

has come to me and could be thrashed out by the Road Safety and Traffic Authority.

Mr Speaker, once again, I congratulate you on your high appointment. I should like to express my sincere thanks to the Governor for his Speech, and to pledge the loyalty of myself and my constituents to His Excellency.

**Mr MATHEWS** (Oakleigh)—The Leader of the House has been quoted as saying that maiden speeches should be non-controversial and limited to a quarter of an hour. It seems to me to be a slightly restrictive arrangement. Luckily, my maiden speech was made in another place some time ago. A lot of things can be done by a majority vote in the democratic process, but restoring lost innocence is not one of them. In any case, in the face of wrongdoing, it is no asset. If the Melbourne media had been less innocent in the face of the Premier's claim that the Government land deals had all been exhaustively investigated and given a clean Bill of health, the results of the recent State election might have been very different. If Australians on our side of politics had been less innocent in 1975, the rape of the democratic process in the Senate that year might not have happened.

I raise that point because, in recent weeks, the Premier has told us of his part in that episode—when he knew that the blocking of Supply was wrong. A word from the Premier at that time would probably have led to an entirely different outcome, but instead the Premier stayed silent. The Premier may feel there are heavier burdens than that on his conscience, but he has gained himself a footnote in history books for it, which will stand as an epitaph—"His silence was democracy's defeat".

The Speech that the Governor delivered to us three weeks ago on behalf of the Government is unsatisfactory, because it shows no sense of urgency about the problems that are bearing in on this State in fields as diverse as employment, immigration and energy. Where problems were rec-

ognized in the Speech, the solutions which were proposed to them were inadequate.

I want to begin tonight, as so many honorable members have in this debate, by saying something about the problem of unemployment, which is exercising so crippling an effect on this community as a whole, and particularly on its younger members. Although a number of honorable members on the Government benches have paid lip service to concern about unemployment, it seems to me that the magnitude of the problem, and the damage that it is doing, has not got home to them in all its enormity.

In May, Australia's unemployment rate was nominally 6·7 per cent. I say, "nominally". That means that for every job vacant in Australia there were 24 applicants—24 people in search of work. The number of people out of work in our community in May was virtually at the same level as at the height of the great depression. In fact, as most honorable members are aware, these Commonwealth Employment Service figures drastically understate the real extent of unemployment in our community. Economists estimate that for every 100 people who register with the Commonwealth Employment Service as being in search of work, a further 36 are victims of hidden unemployment.

It is two years since the national Government has been prepared to finance an investigation into this problem of hidden unemployment. That programme of investigating the phenomenon of hidden unemployment has suffered as a part of the over-all clamp down on the compiling of statistics which might be embarrassing to the Government. But two years ago—and let us not make any allowance at this stage for an increase in the figures—those figures included 65 000 people who wanted work, in many cases quite desperately, but had withdrawn from the work force because they had despaired of finding a vacancy. There were 20, 21, 22, 23, and now 24, people in search of every available job. They included 17 000 people who wanted to work, but who could not find work at suitable

hours, and 21 800 who wanted to work, but for whom no child care facilities were available. They included 105 000 people who had remained in the education system, although study was not really what they wanted to be doing; they wanted to be in gainful employment. If one adds those 210 000 people who were the victims of hidden unemployment two years ago—without making any adjustment for the increase that has certainly occurred over the past two years—to the 436 977 people who were registered job seekers last month, one comes to a total of 650 000 people who are the real victims of unemployment in our community, or more than 10 per cent of the Australian work force.

In addition, there are a further 127 000 people who are classified as under employed because they are working part time, when in fact their wish is to be employed full time. It is futile for honorable members opposite, here and in other places, to keep suggesting that unemployment is less serious than the Commonwealth Employment Service figures suggest, and to keep blaming unemployment on the people who are unemployed, and whom they regularly stigmatize as dole bludgers. The fact is that we have a work shortage of massive and increasing size. That work shortage problem is no longer exclusively a working-class problem. It is no longer confined, as it was so often in the past, to the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne, or to a few country and regional centres where there are declining industries.

A French Government report predicts that 30 per cent of all banking employees in France will lose their jobs over the next ten years as a result of the introduction of automated office machinery, with similar losses in the insurance industry and the Public Service. A German report sets the figure higher. It believes that 40 per cent of present office work will be passing into the realm of computerized machinery over that same ten-year period. I want to emphasize that these are not distant problems.

*Mr Mathews*

They are problems that are rushing in on this society and this State with great rapidity.

It is estimated that in Sydney alone—I have been able to find no comparable figure for Melbourne—20 000 typists have been displaced by the introduction of the first generation of word processing machinery; 20 000 fewer jobs available for girls in their first years out of school. Here in Melbourne, the head office of the National Mutual insurance group has used the introduction of word processing machinery to reduce its secretarial staff by 29 per cent over a two-year period. What it saved in wages paid for the capital cost of that machinery in only eighteen months.

*Rydges* magazine—and I quote from it—states, “One word processing machine and its operator can be expected to replace two and a half to five typists; in certain circumstances an even greater number can be replaced”. At another level unemployment is currently at 9.5 per cent among university and college of advanced education graduates, and the recent report of the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs—a Federal Government report produced by a Government made up of colleagues of honorable members opposite—estimates that these figures on unemployment are going to get worse. The highest levels of unemployment among graduates are not in arts and humanities, as is always suggested, but in science and in engineering, the harder schools. Increasingly, unemployment is moving out of the working-class suburbs of Melbourne, moving out from the northern and western areas of Melbourne, and engulfing middle-class homes in Liberal Party electorates. The Jackson report on manufacturing industry, the Crawford report on structural exchange, the Williams report on education and training, and the annual report of the Australian Manufacturing Council all agree that high unemployment will be with us throughout the foreseeable future.

Prior to the recent State election the Premier set out to show that he and the Government were aware of the

dimensions of this problem and had some compassion for the people who were caught up in it. In December the Premier told the Conference on Structural Change and Employment:

In modern factories single automatic machines are doing the work of scores of men. In business offices, banks and insurance offices, computers, calculators and word processors are displacing human hands and brains at an alarming rate. With modern machinery our farmers are producing more and more from the land with fewer people. Jobs have vanished by the thousand. The really urgent thing about the present situation is the speed of change. If we are to adapt successfully to it we have to be prepared to change rapidly and radically too.

Now that the elections are over, unemployment has returned to its normal place at the bottom of the Liberal Party's priority list. The situation is no longer alarming or urgent, as the Premier described in December. What the Premier meant by rapid and radical change has turned out to be, in the words of the Governor's Speech, "strengthening the resources of the Victorian Employment Committee and establishing a Job Forecast Committee to assist it". That is what the Government means by rapid and radical change.

Liberals always show concern for unemployment before, but not after, elections. Their unchanging objective is to curb the bargaining power of employee organizations, through the maintenance of a substantial unemployment pool. Again and again over the years that theme has recurred in the arrangements introduced in the economic sphere by Liberal Governments. It is not so many years since they were proud of it and used to boast that only under a Liberal Government was there an adequate unemployment pool. I remember that at the time of the 1968 Budget the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote a leading article congratulating the Liberal Government on the fact that, thanks to its economic policies, Australia was bound to achieve the unemployment pool again that it had needed for so long. Instead of taking action against unemployment, the Federal Liberal Government has

now dismantled the unemployment forecasting machinery of the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs.

There is a parallel here with the Liberal experience over Vietnam and conscription. Honorable members opposite who scoff will see it operate very much to their disadvantage in due course. The 1966 Federal elections were won by the Liberal Party on a policy of conscripting young Australians to fight in Vietnam. The 1972 elections were lost very largely on that same policy because the middle-class homes in Liberal electorates had come to understand the cost of that war in terms of the killing and maiming of middle-class children. The Premier will learn that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Today middle-class children are having their lives distorted and destroyed by unemployment in a way which is unprecedented in the experience of most of those young people and most of their families. They have met the dole bludger, and he is themselves. In the Governor's Speech the Premier and the Government lost their last opportunity of having a change of heart and a change of policy on this problem of unemployment. Unemployment will destroy this Government at the 1982 elections, and very likely earlier, as surely as Vietnam destroyed another Liberal Government seven years ago.

The myth of the dole bludger is the cruellest, the most cynical and ultimately the most destructive emotion that has ever been palmed off on to an Australian electorate. It stops us from coming together as a community to understand, and eventually to overcome, our crippling shortage of work. Liberals claim that Australian young people are not interested in work. In fact, in 1974, the last year when there were enough jobs to go around, these same young people were employed along with the rest of the work force. It is incredible to suggest that there can be a complete change over of attitudes of young people, a complete overthrow of the work ethic, within a four-year period. That is the idea that underlies the myth of the

young dole bludger, the young person who will not work and who thus swells the unemployment statistics.

Liberals claim that our schools are turning out unemployable, inarticulate illiterates and innumerates. It is said that this is the cause of unemployment. They say that job applicants are turning up for interviews with long hair, ear rings, jeans and thongs. If all of the community had the intellect of Einstein and dressed as Anthony Eden did, it still would not make any difference to the brutal arithmetic of unemployment. Twenty-three out of every 24 of the people who are unemployed would still miss out on the jobs because that is the ratio. With 24 applicants for every job available, 23 are always disappointed.

It should be realized that the jobless young people in the community are not the cause of unemployment but its victims. There is nothing intrinsic about them that makes them different from young people in the years of full employment. The cure for unemployment is not changing the people who are out of work but changing the economic arrangements in ways which will create more jobs and will better distribute the jobs and the working hours that are already available. Blaming unemployment on young people, on so-called dole bludgers, solves none of our present problems; it simply creates new ones.

The myth of the dole bludger has created this new growing social problem of thousands of workless teenagers being driven out of their homes by parents who have been sold the line that it is the responsibility of the kids themselves for being unemployed. The myth of the dole bludger has raised the suicide rate amongst young people to historically high proportions. The myth of the dole bludger fosters personal feelings of worthlessness amongst the kids, with all that means in terms of mental illness, drug dependence, crimes and other forms of social irresponsibility. Above all, the myth of the dole bludger stops us from understanding as a community that our problem is not people but a shortage of work, which cannot be overcome

Mr Mathews

by changing people. This was recognized clearly in the report of the Williams committee that was introduced into Federal Parliament a few weeks ago. It was made explicit that no conceivable change in the education system and in the people coming out of that system would provide more jobs where none had been available.

In refusing to recognize the nature of this work shortage that is afflicting the community, we are failing to take advantage of the fact that it also offers some opportunities. If it is seriously argued that we will have a shortage of skilled tradesmen when the economy has strengthened further, then surely now is the time to take out the people from this large group of unemployed, 646 000 people who are the victims of unemployment in one form or another, and to equip them with the skills which will enable them to take the jobs which traditionally go unfilled in Australia in times of economic prosperity, because we have never at any stage in our history trained as many skilled workers as are needed for the requirements of industry.

It is argued that fewer and fewer hours of work will be available. The corollary is that there will be more leisure, a greater requirement for recreation, and with it a greater requirement for equipping people with the skills for taking advantage of that leisure to the full. It is interesting that the head of the staff college at Mount Eliza has given considerable thought to ways in which that goal might be achieved. Why cannot we take up some of these more imaginative proposals that are put forward in the community, which would enable us to see opportunities in unemployment as well as disadvantages?

I turn to the subject of energy because, although the unemployment crunch is here now, the energy crunch is following rapidly on its heels. As my authority in developing this point, I take a spokesman of impeccable conservative credentials. The Chairman of Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd,

Sir James McNeil, has predicted that Australia's self sufficiency in oil is likely to decline by two-thirds over the coming ten years. Whereas in 1978 Australia was able to meet 65 per cent of its oil requirements from local sources, by 1980 it will be able to meet under 20 per cent from local sources. This means an increase in oil imports from 83 million barrels in 1977-78 to 275 million barrels in 1990. This is a staggering eight-fold increase in overseas payments for oil, from \$850 million in 1977-78 to \$7000 million in 1990.

These estimates from Sir James McNeil, the head of Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd, raised three assumptions which are all open to challenge. They assume that it will be possible for Australia to obtain all the oil it wants from a world that is characterized by shrinking oil reserves; it assumes that the ruling price for oil on 1 January next year will be \$15.80 a barrel when there is every indication that it will be \$20 a barrel or more at that stage; it assumes that subsequent to the beginning of next year there will be no further increases in the price of oil relative to the price of other goods; and that the only increases in oil prices will be those arising from inflation. Some of those assumptions have already been disproved and all of them are suspect. They understate the shortage and the soaring price of oil which is overtaking this community with such rapidity.

The Federal Minister for National Development, Mr. Newman, has predicted publicly that by the late 1980s, not ten years from now, the Australian motorist will be paying four times as much for his petrol as he now pays. Recently there have been photographs of a single car with most of the city side of the West Gate Bridge to itself. Within ten years we will have situations in which single cars will have whole freeways to themselves.

The opening of the Gardiners Creek Valley freeway in the electorate that I represent, in 1992, will coincide with the new heights in the price of petrol and new shortages of supply. It is a

measure of the shortsightedness of this Government that it continues to spend public money on forms of road constructions which are following the dinosaur and the dodo into extinction.

In some areas this Government is driving people from their homes for the sake of freeways which will either never be begun—I ask honorable members opposite whether they seriously envisage a six-lane freeway being commenced under the energy shortage conditions of the early 1990s—or will be recognized as white elephants before they are finished. There is nothing in the Speech which the Governor delivered to suggest that the Government has learnt anything from the petrol queues which are currently to be seen in the United States of America, in Europe, and in the United Kingdom. Nowhere in the Governor's Speech is there any acknowledgment that within five years—and perhaps within the final quarter of the present year—similar queues will not be a feature of life in this country.

There is no acknowledgment of the disproportionate share of the burden of fuel shortages which rationing by price inevitably imposes on the low-income groups who are least able to pay. There is no sign of a start at adapting town planning and development processes to the era of scarce and costly local fuels.

There is no inkling of what it might mean to live in Ringwood or Melton or Dandenong when the price of petrol is \$4 or more a gallon. Honorable members opposite scoff at the idea. Have they given serious thought to the impact on the average family budget of the cost of running a car between an outer suburb, 15 or 20 miles from the city centre, backwards and forwards for work, as so many people now do, for recreation, and for shopping with petrol at \$4 a gallon? The sums simply do not add up.

I want to say something in conclusion about immigration. The Government has shown through the Governor's Speech that it is quite unprepared for the magnitude, the speed and the desperation with which the processes of social

change are hurrying upon us in the field of immigration. One million people have come to Australia from Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea over the past five years. Half of them have been resettled, but at least 300 000 of them are still being held in transit camps in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Hong Kong. These countries are going to be placed under intolerable pressure as a further one million people move out of various parts of Indo-China over the twelve months immediately ahead. There is no way, in the circumstances, in which Australia will be able to limit its intake to the 10 500 refugees whom we are expecting in the current year without seriously disrupting relations with our neighbours.

What members of the Opposition would very much like to know is what preparation is being made for this influx, for the people who are already on their way here, the 10 500 who have been admitted under the quota arrangement or those who are turning up uninvited in Darwin and off the coast of the Northern Territory? How many of these people have already come to Victoria? How many of them does the Government expect will come to Victoria over the three years of its nominal term of office?

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Forest Hill)—I commence my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate by congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to the high office of Speaker. I am sure all honorable members wish you well and compliment you on the way in which you have conducted the business of the House since you became Speaker.

I should also like to place on record an affirmation of the loyalty and affection of the people of Forest Hill to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family. I also compliment the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Winneke, and Lady Winneke, on the way in which they represent the Sovereign in this State and on the manner in which they carry out their duties in the service of the people of Victoria.

The Government has been returned to office in spite of the suggestions, smears and innuendoes which were levelled at it in a despicable election campaign waged by members of the Opposition and other institutions which supported them. Traditionally, speeches made during the Address-in-Reply debate are non-controversial, and I shall endeavour to maintain that tradition. I have noticed that many new members of Parliament on the opposite side of the House have attempted to maintain the tradition, but with varying degrees of success.

I compliment all new members of Parliament who, together with those who have been re-elected, have been given a unique opportunity of serving their communities. Despite our differences in ideology and, indeed, our approach to many matters, we are all charged with the awesome responsibility of serving our communities in the Parliament. We have a responsibility to act earnestly, intelligently, and, where necessary, non-politically, to serve the people.

For many years it has been a tradition that members on all sides of the House have been able to come together and decide to act in concert. I hope this tradition will continue, although we would all acknowledge that political differences will remain; the point-scoring and the cut and thrust of debate are part of political life, and none of us should shrink from that. Nevertheless, we have a common purpose, despite the differing directions from which we may approach the common object, which is the service of the people of Victoria. I am confident that every member of the House will do his or her best to meet that common objective for which each member was elected.

I am grateful to the electors of Forest Hill for the confidence they have placed in me by re-electing me to serve them in the House.

**Mr Edmunds**—Narrowly!

**Mr RICHARDSON**—Not nearly as narrowly as many members on the Opposition benches. The electorate of Forest Hill is reasonably small, with about 32 000 electors, the majority of whom