

A turbulent winter

The toughest winter for years has come and gone. It's been a case of back to the forties. According to the weather bureau the Roaring Forties have for the first time for a number of years exerted their full force on our islands. Beautiful snow and proper, fierce, winter winds, and for at least most of the state, good winter rainfalls. For those of us receiving much of our exercise crossing the level plateau of life beyond our own roaring forties, it was a Tasmanian winter as it should be: cold and tough enough to frighten a Sydney speculator back across Bass Strait.

This fine sharp winter saw turbulence of a different kind, centred on the office of Governor. Whether republican or monarchist the controversy surrounding the recent gubernatorial debate is, or should be, a sharp reminder that the State Governor holds a position that is an extremely important part of government and that the holder of this position is no mere figurehead.

Rather than being allowed to degenerate into a discussion of the personalities concerned, the recent events centred on Government House

should encourage reflection on the role of the Governor, and, critically, whether we need to reform the process for selecting the person to carry such responsibility. The reader's attention is drawn, in this issue, to the opinion column by Associate Professor Richard Herr: "Vice-regal 'insurance'."

In this year of our official bicentennial, we examine, in the spring and summer issues, some aspects of Tasmanian life and how they have changed over two centuries. We have even managed to find the oldest (European) "graffiti" on our islands.

Finally, we wish to honour the memory of our late Premier, Jim Bacon, and to convey our condolences to his wife, Honey, and family.

