

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

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.

When my colleague, the Minister for Conservation, joined this House just three years ago, he expressed two hopes. The first was for the abolition of this House and the second was for reasonable representation of women. It gives me great pleasure both to be part of the increase in the number of Labor Party members in this House—an increase that will take the Legislative Council a step closer to abolition—and to be one of the three new women members of this House. Three new Labor women members bring the male-female balance to something like 1 in 8, which is a very small step towards reasonable representation, which should be 50-50.

I also take this opportunity of paying tribute to some people who are important to the community, to the Labor Government and to myself. Firstly, I pay tribute to the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party, which is made up of the people who, through our party's democratic processes, decide the policies within which the Labor Government works and select the candidates to implement those policies. I believe the strength and success of the Victorian Labor Government will very much depend on the continuing development of effective linking mechanisms between all parts of our party, including the Parliamentary wing and the public.

It is interesting to note that in the view of Richard Alston, the past president of the Victorian Liberal Party, the defeat of the previous Government on 3 April was at least partly due to the breakdown of such mechanisms within his party.

Secondly, I pay tribute to my family and friends without whose support I would not be here. The influence of each has been of equal importance. However, I would like to single out my mother, always actively involved in the fight for better education, and my father who has been clinging on to life for some five years in order to celebrate 3 April and today.

It was from my father, a fitter and turner, that I realized the importance of Labor Party ideals which include

respect for each person's human dignity and the distribution of resources according to each person's need. From him I learned that I have a responsibility to be active and articulate in the community and that I have an obligation to oppose those who would deliberately create and benefit from recession while workers suffer.

The depression of the 1930s is writ large in my father's memory and it brings me no joy to see that same scene repeated even today. I am glad to be part of a Labor Government which will fight the Fraser Government's recipe for recession with all the means at its disposal.

Thirdly, I thank the people of Melbourne West for electing me to the House as one of their two representatives. I look forward to working with my Melbourne West colleague, Mrs Coxsedge, and the western suburbs community to tackle the serious problems of unemployment, pollution, under-education, lack of public housing, transport, health, age, and youth and children's services.

Already residents of western suburbs are feeling greatly encouraged about their futures under a Labor Government with the recent promise of the Minister for Planning for a community-based and community-supported study of zoning in the west. Local residents were particularly impressed—in fact they could hardly believe it—by the guarantee of the Minister for Planning of equity with the polluters at any hearing. This is in marked contrast to the position of the former Government.

Fourthly, I pay tribute to the people with whom I have worked over the past ten years and with whom I have developed my commitment to participation and equality of educational outcomes. In particular I compliment the Government school council and parent organizations throughout the State and nationally for their invaluable educational leadership and their watchdog role in the development of a public system of education.

Without their role and crucial alliance with teacher organizations, the Federal Government's transfer of funds

from public to private schools would have been far greater. As it stands, from 1976 to 1983 Government schools suffered a 10 per cent reduction in Commonwealth funds while private schools, regardless of need, enjoyed a 77 per cent increase.

I commit myself as a politician to work with Labor Party policies to ensure that the contributions of parent and school council organizations to education is recognized and supported by Governments in terms of our primary obligation to a quality Government school system, legislated rights for parent participation in decision-making, the encouragement of a collaborative process involving parents, teachers and students as equal partners in the development of educational policies and adequate resources for community organizations to perform their important roles of information and advocacy.

It is important for Governments to spell out the principles and values which underlie their actions. My actions in this Parliament and in my Parliamentary duties will be centred on my commitment to the three great principles of the Labor Party: Firstly, social democracy, that is, the redistribution of power so that it is shared equally by all people; secondly, social justice, that is, the redistribution of resources to ensure that all people live equally well; and, thirdly, freedom and a commitment to freedom of speech, education, assembly, organization and religion.

I conclude by outlining some examples of what those three principles might look like translated into Labor Government practice. The Government's commitment to the five great freedoms will be reflected and protected by legislation for freedom of information and for a Victorian Bill of Rights. I look forward to the Government's freedom of information legislation, giving the community full rights to discuss all the details of Government and administrative decision-making subject only to the requirement of essential security and individual privacy. Although, as a former lobbyist, it will not be half as

much fun as collecting information from the back of a truck!

The legislation will apply to all 9000 public bodies in Victoria including schools. I look forward also to the Victorian Bill of Rights spelling out clearly, simply and comprehensively the fundamental rights of all citizens, as well as acting as a weapon to guarantee freedom from discrimination and the right to equal treatment. This Bill will have special importance to women, migrants and the disabled.

Nowhere will the difference between the Labor Government and Liberal policies be clearer than in the education system. Liberal education philosophy as translated by PA Australia, management consultants, under the former Government was based on a priority for individual success through individual development. Within the bureaucratic structure individuals are to be held accountable for the work of individuals below them in implementing policies.

Under such a philosophy it is possible, in fact it is essential, for individuals to succeed and groups to fail. Individuals are in competition with each other as the education system sorts out successes and failures. Under a Labor Government individual success will come through individual development which includes membership of a group, collective understanding of the social context in which the group operates, collective action and shared accountability.

Under a Labor Government the extent of progress in education will be measured not by the success of each individual—for example, in the "selective" intake at University High School—but by the success of the group to which he or she belongs. Consequently, the neighbourhood school will become the focus for improving a student's chances of success and the real challenge for a Labor Government is the extent to which working-class children can be assured of having the same access to school satisfaction and enjoyment of power as middle-class children.

The Labor Government commitment to the redistribution of power can be clearly seen in its proposed struc-

ture for the schools system. One of the major achievements of the Honourable Alan Hunt, the then Leader of the House, the former Minister of Education, was to force through a much-needed re-organization of the Education Department under the banner of more power to the regions—in other words, decentralization.

In fact, real power and control was still maintained within the corporate management group of Minister, bureaucrat and head office. The former Minister of Education had the right idea but his banner was wrong. The real banner of change is devolution, participation and collaborative process. The new Labor Government marches under that banner.

In the next few weeks, the new Minister of Education will announce the structure of the schools system under the Labor Government. That structure has been derived by a review panel which includes the parents and teacher organization representatives so shortsightedly and deliberately left out of the former Government's review process.

The Labor Government will establish participatory structures at each level of decision making on schools, including State, regional and local. Membership will include parents, teachers, principals, members of the local community, academics, members of the Labor movement, and in some cases students. These boards will be part of a legitimate and equal second stream of advice to the Minister. They will be accountable to the Minister and their local community for the improvement of the quality of education in our State.

In conclusion, the ultimate test of the success of a Labor Government for all the people of Victoria will be whether it can redistribute resources to encourage the creation of jobs.

The recent Premiers Conference shows that the Government will be frustrated at every turn by a Federal Liberal Government still dogmatically committed to fighting inflation by creating unemployment. Since the Fraser Government came to power, the average taxpayer pays \$37 more a

week in tax and has lost \$22 a week in social benefits, for example, in health and education. At the same time the private sector, comprising people who specialize in tax avoidance, will get wealthier. The end result of this is a "no growth" economy. The Cain Labor Government's election policy clearly signalled an alternative economic and social strategy that embodied a return to full employment.

Within this aim, job creation is part of the answer, both in the public sector and private sector. For example, when projects like the Footscray home care project of the Ministry of Employment and Training for elderly people prove themselves and should become part of Public Service employment. All job creation schemes need to be carefully integrated into the local community and need to be targeted to those most in need.

A further part of the answer lies in the development of a comprehensive youth policy for Victoria and Australia. This youth policy should, as Professor Peter Karmel has repeatedly stated, tackle the abysmally low retention rate in Government schools and in tertiary institutions in Australia of 28 per cent. He has stated that 46 per cent of Australia's 15-19 year old youth are involved in full-time education, compared with 57 per cent in other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries and 75 per cent in the United States of America. A comprehensive youth policy should also provide each young person with the option of work or part-time work and part-time training or full-time study. It should reorganize the student assistance scheme to provide a minimum income guarantee for all young people from the age of fifteen years.

As a new member of Parliament, all the policies I have outlined are exciting and challenging, but the most important and significant challenge is the implementation of John Cain's promise to the Victorian electorate, which stated:

We will never put you, your children and future generations of Victorians at risk with nuclear power and its lethal wastes.

I thank the House for its attention.