

something from it. However, the Premier is actually leaving the State while Parliament is meeting and he will be absent for half of the sessional period. It is unforgivable that the Premier, who has deemed that Parliament will meet for only sixteen days in nine months, has decided to be absent for eight of those days.

What will happen during the time he is away? I shall give a brief run-down. The Premier likes to be associated with good news, but if it is bad news he will be in Zurich informing the bankers of what a marvellous place Victoria is in which to invest. Increases in compulsory third-party insurance premiums will be made public and the Premier will be in Zurich.

On 15 May, honourable members will find that, due to investigations being conducted by the Attorney-General, it is quite possible that the Victoria project will not go ahead. Where will the man be who announced with a great flourish that the project is a return of investment to the State? He will probably be in Munich telling the people what a marvellous place Victoria is.

Will the Premier still be away in June when it becomes obvious that, because of the bad reputation of this State and the lack of confidence of the business community in the Treasurer, Premier and Government, there will be no third party in the Alcoa of Australia Ltd agreement and that the stake of the Victorian community in that project will be increased to 40 per cent? Where will the Premier be then?

Members of the Opposition and the people of Victoria look forward to the next four years. Hopefully, we will not have to wait four years because every year, every month and every week that goes by with Victoria being led by a Government that is not prepared to tell the truth and which incurs losses within some of the most important statutory authorities, opportunities for this State will diminish extremely quickly. The Opposition will be ready at any time to face the people.

If the Court of Disputed Returns indicates that a new by-election will be held for the Upper House seat of Nunawading, that will be the first test of the Government's honesty and integrity. If the best the Government can do is to put forward a diatribe, as was done by the Premier only a few moments ago, no doubt exists as to what will be the result. The public feels cheated by the Government and the Premier. As the months unwind, as taxes and charges increase and as more of the facts become known, the public will look towards a Liberal Government to once again resume the Government benches to put back some degree of responsibility and honesty into government.

**Mrs GLEESON (Thomastown)**—I am honoured to speak in Parliament as the elected member for the new electorate of Thomastown. It is an honour for which I am very grateful. I thank the electors of Thomastown for the trust they have shown in me and I give them my sincere commitment that I will work tirelessly on their behalf.

I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your re-election to the high office of Speaker of this House. I am sure your difficult task will be administered with the wit and wisdom for which you are renowned.

I join other honourable members in thanking His Excellency for the speech he made when opening Parliament and I wish His Excellency, Sir Brian Murray, and Lady Murray well as they continue to serve the State of Victoria and its people.

As I said in my opening remarks, I came to Parliament to serve the people in the new electorate of Thomastown. This electorate is centred on the Shire of Whittlesea in the north-east region of Melbourne. It has a young and rapidly growing population representing a mosaic of cultural backgrounds and a diversity of needs mirroring the early settlers of over 130 years ago.

The Thomastown area was first described in 1824 by explorers Hovell and Hume when they made their way from Sydney to Port Phillip. Settlement began in 1848 with John and Mary Thomas, followed in 1849 by German settlers brought out to Victoria as qualified

vine dressers on assisted passages costing 18 pounds a head. This microcosm of history introduces the background to the name of Thomastown and highlights the diversity of cultures.

Another important historical point comes with the first intimations of urbanization of the electorate in 1948 with the purchase of 245 acres of land between Epping and Thomastown. Ex-servicemen from the second world war, with Trades Hall affiliations, combined to form the Peter Lalor Home Building Co-operative Society Ltd with plans to build 1000 homes on their acquired land. The first housing estate in the Thomastown electorate formed what is now called Lalor, after Peter Lalor of Eureka fame, who was known as a person who stood up for justice and equality for ordinary working people. This partly explains the foundation for the strong and loyal support given by the people in the Thomastown electorate to the Australian Labor Party.

This embryonic urbanization has today grown both in number and cultural diversity, with 31 nations being represented by people residing in the electorate. Thirty per cent of these people come from non-English-speaking backgrounds. If one includes the children of these people, one finds that two-thirds of the population come from homes where the English language is not the main spoken language.

These people, like the German settlers of 130 years before, maintain a great pride in their national culture and they have striven to pass this cultural pride on to their children. They have shown enormous self-sufficiency in their endeavours to set up networks of community houses, provide welfare assistance and support programs to establish ethnic schools.

Unlike their German counterparts who unsuccessfully submitted to the then colonial Government of Victoria for the German language to be taught at their local schools as a second language, today's migrants are benefiting from the Cain Government. It was this Government, in its first term, which appointed a Minister, himself a migrant, to the portfolio of Minister for Ethnic Affairs.

Under the administration of the Minister for Ethnic Affairs, the Ethnic Affairs Commission was established in 1983. The budget for the needs of migrants was increased under the Cain Government from \$1.2 million to \$3.4 million and funding made available to ethnic communities increased by 500 per cent. This is a clear demonstration of the Government's concern for the welfare of our migrant settlers and their families.

The people of Thomastown are pleased to experience the firm adherence of the Labor Government to the principles laid down in its platform in the 1880s, and so eloquently espoused by Ben Chifley in 1949 when he described the Labor Party as protecting those who are helpless and without hope. He referred to this objective as, "The light on the hill to which our eyes are always turned and to which our efforts are always directed". That social justice remains a strong tenet of the Cain Labor Government.

I acknowledge the performance of the Government in job creation as outlined by His Excellency. Employment generation schemes are not new to the Thomastown area. In 1929, the McLeans Road bridge was constructed under the Unemployment Relief Funds scheme. The difference with the job creation program implemented by the Labor Government in 1982 was its human element of targeting those jobs to the most disadvantaged unemployed: youth, migrants with English language difficulties and women, especially women from migrant backgrounds.

The Government has the best record of any Government in Australia for reducing unemployment. This does not mean that we can rest on that record. Unemployment is the greatest problem facing Governments in the nation, and the welfare and social costs of this problem are enormous. The scope of a State Government is often limited by external circumstances, but there is much we can do from within.

The Government continues to tackle the vast problem of unemployment through job creation, the youth guarantee program and industry support. I commend the Government

on establishing the Industrial Supply Office, an objective which is part of the plan put by the metal trades unions in their research program of August 1984, titled "Campaign for Industry Development and More Jobs".

Employment and industry support are important in the electorate of Thomastown. The rapid urban growth of recent years is paralleled in local industry, commerce and retail business. Approximately 25 per cent of the land in Thomastown is zoned industrial and 654 sites have been developed in the preceding six years.

Therefore, protection of the worker is important and the people of Thomastown applauded the Government for its initiative in framing the Occupational Health and Safety Bill. The proposed legislation was aimed at protecting the worker in the workplace. When the measure is reintroduced, it will give employees the opportunity of contributing their own input into safety standards which will in turn protect their working lives. I am pleased that the Government has made provision for work and safety instruction to be given in a variety of languages. For too long, migrant workers have been at risk or injured because they simply could not understand the language when instructions were given. These victims have been unnecessarily filling our hospitals since the advent of the industrial age.

A second, and equally important, Bill will be the Workers Compensation Bill. This measure will introduce periodic payments and rehabilitation schemes for injured workers. These two Bills, implemented together, will ease the strain on the migrant workers and, in many instances, extend and enhance their working lives. In the unfortunate circumstance of injury, the worker will retain economic security with the knowledge that recovery will bring rehabilitation and retraining for re-entry into the work force.

A final point regarding migrants and employment is the link to the shop trading hours debate. The Government, in the lead-up to and during the election campaign, quite rightly rejected calls from the Opposition and the media to deregulate shop trading hours. Much of the small retail business community in Thomastown has continued to trade successfully alongside the larger retail stores. These stores provide mainly specialty goods and services from which nationalities from many countries represented in the Thomastown electorate can choose foods and services peculiar to their own ethnic group. Extended shop trading hours jeopardize the important aspect of migrant employment and of cultural life.

I am glad to be one of the growing number of Labor women elected to this Parliament, in contrast to the Opposition's diminished female representation. I will work with enthusiasm and purpose to represent the needs of women, especially those of migrant women.

**Mr PERRIN (Bulleen)**—It gives me great pleasure to speak in the Legislative Assembly as the first member for the new electorate of Bulleen. I am pleased to be here as a member of the Liberal Party and I am pleased that the people of Bulleen saw fit to endorse me, and the Liberal Party, as their representative for the next four years.

I acknowledge the Speech by His Excellency, the Governor, and I understand that it represents the view of the Government. I congratulate Sir Brian Murray and Lady Murray on the excellent service that they give to the State of Victoria. I wish them well and hope they have a long and happy association with the people of Victoria.

I should like to speak about the electorate of Bulleen and about the areas of Doncaster and Templestowe. The electorate of Bulleen encompasses approximately 50 per cent of the area of Doncaster and Templestowe. It is made up of approximately one-third of the previous electorate of Ivanhoe and two-thirds of the previous electorate of Doncaster.

I place on record my thanks for the work undertaken by the previous member for Doncaster, who is well known in the electorate that he represented. Approximately two-thirds of the electorate that I represent supported me in the same manner as they supported him. I also thank my wife and family who have given me the support to win a seat in this Parliament.