

sultation is being stifled and it is absurd to speak about altering boundaries without proper consultation. As honourable members would be aware, the city commissioners have proposed a maximum of twelve months' consultation. They are not being given sufficient time and I deplore the rush towards holding an election.

This is one policy which is easy of implementation and there are many Government policies which are difficult to implement. It is easy to provide for the holding of Melbourne City Council elections and this is one promise which can be easily honoured.

However, there is a lack of an agreed plan for the future of the central business district. There are also problems regarding people who work in the City of Melbourne and those who live in the City of Melbourne. There is conflict between the residential sector and the business sector.

The Government has shown that it has been indecisive about the mall. I read with some joy that Melbourne was to have a mall without trams, but the next minute, Melbourne is to have a mall with trams. I find it inconceivable. I was thrilled that the mall was not to have trams but apparently the Government had second thoughts about the matter and now trams will travel through the mall.

I turn to the operations of the Victoria Police which is of some interest to me because in Brighton we have a number of burglaries. In fact, there are about six a day. The promise has been made of one additional police officer for our area in the year 1983-84, so I read with interest the statement that it was proposed that in its first year in office, the Government was to increase police recruitment from 650 to 1000 and to increase the Budget allocation for the Victoria Police by about 6 per cent. I have not heard very much about that, certainly not since the promise was made, and I ask the Government to go carefully through its promises and make decisions on which ones it will fulfil and which ones it will not and inform the public.

I hope that in the electorate I represent the Government continues the beach reclamation programme which was instituted by the former Government. Honourable members would agree that our beaches are an asset and they are used by all Victorians and I trust the Government will continue the commitment of pumping sand and generally assisting in that area.

I also ask the Government to continue its maintenance of schools in the electorate which I represent as those schools are very old. I am concerned for the children of Brighton that they have adequate facilities and that the very good staff are not compelled to work in sub-standard buildings.

Finally, I rather feel my contribution has been a sad commentary of the performance of the Government to date, and I can only hope for better things.

Mr HARROWFIELD (Mitcham)—Mr Deputy Speaker, first of all I offer my congratulations to you on your election to the position of Chairman of Committees, and ask you to pass on to Mr Speaker my congratulations on his elevation to that important position.

It is 27 years since a member of the Australian Labor Party last rose in this House to speak on behalf of the residents of the Mitcham electorate. I am deeply honoured that on 3 April last, my local community elected me as its representative in this House. As its new member, I am most conscious of the responsibility that they have entrusted to me and to the Cain Labor Government. I thank them for that and look forward to representing all of them as a member of the Government party in this Parliament.

It was the late Bob Bray, as the Labor member for Box Hill in the previous Cain Government of 1952-55, who last flew the Labor banner on behalf of those suburbs that now comprise the electorate I represent. Since then there have been many dedicated people who, as party candidates, party members, workers and supporters, have sought the election of a Labor member for Mitcham. I thank those people and I am very happy to have been able to fulfil what those people

have so long and so tirelessly worked towards. I also thank those people who worked for and loyally supported me, and I specially thank my family for its encouragement and support.

I offer my congratulations to the new Premier, John Cain, who continues the fine record of the Cain family in the service of the State.

To enter Parliament as a new member of the new Cain Government offers an exciting challenge, not just for me personally but for my constituents in Mitcham. It is exciting because for the first time in almost three decades the majority of my local community has opted for a new beginning. They and the people of Victoria generally have clearly expressed their desire for something different, for something new, but most importantly, something better from their Government.

I do not see my election to this Parliament as an end in itself; it is simply a means to an end which is far more important and, I feel, more significant. It is a means of achieving, as a member of a Government with a deep commitment to social justice and reform, a better deal for the vast majority of Victorians whose needs over the past three decades have been forgotten and ignored.

Probably the single greatest challenge facing the Cain Government is to restore community confidence in the capacity of government to recognize and respond to change in a community like the Mitcham electorate.

The result on 3 April reflected the deep disillusionment with the *status quo* style of Government which was the trademark of the former Administration. Faced with fundamental changes to the social, economic and demographic structure of the community, the electorate responded by electing a Government with a capacity to deal with those changes creatively and compassionately.

The electorate of Mitcham which I represent contains the suburbs of Nunawading, Blackburn, Mitcham, Ringwood, Vermont, East Doncaster and Donvale. It represents a cross-section of the problems and challenges facing all Vic-

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torians. I shall briefly highlight three groups in the electorate who are in need of special attention.

The first of these is the elderly. One hears much about Australia being a lucky country, and, indeed, it is so for many people, but too often the old, the retired and the ill have been left out and denied access to those resources that have made Australia a lucky country. I was heartened by a reference in the Governor's Speech to the Government's deep concern at the failure of the Federal Government to assume its full responsibility for providing income security for the poor and disadvantaged, and I welcome the announcement that the Minister for Community Welfare Services will be establishing a task force to investigate and report on this important matter.

The State Government also has an important role to play in ensuring the income security of the elderly. Too often under the previous Government cynical attempts were made to downgrade and diminish the financial security of retired and elderly people. Amongst those cynical acts was the imposition of the State Electricity Commission supply charge—the \$18 charge every quarter that hits hardest people on low incomes and those who can least afford it.

The cynicism of the previous Government towards the elderly was also reflected on the comments made this morning during question time about the \$89 000 that was squandered on the production of a pamphlet for the elderly which contained many inaccuracies.

There is a need to improve health services available to the elderly. Security is not just a financial state of mind; it is also knowing that the services and support needed to sustain a dignified standard of living are available. There is an urgent need in electorates such as Mitcham to provide a whole range of services to that part of the community, including domiciliary care, rehabilitation facilities, day care facilities, and hostel and nursing home accommodation. It is to the discredit of the previous Government that it so often dangled the prospect of the pro-

posed Eastern Suburbs Geriatric Centre before the elderly people of the eastern suburbs. As with its counterparts in Bundoora and Sunshine, very little, if any, progress has been made on that project.

I also welcome the initiative of the Cain Government in the area of transport that will benefit not just the elderly but also many other sections of the community. The Cain Government comes into office with the needs, anxieties and aspirations of the elderly people of the electorate which I represent and others like it very much at heart.

In the electorate of Mitcham there is also a need to come to terms with the devastation facing many young people. Despite the impressions of cosiness and the apparent affluence that many people attribute to the eastern suburbs, there is an army of young people there who are convinced that they have no real part to play in our society. Their expectations have been inflated, but they are now faced with the grim reality of unemployment and its associated problems. These people are unable to find jobs and were given no comfort by the previous State Government, whose job creation schemes amounted to little more than public relations exercises.

There is a problem of homeless youth. An increasing number of young people, for a variety of reasons, are without accommodation. This is partly because rents are too high, rental stock is not available and, with the exception of some of the facilities provided by the community, little or no emergency accommodation is available. Therefore it is not surprising that there has been an upsurge in the incidence of vandalism and other associated problems. It is with concern that I report to the House that the Nunawading area has one of the poorest ratios of police to population in the eastern suburbs.

The third group of people to whom I refer are the families in the Mitcham electorate—those who are buying homes, particularly first homes, those who are struggling to find rental accom-

modation and those who have perhaps paid for their homes but are now struggling in the face of increasing rate bills and energy costs to maintain those homes. I welcome the measure introduced into the House by the Government yesterday to provide exemption from stamp duty for home buyers. It is a welcome first step in the implementation of a fine housing policy that was put before the electorate by the Labor Party on 3 April.

A measure of the lack of commitment of the previous Government is that within the City of Nunawading under the spot purchase programme of the Ministry of Housing, only two or three houses were purchased.

I have mentioned three groups in the electorate that deserve special attention. We, as legislators, need to convince people in those groups—the elderly, the young and families—that they are not on their own; that the Government is not insensitive to and disinterested in their plight and their future. We need to convince young people that, indeed, they have a future.

In tackling many of those problems one comes to an issue which is at the very heart of government, and that is the question of economic management. It has always been the case that economics and politics have been closely linked, but especially over the past decade, when many problems of unemployment have surfaced, that link has received much greater attention.

As someone with an economics background, I am always saddened at the insensitivity of some economists in the formulation of their policies. They forget that behind the facts and figures of economic recession are people—ordinary men and women who are the living proof of that recession. The monetarist prophets of doom in Canberra and their counterparts on the other side of the House would have us believe that our only salvation is to tighten our belts and allow the process of austerity to purge the economy of its ills.

It is a tragedy that the Federal Government, supported by its Liberal colleagues at the State level, has been

prepared to inflict hardship and suffering on so many Australians in the name of such dogma.

I welcome the comments made in the Governor's Speech indicating that the Cain Labor Government believes there is a State economy and that action can be taken by State Governments to improve the climate in which an economy can operate. We need to be careful to avoid the kinds of simplifications that have often become part of the economic debate. For example, conservative governments would have us believe that there is something inherently wrong with the public sector and something inherently right about the private sector. That fails to recognize the importance of a healthy and active public sector and its effect on the general health of the economy of the private sector. Without an active public sector there would be substantially reduced demand within an economy, with fewer opportunities from which the private sector can benefit. For example, one need only look at the weekly lists of public works tenders to see how many private sector enterprises benefit from expenditures emanating from government.

I make these comments not to downgrade the importance of the private sector and inflate the worth of Government involvement beyond its real level, but rather in the hope of promoting greater awareness of the need to foster the growth and development of all sectors of the Victorian economy. Those who would view the role of the State Government as that of a mere bookkeeper are doing a grave disservice to the potential contributions that the public sector can make.

In the electorate of Mitcham many community facilities are needed and existing facilities require improvement. Equally, there are many businesses, especially small businesses, that would welcome the opportunity of accepting demand from Government. Meeting the demands and requirements of the public sector and maintaining a healthy private sector are therefore not mutually exclusive options.

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I should also like to address myself briefly to one of the conventional wisdoms current in the political process.

It is that the Liberal Party is expert in economic management. The Treasurer's statement of yesterday indicates the appalling legacy that this Government has been left by the previous administration. For example, it has been left with a projected deficit of \$400 million in the current account. There are also many examples of inefficiencies in the management of cash in the public sector. The infamous Transport Regulation Board mail room incident is one example of a Dickensian approach to financial management under the previous Government.

There is one good example of how the previous administration was lacking. It was referred to in the Treasurer's speech when he mentioned the need for a more critical approach to capital works projects. It is an appalling indictment of the way in which the economy of Victoria has operated for so long that in all but a few cases there is no independent cost benefit analysis of important capital works projects. As honourable members learned from the answers at question time today, there are plans, many scale models and plenty of holes in the ground but there is little evidence of a responsible approach to economic management.

There is also a misunderstanding of the functions of the Victorian Development Fund, a fundamental misunderstanding by members of the Liberal Party of the difference between capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure. Many people who, in light of the evidence presented by the Public Bodies Review Committee, thought that the Liberal Party's opposition to the Victorian Development Fund throughout the election campaign was just a political position have now learned that that opposition is based on a fundamental misunderstanding and a failure to grasp anything more than the simplest of economic concepts.

As I reflect on the problems in the community that I represent and which are all too evident in all communities in the eastern suburbs, I am all the more convinced of the correctness of my commitment to the Australian Labor Party. That party and its new State Government offers my electorate and Victoria generally the hope of coping with the problems of change. It is a party of change, but not change for its own sake. It seeks change because of the enhanced security and dignity than change can bring.

People are tired of conservative Governments that have been content to neglect the serious difficulties that surround us socially and economically. That is why they rejected the Thompson Government on 3 April and why they will reject the Fraser Government at the next Federal poll. People are tired of having their hopes built up and then dashed. They want sound, common-sense, hardworking and, above all, compassionate government. The Cain Government does not offer a panacea for all the ills of this State but it holds out the first chance in 27 years of something better.

In the area that I represent, the local community has been and remains innovative, resourceful and inventive in its responses to the changing needs of its people. In that respect it has advanced far ahead of past State Governments. I look forward now to the potential that can be developed by having a State Government that is prepared at least to match that inventiveness; a Government that is prepared to pull its weight.

The prospect of at last having a State Government that sees its whole purpose as using office and not just hanging on to office, is indeed exciting. I am proud to be a part of that Government and to be the newly elected representative for the Mitcham electorate. I am honoured to have been chosen by my community to restore Government to its rightful role as a partnership with the community and its people.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I commence my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate by once again pledging the loyalty of the people of Forest Hill to Her Majesty the Queen and conveying the loyalty and affection of my constituents to His Excellency the Governor, Sir Brian Murray and Lady Murray. All people in the community and Parliament wish Rear-Admiral Sir Brian Murray and Lady Murray a fruitful and happy period of office as Governor and Governor's Lady in the great State of Victoria.

I know that the people of Forest Hill and members of this House would like to have on record my appreciation as a member of the community that I represent of the contribution made over so many years by the previous Governor, Sir Henry Winneke, and his wife. They served Victoria exceptionally well during the period of Sir Henry's Governorship of Victoria, in the fine standards and traditions of Governors of Victoria, and they left office with the affection and good wishes of all sections of the community.

I congratulate all new members of this House who have been elected to the Parliament. They have had bestowed upon them the greatest honour that the community can bestow on its members—election to the Parliament of this State. I congratulate all honourable members who have made their maiden speeches during this Address-in-Reply debate, and to those honourable members who have still to make their maiden speeches I point out that all of us understand the excitement of election and the sense of purpose that it brings to new members. We each remember the time when we made our maiden speeches and many of us felt nervous at that time.

It is proper that as a member of the Opposition I should congratulate the new Premier and his Cabinet. I also congratulate the new Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and of Consumer Affairs. I now speak for all honourable members when I say how saddened I am that the elevation of