

Works Committee will conduct an inquiry into flood relief and control, but, as yet, no terms of reference have been determined. A statutory authority should be established to organize a plan to control completely the flow of the rivers in times of flood. When the waters reach flood height, certain pondage areas should have been predetermined to take the flow of water from the rivers. Large tracts of forest and marginal land are suitable for conversion to temporary pondage areas. It was suggested recently that the authority should have complete control over these areas, although people would still be allowed to farm or graze stock there on the condition that in time of flood the land would be used for ponding flood waters. The people would be compensated for land lost for this purpose. The proposal should be seriously considered. Representation will be made by the farmers of the area to the Premier, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and at the inquiry, and the case for a plan to minimize flooding will be submitted.

I wish Sir Rohan and Lady Delacombe many years of health and happiness, and I once again affirm the loyalty of the electors of Swan Hill to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Mr. EBERY (Midlands).—I endorse the remarks of the honorable member for Swan Hill in expressing loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II. I also congratulate His Excellency, Sir Rohan Delacombe, and Lady Delacombe on their contribution to Victoria over the past ten years.

I have the honour and privilege of representing the Midlands electorate, which has a unique history based on gold and agriculture. The attraction of gemstones and the lakes such as Cairn Curran and Eppalock in my electorate provide unlimited potential for tourism. Geographically it is ideally situated, because places such as Castlemaine, Bendigo and Ballarat can be dovetailed in to provide an interesting few days excursion from the metropolitan area

of Melbourne. It is essential to provide opportunities for tourists to visit country areas. There is no reason why tourism and industrial development should not work hand in hand, so long as the development is planned to retain the existing environment.

After the gold rush era there was an exodus of young people from country areas. I have the privilege to be a member of the board of management of the Alexander Home in Castlemaine which serves an area containing approximately 57,000 people, between 15 per cent and 16 per cent of whom are of pensionable age. The proportion of pensionable age people in other parts of Victoria averages approximately 9 per cent. Thus heavy strain is placed on intensive care units in the Midlands district. At present there is a three-year waiting list for admittance to intensive care units and aged people's homes.

Recently confidence in country areas has been generated because of the positive policies of the Government in granting pay-roll tax concessions to industries. Problems such as the lack of sewerage facilities have been created with the growth that has taken place, particularly in areas such as Kangaroo Flat and Golden Square. Modifications and extensions to the services must be made, because a critical situation exists. The population of country towns could be doubled without the need for major modifications.

People in Seymour have vivid memories of the flood which occurred in February this year, and it is not easy to erase those memories from their minds. Disasters of this magnitude do not happen often, but Nature has a habit of not conforming to statistical data. Modifications are needed on the railway bridge at Whitehead's Creek, and I hope they will be carried out.

In the realm of youth, I disagree that the Government should fully subsidize sporting facilities in country

areas. If young people are given a challenge they will accept responsibility and work for a good cause. In Castlemaine recently young people worked for ten weeks and raised \$20,000 for a sporting complex. Projects of this type create interest among young people. During this fund-raising campaign, young people seemed to pop up from the footpath seeking donations for the sporting complex. It is essential to create challenges for youth. I have a great respect for young people, and I know they will accept responsibilities if others are prepared to offer them. After the appeal in Castlemaine, a Miss Victoria Spastic Appeal was launched, and the young lady representing Castlemaine raised \$5,900 for the appeal.

The conservation of soil affects everybody because pollution will result if the heritage of our forbears is not retained. In 1960 the Government created employment for people in the upper reaches of Lake Eppalock where sheet erosion had been caused. If this work had not been undertaken, the reservoir would have become polluted within a few years. Some grazing areas which previously had a carrying capacity of half a sheep to the acre now carry three and a half sheep to the acre. This aspect should be examined so that our heritage will continue to be retained. The Government's project which began in 1960 will gradually phase out by 1975. A total of 375 landowners are involved in the project, which covers about 320 square miles.

The Soil Conservation Authority and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission work on a run-off of approximately 5 per cent. The run-off in many eroded areas is closer to 20 per cent. This does not help the situation in downstream areas which have suffered damage in the recent floods in northern Victoria. About one-third of the State is under the jurisdiction of the Forests Commission. An area of 14 million acres comprises State forests and there are 3 million acres of private lands adjoining State forests and

national parks. Our natural environment in these areas must be retained at all costs and our flora and fauna preserved from depredation. Further education is needed to prevent people from lighting fires in those areas.

The Country Fire Authority has done a magnificent job over many years and an infusion of capital funds will assist it. The equipment and residential quarters for country fire brigades need upgrading. These organizations have first-class records which must be recognized. I hope I have made a useful contribution to this debate and I will endeavour to fulfil my role to my electorate.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne).—I have listened with attention to the maiden speeches of the honorable members opposite. I congratulate the honorable members for Swan Hill and Midlands on their contributions to this debate on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech and I look forward to hearing from them again. I am not going to refer to the honorable members who have just resumed their seats, but I have listened with attention to the speeches of other Government supporters during this debate and I have never failed to be intrigued by the glowing tributes they pay to the role of the monarchy in evolving our system of constitutional democracy. One gets the impression that George III., Queen Victoria and George V. virtually made the running in initiating the freedoms which we now take almost for granted and that monarchy and liberty are virtually synonymous.

I confess that my reading of history goes the other way. I had thought all the major reforms—extended franchise, equal electoral districts, payment of members, limitation of power in non-elected chambers, abolition of the powers of the House of Lords—were by no means encouraged by the monarchy; in fact they were carried in the teeth of the fiercest opposition from the monarchs. Perhaps I am wrong—along with Macaulay, Trevelyan, Namier,