

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.

I congratulate not only the Labor Party but also the workers, those people who built this beautiful place here. I read a bit of history a few years ago, and found that when this building was being built the workers marched to the Trades Hall to obtain an eight-hour working day. We have to congratulate those people, because it is nice for us, and for many people on the Government side of the House, to put our feet on the beautiful velvet chairs and cushions. We have to congratulate the people who built this House for us to be able to come here and express our point of view. Now, with your permission, Mr President, I will speak in Italian. It is easy for me because it is my mother tongue.

Signor Presidente, sono passati tre anni da quando sono stato qui, in questa aula, assieme ad una donna coraggiosa, la signora 'June English, preside, allora, della Brunswick Girls High School'. Noi due venimmo qui per attirare l'attenzione del governo sul fatto che a Brunswick East bisognava disperatamente costruire una nuova scuola.

Quel giorno fui scacciato da questa aula dalla polizia e dalle guardie e venni rinchiuso in una cella sotto questo Palazzo. Se qualcuno mi avesse detto, quella volta, che un giorno io avrei parlato in questa aula in veste di membro parlamentare, io non ci avrei creduto.

L'azione mia di tre anni, credo tutt'ora, che fosse giusta per il bene dei bambini di Brunswick: infatti il governo poi fu d'accordo a stanziare dei fondi per un programma di ricostruzione a Brunswick East.

Comunque, ora io sono un membro di questo parlamento e intendo continuare ad aiutare i miei elettori quanto meglio posso, usando la mia posizione di parlamentare a questo fine.

The reason I have spoken in Italian is to prove to you, Mr President, and to all honorable

members, that this is a multi-cultural society. Until now a lot of lip service has been paid to this fact and people talk about it but nothing has been done. When I first arrived in this country the Government of the day sent me to Bonegilla camp. I went to a job at Cobram in northern Victoria. I spent six months there and my best friends were the Aboriginal people, the true Australians. In Cobram they were my mates and they shared everything they had with me. It would be a shame if the white man in this country should destroy their culture. I feel very strongly about this. I love this country but in the past as a South European I have done what I could for the Aborigines. However, in the future I intend to do more and I will devote my life to them because the only people in this country who are truly Australian are the Aborigines. What have we done for them? It makes me sick to hear people talk about giving the Aborigines hand-outs and giving them land. The land should not be given to them; it belongs to them. We have taken it away from them and I dedicate myself to their just cause.

Fifty per cent of the people in my electorate were born overseas. The other 50 per cent are old Australians, people who were born here. Many times I have been asked whether I had to convert those people, the 50 per cent Australian born and the other 50 per cent of foreign origin. It is not an easy task. I have a working-class background and 90 per cent of the people in my electorate are working-class people. I understand them; it does not matter what language one speaks. I do not have any difficulty in speaking with Greeks, Aborigines, Dutch, Russians, or Chinese because we all understand each other and we all suffer the same conflicts. In the future I will dedicate myself not only to working for the Australian people, amongst whom I have many friends in this country, but also to working with the different foreign nationalities. I admit it is difficult to gain preselection under the present system. It was doubly difficult for me, but I gained preselection thanks to friends in the Labor Party and that is why I am here now.

I repeat that I did not come here solely because I wanted to be working in Parliament. My job will be outside with the ordinary people in the street in my electorate. I have referred to the problem of the Brunswick Girls High School. Three years ago, the Government promised that a new school would be provided. However, money was provided for a different school, not that school. The Government decided that it would not win votes by doing so as it was a Labor area and it switched the money from Brunswick to another area. There is also a problem with the Brunswick East Technical School. It is not the teachers who revolted against the school system but the parents. They had had enough. They realized that their children needed a better education. They will no longer put up with the crumbs and the leftovers. They want a slice of the cake. The workers make the cake and they want a share of it. They will not put up with crumbs that drop on the floor. Therefore, I have been approached by three schools in the area which need a great deal of help. I hope to give my time and efforts to the people who need this help.

I refer to the enormous problems faced by pensioners. I will dedicate myself to those people. The only way we can destroy prejudice, hate and racism is to educate the children while they are young. It is not much good trying to educate them when they reach university. Honorable members should perform their duty and be of service to the community. If they do that they must do really good work. It can be done. A few weeks ago a report appeared in the newspapers on some research that had been carried out about how people regard the migrants of this country. That was a disgrace. Nevertheless, I should like this House to start doing some useful work to instigate an inquiry to ascertain what people really think of migrants. In 1974 new legislation was introduced in the Federal Parliament in relation to migrants. A Liberal senator from South Australia said that migrants who came to this country were worth \$74 000 from the day they arrived. Up to 1975 we brought to this county more than \$2000 million in real value, apart from

the work we produced in this country. This South Australian Liberal senator was courageous. He even criticized his own party, which had been in office for 23 years but had done little to eliminate discrimination. I shall insist that in future honorable members get off their - I do not say what - and do some useful work. A Parliamentary committee should be appointed to ascertain what the people of this country feel towards migrants and we should try to create a better society for everyone.

I love opera and many years ago an opera called La Gazza Ladra was written in Italy. This opera is the story of a very rich family. Every summer they used to eat their lunch under the trees in the garden. They had a servant. Their knives and spoons were of silver, not ordinary cutlery. One day, a magpie was sitting in a tree nearby while they had their lunch. The rich people finished lunch and moved away, but the poor peasant servant cleaned up the dishes. The magpie flew down and stole a silver spoon, and a girl was blamed for the theft. She was sacked, and in the end she died. Mr President, I am sorry to say that some members on the other side of the House remind me of La Gazza Ladra. They were born with silver spoons in their mouths, and I believe the time has come when the people of this country should share equally.