

As recently as last December, the Full Bench of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission rejected a proposal of this kind out of hand. It was concerned with the same union, the Municipal Officers Association. Following an agreement that had been reached by the then Government and the union for a salary increase, the matter was taken to the Arbitration Commission for ratification and before the commission the association saw fit to argue that it should be made retrospective only for members of their association. The Full Bench rejected that proposal.

I am encouraged that this morning the Premier gave an undertaking to the House that the present offer that had been made to the unions on a salary increase will be submitted to the Full Bench, giving all the proposed details of starting dates for union members and non-members of the commission for its ratification. I am confident that when it is looked at honestly and squarely as equal pay for equal work in a true sense of justice for employees of public authorities, the Full Bench will maintain the view it expressed in its judgment of 18 December.

A final and personal point concerns all honourable members because they would know that their electorate secretaries have been approached by the Municipal Officers Association inviting their membership. It is possible that electorate secretaries could join the Public Service Association and they just might. Is it the desire of the Government that electorate secretaries be given pay increases retrospectively depending on which organization, if any, they have joined? There is a fundamental principle that the Government has not thought through.

The Minister of Housing, by interjection, queries whether I believe electorate secretaries should join an association. I would say without hesitation that every electorate secretary should have the unbridled right of joining or not joining as he or she sees fit. They should approach the association and determine what benefits will accrue to them through membership and in response to that they should then make a judgment. For electorate

secretaries to be told that if they do not join an association, they will miss out on the pay increase that other electorate secretaries will obtain is a grave breach of fair play. I will not be a party to it and the Government should not persist with its discriminatory proposal.

As members of the Opposition, I and my colleagues will be doing all we can to ensure that we give the Government a constructive and creative Opposition. We shall not simply indulge in mudslinging and criticizing merely for the sake of it. It is fascinating to hear the disorderly interjections being made now by Government members in response to my unequivocal statements; it is reminiscent of similar noises they uttered as members of the Opposition in the last Parliament. Their interjections do not alter my commitment. We will be a constructive Opposition. We are not going to stand by and allow the Government to ride roughshod over principles of equality and fair play for the people of Victoria.

Mr NEWTON (Bennettswood)—I commence my speech by offering congratulations to the Speaker for his recent unanimous election to the most respected position as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria. As it is the people's House in Victoria, it is reassuring to note the Speaker's actions in eliminating unnecessary and pretentious practices that were associated with a time in history when Parliament had little in common with the average citizen.

By forsaking his ceremonial wig, he has given the Speaker's position a more human face. This I hope will be an example to members of Parliament when dealing with their constituents. We should never forget that we are the people's representatives—not their rulers.

It is an honour for me to represent the people of the Bennettswood electorate who have so clearly placed the responsibility of Parliamentary office on my shoulders. I take this responsibility seriously and I shall represent the people of my electorate steadfastly, making no exception of age, origin, sex, creed or political opinion.

Mr Ramsay

In saying that, I believe that being accessible is more important than just talking about it. For this reason I wish the people of Bennettswood electorate to know that I shall be opening an electorate office in the busiest and most accessible shopping centre in the electorate. I shall also be opening my office on Saturday mornings to allow those working during the week some time to see their Parliamentary representative. I intend to give my electorate a more dynamic and open form of representation than it has ever experienced.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Governor made reference in his Speech to the clear mandate that this Government has received. Indeed, this clear mandate was expressed most forcibly in the eastern suburbs where the seat I represent is situated. Contained in that vote of confidence is a clear warning to those, in that other place, who may attempt to use their numbers from a previous election, to prevent the Government exercising its mandate.

You can be sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it will be a long time before the people of Victoria forget the economic mismanagement and blunders of the previous Government. This is particularly true for the small business owners, the unemployed, the teachers, the home buyers and the aged in the electorate that I represent.

It is pleasing to note many of the fine initiatives of our Premier, John Cain. It is an honour for me to be on the Government benches and in the position to support these much-needed changes. I should like to mention some of the initiatives which have particular impact in the electorate that I represent.

The measures outlined in regard to improving public transport are very encouraging. The many young people who approached me prior to the election will be pleased at the action of the Minister of Transport in reducing train fares for the young. The planned extension of travel concessions to supporting parents will also be warmly received in the Bennettswood electorate.

Having had a long association with the movement to extend the Burwood tramline, I should like the Government to consider a further extension of this line up to Springvale Road. I am aware of the enormous costs associated with such works, and the fact that the last extension was financed by a grant from the then Whitlam Labor Government. However, the success of that tramline extension merits the consideration of an additional extension. My constituents will be pleased to note that I am already working closely with other local members on the transport interchange projects for both Box Hill and Glen Waverley.

On another matter, I note that the Minister of Health will be looking closely at lead levels in petrol. Constituents in the electorate I represent will be aware of my concern for children in schools along major roads in the electorate. I had previously brought to the attention of the electorate the lead pollution threat after inquiries through the Box Hill council. The council officers had indicated that lead fallout along major roads in Box Hill would be far greater than the recommended safety levels.

The fact that these results indicate that lead pollution is a potential health threat, especially to children, is reason alone why the Government's move to reduce lead levels in petrol is most welcome.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, as a former teacher it warms my heart to see education once again returned to a respectable status. It is pleasing to see that the new Government is working so closely with teachers and parent organizations, in reducing class sizes, looking at needs based staffing and reducing the industrial conflicts so often whipped up by the previous Government.

Personally, I am keen to see the Government assist the integration of handicapped children into Government schools, and move away from institutionalization where it is possible. A classic irony is associated with the new office I now hold. For so long, as a teacher, I had fought against the use

of portable class-rooms in schools and after all that I now find I am housed in a portable in the Parliamentary grounds.

It grieved me to hear recently that hospital charges had to be increased. But it was heartening to have so many of my constituents indicate their understanding of the causes behind those increases. Indeed, the irresponsibility of the Federal Liberal Government and the poor planning by the previous State Government in regard to hospital charges are generally well known.

The cost of Government services is a real concern to the elderly in the electorate that I represent. Far too many are struggling with reduced spending power as the real value of pensions and superannuation payments declines with the effects of inflation. It is disturbing to note that, at present, all Australian pensions except for aged married couples, are below the Henderson poverty line. I look forward to when the Government does away with the grossly inequitable quarterly \$18 electricity surcharge. I know many pensioners in the Bennettswood electorate will share my sentiments.

The Government has also given a firm indication of its intention to increase the amount of public housing. I believe that both the elderly and the homeless youths in my area are looking toward the Government for a brighter future in this regard. Already, the City of Waverley council has proposed a joint venture to develop units for the aged in Bennettswood.

I understand that the Minister of Housing has expressed keen interest in the project but that the Federal Government is not willing, as usual, to share the responsibility of developing the project. I should like to let my constituents know that I will be working for the completion of that project, and it is to be hoped that with the expected change of Government in Canberra, Federal assistance will once again be forthcoming.

Accommodation for the mentally ill is also urgently needed. I have confidence that our Government will work quickly to overcome this long fester-

Mr Newton

ing area of neglect. I know that the many first home buyers in the electorate that I represent will welcome the Government's initiatives, especially the provisions for exemption of stamp duty up to the value of \$50 000.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to add my voice to the many members on the Government benches who desire electoral reform. I wholeheartedly support the concept of one vote, one value. I am also on record as stating my opposition to the alphabetical listing of candidates. It is shameful to think that some honourable members have been elected to this very House, in marginal electorates, notably on the influence of what are commonly called "donkey votes".

It is ridiculous to think that people with surnames higher on the alphabetical list are more deserving of this non-informed vote than those lower down the list. Any method which can randomize the effect of the donkey vote must surely be endorsed by those concerned with democratic practice.

I thank the people of the Bennettswood electorate for the confidence they have shown in the Labor Party and in me. I look forward to representing them in the new Cain Government which is pledged to enhance the well-being of all Victorians.

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton)—I again pledge the loyalty of the people of the Brighton electorate to Her Majesty the Queen. I also take this final opportunity of conveying to Sir Henry and Lady Winneke the gratitude of the people of Brighton and send them congratulations for a job well done. On behalf of the people of Brighton, I also congratulate and welcome Sir Brian and Lady Murray and wish them well in their new jobs as Governor of Victoria and Governor's wife.

I thank the people of the Brighton electorate for returning me to Parliament with a handsome majority of votes and I assure them that, as in the past, over the next three years I will do my best to help all sectors of the community that I represent.