

Mr GIBSON (Denison) - It is with some pleasure that I am here responding to the Governor's opening address. It is a pleasure for two reasons.

Firstly, I believe service to one's State or country is one of the greatest honours he can achieve. We are given the responsibility for directing and coordinating the activities of this State. We are responsible for the welfare and development of the aged, the youth, the infirm, those who are working - or those who are trying to - and this great trust is given to us by the people for a period of three or four years. Another point often forgotten by governments is that while they may be elected by only 50 per cent of the population - or even by only 34 per cent - they must represent the total population.

The second reason for my pleasure in this speech is that on completion of it I feel I will be able to contribute much more fully in this House and also assist in allowing the constituents of my electorate to be more fully aware of what is going on.

In the short time that I have been in the House I have been asked how I think I will fill the shoes of the former member for Denison, Mr Bennett. If we look at his career in parliament from the time he was elected in 1986, what he initiated as Attorney-General is formidable. It includes initiatives in such diverse areas as children in courts, video interviewing, improvements to the court system and many others in the areas of sport and recreation and land, parks and wildlife. Some legislation which he initiated incidentally has been supported and carried on by the current Government. The former member is also a character whose humour and outgoing nature will be missed, particularly by some members on the other side of the House. I owe the former member a debt of gratitude for giving me the opportunity to sit in this House and make my own contribution.

What qualities or skills do I bring to this position? The member for Denison, Mrs Jackson - who is not present at the moment - would have been aware of this had I not been elected as I had applied for some of the jobs she talked about this morning. Unfortunately I do not think my chances would have been all that good, even though I do come from interstate. Whilst I have extensive skills in many managerial areas, a quality which I believe I have which will assist me greatly is that of caring for people. This quality can however be a disadvantage unless one realises that this care for a person or a group of people should be tempered with consideration of its effect on - and whether it will hurt or disadvantage - the majority of the population.

I will now outline some of the areas of concern with which I will involve myself in my time in parliament, in addition to those of my spokesman responsibilities. The first is dear to the hearts of some of the members on the other side of the House - it is bicycles. This is probably the easiest matter to discuss. I believe bicycles are greatly under-utilised in this city and in this State as a means of transport. The topography of Hobart is such that more extensive use of bicycles could be made. Why is it not?

Only one child in my son's class rides to school. I remember that when I was quite a bit younger two-thirds of the class rode to school.

Why is it that the children do not ride to school at the moment? It is not because of free bus travel. The main reason is the dangerous nature of riding on Tasmanian roads, and there are two areas in which this can be improved. The first is the greater development of cycleways. This could even be to the extent of a lane on the side of the main road on direct transport routes, with signposting to advise motorists of bicycles in the area and also to keep them out of the bicycle lane.

The second problem relates to the education of drivers. For two years whilst I was in Sydney I rode to work - a distance of some 11 to 12 kilometres - in traffic which was three to four lanes wide, travelling at 80 to 90 kilometres per hour and not once in that two years did I have what I could call a close shave. If one goes for a ride in Hobart on Brooker Avenue he will probably use up three of his nine lives just travelling to the roundabout near the showground. The problem is that drivers do not consider bicycles.

A further problem in relation to bicycles as a means of transport is secure storage at destination. Here at Parliament House we have had a new bicycle rack put in and, to the sorrow of some of the staff members of people on the other side of the House, this is not a secure method. Not only that, the triangular school-type of bike rack which has been put up is not ideal for the bike and can cause damage to the bike itself. The Japanese and some European countries have excellent storage systems which allow the bicycle to be hung up; it can be moved away and stored in a fairly small area; and the member has a key to his own little locker in which the bike is placed. Whilst I realise that some of these are council matters I think this Parliament and the State Government could be assisting much more with these initiatives.

A point which has been brought up in the past is the use of helmets and I certainly agree that helmets should be compulsory for bike riders. The previous Government started an initiative of a subsidy for children purchasing helmets; the current Government carried it on, but I believe it has now lapsed.

The next important area is training for young riders. We currently have a system whereby police and road authorities go into schools and talk to the children about road safety, but very little is done in relation to riding skills. It might come as a surprise to some of the members that people on bicycles can quite often attain speeds of between 70 and 80 kilometres per hour and a cotton shirt and trousers are not much support if they come off their bikes. Young children must not only be taught road safety but they must be taught bike-handling skills. This could occur in the school environs, even if not during school time.

The bicycle has two advantages, the first being a decreased use of fossil fuel and the second reduced emissions to the atmosphere. Some members will realise that motor vehicles are the main cause of atmospheric pollution. One has only to live somewhere like Sydney or Melbourne and look at the roads and the atmosphere at the end of a weekend when one can see much further than he can on Friday after cars and vehicles have been travelling through the city. We here are indeed fortunate and I think we should be doing something now to ensure that this does not happen in the future.

The next point of concern that I have is youth affairs. I was very pleased to hear the member for Bass, the Rev. Lance Armstrong, state that youth is our most valuable resource and on this point I agree with him wholeheartedly. To use an analogy that some members can relate to, for this resource to grow and provide the greatest return it needs to be planted into good soil - that is, a strong and stable home life - and provided with the nutrition to allow the resource to grow and reach its greatest potential. This afternoon I am going to deal with only one aspect of this and that is the nutrition for this resource. Those members who have left their careers in education might disagree with some of my ideas but they are based on seventeen years' training of youth, dealing with a wide range of educational standards and teaching a wide range of skills; and also on experience as a father for twelve years.

The first type of nutrition is education. Each facet of education - whether it be primary, secondary, tertiary or technical training - has a different role. Primary education should be designed to teach the basic skills. These include the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic and also the development of the basic educational concepts. A point that should not be ignored is the development of physical skills. Basic motor skills should be encouraged as these also assist intellectual learning and besides - as the Minister for Primary Industry recently learnt - it requires some coordination at any time in a person's life to hold onto a raft and reach for a paddle in the water while members of his team are trying to hold him back.

I believe secondary schooling should be designed to provide the educational skills either to go on to tertiary education or technical training, or to survive in the outside world. Whilst tertiary and technical training is designed to equip people for their chosen careers, too often I feel educationalists pursue learning for learning's sake without keeping these

goals in mind. Whilst it is necessary to have an emphasis placed on research and development, this is not the requirement for the bulk of our students.

The second area of concern in youth affairs is social development and this is just as important as education as it contributes to the set of values which controls the rest of our life. This includes use of drugs, including alcohol and nicotine; moral values and relationships with peers and adults. One cannot overestimate the value of activities such as sport, music or hobbies for development of self-discipline, cooperation between people, ability to compromise to the greatest satisfaction of all and communication skills.

We see here in parliament the development of some of these communication skills and, as was previously said by the Premier, this is an area in which we should be contributing as much as we can to assist the public of Tasmania, not only in learning how government is working but what is going on in the State.

The last stage in this development is the range of jobs and careers to allow the youth of Tasmania to gain valuable experience and skill which will enable them to contribute to Tasmania's future.

Like the member for Denison, Dr Brown, a number of members on this side of the House have a concern for the environment. In 1981 I navigated the Franklin River on a raft and had even more time to ponder its beauty whilst we sat on the side of the river for three days waiting for the water to go down. I am sure the Minister for Resources and Energy would appreciate some of that rain now.

In my career I have walked over a large area of Australia and I believe we have one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It amazes me when a number of Australians travel overseas even before they have seen Australia. We in Tasmania are doubly fortunate in having our environment. However we must not lose sight of the fact that we require suitable education, jobs and a strong economy for our children to remain here, to enjoy Tasmania, and to be able to support and bring up their own children.

Mr Speaker, this is all I will say for the moment. I appreciate members' courtesy and I am fully aware that the next time I am on my feet I may not be so fortunate.

Members - Hear, hear.

Debate adjourned.