

Mr. BORTHWICK (Scoresby). - I rise for the first time in this House with a feeling of humility but at the same time of pride; humility, because I am aware of the historic backgrounds of this House, the great issues that have passed through here and the great leaders, past and present; and pride, because I represent Scoresby, and an additional pride in that I am following in the footsteps of a man who, all members of this House will agree, was one of the finest Parliamentarians this State has had. I refer to the late Sir George Knox, who was loved by all in his electorate and who was held in the highest respect by all sections of this House. I have been told on many occasions since coming here of the guidance Sir George Knox gave to his fellow members on their first setting foot in this Chamber. Indeed, I am sorry that it is not my privilege to have received his guidance.

The Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech gives us an opportunity to review the progress and prosperity of this State. I think we are apt to overlook its vitality and growth on all sides. There is no doubt in my mind that in recent years there has been a feeling on the part of sections in the community that it is time we relaxed, perhaps, and caught up. One has not far to go in this State to see signs of its progress. This abounds on all sides in my electorate. There are major works on all hands-new schools and the like, and rapid growth of population. I was much interested on entering this House to go to the Papers Room and obtain a copy of the Fern Tree Gully-Gembrook Railway Reconstruction Act. That Act was passed in 1948, but work did not start for ten years. I congratulate the present Government on having made money available to enable that work to be put in hand.

Another sign of progress in my electorate is the water reticulation scheme in the lower Dandenongs region. When I first went to that area fifteen years ago, I was told we should have water in eighteen months; in actual fact, it is going through right now. It can be argued, and I believe is now -being argued by people of all shades of political opinion, that we should slow down our expansion and catch up. With rapid population growth and consequent rapid industrial growth to ensure the full employment we are all agreed upon, we are confronted with many problems, particularly in finance and the extension of services. It is one of the major issues of the day as to what action we shall take. Are we going to stop and catch up, or have we the courage to go on and develop this State and, with it, Australia as rapidly as we can to its maximum potential?

When we come to make a decision, we should look back to the true motives behind the expansion we have seen. When I thought about it I wondered: When did the idea of expansion occur to me? I believe that most of us really began to think about it in the early 1940's. We all recall those days of 1941 when we felt very weak, very lonely and rather afraid. I felt that we had learned our lesson then. It became apparent that we could not go on and indeed had no right to hold this land, unless we showed a hungry world that we could use it and develop it to its full potential to play its part in the world.

Have those who claim that we should stop now and catch up forgotten all this in fifteen years? The men of my age, and older, who came back from the services had two strongly held views. One was for full employment, and we have had fifteen years of full employment. The other, born, I believe, from those dark days was-let us develop this country because we may not get a second chance. Those are the only motives behind the present drive to develop this country. Certainly, at times, brakes may have to be applied and guidance given, but I believe that if too much momentum is lost it may be most difficult to regain. If we fail, history will show that we have been nothing but cowards.

Since I have been a member of this House I have been tremendously impressed with the concern shown by honorable members on both sides about the future of the children. The fundamental aspect of our children's future is to ensure their freedom, and rapid development is one of the major insurances that will guarantee that freedom. Naturally, there are problems, as there are bound to be when rapid growth takes place, but they are problems which continued sound government can minimize and which in the long run will prove to some degree to have been worth while suffering.

I now wish to deal specifically with the subject of education. I had the good fortune this morning of having the Minister of Education in my electorate, when we visited the Fern Tree Gully Technical School, the Upper Fern Tree Gully State School, Sassafras State School, and the Education Department's school at the Salvation Army Boys' Home at Bayswater. I thank the Minister for his attendance. It may be of interest to honorable members to learn that in 1955 a report on the educational future of the Fern Tree Gully Shire was produced at the request of the combined hills State school committees. The report was compiled by officers of the Council of Educational Research, the School of Education at the University of Melbourne, and the Education Department. The results of this survey depended on one vital factor -the accuracy of the forecast of population growth. It was decided to accept the forecast of Mr. Alan Blair, who was then the town planning officer of the shire. In 1955, he forecast that by 1960 the population of the Shire of Fern Tree Gully would be 33,200 persons. This estimate has proved to be remarkably accurate, to within 200 persons. The report set out the provision for accommodation in schools which would be needed to keep pace with the estimated growth of population. It was estimated that sixteen to eighteen new primary rooms would need to be constructed. In fact, 21 new rooms have been built. The report suggested that a new high school would be required, and this was constructed at Boronia two years ago. A domestic section at the Upwey High School was requested, and this has been built, in addition to major extensions to the Fern Tree Gully Technical School. Where the report failed to some degree was in the estimate of the rate of population growth in the next five years, because already it is apparent that the estimate will be found to be very wide of the mark. The latest conservative estimate of the increase in population in the next five years in that shire is 22,000, which will bring the shire's population in five years' time to 55,000 persons. Already home building permits are being issued at a rate in excess of 1,000 a year. The anticipated rapid growth will mean an increase in school attendances from the current figure of 6,500 pupils to 11,000 pupils by 1965.

On my election as a member of this House I asked myself, and then the Education Department, whether it was aware of the changing and developing situation in the western region of the Scoresby electorate. I discovered that two years ago the survey and planning branch of the Education Department employed one part-time officer. To-day there are three full-time officers, working in conjunction with local authorities, Departments, and instrumentalities, both State and Federal, keeping track of population trends. So far as the electorate which I represent is concerned, I congratulate those officers on the remarkable job they have done. The situation in the western section of the Scoresby electorate has developed almost in recent months. The Education Department has recently purchased or reserved certain sites for school purposes. I direct the Minister's attention to the fact that urgent priority is requested for the construction of a school on the 5-acre site in Tormore-road, Boronia. When that school has been constructed, it will be possible to zone the town so that children will not have to cross the railway line, and the school in Range View-road will be greatly relieved.

Further sites which have been purchased or are reserved include Johnson Park estate, 5 acres;

Glennifer Farm, Scoresby, 15 acres, for a future secondary school; Scoresby Heights, youth of Burwood-road, and adjacent to Department of Agriculture land, 5 acres; Knox Park, 5 acres; Studfield estate, 5 acres; and Mountain Gate estate, 5 acres. I believe that consideration will have to be given shortly to the establishment of a primary school on the Mountain Gate estate primarily to afford relief to the Fern Tree Gully school, in connexion with which tenders will shortly be called for the construction of four additional rooms. Four acres of land have also been purchased in Talaskia-road, Upper Fern Tree Gully. The Minister inspected this site this morning, and it seems to be an extremely good one. The idea is to remove the school from its present site because it is an extremely steep, damp and gloomy one, and is unsafe because of road and rail crossings. It is anticipated that in the near future the school will be removed to Talaskia--road. Further sites, comprising 5 acres at Rowville, 5 acres at Upwey South and 35 acres at Kilsyth South, have been reserved for both secondary and primary school purposes. I congratulate the Minister and officers of the Education Department for their foresight in reserving land in the western section of this rapidly growing electorate. At the same time, I issue a warning that the situation could change almost overnight because of the activities of large building firms which are operating in the area.

I have spoken to the district inspector of schools, Mr. Cumming, who is aware of the problems and who, I believe, is a very good officer. I ask that the Education Department give urgent consideration to the establishment of a high school in the Mooroolbark district, and also a primary school to draw off some of the pupils from the secondary and primary schools at Croydon which will soon be overcrowded. In addition, the erection of a primary school in Hinckley-avenue, Croydon West, is urgently required. I believe the Education Department is aware of the situation and realizes that the schools in Croydon must be afforded relief. The Government promised to give first priority to education, and I believe it has done so. It is not for us to sit back now and feel that no problems exist in the provision of education facilities. They do exist, but I am sure the Government realizes the position. In many cases they are problems inherited from the war years and magnified by rapid expansion.

Earlier, I mentioned that our children's birthright is a guarantee of freedom, but equally their birthright is equal opportunity for all to develop their potential by means of the best possible standard of education that can be devised.