

they are going. This is an important component of technical and further education.

I am concerned that emphasis should be placed on this transition and that it should be considered in its widest aspects and not only in terms of job availability. A number of constructive steps have been taken by the Government. It has placed considerable emphasis on increasing the number of apprentices in training. That is well known and well established. It has introduced the concept of work experience for school students, and Victoria leads Australia in this field. The Government has provided jobs in specific areas where jobs have obviously been needed. That is a responsible way of allocating resources. The Government has stepped in to make sure that all secondary schools are adequately staffed with career officers, and the Government supports the concept of further education.

Above all, it would be wise if all the young people understood that one of the essentials is to keep options open when moving forward, and I hope that the building up of the credentialism that exists today does not operate in a destructive fashion. Although most people respect the concept of "meritocracy", of the best person having the job, if it means that the person with the highest credentials obtains the position, I cannot go along with it. If it means that the person with the best all-round ability to do the job, which may include the right educational components, I can agree with it, although it is more difficult to judge whether people have all-round ability than it is to judge whether they have credentials, and I think we should be working towards that end.

I look forward to the years ahead with considerable optimism. I hope all honorable members work towards a constructive future for Victoria and I am confident that the policies of this Government will lead Victoria to a rewarding future.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Victorian Parliament. Over the past eight days I have

watched the working of this House and I have observed closely your function and role. Although as I look at it, I judge the situation with some inexperience, I judge that you have been a fair Speaker. I am sure that you will continue to put the interests of the Parliament and of the people of Victoria ahead of any other consideration. I hope history will have the opportunity to say about Sidney James Plowman, the honorable member for Evelyn, that he was not only a good Speaker of this House, but that he was a great Speaker.

I now wish to provide a few facts about the electorate of Glenhuntly which has done me the honour of electing me to this House. Glenhuntly is predominantly situated in the eastern end of the municipality of Caulfield. Since the last redistribution it has had added to it the northern part of the municipality of Moorabbin, and I look forward to working in close co-operation with both the local councils to the benefit of the people of the area.

I shall inform the House of my neighbours in this place. To the north I have the Deputy Premier, the honorable member for Malvern; to the west I have the honorable member for Caulfield; to the south west I have the honorable member for Brighton; to the south I have with great pleasure on the Opposition back bench the honorable member for Bentleigh, and to the east I again have with great pleasure on the Opposition back bench the honorable member for Oakleigh. In the other place I shall shortly have two colleagues from the other side of politics. As a temporary measure I understand that I now have only one. I trust that I shall be able to work in close co-operation with my neighbours in this House on matters of mutual interest and mutual benefit to our constituents.

The electorate of Glenhuntly is situated predominantly in the Federal electorate of Henty but it has one division in Higgins. It was formed in the 1965 redistribution of electorates.

From 1967 to 1979 the Glenhuntly electorate was represented in this House by Joseph Anstice Rafferty, who is temporarily residing in London. I wish Mr Rafferty and his wife a long life and good health. In the recent elections there were four candidates for the seat of Glenhuntly. Because of the system there were three losing candidates. It is my considered view that all of the candidates for the seat had something to contribute to political life in this State. Unfortunately, there could be only one winner, and the people of Glenhuntly, by a narrow majority admittedly, voted for a State Labor Government. I regret that that has not come about. All I can say is: Give us time!

At the declaration of the poll three years ago, the then honorable member for Glenhuntly had some very encouraging words to say to me. I took them to heart and decided to nominate a second time and to give it a second go. I am sure he is pleased that it paid off.

I shall now mention a little political philosophy—or I shall philosophize politically. Before entering this House I worked as a chemical engineer and as a scientist in the field of water pollution control. Any engineer working in the environmental field could tell anyone that, if one wants a healthy community, one does not defecate in the well. Politicians in this country can learn a lot from that by analogy. For too long politicians have fouled political life in Australia.

In recent years we have witnessed the flouting of political conventions, a strong resistance to much needed constitutional change and the silencing of Parliaments by two mechanisms—by their closing down for indefinite periods and by the gagging—and this has occurred in other places, perhaps, more than in this place—of debates on important political issues of the day. All of this is to be much regretted. It is also to be greatly regretted that the telling of untruths in political life in this nation has been raised to the level of an art form. I hope the more rapid

turnover in the membership of Parliaments in this nation will mean that the dignity of and the respect deserved by Parliaments in our system are restored.

I also hope—and I shall be working for this—that there will be a greater turnover of Governments in this country. This would effect great improvements. It would improve public administration and also reinforce the democratic system. That second point should not be forgotten.

I shall now canvass a number of electoral reforms that I should like to see in this State. I hold these reforms close to my heart. The first is that it is desirable to introduce optional preferential voting. This would enhance the democratic rights that the electors now hold under our present system. How could one object to that?

In the electorate of Glenhuntly in the recent elections there were 733 informal votes. My majority on a two-party preferred basis was only 750. Those informal votes formed an important proportion of the total number of votes. Many of those votes clearly indicated the voting intention of the voter—in favour of the Liberal candidate, the Labor candidate or either of the two minor party candidates. The intention was obvious, but the votes were ruled invalid because the law is wrong. The law is unjust. The electoral law should be reformed.

Optional preferential voting does not interfere with the rights of minor parties. The preferential aspect of the vote remains, but there is increased choice for the voter. That is, perhaps, enough on the subject at present, but I hope to come back to it on another occasion.

The second matter I raise is of fundamental importance to our system and it is the gerrymandering of electorates. Gerrymandering shames any Government that participates in it. It is a matter of great regret that electorates in Victoria are gerrymandered. The third reform I should like to canvass concerns balloting for the position of

candidates' names on the ballot-paper. Ever since I started school I have learnt that a name starting with the letter "V" is bad news. A large number of honorable members whose names appear on the alphabetical list of members of the Legislative Assembly should agree. I am sure the honorable members for Albert Park, Frankston, Mildura, Northcote, Doncaster, Broadmeadows and Swan Hill would agree, because their names appear even lower down the list than mine. I hope I have the support of all honorable members in attempting to change that aspect of electoral law.

The introduction of an element of chance into the position of candidates' names on ballot-papers would mean that the donkey vote would have less effect in politics. The fact that the donkey vote would be spread across the board over a period would perhaps mean a greater turnover of honorable members and, as I mentioned earlier, I consider that a desirable prospect.

The fourth reform that I should like to see achieved is a more local matter and is of particular significance to residents of part of the electorate I represent. The change in the electoral Act at the end of last year, which introduced 6 p.m. closing of polling booths, was, I believe, carried out without due consideration being given to a number of factors. Many communities in Victoria have a religious objection to voting on a Saturday or during part of a Saturday. The Jewish community within the electorate of Glenhuntly—and I know the same situation applies in the electorates of Caulfield and St Kilda—had difficulty in casting their votes on polling day.

It is all very well to suggest that the members of that community can use postal votes, but religious objection is quite different from the normal reasons for using a postal vote, such as illness or travel interstate or overseas. Religious objection deserves special consideration. When the Local Government Act is amended in 1979 I hope honorable members will support me in

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requests to the Minister and to the Parliament that due consideration be given to the Jewish and other communities in Victoria which have a religious objection to voting between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on a Saturday, as was obvious on 5 May.

I shall now deal with several local matters. A large number of the residents of the electorate of Glenhuntly are elderly. Elderly people face problems in these difficult times. A task I shall hold as a high priority will be to raise the special interests of these people in this Parliament.

Another large group in the electorate is composed of teenagers, who also face special problems, apart from those of unemployment and the general disillusionment with the system that that brings. Only a limited range of social activities appropriate to teenage interests is available in Melbourne. The very real problem of teenage drinking can be seen to be a direct result of the failure of the community to place due importance on the social needs of young people.

Many residents of the Glenhuntly electorate live adjacent to the Frankston railway line. VicRail has proposed a rail overpass for the purpose of grade separation at Glenhuntly Road and Neerim Road. I shall be endeavouring to express the wishes of local residents on this subject to the Minister and to Parliament.

The schools in the electorate I represent have suffered decay for a long time. The parents, the pupils and the teachers at Ormond and Carnegie primary schools can tell honorary members all about that. There has been one recent improvement in the situation because after eighteen years, Caulfield High School has finally been granted cyclical maintenance. I understand that Ormond and Carnegie primary schools are due to be upgraded in the near future. I hope that is the case because the problems are urgent.

In closing my remarks, I mention that Glenhuntly is a sporting electorate. It is the home of the Glenhuntly

Amateur Athletic Club, which is the best-known athletic club in Victoria, in Australia and, as an Australian club, internationally. It is also the home of the Victorian Amateur Turf Club, which is situated at the Caulfield racecourse. The streets of the electorate, morning and night, contain runners attempting to avoid the traffic and sampling the deteriorating quality of Melbourne's air.

Finally, I thank the House for the courtesies extended to me during this, my maiden speech.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—I join other honorable members who have congratulated newly-elected members of this Parliament who, I believe, have now all made their maiden speeches. The standard of most of those contributions has been extremely high.

I also congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to your high office. As has been said, you have already established yourself as a Speaker who has his own point of view and one who will make many contributions to the good government of this State through the Chair of the people's Parliament of Victoria. That is something honorable members always look for and we hope that that situation will prevail for many years to come.

It is obvious from His Excellency's Speech made at the opening of the 48th Parliament of Victoria that, although the Government would have pointed out a few of the matters it would like raised in the Speech, a significant number of points made in the National Party policy speech prior to the election have been taken up by the Government as part of its policy for the future of Victoria.

The first of them to which I shall refer was mentioned by the Governor and appears on page 5 of his Speech. It reads—

In addition, efficiency groups will be established to monitor performance in departments and to assist in the control of expenditure and the best use of staff and facilities.

Another of these matters is the sunset legislation that was suggested by the Victorian Employers' Federation. This type of legislation has apparently been

most successful in the United States of America and if it is implemented in Victoria it will have a beneficial effect on authorities and bodies that are established from time to time. If the jobs for which they are established are no longer necessary, they will have to justify their existence or be wound up. If they are wound up, their funding can be used for other purposes. That is a very sound policy.

Another point is that finance will be provided for tree planting programmes in dry land areas in an attempt to reverse the effects of the salinity problem that has developed in many areas of Victoria during the past decade.

The other matter to which I refer is the statement that the Government will develop a young farmer establishment scheme in an effort to replace the ageing group of farmers who are now producing a large proportion of the foodstuffs required not only in Victoria but also by the Commonwealth. In addition to that, approximately 50 per cent of Victoria's food production is exported overseas and earns export income.

His Excellency stated—this is at page 4 of his Speech—that in trying to stimulate employment in both the rural and urban areas, every resource should be used. I agree with his comment but the objective is difficult to achieve where all the resources of the country are not being used and the resultant productivity loss is a real drain on the economy of the country. This has a snowballing effect and the lost production is in turn reflected down the line leading to a higher proportion of unemployment than would otherwise be the case.

His Excellency also stated that in many respects we are now again competitive in world markets. I have doubts about the accuracy of that comment, but His Excellency went on to state that it is imperative that we do not again price ourselves out of world markets.

In the field of secondary industry we have priced ourselves out of every market which was available to us,