removal of the right to strike also removes the desire to do so, having experienced the warm and happy environment I have over the past 6 years, I am now a strong opponent of corporal punishment.

This did not mean a watering down of my standards of expected social behaviour from the students, but I was forced into rethinking how to achieve this. Therefore, I am firmly convinced that Parliament does have an important role to play in protecting the rights of our children. However, the final solution lies in the hearts and minds of the parents and primary caregivers of our nation's children. Harsh and inconsistent parental discipline, with an emphasis on the critical and the punitive, lack of parental involvement, poor monitoring and supervision of children's behaviour—these are the root causes of most of our social problems. Our culture must begin to emphasise positive parenting and to give parents the skills to carry out such a role. For so many of our young people, the damage is already done. The question we must all ask ourselves is what we are going to do to prevent another generation from being damaged in the same way. When we, as a nation, come to value emotional literacy as we do the other literacies, then, and only then, will the health of our nation be assured.

I hope in my time in Parliament to be an advocate for the people of Northland, a region that has so often received less than it should have in the way of active interest from decision makers in Wellington. I hope to be an advocate for teachers, who hold the future of our nation in their hands. But, most of all, I hope to be an advocate for children, for they are the future of our nation.

No reira ka mutu taku korero. E te whānau, e nga manuhiri, e nga hau e whā—mā te Atua koutou katoa e manaaki, e tiaki—tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

[Subsequent authorised translation: Therefore, my address finishes. To the family, to the visitors, and to the four winds—God will protect and look after you all—greetings to you, greetings to you, greetings to you all.]

GERRY BROWNLEE (NZ National—Ilam): Pride tinged with just a bit of humility best describes my feeling as I rise to speak in this House for the first time. I am proud to have been chosen by so many people in the Ilam electorate to represent them in all matters that are in any way connected to the business of this House. As a consequence, I am a little humbled by the enormous trust that the people in the Ilam electorate, my electorate, have chosen to place in me. My response to those emotions is to accept the responsibility of making service to my electorate the greatest commitment of what I hope will be the best years of my working life—those spent in this House.

On behalf of my electorate, may I congratulate you on your election to the office of Speaker. During the many years that you have spent in faithful service of this House, you have accumulated considerable knowledge of its workings. We are indeed fortunate to have the benefit of your vast experience.

Politics has been my passion for some time. In making the decision to serve in the political process as an elected representative, I am ever grateful for the support of my wife, Michelle, whose personal commitment is no less than my own. I recall that some years ago, when we were both much younger, Michelle announced to me that she intended to travel overseas to work—a desire common among most young New Zealanders and a trend that I believe should be encouraged. However, we were not married at the time and after she had left I soon felt that perhaps we should be. So I took off after her. I particularly remember one morning in the beautiful city of Paris. We were out for a walk. We came to a stop on a bridge over the River Seine. Below us, the riverboats full of people busily made their way up and down the river. In the far distance we could see the top of Notre Dame Cathedral and hear its bells on the gentle breeze. In the cafes below, the air was filled with the sound of accordion music and the smell of coffee and croissants. It was a most romantic atmosphere. I thought to myself “This is the moment”. I held Michelle close and said to her: “Darling, when we get back to New Zealand I would very much like to go into politics.” She had, of course, already agreed to marry me. I was pleased that her earlier decision was not challenged nor changed by this later revelation, because without her support I would not be here.

It has been pleasing that since arriving in this place so many senior members have stressed the importance of family and the high priority that families should take in
political life. I accept that good advice and embrace it willingly. I am also fortunate to have the support of a very strong electorate organisation in Ilam. I am deeply grateful to the large number of people in my electorate who have chosen as their course in politics to give generously of their time, making particularly a commitment to the National Party. My endorsement as a member of Parliament in this House is, for the most part, due to the hard work of my campaign committee and the many helpers who joined us in taking our message to the people of Ilam. I take this opportunity to thank them all and to invite them to stay on board for 1999.

Ilam is a new seat in the north-west of Christchurch. I am mindful that in all the combined former seats that make up the new seat of Ilam I have been preceded by most capable members. The Rt Hon. Mike Moore has returned to this House as the member for Waimakariri. The Hon. Margaret Austin has retired from politics, and will be remembered for her ability to take a bipartisan approach on issues of importance to her constituents. But most of all it is the legacy of the Hon. Philip Burdon that I inherit in this new seat. In his 15 years of service to this House, Philip earned enormous respect and a great following from his electorate. Although now retired from this House, he continues to work for the better interests of his country. I extend to Philip and Ros best wishes for a long and enjoyable retirement from political life.

Throughout last year, as I made an effort to meet and talk to as many people in the electorate as I could, perhaps the most commonly asked personal question was: "Why do you want to go into politics?". That question deserves some reflection in its answer. I have been privileged in my life to have come from a caring and loving family. My late father will remain the person who had the most influence on my life. My mother, who is now so very ill, can be proud that her strength of character is evident in all of her children. Those influences have stirred in me a political interest. I have always believed that the consequence of a political decision pervades the lives of all New Zealanders—not only at the time of the decision but very often for many generations to follow. Yet most New Zealanders do not have the luxury of time to evaluate what politicians are trying to achieve. They glean their information from the glib news stories and 30-second sound bites that are often published more as a piece of hot product in a fiercely competitive news media business than as a considered, well-reasoned article published for the purpose of information and encouraging discussion.

I am motivated by the opportunity that membership of this House affords to participate in considered decision-making, and the opportunity it presents to propose, support, and drive new initiatives that I would hope are always directed at improving our lives. I do not lament the reality of competition among media outlets and the obvious difficulties this presents to politicians, but rather I accept it as a challenge. As a New Zealander who values and demands freedom, to me freedom of expression is most important of all.

I am motivated too because I have a deep belief in the capacity of individual New Zealanders to make good choices in their lives. To a greater extent, that is the evidence from our brief history. The vast majority of us are descended from stock that made the choice to leave one country behind to make a new life in this country. They did so without the advantage of modern technology. They made a choice that required considerable individual strength of purpose and personal courage. I believe those traits are still common among most New Zealanders. In some they lie dormant and will not be awakened, but for many others they remain potent forces, which, in my view, the political process must ensure are unleashed and encouraged.

In recent years we have seen some lifting of excessive State control. If that process has taught us anything, it is that we cannot advantage any individual by restricting the range in which people can achieve and by regulating the bounds in all facets of their lives. There remains a great need to keep the reform process alive. This is a country where vested interests and strong lobby groups are able to operate to almost exclusive advantage behind legislative protections that currently enjoy widespread public support. Time will not allow me to name them this evening, but during my time in this House I would hope some of those organisations will face greater challenge.
In summarising why I am here, it is because I want to work in the service of my country. I believe in the capability of individual New Zealanders. I am committed to New Zealand remaining a free society. I want to contribute to the direction New Zealand takes in staking out its future. Guided by my electorate, I want to have influence in determining the type of country New Zealand becomes in the future. I am aware that most New Zealanders, as a consequence of busying themselves in their daily lives, place a great deal of trust in politicians. Despite recently published opinion polls showing politicians to be the least respected professional group in society, I think that trust is well founded. It has been demonstrated by the very orderly and civil, if somewhat protracted, passage towards our first MMP Government.

John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, remarked the other day that New Zealand was one of only eight countries in the world to have experienced democratic Government throughout this century. I think we can be proud of that. I look forward to making MMP work as productively as possible. If at times it results in this House becoming more hostile, that is a good thing too. It is far better that we fire words at each other than missiles.

While I am committed to protecting individual freedom, I want to affirm and expand on the ideas of the difference between freedom and licence, as first expressed by Lord Cobham some 40 years ago: "Freedom implies the voluntary acceptance of individual responsibility and demands respect for others. Moreover it requires the acceptance of the order of law, not as a compromise to chosen activity but as an agent of achievement and as an assurance of security. Licence, on the other hand, describes the indiscriminate exercise of action, without concern for the rights of others. It claims validity as freedom, but has no respect for the order of law." As a member of this House, I will always want to ensure that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand. In my view, accepting less is offensive to the right of freedom.

As a new member of this House, I am critically aware that any effect I have will impact most on the future. As we stand at the close of an extraordinary century, I think it is worth reflecting that for New Zealanders born between the years of 1900 and 1910, and who lived for 70 years—an average age for that generation—two-thirds of all the knowledge in the world would have been discovered in their lifetime. Despite two world wars, many of that generation lived much longer. Average age projections have constantly been revised upwards throughout this century. The race in technology has exceeded any expectations. We can only marvel at what might be achieved in the next century. The combination of expanding technology and an increasingly elderly population will place great responsibility on this House. I am sure this House will consider those two factors very carefully when we ask New Zealanders later this year to choose how they want to provide for retirement income in the future. I do not favour compulsion, but I look forward to more discussion as we develop the question for the referendum on retirement income to be held later this year.

One of the historically distinguishing features of this Parliament, apart from its being our largest, is the significantly increased number of members who are of Maori descent. For the 4 years preceding 1996, I was a teacher of te reo Maori. While it is not my language of first choice, I am not uncomfortable about its more frequent use in this House. I think that New Zealand will be a better place if we can accommodate the concepts of partnership expressed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We have made progress in settling grievances, and that process will continue. However, this is the Parliament that should define partnership as it can be understood and embraced by all New Zealanders, because this is the issue that has the potential either to springboard New Zealand towards much more widespread prosperity or to bind us in debilitating conflict at endless cost of opportunity.

New Zealanders have a right to expect their Government to provide and ensure that circumstances within the country give them the opportunity to enjoy the rights to good housing, good health, good education, and security. The debate in this Chamber will always surround how that is best done. I hope that in this brief time this evening I have indicated the philosophies that will guide me when I take part in considering those matters in this House.
Finally, I tell all members of this House that every time their plane touches down in Christchurch they are in the Ilam electorate. I could have spent some considerable time this evening telling members of its beauty and of the wonderful amenities in that electorate. It is renowned for the fine educational institutions that it has, and for some of the nicest residential areas in the city. I have no doubt that, in time, many members will make the choice to visit. Let me tell members that they are welcome on my patch any time, so long as they do not plan their stay to be a career move. You may ring the bell, Mr Speaker!


[Subsequent authorised translation: To the noble colleagues of this House of Parliament—greetings to you. To the Māori members of this House, be strong, be brave, and be stout-hearted. Sincere greetings to all of us.]

I wish first to honour my forebears in Parliament: Hone Heke, the great northern MP; Sir James Carroll and Sir Apirana Ngata, our two outstanding Māori parliamentarians; Maui Pomare, whose ruthless pursuit of health has stood Māoridom in good stead; Paraire Pāikea; Mrs Iriaka Ratana, the first Māori woman MP who for 20 years acted as a courageous woman, a persistent advocate of the Māori point of view in this Parliament; and Matiu Rata, who repealed the notorious Māori Affairs Amendment Act—kia ora Matiu—and, finally, Koro Weterj!, whose full funding of te kohanga reo, leadership of iwi development, Mana and Māori training programmes, and retrospective treaty claims led to the biggest explosion of Māori development we have ever seen, except in the early 1900s.

I am proud to represent them here today, the living embodiment of their spirit. I am also proud to represent the fighting spirit of my ancestors of Ngati Porou and Ngati Whakaue: Te Aotawarirangi, who, to motivate her people to get vengeance, carried her father’s head about with her; Hinetapora, who offered herself as a sacrifice to her enemies—indeed they did chop off her head; Te Aokapuarangi, Kirimatao, whose skill with the taiaha was so astounding that we speak about her exploits over 100 years later.

I wish to remember my three mothers here: Elsie Awatere, my sister Hinetapora Douglas; and Hinemihi Huata, for all their love and tender care. I wish also to acknowledge the support of my Ngati Kahungunu husband, Wi Te Tau Huata, whom I mention against his will, and whom I believe is a model for a Māori man of the 1990s, a hard-working enterprising man, a caring husband and a loving father who pays great attention to his children.

I have a mission to do what I can to ensure that every single New Zealander, not just the well off, not just the clever, has the opportunity to reach his or her educational potential. All Māori members of Parliament in our past have promoted the idea that education is the engine of social and economic change for their people. I am simply following in their tradition. But Government has in the past let us down badly. The native schools, which taught in the Māori language and which produced the most brilliant leaders of the 19th century, were closed down; the gentleman’s agreement under which my father and Tau Henare’s grand-uncle, and thousands of our people were put off schools and education for ever by being beaten and abused for speaking their native tongue.

One in four children now leave school not able to read and write properly. Where there is a high density of Māori the figure rises as high as one in two.

Generations of education researchers have made the point that low expectations by teachers of pupils’ achievements led to poor programmes and even poorer teaching. I observe that when appalling teachers left Otara to teach in Pakuranga or Howick they suddenly transformed into well-prepared and excellent teachers. Right now, the lousiest teacher in any school gets paid the same as the best teacher in the country. Year in and year out those pathetic teachers ply their craft on Māori children. This is why I support bulk funding.

I also want to ensure that parents who want to can send their children to a Māori language school. At present they cannot because Government is drip-feeding the
Brownlee, Gerry: Address in Reply
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