

may have about me, and although what I am saying—and I hope to say much more in future—is in complete opposition to the basic principles under which conservative Capitalism operates, I am pleased to realize that, even though one may have, before knowing them, considered certain individuals to be socially unacceptable, they are still human beings who are capable of being converted.

I thank the people who have placed me here—the Labor Party and the electors of Chelsea Province—and I assure the House that I shall spend my time in an endeavour to justify and to spread the beliefs and philosophies on the basis of which I was elected.

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR (Boronia Province)—I convey to His Excellency the Governor sentiments of loyalty of the people of Boronia Province to Her Majesty the Queen and I express deep appreciation of the outstanding efforts of His Excellency on behalf of the people of Victoria. Both Sir Henry and Lady Winneke set the highest possible standards in carrying out their duties and they endear themselves to all Victorians as they travel about the State.

I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the Legislative Council. I know you will carry out your duties with distinction and honour and I am sure that I join with my colleagues in wishing you a long and rewarding term of office.

I thank the people of Boronia Province for electing me as one of the first women to become members of this House. I am indeed most proud to have the honour of being the first woman sworn in as a member of the Legislative Council and I am deeply conscious of the responsibilities and obligations such an honour bestows on me. I am also proud to have created another first for the province of Boronia. The late Honorable Sir Gilbert Chandler, a much respected and well-loved member of this House, created a first when he was elected on 30 March 1935 as one of the members of the then South-Eastern Province. He was at that time the youngest person ever to be elected

to the Legislative Council. Later, in 1937, the qualifications were changed and subsequently younger men have been elected. Sir Gilbert Chandler, who in 1967 became the member for Boronia, also created another record in being, at the time of his retirement in April 1973, the longest serving member of this House and the longest serving Minister and so one can only feel great pride in following in the footsteps of such an esteemed member.

We have seen the number of women entering Parliament in Victoria grow from two to five since the last election. In Australia there are now 35 women members of Parliament. A much larger number of women, 160, are now serving as municipal councillors in Victoria. In fact, women candidates have a remarkably high record of success in local government elections. These women are making a very worth-while contribution. It is an important area of government, and one where women's perceptions, points of view and judgment should be heard. We can be proud indeed of the pioneering women who have gone before us in State and Federal Parliaments. Those of us who are entering at this time have a high standard of performance to emulate, and I am sure we are conscious of the very fine example that has been, and is being, set for us in other places.

It is appropriate to reflect on the significance of the date of the fixed term of members of this House. It commences on 14 July and one perhaps can pause for a moment to ponder the historic implications of women entering this House for the first time in its history. It is worth recalling that this year 14 July marks the 190th anniversary of the storming of the Bastille.

I wish to address my remarks to the changes taking place in local government at this time. I had the privilege of serving the Shire of Healesville as a councillor for twelve years, having recently retired in August 1978. I had the honour of becoming the first woman shire president of that municipality for the last year of my term of office, and it was a richly rewarding experience.

Local government is undergoing a period of change and presents new challenges, not only to itself but also to the Government, to meet the needs and aspirations of local communities. There are changes in the directions that local government must take. The delivery of its services and the ever-broadening spectrum of those services points the way to much searching investigation and exhaustive study.

Community expectation is at a high level, whether it be local, State or Federal, but local government particularly is being asked to play an extended role in the provision of community services.

I firmly believe these services are best provided at the local level. People living and working as part of a local community are best able to judge and assess the needs of the people around them. Very often needs have to be assessed in the context in which they appear. In turn, people who need help are more likely to know where to turn if that help can be found locally. However, there are still numbers of people in the community who do not know where to turn when they are in trouble, and the work of volunteer bodies, such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux, is invaluable in overcoming this problem. I believe councils need to be given greater flexibility in their funding so that each can decide on the priorities of need in their community and perhaps be better able to meet the needs.

To meet the challenges of the future presented by these changes, the Government has initiated a board of inquiry into the role and structure of local government. The board has issued an interim report on the role, containing a great number of recommendations which are now being evaluated and studied by interested people.

The board emphasizes that its findings to date must be regarded as preliminary in nature, and that all further evidence and submissions presented prior to completion of the final report must receive full consideration. The board has suggested that the interim report should fulfil a similar function

to that of a Green Paper, and its publication should encourage and stimulate further discussion by those interested in the future of local government.

The report calls for increased opportunity for public participation in community affairs, and for increased consultation with local groups and with other levels of government. It also calls for increasing consultation, co-ordination and co-operation between municipalities and voluntary organizations.

In the summary of the main conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter 6 at page 50, the board states:

That the municipalities should assess and interpret public views and opinions; be aware of the changing needs of the inhabitants of its local community and be capable of responding to them.

I have no doubt that, when the final report is presented, it will point the way to reforms designed to assist councils more effectively to meet the needs of their ratepayers and citizens, both now and for the future.

Another initiative that the Government is currently pursuing is the implementation of a number of major recommendations of the Building and Development Approvals Committee, dealing with building and development applications and planning procedures, designed to cut down the time taken to deal with applications.

There is no doubt that, with the growth in the complexity of planning procedures, many people have been frustrated and disadvantaged by long delays in obtaining permits. There is a need to streamline this process so that the many authorities whose approval rightly must be sought, can be promptly and efficiently dealt with. The Government is pledged to expedite measures to this end through the new buildings and development control administration.

Much has been done with regard to rates and rating systems. As a result, councils are better informed and encouraged to grant realistic rating

concessions to genuine farmers, particularly in municipalities with substantial urban components. There is a need for further investigation to resolve certain conflicts which arise in property valuations and, in particular, zoning within a municipality.

At the present time a number of urban fringe municipalities are looking carefully at rating systems. It seems that to some extent the present systems do not meet all the requirements of an equitable distribution of the rate burden. In particular, where there are diverse land uses ranging from broad acres to market gardens to residential blocks, it is difficult to find one formula which treats all fairly when it comes to striking the rate.

One of the concerns of ratepayers is that many are contributing substantially towards municipal services which, in the main, are consumed by non-ratepayers. Again, these sorts of problems are thrown into sharper focus in the outer fringe areas than in the wholly rural or wholly metropolitan areas. They are special problems which require special attention. A number of alternative proposals will come forward and should attract the closest possible consideration in an effort to bring about a more equitable rating system.

I might add that much has been done to assist pensioners with the burden of rates by way of a Government subsidized rebate, which has now been raised to 50 per cent of their municipal, water and garbage rates. In times of rising costs, this has been a most welcome relief for those on fixed incomes and no doubt one which is very much appreciated by that section of the community.

The Victoria Grants Commission was established to ensure the equitable distribution of untied grants to municipalities. It was good news for local government when the Federal Government announced recently that the amount to be reimbursed from personal income tax collections will rise to 1.75 per cent. That represents a welcome boost of more than 20 per cent in local government funding. This is in line with

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a stated policy to bring the total reimbursement to 2 per cent during the life of the present Federal Government. These matters will serve to strengthen local government and will ultimately enhance the living standards and welfare of people across the State.

In the Governor's Speech at the opening of Parliament, His Excellency remarked that "quality of life in all its aspects has been the aim of recent Governments of this State. It will continue to be a prime aim of the new Government that all Victorians should share in wider opportunities for self-expression and personal development". I look forward to the formulation of the new personal development course to be introduced into Victorian schools. As a mother of four children, I believe it is very important for children to learn the skills for entering adulthood as well as the academic disciplines to enable them to lead worthwhile, satisfying and fulfilling lives.

In past generations perhaps children were expected to learn those skills from their home environments. Present day lifestyles have changed so dramatically that it can no longer be taken for granted that children will learn those things that will equip them to lead a full and satisfying life. The influence of television, if not carefully supervised and selected by parents, can lead children to hold many misconceptions about life.

Today, great numbers of young adults leave school with only the vaguest perceptions about the real world and the necessity of making a contribution to the prosperity of the country. Somehow, in the process of their education, many young adults have become quite detached from the nitty-gritty things of life. I do not blame teachers for this; it appears to be the result of a number of elements during their formative years and parents, too, must accept their share of the responsibility.

Many of these subjects are being taught in schools today but only in a fragmented way and often at the whim of the school principal. They need to

be co-ordinated into one cohesive course and streamed into the school curricula. With the advent of computerized education and the specialized nature of subjects being taught, one must not lose sight of the fundamentals of learning and the ability to discipline oneself along a chosen path in a meaningful way in order to realize one's full potential. I hope teachers at both primary and secondary levels will recognize the need for the introduction of such a course and will readily embrace the philosophy that lies behind it.

The aim of education should be to produce a well-rounded citizen, who has not only achieved satisfactory levels of literacy and numeracy but who has also developed a sense of self-esteem and respect for others. The skills of parenthood, homemaking and human relations are essential tools for the well-being of human beings and I believe the introduction of this course will do much to balance the education of our young in future generations.

I am grateful for, and sincerely thank honorable members, staff and others, for the warm welcome and assistance that I have received since I was elected to represent the Boronia Province and I look forward to making my contributions towards the continuance of a progressive and forward-thinking Government.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I take this opportunity to thank honorable members and you, Mr President, for welcoming me to this Parliament. Mr President, I congratulate you on your election to the Chair of the House. I know you will serve the House with the sound judgment and impartiality of your predecessor. I also take the opportunity of paying tribute to all the Parliamentary staff whose courtesy and friendly assistance has been very much appreciated.

I, too, have made history today in the House. As my colleague, Mr Walker, is the first architect to serve in the House, I must be the first plumber to grace the benches of the Chamber and I pass on to honorable members the message that now they have a free consultative service available to them.

I am proud and deem it a great privilege to represent the people of the Geelong Province. I have lived in Geelong for more than 42 years and I consider that I know the people and the area well. As honorable members know, I share the Geelong Province with the honorable member opposite, Mr Glyn Jenkins, whom I regard as a personal friend, although somewhat misguided politically. Mr Jenkins has been a respected representative of the province over the past nine years and he is held in high regard by people of all political persuasions in the Geelong area. I congratulate him on his appointment as Secretary to the Cabinet, a post which I believe is very much deserved.

I come to Parliament as a member of Her Majesty's Opposition, and a proud member of Australia's oldest political party, the Australian Labor Party. I shall also state at the outset that I am an unashamed idealist and I firmly believe that social justice can be won for all Victorians through the Parliamentary system. I shall refer briefly to some aspects of the province I represent— aspects that concern me greatly and matters that I intend to pursue within Parliament until reforms are effected.

I refer, firstly, to unemployment, especially amongst the young. Despite all the words of concern and promises of solutions, very little is being done. The unemployed are still being treated as second-class citizens, they are still being harassed by Government agencies and, in a majority of cases, are still living without hope.

In Geelong, the current level of unemployment is 7.8 per cent of the work force compared with the State average of 5.5 per cent. In human terms, it means that 5219 people in Geelong are registered as unemployed. When considering the problem of unemployment in Geelong, one must also consider that approximately 3000 people commute daily to Melbourne by train and car because they cannot find employment in their field in Geelong. Commuting, too, takes its toll of family life and places great strain on the family unit. Add to the already alarming