

and the educational philosophy of the key appointee, the principal, to be matched. I thank honourable members for their kindness and advice and for listening to my remarks. I look forward to the work of the House.

The Hon. J. L. DIXON (Boronia Province)—It is 30 years since a member of the Labor Party was last elected to represent people in the outer eastern suburbs. The honourable Roy Rawson represented those people from 1952 to 1958, as one of the members for the Southern Province. He was a very active of Parliament and was concerned with the Book Censorship Abolition League and the Council for Civil Liberties, and he was an activist in the peace movement. I am sure that he would be proud as I am of the Government's initiatives on anti-nuclear legislation; freedom of information and civil rights initiatives. I am proud to represent my party in the Boronia Province and I anticipate the time when both honourable members representing the Boronia Province are members of the Australian Labor Party.

Boronia Province is the second largest province in the State and it has experienced the largest increase in population over the past three years when more than 12 500 new voters have been added to the rolls. That increase is not particularly surprising when one studies the nature of the outer eastern suburbs. Traditionally, they have been regarded as places for people to go to fulfil the promises of home ownership being given to people over many years and promises of being able to give the children a better chance in life than their parents had in earlier years. The most obviously important aspect of that fulfilment is the security of owning one's home in one's old age and of providing one's children with better opportunities. The opportunity for this fulfilment can best be found in the outer suburbs.

To help keep faith in this dream there is the reinforcement of ideals through Tattslotto where, as long as one is "in it", one has a chance of "winning it" and the game and quiz shows on television quite blatantly illustrate the

rewards of ability, of having a bit of luck and of "having a go" which are regarded in society as rewardable attributes. In response to the dream which I, certainly, have been reared on, the land subdividers, speculators and developers have obligingly carved up massive areas of the beautiful foothills of the Dandenongs into housing estates, shopping centres and a few factory blocks. Assisted by elaborate advertising campaigns, people have followed their dream and moved to the outer areas to create what have become areas with a traditionally high proportion of home ownership.

Some parts of the outer eastern suburbs have a 90 per cent to 95 per cent home ownership level—or "bank ownership" level. The problem that has arisen, and which has been given plenty of airing in the past few months, as all honourable members are aware, is the breakdown in the home ownership system and this enormous problem is demonstrated significantly in the outer eastern suburbs where one is simply expected to own one's home, with all the infrastructure that goes with it.

As a result, very little private rental accommodation is available. Recent surveys conducted in the Boronia Province demonstrate that there is full occupancy of all private rental homes in the outer eastern suburbs compared with 1·2 per cent vacancies in the inner suburbs of Melbourne which, although low, is certainly higher than it is in the outer eastern suburbs. Occasionally estate agents do advertise properties for rent and an advertisement for one property can receive nearly 100 responses. No property is vacant for more than four hours. Rentals for a 3-bedroom home range from more than \$60 a week to \$100 a week.

This has caused a major social dislocation because low-income earners are being squeezed out of the rental market. Moreover middle-income earners are being squeezed out of the home ownership market because either they are unable to keep up their mortgage payments or they cannot save the deposit and they are relying on the private rental market. Combining the

factors of a very high and limited market availability, many people obtain accommodation that they cannot financially afford. This problem leads them to seek help from welfare and relief agencies for other services, such as food, furniture, clothing and financial assistance for gas and electricity charges and for rental arrears.

There is no real stock of public rental housing in the outer eastern suburbs. In the past three years, the Housing Commission has spot purchased only 30 homes in this area. As a result, people have nowhere to go. In addition, homeless youth and single-parent families are not regarded as good tenants for rental accommodation and they are turning to welfare agencies for help and are being advised to move out of the area. This is not necessarily satisfactory for those who have support groups and families in the area and who do not particularly want to move elsewhere. This social dislocation has proven quite conclusively that the Australian dream of owning one's home has been shattered.

The other and more important part of that dream is to provide a better life for one's children. I believe people will put up with a lot in the hope that life will be better for their children. Certainly, this part of the dream has become a farce over the past few years. The Boronia Province has a high proportion of young people. For example, the City of Knox has the highest proportion of teenagers in Victoria with 8.1 per cent of its population being aged between fifteen and nineteen years. The problems of youth homelessness and unemployment are acknowledged as being very severe and have been highlighted by headlines in the local newspaper with articles on homeless youths sleeping in used-clothing charity bins and with young people camping outside council chambers to draw attention to their problems. One example of the unemployment problems of young people is illustrated in an advertisement last week for a temporary position for a young person as a packer of shortbread. The advertisement attracted 200 applications for the one position.

These problems cause immense stress and anxiety in families. Although I would not blame the Liberal Party or its philosophy for splitting up families, I certainly suggest it has added to the large increase in marital disruption in the outer eastern suburbs. Local councils have reported an increase of up to 30 per cent in the demand for services such as marriage guidance and there has been a huge increase in the need for support services for single-parent families. Local schools have sent out notices asking whether children belong to single-parent families and the results show that there are many such families in the area.

If the supporting parent is the recipient of only the supporting parent's benefit, these families would find themselves in dire straits. They would certainly constitute an extremely disadvantaged group in society. I remember reading some time ago about one of the departed Ministers of the former Government who lived in a Housing Commission flat for a couple of weeks to find out what it was like. I suggest to honourable members that they should try supporting themselves and two young children on \$100 a week. Once the rent of \$60 or \$70 has been paid, one does not really have much left for the children's present needs, let alone their future needs—their rosy future.

Within the outer eastern area there are people who understand what is happening and are aware of the social dislocation that has occurred. They have a strong desire to do something about the problems and they have formulated plans to deal with them. They also have an understanding of the potential of the people in the area. Local councils are aware of what is happening and many of them have carried out surveys of their human and physical resources. They would be very happy to put their ideas and plans into practice. I have received many excellent ideas from local councils over recent months, but because of the Commonwealth policy of new federalism the councils are being made responsible for the provision of more and more services and facilities without being given sufficient

funds to deal with them, let alone extra funds. The councils can see what is wrong and, unfortunately, in many cases they are blamed for what is wrong. People tend to think councils can do much more than they do, but in the invidious position in which they have been placed they cannot provide additional services.

Another important section of the population are the talented and hard-working people involved in community groups. In the outer eastern suburbs there are many hundreds of these groups who do an enormous amount of work, often picking up the burdens and responsibilities of government, yet because of the system in which they are operating they have been co-opted themselves. The women's refuge movement is an example. The women working in refuges could do a tremendous amount of work restructuring the broken lives of women and children who have finally reached refuges and who are desperately in need of help, yet the workers at the refuges spend so much time agitating for funds and legitimacy to enable them to keep going that they cannot do the constructive work of which they are capable. I know the refuges turn away many more women than they can accept.

Unfortunately, it is an integral part of the system that activists are kept busy trying to find money, running barbecues or making salads for fund-raising functions, or perhaps they are trying to look after a particular individual. They may be trying to save a single mother from eviction or working to get a teacher for a kindergarten, but they are obviously too busy to get together and articulate some sort of challenge to the system that has allowed the situation to develop. This should be changed. The Labor Government is very concerned to work with community groups and to adopt a co-operative policy wherever possible.

The most obvious result of the outrageous situation that has come into existence is the fact that the former Government lost virtually every seat it held in the outer eastern suburbs. That result shows quite clearly that people have rejected the paternalism of the

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former Government's ideology. The promise of rewards for those who do the right thing, the reward of the home and the better life and so on, and the virtual ignoring of those who do not make the grade cannot possibly be seen as valid any more, when the rewards themselves are seen as illusions. The old notions of divisions have also crumbled away.

That the world is changing has become a cliché. We are faced with technological change of great magnitude. We are faced with the threat of nuclear destruction and there are vast employment and structural changes, as well as value changes and many new lifestyles.

Working people and their organizations are already understanding that problems of wages, housing, employment and the well being of the community are not simply economic concerns, so that if a little more money is put in at a specific time, usually election time, suddenly the whole social direction will change. Housing, for example, is much more than building. It must encompass a whole environment-social justice, social values and understanding of the need for change in people's lives, as well as a real acceptance of basic human services as a right.

These issues are economic issues, certainly, but they are also issues of social justice, social values and understanding. I believe the role of Government must be to identify key policy intervention areas so that it can design programmes to enhance the quality of life of all people, not just to make promises in line with an outmoded and unjust ideology, but having the genuine commitment of those who believe in the functioning and dignity of all people. The Labor Government has that commitment and the ability to carry out those policies.

The Hon. J. E. KIRNER (Melbourne West Province)—I wish to acknowledge the Speech of His Excellency the Governor. It represents the views of the Government and emphasizes the fact which should not be forgotten by this House, that this Government has the greatest popular mandate to implement its policies of any Government for 60 years.