

an integrative view or one which takes into account the perspective of the user of the welfare service.

An equally good case could be made out in favour of integrating handicapped children into a whole range of other Government departments, or even into one of their own, but it is the Opposition's integrative philosophy which is leading it astray. If one takes the view that integration is useful only if it is meaningful to the handicapped child, and if one believes that it is the person orientation rather than the problem orientation which must dominate the organization of Government services, then the important objective will be that which aims to ensure that the whole range of welfare services used by the handicapped child and every other citizen, irrespective of his disability.

The problem of the honorable member for Footscray and the Opposition is that they take an essentially elitist view of welfare delivery; they want to integrate the whole structure from the top. I was absolutely astounded to witness the honorable member for Footscray waving around in this House a piece of Ministerial paper bearing the new crest and title of the Ministry of Special Education on it, as if it at last he had discovered the ultimate and conclusively damning piece of evidence that the Government was hell-bent on the disintegration of services for handicapped children.

What an unfortunate spectacle it was to see him parading his ignorance in this manner before the House. Surely he does not wish to suggest that a different crest and a different title on a piece of notepaper is going to make the slightest difference to the integration of Government services as experienced by the handicapped child in our schools. It is unlikely that the handicapped child would ever get to see such a piece of notepaper. However, he will, in his lifetime, come into contact with a whole range of welfare professionals including special teachers from Gov-

ernment and voluntary agencies. Integration will be achieved only when these professionals are working together within a structure which provides a range of co-ordinated services through a multi-disciplinary team approach.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The Leader of the Opposition indicated to me that he wanted to make a personal explanation. If he does not take advantage of the opportunity now, one may not be available to him. If the honorable member wishes to forgo the opportunity he may do so, but if he so desires he may make a personal explanation now.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): The honorable member for Warrandyte made a personal reference to me when he indicated to the House that, as a result of some conclusion he had drawn, I was not aware of the presence of the poverty inquiry office in my electorate until he told me. I do not know on what basis the honorable member drew that conclusion, except the honorable member's belief that he is able to inform all honorable members of matters, even those pertaining to their own electorates.

If the honorable member called at my office I should be happy to show him a personal reference I signed for a research officer who was attached to my staff, and who left to take up a position with the poverty inquiry office prior to its being established in my electorate. I do not know the basis on which the honorable member reached his conclusion, but I assure him that to the extent to which he stated it to the House he was guilty—innocently, I hope—of misleading the House.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): In this Address-in-Reply debate I should like, firstly, to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the high office you occupy and, secondly, to congratulate the other newly elected members of this House on their maiden speeches which have

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preceded mine. Many of the speakers before me in this debate have referred to parochial issues, and the need for members to be aware of them. I, too, am aware of the issues that affect people in their homes and work places, but I should like to address myself to broader issues concerning those people.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century the whole fabric of civilization is going through a period of unequalled challenge. Our whole social structure is changing rapidly and the nature of our work is changing. The whole fabric of our lives is undergoing accelerating change. Books such as *Future Shock* indicate the extent of that change and challenge. It is a challenge that must be taken up by Governments. It is a challenge that must be met by imagination, initiative and intellect. But the programmes outlined so far by this Government seems to me to indicate a continuation of the last languid triennium. It is not enough that Governments should idle along while the tides of change wash how they will over the people of Victoria. The Government seems unaware of the constant multiplication of social problems in Victoria. Our children are trained to fill their roles as producers and consumers in understaffed schools, teenagers are exhorted to smoke, drink and, at all times, consume, but are left to the rock groups at the nearest beer hall or to vandalism.

Our whole approach to education must be geared to helping people cope with the increasing complexities of their daily lives. Education must still provide children with the basic needs to be productive citizens, but it must recognize that young people are individuals with unique needs which must be catered for.

While teachers endeavour to prepare children for the post-industrial society, many of their mothers work at home in the mind-dulling boredom of sterile suburbs, and they meet only while being overcharged in the con-

crete jungles of Northland, Southland, Eastland and Westland. The full extent of the hidden social problems in our suburbs is only guessed at, and there is no magic instant answer. But, we can be sure that the opening of more and more shopping extravaganzas does not get to the centre of the problem.

At work many Victorians increasingly find their duties dehumanized, conveyor-belted and downright dull. What satisfaction is there in work on a conveyor belt? What joy in completing mysterious forms for dispatch to an unseen computer for an unknown purpose? The employers of labour become fewer and larger, and the duties of the individual become more routine; so does the individual participate less in the decisions on matters which affect his daily working life. As the worker has less and less control over his own activities, he becomes less of an individual human being and more of a machine.

The greatest threat to our civilization is not the yellow peril, the red menace, or the black death, but the rise of the great capitalist corporation. During the past two decades we have seen corporations grow ever larger and ever more remote from the population they serve. Who decides the path of these huge corporations? Who makes their decisions? It may be a baron of Wall Street or a committee of faceless managers. One can be sure decisions are not made by the workers who make its products, or by the consumers who buy them, or by the small shareholders who supposedly own the corporation. The great corporations have become dinosaurs, mindless gargantuans plodding through time with no purpose other than growing ever bigger. Growth is the primary motivation of today's corporations.

The free enterprise which members supporting the Government so vocally espouse from time to time has vanished in many industries as the market in those industries comprise fewer and larger producers. Yet, as

we move into the ultimate stages of the industrial revolution, the conservatives among us cannot see beyond the fabled virtues of free enterprise. The rhetoric of *laissez faire* capitalism is no more relevant to the problems we now face than is the feudal system. This Government is so blinkered by free-enterprise dogma that it is unable to recognize sensible business opportunities.

The State Insurance Office has accumulated losses of \$61 million. The reason for these losses is that it is not permitted to sell the full range of insurance policies. It is not permitted to spread its expenses over a full range of policies in the same way as every other insurance office in this State does. In the sacred name of free enterprise, the people of Victoria must tolerate this persistent drain on State revenue.

As *laissez faire* capitalism sinks slowly in the west, our conservative politicians slumber on in quiet reverie of the past glories of the system, and the great corporations grow greater and ever greater. But, in the face of corporate growth there is the beating of a distant drum, the sprouting of myriad community action groups. These groups—train travellers, consumers, residents, individuals concerned with all sorts of issues—provide a hope that people have begun to increase their influence on the events around them.

Train travellers are one section of the community in dire need of action and Government support. Like many thousands of others, I have been a train traveller all my working life, and I remain a train traveller. I intend to travel to sittings of this House by public transport.

I shall do so not because it is more convenient than other means of transport. Anyone who has sat in a train in the railway yards at Flinders Street for an hour and a half in the morning will know that it is not more convenient. I shall continue to travel by train, but not because it is more comfortable than other

methods. Anyone who has hung on a strap in a red rattler for three-quarters of an hour from Belgrave will verify that it is not more comfortable. However, I shall continue to travel by train because I want to remain angry at Melbourne's woefully inadequate transport system. I do not want to sink into the complacency that permeates the Government benches.

Consumer prices is another area in which I believe grass-roots action is becoming more important than hitherto. Again this Government and I are in disagreement. Although the Government is claiming to fight inflation, it refuses to establish a State prices bureau. It claims that market forces are sufficient to keep prices down and that free enterprise will solve the problem. But year by year it becomes more difficult for ordinary people to compare prices when shopping. Supermarkets are often miles apart. Specialty shops often have a monopoly within a shopping centre. What hope has a shopper of comparing prices in these circumstances? I disagree with the Government. I believe Governments must help consumers to get the best deal. One way this can be done is for the Government to provide information on prices. Because the Government will not do this, consumers are left to take action themselves.

The Knox Prices Action Group was formed in my electorate last year. It has already surveyed a range of prices and published the results of those surveys. This has been extremely well received by the citizens in my electorate. I shall continue to assist that group in every way to show just how wrong the Government is in withholding its support for the group's activities.

Social welfare is yet another area in which community groups are enjoying success. The Australian Assistance Plan—Access—has already been mentioned in this debate. This programme of the former Australian Government has

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been a tremendous catalyst for community development. It has given the advice, encouragement and drive needed. I have attended meetings in the eastern suburbs and been tremendously impressed by what is being accomplished with limited resources. Thousands of individuals are now involved in programmes started by Access. They are providing coffee shops, half-way houses, recreation groups, and study groups. In all the fields of community welfare, people are actually doing things. This is a prime example of the qualities which conservatives hold dear—initiative, enthusiasm and energy—not used in pursuit of personal gain, personal power or personal influence, but in pursuit of the common good. If the Australian Government eliminates the Access groups, and many fear it will, it will have committed an act of calumny on every Australian.

The challenge before us is the increasing remoteness of ordinary people from the instruments which control their everyday lives. The challenge must be met with courage—not flag-waving courage, but the courage to refuse to tolerate inadequate services, accept shoddy goods, pay extortionate prices, be tied up by red tape, or be lulled into apathy by reactionary politicians. The quiet courage of individual citizens is needed to ensure that their views are effectively represented whenever their welfare is involved. Members supporting the Government are often vociferous in support of compulsory secret ballots in trade union elections. What about compulsory secret ballots for the election of directors of public companies, for the trustees of superannuation funds or for the boards of life assurance companies? The people who pay Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works rates should have a direct say in the board's decisions. The same applies to the Country Roads Board, the State Electricity Commission and every other instrumentality. What this State needs is leadership which will recognize this

need of the people, accept this challenge and take determined action directed towards a truly representative and involved society.

Mr. LIEBERMAN (Benambra): It is indeed a privilege for me—the first member of the Liberal Party to represent the electors of Benambra for more than twenty years—to express to you, Mr. Speaker, the best wishes of the people of Benambra on your re-election to the high office you occupy, and also to express to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. the loyalty of her subjects in Benambra. I can testify to the fact that the making of a maiden speech is an ordeal. However, as I walked to the House tonight, I looked to the heavens for some inspiration. It started to rain and I realized that the drought had broken. If that is all that the member for Benambra can contribute to Victoria, perhaps he has done his duty tonight.

I was pleased to note that on three occasions His Excellency the Governor, in his Speech, referred to projects of great impact to Australia and Victoria. Those projects are being undertaken in my electorate. I refer, of course, to the natural gas pipeline which will soon reach Albury-Wodonga and provide a further impetus to the strength of country Victoria and Australia, and to the important Dartmouth dam project which is well under way. Its construction will contribute to the security of Australia and to the betterment of the people.

It will be recalled that His Excellency reaffirmed the Government's dedication to the Albury-Wodonga project. As the member for Benambra it is only fitting that I should refer in my maiden speech to this great national project. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I should like to go through the pages of history, although not too far back, and refer to some of the sequence of events which led up to the present Albury-Wodonga project. It was an historic