

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN (Dundas) - I have the honour to represent the electorate of Dundas in this Parliament and in this debate I desire to direct attention to certain practical aspects of decentralization as they affect Victoria. Firstly, I shall give in this short dissertation some background facts on the physical characteristics of the Dundas electorate in order to put my comments in proper perspective.

The Dundas electorate comprises an area of 6,300 square miles. It is bounded by Hamilton on the south, the South Australian border on the west, the Little Desert on the north and Stawell and Great Western-of champagne fame -on the east. The electorate encompasses the industries of dairying, beef cattle and the three W's - wool, wheat and wine. It possesses the largest concentration of fine wool sheep in the world and is one of the most fertile and pastoral areas in Australia.

The electorate includes the City of Hamilton and the Town of Stawell as its major centres, with other smaller towns such as Edenhope, Rupanyup, Murtoa, Balmoral, Apsley, Goroke and Harrow. These towns possess all the facilities required for modern life and good community spirit, yet the development of their population has been slow. Why is this? It is because, like most country towns throughout Australia, these centres have been losing up to 60 per cent of their school leavers to the metropolis. They come to Melbourne in search of better education and job opportunities. The urgent need, as I see it, is to broaden the economic base of our rural towns and cities. By providing greater employment opportunities in fields unassociated with rural areas we can insulate these towns from the vagaries which can beset rural industries. Melbourne has problems of overcrowding and high land costs, and problems with transport and pollution. However, in Hamilton and Stawell 98 per cent of homes are sewered; there is unlimited water; there is land with all services at reasonable cost; and excellent education facilities-for example, there are schools in Hamilton which attract students from all States of Australia and Singapore, Thailand and other parts of SouthEast Asia. I venture to suggest that the Stawell Technical School is one of the best in Victoria.

There are excellent cultural outlets, such as the Hamilton art gallery, which is the finest provincial gallery in Australia and now houses the famous Paul Sandby collection. This was acquired with the assistance of the State Government, and it is a collection which is equalled only by that of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth.

These towns provide various sporting outlets. All honorable members are aware that the name "Stawell" is synonymous with athletics and with the Stawell Gift. Last week I opened a rubberized bitumen track in that city which is one of only three such tracks in Victoria. These are progressive areas with great community spirit and involvement. They are ideal places in which to bring up children.

Until recently I was a member of the Hamilton City Council. Four years ago that council took certain initiatives, in co-operation with the Department of State Development, to encourage industrialists to set up in the city. Incentives to industrialists include cheap land, five years free rates and the provision of finance. So far some 600 job opportunities have been created in Hamilton due to the fact that the council, in co-operation with the Department of State Development was prepared to go out and sell itself.

Country towns and cities such as Stawell and Hamilton have a big advantage in the field of industrial development. They can provide a stable work force compared with a turnover in Melbourne in some cases of 200 per cent per annum. This is a matter which is given great

importance by industrialists who have visited Hamilton.

Recently I discussed the problem of decentralization with an industrialist. He was prepared to decentralize his factory. He spoke of a turnover of labour in the city of as much as 130 per cent each year. He also said that as soon as an operator is trained at a cost of \$600 he goes looking for extra money, and that the problem will worsen when there is full employment. However, in country areas labour turnover is in the order of 25 per cent to 30 per cent. More and more emphasis is being placed on this factor by industrialists, and it is an important advantage which is offered by country Victoria, and one which will become more and more evident in the future. Employment opportunities are being created in Hamilton; not just factory jobs, but all the associated commercial services. It is said that for each wage earner three people are employed to provide him with services. This is helping to retain our young in Hamilton and, by retaining them in the country, we help to solve the problems of the metropolis. City people must be taught that it is in their interests to ensure that decentralization works. By solving the problems of the country many of the problems of the city are also solved.

Country areas of Victoria are experiencing an unprecedented boom at present. Industrial and commercial activity are at their highest point. There are problems arising from this growth, such as shortage of housing. These are growing pains which are being tackled. At present 17 Housing Commission houses are being built in Hamilton, an extra 37 have been allocated for this year and 10 lone-person units and houses are expected to be provided by the Decentralized Industry Housing Authority when it gets into gear. To supplement this the Hamilton council has now decided to build ten houses itself. A sum of \$600,000 has been made available this year through co-operative housing societies in Hamilton and \$500,000 in Stawell. Private home building is at maximum capacity.

The biggest disadvantage faced by country industries is telephone charges. They have become an enormous part of a country industry's overheads and they have recently been increased. The granting of telephone rebates is entirely under the control of the Federal Government, and we hope for some relief in this area. By granting double tax deductions or the like, the Federal Government could make a massive contribution to the decentralization cause.

I welcome the additional incentives to country industries which have been outlined by the Treasurer. These, added to pay-roll tax rebates, training and removal allowances, freight rebates, rate concessions and finance now amount to an impressive list and show that this Government intends that its decentralization policy should work.

The implementation of the tenpoint plan will make a major contribution. The Education Department will expand its regionalization objectives in western Victoria next January as will the Social Welfare Department.

I hope that Hamilton and Stawell will benefit from these moves towards regionalization of Government departments. Hamilton put up a most impressive case for the establishment of the fourth university in that city and its case for an external study centre of the fourth university is unbeatable, taking into account population, geography, existing education enrolments and facilities, sporting facilities and any other criterion.

Mr. Speaker, there is no magic in decentralization. We in country Victoria fool ourselves if we expect industrialists to come knocking on our doors, although towns which have been active in this field consider that the tide has turned. Strong industrial development comes from sheer hard

work and persistence. In Hamilton's case, a strong industry promotion committee headed by a tireless mayor has had considerable success because it is prepared to work and to seek out potential employers of labour. The policies of the State Government provide the bones and muscles of the decentralization body. The flesh and blood must be supplied by country Victorians who are convinced that they have the product and who are prepared to go and sell themselves, with the assistance of the Department of State Development.

The towns and shires which cry out that they are being ignored in decentralization moves should have a good look at themselves and see what they are doing for themselves. We must remember on the one hand that there are some hundreds of towns in Victoria and that competition is keen. On the other hand Hamilton is at present considering applications from six new industries which desire to set up there with an employment potential of 600.

For many years I fought, as many others had fought, for the exemption of rural industries from pay-roll tax. The granting of that exemption to decentralized industries is one of the greatest boosts given to the country. In inflationary times wage bills will continue to rise and the value of the rebate will continually increase.

The Treasurer has informed the House that this financial year the rebate will amount to about \$6.5 million. That is \$6.5 million in revenue which this State is giving up. What galls me, Mr. Speaker, is that some \$3 million of this rebate will be siphoned off to Canberra as additional income tax. This in effect constitutes a direct subsidy from this Government to the Commonwealth Government in Canberra. The same situation has applied with rebates given by this State on probate duty on primary producers' estates. The effect of Victoria reducing probate duties on such estates is that Federal estate duty then increases-again this becomes a direct subsidy to the Commonwealth Government.

What I have fought for in these areas, Mr. Speaker, and what I believe should be achieved, is that where a rebate is granted by this State, whether for pay-roll tax, probate duty or the like, that rebate should be preserved to the recipient in full by the Federal tax or duty being assessed as if the rebate had not been allowed. The present situation is unfair both to the State and to the recipient of the rebate.

I welcome the announcement in the Budget speech that there will be immediate expenditure on the Pleasant Creek Special School for mentally retarded persons in Stawell. I have been advised today by the Minister of Health that tenders for the first stage of the project will be called within four weeks. It is estimated that the cost will be \$100,000. This will provide a day training centre and increased hostel accommodation at the school.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the Dundas electorate covers 6,300 square miles. Currently we hear the cry for „one vote-one value" and I desire to comment briefly on this concept as it affects larger rural electorates. "One-vote -one-value" means that any voter in the State shall have an equal right to elect his member of Parliament or that each has an equal share in his member. A logical extension of this concept, I believe, is that each elector is entitled to equal quality of service, or the opportunity of equal quality, from his member.

By using the 1970 election figures, I shall illustrate my point by comparing my electorate with that of Richmond. Dundas covers 6,300 square miles and had 18,433 voters. Richmond has 21,339 voters but covers only 3.57 square miles. As well as the size of the electorates their distance from Parliament must be considered. The Dundas electorate is 185 miles from Melbourne and

Richmond is two miles. From Hamilton where I live to Murtoa or Rupanyup is more than 100 miles, and because of that fact those areas must have limited access to me, although I endeavour to travel the whole electorate each month. These are factors which must be recognized and given due weight in any redistribution.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity of paying tribute to two former representatives of the Dundas electorate. The first is Sir William McDonald, a former Speaker of this House. Throughout the electorate there are monuments to the work that Sir William performed. That work has set a pattern for me as one of his successors. That work has made my job much easier.

I should also like to pay tribute to my immediate predecessor, Mr. E. W. Lewis, who distinguished himself by his hard work in the electorate and on the Parliamentary Meat Industry Committee.