard hit. Some years ago, a Mr Edward Kelly, a resident of Strathbogie, tried to derail a train at Glenrowan. It is hoped that the dissatisfaction with rail services does not lead to similar drastic action.

The National Party has always recognized the vital role that roads play in the development of Victoria. The deterioration of the State's road network over recent years has had a detrimental effect on the Victorian economy in terms of congestion, delays, greater fuel usage, a decline in road safety and increased transport costs. The National Party is concerned about the decline in road funding for the construction and maintenance of Victoria's road network. Over the past ten years

that funding has declined by up to 22 per cent, whilst road travel has increased by 66 per cent. Further, Victoria received the lowest *per capita* and *per vehicle* road grant from the Commonwealth in 1979–80. A substantial increase in the real value of road funds is needed to prevent a further deterioration of Victoria's road network.

The National Party accepts the mandate of the Labor Government. The National Party accepts the responsibilities placed on its members of Parliament. Members of the National Party campaigned strongly on those issues that affect the community, especially the aged. The National Party also has a mandate to continue promoting the policies on which its members were elected to Parliament.

The National Party will use its position in this House and in another place in the best interests of those people who elected the National Party for the betterment of all country people. The Benalla electorate has been represented by the National Party for more than 60 years. The electorate covers eleven municipal areas and all types of agriculture and grazing can be found in the area.

The Benalla electorate is the home of many Government departments and the industries in the area range from timber mills to motor vehicle manufacturing. It is also the home of a major Army base at Puckapunyal. There is certainly no lack of variety of industry in the electorate and I look forward with enthusiasm to representing the electorate of Benalla.

Mr HILL (Warrandyte)—Mr Speaker, I wish you well on your appointment as Speaker. Like other honourable members of this House, I am confident that you will be a Speaker of great distinction. In joining my fellow honourable members to thank His Excellency the Governor for the Speech he made to the Parliament, I take the opportunity of wishing His Excellency, Sir Brian Murray, and Lady Murray well in serving the State of Victoria as required by the Constitution.

The motto of the 1981 International Year of the Disabled, "Break down the barriers" has been applied by the people of Victoria who have elected a Labor Government to break down the barriers of conservatism and reaction. The people of Victoria have demanded access to social justice and to conditions and services that are not privileges but rights. The people of Victoria have demanded access to housing, employment, transport, education, health and justice—that is, access through consultation and co-operation. It is extraordinary that these conditions and services that are considered to be the rights of people in Western democracies have been denied for so long to so many people in Victoria.

If any honourable member doubts this state of affairs, I invite that honourable member to visit the electorates situated in the outer eastern suburbs. I invite those honourable members particularly to the electorate of Warrandyte, which I have the honour and the privilege to represent in this Parliament.

Those who look and listen will see and hear clear evidence that the people of the outer east are demanding access to services taken for granted elsewhere.

I am proud to be part of this Government elected to provide services and improve the well-being of people in the Warrandyte electorate and throughout Victoria.

No one would deny that shelter is a basic need of all people. Yet in the outer east housing is in such short supply that the average time a house to rent remains vacant is two hours.

The policy of the former Liberal Government was that unless one can purchase a house in the outer east, one cannot live there. That policy has caused great suffering not only to the poor, the unemployed, the single parent and the aged, but also to the middle income people who simply cannot bridge the deposit gap or keep up with increasing interest rates and living costs.

These people welcome the Government's commitment to housing as indicated by His Excellency the Gov-