

and arbitration system. I shall provide further evidence of the Government's failure in that regard. For example, a settlement had been reached in the Latrobe Valley after the longest power dispute in this State. That dispute was provoked by the Government for political purposes. After the settlement was negotiated, the Government subsequently appealed against the decision when the umpire's decision was made. That decision was not a healthy one from the trade unions' point of view, it was simply a contribution towards the removal of an anomaly which was regarded publicly as an anomaly by all thinking people. The Government is still in confrontation with the unions in the Latrobe Valley over a settlement that has already been dealt with within the conciliation and arbitration system. The Government has appealed again and again and it will never accept the decision.

The Government will not accept even now that the people of Victoria are satisfied there is something wrong with the land deals negotiated by this Government through the Housing Commission and its agents. It is still seeking by various tactics to prevent Parliament from fully discussing and disclosing before the Parliament all the matters which were referred to in that area. In its industrial relations it seeks to use this Parliament in the same way. It runs into Parliament like a little boy who has been caught with his hand in the till and says, "I did not really do it, I did not mean it that way, I have been misunderstood." The Government is unable to negotiate with responsible people in a responsible manner to achieve a just settlement of union claims in Victoria.

The Government will have a nasty time in the next three years, if it lasts that long.

The Government is in confrontation with every decent element in the work force in Victoria. It is in confrontation with the teaching community; it is in confrontation with the trade union movement in the power industry; it is

*Mr Simmonds*

in confrontation with the transport industry because of its failure to acknowledge that anomalies exist with respect to railway workers, and it is in confrontation in respect to rates paid in Victoria when compared with rates paid in New South Wales.

No evidence was given in the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor on behalf of the Government that it is in any way aware of its past sins or is in any way capable of keeping its future promises.

**Mrs CHAMBERS** (Ballarat South)—Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to support the honorable members who so ably moved and seconded the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor.

Sir Henry and Lady Winneke have visited Ballarat on a number of occasions during the Governor's term of office and are held in high regard by the residents of my electorate. I can assure His Excellency that he has the wholehearted support of the people of Ballarat South.

Before moving on to broader matters, I wish to express my sincere thanks to my predecessor, Mr Bill Stephen and his wife, for the service they have given to Ballarat South over the past fifteen years. I know that Bill found it hard to come to terms initially with the idea of a woman replacing him, but he made a remarkable recovery and has been a lot of help to me during the past few months.

Ballarat has been an area of political ferment for the past few months. In October last year, the Labor Party won the by-election for the Ballarat Province and gave the district its first taste for many years of being represented by a Labor politician. Fortunately, the experience was not palatable and good sense prevailed on 5 May. Ballarat is now well served by a solid and versatile Liberal quartet.

The Governor spoke of accountability. At the moment I am in transition between two occupations where accountability is particularly relevant. As a

t in-  
now-  
spect  
con-  
d in  
paid  
  
each  
the  
rent  
past  
rep-  
  
ure  
who  
ion  
ply  
the  
  
ave  
ca-  
of  
by  
can  
the  
of  
  
at-  
ere  
bill  
ice  
er  
bill  
lly  
ng  
v-  
ne  
  
al  
In  
on  
v-  
te  
y  
e  
d  
is  
a-  
  
7.  
:-  
:-  
a

former secondary school teacher, I am painfully aware of the vital difference between the way most teachers perform their duties and the idea held by the public of the manner in which they perform them. It grieves me greatly that even the politicians with whom I have associated have the most prejudiced and unrealistic views of the teaching profession.

Most members of the public judge teachers by what they see, read and hear through the media, so they see teachers as a race of banner-waving, striking, complaining and protesting radicals. Unfortunately, they are not inside the schools to see that the majority of teachers are conscientiously doing everything they can to provide a thorough and meaningful education for their students, as well as coping with many domestic and social problems.

One constantly hears of students who leave school unfitted for the work force because their academic standard is so low. No doubt this is sometimes due to inefficient teaching and lack of remedial teaching, but it is not always recognised that many children who suffer in this way come from homes where there are severe domestic problems, such as broken marriages, alcoholism and financial hardship. Many children regularly miss school and move from district to district. With every school arranging its own curriculum, their education becomes more and more disjointed to the stage where it is almost impossible for any teacher to remedy the situation. Who, outside school, is aware of the endless time devoted by teachers to individual students and their personal problems?

In resigning as a teacher to become a member of Parliament, I jumped out of the frying pan into the fire because the public image of politicians varies very little from its image of teachers. The public thinks that politicians are overpaid and underworked. Most members of the public visualize a politician only sitting in Parliament, so they total up the number of days Parliament sits and throw up their hands in disgust at the

easy life of a politician. Every year approximately 20 000 children from schools in Victoria visit Parliament and all they can talk about is the noisiness and rudeness of members in the House. Their most frequent comment is, "Fancy those people running the country!"

During the election campaign, person after person commented to me on the prevalence of mud-slinging and personal attacks in politics today and expressed the wish that politicians would get on with governing the State. That shows the public's image of a politician. Those of us who have the chance to see more know that sitting in this House is a very small part of a politician's life, and by far the easiest part. Members of the public in general have no idea of what a politician does in his electorate and elsewhere when Parliament is not sitting; they do not realize that the conscientious politician is on call seven days a week with no set time to start work or knock off.

In the light of my experience as a secondary school teacher, I wish to comment on the current unrest in Victorian schools. We are all aware of the continuing saga of the Footscray Technical School, but this is only one symptom of a far greater problem. Ten years ago, Victorian secondary school teachers put forward a work value case to the Teachers Tribunal and received substantial increases in salaries. At that time the salary award was based on the fact that most teachers were before a class at least 80 per cent of the school time and that they also took extra duties and sport as required. The tribunal was told that every week they worked for up to 70 hours correcting and preparing work for their classes in their own time. The teachers claimed that, like lawyers and doctors, they were professionals, whose time on the job was open-ended and, on the basis of those claims, their salaries were established.

Since that time, salaries have continued to rise but teaching time has been considerably cut so that more correction and preparation work can be done in school time. Extras are paid for and teaching unions have placed many restrictions on what teachers will do.

Last week, with relation to the Footscray strike, the secretary for the Bendigo regional branch of the Victorian Teachers Union spoke out in high dudgeon over the fact that the Footscray teachers were being punished for obeying union directives. This is the crux of the matter in educational disputes today. Teachers cannot serve two masters. If we are to have a stable educational system for our children, teachers must decide once and for all who is boss. On the one hand, we have the Education Department taking an over-all view of the needs of the State within the framework of the money available, to decide what is best for the children of Victoria. Within that framework, principals are appointed to put into action departmental policies. On the other hand, we have teacher unions trying to run the State education system and demanding that teachers follow their directives, regardless of whether they are in the best interests of students or the taxpayers. It is an impossible situation, and I must support the suggestion made by the honorable member for Burwood that the time has come to declare teaching an essential service. Only then could we give children what is their legal right, namely, a stable and uninterrupted education.

In my own electorate, students from Mount Clear Technical-High School have missed approximately one day a fortnight through strike action since the beginning of this year. In such a situation students are demoralized and parents lose faith in the education system.

Over the years we have witnessed many changes in school administration and conditions due to pressure from teacher unions. Some of those changes have been good but some have had an adverse affect, especially from the point of view of the teachers. If one looks, for instance, at the staffing formula for primary, secondary and technical schools, one will see clear evidence that those who were most militant have by far the best teacher-pupil ratio. The same is true in the case of teacher assessment procedures in the Secondary Schools Division. The Victorian Secondary Teachers Association

*Mrs Chambers*

held a gun at the head of the Director-General of Education until it got its own way, even although this meant broken promises to other members of the teaching profession. The Government must be particularly careful that it gives due regard to the interests of those teachers who do not strike to get their own way.

As a new member of this House, I look forward to actively representing the people of Ballarat South and contributing to the governing of this State. Finally, I assure His Excellency the Governor of the loyalty of the people in the electorate of Ballarat South to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

**Mr HOCKLEY** (Bentleigh)—Mr Speaker, at the outset I congratulate you on your elevation to the important position you now hold. Because of your apparent youth, Sir, I researched the ages of Speakers of this House as far back as 1856, and I found that you are the third youngest speaker in 123 years of the history of this House. I, too, can claim something of a record. I believe that I am the oldest new member to be elected to the 48th Victorian Parliament. My colleague, the honorable member for Springvale, may dispute that claim, but if he does he will have to produce a birth certificate. I think that I overcame the biggest margin in Victoria to win the seat of Bentleigh—it could be said: An old dog for a hard road.

I wish to thank the staff of this Parliament for their courtesy and patience, particularly during the installation period of this, the 48th Parliament. Having regard to the high turnover of members, they have been most helpful in every possible way. The catering on the occasion of the official Opening of Parliament could be termed a monumental achievement. The staff are to be commended for that. I speak from 34 years of experience in that field. Their success on that occasion was no accident. I wish also to express my gratitude to the people of Bentleigh for placing their faith in me and electing me to represent them in the Legislative Assembly. I am fully aware of the responsibility that has been bestowed