

acknowledgement that many of us have honest views about this matter. The level of mockery and ridicule which speaker after speaker on the Government side levelled at Tasmanians was disgraceful. I hope the honourable member for McMillan takes note of the list. Tasmanians were called maggots, vandals, treacherous, Noddies—

Dr Charlesworth—You said it.

Mr NEWMAN—There it is again. Let all Tasmanians listening note the list, which once again confirms the Government's attitude to Tasmania. If the Government really believes it is creating a climate in which the Tasmanian Government will talk to it, negotiate with it, why do its supporters create this climate of ridicule and insult? The list goes on. Tasmanians were called Constable Plods, rapacious, small minded, cheap, grubby and cowards. I did not notice any fair-minded or objective Government supporters taking points of order during the speeches that included those sorts of insults.

Mr Cunningham—Maybe they are representative.

Mr NEWMAN—No, that is where you are wrong.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mildren)—Order! The honourable member will ignore interjections and direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr NEWMAN—They not only got stuck into Tasmanians as a group but they also had to use the poor excuse that the Tasmanian Press was the worst in Australia, it was not fair, it was not balanced and it was subject to the biggest monopoly in the country. They said it was the unfairest in the country. An analysis of all those speeches on 4 and 5 May reveals one common thread—that any Tasmanian who happens to have a pro-dam view is a criminal and that he is bewitched by the HEC. The Government attributes absolutely no merit to anyone who does not accord with its view, which almost entirely is taken from the publications of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society. Some consensus! Some effort to understand the other bloke's point of view! Some resolve to achieve the grand and noble aims which the Prime Minister so often likes to talk about!

Mr Uren—Give the other blokes a go. Come on.

Mr NEWMAN—If the Minister for Territories and Local Government had not set such a stupid course for his Government—he is one of the prime people responsible—I might have sat down

to let one of the members from his side have a go. But, because the Government is determined to cause disunity, far from conciliation, I am not going to.

Finally, who really is responsible for this woeful and sad record? In the normal course the Prime Minister should have accepted some responsibility for it, but in this case he accepted all the responsibility. On election night, the very night that he was elected and was making speeches to the country, he singled out Tasmania. He assured Tasmania that he understood the effect of the vote in Tasmania and promised that he would make a special effort to try to bring Tasmanians back into the fold. He promised that there would be a special effort. Some effort! On 8 March his second news conference in as many days was reported in the Hobart *Mercury* and many other publications. He was reported as saying that the dam would not be built but that he hoped it could be stopped through negotiations rather than a legal challenge through the High Court of Australia. He said:

I regard the question of Tasmania as so important that I will personally be assuming prime responsibility for the discussions with Tasmania. I think it is of such importance I shall accept that responsibility and I will act in association with relevant Ministers.

There it is. Mr Hawke, by his own words of 8 March, accepts the bungling and the actions of his Ministers and all those honourable members on the Government side who have spent time in the chamber on a tirade against Tasmanians, their fellow Australians. The Prime Minister has ignored the pious election night statement that he made. He has ignored his declaration of full responsibility for the negotiations with Tasmania. Certainly, he has ignored the noble sentiments that were set out in the Governor-General's Speech.

Constitutionally the Tasmanians have the right to build their dam. They have given to the Premier of Tasmania a clear mandate to build the dam. I ask only that the Hawke Government really believe in national reconciliation and unity. If it does, it will allow the Tasmanians to get on with it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mildren)—Order! Before I call the honourable member for Bendigo, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's maiden speech. I call upon the House to extend to him the normal courtesies.

Mr BRUMBY (Bendigo) (6.16)—Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the very high honour bestowed upon me by the electors of Bendigo, and publicly thank the substantial number

of our party members and supporters who contributed so greatly to our decisive victory on 5 March. The policies we put before the people in the recent Federal election, entailing a program of economic growth and reconstruction, social reform and a vision of a more united and equal society, were overwhelmingly endorsed, not just by the people of Bendigo but by all Australians. The people of my electorate resoundingly rejected the anti-Bendigo policies of the previous Government, and chose instead to elect a government committed to getting Bendigo back to work.

For the first time since Federation, Bendigo now enjoys a State Labor member of Parliament, a Federal Labor Member of Parliament, and at the same time a State Labor Government and Federal Labor Government. For the first time since Federation, Bendigo can be assured of a total and genuine commitment to the needs and interests of the electorate. Already, the Government has begun the process of getting Bendigo back to work. Already, our Government has shown its commitment to restore the Bendigo economy, generate local job opportunities and plan co-operatively and imaginatively for the future. The Bendigo Ordnance Factory, which was destructively attacked by the previous Government and its razor gang, has already been strengthened and supported by our Government. Not only have we rejected for all time the proposition that the factory be stripped down and sold to private enterprise, but projects worth more than \$3m were announced two weeks ago by the Minister for Defence Support (Mr Howe), with further projects to be announced in the latter half of this year.

An amount of \$14m has been allocated to upgrade and refurbish completely the armoured centre at Puckapunyal Army Base. The work will be completed by 1985 and will generate 500 direct and indirect jobs, with a peak on-site work force of 175 during 1984. Discussions between the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs (Senator Ryan) and the Bendigo College of Advanced Education have already taken place regarding the reinstatement and future development of the engineering course axed under the previous Government's razor gang. After lying idle for seven months because of funding conflicts between the previous Government and the Victorian State Government, the 60-bed Stellar Anderson wing of the Bendigo Home and Hospital for the Aged will now be opened, following constructive and co-operative discussions between our Government and the Victorian State Government. Importantly also, our Government has already confirmed its

rejection of the Davidson Inquiry recommendations to dispense with cross-subsidisation of telephone charges and costs. Such a policy proposed for implementation by the previous Government would have doubled STD phone charges, increased rentals—by up to \$900 for many of my constituents—and effectively destroyed our rural towns and decentralised industries.

Before I comment on particular aspects of the Governor-General's Speech, it is important to emphasise the dual commitment of our Government to both economic growth and social reform. That dual commitment contrasts rather markedly with the policies of the previous Government, which achieved neither growth nor reform. Indeed, during the past seven years, Australians have witnessed a concerted and deliberate effort by the previous Government to stifle, postpone and in some cases reverse reforms achieved by past governments particularly Labor governments. Not only have social, parliamentary and legal reforms been postponed in the name of economic recession, but also deep and unnecessary divisions have been created in Australian society. Australians will not forget the overt and calculated efforts of the previous Government to reduce health standards and to create divisions between those who are healthy and those who are sick, and between those who could afford health insurance and those who could not.

Australians will not forget the deliberate policy of the previous Government to undermine and divide our education system, not just by subverting the independence of the Schools Commission, not just by concerted attacks on the standards of our government schools, but also by providing the greatest percentage increase in funding to the wealthiest private schools at the expense of needy non-government schools and our government school sector. Australians will not forget the massive shift in the economic burden from those most able to pay to those least able to pay, or the unnecessary divisions created between those who actually pay tax and those who avoid tax. Only under the previous Government was the failure of that Government to provide work for almost 30 per cent of our young people used as a means of attacking our youth as dole-bludgers, denying their adult right to a basic level of income security, and propagandising against the right of women, particularly married women, to work.

The people of Australia overwhelmingly endorsed our policies of economic recovery and our policies of social, economic, legal and parliamentary reform. The implementation of our reforms in relation to universal health care, widened

access to and participation in the arts, the protection of Australia's national and cultural heritage, including South West Tasmania, the introduction of the principle of one vote, one value, the broadening of the Freedom of Information Act, the establishment of a royal commission into the effects of herbicides and pesticides on veterans of the Vietnam war, the introduction of legislation dealing with discrimination on the basis of sex, and our firm commitment to genuine equality of educational opportunity, are all overdue reforms, and will be to the benefit of all electors in my electorate of Bendigo, as they will be to all Australian people.

I now turn to consider specific aspects of the Governor-General's Speech and the programs of our Government. I welcome the establishment of the Economic Planning Advisory Council, representing governments, business, unions, farmers and community groups, to advise on economic developments and provide a forum for community consultation on national economic and social strategies. With the exception of honourable members on the opposite side of the House, all Australians recognise the need for constructive consultation and co-operation as part of the urgent task of restoring employment opportunities and removing the acute deprivation caused by present massive unemployment. I welcome also this Government's commitment to a community works program including jobs on local roads.

Throughout my electorate more than 4,000 persons are registered as unemployed. While very good progress is being made by the Victorian Government under its capital works program and employment initiatives program, there are still more than 50 excellent jobs programs submitted by councils and community groups throughout my electorate to the State Government, which remain unfunded, and thousands still without jobs. The municipal councils of my electorate are delighted by the Government's jobs on local roads program. Under the policies of the previous Federal and State Liberal governments, substantial sums of road funds were channelled into vast freeway developments in metropolitan cities at the expense of rural and arterial roads. Many councils have simply been unable to maintain local roads in a safe and serviceable condition, and in at least one Victorian rural shire the local council has been forced to take the extraordinary action of actually ripping up its local bitumenised roads because of these serious and long term funding shortages.

Far more disturbing, however, than the loss of country roads due to lack of funds has been the

misery of homelessness that I have witnessed in my electorate. Adequate shelter is a fundamental human right yet in my electorate of Bendigo homeless unemployed young people sleep in country railway stations and abandoned cars, low income families wait over two years for housing commission accommodation, and over 300 elderly people await local government sponsorship to obtain an elderly person's home unit. Such is the poverty of the previous Liberal State and Federal housing policies.

It is the young unemployed and the single unemployed who are most vulnerable in times of housing shortage. St Luke's family care in Bendigo last year gave assistance to over 100 homeless young people, estimated as just a fraction of total youth homelessness in the region, and the Bendigo Urban Emergency Accommodation Resource Centre dealt with 4,700 requests last year for emergency accommodation. One thousand of the requests came from single persons and 750 could not be met by the Centre. The very least that this Government can offer, to raise the standard of living of the individuals trapped in these circumstances, is adequate shelter. I commend our Government's intention to increase the public housing stock and I look forward to a renewed and increased commitment to vital youth housing services. Augmented by measures designed to bridge the deposit gap for home-buyers; I believe this Government will significantly redress existing housing problems, whilst directly creating jobs in the construction industry, and indirectly, in many occupations, through the economic stimulus provided by house construction.

My speech would be incomplete without reference to the educational needs of the electorate of Bendigo. At all levels of education—primary, secondary, technical and tertiary—additional funding from the Government is required to honour our commitment to the principle of genuine equality of educational opportunity and the elimination of disadvantage or discrimination. The very comprehensive and much lauded 1982 Australian Teachers Federation survey of conditions in schools highlighted that in the electorate of Bendigo there are more large secondary school classes than in Victoria as a whole, and a massive 40 per cent of all primary grade sizes exceeds 30 students. Our primary school teachers have less preparation time than in other schools in the State, and immediate maintenance is required in 31 per cent of classrooms. Staffing and capital needs in non-government schools in my electorate are also very evident and 99 per cent of these schools will be more equitably assisted under our

policy of stricter needs funding than under the policies of the previous Government.

Serious funding difficulties also exist in relation to the Bendigo Technical and Further Education College and the Bendigo College of Advanced Education. This year more than 100 qualified students have been turned away from our Bendigo TAFE courses and an even greater number have been excluded from our BCAE course because of restrictive quotas. As a nation with one of the lowest tertiary education participation rates in the industrialised world, and a youth unemployment rate of 30 per cent, the exclusion of qualified and enthusiastic students is senseless and must be halted. Increased access to, and enhanced quality of, tertiary education will be a vital factor in the economic and social reconstruction of Australia.

The rural sector is of fundamental importance to the economic base of my electorate both in employment and income, and equally fundamental to Australia's export earning capacity. As one with a family background in farming, I have been astounded by the frequent and often hysterical outbursts of the Opposition in relation to this Government's attitudes and policies for the rural sector.

Our farmers and our people who live in rural areas demand no more from government than other sections of our community—the right to income stability and security and a fair and reasonable provision of transport, health and educational services. Yet by 1981, after some six years of the high interest rate and otherwise vacuous rural policies of the previous Government, profitability on farms had fallen to its lowest levels, and the ratio of farm debt to income had never been higher. Some 12,500 of our primary producers throughout Australia are now estimated to be living substantially below the poverty line. Honourable members opposite would do well to acknowledge that the only two policies guaranteeing any income stability or security at all to our farmers—the wheat price stabilisation scheme and the wool scheme—were both introduced by Federal Labor governments.

Like the farmers in my electorate, I look forward to the introduction of the National Soil Conservation Program, to the new wheat marketing plan to apply from 1984-85, to commencement of work on the Wimmera-Mallee pipeline project, and to a concerted and vigorous attack by the Commonwealth in conjunction with the States to arrest the very serious salting problem destroying so much of our agricultural land throughout my electorate and Australia.

I should emphasise that in addition to our policies for the rural sector our government is firmly committed to the development of strong, competitive secondary industries. Our program provides for short term protection, support for industrial reconstruction and development of new industries, and the introduction of incentive measures to stimulate industrial research and development.

As indicated in the Governor-General's Speech, it is the intention of our Government to introduce a 'buy Australian' Act into the Federal Parliament. It is important that all Australians recognise that not all of our secondary industries can be internationally competitive on a cost basis. In my electorate of Bendigo, clothing manufacturers Stafford Ellinson produce a fine range of garments distributed throughout Australia and provide employment for more than 200 people. Stafford Ellinson is more than competitive internationally on the basis of output per person but cannot compete on a cost basis with low wage exporting nations. Who in this House would suggest that the Australian people employed in Stafford Ellinson should have their wages reduced to 50c per hour? Who also would argue for the abolition of protection for our clothing industries, with its consequent loss of jobs and subsequent social tragedy?

My final comments relate to the field of communications. In this national public broadcasting week, our Government has expressed support for public broadcasting networks which provide information and access to diverse groups and individuals, and which strengthen our local communities. Just two weeks ago I was pleased to attend the first anniversary celebrations of my electorate's first community radio station—3CCC-FM. The people of my electorate are proud of the achievements of 3CCC. Broad community access is provided throughout central Victoria, more than 110 volunteers contribute to programming, and more than 1000 of my constituents in the electorate of Bendigo are paid subscribers. Station 3CCC enjoys the distinction of being the radio station with the highest percentage of Australian music content, and broadcasts via the strongest signal of any non-metropolitan FM radio station in Australia. I am confident the contribution of our Government in this year of communications will support and encourage community radio stations such as 3CCC, as well as guaranteeing the commercial media networks in my electorate—particularly regional television—freedom from encroachment by metropolitan and overseas interests.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is with great honour that I stand to support and endorse the program of our Government, which I believe to be one of compassion, economic restoration and growth, and social and legal reform. It is, I believe, a program of vision and optimism for the people of my electorate of Bendigo, and for all Australians.

Sitting suspended from 6.36 to 8.30 p.m.

Mr FISHER (Mallee) (8.30)—Mr Speaker, may I congratulate you on your appointment. I assure you that you have the respect of this Parliament and I know that you will serve it with dignity. I also wish other office holders in this place well in the performance of their duties.

This is the first opportunity that I have had to speak generally in this House in my new role as shadow minister for sport and recreation. I would like to make some comment on that new role and what I consider ought to be the priorities for sport in this country. However, before doing so, I feel that I must make some comment on the Government's performance since coming to office.

I am sure that I am not the first to complain, and I know that I will not be the last, about the Government's performance. I am becoming heartily sick of its use of that very tired and old chestnut of blaming the previous Government for just about everything. Since the Australian Labor Party came to office on 5 March, we have had a line of broken promises and sidestepped issues. Everything with perhaps the exception of the weather has been blamed on the apparent excesses of the previous Government. In a little over two months, just about every major undertaking given by the Australian Labor Party, and on which it was voted into office, has gone by the board. That surely must be some sort of record. Never before has so much been promised by so many and broken so quickly.

Let me give some examples. The people of Australia were promised less tax in Mr Hawke's policy speech of 16 February, in the course of which he said:

Immediate reductions in income tax for almost six million Australian taxpayers.

Instead we have threats of more tax. Already we see proposed the introduction of a 20 per cent sales tax on retreaded tyres. This is despite a pre-election promise which recognised the disruptive potential of such a tax upon the economy of the road transport industry and upon, particularly, employment prospects for small business in many rural towns and cities.

The people of Australia were promised petrol price cuts of 3 cents a litre. Mr Hawke said in his policy speech:

Labor will reduce the price of petrol by cancelling the January 1 oil price increase of \$3.23 per barrel. This will have the effect of reducing the price of petrol by the order of three cents a litre.

This was the promise. The reality was a reduction of 1.5 cents a litre. In fact, because of State government policies in Victoria and New South Wales, motorists in those States will derive no benefit at all. We now face a proposal that motor car registration and third party insurance may be collected by way of a petrol levy. Such a levy would see a rise of at least 11 cents a litre occur in the price of petrol. Such a burden would fall heavily upon country people, who must travel long distances, and very heavily on low income earners and pensioners who generally own smaller and older cars. The question, what effect would such a significant rise in petrol prices have on the tourist industry, should be asked.

The people of Australia were promised a united country. The Australian Labor Party preached consensus. 'Hawke: Bringing Australia Together' was the catchcry. But what did we get? On coming back to this Parliament we witnessed a High Court challenge lodged against Tasmania by the Government within days of coming to office. Consensus and harmony—tell that to farmers whose shearing sheds have been destroyed, whose workers have been attacked and whose lives and those of their families have been threatened by members of the Australian Workers Union, who cannot be brought under control, who have refused to allow shearers to earn their living and who are terrorising fellow Australians with guerrilla warfare tactics.

But that is not the only example of neglect of rural people. Items as fundamental as water programs and conservation measures are also to be given the chop or, to be more accurate, have not been thought about at all. It is not a coincidence that electorates along the Murray River—Mallee, Riverina and Murray—all returned National Party members with an increased majority. The demands of people along the Murray River are not excessive. They do not want \$200m grants such as Qantas Airways Ltd and Trans Australia Airlines have had to help them with their tax problems. They do not want \$46,000-odd spent on food and drink for them. That was the cost of entertaining the Economic Summiteers.

In the last two months, we have heard of all the things that the Government will not now be doing. What the people of Australia would like to hear, especially those in my electorate of Mallee,