

What is here today shows what improvement was achieved by organized effort.

They said "Smile to your bad luck" because they thought we had no chance.

We fought and we won.

North Fitzroy Residents Action Committee and the Brooks Crescent Improvement Committee 1970-1982.

The point is that these residents, in their own way, transcended their individual causes and, in doing so, made an important contribution to the future of public housing in Melbourne—perhaps an immeasurably greater contribution than the town planners, engineers and other professionals who had been working in that area at the time and failing. I honour their efforts.

The Hon. L. A. McARTHUR (Nunawading Province)—I come to this House as the representative of the people of Nunawading Province. It comes as a surprise—a pleasant surprise to Government supporters, although perhaps not so pleasant to members on the Opposition benches—that what was formerly a safe Liberal Province should behave in such a way. It is an honour for me to come to Parliament as a member of the Labor Party and a privilege to represent the people of Nunawading. In six years' time, I hope I will be able to say that I have done my best by both the people and the party.

In reviewing the contributions of people who have spoken on such an occasion as this, I find it acceptable to speak on a subject familiar from one's previous occupation. For me, that was as a State school primary teacher. Until today, teachers were fairly rare in this Parliament, and primary teachers even more unusual, so it is an opportunity for me to speak on the affairs of primary schools.

There have been two areas of success, two where some work has been done to alleviate the disadvantaged, but more needs to be done and I shall make one suggestion that may help to improve the service. The only qualification I bring to the task is 30 years of working in primary schools. The primary school is the economy end of the education market. There are

approximately 2200 primary schools in Victoria. A primary school should be judged by the service it provides, and a school fulfilling its role would have to provide service to the children. A good primary school would sometimes be a noisy place, with busy children who are secure in successfully completing child centred tasks and so gaining skills and attitudes. Back in the 1950s, the first phase of my definition, "a noisy, busy place" if put into practice would have brought an abrupt end to my career. However, society has changed and the needs of the children of society have changed. Thus, schools have had to change their methods to provide children with a broader range of opportunities and options.

Some State schools are now ungraded. Family grouping patterns, open education class-rooms and team teaching enterprises are some of the organizational methods that have changed in schools. Parents, community members and other educational agencies are entering many schools and the educational experiences of the children in schools. Many schools have developed school-based curricula; other schools have adopted curricula, and the norm now is not subject divisions but thematic curriculum. These measures have certainly made schools more responsive to the needs of their children.

Perhaps to the surprise of many, the second success refers to the last part of my definition, that is, the acquisition of skills. It was natural that parents would be concerned when schools changed, and they changed rapidly in the mid 1970s. The concern of parents launched the "back to basics" campaign. It was thought that schools, in changing their methods in response to needs, had abandoned the traditional three Rs. The "back to basics" campaign was probably fuelled by parent concern and it was certainly supported by dubious selective evidence. A search for justification for further reductions in the already insufficient amount of spending on State schools may have been the motivation of the most vocal members of the movement.

The Australian Education Council commissioned a national testing programme to test the validity of the "back to basics" lobby. The results are contained in "Performance in Literacy and Numeracy". The study compared the performance of ten and fourteen-year-olds on reading, writing and numeracy with the same age groups tested in 1975.

The report shows no decline in standards in any area and significant increases in standards in some sections of each subject. Honourable members may be pleased to note that ten-year-olds achieved a 30 per cent increase in their reading and understanding of newspaper items. A success worth noting was the ability of primary schools to change and develop children's understanding of themselves and their society, and at the same time preserve their traditional roles in the three Rs.

I now come to the areas where there are problems, although some work has been done. The first area involves the failure of society to marshal the resources and the expertise to adequately help children who must learn in a second language. It is the policy of this Government to proceed with bilingual education programmes, which receive my enthusiastic endorsement. However, this group of children is often disadvantaged before starting school.

The system at kindergarten and pre-school centres has been well developed in many areas, and in those localities every child has the opportunity to attend and to gain pre-school experience and their parents ensure that they do have that experience.

Recently I worked in a primary school where 70 per cent of the children of the preparatory intake had no pre-school experience. These children were educationally disadvantaged compared with their more fortunate colleagues. During the life of this Parliament, I trust that pre-school facilities will be available to all children.

The second area of concern is the care of the emotionally disturbed child. Vastly improved support services are needed in primary schools if we are to assist this group.

The traditional source of help is counselling and guidance services. The service of this division of the Education Department is inefficiently distributed; the staffing is insufficient and it appears to be starved of resources needed to carry out its function. The traumas of the young child can be caused by either the loss of the family home or the loss of a parent by either death or leaving the family group. There is also the loss of security within the family of the unemployed. These situations give the school a problem it is not equipped by training or resources to solve. The emotionally disturbed child cannot cope with or benefit from the school experience.

Our society can and does care for the physically ill child, and I strongly recommend that a similar intensive programme should be organized to help the emotionally disturbed child in our schools. This is necessary for the health, welfare and educational well-being of the child, and it is a measure that should alleviate future problems for our society.

Finally, I refer to the position I have just left, that is, the position of the school principal. In former times this position was called a head teacher. I have occupied both positions, as is obvious by my age. In the title of head teacher, 95 per cent of the job description was in the word teacher. The school principal of today is a more multi-faceted operator; 50 per cent of his work is in education management and leadership and the other 50 per cent can be anything from a marriage guidance counsellor to a financial manager, and of late he has had to have industrial relations skills, and he has had to deal with budgeting, staff and so on.

I refer especially to education management. In Victoria, the Teaching Service has had a traditional pattern of central employment and it is essential that this central employment be retained. I can perceive no equality and no way of retaining any semblance of equality without maintaining central employment in the Teaching Service, but within this conception there is room for the philosophy of the school

and the educational philosophy of the key appointee, the principal, to be matched. I thank honourable members for their kindness and advice and for listening to my remarks. I look forward to the work of the House.

The Hon. J. L. DIXON (Boronia Province)—It is 30 years since a member of the Labor Party was last elected to represent people in the outer eastern suburbs. The honourable Roy Rawson represented those people from 1952 to 1958, as one of the members for the Southern Province. He was a very active of Parliament and was concerned with the Book Censorship Abolition League and the Council for Civil Liberties, and he was an activist in the peace movement. I am sure that he would be proud as I am of the Government's initiatives on anti-nuclear legislation; freedom of information and civil rights initiatives. I am proud to represent my party in the Boronia Province and I anticipate the time when both honourable members representing the Boronia Province are members of the Australian Labor Party.

Boronia Province is the second largest province in the State and it has experienced the largest increase in population over the past three years when more than 12 500 new voters have been added to the rolls. That increase is not particularly surprising when one studies the nature of the outer eastern suburbs. Traditionally, they have been regarded as places for people to go to fulfil the promises of home ownership being given to people over many years and promises of being able to give the children a better chance in life than their parents had in earlier years. The most obviously important aspect of that fulfilment is the security of owning one's home in one's old age and of providing one's children with better opportunities. The opportunity for this fulfilment can best be found in the outer suburbs.

To help keep faith in this dream there is the reinforcement of ideals through Tattsлото where, as long as one is "in it", one has a chance of "winning it" and the game and quiz shows on television quite blatantly illustrate the

rewards of ability, of having a bit of luck and of "having a go" which are regarded in society as rewardable attributes. In response to the dream which I, certainly, have been reared on, the land subdividers, speculators and developers have obligingly carved up massive areas of the beautiful foothills of the Dandenongs into housing estates, shopping centres and a few factory blocks. Assisted by elaborate advertising campaigns, people have followed their dream and moved to the outer areas to create what have become areas with a traditionally high proportion of home ownership.

Some parts of the outer eastern suburbs have a 90 per cent to 95 per cent home ownership level—or "bank ownership" level. The problem that has arisen, and which has been given plenty of airing in the past few months, as all honourable members are aware, is the breakdown in the home ownership system and this enormous problem is demonstrated significantly in the outer eastern suburbs where one is simply expected to own one's home, with all the infrastructure that goes with it.

As a result, very little private rental accommodation is available. Recent surveys conducted in the Boronia Province demonstrate that there is full occupancy of all private rental homes in the outer eastern suburbs compared with 1·2 per cent vacancies in the inner suburbs of Melbourne which, although low, is certainly higher than it is in the outer eastern suburbs. Occasionally estate agents do advertise properties for rent and an advertisement for one property can receive nearly 100 responses. No property is vacant for more than four hours. Rentals for a 3-bedroom home range from more than \$60 a week to \$100 a week.

This has caused a major social dislocation because low-income earners are being squeezed out of the rental market. Moreover middle-income earners are being squeezed out of the home ownership market because either they are unable to keep up their mortgage payments or they cannot save the deposit and they are relying on the private rental market. Combining the