

This is the usual empowering motion passed at the commencement of each Parliament allowing Temporary Chairmen of Committees to undertake the role in the absence of either yourself, Mr Speaker, or your appointed deputy.

The motion was agreed to.

The SPEAKER—I advise the House that it is my wish that Temporary Chairmen of Committees regularly take the chair from time to time. I shall be seeking shortly to meet with the Temporary Chairmen of Committees to make suitable arrangements with them.

PROCLAMATIONS FIXING OPERATIVE DATES

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—By leave, I move:

That this House authorises and requires the Clerk to lay on the table copies of proclamations of His Excellency the Governor in Council fixing dates for the coming into operation of Acts as published in the *Government Gazette* from time to time.

This is again an empowering motion that is passed at the commencement of each Parliament.

The motion was agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

The debate (adjourned from earlier this day) on the motion of Mr Cole (Melbourne) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr ELDER (Ballarat North)—Mr Speaker, as I was about to say some six weeks ago when I was interrupted by a hasty and expedient election, it is a great honour to be in this place today representing the people of Ballarat North. This great trust they have placed in me shall not be broken, and I will strive to safeguard their interests and advance their living standards as a continuation of the tradition set by my predecessor, Tom Evans.

The cliché "a hard act to follow" is much used these days but it is entirely inappropriate in any reference to Tom Evans because his was not an act! This man justifiably held the Ballarat North seat for a record 27 and a half years because he was truly the voice of the people, which was evidenced by his accessibility, by his willingness to listen to all constituents, and a dedication, befitting his physique, to the interests of his electorate.

Tom devoted tremendous energy and capacity to his electorate but his workload allowed for compassion and friendship, and I count myself most fortunate that I was able to enjoy some of that friendship from this fine man 40 years my senior. Even in this place with its varying talents and degrees of ambition, Tom Evans has left a vacuum, because quite simply he preferred to put the people and his electorate ahead of self-interest. The ballot-boxes of Ballarat North over a long period clearly showed that this is what people want of their politicians, and I will strive to follow in the footsteps of the Tom Evans of this place in the hope that I, too, will earn the same respect.

The Ballarat region I am privileged to represent needs no singing praises from me because much of Victoria today is enjoying the stimulus of its history. Indeed, Ballarat was a national focal point in probably one of the most significant five-year periods in the history of this country. It started with the discovery of gold in the Buninyong

Ranges in 1851, and extended to the influence factor in 1856 with the enhancement of electoral freedom and Victoria becoming the first State to introduce the secret ballot at elections.

The gold discovery typified the spirit of challenge still ingrained in the people of Ballarat which led to winning the 200 pounds reward for the gold strike in the ranges, which was so successful that New South Wales was overtaken in quantity of gold mined. However, as so often is the case, lasting achievements and their place in history are not made without sometimes tragic sacrifices and the gold era I refer to was no exception. History today records the Eureka uprising with inevitable emotion but there is no escaping the fact that much of Eureka was about the substitution of military force for consultation in the wake of a claimed unfair murder trial.

If there is any consolation to be gained from the tragic events of the Eureka Stockade, it is that while the government of the day could have lacked sensitivity, the system of justice finally prevailed with the acquittal of twelve miners on mind-boggling charges of high treason! Perhaps there is a lesson from Eureka for new politicians: it could have been a vindication of the adage that a law created by government is not a good law if it is not accepted by the majority of the people.

I am still sufficiently new in my confinement behind these cloistered walls to be able to appreciate the impact on the community of any drift towards bureaucratic intervention rather than consultation.

This was spelt out at the first meeting—IN BALLARAT—of what was to be a series of such exercises aimed at amalgamating our councils by changing boundaries on the drawing board regardless of community interest and other human factors. The rural areas of Victoria have been the target for too many attempts in the past six and half years of this government to push legislation through this place with indecent haste. We have the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Bill, the Water Bill and even a legislative change proposal to take away the rights of Crown land leaseholders in Ballarat without consideration of the consequences. But not the same haste has characterised the implementation of a long string of pork-barrelling promises made by Ministers to the people of Ballarat during two recent elections.

For too long under this ALP government people who live beyond the tramlines of Melbourne have had to suffer double standards, and it is quite clear the many pre-election promises are heading for the same fate. The cruel reality of all this is now surfacing as municipalities are in the process of striking their rates, with some predicting a 12 per cent rate rise, an increase in water bills, and so on.

How does this relate to the much-vaunted government pre-election pledge—I repeat, “pledge”—that from the day the Premier announced it there would be a freeze on prices. This so-called “pledge” was the same *modus operandi* used to herald the announcement of the abolition of motor car registration fees. The expression *modus operandi* is usually related to a way of doing things that is similar to the way in which the promise of this four-year price freeze was made. And into the same category must fall most of the promises made during the two elections in Ballarat, particularly the by-election, where there still remains a stench of rotting political carrots left dangling on the line.

One is entitled to ask just what the bona fides of ALP Cabinet Ministers are worth when one examines the role played by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mr Crabb, in what is now known in my electorate as the “great two-way CFA con”. What part did the Minister play in an announcement by my ALP by-election opponent on 9 June that the Minister would make an announcement when he returned from overseas two weeks from that date and that the \$12 million Country Fire Authority headquarters could be relocated to Ballarat?

Two weeks must certainly be a long time in politics because not only two weeks have gone by but almost five months have lapsed and still no announcement. It is now cruelly obvious to the people of Ballarat that the Minister was having two-bob each way on the CFA issue and was trying to placate the ALP candidate because the Minister knew only too well that land had been purchased and rezoned at Knox for the CFA headquarters where the authority wants them to be.

The Minister, however, persisted with the charade. He stalled the issue until 21 July when he announced he had referred the matter to a Cabinet subcommittee for an announcement in two weeks. The by-election, of course, was held less than two weeks before the decision was promised. People in Ballarat who were still naive enough to believe in the government's credibility were dismissing the Country Fire Authority hoax as a rush of blood to the head of my Australian Labor Party opponent.

I make no apology for the stand I took throughout the campaign of calling for the CFA proposal to be removed from the realm of politics and placed into a community-wide project. I consistently asked the government to level with the public about the real prospects of getting the complex built in Ballarat to ensure that Ballarat voters were not being expected to nibble at a dangling carrot. The only responses received were Mr Cain saying that Ballarat "appeared" to be the right location and Mr Spyker—

The SPEAKER—Order! I remind the honourable member for Ballarat North that he should refer to Ministers by their correct titles.

Mr ELDER—The former Minister for Property and Services said that if ever there were a government authority that should be logically located in Ballarat, it was the CFA.

It is absolutely incredible that the subcommittee used by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to duck for cover comprised the Minister himself, the Premier, and the former Minister for Property and Services and that, in spite of the utterances I referred to, a decision was still not made by the three of them.

I assure the three parties concerned in this political saga that the people of Ballarat are very patient. However, time is running out for the government to either deliver or admit to a gigantic con of "Nunawading" proportions.

After enduring six and a half years of neglect by the Cain government, not too many people in my electorate were fooled by the promises, but in some areas of real concern the promises represented hope. The seriousness of law and order problems in the electorate, for example, withstood all attempts by the Labor government—from the Premier down—to be pushed aside as not being serious issues. The hopes of the Ballarat people were again dashed by despicable pork-barrelling with a promise on 21 July by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services that within two months four additional police, including a sergeant, would be added to the dangerously depleted police numbers at Ballarat.

I hope I do not detect amusement from honourable members opposite because any broken promises in the very sensitive areas of police numbers and the risks forced upon police as a result reflect little credit on politicians in general and the Parliamentary process as a whole.

The irresponsibility that goes hand in hand with pork-barrelling probably reached the pits with the Australian Labor Party's \$800 000 propaganda machine creating a "killer corner" on the Ballarat-Maryborough-Sunraysia Highway so that the Minister for Transport could rush in, a few weeks before the election, with an \$81 000 promise to "fix" the corner.

With 50 per cent cutbacks in real terms for unclassified roads in my electorate and a 30 per cent cut in the funds for main roads, not even the local municipality could justify an expenditure of \$81 000. Only four accidents occurred on the corner between 1982 and 1987 and none of them was fatal.

Even more ludicrous than this whole circus is the fact that not even the Minister's propaganda machine could get it right because the major focus of this scenario was the Minister's front-page newspaper commitment that he would order the work to be started immediately. The Minister repeated the commitment on the electronic media on 13 July. Since then two elections have taken place—a by-election and a general election—and not a sod has been turned.

This is of little consolation to elderly people and young children because a serious "black spot" exists in the electorate outside a major hospital and the government has refused funding for a pedestrian crossing there until 1989–90. The government is obviously hoping to get off the hook with the reshuffling and dumping of Ministers. The former Minister for Community Services has left a big question mark over a funding guarantee to enable full-time activities at the Wendouree preschool.

An even bigger question mark remains over the City of Ballarat with the government's fire sale of Crown lands. Even the department handling the sell-off comes up with different answers to those fed out by the Minister before the election to placate the candidate.

I could go on and on with the list of promises. I have no doubt that other honourable members on this side of the House have similar experiences to relate in the wake of the government's pre-election bribes. The government had to buy a mandate at any cost, and it needed the distractions of school holidays, Olympic Games, and football finals to complete the massive con on Victoria.

The perpetrators of such cons have to have good memories, and the best that honourable members on the other side of the House can claim is "convenient" memories which, I can assure them, will be tested by the people of Ballarat. They are not going to be ignored by a government dominated by metropolitan factions, and I shall be involving myself fully in the processes of Parliament to obtain not only the programs that have been promised, but also other much needed programs.

In conclusion, I have been honoured to be appointed to assist my Leader as his spokesman on youth affairs. With my experience from both sides of the track, as the saying goes, I shall be using the best of my endeavours to come to grips with this most important task.

There is a real need to open up communications and, to the best of my ability, I shall be talking with youth rather than talking to youth because there can be no running away from the tremendous social problems that currently exist.

Although I do not condone much of what is described as the attitude of youth today, I do not think I am in a position to condemn because I have been part of a society willing to concentrate more on finding punitive solutions than on investigating causes.

Just how far we have succeeded can be gauged by the fact that the first case of gang rape in Australia occurred 100 years ago when eleven young men were found guilty of that crime against a sixteen-year-old, Mary Hicks. It is interesting to note that the country's first offence for drug trafficking was recorded in 1923—65 years ago—when a Henry McEwan was arrested for dealing in the drug, opium.

I cite these examples to remind honourable members that these problems have been part of our society for a long time. Because of the enormity of the task ahead, we have

nothing to gain by recriminations against the habits of today's youth. We should aim for constructive discipline by example from us all.

Mr Speaker, I thank you and the House for the indulgence you have shown me in this, probably one of the most important occasions of my life.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—Mr Speaker, I should like to offer you my warm congratulations on obtaining your important office and on the way you have conducted both yourself and the Parliament this evening during what has been a very difficult time. Your sobriety has helped in that regard.

An honourable member—Sobriety?

Mrs TONER—It is difficult, as you would know, Mr Speaker, and when one comes into a House like this there is a degree of aggro and angst going on. I congratulate the honourable member for Ballarat North who has just made his inaugural speech.

An honourable member—His maiden speech!

Mrs TONER—One could use that term. The custom of the House is that honourable members should not make any interruptions during a member's inaugural or maiden speech but it does represent a bleeding and the honourable member will keep until the next time around! If any honourable member chooses to say aggressive things about the government—and I remember my maiden speech—he or she will find that other honourable members will be waiting the next time!

This is a special day; it is the third time the Cain government has been elected to office. I feel extremely proud of the honourable members for Melbourne and Ascot Vale who moved and seconded the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech.

The sentiments they expressed and the statements they made show that the government is selecting people who have a real contribution to make. I am pleased to hear what the new government members have to say and to know that all honourable members are challenged in that regard.

I was delighted that the Governor, His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey, was present today to deliver the Governor's Speech and that he was accompanied by his good wife. On Friday I visited Government House because a number of people were presented with honours. A close friend of mine, John Scomparin, received an award under the Order of Australia. He has made good in this country; having come here a couple of decades ago he educated himself as a lawyer, brought up a family and has made a significant contribution to the Italian and Australian communities in this country.

It is wonderful to see such people honoured by the Australian government and it is a reflection of what we should be on about. It is most pleasing to see members of the ethnic community and an increasing number of women being recognised under the Order of Australia.

I am pleased that there are now thirteen women on the government benches but it is sad that there are only three women in the Opposition. I am sure that the honourable member for Kew would agree with me and that she feels slightly lonely in this Chamber.

Mr Perrin—We always go for quality.

Mrs TONER—That remark is typical of the honourable member for Bulleen. The Opposition has chosen a number of young men to represent it and makes the assumption that the quality is there. Those young men must meet the challenge and demonstrate their quality. I do not know the judgments made about the women who