

## GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

## Address-in-Reply

The debate (adjourned from earlier this day) was resumed on the motion of Mr McCutcheon (St Kilda)—

That the following Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor to both Houses of the Parliament be agreed to by this House—

## YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, assembled in Parliament, wish to express our loyalty to our Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech which you have made to the Parliament.

and on Mr Thompson's amendment;

That the following words be added to the proposed Address—

"but expresses its concern at the failure of the Government to inform the people of Victoria fully, truthfully and in advance, of its real intentions, particularly with respect to financial and industrial matters"—

Mrs **SETCHES** (Ringwood)—I am proud to have been elected to represent the people of Ringwood in Parliament for two major reasons: Firstly, because I am a member of the Cain Labor Government, which has ended 27 years of Liberal rule in this State; and, secondly, because I am the first woman elected to represent the seat of Ringwood.

Ringwood is one of the Maroondah Highway seats that Labor swept through so successfully on 3 April. It is a fairly compact urban electorate that has two railway lines branching from a junction at Ringwood station. The one thing wrong with the provision of these lines is that the residents of the Ringwood electorate have been waiting many years for the completion of the railway line duplication from Ringwood to Lilydale, and from Ringwood to Fern Tree Gully. I am glad that the Government's proposed capital works programme will speed the completion of this duplication.

I hear a great deal said about the affluent eastern suburbs, into which category Ringwood is purported to fall. However, that is not the message that I receive when I am out in the electorate.

Firstly, the ratio of people in the Ringwood area seeking employment to the number of jobs available is approximately 50 to 1 for those under 21 years of age, and reduces only slightly for people over that age. The large industrial estates such as those in Bayswater and Knox that serve the Ringwood electorate with manufacturing jobs are currently running at well below full capacity, and in some cases are operating at only 50 to 60 per cent of full production. This has meant that no expansion has taken place, and indeed, gradual layoffs have been carried out in a number of large factories in the area.

This unemployment undoubtedly contributes to the increase in youth homelessness in the Ringwood electorate. The Outer Eastern Youth Needs Group has produced figures for the twelve months to 31 March this year showing that of the 573 requests for emergency accommodation that were received, only 177 were able to be satisfied. We do not know what happened to the other 396 people, but youths are sleeping in the locomotive engine at Ringwood Lake most nights and young people are also sleeping in the unused ticket box at Heathmont railway station.

Croydon City Council, part of which I represent, has produced a report stating that the 1981 census figures show that persons aged between 10 and 19 years comprise 18.7 per cent of the population of the City of Croydon. A similar percentage appears to apply in the City of Ringwood.

In the short period since my election to Parliament, I have attended a number of meetings with local groups such as the Ringwood-Croydon Youth Workers Police Liaison Group, the School Leavers Employment Opportunity Service and the Maroondah Youth Accommodation Project. At these meetings it has been stated by youth workers and police that youth unemployment and its attendant problems are reaching epidemic proportions in the Ringwood-Croydon area.

As the president of a local technical school council, I have been acutely

aware of the shocking shortfalls of the former Government in the delivery of education in Victoria.

Parents of school children in the electorate of Ringwood would laugh grimly at the fable of the affluent east. Last year the Knox region, which then covered the electorate of Ringwood, had the highest percentage of class sizes in primary schools in Victoria. It was not unusual for classes to have 33 to 36 pupils in some primary schools. The Government's programme of providing enough class-rooms so that no child need be in a class of more than 30 pupils is welcomed by the people of the Ringwood electorate.

The school building programme in the Ringwood area is a shambles. Norwood High School has no physical education facilities, nor do the Heathmont High School and Boronia Technical School, which serve a number of students from the electorate I represent. Boronia Technical School has been waiting nine years for the completion of its building programme.

The Government has introduced a number of policies that, with assistance from the concerned wider community, will help alleviate many of the problems that affect the youth of Victoria.

Of course, youth is not the only group seriously disadvantaged where housing is concerned. There is virtually no public rental housing stock in the electorate of Ringwood. Private rental housing stock is also scarce and if one is lucky enough to find suitable accommodation the rents charged are prohibitive.

Accommodation for aged persons is almost non-existent and causes extreme hardship to pensioners. When they come to me for help, I have to tell them that the only accommodation available is high-rise units in Collingwood.

The Maroondah bond scheme has an enormous waiting list of bond applicants and if and when bond money becomes available the lack of housing for rental in the area is a further obstacle. The policy of the Government

on housing, based on construction leasing and spot purchase, is to be applauded.

During the leadup to the recent State election the importance of our policy not to allow any extension to shop trading hours during the life of this Parliament was impressed upon me. Small traders, of whom there are more than 500 in the Ringwood electorate, look to a Labor Government to preserve sanity in the retail trading area and not to increase shopping hours.

Shop assistants in the electorate I represent breathed a sigh of relief when the Labor Government was elected. As a former shop assistant, I am keenly aware that, when all other sections of the work force are moving to shorter working hours, shop assistants are faced with the ludicrous situation that they may be required to work longer hours.

The Government is aware that it has inherited an impossibly complex, and in some cases antiquated, Labour and Industry Act and believes that reform is certainly necessary.

As a woman and a former co-ordinator of the Maroondah women's refuge, I am aware of the need for the Government to financially support the principle of women's refuges. For the first time in Victoria's history, the Government is proud to have a woman Cabinet Minister administering the Community Welfare Service portfolio.

The programme that the Government has outlined is, I believe, one that will endeavour to relieve some of the burden on the average Victorian. Nowhere is that burden felt more unjustly and more keenly than in the iniquitous tax levied by the State Electricity Commission, known as the \$6 service charge. The \$18 a quarter, which was introduced by the former Government, is causing extreme hardship and I congratulate the Government on its decision to abolish this unfair charge that should never have been introduced in the first place.

Of all the policies that were put forward by the Government, none were more earnestly welcomed by the

people than its declaration that it will never introduce nuclear power in Victoria.

I must comment on the cultural shock that I and I suppose other new members have felt on coming into this Parliament. The workings and decisions of the Parliament seem to me to be so far removed from the ordinary people of Victoria, yet decisions made in the two Chambers radically affect the lives of very man, woman and child in Victoria.

I hope that we as a Government will strive in every way possible to bring this Parliament and decisions made here closer to the people of Victoria.

**Mr BROWN** (Westernport)—Mr Speaker, I am pleased to see you in the chair. I congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker. You are following in the footsteps of a man held in high esteem, the former honourable member for Evelyn. Mr Speaker, I am sure you will continue the tradition of fairness and impartiality. The Opposition looks forward to working with you in that capacity.

In past debates on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply, I have pledged the allegiance of myself and my constituents to Her Majesty the Queen. I still have that feeling towards Her Majesty. In times of turmoil for the United Kingdom, such as currently exists, I am sure it is fair to say that most honourable members, if not all, have the feeling that England has a difficult situation on its hands and we are with them.

I congratulate the new members on this side of the House. The honourable member for Narracan comes to this House with a wealth of experience, particularly in local government. The honourable member for South Barwon likewise comes to the House with high esteem and a lot of experience in public affairs. The honourable member for Wantirna who spent one term in another place also comes to this place with a wealth of community experience.

I also congratulate the new members on the Government benches. There are several, whose speeches so far have

been well read. It is a pity they will be here for only one term, but I wish them well. Having been through one term of back-bench involvement, I wish them well and remind them not to forget their families in the role we share. It is very important to consider one's family. Surely if we can set aside seven days of the week for the affairs of our constituents, it is fair to put our family in the diary and give them attention too. Honourable members should take note of that valuable advice.

The new Governor, His Excellency, Rear-Admiral Sir Brian Murray and Lady Murray come with the high esteem and support of the community. They follow in the steps of Sir Henry and Lady Winneke who carried out their duties with considerable esteem and were well loved by the people of Victoria. They visited my electorate of Westernport several times. I am honoured to say that the former Governor is now residing in his former holiday home at Shoreham—a magnificent area in my electorate. I trust that he will be long lived and will go on to enjoy his time in Westernport.

Whilst handing out bouquets, I congratulate the Premier and the Government for a very good win. I shall now refer to some of the policies. I congratulate the Premier for the initiative shown by inviting the former Premier, the Hon. Sir Rupert Hamer to open the new Arts Centre later this year. That was a magnificent gesture. I am sure it would not have been easy for the new Premier to make that decision on the basis that he has a Minister who would have liked to have performed that duty. I am sure the new Premier's image rose in stature as a result of that bipartisan approach to the arts. I am grateful for the kindness shown by the new Premier. I hope his line of thought is not a one-off situation but will continue.

I refer now to the promises and the mandate of the new Government. They are many and varied. There is no question: The Labor Party promised everything to everyone. I have not yet met anyone in the electorate I repre-