

workers decided to take industrial action that was going to cost the community dearly and cause untold hardship and suffering to the families of Victoria, the Government moved in with the Essential Services Act and brought that union back to laws.

The Government has also indicated that it will not negotiate under duress or tolerate standover tactics and that is the reason why the Government wishes to introduce secret ballot legislation into the Parliament to assist and strengthen democracy within the trade union movement. I expect that members on both sides of the House will give that proposal their full support.

The fact of the matter is—and I do not resile from the situation—that the citizens of Victoria, and, indeed, of Australia, are basically good people. They are seeking and getting from this Government sound and sensible leadership. They are not and will not be attracted to the gloom peddlers of the Opposition. Perhaps I should encourage the Opposition to continue with its gloom, because then it will be seen how the Gallup polls will go! The citizens of Australia and of Victoria are basically a good bunch.

The Government will give them the leadership they need and deserve, and we will see a resurgence of confidence in the community, a resurgence which has already begun. The economy will move from strength to strength and these people of Victoria, in areas of real need will have their needs met and we will see a strong and virile economy continuing into the future.

Miss CALLISTER (Morwell)—I address this House as the representative for the electorate of Morwell. In doing so, I would take the opportunity of thanking the electors of Morwell for electing me as their representative in the House.

I also take the opportunity of recording the gratitude of the electorate for the dedicated and energetic representation that my predecessor—Derek Amos—gave on behalf of the electorate to the State of Victoria.

In addition, I congratulate the honourable member for Kew on her contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate.

My electorate blends industrial centres with rural areas. Its three major towns are Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill, with a number of small townships in country locations. Our economy, as is well known, is dominated by resource-based industries, chiefly the mining and conversion of coal to power, briquettes and char, along with APM's pulp and paper industry.

Resource developments involve a large construction component. Our area has many large construction contractors and industries which provide the associated needs of resource development—for example, concrete, bricks, pipe manufacture, machinery hire, engineering works and logging contractors.

There is also a range of decentralized industries based on a large and stable pool of female labour, significantly the manufacture of telecommunications equipment, textiles and footwear. In addition, there are important rural industries, mainly dairying, beef and sheep, along with a wide variety of tertiary sector service industries.

I am entering Parliament at a time when the resources boom, as has been emphasized in the past two days, is the preoccupation of many Australians. Indeed, this is very much the case in the Latrobe Valley. It is this area on which the hopes of the State of Victoria have become focused, for what we do with our coal resources there, will largely determine Victoria's future prosperity.

Let me preface what I am about to say by stating how much all Victorians hope for the economic development of our State so that we may all enjoy better lives. If change in a region such as the Latrobe Valley means a better life for all of us, then that change is to be welcomed. But that change must be adequately planned and integrated into an economic strategy that benefits all Victorians.

More than any other area in the State, the Latrobe Valley has had change imposed on it. The people of the Latrobe Valley know better than most Victorians

what it means to live in the centre of the resources boom, and they are experiencing, every day, both the problems and the promise of the boom.

In the name of the resources boom, the Federal Government has undermined the capacity of State and local government to maintain services in health, education, welfare, housing and essential infrastructure development. In the name of the same boom, the States have gone along with this policy, they have wielded their own scalpels; they have forced charges on essentials, such as electricity, higher and higher.

At the local level, government is faced with trying to fill in the gaps left by other levels of government. Those municipalities that are within my electorate are in an especially difficult position as they struggle to cope with ever-increasing infrastructure, service and welfare demands.

This worrying series of developments in government has prompted many of us to ask whether the resources boom has, in fact, been seriously bungled by governments.

Tonight I want to address some of the problems which have made the people of the Latrobe Valley question the way in which resource development has taken place.

I want to begin at the most important matter in our society, the matter which ultimately determines how our society will work—the matter of democracy—for it is already the experience of the people of the Latrobe Valley that resource development has brought about a situation where they have become less and less able to control their own future.

It is important to me that our system of government should reflect three basic principles: Firstly, that the people are encouraged to contribute to decision making, and have the chance to participate at all stages of economic and social planning; secondly, that there are no impediments to a two-way flow of information from government to people, people to government; and thirdly, that everybody should have equality of access to the institutions of government which are making decisions on behalf of the community.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, it appeared that the Liberal Government also understood the importance of these principles. There was a time when the Victorian Government was committed to finding ways to reconcile State policy with local interests and needs. There was a time when it expressed support for the principle that if significant change was to come to a region, then the people in that region ought to have some say in directing that change.

As late as 1979, the then Minister for Planning, Mr Hunt, stated:

The Government believes that it's very much in the interests of the residents and ratepayers of this region that they should be represented on a regional authority, where their interests can be presented and their voices effectively heard.

The Minister continued:

I would suggest that there is everything to gain by adopting an approach in which the local community does have that say, avails itself of that opportunity to control its own destiny. That seems to me to be the responsible approach and the approach likely to be most responsive to local needs and local opinions. It is the only approach which will enable the local community to have a voice in the future of their own area and I would believe that it would be tragic if the opportunity was lost.

All the talk supported participation. The State Government had promised lending substance to the talk in its *Statement of Planning Policy No. 9—Central Gippsland Brown Coal Deposits in the Context of Overall Resources*, June 1975. It was also implicit in the establishment of the Central Gippsland Regional Planning Authority Interim Committee, and in the Central Gippsland Regional Planning Authority Bill, 1978.

Despite procrastination by local government, there was strong support throughout the Latrobe Valley for a regional body. This was soundly demonstrated in the findings of the Central Gippsland social survey which showed that the great majority of respondents endorsed the concept of a regional body and agreed that planners in Melbourne were too removed from the local situation to plan effectively for the area. Nevertheless, with one swift decision in late 1979, the Government's commitment to open and genuine consultation was abandoned. A centralized decision-making pro-

cedure was adopted which gave the role of strategy planning to a group of Melbourne bureaucrats who are responsible to other bureaucrats who, in turn, are responsible to a Ministerial Council that is responsible to the Cabinet.

The Government has locked the people of the Latrobe Valley out of decisions about the region. The Government has tried to keep the people of the Latrobe Valley in ignorance. It has impeded the flow of significant information by restricting much of it to a Melbourne-based elite. If it deigns to tell the people of the Latrobe Valley what it has in store for them, it informs only a few persons and swears them to silence. When information is given to the community, it is given through a public relations handout or consultant's report aimed at justifying decisions already made.

The people of the Latrobe Valley find closed Government most worrying. If development is to be for the people, it must be with the people; it must be open to examination and contribution and its benefits must be fairly distributed.

When the Loy Yang project was announced, people in the Latrobe Valley were tremendously excited. A population growth of up to 150 000 was predicted. Some people have benefited from that development; yet serious pressures have been created in the wake of the development. For example, the high wages offered by construction contractors to attract workers have caused a shortage of skilled labour in other industries. In February this year, there were shortages of 94 boilermaker-welders, 63 fitting and machining tradesmen and 37 electrical tradesmen. Shortages of maintenance workers at the State Electricity Commission and the high loss of recently qualified commission apprentices to other industries has become a key problem.

The problem of the Latrobe Valley workforce will be aggravated by resource developments in other States. In New South Wales, for example, 4500 trade skilled workers and 7500

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other skilled workers are needed by 1987. In Victoria, the State Electricity Commission will add approximately 1500 new jobs to its operational workforce by 1986. This does not include labour needs for construction and other coal conversion projects.

It becomes clear that there is a pressing need for higher State Electricity Commission wage rates and that there is a need to develop a much larger pool of skilled labour in the Latrobe Valley. It follows that there is a need for many more apprenticeship training schemes in that area. The establishment of an apprenticeship training company in the Latrobe Valley is welcomed.

It is noted also that the present manpower crisis is the direct result of a lack of foresight by the present Government. The Government believes the manpower crisis will mostly solve itself. The Liberal Party believes in magic, which its philosophers sometimes call the market. The results of this philosophy have been seen. It has failed. The answer to the problem of manpower is in sound planning and that is the approach of the Labor Party.

Another key problem, again because of a lack of planning, has occurred in the housing sector. The premature dismantling of Yallourn combined with a sudden influx of construction workers and short-sighted Government housing policies have imposed an incredible burden upon the community. Rental costs have gone sky high and caravan parks have become the home for thousands of people. High rents have made the life of poorer people much tougher. The number of Housing Commission homes available is totally inadequate.

A spin-off from the problem of housing has been the problem of attracting labour in vital service areas. People are not attracted to an area where it is hard to find a place to live. They are not attracted to an area where, if you do find a place to live, it costs the earth to live there. The housing problem has now been aggravated by rising interest rates, another by-product

of the boom, which have been imposed in an effort to direct capital to development projects and away from housing construction.

Other social problems created by rapid development have become a matter of concern to the Latrobe Valley community. Youth homelessness, teenage delinquency, stress on the family and health problems are some examples. It is through Government initiative that the impact of some of these problems can be softened.

Yet public sector cuts have resulted in the freezing of staff ceilings in relevant Government agencies. For example, in the Latrobe Valley, the regional Department of Community Welfare Services is four under establishment, the Housing Commission is operating with five fewer staff than its establishment and Early Childhood Development Programme has five frozen positions. In addition, many schools in the electorate I represent are understaffed and school maintenance programmes are inadequately funded. School building programmes have also been stopped.

The abandonment of the Community Youth Support Scheme has left a gap in coping with the needs of unemployed youth, particularly as alternative projects at the local level will not replace the services offered by Community Youth Support Scheme; and, theoretically, these alternatives are State-organized.

If one questions who has benefited from the development in the Latrobe Valley, it is clear that considerable financial benefit has accrued to those with skills in great demand for large-scale construction work, land speculators and landlords, some businesses, and some financial institutions. However, the evidence demonstrates that there have been many losers. I have mentioned some of the problems. There are also many people who have found their livelihoods threatened—farmers have been pushed from their properties, small businesses have been forced to match the wages paid on construction sites, and those in the Latrobe Valley's only real decentralized indus-

tries, the manufacturing industries, are being squeezed by the results of the resources boom.

Why has the resources boom necessitated decision-making behind closed doors? Why has it resulted in growing inequities in the distribution of wealth in our community? Firstly, as I have shown, we have not been able to handle the rate and scale of development. The types of changes that our social, physical, political and economic environment have had to adjust to have been too great at the national level, but even greater at the level of the resource region.

Government shenanigans over inflation, the money supply, capital inflow, loan raising and interest rates have created chaos for most Australians and, paradoxically, for instrumentalities like the State Electricity Commission of Victoria which are supposed to be at the forefront of the boom. At the State level, the State Government is pushing its jobs from growth strategy which is its attempt to catch up on the boom before it passes Victoria by.

We in the Latrobe Valley have experienced some of the direct consequences of the Victorian Government's method of pursuing development. The Loy Yang lockout; Environment Protection Authority cave-ins over environmental regulations; glossy, but superficial assessments of social and economic impacts of major economic proposals—these are some of the fruits of its policy.

The Government's deal with Alcoa shows that too much power was committed to Alcoa, too soon; the conditions under which Alcoa was to receive its power were grossly over-generous; our State Government over-committed itself to the supply of infrastructure, notably power lines; and inadequate attention was paid to the most appropriate form of taxation return to the State.

Over recent years many commentators have speculated about the future of the resources boom. Max Walsh has commented:

Australia . . . in the eighties will be a land where the rich get richer and the poor get more

numerous and poorer . . . it will be a country on the verge of losing its democratic values even though they will be superficially on view through the continued existence of institutions such as the Parliament and three-yearly elections.

Under present directions, this is not only a scenario for Australia but, more particularly, for Victoria and the Latrobe Valley.

Mr Speaker, I am here tonight as the representative of people who hope, and continue to hope, that resource development will be of benefit to them. We live in a region which desperately requires good management. We require policies which aim for open Government and a fair distribution of resources. I will be spending my time in Parliament fighting to bring about such policies.

On the motion of Mr KENNETT (Minister of Housing), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until next day.

FORESTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Forests)—
I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It proposes a number of minor and unrelated amendments to the Forests Act 1958. Clause 1 contains the usual provisions relating to citation and commencement.

Clauses 2 and 3 (1) transfer powers from the Governor in Council to the Minister. These powers relate to the granting of leave of absence to the Chairman of the Forests Commission and other commissioners and to the appointment of deputies during the absence of the chairman or a commissioner. These are matters of relatively common occurrence and it is appropriate that they be left to the discretion of the Minister rather than the Governor in Council.

Clause 3 (2) inserts a new subsection into section 17 of the principal Act which entitles the Chairman of the Forests Commission and each commissioner to leave of absence for recreation. Although the principal Act implies that recreation leave may be granted, it is not explicit and it is desirable to

make the legislation clear. The amendment will entitle the chairman and each commissioner to four weeks' recreation leave in each year and is subject to the approval of the Minister.

Clause 4 repeals that part of section 46 of the principal Act which requires notice of intention to dedicate reserved forest to be published in four consecutive issues of the *Government Gazette* and two consecutive issues of a newspaper circulating in the area concerned.

This requirement has remained unaltered for 65 years. It is a costly process and completely outmoded in the light of present-day involvement of the public in land use decisions. Most dedications of reserved forest these days result from Government decisions to accept recommendations of the Land Conservation Council, which have already been widely publicized.

The effect of the amendment is to require notice to be published once only in a newspaper circulating in the area and this is in line with similar provisions relating to the reservation of land in the Crown Land (Reserves) Act.

Clause 5 increases the amount of money specified in section 48 (1) of the principal Act in relation to the purchase of land in any year to \$3 million. The existing provisions of section 48 (1) of the Act limit expenditure on land purchased by the Governor in Council on behalf of the Crown in any one financial year to not more than \$200 000 without the express sanction of Parliament. This financial limit was last increased in 1948.

Since that time the Forests Commission's role in purchasing land on behalf of the Crown has increased substantially, particularly with respect to marginal farmland for pine planting and land with conservation and fire protection values in places like the Dandenongs and Mount Macedon.

Each year a State Forests Works and Services Bill is presented to Parliament which authorizes the commission to spend money on purchasing land. The commission also acts as the purchasing agent for the Ministry for Conservation