

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

figures of the registered unemployed the hidden unemployed—those persons not registered as unemployed but who are none the less without jobs, and the women in the community who would certainly work if work were available—it could well mean that more than 9000 or 10 000 members of the Geelong community cannot find gainful employment within the region, whereas they would willingly go out to work if work were available.

This is a terrible waste of human resources. The escalating social problems associated with long-term unemployment are hardly imaginable. It is the responsibility of the Government to give absolute priority to overcoming the problem. The foremost aim of the Government's coming Budget should be the provision of jobs.

To deny present day Victorians the right to work, to save, to build homes, to raise families and to play a constructive role in society will condemn this Government and all its members to the justifiable vilification of future generations. Solutions can be found. I believe that these decisions will take a great deal of courage for the Government to make, and they will be decisions which will cause quite a restructuring of our present society.

Twenty per cent of Victorians live in some degree of poverty as a result of sickness, industrial injury, unemployment, old age, being a single parent, and particularly women, through desertion or widowhood. One in five of our fellow citizens is in dire straits, especially in relation to the basic need of adequate shelter. The second aspect that I wish to speak on briefly today is the lack of low-rental and emergency accommodation for those who, through circumstances beyond their control in many cases, are poor. With all the affluence in our society, despite the two-car, one-swimming pool families, at this moment many Victorians are living on the breadline in houses not fit for human habitation.

Outside the quiet opulence of this House, men and women are being literally thrown out on the streets. The lack

of emergency accommodation and housing for low-income families is a disgrace to us all.

The original object of the Housing Commission Act of 1937 was:

The provision of adequate and suitable accommodation for persons of limited means.

Despite the construction of 70 000-odd homes and 20 000-odd flats since 1937, the need is still there, and accommodation for these people is certainly not being built in Geelong. No homes have been built by the Government for rental in Geelong for the past twenty years, except for some homes for the aged. The waiting time for commission homes is eighteen months to two years. Emergency accommodation is limited to approximately four homes in the entire region. Social welfare agencies estimate that there are some 2000 deserted wives or single mothers in the Geelong area. Many single-parent and low-income families, unable to find accommodation in the private sector because of the cruel bonding system and the high rents, finish up in caravan parks or in very sub-standard houses.

In the first twelve months of occupation of the recently constructed Rosewall estate of some 500 houses built for ownership, there were 44 deserted wives—a situation caused in the main by unemployment and increases in interest rates for home buyers. Can honorable members imagine the predicament of a deserted wife, suddenly finding her husband gone, often with the car and family savings, with rent or house payments to meet; hire purchase agreements to honour; children to feed and educate; transport costs, rates and so on, and little or no income apart from the pension—the adequacy of which is a subject for further debate at a later date?

These are not isolated cases; this is close to a daily occurrence in the province I represent. Eviction is inevitable. The private sector landlords often discriminate against these women when they are at their most vulnerable. If they are unable to obtain emergency accommodation for

that initial period while they sort themselves out, the effect can be traumatic. They must rely for help on family, friends or some charitable organization, and in many cases have to break up their family unit to survive.

The Government must be made aware of the ever increasing need and demand for rental accommodation that people can afford. The plight of the under-privileged—the single parent, the young unemployed, the aged—in their accommodation needs can be ignored no longer. The Australian dream home is not, unfortunately, within the reach of everyone, but every Victorian is entitled to live with dignity and to be adequately housed. I cannot emphasize too strongly to those honorable members on the Government side of the House, who will shortly be planning the Victorian Budget for 1979–80, that the needs of the disadvantaged of this State must be given first consideration.

They are just two issues arising in the Geelong Province which are important to me. Education staffing, transport, and local government funding are also areas of concern that I will be pursuing in this Parliament in the future. I look forward to working with you, Mr President, and the honorable members in this House in the ensuing months. The present day problems are of daunting magnitude, but not without solution. The public is looking to us to provide the leadership and the answers. If we face them and make our decisions in the public interest, and not for political expediency, the answers can be found.

**The Hon. G. A. SGRO** (Melbourne North Province)—A few days ago I was sitting in the public gallery of the other House and I heard a report from the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. I was convinced that this is a multi-cultural society; now the Minister has convinced me even more and therefore, because I believe this is a multi-cultural society, with your permission, Mr President, I wish to say a few words in Italian, if you will allow me. I will speak first in English and repeat what I have said in Italian.

**The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)**—Thank you; I should like to hear it in English.

**The Hon. G. A. SGRO**—I will start with English first. Mr President, only three years ago I was here in this Chamber, but for a different reason. At the time I came here with a very courageous woman, Mrs June English, who was the principal of the Brunswick Girls High School. For years and years Mrs English, the students and the parents in Brunswick wanted to persuade the Government to build a new school in Brunswick East. The Government accepted the reality that a new school was needed, and promised a new school for ten years, but for ten years nothing was done. Nevertheless, at that time Mrs English—a very courageous woman—and I decided to come here, not because we wanted to disrupt the Parliament, but we thought if that was the only way of making the Government take notice of what was going on in Brunswick, we would do that, so we came here with a banner. We came not to disrupt the Parliament, I repeat, but purely to make sure that the Government would take notice of what was going on in Brunswick.

Then I was dragged away by the guards—I would have done the same thing, I must say—but nevertheless the Government did take some notice, and three weeks later the Minister of Education at the time promised us a new school, although we are still waiting for it.

I am not ashamed of the action I took then. I hope I do not have to do it again, but if I have to do it, I will, for the sake of my electorate. At the time I was a bit nervous, and if anyone had said to me three years ago that one day I would come here and address this Chamber as a member of this House, I would not have believed it, but here I am today, thanks to my party—the Labor Party—which not only talks about multi-culturalism but has also given a chance for two ordinary blokes to speak in their own language at meetings of the branch to which they belong and also to represent their nationalities in this House and the other place.