

Mr MCKENDRICK (Cornwall) - Mr President, it may be a little belated but I would like to offer my congratulations to you on your election as President of this Council. I would like also to pay a tribute to the former member for Cornwall, Mr Mac Le Fevre, for the good work he has done over the past years.

I was intending to get up and speak tonight for a few minutes but I was also prompted to get up a little quicker than normal by the remarks on the football coach from the honourable member who spoke last. Might I remind him that that football coach came from the northern part of the State.

Part of my speech tonight will be along the lines of that of the honourable member for Hobart - on the matter of unemployment. I must congratulate him on his speech and fully endorse his remarks about governments taking full-time, long-term employment in hand. I think we have had enough of the CEP-type of scheme which is short-term, does nothing for the young people but build them up for three or four months and then throws them back onto the scrap heap again - I think they were the words that were used.

But in saying I fully support the words of the honourable member for Hobart on that issue, I would like to make a few remarks concerning the other side of the unemployment schemes that are facing the youth of today who will still be unemployed. And there will be many of them; they will be a fair percentage of the youths currently in our communities and coming out into our communities over the next few years. Unemployment is one of our fastest growing industries in Australia.

I remind honourable members that, if they look around many of the office blocks that are being built - particularly in my area and perhaps the north-west coast - they will see they are not private enterprise buildings; they are social security offices, Commonwealth Employment Service offices - they are all to deal with social welfare problems. They are quite huge office blocks employing a great many people but they are not private enterprise or business ventures that will employ people.

We are heading towards a time when children will grow up never having known their parents to have a job. What sort of an attitude will they have? What sort of a family lifestyle are we looking for in the future? I pose that question because I do not know the answer. I read what happens in America and England where they are experiencing that lifestyle and have those types of people - through no fault of their own - and I shudder to think that could happen to our nice State of Tasmania and this country of Australia.

The problem is really a growing one for the entire State. I watched, I think, 'Nationwide' or one of the television programs the other night which said that Burnie has a real problem with youth and the people concerned - and I congratulate them - are currently attempting to get Federal, State, local government and business community leaders together to discuss the problem. I believe it is a huge problem in the Burnie area and probably a bit further along the north-west coast. We have the same problem with youth unemployment in Launceston. If we read the newspapers there are bashings, robberies and vandalism, and this is growing and growing. I believe it is at a higher level than we have ever seen in any past time in my area. Hobart is experiencing the same problems with the youth in the mall and homeless youths. The other day something like 80 kids between the ages of 14 and 17 had nowhere to stay for the night. It is a huge problem. It is not isolated to my area but is a State problem.

The reason I bring this forward is because in this paper before us the Government has reduced expenditure on youth. It has been reduced by only a small amount but it is a reduction and a reduction in the area of one of our fastest growing problems. I cannot understand that. I could give many examples of the problems caused by youths being unemployed with nothing to do with their time. I believe everybody around this Chamber could give examples of such problems and we could talk for many days. I do not intend to do that because I have been told that the former member for Cornwall possibly spoke for a little longer than was necessary at times.

Many fine community groups are managed and manned by dedicated and caring people but to keep these organisations running and operating, even at their present levels, is becoming a major task. The only place they can go to is the community and in the community we are finding large numbers of unemployed who do not have the money to keep these types of organisations running.

I believe the Federal and State governments should be supporting many of these organisations in a more positive way, particularly in the area of youth work. The Federal and State governments should also consider local government receiving an allocation of funds for distribution to the appropriate organisations in this area. I firmly believe that local government is an appropriate body, as it is most certainly at the grass-roots scene of our community and is in daily contact with the people who are aware of the aspects of need within the council areas. Local government should be the focal point within the community and will most certainly have to involve itself in the very near future.

There are only about one or two local governments which are minutely involved in welfare problems. There will most likely be a few councils that disagree with me because they have been dodging the problem for quite a time - and quite successfully, I might add. But might I say at this stage that, in the Launceston region - and the southern people may not believe this - the four councils up there - Lilydale, Beaconsfield, Launceston and, I hope, St Leonards - have come together and contributed part of their funds to help fund an out-reach worker for the youth problems in the community. It is a first sign of the councils being concerned with the problems and they have done this because they have a huge youth problem within their own areas - it is something very real and close to their hearts.

Local government should be the focal point, as I have just said. There will most likely be councils that will not agree with me but I believe local government councils should be gearing themselves up for the future, because I sincerely hope the Federal and State governments will see a way to allocate some funds for local government to be involved in this work.

I commend the Government on its \$5 000 grant to employers to help relieve the situation but I also support the honourable member for Hobart in that it is up to private enterprise to take hold of that and do something with it - not to let it just slide by. It is there and, if they grab it, over a period of 12 months they may find that, of the one or two people they employ, there will be a certain percentage who will find a job on a permanent basis. So I urge the private enterprise sector of our community to take up that money which is available.

Most certainly I understand that some people say there are many bludgers amongst our young people around the State and in Australia - that many do not even look for jobs and so on. Of course there is a percentage of those - there always has been and there always will be - but the real fact of life is that there are not enough jobs: that is the crux of the situation. Our young people need help; we have a responsibility to assist in any way we can for the benefit of our children and our family lifestyle which, I believe, is slipping away from us at quite a rapid pace. I think that is a shame because I believe in the family and that the family group keeps our community, our State and the country of Australia going ahead.

So I urge the Government to give consideration to our young people, even though it may not be allowed for in the Budget. Hopefully it may be in its heart to find some other funds somewhere during the year to help the youth of Tasmania.

Members - Hear, hear.