

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH
Address-in-Reply

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I have the honour to report that the House this day attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, when His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. As the Speech is printed, and copies are in the hands of honorable members, it will not be necessary for me to read it.

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—I move—

The following Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor to both Houses of Parliament be agreed to by this House—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

It is an honour for me, especially as this is my first speech in Parliament, to move on behalf of the Government, the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech to this Parliament. I should like at this time to take the opportunity to publicly acknowledge and pay tribute to His Excellency for his past and continuing public service to this State.

I should like also to acknowledge the service, Mr Speaker, of your predecessor, who, in the eyes of the public, and no doubt of honorable members of this House, upheld the high standards and traditions of his office. I have no doubt, Mr Speaker, that you will do likewise, and I congratulate you on your elevation. I give you my good wishes and, I trust, the good wishes of every honorable member in this House, in your task of steadfastly upholding the dignity of your office and the tradition of fair-minded and impartial administration of this House. All honorable members have a part to play in this matter for if we undermine the dispensation of justice in this Chamber we undermine the very core of democracy in our community.

We follow in Australia, and in Victoria, the Westminster tradition of government, the security and basis of which, in many instances, rests on unwritten conventions which have evolved over the centuries to preserve and foster democracy—rule by the people. These conventions singularly amount quite often to very little, but added together they make our country and our community part of the free world.

I think of the convention that a new member may make his maiden speech unhindered by interjections. This is an expression by members who hold opposing views that the new member be allowed to gain some experience before being called upon to justify his or her viewpoint. I think also of the far more important convention this House must observe if democracy is to be maintained in our community, that not only the will of the majority should prevail, but fair consideration and treatment of the views of minorities should also occur.

These traditions are matters which every member of this Assembly should observe if we are to preserve our community's way of life. If we abuse them it will, for instance, lead to calls—as occurred during the lifetime of the last Parliament—for curtailment of the rights of free speech that are given to members of this House. One such instance was the allegation that a former Leader of the Opposition in this House had been bribed. This allegation, I understand, is completely untrue, yet by its utterance it lowered the esteem of this House and the confidence the public has in it. A core of democracy in our community, the confidence the people have in their representatives elected to govern, was damaged as a result. That allegation, unfortunately, appears to have been only one of many abuses in the last Parliament of the conventions upon which our system of government rests.

It should be the aim of all members of this House, and this Parliament, to be responsible in the use of the rights and privileges conferred upon us as elected representatives of the people,

and to maintain and increase the confidence the community of Victoria has in Parliament as the core of democracy.

His Excellency indicated in his Speech that it is the Government's intention in this the 48th Parliament of Victoria to introduce a legislative programme that will improve the standard of living and quality of life of all sections of the community of Victoria, and to maintain our State's stature in these areas as the leading State in Australia. This programme has evolved as an expression of Liberal Party philosophy—a philosophy that has, as its basic principle, the freedom and well-being of all people.

This Liberal Party Government has, as have the others before it, looked to the democratic majority for its authority, but it will govern in the interests of all, seeking to unite the beliefs and aspirations of all whose love of this, our community, and care for the well-being of their fellow citizens transcends party loyalties.

Tenets of Liberal Party philosophy are belief in freedom, belief in the family as the fundamental and vital unit of social organization, and belief in free enterprise. Liberal Party philosophy is not academic cant—it is the guide to Liberal Party action in Government.

Freedom and free enterprise are, of course, intertwined. The Liberal Party supports and encourages freedom because it is a fundamental human right. Freedom of speech, freedom of organization, freedom of worship, freedom of non-violent dissent; these are all important to our way of life in Australia. There can be no freedom unless one is independent of the arbitrary authority of others. Fundamental to this independence is the possession of private property, home ownership and income security.

Members of the Liberal Party believe in, and support, the system of free enterprise because we believe the standard of living of the community, both in material possessions and in day-to-day freedom and security, can best be provided by the development and utilization by individuals of their own

skills. The catalyst for this is incentive to achieve and reward for achievement, with controls over the actions of the individual being avoided unless there is the clearest evidence that the rights of others, the common good of the community, require the imposition of controls.

The Government's programme in this Parliament will therefore give incentive to competitive free enterprise because it leads to a healthy, vigorous and creative community, and it will give people increased opportunity to exercise their freedom of choice and initiative.

The programme will continue the encouragement of a broad diffusion of private ownership throughout the community—an objective that the Liberal Party has had great success with in Victoria over the past quarter of a century, with our community now having the highest private home ownership rate in the world.

Our great nation of Australia and, more particularly for us, its leading community, Victoria, have been and are being developed by pioneers—men and women with enterprise and determination to be individuals in a "new world"—and the whole community has been carried along on the tidal wave of development created.

I am proud to say that the Liberal Party embodies this philosophy of enterprise that has developed our country and our State. We do not want a community where, by the year 2000, no one will be able to afford to own a car or be able to afford to own a house. Yet this is the type of society a former Prime Minister, in March of this year, forecast Australia would have in twenty years or so. Australia, and the States, especially Victoria, have not developed that way under Liberal Party Governments, and I have no doubt that under this Liberal Party Government, and other Liberal Party Governments, they will not.

I am particularly pleased with the Government's commitment, in the programme set out by His Excellency, to further increase benefits payable for education. I strongly believe a good

education is the birthright of every child, and I equally strongly believe that it is the right of parents to choose the type of education they want for their families.

A great compliment has been paid to the Premier and myself, as representatives of the Liberal Party, by the people of the Caulfield electorate in their election of me as their representative in this House. No doubt their decision was greatly influenced by the achievements of Liberal Party Government in Victoria, achievements such as the highest rate of average earnings in Australia, the highest rate of employment in Australia, the highest rate of bank savings, the highest rate of teachers to pupils, the lowest rate of road casualty accidents, and the highest rate of home ownership in the world, to name but some of these achievements.

I was born in the electorate of Caulfield. I went to school there, and my father represented the area in this House for 21 years, from 1955 to 1976. I am honoured by the people of Caulfield electing me to represent them in this House, and I will do my utmost to represent them well and to keep flourishing in Victoria the spirit of individual enterprise from which every major achievement in this world has been derived.

Sir Winston Churchill once said "We must beware of creating a society where no one counts for anything, save a politician or a civil servant." I have no doubt I will be joined by every member of the Government party in ensuring that this sentiment is not overcome during the course of this Parliament.

It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the people of the electorate of Caulfield, to assure His Excellency of their loyalty and good wishes to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I am pleased to have the honour to second the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply so ably moved by the honorable member for Caulfield. In doing so I express the high esteem in which His Excellency is held in the electorate of Westernport and within the State of Victoria.

Sir Henry and Lady Winneke have set a magnificent example for all Victorians. I also wish to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to your high office.

Westernport is a large and diverse electorate which covers 3296 square kilometres. It takes in all the shore line of Westernport bay and extends from Cape Schanck in the east to Flinders and Hastings, across to Pearcedale and Langwarrin, around the corner to Tooradin, Koo-wee-rup and Lang Lang townships, easterly to the Strzelecki Ranges nearly to the town of Drouin, southward to the townships of Korumburra and Wonthaggi, and down the coast to Cape Paterson. It is a hard electorate to traverse. From the town of Cowes on Phillip Island one can look across the bay to the township of Flinders, but to traverse that road is a one-and-a-half hour journey.

As I said, Westernport is a diverse electorate. It contains major secondary industries of which Lysaght's, which presently employs approximately 1400 persons, is an example. Many small industries are carried on in the towns to which I have referred and most primary industries are carried on in Westernport. Fishing and tourism are major industries. Because of the size and the number of towns in Westernport, of necessity the honorable member for Westernport has an arduous task and must, I believe, be active. In Westernport there are 68 schools and 6 hospitals, ranging from one with 12 beds to a 98-bed hospital in Wonthaggi. Wonthaggi, the town in which I live, is the largest town of the electorate with more than 5000 residents. It was established by the State Government of Victoria in 1910 because of the deposits of black coal that existed in the area. I am proud to stand in Parliament as a person born and bred in Wonthaggi. My father and grandfather worked in those coal mines all their working lives.

In addition to the mainland towns three islands are located in the Westernport electorate. Phillip Island, which is well known, is Victoria's major tourist attraction with penguins, koala bears and seals as the