

week-end and the accident in which two young boys, aged fifteen and sixteen, died as a result of trichlorethylene poisoning in 1981.

In closing, I point out that what appears to be overlooked by the critics, the pundits, the press and the Opposition is that, when the Cain Labor Government took office in 1982, it inherited from its predecessors the legacy of a deficit of \$400 million. By demonstrating sound economic leadership, the Government has reached a stage where Victoria's Consolidated Fund is now in surplus, where Victoria has the lowest unemployment rate of any State in Australia and, in the process of reaching that position, has created more than 120 000 new jobs. In addition, this State has the lowest inflation rate, the highest retail sales and the best industrial relations record in Australia; it has gained the confidence of business and has created a good investment climate. The partnership works and will continue to do so as the Government enters its second term of office—the partnership of government, local government, unions and business.

I look forward to serving and representing the constituents of Derrimut in that atmosphere of partnership. I believe this term will be challenging, and the Government will be judged on its record. I look forward to that challenge with optimism and enthusiasm.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—It is an honour and a privilege to represent the electorate of Sandringham in this historic 50th Victorian Parliament. I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, upon your election to that office and trust that your proven impartiality and wit will see us safely through the course of this four-year Parliament.

I congratulate honourable members on both sides of the House on their successes at the recent State election.

I should like to make respectful comment on the traditions that have made this Victorian and Australian society so great. I refer to our British, European and Australian native traditions and I hope in the years to come that, when the mix of our society is changing so dramatically, the heritage that has been brought to bear in the first 150 years of this Victorian society will not be forgotten.

I thank my wife and family and the hundreds of supporters who have helped to achieve a notable success in the electorate of Sandringham at the recent election. I record with pride that the result would have been quite convincingly the same without the redistribution of boundaries.

I also thank my party for providing the opportunity for me to be here in Parliament to represent the electorate of Sandringham and the State of Victoria as a whole. Before entering Parliament I was a representative of the Education Department for more than 30 years. For 26 years I was the head of a department and an administrator and during the past eleven years I was a principal in technical schools.

I preface my remarks by making those points as the reason I am standing here tonight at 10 o'clock, after waiting all day with my pads on to get to the batting arena, is because of the Federal and State Labor Party education policies of the past three years.

I shall remark briefly on the situation that appalled me when Senator Susan Ryan attacked excellence and standards federally and diminished the worth of genuine striving and effort. Excellence is not elitism. Excellence means doing one's very best. I also point out that from my principal's seat in my school it was very clear what standard of education was being presented in the State and in this nation. Schools were becoming politicized instead of being apolitical. There was no doubt in my mind that I had only two choices to make; either to vacate my chair as principal and seek another job or to seek another venue to make the point of view I am making to the House.

I should like to examine a couple of comments that were made initially by the Minister of Education regarding the review of discipline in this State. I take honourable members back to February 1983 when the disciplinary procedures in this State were altered by the previous Minister of Education. I say quite categorically that the review and alteration of

the disciplinary procedures which the Minister for Education today proclaims so proudly were merely a reversal of the policy alterations made in February 1983, namely the diminution of discipline, the undermining of standards and the undervaluing of the State system.

The present Minister for Education must be extremely concerned about the drift away from the State system of the three years from 1982 to 1985. There has been a 4 per cent increase in enrolments in independent schools. I ask the House why this has occurred. I have made reference to two key points—excellence and standards and discipline—as the reasons the State system has suffered so badly.

I might add that my colleagues, the principals and teachers, have suffered for three long years under that situation and it is about time the current Labor Government and the Minister for Education recognized that instead of strengthening the State system they have diminished it.

I urge caution about the Blackburn report, which is due to be presented to the House shortly. In the draft discussion paper of the Blackburn report there was a note about the retention of students to Year 12. It is hard to retain all students who come into schools at Year 7 to Year 12 without diminishing standards. I suggest the Minister for Education and members of the Government exercise caution, because if the Blackburn report diminishes standards and diminishes the value of university entrance against retention it will lead to a further drift away from Government schools.

I am for State education. I should like to strengthen the State schools. The current Government and previous and present Ministers for Education are not seeking to address the problem and achieve that goal properly. A word of caution about the report should be brought before the House. I am sure that Jean Blackburn would know that the solution is a difficult one to achieve.

I turn to the electorate of Sandringham and to the people I seek to serve.

Sandringham is a bayside electorate and passes through Hampton, Sandringham, Black Rock and Beaumaris, and the suburbs of Highett and Cheltenham are adjacent to a light industrial area. An incredible number of shopping centres exist in the electorate; they are mainly in small groups and no large shopping centre exists.

The major factor of the population is its ageing nature. Constituents living in the electorate have been adversely affected by the Government's increases in taxes and charges, particularly increases in land tax. The Government has obviously forgotten that most people who settled in Sandringham after the second world war are of modest means. Therefore, increases in land tax have been iniquitous and have created much hardship.

Another area of concern in the electorate I represent is the number of unemployed youths aged fifteen to nineteen years. In the Governor's Speech, the Governor referred to the fact that every young person would either have a job or find a place for further study or training. I sincerely hope the Government can achieve that objective for the young people who leave school. It is a noble aim and I will congratulate the Government in four years' time if it can be achieved. I hope it can be, because the need in Sandringham is just as great as in any other electorate in Victoria.

I shall mention some areas where the electorate requires assistance. The Sandringham and District Memorial Hospital has given great service over many years to the people of Sandringham. It currently has two great needs: Firstly, a need exists for nursing facilities for the aged and chronically ill; and, secondly, there is a need for a children's care centre. Those with sick children in the electorate must attend the Royal Children's Hospital to receive treatment.

The Police Force in the electorate is excellent. Unfortunately, its services have been cut back, rationalization has occurred and mention has been made of intended closures, which has produced concern in the electorate.

I shall refer to the transport problems in the electorate. A need exists for the transport situation at Cheltenham railway station to be rationalized so that buses pass by the station before arriving at Southland shopping centre and therefore the local shopping centres can receive support. A shopping centre in Highett is suffering from a decline in patronage and a need exists for boom gates to be put in place to enable traffic to flow freely along Highett Road.

An urgent need exists in Black Rock for a pedestrian crossing at the shopping centre. It is a wonder that no one has been killed at that site and yet the Road Traffic Authority has ignored the pleas of the people of Black Rock and the Sandringham City Council.

I conclude my comments about the Sandringham electorate by congratulating the teachers at both the independent and State schools for the excellent jobs that they perform. Teachers are currently going through difficult times because of the decline in student enrolments. Therefore, some rationalization must occur. The Minister for Education will need to give attention to that matter so that satisfactory solutions can be found for many small schools.

I was attracted to the Liberal Party because of its philosophy and its belief in the sanctity of the individual. I would suggest that that is something worth preserving. There is also the sanctity of the family, the sanctity of private property and the right to be wealthy. Perhaps the present Government, like many Labor Governments, does not understand that wealth creates the money to pay for welfare and the public sector. If the Government does not allow people to reap the proper rewards for their efforts it will not have the money to pay public servants—I guess I am in that category—and will not be able to look after the people who need welfare. Basically that is what government is about.

I am proud to represent the people of the Sandringham electorate. I hope that, collectively, members on all sides of the House will make a valuable contribution towards the future of Victoria, to achieve a better lifestyle for people throughout the State.

Mr Speaker, and honourable members, I thank you for your courtesy tonight in listening to my remarks to Parliament. I look forward to working in co-operation with all honourable members to develop better results for government in the years to come.

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—It is a pleasure to speak for the second time in the Address-in-Reply debate. In the 1982–84 49th Parliament I heard on many occasions from members of the Opposition that I was a “oncer”. In reality not only did the Australian Labor Party hold the seat of Monbulk but also the majority for the the Labor Party in that electorate increased. I thank the constituents of the Monbulk electorate.

When Parliament met last on 4 April, honourable members heard the honourable member for Hawthorn's dissertation about the policies and commitments of the Government prior to the 1985 election. I dare say that honourable members will hear many more speakers from the Opposition benches with the same diatribe on what this so-called socialist Government will do between 1985 and 1989.

On many occasions in the past, Opposition members have condemned the Government's policies. In 1985, it is a pleasure to be again sitting on the right hand side of the Speaker's chair, while the Opposition members are still sitting on the left hand side of the Speaker's chair. I dare say that so long as the Labor Party is in government and the Liberal Party is in opposition, honourable members will hear more of the same kind of speech that was heard on Thursday, 4 April, from the honourable member for Hawthorn and also from the honourable member for Brighton.

The Leader of the Opposition is still the honourable member for Burwood, and members of his back bench, in the main, are the same people I looked at from 1982 to 1985. The Liberal Party needs a swing in the order of 5.8 per cent to win government in its own right. Before the 1985 State election the Liberal Party needed a swing of 5.7 per cent. What great gains it has made!