

of the Government. I congratulate the Governor on delivering the Speech, but I am critical of the ingredients of the Speech itself. That is why the Opposition has moved an amendment, which states:

That the following words be added to the proposed Address:

"but express our concern at the failure of the Government to inform the people of Victoria fully, truthfully and in advance, of its real intentions, particularly with respect to financial and industrial matters."

I support that amendment.

The Labor Party was elected on the promises it made during the election campaign. One of its major policies concerned the bringing into being of a development fund. Whenever the Labor Party found difficulty in explaining how a promise or commitment was to be financed it said that the money would come out of a development fund that was going to be formed from money in various statutory authorities. The Liberal Party did a costing of those promises, which amounted to \$3000 million. An independent costing estimated in excess of \$2000 million. The Opposition does not know how the Government is going to meet those commitments. There is a great expectation in the electorate, and people are waiting and watching to see how this Government is going to honour all its promises. The Labor Party gave the impression that it would introduce the development fund almost immediately. It has now been delayed for twelve months. There will be a lot of interest in twelve months' time in whether there will be further delays in the implementation of this fund.

Mr IHLEIN (Sandringham)—I wish to enunciate the reasons why the Australian Labor Party won the State election on 3 April and why I won the seat of Sandringham. I am concerned that the Liberal Party in Victoria viewed the State election as a simple means of getting rid of those members it viewed as being useless so that the Liberal Party can return to Government. There have been deep seated changes in community attitudes and the way in which political structures and opinions are formed. The

former Government lost office because it was totally unaware of those changes that were occurring in the community.

However, the Liberal Party is showing no signs of a preparedness to get in touch with the electorate. The Liberal Party has not shown any remorse or willingness to reform itself. In the area I represent, I see all the signs of a Liberal Party machine that is continuing to decay. I am certainly happy about that, but I am concerned that the Parliament will decline in value if Victoria does not have an effective Opposition.

There has been a decline in the administration of the public sector in Victoria. The former Government showed a disdain towards the findings of the Public Bodies Review Committee. The former Government did not realize that the committee's findings offered an opportunity to revise Victoria's public sector.

The Liberal Party has engaged in a certain amount of self delusion since the election. There has been talk of the election being lost by the Liberal Party because of an unwillingness by the former Government to make decisions. However, that weakness went much further. The back-benchers of the former Government made no attempt to find out what the electorate was thinking. There was a fall away in the ability of those back-benchers to door knock and find out what the electorate was thinking. Hence the fiasco of the shop trading hours, which was the turning point in the demise of the former Government.

Suggestions have been made that all a Government has to do to stay in power is to make decisions, but that is not enough. A Government must make the right decisions that are in touch with the electorate's thinking.

Another delusion of the former Government was the belief that its defeated members were good local members but they were not Cabinet material. The Minister of Consumer Affairs and Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr Spyker, is an excellent example

of how a local member should campaign. The Minister door knocked extensively in the area he represents, as I did. I say quite frankly that the local campaign was easy in the area I represent, but it should not have been that way. One should not allow the myth to develop that the former Liberal Party back-benchers were good local campaigners; they were not.

A preoccupation has developed with the term "development". That preoccupation was a contributing factor to the loss of Liberal Party seats. In the area I represent there was a seemingly overwhelming desire to install a marina in the name of development. However, the former local member did not get out in the electorate to discover that the local community was totally opposed to that type of development.

In the area of social welfare, the Federal Government is out of touch with the electorate's thinking. There are a large number of elderly people in the area I represent. Sir Phillip Lynch was quoted in the media as suggesting that the Federal Government should cut back on pensions for elderly citizens and apply means tests and needs based services. Those statements were treated in the area I represent in a most antagonistic way.

In the Governor's Speech the Government announced that it will establish a task force to examine income security. The Government is deeply concerned about the failure of the Federal Government to assume its full responsibility for providing income security to the poor and the disadvantaged. That statement is again reiterated in the Ministerial statement today by the Treasurer, who referred to the problems of the Federal Government foisting onto the States increased responsibility for pensioner financing. I refer to an article in the *Age* of 28 April by Claude Forell under the headline, "Tax-cut money would be better spent on welfare". Mr Forell quotes some statistics that should be examined at a time

when the Federal income tax cuts and Government expenditure are being discussed. The article states:

The prevailing propaganda that welfare spending is bursting out of control is not true, at least not yet. Social security and welfare spending as a percentage of the total Federal Budget is the same in 1981-82 as it was in 1977-78.

This is in spite of a growing number of welfare dependants as a result of rising—and more prolonged—unemployment, an ageing population and more family breakdowns.

Over the same period, the pensions bill as a percentage of gross domestic product has actually declined from 8.3 to 7.8, and as a proportion of average weekly earnings it has gone down from 23.2 to 22.1 per cent.

What is happening is that more Australians are falling below the poverty line, and many already below it are sinking even deeper into despair.

The former Government failed to perceive the electorate's opinion that the Government should help pensioners.

I am here to represent the people of Sandringham, an area which includes two sections: Firstly, a somewhat more affluent belt along the seaside and, secondly, a working class area inland that includes Moorabbin West, Highett and Cheltenham West. I bring to the Parliament a desire to be a strong local member. I have acted to establish a number of think tank committees in the electorate on various problems.

I will briefly refer to some of the problems of local transport in the area I represent. Moorabbin contains 600 Housing Commission units, most of which are two and three-storey units. Most of the residents of those units are elderly pensioners and single parent families. If one wishes to travel by public transport from Moorabbin West, which is close to Bluff Road, to Sandringham Hospital, for example, which is a distance of only about 3 kilometres, one must walk some distance to catch a bus to the Hampton railway station. One must then catch a train to the Sandringham railway station and then another bus to the Sandringham Hospital. There is no bus that travels directly down Bluff Road, which is the major arterial route in the area. This sort of problem should have been foreseen and acted upon years ago.

I have established an office centrally in the electorate of Sandringham, but, unlike the office of the previous honourable member, it is open six days a week. I am conducting street stalls in the electorate every fortnight so that I can deliver the message of the Government to the electorate and so that I can hear what the electorate is trying to say. I point out to honourable members on the other side of the Chamber that there will have to be a change in their attitude and they will have to listen to what the electorate is saying to them, rather than listening only to certain public servants if they are to have any chance of getting back into government.

I shall conclude my remarks by referring to a number of local issues on which I am working at present, and I do so to indicate that they are of a relatively straightforward nature and should have been taken up under the previous administration.

Last week the Government made an announcement concerning the likely establishment of a supermarket in the Sandringham area. Debate has raged for more than three years about this matter and there is great relief in the area that finally a decision is to be made about where the supermarket is to go. Unfortunately, as a result of procrastination by the previous administration, the Straws clothing store, which has been in the Sandringham shopping centre for more than 50 years, announced its closing down in the dying days of the previous Government.

I have also had discussions with the Hihett Chamber of Commerce with a view to solving the car-parking problems in their area. The whole of the shopping centre is in a sorry state simply because no discussions of any moment were arranged with VicRail, which has land available for car parking, or in connection with the traffic flow and the arrangement of local streets. Those problems will be resolved. Similarly, I have had discussions with the Minister of Public Works about a Public Works Department depot that has been on the foreshore illegally for five years. The local council has written many letters trying to have it removed but the

Mr Ihlein

previous administration did nothing, despite the fact that its policy was that non-water related facilities had to be removed from the foreshore. Despite that policy, the depot was constructed on the foreshore, higgledy-piggledy, and it was not removed even though the local council requested its removal, in line with the policy of the former Government.

Another matter of concern has been Housing Commission rents and rebates, and I am delighted that the present Government has been able to introduce a change in policy that will benefit all Housing Commission tenants. I campaigned heavily on the ground that rent and service charges being inflicted on Housing Commission tenants were unfair. I am pleased that, rather than taking the whole of pension increases through decreasing rebates as occurred last year which was of great concern to residents in the electorate I represent, the present Government has limited increases in Housing Commission rents, through a reduction in the rebate, to one-fifth of any pension increase. That represents a substantial benefit to many people in the electorate of Sandringham and they appreciate it.

I close my contribution to the debate by thanking the House for its indulgence and I indicate that I hope to be a strong local member and I am pleased that, in serving on the Economics Committee of the Government, I will be implementing the sorts of changes referred to by the Treasurer in his Ministerial statement today.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—As the newly-elected member for South Barwon, I congratulate the Governor on his address at the opening of the first session of the 49th Parliament and extend the best wishes of all electors in South Barwon to the Governor and Lady Murray during their Vice-Regal appointment in Victoria.

It is interesting to note the Government's firm intention to bring control over Victoria's assets and to implement programmes in areas such as housing, education, public health and transport to provide the greatest benefit in areas of greatest need. I am pleased to see that