

That the following words be added to the proposed Address—"and respectfully desire to inform Your Excellency that this House regrets the failure of the Government to foreshadow amendments to the recently enacted Constitution Act 1975, with specific reference to section 48 of that Act relating to the qualification of electors, which enactment caused a significant change in the law, despite the assurances of the former Attorney-General that the measure did not involve any changes in principle or practice".

Mr. WEIDEMAN (Frankston) : Mr. Speaker, firstly, I congratulate you on your appointment to the high office which you hold and thank honorable members on both sides of the House for their words of welcome and advice. I am also grateful to your staff, Sir, the officers of the Parliament, who have been most helpful in this difficult time of adjustment to Parliamentary life and procedure.

I follow into this House the Honorable E. R. Meagher, who represented Mentone from 1955 to 1967, when he then represented the new seat of Frankston and held that seat until he retired. He served this House for some twenty years, most of which he served as a Minister of the Crown. I pay tribute to his outstanding contribution and distinguished Parliamentary record on behalf of the constituents of Frankston and all Victorians.

The Frankston electorate, which like many other electorates has new boundaries, takes in the major part of the City of Frankston. It is a fast-growing area, having approximately 25,000 voters on the rolls in December and 31,000 votes were cast in the March State election. It would be described as a dormitory area, being a suburban railhead, and it is the gateway to the Mornington Peninsula.

It is the centre of the peninsula for health, education and transport, and is the capital of the peninsula for commerce, the professions and the small business community. The people of Frankston look forward to the development of the Frankston interchange and the third line for fast rail passenger travel to Melbourne.

The Frankston Community Hospital forms the heart of the peninsula health team. Its development is vital to the provision of effective health care in the community and should keep up with the needs of the area. I welcome the recognition by the Government of the problems we face in Frankston and the proposed programmes which are to be carried out in the future.

As indicated by His Excellency the Governor in his Speech, the Government will introduce legislation to provide for the establishment of the Small Business Development Corporation. Contrary to the general view of the Opposition that this country is run by big business, I remind the House that the backbone of Australia is the many thousands of small businesses, more than 300,000 of them. It is estimated that 95 per cent of all factories, retail stores, wholesale and service enterprises come into this category. Small businesses employ 42 per cent of the State's work force, and much more than 90 per cent of the work force in country areas. They have been independent in spirit in the past and this factor has resulted in inadequate assistance being given to them by Governments and associated instrumentalities.

The small business owner or manager has encountered increasing difficulty in the past three years in meeting his financial commitments and maintaining profitability. Over the previous decade, when the growth of inflation occurred at a fairly steady rate of 3 or 4 per cent and with the growth conditions that existed in the Australian economy, small businessmen could survive and even prosper while earning what would be regarded as a marginal return on investment. They were frequently satisfied to receive an equivalent salary, and made no provision for long-term growth and development. Small business does not differ from big business in that it must obtain a return on investment funds to meet any flattening out in the economy or downturn in business.

It is not surprising that small businesses are in dire financial straits at present, because costs are increasing at a greater ratio than profits. Productivity of staff is declining and debts are rising at an impossible rate. The essence of the problem has been the low productivity of funds invested and the declining productivity of staff employed.

The answer to this problem is complex, but with Government guidance in the areas of planning, management, assistance in raising capital, and above all, the control of inflation, progress can be achieved. The approach to small business development must be positive if we wish to retain this sector of the economy. The maintenance of a free enterprise economy must be based on a thriving small business community with incentive, a competitive spirit and reward for effort and initiative.

I should now like to draw the attention of the House to the problems of drug abuse in the community. We are well aware of the problems associated with the so-called "soft" drugs and the "hard" drugs like heroin and cocaine and the problems that they present in the community. However, by far the most dangerous drug in the community is alcohol. Alcohol has risen to number three on the nation's list of killers, after cancer and vascular disease. Alcohol accounts for half of all road fatalities and more than half of all drownings. It is a major factor in heart disease and emotional illness.

Its effect on crime and road accidents is incalculable and its cost to industry through lost efficiency and man hours must be many millions of dollars. It has been estimated that the amount is about \$1,000 million a year.

Alcohol is not selective in the impact it can have on members of the community. Almost everyone, regardless of background or temperament, can become an alcoholic.

Mr. Weideman.

Society seems to cause tension which results in people seeking to escape from social pressures. This in turn encourages heavy drinking and the development of alcoholic problems. Alcohol consumption in Australia over the past ten years has risen to 5 per cent higher than the world average. Australians now drink twice as much per head as they did in 1949.

Society does not seem to be prepared to recognize and treat the real drug problems in the community. We have been able to co-exist with the unrestricted use of drugs, which at other times and in other societies have been considered dangerous enough to require strict legal control. We are a society of double standards.

We recognize and attempt to educate our young people against the problems of addiction and dependence on drugs and apply laws designed to protect our community against the drug offender. Unfortunately, most of those convicted of drug offences are sent to gaol without appropriate treatment; so after their sentence has been completed, they return to the community and often commit the same offences again.

There is a compelling need under the provisions of the Alcoholics and Drug-dependent Persons Act 1968 for more treatment centres to be developed in regional areas for the treatment of alcoholics and drug addicts.

I recognize the value of employer rehabilitation schemes, Alcoholics Anonymous and similar organizations, and believe they should be encouraged by Governments, as the task they have taken upon themselves is of enormous proportions. I also appreciate the work the Government has undertaken in this area.

The proposed legislation outlined in the Governor's Speech in regard to random breath testing of motorists to detect drinking drivers,

as a further measure aimed at curbing drinking drivers and reducing the road toll, is a recognition of this problem. This is a measure aimed at dealing with symptoms of the problem of alcohol, but not with its real cause. Surveys show that there are more than 250,000 alcoholics in Australia, of whom 50,000 are in Victoria.

After alcohol, the next major drug problem areas are tobacco, analgesics, sedatives, stimulants, tranquillizers, narcotics, hallucinogens and marijuana. About 3,500 Australians die each year from lung cancer and 90 per cent of these deaths are due to cigarette smoking. About twice as many people die from cigarette smoking associated with heart disease. Three to 3.5 million Australians smoke and of these 50 per cent smoke more than twenty cigarettes a day.

Analgesics are a significant problem with 11.4 per cent of Australians who use them daily. As a result, Australia has the highest incidence of kidney disorders associated with analgesic abuse.

About 6 per cent of the population are dependent on sedatives, depressants and barbiturates; much smaller groups are dependent on stimulants and tranquillizers. Narcotics are used by a significant number of people in the drug sub-culture, but the number in Victoria appears to be small—perhaps only several hundred.

Hallucinogens, cannabis, and L.S.D. are used fairly widely in the drug sub-culture, and the surveys show that 11 per cent of fifteen to sixteen-year olds have used marijuana. It is estimated that 4,000 people in Melbourne under 25 years of age have used illicit drugs. Governments must tackle this problem in the interests of public welfare, health and safety and must initiate programmes in research, education and training of teachers and counsellors to be used in these programmes.

In his Speech the Governor indicated the Government's intention to set up two expert committees to simplify public administration; one to examine Acts, regulations, and rules, to advise on those which could be repealed and simplified; and the other to report on ways in which Government procedures, forms and documents could be abolished or expressed in direct and simple terms.

Before and during the recent election campaign, this matter was one on which many comments were made and, as we know today, 41 per cent of students now reach higher school certificate standard whereas only 6 per cent did so twenty years ago. We therefore have a better educated and better informed electorate.

The Premier in his policy speech indicated that in its legislative programme during the next three years, the Government will be examining ways and means of simplifying existing legislation to lessen restrictions on the community and its way of life.

It is commonly accepted that there are on the statute-book many outdated and outmoded Acts which are little understood by the general public. Even the experts sometimes have difficulty in determining the intention and application of legislation.

During this debate I have observed the many talents and fields of expertise that new members from both sides of the House have reflected in their speeches. This will be of benefit, not only to their electorates, but to all Victorians. I congratulate the honorable member for Burwood, the mover of this motion, and the honorable member for Noble Park, who seconded it so ably.

I have been informed that not since 1895 has more than one pharmacist been a member of the House—at that time five pharmacists were members. I now join with my colleague, the honorable member for Mentone, to make two pharmacists in this House.

It was in 1876 that the Pharmacy Board was given the power to act in the public interest, when the first Poisons Act was passed through this House. I congratulate the Government and the board for 100 years of concern in the field of controlling poisonous and dangerous substances.

In conclusion, I pledge the loyalty of the constituents of Frankston to Queen Elizabeth II. and to her representative in Victoria, Sir Henry Winneke. I pledge to the constituents of Frankston that I will represent all sections of the community, large or small, and work in their interest in this place.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North): I congratulate the honorable member for Frankston on his valuable contribution. His only fault may be that he belongs to the wrong political team and the wrong sporting team. Even the Minister of Transport would agree with half of that statement. I congratulate those new members who have taken the opportunity in this debate of making their maiden speeches. I have been in this House for a few years and I consider that the standard of those contributions has been higher than in the past. Those contributions, regardless of party policies, or party affiliations, have been for the benefit of Victorians as a whole.

As the member for Geelong North I pledge my support to the Crown. I support previous Opposition speakers who have commented on the sad stage which has been reached in Australia concerning the Federal representative of the Crown. The Governor-General cannot, or will not, carry out many of his duties because of the hostility of a large section of the Australian community. I say that without bias one way or the other. I trust that something will be done to overcome this situation in the interests of Royalty in this country. If this position does not alter the Governor-General has two alternatives—either to resign, or to be replaced by the Commonwealth Government.

In Victoria we are fortunate that the Governor, Sir Henry Winneke, has the fullest support and co-operation of every section of the community, and he carries out his duties in a most creditable manner. All honorable members wish Sir Henry Winneke many years of good health in which to continue his role as Governor of Victoria.

The first point I wish to raise concerns the remarks of Sir Henry Winneke about the stimulation of growth centres outside the metropolitan area. He referred to Geelong as being the second largest city in Victoria. Many assurances have been given about what is going to take place outside the metropolitan area, particularly in Geelong. The people of Geelong look forward with great hope and expectation that the shortcomings suffered over the years will at last be overcome. There are records in *Hansard* of promises made over the past twenty years by various Premiers and Ministers, but no other city has suffered from so many broken promises and has been so let down, frustrated and neglected as has Geelong.

Mr. STEPHEN: That was Whitlam's nickname, "broken promises".

Mr. TREZISE: I was thinking of the present Prime Minister. The Geelong public will agree that the present Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, and the past State Governments under Sir Henry Bolte and the present Premier, have given the people of Geelong in policy speeches many assurances that have never been carried out. I half exclude Mr. Whitlam and the former Federal Labor Government because the record will show—and people will agree regardless of political affiliation—that the Whitlam Labor Government did more to develop Geelong than any other Governments in the past twenty years.

The Minister of Labour and Industry interjected that Whitlam ruined the motor industry. The Minister should know that in the past