

Mr LEIGH (Malvern) - If I could first have the House's indulgence, on behalf of the people of Malvern, I thank all honourable members for their tributes to the Honourable Lindsay Thompson on 4 November. The finest tribute that could be paid to any individual is for people from all walks of life and all political parties to say the kinds of things which were said on that day. If I can ever be anywhere near the man Lindsay Thompson is, I will be happy.

Perhaps some honourable members expect me to come into this place and provide a great revelation because I am a 30-year-old tradesman. I am a carpenter and someone once a long time ago was also one.

I wish to discuss a matter which some honourable members may consider mundane; I refer to traffic, which many people may consider unimportant. However, I want to discuss the problems traffic is causing in the electorate that I represent. It is tearing the place apart. It is turning into a matter of Liberal Party people versus Liberal Party people, Labor Party people versus Labor Party people and friend versus friend. It is decided on whether a person lives on a main road or on a side street.

What all honourable members must realize is that it is not a problem just for me as the honourable member for Malvern, because the electorate of Malvern is a blue ribbon seat and I have to deal with the problems such as traffic in that electorate. It is a problem of where the traffic comes from. I have a list here; it is the problem of the honourable members for Oakleigh, Syndal, Heatherton, Springvale, Dandenong, Noble Park, Gippsland South and Westernport. In other words, it concerns members of the Liberal, National and Labor Parties. Unless the traffic problem in those suburbs is solved by the completion of the link, the electorate of Malvern that I represent is going to be torn apart. I suspect that the people of the electorate will make a decision that some people in this Chamber are not going to like, and it will not be the council that does so. Residents in those areas will start blocking off main roads. That is basically what it has got to at this point.

Nothing has been done to overcome the problem since 1929, when the whole thing started with the reservation of land that was set aside for the purpose. There has been talk and more talk, and I hope that I have come into this place not merely to talk, but to bring about action. It is not this side of the House that will decide whether the link will go forward; it is the Government side. If honourable members on the Government side are not prepared to create that link and members on this side are not prepared to help them do so, we will have some problems as a Parliament.

I make an offer to the Minister of Transport and any member on the other side of the House: I am prepared to do anything and to go anywhere in any attempt to solve this problem, because it is no longer a political problem. The problem is that an old lady cannot walk across Toorong Road because Toorong Road is a freeway, yet it is nowhere near as wide as Spring Street, in front of Parliament House. Cars and trucks rush past people's houses at 12.30 a.m., waking people up in the middle of the night.

I would not like it to happen to me, and I suspect not many people on the other side of the House, or even on this side, would like it either.

This is the House of the people-the Legislative Assembly-and I hope that in the near future this House will take a decision to do something in support of the people. I accept that it is going to cost some money; it is going to take time, but what people want is for something to be done.

The lack of action is not merely the fault of members of Parliament or of the Government; it is also

the fault of the City of Malvern because so many people with good intentions have argued their own points of view over this situation. The people of that area have not had one voice on the issue, and as a result Governments over the years have thrown up their hands in despair and said, "Come back to us when you have done something", and we have not done so.

Maybe it is my job as the member for Malvern on that one important local issue to drag people together, to give Malvern citizens one voice so that they will do the right thing in the way that the law requires, but unless somebody starts to take action shortly, people will start to barricade Wattleree Road, Malvern Road and High Street because they feel so strongly about the situation. The police would then be called in, and it is ludicrous that such a situation could come about. I hope representatives of the Ministry of Transport or the Public Works Department or whoever is responsible will come to see the people of Malvern and that something will be done in the near future.

It is sad that on the first occasion that I make a speech in Parliament, it has been almost a negative speech, because I did not come here to be negative. I came here as a person who is concerned about what is happening in my nation, and, as my Leader has said, while the Labor Party is the Government, I will do what I can to help it govern until the next election. Maybe what the people of our community want now is some direction, and I hope that on matters such as the freeway we can receive some direction and authority.