

them of representation to the best of my ability. The people of the Bentleigh electorate are not to be taken for granted by any politician or political party. The local member must earn his keep. One has only to consult voting patterns in the Bentleigh electorate to realize that that is true. I represent an electorate with the highest density of small retailers in the metropolitan area. There are approximately 1000 traders, who employ approximately 4000 people. Their annual turnover is approximately \$75 million. Those people express, in no uncertain terms, their rejection of the Opposition's proposal to deregulate shop trading hours. At meeting after meeting with the chamber of commerce that I convened to monitor their views, the message came through loud and clear. The Opposition policy brought fear and uncertainty. It was a destabilizing influence on a wide range of retailing interests. The shop trading hours policy of the Opposition was rejected out of hand by all but the largest retailers in the Bentleigh electorate.

I also represent approximately 2600 small and large manufacturers who produce a wide range of consumer goods. The great majority of the manufacturers pay huge workers compensation premiums, some as high as \$500 million annually. During the past three years I visited almost all of their premises where the response to the Government's proposed changes to workers compensation was overwhelming. On all occasions I left the employers with a brochure containing a coupon that could be sent to the Premier's office requesting information about the Government's proposed workers compensation policy. On the last count at the Premier's office several thousand coupons had been returned. In one typical case a woman running a small curtain making business employing two permanent staff and one temporary staff pays a premium of \$1300 a year. In the seven years in which she has been operating one accident has occurred which involved \$40 for treatment and two days off work for the employee involved.

I shall comment briefly on the scurrilous rubbish appearing in media advertisements inserted by major workers compensation insurance companies. The electronic and print media were swamped by an estimated \$2 million advertising campaign. The advertisements depicted the Public Service and hospital system management as bumbling and incompetent idiots. The advertisements were a gross insult to those people. Fortunately for the people of Victoria, this massive waste of contributors' premiums to promote greedy overseas companies fell on deaf ears.

I look forward to the introduction of the long overdue proposed legislation, which will be for the benefit of Victorian employers and employees. It would be a brave Opposition that would dare to deprive Victoria's employers and employees of this desperately needed reform. It is a reform of what can best be described as an El Dorado for doctors and lawyers. I look forward to servicing this Government over the next four years. These years will go a long way towards further reducing unemployment, eliminating poverty and bringing about social justice.

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—I join other honourable members in congratulating the Speaker of the House on his re-election to his high office. I take particular pleasure in saying this at a time when you, Mr Acting Speaker, are occupying the chair. Having been in this place on a previous occasion, and enjoyed your friendship and warmth of fellowship as the honourable member for Preston, I look forward to working with you and other honourable members. The Speaker has a difficult job to perform. It is a job that requires considerable impartiality. I am certain that the Speaker will undertake that job with confidence. I am also sure that the Speaker and other honourable members will conduct the affairs of the House with a fine balance.

I express my goodwill to the electors of Hawthorn. They gave my party a resounding win in the Hawthorn electorate. The majority was more than double. In a large measure that was attributed to the regard in which the previous member and the Liberal Party are held in this State. It gives me considerable pleasure to have the opportunity of serving the Hawthorn electorate. It has been extended in boundary, which is a matter of significance to people who now reside in the Hawthorn electorate. In reply to an interjection from the honourable member for Melbourne, I point out that the vote was divided exactly in half, with the exception of one vote. There was one more vote in Hawthorn than in Camberwell.

The people of the Hawthorn electorate are looking forward to my contribution, recognizing the broader electorates. It is essentially a community-based electorate. It does not have significant industry or any rural content, as the electorate that I previously represented in this place had. None the less, people in the electorate are affected by the decisions of Government. People are affected by the land tax decisions of this Administration and think about them daily. Honourable members heard earlier in this debate of people who vote on education or some other matter, such as land tax. The point is that all of the people affected by land tax are not wealthy landowners. Many of them are retired people who have been hard working and have put their life savings into properties, small though they may be. They may invest in inner-suburban municipalities. With the valuations of land increasing as they have in the past those people are now required to pay excessive land tax bills as a consequence of the directions of the Government.

I acknowledge publicly the efforts and performance of my predecessor, Walter Jona, a person who served his electorate, Parliament and the people of this State with considerable distinction for 21 years. Walter is a person of the highest integrity and morals. It is fair to say that he is held in the utmost esteem by all who have the privilege of knowing him. That makes it for me a doubly important opportunity to follow in his footsteps.

I also acknowledge the effort and the role of those who supported me in my move back into the Parliamentary process. At the top of that list I put my family—my wife and my children—who have made major commitments and sacrifices as we have moved our family home from one region to another. I acknowledge the friendship of the people in the electorate of Hawthorn, not all Liberal supporters, who have been forthcoming with their friendship as we have moved into the community.

Hawthorn may be regarded by many as a centre for education. Certainly it has a large number of State schools and a good many private schools as well, and I now make a plea for two of those schools. Although the Minister for Education is not present in the Chamber, I am sure the matter will be brought to his attention. I look forward to the development that must occur at Swinburne Institute of Technology. A major effort is being made by that institution to obtain funds from the Federal Government. I know the Minister is aware of that. He was in the electorate a week ago for discussions with the school. I seek his support and encouragement for those young people who seek tertiary education through that college. As I said, the matter is currently before the Federal Government seeking substantial funding so that that facility can be redeveloped.

I also draw attention to the plight of the Hawthorn West Primary School, an older school that is falling behind in its facilities. A good deal of attention needs to be given to it.

I recall that in 1976, when I first spoke in this place, I mentioned the question of industrial relations. Given my background, I suppose that would not have surprised honourable members. I recall commenting at the time that the community was moving to a point where it would no longer accept the determination of industrial matters by the bully boys, and where it would look for both sides of the industrial fence to be prepared to enter into a contract that would be enforceable by law. I believe that move is now afoot within the community. When I first expressed the thought, it obviously was not getting anywhere in the event that there was not yet a groundswell of community opinion. With the more recent industrial action that has occurred throughout Australia, and particularly here in Victoria—especially the recent dispute at the Royal Children's Hospital—I believe there is now a good deal of empathy and support for a situation where both sides have their contract enforceable by law and where unions are not able to bully and hold the community to ransom, especially in a dispute which affects the lives of young children.

I refer now to free enterprise. In many ways it is the most important and the most threatened constituency in this State. It is threatened not merely because there are Labor Governments Federally and in Victoria, but also because the Victorian Government is the most anti-business Government, the most extreme Government, the one least sensitive to those fragile conditions that are necessary for prosperity and enterprise.

Some people still harbour the illusion that the Premier and the Treasurer are the acceptable faces of socialism. The notion of them as seductresses is frightening enough. However, the truth is that, with their gimmicks and their platitudes, they have seduced many into a totally false belief that they are concerned to see enterprise flourish. I invite honourable members to consider the record. Never has it been truer that actions speak louder than words. On 27 March 1982 the Premier said:

We do not see any need to increase State taxes in any area.

He also said that a State Labor Government would cut electricity and gas prices, public transport fares and hospital charges. The facts are that taxes and charges have increased by 55.4 per cent; gas prices have risen by 32 per cent; water rates have increased by 28 per cent; petrol tax on motor spirit has risen by 48 per cent and on diesel fuel by 28 per cent; pay-roll tax has been extended; land tax has been increased, as it affects private enterprise, and the Cain Government has introduced the financial institutions duty. These are daggers plunged at the very heart of business in times when it is least able to cope.

I remind honourable members that all of these actions were taken by a Government that claimed to be capable in economic management and to be concerned to see enterprise flourish. Clearly, the Government does not understand what business is about; it does not realize that to produce wealth, to employ people or even to pay the taxes that it would raise against them requires a private sector with funds left over to invest in service capital.

I shall not leave the matter there. Victoria now has the highest tax per head of any State in Australia.

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I understand that an honourable member is entitled to read his maiden speech, but I believe the honourable member for Hawthorn was a member of this Chamber some years ago. Nevertheless, I see that he is reading his speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—In an earlier debate today honourable members heard a great deal about Queensland. The taxes in this State are at more than twice the level of Queensland's taxes. The closest we come is to the taxes levied by "Nifty Nev" in New South Wales where the taxes are 20 per cent lower than those in Victoria.

I make the point that, not only have taxes and charges risen by 54 per cent, but that they have done so in a period when price increases have accounted for only 22.2 per cent. Is it any wonder that the small business sector and the business community generally are going out backwards? I invite honourable members opposite to study the bankruptcy situation in this country. They will see from the next edition of the bankruptcy report that Victoria is a leader in the number of companies that are going out backwards as a result of the economic decisions taken by the Victorian Government. With that record, the Premier suggests that this State is moving forward! It is certainly moving, but in the wrong direction.

I invite honourable members to consider what has happened to a number of specific companies, such as Email Ltd, in Dandenong, a company in the high technology industry, a company producing refrigerated container units for the transport industry that is leaving Victoria and going to New Zealand because it cannot cope with the costs that are being created by the Victorian Government. Honourable members who examine the position of a laundry in Hawthorn will find that it has been denied Government contracts as a consequence of not being prepared to force its employees to join a union. I cite the instance of a canvas maker in Ferntree Gully where the same thing has occurred. Another more recent example is the remand centre site where the Government has forced four professional architects to join a union so that work on the site can continue.

I shall quote briefly from a press release by the Australian Chamber of Manufactures which sets out clearly the areas in which the Victorian Government is letting down the business community.