

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PAPERS.

The following papers, pursuant to the directions of several Acts of Parliament, were laid on the table by the Clerk—

Equal Opportunity—Reports of the Equal Opportunity Board and the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity for the period 1st December, 1977, to 30th June, 1978 (two papers).

Poisons Act 1962—Proclamation amending schedules to the Act.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—

Shire of South Gippsland Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 33, 1977.

Waratah Bay Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 10, 1977.

APPROPRIATION (1978-79, No. 1) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 14) on the motion of the Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. D. G. WILLIAMS (Ballarat Province): It is at a time of crisis that I come to this Council; hard times for Victoria and hard times, certainly, for the Ballarat Province. It is a time of high unemployment which is certainly the crisis that is facing Victoria. On 28th October, the electors of Ballarat Province showed their views on unemployment.

This Appropriation Bill must be condemned in that it does not create maximum job opportunities for Victorians, particularly the young and more particularly the young in the country. I wish to dwell on this question of unemployment. We have reached the stage where the time for words is well past and action is certainly the order of the day. I wish to dwell on the extent of the problem, particularly as it relates to country areas and especially to the Ballarat Province.

It is said that one picture is worth a thousand words. That saying was never more true than when applied

to a photograph which appeared in the *Ballarat Courier* last week showing the response of people, mainly young people, to a call for labour by a recently-established fast food chain in Ballarat. Given the length of the queue, one can be excused for thinking that it was a pop festival or even a football game, but there was no pop concert and there was no football match; they were all young people of Ballarat, all young unemployed, who are the most valuable resource that this country has, shopping around to the buyers of labour.

The press photograph graphically illustrated that close on 10 per cent of the Ballarat work force wishes to work, but cannot find it. It illustrates the statistics that more than 3,000 people are registered for work in Ballarat and that there are only 122 vacancies. That is something like 26 people out of work offering themselves for every single vacancy on the books. A recent survey in Geelong showed that the figure could be anything up to double what it is, given the number of people who do not register and the number of people who leave the district.

We are fast creating a disenchanted generation that will be socially scarred for the rest of their lives. It is another depression generation. This disastrous situation has arisen, firstly, because of lack of Government initiative at both State and Federal levels to create meaningful job opportunities; secondly, because of the attitude of a large section of the community to blame the victim and label him as a dole bludger, and even to ostracize him to the extent of sending him identifiable mail.

The first point that I wish to make is that typified in the photograph in the *Ballarat Courier*; that many unemployed do want to work. Work is both a psychological and social necessity as well as being an economic necessity. Meaningful and satisfying work is essential to the development and growth of the human person.

My second point is that the Government must show its concern for the situation of unemployment in Victoria by creating more meaningful and satisfying job situations. It must start treating the cause as well as the effect. The effect has been treated by certain job schemes, but they have been temporary—temporary sops to unemployment, such as three weeks' work and then out of work again; six months' work if you are lucky and then unemployed again. This simply creates bitterness, especially in the young person.

The cause, however, is more difficult to treat, but nevertheless it is the most important aspect that should receive attention. The situation we face, and the sooner we realize it the better, is that we are in an entirely new ball game. The glorious days of post-war full employment have passed and finished. It is because of our ingenuity in creating more goods and services with fewer and fewer people, and the trend of people to allocate their incomes more towards greater savings and less towards the purchase of manufactured goods, that we are faced with the situation of more people seeking work and probably fewer and fewer jobs being available. The reality is to match up that inequality; to match the situation of more and more people seeking work with that of fewer and fewer job vacancies.

Permit me then to make certain suggestions which I consider will assist in the problem. Unemployment must become a matter of far greater local concern. To register with the bureaucracy in Canberra, to be paid a benefit by the bureaucracy in Canberra, and to be assisted in obtaining a job by that same bureaucracy is something too remote. Unemployment must become a matter of concern and control, and be dealt with by the local community. There must be a devolution of power down to the local community, the municipal council, to deal with this problem. Then the problem of matching the unemployed with the work will

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be one for the local community. Participation and involvement at that level will be one step in creating a meaningful community relationship.

The administration of unemployment, job vacancies and benefit payments could be transferred to local councils with a corresponding on-cost payment to cover the additional administration. These should not be only the efforts of the State and Federal Governments to create jobs. The actual process of creating jobs should be channelled through the local council. This will provide the local community with both the challenge and the resources to keep themselves in employment.

Another aspect that the State has to face is the reality that employees must be given the option to retire earlier if they so desire. They must also be given the option to work less than the full working week if they desire. Further, they must be given the option of temporarily taking leave from the work force and being able to return to it without loss if they so desire. Correspondingly, our industrial laws must be altered to allow for these innovations and for the existing rights to leave and other entitlements to be preserved.

Moreover, in this State, the virtually non-existent attempts at manpower planning must be stepped up to provide the necessary link between preparing people for job vacancies and the future job opportunities that will become available. We have seen almost an absence of manpower planning by the Victorian Government. An instance is teacher training where, over the past ten years, the expansion of teacher-training institutions has reached the point where a substantial proportion of the graduates are without jobs.

The Government stands condemned for its actions towards employment in Victoria, particularly in country Victoria. With unemployment rates between 50 per cent and 100 per cent higher than in the metropolitan area, country Victoria has

become the victim of Government malpractice in employment. A specific example is the railways where staff numbers have dropped dramatically in country regions. The establishment of rail freight centres may have been a plus on the score of efficiency, but for towns like Stawell it has achieved a minus in terms of employment. The number of men employed on the railway lines and in the workshops in country Victoria has been allowed to decline.

It is in this very area where the Government has direct control and responsibility that it has failed on a massive scale. For a Government to try to talk the economy up, as this Government does, is hypocritical when, in its own departments, it is implementing quite the reverse policy. Victoria, and especially country Victoria, will not return to economic stability until there is work for all who seek it. The Government has a direct responsibility to expand and to administer its departments to achieve maximum job possibility.

Amid all the words from the experts on unemployment, all of whom by the way are usually firmly employed themselves, and the innumerable conferences both past and present on the issue, there is some positive work being done and one commendable programme is that instituted by the Youth Council of Victoria which has the involvement of local communities and attempts to initiate discussions at the local level, particularly with the unemployed young. The ideas it is formulating are very commendable.

Domestically, unemployment is the most serious problem facing our community. At Government level, the reaction has been largely irrelevant, even counter to a long-term solution. This Appropriation Bill should therefore be re-drafted and emphasis should be placed firmly upon the maximum creation of jobs throughout Victoria.

In this first speech by a Labor Party member for the Ballarat Province in more than 20 years, might I

be permitted the indulgence of the House to pay my respects to those who have sat here before me and to those in another place, in the persons of the Honorable John Sheehan and the Honorable Jack Jones. I pay them my respects and thank them.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province): In participating in the debate on this Bill, let me firstly commend our newest member, the new member for Ballarat Province, Mr. Williams. I believe he has distinguished himself in his maiden speech and I hope he has a long and distinguished career in this place. I will come back to the reasons for that comment at a later stage.

The debate on this Bill is the counterpart of the Budget debate in another place and provides members of the Legislative Council with the opportunity, if they so desire, of discussing the Government's financial and budgetary proposals and also of raising specific matters listed in the various divisions in the schedule.

Before I commence my general comments on the Budget, let me refer to one matter in particular, the resignation from this Legislative Council of our former colleague, Mr. Pat Dickie. It is a matter of some regret to me personally that at this stage this House has not placed on record its appreciation of the service to the State of Victoria by our former colleague.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: The Minister for Local Government referred to it.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD: I know that, but I point out that the House did not move the conventional motion of appreciation that is moved when an honorable member, and particularly one who has been a Minister for a long period, retires.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON: We all agree.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD: Some of the members on your side do not agree. Mr. Dickie had a firm belief in the ideals and traditions of