

my electorate, to write letters, and to keep in touch with my electorate office. I am not being mean-spirited. I will not move a motion now, but it is probably time that the House set a date by which the Premier or his nominee should tell us when something will be done with this place. When I was Minister for Disability Services, on a number of occasions I sat in the corridor with people in tears because there was no room for them to talk privately with a Minister. They had come to the end of their tether trying to look after a disabled child or because of some other problem.

I have heard the rhetoric. I have sat through the term of four or five Premiers now, and they were always going to do something but it was always after the next Budget or election. It is about time that this House suggested a date to the Premier - perhaps 1 July would be a good time - for him or his nominee to tell us what he will do about this House.

Mr Pental: You move it!

Mr MINSON: The member should move it and I will support it. I do not mind moving it, but I want to frame the motion so that it will achieve what I want.

Mr Pental interjected.

Mr MINSON: That is true. It was discussed in Cabinet. On a number of occasions it was discussed in detail, but it was as usual never the right time. It will never be the right time. If we do not move, as a House, that time will never come. This should be done not for our comfort but for the benefit of the people of Western Australia.

This motion should be supported by the Opposition. The Leader of the House does not intend to put it to a vote because it is not necessary. It is time for change, beyond this one.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [10.45 am]: I would like to see some bipartisan activity in this House. Driving to Parliament today I heard the public debate on the parliamentary superannuation scheme. At some stage we must address this matter because the public is giving us a hiding. We have been trying to deal with this issue for some years, but some members always promote a negative point of view. I appreciate that this will happen at some other time.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 12 March.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [10.46 am]: In the year 1801 a Frenchman named Thomas Timothee Vasse was washed overboard from a small boat that had been sent to recover marooned sailors from a place now known as Quindalup, to return them to Captain Nicholas Baudin's corvette, *Geographe*, as part of Baudin's voyages of discovery around south west Australia. While Vasse is almost certain to have drowned after falling overboard, stories persisted that he survived, living with local Aboriginal people for a number of years. This voyage and that incident play an important and educational part in the history and present day character of my electorate and the people whom I am proud to be able to represent in this Parliament.

Today, the Vasse area is the second fastest growing region in Australia. Its annual population growth rate of 6.8 per cent - compared with a state average of 1.9 per cent - is a reflection of its Mediterranean climate, clean air and water, outstanding natural attractions and vast array of both natural and human resources. The Busselton and Dunsborough region is the premier tourist destination in Western Australia, having surpassed attractive but less enthralling places such as Mandurah as the place that most West Australians choose to visit for holidays.

Today Vasse hosts a number of mineral sand mines; contains arguably the most productive agricultural soils in the State, namely the Marybrook loams; grows grapes from which people such as Albert Haak and Krister Jonsson produce the best wines in Australia; provides the best recreational fishing experiences in the State; and, has attractions such as Yallingup Cave, the Busselton Jetty, Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse, outstanding restaurants such as Café Ibis at Dunsborough, accommodation facilities such as the Mandalay Holiday Resort in Busselton which has won national awards for its presentation; historical sites such as Wonnerup House near Ludlow and Minninup House near Capel, together with a wide range of arts and crafts shops and other tourist attractions. All of these things combine to make Vasse the place to live and holiday.

Two other features of my electorate are integral to its character. The first, Mr Speaker, is agriculture. Although most growth in Vasse is occurring in the various townsites that are spread throughout the area, it is the complex range of agricultural activities taking place as the backdrop to these towns that creates a uniquely mixed rural and urban environment which is attractive to town residents, tourists and farmers alike.

The second integral feature of Vasse is the quality of its natural environment. Although only a few people may be aware of the many rare or unique plants and animals that exist within the Vasse region, all visitors and residents accept that the natural environment of the region is special: The wide sandy beaches and clean waters of Geographe Bay, the rugged coastal beauty of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, the jarrah forests of the Whicher Range, the statuesque tuart forest at Ludlow and the tranquillity of Meelup. All of these natural features combine to make Vasse a truly special place.

I could continue to sing the praises of my electorate for several hours, but I believe I have a more important role to play in this, my maiden speech; namely, to advise members of this House that Vasse is experiencing a number of serious problems that require favourable consideration by decision makers both here in Perth and at the local government level. First, the pressures on agriculture are often adverse and unrelenting. In spite of the favourable climate and large areas of productive soils, the price of many agricultural commodities is close to or below the cost of production. In particular, many beef producers are hurting badly as a direct result of disputes between the United States of America and the European Union on their respective levels of agricultural subsidies. With Australian agricultural subsidies equating to less than 5 per cent of total farm income, North American subsidies 30 per cent, and some European countries exceeding 80 per cent of farmer's annual income, there is no such thing as a level playing field for agriculture. Although State Governments can do little to correct these international inequities, it is nonetheless important that these problems should be remembered when Perth based decision makers prepare policies and laws that impact on rural Western Australians. For example, there is a strong case in support of uniform electricity and petrol prices throughout this great State of ours on the basis that the great bulk of our wealth is created in rural and pastoral Western Australia, but mostly spent in Perth. For metropolitan residents to subsidise country people is both natural and desirable. It is a good example of how urban residents can show their support for decentralisation and regional development. I therefore concur with the comments made by the member for Ningaloo who, two days ago in this House, pointed out to members the problems that his rural constituents are facing.

A second major force affecting agriculture in Vasse is the rezoning of agriculturally productive land and its subsequent subdivision into small urban or rural residential lots, or to farming units that are not economically viable. As urban centres grow, by necessity that growth is located upon productive agricultural land. Although I commend the councillors and staff of the Shires of Busselton and Capel for their efforts over the years to strike the right balance and to protect agriculturally important soils from adverse development, the State Government has an important role as well through the Ministry for Planning and the Valuer General's Department.

It is important that members understand how good quality agricultural land is lost. As urban areas expand towards genuine farming properties, the unimproved capital value of those properties increases because of the real or perceived increase in the urban subdivisional potential of those properties. In turn, local government rates increase every year to reflect those increased land values. However, throughout this entire process, the agricultural income of those same properties has rarely, if ever, increased, and the farmers' ability to pay for the high rates does not improve. Eventually, most farmers finding themselves in this position simply give up. They either sell their land, subdivide it themselves, or allow speculators or developers to do so, and more of this country's limited supply of high quality agricultural soils is lost forever beneath houses, roads, shopping centres and such like. This process reduces our wealth generating capacity and significantly disadvantages all future generations of Western Australia. This issue provides a major challenge for both state and local governments. I hope all political parties will accept the challenge of finding a way to resolve this unrelenting pressure for the long term good of us all.

Another agricultural issue is land rezoning through local or state planning schemes, where privately owned land has development constraints placed upon it in order to achieve aims considered by the general community to be desirable. This process has been described to me as acquisition by stealth. In these circumstances, the most appropriate action is for the community to reflect its ambitions for future use or protection of that land by paying compensation through outright purchase or making other arrangements to reasonably satisfy the needs of the landowners who have used their own money to purchase the land in the first instance.

The second major issue I wish to raise relates to the social and human problems caused by the extremely high growth rates of the Vasse region. We should not become complacent, or naive, and assume that growth is, in itself, capable of delivering the end goals that a community agrees by general consensus are desirable. In Vasse, the annual growth rate is 6.8 per cent. Dunsborough's growth over the past 10 years has been 15 per cent per annum. This annual growth rate is placing great pressure on many of the services generally provided by both local and state governments. For example, the Vasse-Leeuwin Health Service, which covers the Shires of Busselton and Augusta-Margaret River,

has serviced a population growth of 47.6 per cent since 1986. One consequence of this growth is an increase of 38 per cent in the number of projected cases to be treated in the three local hospitals over the next two years. Although the Busselton District Hospital is the most efficient hospital in Western Australia, with an excellent quality of care combined with the lowest dollar cost per patient in the State, it requires \$2m in capital funding and another \$1m in operating funds to cope with this projected increase in patient numbers.

The tragedy of the Gracetown cliff collapse has highlighted the important work conducted by the Family and Children's Services arm of government in attending to the human needs of the Vasse community. Private service suppliers such as South West Counselling Services are unable to meet the community's demand for counselling, even with the introduction of a limited user pays system of cost reimbursement.

I am sure the Government, of which I am very pleased to be a member, is well aware of these issues. The new Busselton airport, which is to be opened in two days' time, will significantly increase tourism opportunities in the south west. In particular, those tourism opportunities will be improved during the shoulder and off-peak times outside the summer and autumn school holidays. However, the airport will in turn place greater pressures on the region's existing infrastructure. For example, although the Busselton bypass will reduce traffic flow through the Busselton townsite by only 15 per cent, the diverted traffic will comprise virtually all the heavy haulage vehicles which, because of their size, weight and limited manoeuvrability, are having a greater impact on traffic safety on the existing Bussell Highway within built up areas. I urge the Government to do everything possible to bring forward the date for commencement of construction of the Busselton bypass and I give notice that I shall be actively exploring with the appropriate Ministers every opportunity to speed up this most important project.

Everyone in the south west agrees that the existing Busselton police and courthouse complex is totally and woefully inadequate. It requires urgent replacement. In addition, the police station requires three additional officers to allow it to operate on a 24 hour, seven day a week basis to cope with the prodigious population growth.

The final issue I wish to raise, Mr Speaker, involves the natural environment. I suspect that some members of this place may have the perception that I am a greenie or environmentalist. If so, I wear those tags with some pride, since they mean that my electorate expects me to defend and protect the important environmental values of the Vasse electorate. However, perceptions are often deceptive. While I commend the efforts of people such as Rachael Siewert, Bob and Anne Goodale, Otto Mueller, Brenda Newby and others who have worked for many years for various important conservation causes, some within the environmental movement are little more than political activists, attempting to further their Marxist, closed market economy visions by proclaiming themselves as supporters of the environment when, in reality, they are simply anti-development.

The concept of wilderness is just such an anti-development concept. It requires large areas of land to be locked up for mostly false or inappropriate environmental reasons, while restricting or excluding wealth generating activities such as mining, sustainable timber harvesting and most tourism. It is worth noting that definitive publications such as "The State of the Environment: Australia" published last year by the Federal Government, conclude that, on balance, the Australian environment is in a relatively healthy state. Although this should not diminish our efforts to repair the damage that has been done by past ignorance, the doom and gloom position that is often peddled by people with political rather than environmental agendas should be strongly rejected.

For this reason, and in spite of my perceived greenness, I place on record my belief that the Government's current policy of allowing mineral exploration and mining in national parks and nature reserves subject to stringent protective conditions is entirely appropriate and desirable. Further, I affirm that the Government's primary focus on tackling the problems of salinity is also accurate as salinity is without any doubt the number one environmental issue facing Western Australia.

As a professional geologist and zoologist, who has worked in the mining industry for more than 20 years, one of my major tasks over the next four years will be to show to any who will listen that development and conservation can, and must, go hand in hand. Without a strong and dynamic economy, we will not be able to afford the expenditures needed to protect and enhance our environment. If people doubt the veracity of this statement, I invite them to visit virtually any of the east European countries or those of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics where environmental catastrophes are a dime a dozen. At the same time, without a healthy and diverse environment represented by adequate protection of our soils, water, air and biodiversity, our standard of living may be high, but our quality of life may be so low as to make life barely worth living.

I shall finish my speech by thanking a number of people, while very briefly touching on some important issues which time does not permit me to discuss in any detail. I thank the outgoing member for Vasse, Barry Blaikie, for handing over to me an electorate that has grown and prospered under his 25 years of care. May he happily retire to the Internet and his recently formed Cape Naturaliste Society, which members of this House and the other place may wish

to join to help celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of Nicholas Baudin's voyages of discovery as I mentioned earlier.

I say thank you to the many Liberals who have helped me over many years with moral support, vociferous discussion on issues as enthralling as elephant bird eggs - I thank Kevan Smith - and physical support during the election campaigns. I also thank Ron Maidment, who turned 90 years of age last month, who will forever be blamed for being the first person to have put the idea into my head in 1987 that I should consider standing for Parliament. I record the strong support given to me over many years by the late Lionel Berryman of Albany, who sadly passed away last October.

To my wife, Carolina, and my mother and brothers and their families, and to my friends and youthful influences - here I list a number: the Rains, Palmer and Danischewsky families; Percy Penguin; classmates from St Louis; roommates from St Thomas More College; Rotarians; Busselton Naturalist Club members; the new year's eve camp crew; mining industry associates and many others - I say that their support, friendship and argumentativeness over many years have been greatly appreciated.

To all those in the farming community of the south west, whether I explored their properties for minerals or more recently worked with them on land care projects, I say that I shall not forget their contribution to the economic wellbeing of this State. Although some of them may be suffering now from tough economic times and others from decisions made by previous Governments on matters relating to drainage rates, I shall stand by them.

I thank the diverse mix of people who make up my electorate of Vasse for their support. I support the sentiments of people such as George Webb, who represents the Noongar people of Busselton, that land rights in their current format are not bringing Australians together, but instead are dividing them and are even working against the reconciliation process. I am pleased to make a personal commitment to oppose racism and prejudice wherever and whenever possible, and I pledge to do more than just "have an Aboriginal person to Christmas lunch in 1980", as was proffered by a certain south west personality as a token offering to this cause.

To Allie Scott and members of the Busselton Jetty Management Committee I say keep up the good work - I have not forgotten my goal of seeking a refund of Department of Conservation and Land Management royalties for logs used as piles in jetty reconstruction.

To the people of Vasse, I submit that growth is inevitable, but we must devise ways by which we decide our own future, rather than having it imposed upon us from outside or by a laissez faire failure on our part to control our own destinies. We cannot, and should not, put up artificial barriers to growth and development. Instead we should plan our own future and then act to ensure it is achieved.

I look forward to working with this Government over the next four years to achieve continued economic development for the State which, in turn, will ensure the promised social dividends are paid. I congratulate the Speaker on his election to the position and, with my parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the House, I look forward to four years of open and honest efforts to govern for the betterment of all Western Australians.

[Applause.]