

VICTORIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

Third Session of the Thirty-second Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, July 6, 1937.

OPENING OF THE SESSION.

The Third Session of the Thirty-second Victorian Parliament was opened this day by Commission.

At 12.5 p.m. the CLERK read the following:—

PROCLAMATION

By His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Victoria and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia, &c., &c., &c.

Whereas The Parliament of Victoria stands prorogued until Tuesday, the eighth day of June, 1937: Now I, the Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Victoria, in the Commonwealth of Australia, do by this my Proclamation further prorogue the said Parliament of Victoria until Tuesday, the sixth day of July, 1937, and I do hereby fix Tuesday, the sixth day of July, 1937, aforesaid, at the hour of Twelve o'clock noon, as the time for the commencement and holding of the next Session of the said Parliament of Victoria, for the despatch of business, in the Parliament Houses, situate in Spring-street, in the City of Melbourne: And the Honorable the Members of the Legislative Council and the Members of the Legisla-

tive Assembly are hereby required to give their attendance at the said time and place accordingly.

Given under my hand and the seal of the State of Victoria aforesaid, at Melbourne, this seventh day of June, in the year of our Lord One thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven, and in the first year of the reign of His Majesty King George VI.

(L.S.). F. W. MANN.

By His Excellency's Command,

F. E. OLD,
Acting Premier.

GOD SAVE THE KING!

At ten minutes past Twelve His Honour Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy—the Commissioner appointed by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor—entered the Chamber.

Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy directed that the attendance of the members of the Legislative Assembly should be requested.

The members of the Legislative Assembly appeared at the Bar.

Mr. JUSTICE GAVAN DUFFY.—Honorable gentlemen of the Legislative Council, Mr. Speaker, and gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly: His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, not thinking fit to be present in person, has been pleased to cause Letters Patent to issue under the seal of the State, constituting me his Commissioner, to do in his name all that is

necessary to be performed in this Parliament. This will more fully appear from the Letters Patent, which will now be read by the Clerk.

The Letters Patent were then read by the Clerk.

Mr. JUSTICE GAVAN DUFFY.—Honorable gentlemen of the Legislative Council, Mr. Speaker, and gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly: I have it in command from His Excellency to let you know that, later this day, His Excellency will declare to you in person, in this place, the cause of his calling this Parliament together; and, honorable gentlemen of the Legislative Council, as it is necessary before you proceed to the despatch of business that a President of the Legislative Council be chosen, His Excellency requests that you will proceed to the choice of a proper person to be President.

The members of the Legislative Assembly then withdrew.

TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS.

SWEARING OF NEW MEMBERS.

The Clerk read a Commission from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy to administer the oath of allegiance to the newly-elected members of the Legislative Council, and announced that returns had been received to writs issued by the President for the election of members to serve in the place of members whose seats had become vacant by effluxion of time, by the endorsements on which it appeared that the following members had been elected:—

Province.	Member.
Ballarat—	Alfred James Pittard.
Bendigo—	John Herman Lienhop.
Doutta Galla—	Percy James Clarey.
East Yarra—	William Haslam Edgar.
Gippsland—	William MacAulay.
Higinbotham—	James Arthur Kennedy.
Melbourne —	Daniel Laurence McNamara.
Melbourne North—	Herbert Horace Olney.
Melbourne West—	James Herbert Disney.
Monash —	Sir Francis Grenville Clarke.
Northern—	George Joseph Tuckett.

Province.	Member.
North-Eastern —	Percival Pennell Inchbold.
North-Western —	George Louis Goudie.
Southern—	Gilbert Lawrence Chandler.
South-Eastern —	Charles Percival Gartside.
South-Western —	Gordon Stewart McArthur.
Western—	Leonard Roy Rodda.

The new members, with the exception of Mr. Gartside, took the oath of allegiance to His Majesty King George VI., and delivered to the Clerk the declaration of qualification required by Act No. 3660.

Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy then withdrew.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

The CLERK said that the time had arrived for proceeding to the election of a President.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction), addressing the Clerk, said—I beg to propose—

That the Hon. Sir Francis Grenville Clarke do take the chair of the Council as President.

The Hon. W. H. EDGAR (*East Yarra Province*).—I have pleasure in seconding the nomination of Sir Frank Clarke.

Sir FRANK CLARKE (*Monash Province*).—I am deeply sensible of the honour proposed to be conferred upon me, and I submit myself to the will of the House.

As there was no other nomination, Sir Frank Clarke was conducted to the chair by his proposer and his seconder.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Frank Clarke).—I have to express to honorable members my grateful thanks for the very high honour they have done me.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—As Leader of the Government in this House, I desire, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your reelection to your high office. As members of the Legislative Council, we have sat under you for nearly fourteen years, and we are fully appreciative of the manner in which you have always carried out the

duties of President. You have filled that office with dignity and honour, and you have done justice to every member of the House.

I should also like to inform honorable members that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor will be pleased to receive the President in the southern library at 2.15 o'clock this afternoon. I ask members to meet in the main library a few minutes before that time in order to accompany the President.

The Hon. W. H. EDGAR (*East Yarra Province*).—I should like to add my congratulations, Mr. President, on your re-election. I prognosticate that this session will be as friendly and harmonious as past sessions have been. We shall give you no trouble and shall bow to your rulings. I am sure that at the close of the session it will be agreed that memorable legislation has been considered with a view to assisting in bringing about the prosperity of the whole State.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Frank Clarke).—Sir John Harris and Mr. Edgar, I thank you very much for the kindly expressions of your confidence. I shall do my best to show entire impartiality in the chair and to assist the House to the best of my ability.

(*At 12.30 p.m. the sitting was suspended until 2.31 p.m.*)

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The Usher announced the approach of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor.

His Excellency entered the Chamber attended by his suite.

The Legislative Assembly, with their Speaker, attended in response to His Excellency's summons.

His Excellency addressed the following speech to both Houses of Parliament:—

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

I have summoned you to meet for the consideration of important public business.

The Coronation of Their Majesties King George the Sixth and Queen Elizabeth was recently celebrated throughout the Empire with demonstrations of loyalty and affection. The State of Victoria was represented at the Coronation ceremonies by the Premier, the Honorable A. A. Dunstan.

It is regretted that since Parliament last met the death of the Honorable Herbert Keek, an esteemed member of the Legislative Council, has occurred.

An explosion at the State Coal Mine, Wonthaggi, on 15th February, 1937, which resulted in the loss of thirteen lives, caused deep concern throughout the State, and the practical sympathy of the people of Victoria was evidenced by substantial contributions to funds for the relief of the bereaved families.

A Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into and report upon questions relating to the cause of the disaster. When the report of that Commission is received any action considered necessary will be taken.

During the year 1936-37 there has been an improvement in the finances of the State. This is most gratifying, especially in view of the fact that taxation was reduced and other benefits were granted, including the complete restoration of the salaries of Crown employees.

Seasonal conditions were favorable in the greater part of the State last year.

Primary industries generally have shown an improvement which has been reflected in commerce and finance during the last twelve months. Many secondary industries have made considerable progress, and as the result of action by the Government further development is assured.

Under an agreement, for which legislative approval will be sought, land has been made available at Fisherman's Bend,

Port Melbourne, for the establishment of the first factory in Australia for the complete manufacture of aircraft.

As the result of legislation passed last session the wood pulp industry is being established on a large scale in Gippsland.

During the twelve months ended June, 1937, there has been a further decrease in the number of registered unemployed persons in the State. My Ministers have decided to introduce in certain metropolitan and country centres a system to facilitate the employment by private enterprise of a greater number of unemployed persons.

Two reports have been received from the Committee appointed to investigate and report upon the problem of unemployment among youths. The reports are receiving the consideration of my Ministers. Subsequent to the appointment of the Committee, the Commonwealth Government made a grant of £55,000 to the State for the purpose of assisting in the solution of the problem.

To enable a searching investigation to be made into the matter of housing, the Government last year appointed a Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board. That Board is continuing its inquiries.

The Commonwealth Government has agreed to renew the Federal Aid Roads Agreement for ten years, but on a basis slightly more favorable to the States.

My Ministers have completed a close investigation of various designs for modern mental hospitals which will shortly be erected to replace the existing institution at Kew. In the meantime increased accommodation for mental patients is being provided at outer-metropolitan and country centres.

As the result of financial assistance provided by the Government, extensive boring operations in search of oil are being carried out in East Gippsland.

Forestry work has continued to be an important factor in the relief of unemployment. The Government is encouraging the greater use of native timbers for commercial purposes. Special attention has been given to the regeneration and development of our valuable hardwood forests.

Owing to the increased demand for electricity, major extensions of the generating system controlled by the State Electricity Commission will soon be necessary. Having this in view, the Government approved the engagement of experts from Sweden to investigate and report upon a hydro-electric system proposed to be established on the Kiewa River. Their report has been received and is being considered by the Government.

During the year the construction of the Hume Reservoir was completed, and work on the Yarrawonga Weir is well advanced.

Last financial year large sums were made available for the drainage of irrigated lands and the improvement of water supply systems in country districts.

In order to minimize flooding, the Government has granted additional large amounts for the snagging and the general improvement of the more important streams of the State.

Considerable progress is being made with the sewerage of a number of country towns.

The Royal Commission on Water Supply has submitted its final report. My Ministers are now determining what legislative action is to be taken.

Boards to control the marketing of maize and eggs have been appointed under the provisions of the Marketing of Primary Products Act.

The Government has made the sum of £1,000 available towards a fund, to which contributions will also be made by the Commonwealth and certain States, to finance a publicity campaign designed to increase the Australian consumption of apples.

The committee appointed under the Land (Crown Leases Adjustment) Act is considering applications from settlers concerned, and it is expected that all adjustments will be completed before the end of this financial year.

Satisfactory progress is being made towards the revaluation of holdings and the final adjustment of settlers' accounts in accordance with the Closer Settlement Act 1932.

Special attention is being given to the destruction of vermin and noxious weeds on Crown lands.

Under the Factories and Shops Act 1936, a Board has been appointed to determine the wages of persons employed in 33 trades for which there was previously no Wages Board.

As the result of action by the Government, the Country Roads Board is constructing at Punt-road an additional bridge over the River Yarra at an estimated cost of £80,000, which will be provided jointly by the Melbourne City Council and the Board.

With the object of preventing further foreshore erosion, £72,000 has been provided for extensive works which are now in progress.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY :

The Supplementary Estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1936-37, and a Bill to make preliminary provision for the services of the present financial year, will be submitted to you.

Estimates of revenue and expenditure for this year will be placed before you as early as possible.

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL :

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY :

During his visit to Europe, the Honorable the Premier inquired into the use of coal for the production of power fuel. In view of the fact that there are in this State huge deposits of brown coal which are eminently suitable for the production of power fuel, my Advisers regard this matter as being of the utmost importance to Australia.

My Ministers have decided to appoint a State Erosion Committee to investigate and report upon questions connected with the serious problem of the erosion of surface soil in various parts of the State.

Steps are being taken to extend the scientific activities of the Department of Agriculture.

My Advisers propose to introduce, shortly after Parliament has met, a Constitution (Reform) Bill.

The comprehensive Companies Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to companies which was introduced last year will again be placed before you, but with alterations designed to give effect to certain recommendations of the committee which examined the Bill last session.

An important measure to re-constitute and extend the powers and duties of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works will be introduced.

The Government has given close consideration to the future policy with regard to closer settlement, and legislation dealing with this important subject will be submitted during the session.

A Bill to amend the Water Act will be introduced.

A comprehensive measure to consolidate, amend, and modernize the law relating to gold buyers will be put before you.

Amending legislation will be introduced to provide further safeguards for the public against imposition in regard to false descriptions of goods offered for sale.

In view of recent disclosures regarding money and securities held in trust, my Ministers are determined that appropriate action must be taken for the protection of the investing public.

Among other measures to be considered during the session will be Bills relating to—

- Workers' Compensation;
- Sickness, Medical and Funeral Benefit Associations;
- Mines;
- Third Party Insurance in relation to Motor Cars;
- Air Navigation;
- Cemeteries;
- Registration of Births and Deaths;
- Maintenance of Families of Testators;
- Public Service (Transfer of Officers);
- Warehousemen's Liens;
- Fair Rents;
- Sewerage;
- Stock Medicines;
- Stamps.

I now leave you to your deliberations in the earnest hope that, with the blessing of Divine Providence, your work may advance the welfare of the State.

Copies of the Speech were handed by the Lieutenant-Governor's Private Secretary to the President and the Speaker.

His Excellency and suite withdrew, and members of the Legislative Assembly retired from the Chamber.

(At 2.50 p.m. the sitting was suspended until 5.2 p.m.)

PRESENTATION OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Frank Clarke).

—I have to report that, accompanied by honorable members, I presented myself to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, who was pleased to approve of the choice made by the Council, and addressed me in the following terms:—

Mr. President,

I have much pleasure in congratulating you on your election for the fourth time to the high and important office of President of the Legislative Council. I feel sure that honorable members have acted wisely in choosing you as their President, and that you will continue to uphold the dignity of your office with the same skill and tact you have shown in the past.

F. W. MANN,
Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria.

COMMISSION TO SWEAR MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Frank Clarke) announced that he had received from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor a commission authorizing him to administer the oath of allegiance to such members as had not already taken and subscribed to the same.

ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE VI.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction) presented the following message from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Governor informs the Legislative Council that the following telegraphic despatch has been received from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, viz.:—

“I have laid before the King your telegram containing a message of congratulation and loyalty from the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Victoria on the occasion of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne.

“The King has commanded that you will convey to the Parliament of Victoria through the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly the deep appreciation with which he has received this message.”

Government Offices,
Melbourne, 24th December, 1936.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CELEBRATIONS) BILL.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—In order to preserve the privileges of this House, I move for leave to bring in a Bill to authorize and validate certain expenditure by councils of municipalities.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in, and read a first time.

ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE.

The **PRESIDENT** (Sir Frank Clarke) laid on the table his warrant appointing the Honorables Sir Alan Currie, C. H. A. Eager, G. L. Goudie, Sir John Harris, J. P. Jones, G. S. McArthur, and D. L. McNamara as the Committee of Elections and Qualifications.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

The **PRESIDENT** (Sir Frank Clarke) laid on the table his warrant nominating the Honorables W. Angliss, J. H. Disney, R. Kilpatrick, and M. Saltau as Temporary Chairmen of Committees.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The **Hon. W. H. EDGAR** (*East Yarra Province*).—(By leave.)—I move—

That leave of absence be granted to the Hon. J. P. Jones for the remainder of the session on account of urgent private business.

The motion was agreed to.

The **Hon. D. L. McNAMARA** (*Melbourne Province*).—(By leave.)—I move—

That leave of absence be granted to Sir George Wales for the remainder of the session on account of urgent private business.

The motion was agreed to.

The **Hon. W. TYNER** (*South-Eastern Province*).—(By leave.)—I move—

That leave of absence be granted to the Hon. C. P. Gartside for the remainder of the session on account of urgent private business.

The motion was agreed to.

The **Hon. G. L. CHANDLER** (*Southern Province*).—(By leave.)—I move—

That leave of absence be granted to the Hon. W. Angliss for the remainder of the session on account of urgent private business.

The motion was agreed to.

CEMETERIES BILL.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to cemeteries.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in, and read a first time.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS DEATHS AND MARRIAGES BILL.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to the registration of births and deaths.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in, and read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SEPTIC TANKS) BILL.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the installation of septic tank systems by municipal councils.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in, and read a first time.

MAINTENANCE BILL.

The **Hon. G. L. GOUDIE** (Minister of Public Works), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend section 75 of the Maintenance Act 1928.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in, and read a first time.

DEATH OF THE HON. HERBERT KECK.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—(By leave.)—I move—

That this House place on record its deep regret at the death of the Hon. Herbert Keck, one of the members for the Bendigo Province, and its appreciation of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria.

The late Mr. Keck was well known to many members of the House, and his genial personality and contributions to the debates will be long remembered by honorable members. He was a friendly man and a good companion, and we deplore very much the loss of our old friend. Mr. Keck was born at Quarry Hill,

Bendigo, in 1860. In early life he was a monumental stonemason, and many shaped stones on important buildings in Melbourne are examples of his craft. He acquired land at Kennington and became a keen horticulturist and orchardist. He developed the growing of citrus fruits to a fine art, and his nurseries were among the most fertile in the State. Mr. Keck was an energetic champion of irrigation, and consistently advocated the erection of more reservoirs. He was amongst the pioneers of the tobacco-growing industry in Victoria, and at one time he had 40 acres under tobacco cultivation at Elmore, where he produced an ideal leaf equal to the best American leaf. He made many gifts of trees to local councils and progress associations, for public purposes.

He was elected a member of the Legislative Council for the Bendigo Province on the 19th of September, 1921, and on the two occasions on which he was re-elected he was returned unopposed. In the municipal sphere he had been a councillor of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye since 1898, and he had to contest an election on only one occasion during the period of his membership of the council. He was president of the shire on four occasions and held that office at the time of his death. Mr. Keck had many other activities. He was a life governor of the Bendigo Agricultural Society. He gave much practical support to the boy scout and girl guide movements, frequently making his property available for camps conducted by those organizations. He was a director of Hanro (Aust.) Knitting Mills Proprietary Limited, the Bendigo Sewing Machine Company, and one of the founders and early directors of the Bendigo Fruit-growers Co-operative Society. Mr. Keck was a director of the South Gully Gold Mining Company, and had interests in other mining ventures at Chewton. He was for some time president of the Board of Management of the Bendigo Y.M.C.A. A keen churchman, he was a vestryman of St. Paul's, Bendigo. This is a record of a life of varied interests, good citizenship, and notable activity in the development of this State. Expressing my personal view, I deplore very much the loss of our old friend.

Sir John Harris.

Lieut.-Col. LANSELL (*Bendigo Province*).—It is my very sad duty to support the remarks of the Leader of the House. The late Mr. Keck and I were colleagues in the representation of the Bendigo Province from the time I entered the House nine years ago, and, travelling with him between Bendigo and Melbourne year after year, I became conversant with his work and aspirations. He was an Imperialist in the true sense of the word. He loved his country, and I think honorable members who knew him will agree that when he had to give a decision on a public matter he never sat on the fence. He always cast his vote in the best interests of his country and his province. He was a great agriculturist, and he was always prepared to give the benefit of his experience and advice to those who sought it. His record of attendance in this House stands very high, if it is not a record. I know that many times when he should have been attending to his private business he came to Melbourne to attend the sittings of the House because he considered that it was his duty to do so. He set a fine example in the examination of Bills, and his assiduity encouraged me in keeping up to the mark in my parliamentary duties. Mr. Keck was highly respected in the Bendigo district.

The Hon. W. H. EDGAR (*East Yarra Province*).—The late Mr. Keck could be described as a typical Australian, and he possessed the best characteristics of the British race. He had the courage, perseverance, and industry which won for him the fine record outlined by the Leader of the House. Mr. Keck was a genial personality, and we shall miss him very much. In the discharge of his public duties he set an example worthy to be followed by those who will succeed him. I do not think he balked at any difficulty; he fought straight on with a confidence which enabled him to win through to success, and he has left the City of Bendigo and the State indebted to him. He was open-handed in assisting various organizations, and he did his utmost to further agriculture and horticulture. Honorable members will recall the magnificent samples of fruit which he used to bring with him to Parliament House. They were proof of his remarkable ability to make nature respond to his efforts.

Mr. Keck was a man of strong character and deep religious beliefs, and he has left a memorable record of public service. I pay my tribute to one who was a good friend, one who stood loyally by the Empire and never flinched from his duty. He has passed on to higher service. I trust that his widow, his children, and his grandchildren will be inspired by his sterling character and un sullied record of achievement.

The Hon. J. H. LIENHOP (*Bendigo Province*).—I pay my tribute to the memory of the late Mr. Keck. It was my privilege to come into close contact with him from the time I was a very young man, and it was my privilege also during the last few weeks of Mr. Keck's life to hear many glowing tributes paid to him. His service of citizenship to Bendigo was outstanding, and Bendigo and the surrounding districts sustained a great loss when Mr. Keck passed on. By his death Bendigo lost an old personality—a pioneer who had done much for the City of Bendigo and the surrounding districts. I regard it as a privilege to follow the late Mr. Keck as a representative of the Bendigo Province in this House, and I hope that I shall be able to do as much for the province as he did. His long record of public service is an inspiration to those who will follow him. For sixteen years he represented the Bendigo Province faithfully and well. I mourn the loss of a well-respected public man, a devoted father, and a great pioneer.

The PRESIDENT (*Sir Frank Clarke*).—Before putting the motion I should like to add a word or two. On behalf of honorable members I sent a wreath on the occasion of Mr. Keck's funeral, and I have received a letter from his widow expressing in very touching terms his affection for all the members, and her thanks for the way in which the House treated him. Mr. Keck was a personal friend of mine. I had very great affection for him, and was glad to think that he reciprocated it to some extent. I must say that he was unique in one way, because, however acrimonious or wearisome a discussion might become, Mr. Keck, by the rough vigour of his style, could always bring honorable members back to laughter, and so give the debate a pleasant instead of a nasty end. It

is saying a great deal of a man when we can say that he could make his fellows cheerful. I shall see that a copy of the motion is transmitted to Mr. Keck's relatives.

The motion was agreed to in silence, honorable members standing in their places.

WATER SUPPLY ROYAL COMMISSION.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction) presented the fourth and final report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the expediency of amending the Water Act 1928, and other matters.

The report was ordered to lie on the table.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—(*By leave.*)—It is with pleasure that I move—

That the Hon. William Haslam Edgar be Chairman of Committees of the Council.

I should like to testify to the ability displayed by Mr. Edgar in carrying out the duties of Chairman of Committees for many years, and to the genial way in which he has always undertaken that work. I do not recollect that at any time one adverse word has been whispered in my ear concerning any of his actions as Chairman of Committees.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. W. H. EDGAR (*East Yarra Province*).—I am sincerely thankful to the Leader of the House for his kindly remarks. It is now seventeen years since I was first elected Chairman of Committees. Over that long period I do not recall one clash with honorable members. When in a meditative mood I think about honorable members, and I recall with a considerable amount of pleasure that I have had no friction with any of them. I believe that all their endeavours have been directed to maintaining the dignity and honour of this House, and to assisting both the President and myself in the discharge of our duties. I am also deeply indebted to the House for the way in which it has treated the Deputy Chairmen of Committees, to whom it has shown every

consideration. On their behalf, and on my own behalf, I thank honorable members; and especially do I thank the Minister of Public Instruction for the confidence shown in me. I hope that I shall prove worthy of the trust reposed in me.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS: SECOND GENERAL REPORT.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—(*By leave.*)—I move—

That the Hons. H. H. Olney and M. Saltau be appointed members of the Public Works Committee.

The motion was agreed to.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction) presented the second general report of the Public Works Committee.

The report was ordered to lie on the table.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RECIPIENTS OF HONOURS.

The PRESIDENT (**Sir Frank Clarke**).—I am sure that I am acting in accord with the wishes of the House when I offer congratulations to the three members of the Council who, since the last adjournment of Parliament, have been honoured by His Majesty the King with knighthood. I refer to Sir John Harris, Sir Alan Currie, and Sir George Wales. Each in his own sphere in this community has been a leader, and this House regards them as most suitable persons to receive their honours. The Council felt that, in conferring honours upon them, His Majesty was honouring this House. I should like to express to the two honorable members concerned who are present, and to Sir George Wales, who will soon return from abroad, the opinion of this House that they were entirely fitting subjects for the honours conferred upon them; and we rejoice with them.

The Hon. W. H. EDGAR (*East Yarra Province*).—The welcome news that the King had honoured three members of this House with titles reached me when I was in Paris. I felt that the Minister of Public Instruction had done his part on the battlefields, and I wrote him a letter of congratulation from the French capital. The same depth of

sincerity accompanies my congratulations to Sir George Wales and Sir Alan Currie. I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate Lieut.-Col. Lansell, who, for his military services, also received an honour from the King.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The PRESIDENT (**Sir Frank Clarke**).—I have to report that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor attended the House to-day, and was pleased to make a Speech, of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. As the Speech is printed, I take it that honorable members do not desire that I should read it to them.

The Hon. J. M. BALFOUR (*Gippsland Province*).—I move—

That the Council agree to the following address to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in reply to His Excellency's opening Speech:—

May it Please Your Excellency:

We, the Legislative Council of Victoria in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

I consider it a great honour to have been invited by the Ministry to submit this important motion. We desire to thank the Lieutenant-Governor for having delivered the speech summarizing the policy of the Government for the ensuing session. His Excellency stands high in the estimation of the people of Victoria, not only because of his valuable work in connexion with affairs of State, but also on account of his personal qualities. Country residents would be glad to see more of His Excellency in their districts, and representatives of rural provinces would be most willing to assist in facilitating the achievement of that desire. We hope that His Excellency the Governor, Lord Huntingfield, is benefiting by his rest, and that when the time comes for him to resume his official duties he will have regained his normal state of health. We look forward with interest to the return of Her Excellency, Lady Huntingfield. The friendliness and courtesy of His Majesty's representatives have won great affection for them.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Speech referred to the coronation of King George VI. and Queen Elizabeth, which was celebrated in all parts of the British Empire with great enthusiasm. We agree with everything that has been said of the wonderful thrill caused by that event throughout the Empire. King George VI. has come to the Throne in the plenitude of his powers, and we feel confident that as a constitutional Monarch he will be above reproach. It might be interesting to recall that there have been three Coronations during the past 35 years, but prior to the crowning of King Edward VII. in 1902 there had not been a Coronation in England for 65 years. You, Mr. President, have referred to honours which His Majesty has conferred upon members of this House, and I should like to be permitted to allude particularly to the honour which was given to the Leader of the House. I like to think of Sir John Harris in his capacity of a general medical practitioner in a country district, where the family doctor is the repository of the family secrets and the guide, philosopher, and friend of the family. He must have done wonderful work in that capacity, and, to enable him to carry out all his public and professional work, he must have received great assistance from his wife. By her death, the honorable gentleman has suffered a very great loss, and I am sure that we all deeply sympathize with him and his family. Reference has already been made to our late fellow member, the Hon. Herbert Keck. He was widely known, and his death also is deeply deplored.

With regard to the Wonthaggi disaster which was mentioned in His Excellency's Speech, we extend our heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved. We are grateful for the practical sympathy that was expressed by the people of Victoria, and we recall with feelings of pride and thankfulness the heroic efforts of those who engaged in the rescue work that immediately followed the explosion at the mine.

I desire to compliment the Chief Electoral Officer, and his staff, on the efficient manner in which the recent Legislative Council elections were conducted. They were the first triennial elections at which voting was compulsory, and at no time in the history of this State has greater interest been shown in elections for this House.

In 1934 eleven of the candidates were returned unopposed, and in the six provinces that were contested the percentage of voters to enrolments was less than 30. In the recent elections eleven provinces were contested, and the percentage of voters to enrolments was more than 75. I believe that in one province it was slightly more than 80. The rolls were not in the condition in which we should have liked to see them. As a matter of fact, in many instances they were very unsatisfactory; still, we can agree that they were in a far better state than formerly, and that was the result of their being open for inspection and revision for two months in the early part of the year. During that period thousands of names were removed by objection, and hundreds of others were removed owing to death. Unfortunately, persons did not take full advantage of this opportunity to have their names enrolled, as only one-fifth of the number removed from the rolls was correspondingly added. I should like to direct the attention of honorable members to the fact that electors receiving application forms for postal voting might regard them as coming from an official source; but after they had completed the forms they might find themselves unable to vote in the provinces in which they lived. In this manner many electors were misled by candidates' agents. It would be impossible to have a 100 per cent. poll, and in the circumstances the percentage recorded on the 12th of June must be regarded as very satisfactory. I wish to congratulate the Government upon the outcome of the elections. I am sure that it must have been very gratifying to them. The results in the Gippsland, Bendigo, Northern, and Western Provinces indicated a distinct and emphatic endorsement by the people of the Government's great national policy, and their proposals for moderate reform of the Upper House.

It is pleasing to note from the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech that the financial improvement forecast by the Budget will be realized. Although the State's accounts will not be closed until the end of this month, I understand there is a possibility of the estimated deficit of £110,000 being reduced, or, better still, of the Budget being balanced. In this connexion I would remind honorable members that for the five years preceding

the present Government's administration, the revenue deficits amounted to £6,844,000; for the last three years of that period they aggregated £3,218,000. If the Budget is balanced at the end of this month the deficits for the three years of the Country party administration will probably amount to less than £267,000. Victoria has made a great recovery. There have been increased overseas prices for our primary products; there has been a return of confidence, and so far as capable administration could assist in the general recovery, it must be conceded that the Government has contributed its share.

In addition, I wish to point out that during the Government's régime there have been certain reductions in taxation. In respect of land tax the super tax of 5 per cent., which had been in force since 1922, was discontinued. As regards income tax, the exemption from special tax was raised from £100 to £175 for married taxpayers. In the case of unemployment relief tax the minimum taxable amount was raised from £52 to £105, and there was a 10 per cent. reduction in rates. Furthermore, the increased fees for secondary education were discontinued from the 31st of December, 1935, and another important concession was the 10 per cent. reduction in the domestic and stock rate in rural waterworks districts in the Wimmera and Mallee areas. There was also a sum of £357,000 provided for the erection and maintenance of public buildings, and this amount was about £120,000 more than that made available for the year 1934-35. In connexion with the restoration of salaries and pensions, in 1935 there was a sum of £182,000 provided for partial restoration, while a sum of £345,000 was provided for complete restoration from October, 1936.

The policy of the Government in regard to Fisherman's Bend is now fully endorsed by all sections. As a result of the Government's progressive policy, we may now look forward to the establishment of a great industrial area in that district. When the Wood Pulp Agreement Bill was before the House last session it was subjected to strong criticism. We were indebted to Mr. Eager for a very complete analysis of the agreement, and Mr. Beckett, speaking from his experience as a former Minister of Forests,

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and other honorable members urged that proper safeguards should be provided for the protection of our forests and our water supply. It was also submitted generally that the interests of the people of this State should be safeguarded. Because of that, I have paid particular attention to what has been done in the area concerned, and I can inform honorable members that there has been drawn up by the Forests Commission a plan of utilization or allotment whereby the areas of forest from which pulp wood has to be obtained, for the period 1938-1941, have been defined. Every care has been taken by the Commission in connexion with the roads leading into the forests, proper firebreaks, and the burning of scrub belts. The area will be under fire patrol, and in addition it will be covered by an air patrol.

With regard to the position of Australian Paper Manufacturers Limited, I may say that the company has done all that was expected from it under the agreement. It has fulfilled all the obligations entered into with the Minister of Forests and the Forests Commission. The company has deposited with the Treasury the sum of £5,000, and is rapidly completing negotiations with a view to depositing a further sum of £25,000, as specified in the agreement. In April this year the company issued a prospectus relating to 1,000,000 6 per cent. cumulative preference shares of £1 each, and 600,000 of those shares were taken by the company's own shareholders, associated companies, and the officers and members of their staffs. Three hundred thousand were underwritten by the brokers concerned, and 100,000 were issued to the public. So great was the confidence of the public in the company that in a very short period of time the list had to be closed, owing to over application. I mention this to show the thoroughness with which the company is carrying out its part of the agreement, and the confidence which the company itself, the associated companies, and their staffs have in the project which is to be launched in Gippsland. In the prospectus, copies of which I understand are available, it is shown that the money to be raised would be in connexion with the new operations of the company in Gippsland, and that approximately £600,000

would be for a pulp mill. In a pamphlet, issued by the authority of the company when the Bill was before the House, the statement was made that the expenditure on the pulp mill would be between £400,000 and £500,000. I am now informed that the actual cost is £575,000. I mention this as an indication that no extravagant talk was indulged in at that time by the company. The following is an extract from the prospectus to which I have just referred:—

Recently the Board of Directors authorized the designing, ordering, and erection of a new modern paper machine, with an ultimate capacity of 20,000 tons of pulp annually.

This machine is to cost £400,000, and the company is now considering whether it should be established in Melbourne or Gippsland. We hope that it will be erected in Gippsland. It will mean the development of the original proposal for a pulp mill into a paper manufacturing mill. This will be of great interest to the people of Victoria, and particularly to those resident in Gippsland. Already the company has advertised for tenders for the timber necessary, and is distributing a large amount of work among the hauliers and people living in the district. The company has been in close co-operation with the different Government departments, and also with the shires of Morwell and Traralgon. Already roads have been cut through its property, and a commencement is being made with the building of 4½ miles of railway. The company has acquired land near Morwell and Traralgon in order to give its permanent employees sites for residences, and it will assist them to obtain beautiful homes under the *Crédit Foncier* system or some other scheme. Sir Herbert Gepp, the managing director, in conversation with me, expressed his great appreciation of the courtesy he had received from the Minister of Forests, the Chairman of the Forests Commission, and all the Government Departments with which he had any business.

It is gratifying to know there has been a decrease in unemployment. Now that we have reached the stage at which there is practically no unemployment arising out of trade depression, the Ministry will be in a position to review this very important question in all its bearings. One

of the most difficult problems that parents are facing at the present time is that of obtaining suitable employment for their children when they leave school. Difficult as this is in the towns, it is far more difficult in country districts, away from the great avenues of employment. During the depression, the opportunities for youth were very restricted. In November last, the Government appointed an honorary committee to take a census of the youth of the State, and I understand that 6,700 applications have been received by that committee from youths who are either out of employment or following dead-end occupations. All who are interested in youth welfare will feel that there is a duty on the part of the community to these young men who, through no fault of their own, have been unable to learn trades, and anything that can be done to give them opportunities to find employment of a suitable character cannot be done too well.

The present method of distributing the petrol tax is very unfair to Victoria. In the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech reference is made to the fact that the Federal Aid Roads Agreement will be extended for a number of years, with more advantage to the States, but we have had it pointed out to us that 31 per cent. of this tax is collected in this State, and only 18 per cent. is returned to it. During the last few years, Victoria has contributed nearly £1,500,000 towards the building of roads in other States. My own view is that there should be a reduction of the petrol tax. Failing that, there should be a more equitable distribution of the money so raised, and the consumption basis should be taken into account.

The people of Gippsland appreciate the action of the Government in contributing £5,000 to be used, together with a like amount from the Commonwealth, on oil research in that province. We believe that its geological formation is such as to warrant a thorough search for oil. The Commonwealth Oil Advisory Committee which visited Gippsland some few months ago said that the geological conditions existing there were characteristic of some of those areas where the greatest accumulations of oil had been found. Leading geologists in the United States of

America believe that there is a high probability of the existence of major oil structures in Gippsland, and the residents of that part of Victoria feel that the field should be thoroughly tested. If this cannot be done by private enterprise, then the Commonwealth and State Governments should undertake it.

Erosion is one of the important matters now engaging the attention of the people of Victoria. Until quite recently the rivers of this State had been neglected. There was an apparent opinion that they should be left in their natural condition, and required no attention. It is now realized that man's occupancy of the land has upset, in many ways, the balance of nature. Vegetation has been removed from the banks of streams, and in some cases trees have been felled in them. There has been an increase in bank erosion; floods have increased in volume owing to the development of the high country, and, in the lower regions there has been development of siltation of streams in some cases to a very serious extent. Following on the disastrous floods of 1934, the Government instituted a programme of river snagging, and in the last 2½ years £46,500 has been made available by the Employment Council for the removal of snags, willows, and other obstacles from streams. Altogether more than 23 streams and rivers throughout Victoria have been dealt with, and I gather that approximately a length of 150 miles has been cleared. Shire councils have supervised this work, and in many instances land owners have assisted. This undertaking is excellent from the point of view of labour, since 85 per cent. of the cost is spent in wages. During the last twelve months the Public Works Committee has given much consideration to the Latrobe and Snowy rivers. It has recommended to Cabinet that £46,000 should be spent over a period of four years in clearing the Latrobe river, and that £23,000 should be spent in connexion with river work in the Snowy river area. This will be productive of much good. The magnitude of the problem of erosion is not generally appreciated. We have wind erosion and water erosion. Some time ago a committee was appointed to go into the question of wind erosion in the Mallee areas. That committee brought

forward a report, but I understand that hardly anything has been done with it. There are four varieties of water erosion. In the first place we have shore erosion, which is a wearing down of the whole surface of the land. Then we have gully-ing, river erosion, and land slips. The United States of America, and other countries, have had to face this great problem, and it is time that it was attacked by this State. Reference is made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech to the appointment of a State Erosion Committee. I suggest that it should be composed of representatives of the Lands Department, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Mines Department, the Forests Commission, and the Department of Agriculture. This committee should be given power to initiate, suggest, and arrange for experiments to be carried out to determine the best methods for the prevention and control of erosion. It also should have authority to give free publicity to the results of its investigations so that land holders may endeavour to help themselves. That, in my opinion, is one of the first steps that should be taken in connexion with this problem.

I congratulate the Government on the success that has attended the administration of the farmers debts adjustment legislation. During the eighteen months of the operations of the Farmers Debts Adjustment Board it has gained the confidence and respect of both the farming and the business community. Considering the many applications that have been made, and the difficulties connected with them, it would appear that the Board has made very good progress. I am informed that over 1,300 meetings of creditors have been held, and that the Board has confirmed 460 plans of debt adjustment, involving 9,200 creditors. Negotiations are in force with thousands of creditors in other cases. It is regrettable, after this auspicious beginning, that we should find the work of the Board held up by the restriction of Commonwealth funds. It was understood that the £3,000,000 to be provided by the Commonwealth would be made available over a period of three years, but it is now found that funds are to be limited to a certain amount each year.

Believing that the scheme would move speedily with the aid of ready money, no provision was made in the Act, such as was made in the legislation of other States, for direct control over farmers' incomes by the adjusting authority, or for the appointment of trustees or receivers. It was realized that a quickly moving scheme would be more appreciated by both the farming and the business community. I am glad to see that the Government will take all possible action to save this legislation from developing into a glorified moratorium.

Reference has been made to Boards, especially those under the marketing Acts. I feel that the Maize Board has a very much easier work to do than the Egg Board. Fortunately, there are no export troubles in connexion with maize, for Australia consumes all that is produced here. The chairman and members of the Maize Board have a thorough knowledge of the industry, and they should be able to improve it by orderly marketing. I feel that they have the capacity to make the Board a great asset to the industry.

It is not generally recognized that the export of eggs stands next in importance to the export of butter. The people concerned have a very difficult job ahead of them. When it is known that they will be called upon to handle something like 24,000,000 dozen eggs per annum, including a big export, it can be seen that their difficulties will be great; but they are tackling their job in a very workman-like way, and I feel that they will solve their problems.

Dairy farmers and others who cannot afford to employ the services of a veterinary surgeon will be greatly benefited by the appointment by the Government of veterinary officers in country districts. Unfortunately, owing to their inability to get professional advice, many small dairy farmers have had their herds seriously depleted, and in some cases wiped out. They and many others will greatly appreciate what has been done for them by the appointment of veterinary officers.

There is one phase of the dairying industry to which I should like to direct attention. Honorable members know that in 1928 a Royal Commission fixed

the price of 1s. 10d. per lb. as a reasonable price for butter-fat. During the last five years, the respective prices have been 11d., 9d., 11d., 1s., and 1s. 0½d. The dairy farmer has had a very difficult time by comparison with other sections of the community. But what I am concerned about now arises out of a statement that was submitted to a meeting of butter factory employees held in Melbourne last month. It was a statement prepared by one of the leaders of the industry from a questionnaire he had issued. I do not know how many questions were sent out, but 24 replies were received. The object of the questionnaire was to ascertain the individual earnings of dairy farmers for the twelve months ended on the 30th of June, 1936. For an expenditure of £606 on one farm there was a revenue of £1,001, giving a net profit of £395. Other farms showed an expenditure of £302 and a revenue of £327; an expenditure of £742 and a revenue of £828; an expenditure of £472 and a revenue of £760; an expenditure of £503 and a revenue of £500. I could quote additional individual instances, but these are sufficient for my purpose. From those discrepancies in the costs of production it would appear that many of our dairy farmers may be working on very wrong lines. It should be possible for the Department of Agriculture to select dairy farmers in certain districts and ascertain from them their costs and methods of production. After that, the Department could advise the farmers as to the best methods for certain districts. If the figures I have quoted have any merit in them, they show that many farmers must be working on altogether wrong lines.

The Government's intention to assist in financing a proposed scheme to increase the Australian consumption of apples will be well received by apple growers. In Victoria we can grow all kinds of fruits except tropical fruits, and the fruit industry is a very important one.

The erection of a bridge over the River Yarra at Punt-road has been a subject of discussion for years, and the Government's action in that matter will be highly commended.

Before concluding, I desire to remind honorable members that His Excellency intimated that legislation will be introduced for the reform of the Legislative Council. The House will agree that the outstanding feature of the recent election was the prominence given to this proposal, which was the most important proposal of its kind that had been made for 30 years. It was said to be even more important than the reform proposals of 1903. It is a considerable time since so much space was given in the columns of the press to one political question. From practically every political platform, and in every wireless broadcast by election candidates, the reform of the Legislative Council was the most important subject dealt with. Wherever the elections were discussed the question of Upper House reform was uppermost, and it can be said that this House to-day is better informed on the subject than it has been at any other time in the history of Victoria. It is understood that the proposed Bill will be somewhat similar to that submitted last session. In those circumstances the Government cannot be charged with indecent haste, nor will it be proper to say that the proposals are an unlawful interference with the Constitution. The main object of the legislation will be to provide a suitable method for the settlement of disputes between the two Houses. It is admitted that the existing provision is inadequate and too cumbersome for any Government to trouble about. I feel confident that now the question has been placed before the public by the press and public speakers, honorable members will approach it with minds free from all political prejudice of a party character, and will assist the Government in evolving a solution of the problem in harmony with the proposals that have been previously submitted to the Council. May I be permitted to remind honorable members that since the passing in England of the Parliament Act of 1911, which provided for the suspensive veto in place of the absolute veto, the power of the House of Lords has grown continuously, and that it stands higher in the minds of the people to-day than ever. The people respect the peers' ability and their effective criticism.

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In conclusion, I thank you, Mr. President, and honorable members, for the very patient hearing that has been accorded to me.

(At 6.28 p.m. the sitting was suspended until 7.53 p.m.)

The Hon. J. H. LIENHOP (*Bendigo Province*).—I rise with very great pleasure to second the motion so ably moved by Mr. Balfour, and, in doing so, I desire to acknowledge the compliment paid me by the Government in granting me this privilege. At the outset, I would appeal to honorable members for a little understanding of my position, in view of the circumstances in which I now find myself. This is the first occasion upon which I have spoken in this House upon matters concerning the welfare of the State, and I ask honorable members for their forgiveness if I should deviate from the path upon which I should tread.

I appreciate the opportunity of referring to the record of achievement of a country Administration. I was indeed gratified at the very able manner in which His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor delivered his important speech. I consider it most satisfactory that the present Government, the first purely country Administration to take office in this State, should, after two years, be able to place before Parliament such a remarkable record of achievement as was contained in His Excellency's speech.

I desire to express my regret at the absence of His Excellency the Governor, Lord Huntingfield, and Lady Huntingfield. I am sure I voice the feeling of the citizens of Victoria when I say we hope Lord and Lady Huntingfield will soon be restored to their normal health, so that they may resume the duties and responsibilities which they have carried out so admirably in the past. Through their desire to obtain an intimate knowledge of the people of all sections of the State, these two outstanding personalities have, in my opinion, endeared themselves to all Victorians, and have thereby assisted in cementing that good feeling and that close relationship which we hope will continue to exist throughout the Empire. I earnestly hope that Lord and Lady Huntingfield will soon return to carry on their work in this State.

I would express the keen appreciation of the citizens of Victoria and particularly those resident in my province of the fact that the Premier represented the State at the recent Coronation ceremonies. It was indeed a great tribute to the people of this country that they were represented on that occasion by a man of such outstanding ability and talent. I believe his visit to the other side of the world will result in many benefits to the State as a whole. I am convinced that it will have a tendency further to cement that Empire sentiment and relationship which, in these troubled days, I feel are more essential than perhaps at any other time in the history of this country.

I have long held the opinion that, so far as overseas marketing and the publicity given to our products are concerned, we lag very much behind other countries, but I believe that, as a result of the personal contacts made by the Premier, he will now be fully seised of the fact that, if we desire to place the primary products of this country in the forefront of the markets of the world, it will be necessary completely to reorganize the conditions under which our products are marketed and the methods of publicity adopted. During my visit overseas some years ago, I realized very definitely that, so far as our produce was concerned, this State was practically an unknown quantity. I hope that, as a result of his experience and his contact with the problems which confront the primary producers in the marketing of their products, the Premier will take the necessary steps to effect an improvement in overseas marketing conditions.

Looking round this Chamber, I am convinced that many honorable members would be glad of the opportunity to render some service to the State, and I respectfully suggest to the Government that, as there are many citizens who are prepared to give their services and time almost in an honorary capacity for the benefit of the State, it should afford them an opportunity of representing the State in other parts of the world where they may further the interests of our local industries. If the Government feels that the expense associated with the appointment of paid representatives of the State in

other parts of the world would be too great, it should search the State for suitable men and, upon finding them, make it possible for their services to be recognized in an adequate manner. I am sure that there are in this State men who would be prepared to place at the disposal of the country in an honorary capacity their experience and knowledge, provided that such service was suitably recognized by the Government. In all parts of the world to-day we find trade representatives of other countries carrying on operations where, I regret to say, we have done absolutely nothing. I earnestly hope that the Premier will remember all he has seen while abroad, and will avail himself of the first opportunity to impress on his colleagues the need for more trade representation overseas than the Agent-General is able to give. In fairness to Brigadier Bouchier, the present occupant of that office, let me say that a braver or more capable man to represent Victoria could not have been selected. But, after all, he is only one man. He is working against vast trade organizations, is confronted with many difficult problems, and has to face incessant competition from day to day. In my opinion, we are inadequately represented so far as marketing overseas is concerned.

I regret that in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech no reference is made to the tourist traffic of this State. I am much surprised at this. The Premier, who has just returned from a tour, during which he has travelled some 36,000 miles, will, I am sure, realize what a vast contribution the tourist traffic makes to the consolidated revenues of the several countries through which he has travelled. In Victoria we have magnificent health and holiday resorts which I have heard the Premier himself say are unequalled elsewhere, and I think the Government should realize that the assistance given to the development of such places should no longer be regarded as an act of charity or benevolence. It should be an obligation of the Government to preserve and develop our health and holiday resorts, and to convert the tourist traffic into a definite industry. It is estimated that last year Victoria benefited to the extent of £1,600,000 as the result of this traffic. I hope the

Government in the near future will make provision to augment it. Tourist traffic can be made a very considerable source of revenue. If those who visit this State leave with a desire to come again because of the hospitality extended to them, much benefit will accrue. Visitors to many popular resorts beyond Australia never leave without a desire to return, because of the assistance given them and more or less promoted and fostered by the Governments of the countries concerned. We should make an effort in the same direction. If by wise foresight and financial assistance many more people can be induced to visit Victoria, this State will be the better and the happier for it.

I join with the Government and the citizens of Victoria in extending my sincere sympathy to the unfortunate sufferers by the recent coal mining disaster at Wonthaggi. The generous response which was made by the people of the State to the appeal for help must be most gratifying. The Government acted wisely in appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the origin of that frightful disaster, and I hope that it will persevere with whatever measures are necessary to prevent a repetition of it. It is the duty of the Government to take whatever precautionary steps are possible. The Ministry itself made a generous contribution towards the relief of the families who suffered loss; but there rests upon it the still further responsibility of providing that the sufferers alone shall constitute the trust to administer the relief fund. The money raised was definitely contributed to benefit those who were unfortunate enough to lose their breadwinners in that disaster, and the responsibility for creating the administrative trust should rest with them. I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am not unmindful of the generosity of the people, the Premier, or the Government in this connexion; but it seems to me that the trust requires the personal attention of those whom it was designed to benefit.

One of the most satisfactory features in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech is the statement that after some eight or ten years there is a possibility of a balanced Budget. I have a clear recollection of the gloomy outlook—of the pessimism—of the great city

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interests when this Government took office some two years ago. It was declared then that the Government would not last for more than two or three days. At that time the prevailing conditions were, perhaps, almost appalling, and there was much pessimism on the part of our city friends as to what the Country party Administration was likely to accomplish. I need hardly point to the remarkable achievements of the Ministry. East, west, north, and south we find general satisfaction with its administrative ability. When it came into office there were something like 32,078 persons on the unemployed list. The primary producers, the backbone of this country—the men who enabled Australia to honour its obligations overseas, the men who came to the assistance of the country in its hour of dire need—were down and out. The salaries of public servants were so low as scarcely to permit of their living under reasonably decent conditions. Money was difficult to borrow at any rate, and industry consequently was more or less stagnant throughout the State. These were the conditions under which the Country party Administration undertook the guidance of the State and the conduct of its services. And what has it accomplished? To-day we have heard it forecast, in the Lieutenant Governor's Speech, that, for the first time since 1928, there is a possibility of balancing the Budget. Not only is that so, but, as a result of the work and legislation of the Country party Administration, the number of unemployed during the last two years has fallen from 32,078 to 14,422. Then, again, the restoration of public servants' salaries has been effected, and higher prices for primary products are ruling all over the land. Notwithstanding that the Budget is likely to be balanced, the unemployment relief tax has been reduced to the extent of 10 per cent., and I hope the Government will be able to provide for a further reduction of taxation during the session. The 5 per cent. land tax has been completely eliminated, and money can be obtained by the primary producer to-day at rates no higher than those ruling in 1935. When the Farmers Debts Adjustment Board came into existence, almost every newspaper in the State

declared that it would be practically impossible to borrow money—that the credit of the primary producer would be ruined, and that the creation of that Board was one of the greatest blunders that the Government could have perpetrated: But to-day primary producers can borrow money freely at rates of interest no higher than those ruling in 1935.

Let us turn to secondary industries. For the first time in the history of the State, and as a direct result of legislation enacted by a country Administration, an aircraft factory has been established in Australia, and is in active operation at Fisherman's Bend. Then, again, we find also that a wood pulp industry, to which Mr. Balfour has referred, has been established. Are these not achievements in the industrial world that are worthy of any Administration? Is it not gratifying to find that the first country Administration, not merely in Victoria, but in Australia, has within so short a period achieved so much?

I come now to a somewhat delicate subject. I congratulate the Government on its effort to reorganize and re-discipline the Police Force of Victoria. The matter is another of the many vital concerns engaging the attention of the people of this State that the Government has seen fit to attack. We have had experience of Labour, Composite, and National Ministries, but it has remained for a country Administration to set out to overhaul and re-discipline our Police Force. I congratulate the Ministry on its courageous policy—on its bold and determined effort to put the affairs of the Force in order. When reconsidering this question, however, I hope it will take into account the fact that police constables are receiving wages altogether too low, and are working under conditions that urgently need improvement. We look for the very best from the Police Force. We look to our police for the protection of life and property and for every possible assistance in times of emergency and difficulty. Despite this, the wages and conditions of police constables are quite unsatisfactory. A constable during the first five years of his service receives 12s. 1d. a day. At the end of five years he receives 14s. 2d. a day, and at the end of ten years' service 15s. 2d. a day. Can

we expect to attract to the Police Force the best of our manhood, or to secure efficiency, for so low a remuneration? Is it reasonable that these men should be asked to discharge their many duties for such rates of pay? Many unskilled labourers are receiving more than our police constables. I hope that the Government, in its work of reorganization, will see that the payment is increased, and that the conditions are made brighter and better than they are at present.

I thank the Government for its active interest in, and assistance to, the mining industry. In my own province it has established a staff of experts who are ready and willing to serve and to interest themselves in any department of that great industry. It has also spent £15,000 or £16,000 in helping those who wish to promote companies for the benefit of the mining industry and its general development. Gold mining is one of our great primary industries, and, as a result of the interest taken in it by the Government, we have experienced this year the record gold output since 1920. Surely the action of the Government is worthy of the thanks of the people. I am deeply appreciative, and so are the people of my province.

Mr. Balfour dealt so thoroughly with the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech that he left few questions for me to discuss. However, I shall refer to some matters that he did not touch on. The Dunstan Administration was the first to make an attempt to deal with the problem of miners' phthisis. Those of us who are associated with the gold-mining industry realize the unfortunate position of the men who are suffering from miners' phthisis. Although the Government introduced and succeeded in getting passed last session a Bill dealing with miners' phthisis, and attempted to make the legislation beneficial to sufferers, I regret that no provision is made in the Act for the granting of assistance to those at present suffering from the dread disease. During the régime of the Argyle Administration the Government allowance paid to sufferers from miners' phthisis was 4s. 6d. a week. I compliment the Dunstan Government for its action in increasing the allowance to 9s. 3d. per week. However, I consider that it is the responsibility of the Government to have the Act amended so that

financial assistance can be granted to all sufferers from the disease. Imagine men who played an important part in the gold-mining industry being asked to accept 9s. 3d. a week as recognition of the work they did for the State! A sufferer from miners' phthisis may be entitled to receive the Commonwealth invalidity pension of 18s. a week, but that pension, with the allowance of 9s. 3d. granted by the State Government, would give him only 27s. 3d. a week. However, it must be recognized that although Governments representing other parties have been in office, the Country party Government is the first that has ever been game to tackle the problem of dealing with miners' phthisis, from which disease 900 men in Victoria are suffering. I hope that the Act will be amended so that relief may be given to the unfortunate men who are now excluded by it from obtaining financial assistance. I trust that the Government will realize the debt the State owes to these men and provide a means of giving them some assistance in the last years of their lives.

I was pleased to read in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech that the Government proposed to give favorable consideration to the extension of the State Electricity Commission's undertaking. The people of the province who elected me desire to have a flat rate introduced and applied to country districts. I will assist the Government in implementing legislation that will give country dwellers some voice in the control of the State Electricity Commission. So far as I can gather, country dwellers were given to understand when the huge Yallourn scheme was undertaken that there would be a flat rate charge for electricity supplied to the country districts. The Government is pledged to develop inland cities and towns, and it is of paramount importance that there should be a flat rate charge for country dwellers. Not many miles from where I live people are still using candles for lighting. I hope the Government will bring down legislation giving country residents some power in the determination of the question whether residents of country towns and districts should pay a flat rate for current or the rate fixed by the State Electricity Commission under the present system.

The Hon. J. H. Lienhop.

I commend the Government for its attempt to solve the water problem, which previous Governments sidestepped. When the Dunstan Government came into office it constituted a Royal Commission to make a thorough overhaul of the water supply undertaking. I await with a great deal of keenness the Government's policy after it has considered the Commission's reports. I congratulate the Government on what it has done for water users in other directions. It was prepared to tackle the drainage problem, and already an amount of £205,000 has been expended on drainage. The Government has undertaken to expend £200,000 on a new reticulation scheme which will provide for the water users of the Bendigo Province a decent supply under decent conditions. I am convinced that the Government should embark on a bold and vigorous policy to provide adequate water supply in country districts. I believe that there is an insufficient supply for the carrying on of certain industries. In Castlemaine there is untold wealth, and there is available 25 years of payable work in sluicing and other operations. But some reasonable undertaking or guarantee must be given that an adequate water supply will be made available; then that work could be pushed on, and it would provide a great deal of employment on a profitable basis. I believe that there is ample opportunity for the development of country industries by the improvement and expansion of water storages.

Very little reference was made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech to education. I compliment the Minister of Public Instruction on the good work he has done since he took over the responsibility of administering his important Department. Legislation introduced by the present Government has made it possible for nearly 400 school teachers to obtain promotion. I congratulate the Government on tackling the promotions question, which had been sidestepped for a long time. Greater facilities than are available should be provided, however, for primary, secondary, and technical education. One thing the Government should do is to bring about the abolition of the fees charged to students who sit for the intermediate and leaving certificate examinations. I know of no other country which charges, in respect of similar

examinations, such fees as are imposed on students in Victoria. Every opportunity should be extended to young people to develop their talents. There is great opportunity for more research even in education. A Board of examiners or inspectors should be appointed to ascertain the aptitude and talents of students, and if it should be found that a young student possesses certain talents but cannot, owing to financial or other reasons, undertake a University course, it should be the obligation of the Government to see that free University education is provided for him. On the shoulders of our talented young people rests the future of the State. Surely it must be the obligation of the Government to provide every facility and open every avenue by which the talent of our youth can be developed.

I congratulate the Government on the effective manner in which it has endeavoured to deal with the unemployment problem, and I hope the Minister of Labour, as a result of his visit to New Zealand, will be able to make a material contribution to the solution of the problem. Works of a reproductive and national character should be undertaken by the Government. I believe that every man has the right to get a job on a remunerative basis. The Government has been remarkably successful in its administration, but unemployment is perhaps the most serious problem it has to face. One alarming feature is the tragic lack of opportunity for youth, and I congratulate the Government on giving a lead to the other States by its attempt to solve that phase of the whole problem. I hope the Government will realize that if we are to hold the things that are most dear to us, youth must be given full means of making its contribution to citizenship.

Mr. Balfour dealt at some length with the question of the reform of the Legislative Council. I do not desire to deal with constitutional reform at this stage. Throughout my campaign—it was a strenuous one—I told the electors that no member of my party wanted to abolish the Upper House. I question whether there are many men in the Bendigo Province who pay more in taxes than I do or have larger interests at stake, and I have no hesitation in saying that while the present Government is in office there is no danger of the Legislative Council

being abolished. All that is proposed is that this House should be restored to the position for which it was designed—that is, that it should be a House of review, and not a House of obstruction. Therefore, I say that I believe the people of my province trust this country Administration. They accepted my assurance that it was not intended to abolish this House, and 10,576 voters recorded their confidence in me on the 12th of June last. I shall now leave the question of reform to this Chamber.

Perhaps the most important of all the other subjects on which I might touch is that of decentralization. For something like 20 or 30 years the battle-cry of the country people has been decentralization. On the platform at every meeting at which it was my privilege to speak I told the electors that I should urge the country Government, which is pledged to a policy of decentralization, to give effect to various proposals calculated to bring about rural development. Even though I may deviate from the right path, I wish to say that Victorian politics has too long been dominated by city influences. Now the country people have indicated that they are not willing to exist on the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table. They have demonstrated that they expect a more equitable distribution as the outcome of legislative enactment. Enterprises and industries have become almost stagnant in the inland towns of this State. I trust that the Government will realize its responsibilities, and will not be ashamed to pursue a vigorous policy of decentralization. Many country industries are lying idle as the result of centralization. Freezing works that were built in the provinces some years ago are almost idle. It is the responsibility of the Government to make these industries active or operative, and if it cannot do that, then it should make them available to private enterprise to operate them in the interests of the State in general.

Possibly I have said too much, but if I have deviated from the path on which I should have walked, I hope honorable members will forgive me, because this is my first attempt to address the House. I trust that the Government will boldly endeavour to carry out

its policy. I congratulate Ministers on their magnificent work. The people are indebted to the Premier and his colleagues for their services. I hope that during this session the Government will give the same general satisfaction as it gave last session. I am sure that this Administration will be big enough to give all classes, whether they are rich or poor, honest and straightforward treatment. While I congratulate the Government on its accomplishments, I emphasize the fact that it has a big job before it. There is the serious general question of unemployment, and there is the specific question of youth unemployment, which is even more serious. If the policy of decentralization is pursued, it will give the country people more hope, will enable them to share in the comforts and amenities enjoyed by city folk, and will assist to rehabilitate the State as a whole.

On the motion of the Hon. W. J. BECKETT (*Melbourne East Province*), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, July 20.

CORONATION OF KING GEORGE VI. AND QUEEN ELIZABETH.

A message was received from the Legislative Assembly transmitting an Address to His Majesty the King, and also an Address to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, adopted by the Assembly, in which the concurrence of the Council was asked.

The Address to His Majesty the King was as follows:—

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in Parliament assembled, humbly offer to Your Majesty and to Her Majesty the Queen our loyal congratulations on Your Coronation.

We beg leave to convey our sincere hope that Your Majesty may be long spared to be the Sovereign of Your people, and our earnest conviction that Your Majesty will ever endeavour, under the guidance of Divine Providence, to promote the true and permanent interests of Your Majesty's subjects.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—I move—

That this House agree with the Assembly in the Address to His Majesty, and that the blank in the Address be filled up by the insertion of the words "Legislative Council and the".

In submitting this motion I should like to say that this State indicated its great loyalty to Their Majesties

the King and Queen during Coronation week. Throughout Victoria demonstrations of loyalty were made, not only by the Parliament, but also by public bodies and the children of the State. It is my wish, and I am sure it is the wish of every other member that Their Majesties may long be spared to be the magnet which draws all the Dominions of the great British Empire together as one indivisible whole. Now that the Statute of Westminster has been passed, it is merely sentiment that binds together the commonwealth of nations forming the British Empire. It is wonderful that the symbol of the majesty of the Crown of Great Britain holds together that great commonwealth of nations. The act of coronation is largely sentimental. Although we did not see the ancient ceremonial, we can imagine the hold it had on the minds of the people who witnessed it. Although we are on the confines of the Empire, the ceremony was brought right to us. I stand in awe of the sacrifices made by Their Majesties in assuming the heavy responsibilities of being the rulers of the nations forming the British Empire.

The Hon. W. H. EDGAR (*East Yarra Province*).—The tribute paid to Their Majesties the King and Queen by the Leader of the Government in this House was a beautiful and worthy one. To those of us who were privileged to witness the ceremony in Westminster Abbey, it seemed that the honorable gentleman must also have been present on that occasion, because he expressed sentiments felt by every one who was there. The Premier attended as the representative of this State, but through the influence of the British Empire Parliamentary Association, which is operating here and which every honorable member should join, Mr. Angliss, Mr. Jones, Sir George Wales, and I were privileged to have seats within Westminster Abbey. We had to be in attendance by 7.30 o'clock in the morning. Comfortable chairs were provided, and from the position we occupied we commanded a view of the whole of the wonderful and indescribable assemblage. Within the Abbey there was gathered together a very large number of representatives of the British Empire and of other nations. The costumes and jewels were things to be remembered,

and yet there was the great moving spirit of a religious ceremony. The Archbishop of Canterbury upheld the highest traditions in his recital of the ritual. Everything was done with reverence and with a wonderful regard to sentiment. I shall not forget how just after Their Majesties the King and Queen were crowned, and the peers and peeresses were placing their coronets upon their heads, there was a remarkable flash of light that illuminated the whole Abbey. I really thought that my day had come.

Wherever one went among the countless thousands thronging the streets of London one noticed a spirit of family unity that stirred the nation wonderfully. It was an event that lifted us far above the petty details of life and showed us that there is something nobler in us than we had realized. The recognition by the crowds of the King and Queen, of Queen Mary, and especially of the little Princesses, was most impressive. His Majesty has already given evidence, as the late Prime Minister of Great Britain mentioned to me, of the traits of amiability and courage and simplicity of character that distinguished his late father. I was told in England that we could rely upon His Majesty to uphold all the traditions of the British Throne in their entirety, as had his predecessors. The Queen also is playing a most important part. She has lifted our womanhood into further prominence, and has emphasized the value of family life. In fact, the predominant note everywhere was the family tie, and we seemed to be bound together in one family circle. There came to me information from the authorities in London that they had received from Australia congratulatory cables, both public and private, that were very encouraging and inspiring. I regard it as a tremendous privilege to have been present at the Coronation; the memory of the experience will be lifelong. I learned also that in some marvellous way all the Dominions had been linked together as members of the British Empire. One leading statesman said at a public meeting that whatever affected Australia affected the rest of the Empire, and that we were all bound together in one common community, and would continue as members of one great

family. Therefore, we are indeed privileged people, and have been given a wider vision of our status. One can sense the feelings in England in this regard; they are reflected also in the press. I noted that with the absorbing subject of the coronation was alternated the subject of war.

The tribute proposed to be paid by our Parliament is a worthy one, and will have an effect upon the King and the Queen. Queen Mary is also exercising a deep influence in the Old Country, and the reverence which is paid to Her Majesty is nothing short of marvellous. The people seem to worship her as she moves around. Certainly we are linked to a great and mighty Empire, and we have a glorious heritage. I was delighted to note in London the affection that was expressed towards the Australian people, and that a helping hand would be extended whenever that was required. So the coronation of King George VI. has meant not only another link in the chain which binds the component parts of the British Empire, but it has had a steady effect on the rest of the world. I believe that it has been a factor that will tend to disperse the threatening clouds, and bring about a period of peace and unity. I am very pleased that the Government has decided to send a message to the King and Queen, and I am sure that it will be appreciated, not only by their Majesties, but by the British people as a whole. It will be an indication that we, too, value the privileges that we possess as members of the British family.

The motion was agreed to.

The Address to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor was as follows:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in Parliament assembled, respectfully request that Your Excellency will be pleased to communicate, by telegram, to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the accompanying Address for presentation to His Majesty the King.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—I move—

That this House agree with the Assembly in the Address to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, and that the blank in the Address be filled up by the insertion of the words "Legislative Council and the".

The motion was agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE BILL (No. 1).

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly and, on the motion of Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction), was read a first time.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—(*By leave.*)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I should like to give to the House a few facts relating to this Bill. The financial year 1936-37 closed last week and, in order to provide for essential services, it is necessary that Supply should be obtained on account of the year 1937-38. Authority is therefore sought for the provision of £2,513,417, and this amount will provide for the requirements of July and August. Honorable members will appreciate that it is not possible to give details of the revenue and expenditure for last financial year, particularly as cash payments are made up to the 31st of July in each year for services rendered in the financial year closed on the 30th of June. The Supply schedule discloses many variations from expenditure for a proportionate period in the year 1936-37 as, with the exception of salaries and wages, expenditure is not incurred at an even rate throughout the year.

I shall now deal with the principal items showing increases. Division No. 33.—Education—salaries—involves an additional £18,957. Increased provision is due to the fact that salaries were subjected to percentage deductions for the first three months in 1936-37. The passing of the Teachers Act last session also involves additional expenditure. In regard to Division No. 50.—Taxation Office—showing an increase of £9,299, I would point out that approximately 65 per cent. of the expenditure in connexion with income tax is recouped by the Commonwealth Government later in the year. Meantime the State has to bear the full charge. Division No. 66, relating to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission shows an increase of £15,000. It is necessary to proceed as rapidly as possible during the winter months with the supply of water for domestic and stock purposes, and therefore additional provision is necessary in the early part of the financial year. In respect of Divi-

sion No. 73.—Public Health—there is an increase of £3,888. Payments are made quarterly in advance to the Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital at Fairfield, and to the Heatherton Sanatorium. An increase of £111,410 in Division No. 76.—Railways, working expenses, &c.—is due to the necessity of making advances as usual in the early part of the financial year, adjustment not being made until the close of the year. The vote is also drawn upon temporarily for certain expenditure which is ultimately charged to other funds.

Under some divisions considerable decreases are shown, and the more important of these I shall now explain. The first relates to Division No. 44.—Payments to Railway Department—the amount being £108,755. Under this Division the Railways Commissioners were recouped, in accordance with section 102 of Act No. 3759, for losses on non-paying lines, and reduction in freight charges, the amount included in the Estimates for 1936-37 being £567,000. Act No. 4429—Railways (Finances Adjustment) Act—which authorized the reduction on the 1st of July, 1937, of the railway loan liability by £30,000,000, also provided that these recoups from the Treasury would cease after the 30th of June, 1937. It is therefore unnecessary to provide any amount in the Treasury Estimates for 1937-38 for reimbursing the Railway Department for losses on non-paying lines, and reduction in freight charges, and accordingly no amount is included in this Bill for the purpose. Another division where there is a decrease is Division No. 55.—Lands—£103,333. In the Estimates of expenditure, provision is made under this division to meet losses on closer settlement and soldier settlement, but as these losses are not charged until the end of the financial year, Supply is not required in this Bill. There is also Division No. 68.—Maffra Beet Sugar Factory—£16,801. The explanation of this difference is that expenditure is lighter in the early part of the financial year, as the normal season is from April to June.

This Supply Bill is of the usual nature, and provision has not been made for any new items of expenditure. I

hope, therefore, that honorable members will deal expeditiously with the measure.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and committed.

Clause 1—(Issue and application of £2,513,417).

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT (*Melbourne East Province*).—During last session, after consultation with municipalities and other interested bodies, we devised a series of regulations known as the Traffic Code. These, properly carried out, will, I am sure, mitigate to a very large extent the serious position we have reached in regard to street accidents. I am somewhat concerned, however, with certain remarks made by responsible magistrates in administering the code. I commend the Chief Commissioner of Police for his attitude, not only regarding the administration of the code, but on his report relative to transport matters generally. I wish particularly to refer to that part of the code which requires vehicles of any description to keep as near as is reasonably possible to the left, or near side of the road. That, we know, is the general law, and, as I have pointed out, time after time, its non-observance has been responsible for hundreds, if not thousands, of motor accidents. Let me give the Committee one example. There have been a number of fatalities in Wellington-parade, where the Melbourne City Council most unwisely erected what I may describe as monuments in the middle of the street. These, in ordinary circumstances, would be quite safe, but they are unsafe with motorists who are not prepared to observe the law. Every accident reported while these monuments existed was due to an overtaking car trying to pass on the off side a car that was not on the near side of the road. A car may be driven at any speed along Wellington-parade if it is kept to the proper side of the road. In such circumstances an overtaking car would have 20 feet clear of any obstacle in which to pass. But, with that selfishness which is characteristic of many motorists—I have been a motorist for 30 years—we find men driving in the centre of the road, with the result that the driver of an overtaking car does not see an obstacle on his right and crashes into it. There have been three deaths as

the result of accidents in Wellington-parade due to the state of affairs as I have described it. A little while ago I read of two vehicles on the Melbourne-Geelong road, with nothing near them, meeting head on. We know what happens on country roads. I was once driving along a country road, and, on coming up to a motor truck, the driver of which insisted on keeping on the crown of the road, blew my horn in vain. When I sought to pass he came over to my side of the road and forced me into a ditch, with the result that I smashed an axle and narrowly escaped a serious accident.

The Hon. R. KILPATRICK.—What happened to him?

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—He went on his way rejoicing. Drivers of motor transport vehicles are the greatest offenders in this respect. If we are to avoid accidents the rule to which I have drawn attention must be enforced. I have before me a cutting from the *Safety News*, of July-August, 1936, in which the number of accidents in public streets in Australia is set out. In 1925, 650 citizens were killed, and 8,170 were injured. Ten years later, namely, in 1935, 1,100 were killed and 19,189 injured. Nine-tenths of such fatalities are avoidable. Something must be done, and I hope that the Chief Secretary's Department, through the Police Force, will enforce the code. Many years ago I drew attention to a regulation operating in other countries providing that cars must come to a dead stop on reaching a main road. As the result of this regulation in Berlin there is almost an entire absence of serious accidents. Here the law is more honored in the breach than in the observance. Police who are not on traffic duty will take no notice of an offender. In my opinion, whether they are on traffic or on ordinary duty, they should insist on the code being carried out. Life and limb must be protected.

Another point connected with transport is the wholesale stealing of motor cars, and the way in which Police Courts deal with such offenders. In many cases the Bench seems almost to apologize to the culprits. "Poor young fellow," a magistrate will say, "He did not have a car, and merely took this for a ride." But we read frequently of joy

riders stealing cars and knocking down almost the first person they encounter. These thieves, if they do not take a car for a joy ride, steal it to assist burglars. We shall eventually arrive at that state of mind that used to prevail in early Victorian history in regard to horse stealing. Practically every unqualified person who steals a car is taking under his control a murderous power, and what is more or less a danger to life and limb. I should like this matter to be dealt with by the Chief Secretary's Department. Here is a paragraph which appeared in the *Age* a couple of months ago—

Within a space of five hours, on Saturday night, six motor cars, of a total value of over £2,000, were reported stolen to the Russell-street police.

Most of these were taken from Collins-street. This class of crime is becoming more and more rife.

The only other matter in connexion with the Chief Secretary's Department to which I desire to refer relates to what are known as compensation race meetings. I regret that the President is absent from the Chamber at this moment, because he was the first to bring the matter before the House, in connexion with the case of a family who were almost reduced to beggary. The compensation meetings to-day are only paying a little bit more than interest, and very little of the capital obligation associated with the subject. I have a suggestion to make to the Leader of the House that may be of material help. After all, it was never realized that it would be at least twenty years before the Board concerned would be able to pay its debts. It was felt that in a comparatively short space of time those who had had their property taken from them by Act of Parliament would be compensated by means of these particular race meetings. But what has happened? Instead of the profits on the meetings going to the compensation fund, a large proportion of them are going to the Government. If the meetings were not being held, the Government would not be receiving those moneys. During the last three years the Government has taken, out of the profits from compensation meetings, approximately £16,000 in totalizer dividends, and approximately £4,000 in fractions of such dividends. In other words, the Govern-

The Hon. W. J. Beckett.

ment has taken out of those meetings £20,000 which, if paid into the fund, would have helped materially to liquidate the liability in a few years. I place these suggestions in all seriousness before the Minister, and hope that he will submit them to his colleagues. I think the Chief Secretary's Department desires to do something of this nature, and is waiting for sound suggestions to liquidate the obligation within a reasonable period of years.

The Hon. R. KILPATRICK (*Northern Province*).—I wish to bring under the notice of the Leader of the House the fact that although quite a number of Court buildings are being erected in this State, a promise made by the last two Governments that such a building would be erected in Shepparton has not yet been fulfilled. There are vacant Crown lands lying idle in the main street of Shepparton which would pay for the cost of erecting a new Court house, and I regret that the Government has not seen fit to place on the Estimates a vote for that purpose. I ask the Minister to see that this long-standing promise is carried out.

Mr. Inchbold, who has had to leave the Chamber, told me that he proposed to speak to the Minister regarding the heating system in this House. He asserts that the Chamber is cold, particularly in the winter evenings, and he has asked me to bring under notice the point that more artificial heat is required, although we have spirited debates which tend to provide heat.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—I do not think that any one has suffered more from cold in this Chamber this evening than the Ministers who have been in attendance throughout the sitting. There is a large ventilator near them, which we have had to cover with paper since the sitting started. There was a keen draught coming through it, although it should have been supplying hot air. The Minister of Public Works has assured the authorities of Parliament that if they can devise any way of making this Chamber more comfortable in the winter he is prepared to consider it.

The Hon. W. TYNER (*South-Eastern Province*).—I wish to refer to the item

of £8,223 for "Agriculture—Administrative—Salaries, Contingencies, Miscellaneous and Exceptional." I do not expect the Leader of the House to give me a definite reply to my remarks to-night. Since last session an Order in Council has been passed under the Marketing of Primary Products Act 1935 (No. 4337). The Order states—

In pursuance of the powers conferred by section 43 (b) of the Marketing of Primary Products Act 1935 (No. 4337), His Excellency the Governor of the State of Victoria, by and with the advice of the Executive Council thereof, and on the recommendation of the Chicory Marketing Board, doth hereby make the following Regulation (that is to say):—

All producers of chicory who have planted chicory during the year ending 30th of June, 1937, must register with the Secretary of the Chicory Marketing Board, 140 Queen-street, Melbourne, within twenty-one (21) days of the publication of this Regulation in the *Government Gazette*, their full names and addresses, the areas planted during the above-mentioned period, the estimated yield of chicory from such areas, and the following particulars of any contracts made for the delivery outside the State of Victoria of the chicory produced during the period above-mentioned:—

- (a) The name and address of the person or persons with whom such contracts have been made.
- (b) The quantity of chicory which is the subject of such contracts.
- (c) The date and place of delivery specified in such contracts.
- (d) The price agreed upon in such contracts.

The Hon. M. SALTU. — When were those regulations drawn up?

The Hon. W. TYNER.—On the 23rd of March, 1937.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—Have they been laid on the table of the House?

The Hon. W. TYNER. — They have been published in the *Government Gazette*, and producers of chicory have been called upon to comply with them. I take exception to (d)—"the price agreed upon in such contracts." There may be some justification for (a), (b) and (c), but I contend that there is no justification whatever for (d). It appears to me that it is outside the spirit of the Marketing of Primary Products Act. The position is set out very clearly in sub-section (3) of section 16 of the Act. I do not propose to occupy the time of the Committee by reading the whole of the

section, but I shall quote sub-section (3), which reads—

Nothing in this section and no proclamation under this section shall affect such portion of any commodity as is the subject of trade commerce or intercourse between the States or as is required by the producers thereof for the purposes of such trade commerce or intercourse or as is intended by the producers thereof to be used for such trade commerce or intercourse.

A referendum on marketing was conducted throughout Australia on the 6th of March. It is not necessary for me to inform honorable members of the result of it. The referendum was the result of the James case, which came within the ambit of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. It would be interesting to know how the Government reconciles that part of the Order in Council to which I have directed particular attention with sub-section (3) of section 16 of the Marketing of Primary Products Act, which we passed two years ago. I should like the Minister to take a note of this matter and to have inquiries made so that the House may be later informed of the facts. I felt, when the Act was passed by Parliament, that interstate contracts would be practically safe. While there may be some justification for the Chicory Marketing Board requiring to know the quantity of chicory embraced in certain contracts, the names and addresses of persons, and so on, I cannot for a moment see that there is any justification whatever for paragraph (d), which calls on growers to divulge the prices of chicory. I do not know whether similar action has been taken regarding onions, but I shall certainly have the matter looked up. The Order in Council I have read may be almost a facsimile of Orders that have been made concerning other industries. I feel definitely that Parliament never intended anything like that.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT (*Melbourne East Province*).—Under the item relating to public health I desire to bring up an important matter pertaining to the protection of the community, namely, infant welfare. To-day we are spending large sums of money, hundreds of thousands of pounds, in an endeavour to alleviate, if we cannot cure, the diseases of sick people; but we are not spending much on infant welfare. I had the honour for over three years of being Minister of Public

Health. One of the things I desired to do during that period was to spend money on the prevention of disease. I realized that to spend £5 on infant welfare might save the community an expenditure of £250 in the near future. In order to carry out that programme, I allowed a large percentage of the amount available for public health to be given to infant welfare centres. I not only established new centres, but to centres already established I gave increased subsidies for the provision of extra nurses. Unfortunately, now, we find that, through some regulation, or otherwise, the subsidies have been gradually reduced. I cannot realize that the present Minister of Public Health, who is a sympathetic man, is aware of it. I have received a letter on the subject from the Fitzroy City Council. Fitzroy is in the unenviable position of having a very high infantile mortality rate. That is so not because it is an unhealthy place for children to live in, although we realize that no child born in the slums has anything like the same opportunity as a child born in better surroundings. There are a number of people who go from other suburbs and from the country temporarily to reside in Fitzroy, in order to be near the public hospitals which deal with children's diseases. Thus a number of the children who are carried away by disease are unjustifiably debited against the good report that we should get from Fitzroy. The fatal disease is often not acquired in Fitzroy, but is brought from another place. For all that, the people in Fitzroy, as well as in Collingwood, Richmond, and other working-class suburbs, realize that it is essential for infant welfare centres to be conducted in the best possible manner. The letter I have received from the Fitzroy council explains itself. It says—

Dear Sir,—

Re Government grant for Infant Welfare Centres.

My council desires to register a very strong protest regarding the new conditions of subsidy to Infant Welfare Centres.

Municipalities were encouraged to establish these centres on the understanding that the Government would contribute £125 per annum per centre, and they have gladly assisted in the work, notwithstanding their contention that it was a Government responsibility.

The Hon. W. J. Beckett.

I take some responsibility for bringing about that state of affairs. The letter goes on—

During the financial depression the subsidy was reduced to £100 per annum, but recently a partial restoration increased the amount to £112 10s. per annum.

That is £12 10s. less than the centres received when I was Minister. The letter further states—

A new condition, however, has been attached to the subsidy, whereby the Government will contribute one-half of the salary paid the nurse in charge, and the council finds that the Government will thus pay even less than it did during the depression, while the council will be called on to pay more. In addition to salary, there is, of course, maintenance charges and other incidental expenses to be provided.

I have the honour, therefore, to request that you make representations to the Government for a restoration of the full subsidy under the conditions which existed heretofore.

Any conditions put upon this grant reduce the amount the Government has to pay. Why should the Government try to save in this particular direction? I think every member of the House will agree that no money is better spent than that spent on infant welfare. The welfare centres are visited by mothers seeking advice even before children are born. They obtain pre-natal advice so that their children may be brought into the world in a healthy state, and afterwards they continue to visit the centres weekly to obtain further assistance, and God knows many of them need it. How can the work be carried on if the Government economizes in this direction? I urge the Minister to increase the allowance to the amount paid last year. Each health centre formerly received a grant of £125 per annum. During the depression, the amount was reduced to £100. Recently, it was increased again to £112 10s., and now it appears that the allowance will be less than that paid when times were bad. I ask the Minister to go into the matter.

Sir JOHN HARRIS.—I have gone into it.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—At the present time, an appeal is being made to the charitably minded people of Victoria to raise £100,000 for cancer research purposes. I do not deprecate that proposal. If £250,000 were raised, the money would be well spent; but, after all, cancer

is a disease which occurs in mature life and affects only the individual person.

Sir JOHN HARRIS.—It affects one in seven men and one in four women.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—In this case, the future mothers and fathers of our race are affected. One child saved by the care of an infant welfare centre may increase the population one thousandfold in the course of years. That indicates how necessary it is that the centres should be properly maintained. When I was originally a member of the Fitzroy City Council, that body would not contribute anything towards the maintenance of an infant welfare centre. It was contended that it was a Government obligation, but the council was eventually persuaded to follow the example set by the municipalities of Collingwood and Richmond, and a centre was opened. To-day, there are two centres in that municipality, and two nurses are engaged at each place. If there were half a dozen centres in the district, they would all do splendid work and would save the community thousands of pounds. I leave the matter in the hands of the Minister of Public Health and trust he will give me a sympathetic reply.

Sir JOHN HARRIS.—If you came to my office, I could tell you all about it, or, if you went to Dr. Scantlebury, she could do so.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—The position is that the subsidy paid to the Fitzroy baby health centres has been reduced below the amount granted during the depression. Is that the desire of the Government? It is all very well to say, "We can balance our Budget," but I say, "For God's sake do not balance it at the expense of the children."

The Hon. J. M. BALFOUR.—That is not fair.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—It is a fair comment. Why should these institutions be starved? I again appeal to the Minister.

Sir JOHN HARRIS.—I could obtain an explanation for you.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—We want the money, not an explanation.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 2.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, July 20, at half-past 4 o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.37 p.m., until Tuesday, July 20.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, July 6, 1937.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. H. Everard) took the chair at 12.6 p.m., and read the prayer.

The Clerk read His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor's Proclamation convoking Parliament.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY COMMISSION.

The Usher of the Legislative Council appeared at the Bar, and intimated that the Commissioner appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor to open Parliament (His Honour Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy) requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Chamber of the Legislative Council to hear the Commission read.

Honorable members, accompanied by the chief officers of the House, proceeded at once to the Chamber of the Legislative Council.

(At 12.15 p.m. the sitting was suspended until 2.34 p.m.)

STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Usher of the Legislative Council brought a message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor desiring the attendance of honorable members in the Chamber of the Legislative Council.

The House, headed by the Speaker, proceeded to the Council Chamber.

(At 2.52 p.m. the sitting was suspended until 4.37 p.m.)

RETURN OF THE PREMIER.

The **SPEAKER** (the Hon. W. H. Everard).—Before the business of the House is proceeded with, I desire, on behalf of honorable members, to congratulate the Premier on his safe return to Victoria from his trip abroad. We are pleased that he has come back in good health. Having visited many countries and travelled many thousands of miles, he has returned with a fund of information that will be of great benefit, not only to himself, but to the people of the State. I hope that the Premier will retain his present good health for many years to come.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I desire to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your welcome, and for the generous sentiments you have expressed. My wife and I had a most interesting and enjoyable, though strenuous, trip. I hope that the experience gained abroad and the information I obtained will prove of benefit not only to myself but also to the State which I represented. In the course of my tour I visited many countries, and had an opportunity of comparing their methods with those of my own State.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO KING GEORGE VI.

The **SPEAKER** (the Hon. W. H. Everard).—As the honorable member for Port Fairy and Glenelg was not present last session when members took and subscribed to the oath of allegiance to King George VI., I ask the honorable member to come to the table and be sworn.

The oath of allegiance to His Majesty King George VI. was taken by Mr. Bond (*Port Fairy and Glenelg*).

ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE VI.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) presented the following message from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Governor informs the Legislative Assembly that the following telegraphic despatch has been received from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, viz.:—

“I have laid before the King your telegram containing a message of congratulation and loyalty from the Legislative Council and

Legislative Assembly of Victoria on the occasion of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne.

“The King has commanded that you will convey to the Parliament of Victoria through the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly the deep appreciation with which he has received this message.”

Government Offices,
Melbourne, 24th December, 1936.

CORONATION OF KING GEORGE VI. AND QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That this House do agree to the following address to His Majesty the King:—

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY :
MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN :

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in Parliament assembled, humbly offer to Your Majesty and to Her Majesty the Queen our loyal congratulations on Your Coronation.

We beg leave to convey our sincere hope that Your Majesty may be long spared to be the Sovereign of Your people, and our earnest conviction that Your Majesty will ever endeavour, under the guidance of Divine Providence, to promote the true and permanent interests of Your Majesty's subjects.

I submit this motion feeling sure that it will have the unqualified approval of every member of the House. It was my great privilege recently to represent the State of Victoria at the coronation of Their Majesties King George VI. and Queen Elizabeth. I am, therefore, in a special position to emphasize what honorable members, no doubt, already know—that the solemn ritual at Westminster Abbey, and the impressive ceremonies associated with that service, provided a truly majestic focal point for the loyalty of the millions of people who live in the many countries comprising the British Empire and are proud to acknowledge allegiance to the King. For many generations the coronation of a British monarch has been an event of the utmost importance to the British people, but it is safe to say that on this occasion it was more widely acclaimed than ever before. The world-wide interest in the coronation of Their Majesties was intensified by the fact that practically the whole of the civilized world was enabled, by the aid of science, to follow the unforgettable scenes at the ancient Abbey, and to hear the voice of the King himself.

The motion which I have submitted fittingly expresses our feelings towards the Throne. We trust that Their Majesties may have a long and happy reign, and that, under the benign rule of the King, this great commonwealth of nations may remain at peace and advance in prosperity.

Sir STANLEY ARGYLE (*Toorak*).—On behalf of His Majesty's Opposition, I desire to associate myself with the sentiments contained in the motion moved by the Premier. Although we have not been as fortunate as was the honorable gentleman in being present on that historic occasion, most of us, as he explained, through the aid of science were able to listen to the actual ceremony itself and hear the voice of the King in his responses to the questions put to him by the Archbishop of Canterbury. On this occasion—possibly more than in connexion with any other coronation at which this Parliament has been represented—the ceremony has had great significance to us in Australia, because the terms of the oath which the King is required to take have been altered. The King is not only the "people's" King, but the King of all his peoples. His Majesty is now required to swear to govern—

the peoples of Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, of your possessions and the other territories to any of them belonging or pertaining, and of your Empire of India, according to their respective laws and customs.

That brings the coronation of the King right home to us here. His Majesty is our King in the truest sense of the word, and is more our King than any other monarch has ever been before. I join with the Premier in all that he has said in expressing our loyalty and congratulations to His Majesty and Her Majesty on the happy way in which the magnificent ceremony was performed.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE (*Collingwood*).—On behalf of the Labour party, which I have the honour to represent, I desire to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in the loyal sentiments which they have expressed towards King George VI. With them we all trust that His Majesty will have a long, glorious, and—above all—peaceful reign, and that

it will be blessed by the uplift of the masses of the people and an improvement in their lot and conditions.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the foregoing address be forwarded to the Legislative Council with a message desiring their concurrence therein.

Sir STANLEY ARGYLE (*Toorak*).—I second the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That this House do agree to the following Address to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, in Parliament assembled, respectfully request that Your Excellency will be pleased to communicate, by telegram, to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs the accompanying Address for presentation to His Majesty the King.

Sir STANLEY ARGYLE (*Toorak*).—I second the motion.

The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the foregoing Address be forwarded to the Legislative Council with a message desiring their concurrence therein.

Sir STANLEY ARGYLE (*Toorak*).—I second the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

The **SPEAKER** (the Hon. W. H. Everard) laid on the table his warrant nominating Mr. Allnutt, Mr. Brownbill, Mr. Frost, Mr. Groves, Lieut.-Col. Knox, Mr. Moncur, and Mr. Murphy as Temporary Chairmen of Committees.

CIRCULATION AND EXPLANATION OF BILLS.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE (*Collingwood*).—(*By leave*).—Some of the Bills which members of the Government propose to introduce will be brought forward by the Minister of Lands; they relate to the transfer of certain areas of land for definite purposes. I have no doubt that in most cases the purposes are of a desirable nature; but I know from experience that such measures generally are dealt with on a Thursday afternoon,

when there is a scanty House, and very little information is given to honorable members concerning them. I think it would be an excellent idea if the responsible Minister would have such Bills circulated early in the session, so that before they came up for discussion we might have a reasonable opportunity for determining just what land it is proposed to take from the people, and what use is to be made of the legislation itself. I know that we have had several little squabbles in the House over this kind of thing. It may be that some one has wanted to apply to the purposes of a rifle club a site that has been temporarily reserved for, say, a Temperance Hall.

I think we ought to have more information with regard to these small measures than we generally obtain at the appropriate time. In the case of larger measures, there is generally a set debate, and we have an opportunity of familiarizing ourselves with their content and import. The small measures, however, are often rushed through in a thin House, and we do not obtain the opportunity that we need of learning exactly what is proposed to be done. We know that certain things are carried out without their being as closely scrutinized as they might be. In that connexion I do not necessarily refer to the present Government. The remark applies to previous Governments, including the Ministry which I led.

WATER SUPPLY ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. OLD (Minister of Water Supply) presented the fourth and final report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the expediency of amending the Water Act 1928, and other matters.

The report was ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) presented the second general report of the Public Works Committee.

The report was ordered to lie on the table.

IMPORTED GOODS FOR STATE DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. BUSSAU (Minister of Transport), in compliance with an order of the House (dated October 17, 1905), presented a

return of machinery, goods, and material manufactured or produced outside the Commonwealth and purchased for the use of the Railway Department during the year 1935-36.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES PUBLICATION BILL.

Mr. BUSSAU (Attorney-General).—In accordance with the usual practice, and in order to preserve the privileges of this House, I move for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the publication of the reports of parliamentary debates.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in, and read a first time.

COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) moved, by leave, the following motions, which were agreed to:—

That the Standing Orders be suspended so as to allow the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means to be appointed forthwith.

That this House will, this day, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

That this House will, this day, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

ESTIMATES.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) presented a message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor transmitting an estimate of expenditure for the months of July and August, 1937, and recommending an appropriation from the Consolidated Revenue accordingly.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The **SPEAKER** (the Hon. W. H. Everard).—I have to report that the House this day attended His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, when His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. As the Speech is printed, and copies are in the hands of honorable members, it will not be necessary for me to read it.

Mr. J. G. B. McDONALD (*Goulburn Valley*).—I move—

That the following Address, in reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to both Houses of Parliament, be agreed to by this House:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

As a member of the party which occupies the Treasury bench I am very pleased with the way in which that party has administered the affairs of government. I am also satisfied with the courageous policy which the Government has outlined in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. I feel that the Government has been very efficient in its administration, and I wish to inform honorable members generally that the opinion, not only in the country districts, but also in the city, is that the Dunstan Government is the best this State has had for many years. The awful pictures that were drawn by the Government's detractors have been reversed, to their complete discomfort, and their political bed has been made a very rough and unhappy one. The proof of that, I feel sure, is in the recent Legislative Council elections, whereby the Government won three additional seats. I am certain the people realize that the Government is sincere, that it is modest in its ambitions, and that it is progressive in visualizing the needs of the people and legislating accordingly. I desire to refer to some of the items in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. All are important, but I shall content myself with dealing with those that I feel it my duty to discuss. The reference to the improved condition of primary industries generally is indeed welcome news to all of us. The House and the people generally should remember that prosperous primary industries are the surest solution of many of our major problems, and everything that can possibly be done by Parliament to maintain their stability should be done.

I commend the Premier for the firm stand which he and the Government took over the Fisherman's Bend land. Events have proved that their attitude was responsible for the sound policy of development that has been adopted in that area.

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They acted in that matter in the best interests of the people, and, as time goes on, their policy will be abundantly justified. I am sure it is approved by the great majority of the people. As regards the wood pulp industry, I feel it is to the credit of the Government and of this House that in the last session legislation was passed which will lead to considerably greater development of the forest areas of Gippsland. The Government, in assisting the wood pulping industry, has taken a step that will go a long way towards developing the State.

I shall be keenly interested to examine the Government's proposals on unemployment. We have reached the stage at which some of those who have been long unemployed have had their outlook unbalanced in the struggle for life. The Government and the House should consider methods whereby these people, by means of both physical and educational training, may be brought back from what seems to be an almost unemployable condition to become once more decent and contented citizens. I am confident that the system now adopted is not in the best interests either of the unemployed or of the State.

I wish to refer particularly to the Federal Aid Roads Agreement, because, representing a country constituency, I emphasize that there still remain many roads to be made, particularly in my own electorate and other northern portions of the State. I say definitely that Mr. McCormack and his colleagues on the Country Roads Board have done splendid work. They have reduced construction costs, and have built and maintained better roads. The Government should do nothing to embarrass the Board financially. The additional grant from the Commonwealth should be carefully allocated, and any proposals to divert it to other purposes should be closely scrutinized, because, in my opinion, there remains much more work to be done with regard to our country roads problem.

Forestry is one of the major concerns of the State. In my opinion, our timbers are unbeatable, and, with the modern kiln-drying treatment, they make excellent furniture. I, personally, will not use other timber in any building in which I am interested, because I think our own

Australian timbers are wonderful. With regard to the control of forests generally, in view of the lesson which the rest of the world is learning, it is vital that the people of this State should become forest-conscious. The Minister of Forests and officers of the Forests Department are doing good work, but it is the duty of the House and of the State generally to realize the importance of our forests. Other countries are now paying a heavy price for neglecting their forests. I strongly support the hydro-electric scheme on the Kiewa River. I believe that we should develop our power resources to the full, and I shall not be satisfied until every town, no matter how small, and every farm in the State are connected to an electric supply main.

The work on the Yarrawonga weir, which is referred to in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech as being well advanced, is, in my opinion, not proceeding fast enough. The northern portion of my electorate of Goulburn Valley contains some of the finest irrigation country in the whole Commonwealth. It is still awaiting development, and the Government should do everything possible to develop it, and to speed up the work on the Yarrawonga weir. Irrigation has been one of the most successful developmental policies ever adopted in this State, although some people condemn it as a failure. I need only refer to towns like Mildura, Swan Hill, Echuca, and Shepparton, and districts like Rodney—all of which have been most successfully developed by means of irrigation—to prove my argument. Without irrigation, no such results could have been achieved. An interesting comparison of the production of an area of 50 square miles around fourteen different centres, such as Shepparton, Ballarat, and Bendigo, appeared recently in the Shepparton newspaper. The Argus Broadcasting Company claims to have obtained the figures from the Government Statist, so they should be authoritative. According to them, the production of Shepparton and district has totalled £13,671,000; Ballarat, £12,407,000; Geelong, £12,322,000; Bendigo, £10,377,000; and Warrnambool, £9,547,000. I shall not read the figures for the remainder of the fourteen centres, but any one who studies this comparison and

Mr. J. G. B. McDonald.

realizes what irrigation means in the development of our production, must admit that it is the very reverse of a failure. I want to defend the policy of irrigation applied in the right way. Those figures prove conclusively that it is far from the failure that some people make it out to be.

A matter of paramount importance to Victoria is the development of the Department of Agriculture, which is the Cinderella of our Government Departments, the most neglected of all. Previous Governments have not sufficiently realized the value of a well-conducted Department of Agriculture not only to the producers but to the whole State. I am sure the farmers will welcome announcements with regard to the establishment of a dairy college at Werribee, the extension and comprehensive development of the research farm at Tatura, and an increase in the number of scientific officers in the veterinary, entomological, biological, and administrative branches of the Department. All these activities should never have been allowed to be neglected. It is absolutely hopeless for us, as producers, to try to compete to-day in the world's markets without the help of trained scientists. Every country in the world except Australia makes full use of its scientists in the marketing of products. Without some practical assistance of this nature, we labour in vain. The farmers do not want bounties any more than anybody else does, but until they are given the means to market their goods in successful competition with the rest of the world, the bounty system must continue, or the farming community will go to the wall. One of the greatest means of assisting the producers is the control of the diseases and pests that affect primary production. The total loss caused by these troubles is staggering. In one particular instance, that having to do with the Oriental peach moth, the loss in one area in the Goulburn Valley, and in one class of fruit alone, is estimated each year at £60,000—a sum more than sufficient to pay the water and shire rates, and instalments to the Crown. In my own case, the loss from that source averages over £600 per annum. If those conditions are allowed to continue, we shall not have primary production very much longer with us.

I appeal to the Government to appoint sufficient men to the entomological branch, the biological branch, and the administrative branch of the Department. The present conditions of salary and tenure are such that we cannot expect trained and able officers to maintain their interest in the work, or to remain in the Department. Every other State in the Commonwealth, and private industrial concerns also, offer these men better terms and conditions than we do, and entice them away from our Service. Seven or eight of our best officers have left the Department for other States. That is a reflection on ourselves, and a loss to Victoria. It takes years of training to educate young University men to take their places and become useful to the producer in solving his problems. A comparison of the salaries paid in the various States is interesting and instructive. One man in the biological branch of the Victorian Department, with eight or nine years' service, commands a salary ranging from £459 to £520 a year. In New South Wales his rate would be from £525 to £575, and in Queensland from £475 to £650. The result is that we lose our best officers to other States, and are not in a position to cope with our many serious agricultural problems. There are still in the Department a number of officers who have received offers from private firms, and I am certain that, unless the Government takes speedy action, they will leave the Department to better themselves in private employment. The position has become so serious as to be a matter of real concern to the community. I hope the Government will listen to my representations and reorganize the Department, at the same time making sufficient money available in the Budget to enable its valuable work to go on. Honorable members may think that those engaged in primary industries should do some of this work themselves. In my own district experiments are being conducted in conjunction with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the Commonwealth Bank. Our industry has provided funds, and an organization has been created, of which I am a member, to raise finances. We are asking the Government again to make an officer available for further experiments, the cost of

which we are prepared to bear. It is almost impossible to organize the farmers sufficiently well to obtain money from them for this class of experimental work. In view of the fact that the revenue of the Department of Agriculture almost balances its expenditure—there is a difference of only about £32,000—the Government should recognize the position and treat the Department much more liberally than it has done hitherto in the matter of finance.

Another matter I wish to raise relates to the report of certain visiting British experts on national insurance. I am a believer in insurance for every one. I believe that national insurance is a policy that this State should adopt. The Premier and his colleagues in the Government ought to consider seriously the financial position of our public hospitals. Any provision that is made for national insurance should include health insurance, which would relieve the strain on hospital finances. The State by itself, or in conjunction with the Commonwealth, should pass legislation to provide for national insurance.

There is another question which concerns all of us, and which I feel the public of Victoria will expect me to mention; in fact, the public would probably say I was remiss if I did not mention it. I allude to the unemployment relief tax. The improvement in the financial position of the State, and in the unemployment position, is such that I feel sure that the people expect a substantial reduction in this tax. I believe it can be reduced without detriment to those who are now benefiting from it.

I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members on all sides of the House, for the kindly help and courtesy that have been accorded to me since my election to the House. I take this opportunity, also, of thanking officers of the House for their help and guidance. I appreciate the opportunity of representing the best electorate in the State of Victoria. I realize that my predecessor, Brigadier Bouchier, was held in very high esteem. While I am here, I hope to render to the people of Victoria the best service of which I am capable.

Mr. CAMERON (*Kara Kara and Borung*).—I have much pleasure in seconding the motion, and in doing so I desire, at the outset, to congratulate the honorable member for Goulburn Valley on his excellent speech. I also desire to congratulate the Premier on his very capable leadership, and members of his Government on the very fine work they have done over the past two years.

For the unemployed conditions have been hard, but we are hopeful that legislation which has been passed, and legislation which is contemplated, will benefit them greatly. We hope that the unemployment figures in the State of Victoria will soon be considerably improved. I concluded, from the very optimistic tone which seemed to permeate the speech of the Lieutenant-Governor, that the Budget will probably be balanced when it is brought down this session. That indicates to me that the remissions in taxation made last financial year were quite justified. We are hopeful that the Government, when bringing down the Budget for the current financial year, will see its way clear to granting further remissions in taxation, which are much needed, and some of which—as in the case of the unemployment relief tax—are long overdue.

Mr. CAIN.—Has the honorable member ever considered giving the unemployed the benefit of the rise in the cost of living or the increase in the basic wage?

Mr. CAMERON.—We are not now discussing the basic wage or the cost of living. Later, this House will have an opportunity of discussing those very vital problems. The Government, I am assured, is endeavouring to do its best in respect of all legislation. The record of the Government has been quite good. Much useful legislation has been passed. That legislation has been beneficial to the State and helpful towards recovery, and we are hopeful, if further remissions in taxation are granted, that unemployment will be decreased and perhaps wiped out as a result of the expansion of industry. The Government of its own volition cannot wholly and solely wipe out unemployment, but that evil can be largely minimized by promoting the expansion of private enterprise in industry. The more industries we can start, like that

recently begun at Fisherman's Bend, the better. The establishment of that industry was a step in the right direction, and it should considerably reduce unemployment.

One good piece of legislation which the Government passed last session has been commended from all parts of the State and by all sections of the community. It was legislation which was long overdue. I refer to the Hire-Purchase Agreements Act, which now gives the purchaser even-handed justice with the vendor. The vendor is not detrimentally affected in any way, but the purchaser has his interests safeguarded.

I was surprised that no mention was made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech of the fine piece of legislation which the Government put through during the first session of this Parliament. I refer to the Farmers Debts Adjustment Act. Up to a point that Act has worked splendidly. I believe that it is far superior to any debts adjustment Act in any other State of the Commonwealth. I understand that Victoria is the only State that has grappled with the problem of the secured creditor. Although the Act has worked splendidly up to a point, it is at the present time not working at all, because one of the partners to the agreement, the Commonwealth Government, has not found the money expected from it. The House was given to understand, when the Bill was before it, that the Commonwealth Government would supply to the Government of Victoria £3,000,000 over a period of four years. That amounted, approximately, to £750,000 per annum. The legislation was put through, and the Board which was appointed proceeded to work. The work which the Board did was quite good; in fact, the Board worked too speedily for the Commonwealth, for payments as indicated have not been made. The legislation has been in operation for eighteen months, and up to date £582,000 is all that has been paid to Victoria. The payments are only half of what we were led to believe would be supplied. Consequently, the debts adjustment plans agreed to are greatly in arrears as to settlement.

I shall give an instance which is typical of conditions in many country districts. In my district the delay in settlement is

inflicting gross injustice on creditors. Creditors have been brought together, with debtors, under the guidance of the conciliation officer, and they have agreed to certain plans in the expectation that those plans would be finalized in a reasonable time. The plans that have been agreed to are approximately twelve months in arrears. Of 28 plans agreed to only six have been finalized, and no plans have been finalized during the past nine months. There have been no settlements of plans agreed to by creditors, with the exception of six, although the plans have been agreed to for nine months or more. In the same district the parties in 30 other cases are waiting to be brought together in order to draw up plans of adjustment; and they have been held up for three or four months, and are likely to be held up longer, unless the Government can impress on the Commonwealth authorities the necessity for honouring their promises and obligations. It is only in that way that the creditor section in the community will receive justice. It is rather a shameful state of affairs, and I feel sorry to have to bring it before the House at the present stage.

It is useless for Parliament to pass legislation and subsequently find that it cannot be administered as was intended. Creditors throughout the country were quite satisfied with the Act when it was passed. Thinking that they would receive a quick return, they were prepared to accept 10s. or even 6s. in the £1, according to the position of the debtor concerned; but they expected to get their money within a reasonable time. In many cases, however, they have been waiting twelve months and still see no prospect of receiving it. It is up to the Government to push the Commonwealth authorities so that the money may be made available. I understand that the Commonwealth Government evolved the scheme in the first place, whereby the Commonwealth was to provide £12,000,000 for debt adjustment purposes, while the administration of the scheme was to be controlled by the State. Speaking from memory, I think the Acting Commonwealth Treasurer at that time said he hoped the £12,000,000 would become a circulating credit, and that, as it came back into the

debt adjustment fund, it would be available as a reserve fund for use in future depression periods.

Mr. HOLLWAY.—Has any of it come back yet?

Mr. DIFFEY.—The whole of it, in some cases.

Mr. CAMERON.—Having referred in a small way to what the Government has already accomplished, let us look at what it contemplates doing during the session. I was pleased to note from His Excellency's Speech that legislation is to be introduced for the purpose of bringing closer settlement up to date, or, in other words, of effecting a revaluation of soldier settlement and closer settlement blocks. Something must be done, and done quickly, in the closer settlement areas. Many men have been endeavouring for the last twenty years to eke out a living on soldier settlement and closer settlement blocks which are quite inadequate for the purpose. Where possible, living areas must be given to those men. In some districts that cannot be done, and, in such cases, the settlers should at least receive an equity in the land they hold. I am pleased that the Government is contemplating the introduction of legislation to clear up the awful mess of closer settlement. In the past millions of pounds have been spent in an attempt to help men to eke out an existence on inadequate areas when it has been impossible for them to make a success of their blocks.

I am pleased that action is contemplated in connexion with the supply of water throughout the State. The Royal Commission on Water Supply, which recently investigated the position and submitted a report to the Government, has made certain recommendations; but I would point out that, when legislation is introduced to amend the Water Act, great care must be exercised to conserve the rights of water users. Millions of pounds have been spent upon water supply schemes. The greatest losses have occurred in the irrigation areas; and, while I agree with the honorable member for Goulburn Valley concerning the advantages of irrigation in certain districts, there are other areas where irrigation should never have been introduced. Comparatively little loss has occurred in the dry-farming areas where water is used only for stock and domestic

purposes, and I would stress the fact that, whatever is done, the rights of men in those areas must not be jeopardized.

I am glad to notice that it is the intention of the Government to appoint a committee to inquire into the menace of soil erosion. The Government is to be congratulated upon what it has already done in that direction by its allocation of £72,000 for the carrying out of extensive works to prevent further foreshore erosion. It will be necessary for the proposed committee to view the whole question from a State-wide aspect. The causes of erosion are three in number, namely, the sea, heavy rains, and winds.

MR. CAIN.—And the foolishness of the people in destroying timber.

MR. CAMERON.—I shall refer to that. The Government has attempted to do something in connexion with erosion caused by the sea. The Government has also taken action to reduce erosion caused by heavy rains, which create floods in rivers and thereby cause extensive damage to property and injury to many fertile river flats; but in such cases, it has dealt with the effect, and not with the cause. The Government has taken action to provide for snagging and the removal of debris from many rivers, so that in time of flood the waters may flow more freely; but that action will not prevent thousands of tons of the best surface soil in the State being carried out to sea. I think we might well consider what New South Wales has done, or is attempting to do. When the New South Wales Department of Lands and Survey leases hill country, it places a clause in the lease prohibiting the lessee from removing any timber from land within 3 chains of either side of a river and within 1 chain of either side of a creek or a gully. The Department further stipulates that the lessee must not clear or remove any timber within 3 chains of the top of a range or a ridge, and it is also obligatory upon the lessee to maintain at least ten mature trees upon every acre. That, of course, applies to Crown land only, but I think we could benefit by following the example set by New South Wales.

The third cause of soil erosion, and to my mind the most serious one—perhaps I am more conversant with it than with

any other cause—is the wind. That applies more particularly to the semi-dry areas in the north-west part of the State, in what is known as the Mallee, where dry farming is conducted. Much land in that area which has been cleared should never have been alienated from the Crown, although profitable crops may have been grown upon it. It would have been better for the State if some other method of using it had been adopted. In the dry-farming areas, which are mostly used for the production of wheat, the usual practice is for farmers to burn the stubble, and cultivate fairly frequently in order to get the best out of the land in the shortest possible time, but that is the quickest way to do irretrievable damage to the surface soil. Many farmers still argue that the clearing of sand ridges, and the subsequent blowing of those ridges by heavy winds, fertilizes the flats, and does not harm the higher land. They contend that blowing in moderation is quite all right; but after the clearing of the natural timber, what will happen in 50 years if the present methods are continued?

While seasons are good and prices satisfactory, farmers will probably get a living off such land, but when a dry cycle comes—and inevitably it will come—the picture will be very different. Some farmers attempt to get rich quickly by cultivating every available acre when prices of produce are high, regardless of the consequences. They take only a short view of the situation. The State can do much to improve these methods of farming, because, when all is said and done, farmers largely work in conjunction and in co-operation with the agricultural colleges and research farms. The use by the Government of agricultural experts, of whom the honorable member for Goulburn Valley would like to see an additional number appointed, is a move in the right direction. Those experts, who are in possession of both theoretical and laboratory knowledge, should have a roving commission. Then they could do valuable work in advising farmers upon the correct treatment of soil. In that way, soil erosion could be minimized to some extent. The practice of burning stubble and continuously cultivating must ultimately deplete the soil of its humus, with the result that eventually strong winds will remove valuable surface soil,

some of which may settle in other localities, and some perhaps in the sea, where it will be lost for ever. Once the surface soil is lost, there is very little hope of making a living off the land. Honorable members have probably seen photographs taken in other parts of the world—notably in America, where things are done in a big way—showing huge areas which, as a result of wind erosion, have been turned from fertile land into arid deserts.

In concluding, I cannot let pass this opportunity to congratulate the Government upon its achievements in the past and upon its proposals for the future, as outlined in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech to which we have been delighted to listen this afternoon. I hope all the measures indicated will be placed on the statute-book. I am sure their enactment would be of immense benefit to the State. If we play our part in passing such legislation, we shall be furthering the interests of the State as well as the interests of our individual electorates.

On the motion of Sir STANLEY ARGYLE (*Toorak*), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, July 13.

VOTES ON ACCOUNT.

The House went into Committee of Supply.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That a sum not exceeding £2,513,417 be granted to His Majesty on account for or towards defraying the following services for the year 1937-38:—Legislative Council—salaries and contingencies, £195; Legislative Assembly—salaries and contingencies, £1,903; Refreshment Rooms—salaries and contingencies, £300; Engineers and Gardeners—salaries and contingencies, £305; Parliamentary Printing, £1,500; The Library, State Parliament House—salaries and contingencies, £656; Victorian Parliamentary Debates—salaries and contingencies, £1,107; The Governor's Office—salaries and contingencies, £172; Premier's Office—salaries and contingencies, £1,706; Agent-General, £1,008; Public Service Commissioner—salaries and contingencies, £630; Audit Office—salaries and contingencies, £4,486; Chief Secretary's Office—salaries and contingencies, £1,900; totalizator administration, £80; miscellaneous, £1,000; pensions, &c., £12,000; grants, £100; Board for the Protection of the Aborigines—salaries and contingencies, £1,190; Explosives—salaries and contingencies, £1,350; State Accident Insurance Office—salaries, £779; Fisheries and Game—salaries and contingencies, £1,500; Government Shorthand Writer—salaries and contingencies, £400; Inebriates Institution—salaries,

contingencies, and miscellaneous, £470; Observatory—salaries and contingencies, £600; Government Statist—salaries and contingencies, £3,960; Mental Hospitals—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £76,000; Mental Defectives—salaries and contingencies, £1,570; Children's Welfare—salaries, contingencies, and maintenance, £45,180; Penal and Gaols—salaries and contingencies, £18,200; Police—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £125,000; Public Library, &c.—salaries and miscellaneous, £7,420; Department of Labour—salaries and contingencies, £5,067; Education—salaries, £416,042; contingencies and miscellaneous, £36,088; works and buildings, £1,251; endowments and grants, £22,399; Attorney-General—salaries and contingencies, £20,910; pensions, &c., £40; Solicitor-General—salaries and contingencies, £14,550; Treasury—salaries and contingencies, £3,300; miscellaneous, £5,500; transport, &c., £1,000; unforeseen expenditure, £250; payments to Railway Department, £12,000; hospitals and charities, £37,800; grants, £500; pensions, &c., £150; exceptional expenditure, £7,000; State Superannuation Board and Pensions Office—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £800; Taxation Office—salaries and contingencies, £26,780; Stamp Duties—salaries and contingencies, £3,074; Government Printer—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £22,850; advertising, £850; Farmers Debts Adjustment Board—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £5,600; Lands—survey, settlement, &c.—salaries, contingencies, &c., £12,758; miscellaneous, £17,600; botanic and domain gardens, &c.—salaries and contingencies, £2,420; works and buildings, £310; Public Works—salaries and contingencies, £9,861; works and buildings, £49,000; Ports and Harbors—salaries and contingencies, £3,472; works, &c., £7,300; Mines—salaries and contingencies, £4,175; miscellaneous, £2,600; Forests—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £15,300; State Rivers and Water Supply Commission—salaries, &c., £71,467; Agriculture—administrative—salaries, contingencies, miscellaneous, and exceptional, £8,223; Agriculture—Maffra beet sugar factory, £4,000; salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £7,500; Horticulture—salaries and miscellaneous, £5,770; Live Stock—salaries and miscellaneous, £6,893; Dairying—salaries and miscellaneous, £8,286; Public Health—salaries, contingencies, infectious diseases, &c., £26,422; grants, £1,000; Transport Regulation Board—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £4,453; Railways—working expenses, &c., £1,241,000; pensions, &c., £196; Railway Construction Branch, £883; State Coal Mines—working expenses, £46,000; Total, £2,513,417.

The financial year 1936-37 closed last week, and, in order to provide for the essential services of the State, it is necessary that Supply should be obtained on account of the financial year 1937-38. Authority is therefore sought in the motion which I now submit to Parliament for the provision of £2,513,417.

This amount will provide for the requirements of July and August—a period of two months. Honorable members will appreciate the fact that it is not possible at this stage to give details of the revenue and expenditure for the last financial year, particularly as cash payments are made up to the 31st of July in each year for services rendered in the financial year closing on the 30th of June. Although I am not in a position to give such details or to indicate what the position to be later disclosed in the Budget statement may be, I find a persistent demand in various quarters for the reduction of taxation, and at the same time a general clamour for increases of expenditure in many directions. I want to make it clear—and I think all honorable members appreciate the fact—that we cannot have it both ways. We cannot reduce taxation, and at the same time increase expenditure. The Minister of Water Supply stated only yesterday that during my absence he received, as Acting Premier, many suggestions for the expenditure of money, but not one for additional means of raising it. An endeavour will be made to present the Budget for the current financial year early in August. I always favour, if at all possible, the presentation of an early Budget statement, so that honorable members may be able to gain an idea of the financial position, and of the taxation measures to be proposed for the year.

The Supply schedule discloses many variations in expenditure, compared with a proportionate period in the previous financial year, because, except in the case of salaries and wages, expenditure is not incurred at an even rate throughout the year. I shall deal first with the items showing increases. The item, "Education—salaries" shows an increase of £18,957. This is due to the fact that salaries were subjected to percentage deductions for the first three months of the financial year 1936-37, and the passing of the Teachers Act last session also involves additional expenditure. The item "Taxation Office—salaries and contingencies" shows an increase of £9,299. The explanation is that approximately 65 per cent. of the expenditure in connexion with income tax is recouped by the Commonwealth Government later in the year, but in the meantime, the State has to bear the full charge in connexion

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with the collection of income and other taxes by the Department.

The item "State Rivers and Water Supply Commission—salaries, &c." shows an increase of £15,000. It is necessary to proceed as rapidly as possible during the winter months with the supply of water for domestic and stock purposes, and, therefore, additional provision is requisite in the early part of the financial year. The item "Public Health—salaries, contingencies, infectious diseases, &c." shows an increase of £3,888, which is accounted for by the fact that payments are made quarterly in advance to the Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital at Fairfield, and the Heatherton Sanatorium. The item, "Railways, working expenses, &c." shows an increase of £111,410, due mainly to the necessity of making advances as usual in the early part of the financial year, whereas the adjustments are not made, as a rule, until the end of it. The vote is also drawn upon temporarily for certain expenditure which is ultimately charged to other funds.

In some divisions considerable decreases appear, of which I shall mention the more important. "Treasury—payments to Railway Department," shows a decrease of £108,755. Under this division the Railways Commissioners were recouped, in accordance with section 102 of Act No. 3759, for losses on non-paying lines and reductions in freight charges; the amount included in the Estimates for this purpose in 1936-37, was £567,000. The Railways (Finances Adjustment) Act, recently passed, authorized the reduction on the 1st of July, 1937, of the railway loan liability by £30,000,000, and it also enacted that these recoups, which were provided in the past from the Treasury, should cease after the 30th of June, 1937. It is, therefore, unnecessary to provide any amount in the Treasury Estimates for the year 1937-38, to reimburse the Railway Department for losses on non-paying lines and reductions in freight charges. Accordingly, no amount is or will be included for that purpose this year in Supply Bills.

The Division, "Lands, survey, settlement, &c., salaries, contingencies, &c.," shows a reduction of £103,333. In the estimated expenditure provision is made

under this Division to meet losses on closer settlement and soldier settlement, but as these are not charged until the close of the financial year, supply is not necessary for that purpose in this Bill. The item, "Agriculture, Maffra beet sugar factory," shows a reduction of £16,801, because expenditure is lighter in the early part of the financial year. The normal season for working and for the heavy expenditure in connexion with the factory is from April to June.

As this Supply is simply of the usual nature, I hope that honorable members will deal with it promptly. I am anxious, if it is possible, to have the Consolidated Revenue Bill passed through both Houses to-day. If that is accomplished, it will not be necessary for the House to meet again until Tuesday next. Ample opportunity will be available for a full discussion of the State's finances as soon as the Budget is presented. No doubt, there will be a financial debate when the Supplementary Estimates are brought down, and other opportunities will arise. I shall be grateful, therefore, if honorable members will permit the Supply Bill to be dealt with expeditiously to-day.

SIR STANLEY ARGYLE.—The tables circulated give the usual comparison, I take it, between the estimated expenditure for the next two months and the average expenditure for two months of the last financial year?

MR. DUNSTAN.—That is so.

SIR STANLEY ARGYLE (*Toorak*).—I have no desire to hold up Supply in any way. The total for the ensuing two months is actually less than the average for two months of the last financial year. The Premier's explanations of some of the increases are quite well known to honorable members, relating as they do to the different dates at which certain payments and recoups are made. On the other hand, some of the reductions in expenditure are due to similar causes. I notice that the honorable gentleman did not refer to the item "Chief Secretary's Office—Grants," for which £949 was the figure for the average two months of last year, whilst only £100 is asked for now—a reduction of about £850. I take it that that has no significance, except as regards the date on which the various grants are made.

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MR. TUNNECLIFFE.—There never is any significance.

SIR STANLEY ARGYLE.—I am aware that there is very little significance in the comparative figures. The best example of that is provided, I think, in connexion with the Maffra beet sugar factory, which works for only certain months of the year, and does nothing for the rest of the time. Having examined the items in the Supply list, I see no reason to take exception to any, and, in order that serious discussion on matters of expenditure may be postponed until next week, I do not propose to use any item in this Supply list as the text for a speech. In the present circumstances, I think that course is justified. The largest increase of expenditure is shown in connexion with the Railway Department's working expenses, and the Premier's explanation of the increase is satisfactory, because recoups of expenditure cannot be made until the actual amount of expenditure is known. I hope that when the Budget is brought down—it has been already described as an early Budget—we shall have ample opportunity to investigate and discuss items of Government expenditure.

MR. TUNNECLIFFE (*Collingwood*).—I appreciate the restraint which the Leader of the Opposition has imposed upon himself. None of us has yet had opportunity to develop his eloquence to the full; probably we are reserving our eloquence for next week. I desire to refer to one item which has been shown for a number of years under Treasurer's Advance. It deals with the Hawthorn Bridge, and it always appears with an asterisk alongside it. Once upon a time an elaborate Bill was brought down dealing with the allocation of expenditure on the Hawthorn Bridge. The House discussed the responsibility of certain municipalities pro and con, and some honorable members, with their eyes in fine frenzy rolling, protested that the municipalities would be ruined if they had to pay for the bridge. The Government is still carrying the baby, and it is growing fast.

MR. A. A. DUNSTAN (*Korong and Eaglehawk*).—The Government is carrying the burden pending the passing of the necessary legislation.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—Does the Government intend to bring down the necessary legislation? Previous Treasurers accepted responsibility for the Hawthorn Bridge, and why should not the Government accept the responsibility for all the metropolitan bridges?

Mr. LEMMON.—And the proposed tunnel under the Yarra at Williamstown, too.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—Yes. I am getting tired of seeing the item "Hawthorn Bridge" appear under Treasurer's Advance. I am getting old, and I want to see something done about the Hawthorn Bridge before I pass into the shade—as Mr. Stanley Baldwin said recently.

Mr KENT HUGHES (*Kew*).—I direct the attention of the Treasurer to a little matter which has probably escaped the notice of the Government. In view of the increase in the revenue, I should like to see Cabinet make full restoration of the grant to baby health centres as from the 1st of July last. The Government restored the withheld portion of the grant by one-half last year, and only a small amount of money would be required to restore the remainder from the beginning of this financial year. I have brought the matter up to-night because I want Cabinet to consider it next week.

The Premier has stated since his return to Victoria that he had found during his trip overseas that there was closer co-operation between the Government and the municipalities than is to be found here. I assume that he was referring to Great Britain and other countries. I do not know whether there is a lack of co-operation in certain respects in Australia, and particularly in Victoria, between the Government and the municipalities, but it is a fact that in Victoria the municipalities have co-operated with the Government in the establishment and maintenance of baby health centres, and the municipalities are doing a great deal of good work.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (*Korong and Eaglehawk*).—The Government is sympathetically disposed towards the baby health centres.

Mr. KENT HUGHES.—We are all aware of the good work that has been done by the baby health centres. As only a small amount of money is involved, I appeal to the Government to consider

the question of full restoration of the grant from the commencement of the financial year, and not to attach any tag to such restoration. In view of the good work that has been and is being done, I do not think that there is any need to place a condition on the restoration of the grant.

Mr. ALLNUTT (*Mildura*).—I desire to refer to two matters affecting Parliament House. The first has to do with the automatic telephone system, which is very unsatisfactory. I have experienced long delays in getting into communication with the person with whom I desired to speak, and the position is becoming worse. The complaint does not apply only to the telephone in my room; it applies to all the telephones in Parliament House. I ask the Premier to take the necessary steps to have the service improved. The second matter relates to this Chamber, which is very draughty in cold weather. The part of the Chamber in which I sit—the Ministerial side nearest the Speaker's chair—is subject to a draught which comes through the door at the north end of the press gallery. During the last two sessions I have occupied my present seat in the Chamber, and the draught has been very severe at times.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—The remedy is, to change your seat.

Mr. ALLNUTT.—I know that any seat in the Ministerial corner is a good one, and safe. I think the Government ought to ask the engineers to suggest a means of improving the ventilation of the Chamber. If the draught from the door at the north end of the press gallery cannot be stopped by other means, I suggest that a portion of the press gallery at the north end should be closed. It is well known that the draughty condition of the Chamber has been the cause of a good deal of sickness.

The motion was agreed to, and the resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

WAYS AND MEANS.

The House went into Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1937-38, the sum of £2,513,417 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue of Victoria.

The motion was agreed to, and the resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE BILL (No. 1).

Leave was given to Mr. A. A. Dunstan (Premier and Treasurer) and Mr. Lind (Minister of Lands) to bring in a Bill to carry out the resolution of the Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) brought in a Bill to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue the sum of £2,513,417 to the service of the year 1937-38, and moved that it be read a first time.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a first time, and passed through its remaining stages.

(At 6.32 p.m. the sitting was suspended until 9.47 p.m.)

ADJOURNMENT.

REPORT OF FLOGGING AT PENTRIDGE— UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF: WORK ON TRARALGON-SALE RAILWAY LINE: LOCA- TION OF SUSTENANCE BRANCH.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next, at 4 o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. OLDHAM (*Boroondara*).—My attention has been drawn to the following paragraph appearing in *Table Talk* of the 1st of July:—

While we are in the shades of the Law Courts, I hear that a man was given ten strokes of the cat at Pentridge a week or two ago, and was then found to be unconscious.

I hope the Chief Secretary will make inquiries, and let the House know the result when we next meet. If the paragraph is correct, we certainly should have some information about this matter.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Gippsland North*).—The rule in connexion with unemployment relief work in country districts is that out of every 100 men employed 70 shall be metropolitan men and 30 local men. So far as the re-conditioning of the railway line between

Traralgon and Sale is concerned, that rule has not been observed, and the local men are much disappointed. They approached me, and I brought the matter under the notice of the Railways Commissioners, from whom I have received no reply. I also drew the attention of the Minister of Transport to the complaint, and obtained a reply from him later. I also informed the Minister of Labour, and from him I received a reply which the men say is not correct, although the Minister may be misinformed. Every care should be exercised by the Government to observe the rule faithfully. This was work in which the men in the immediate vicinity had a chance of obtaining comparatively congenial employment. They had been sent as far away as 150 miles on relief work, and they claimed that they should have their fair share of work in their own locality. I have received a letter from Mr. Williams, the secretary of the unemployed men concerned, bearing out their complaint. I now ask the Minister of Labour to make careful inquiries, and endeavour to furnish a reply in accordance with the actual facts.

Mr. BARRY (*Carlton*).—For a long while last session the House discussed the transfer of the Sustenance Branch to a building in Flinders-street west. Although many members disapproved of the change of location, the branch has now been established there. I object to the time of members of Parliament—and particularly my own time—being wasted in making a number of applications to the branch for the consideration of a particular case. I have been as many as four times to the branch over one case. In the first place, the officials asked me to wait until they had received a reply from a local depot. Having got that reply, they postponed the matter until the man concerned could appear before them, although I told them that he was actually starving—being without any sustenance at all. Now that he has appeared, the latest official information is that they will make inquiries from his last employer. That gentleman happens to be a person who asked the man concerned to work 70 or 80 hours a week. The man might well have left that employment because he would not work those hours. When I pointed that out to the branch officials they asked me to

come back again. I am compelled to go to the offices of the branch on four or five occasions over every case before I can get sustenance, or even a meal, for a hungry man or a home for a family. The authorities could get all the information they wanted by the use of the telephone. I hope the Minister will save our time by reforming the present roundabout procedure. The representative of a district like mine has more to do than he can get through in a day, without having to go several times to the one department. Every day, between morning and night, I interview at my own home about 40 people.

The Sustenance Branch eventually settles matters on lines that I agree with, but I object to the postponements and delays. The officers have every file at their disposal and can easily ascertain from the local registrar all they want to know, without writing letters. Furthermore, I object to the application of a man for sustenance being brought to the attention of an employer of labour who asks men to work 70 or 80 hours a week. A man may justly dispense with the services of his employer—if I may put it in that way—who requires him to work day and night.

Mr. MACKRELL (Minister of Labour).—The matter raised by the honorable member for Gippsland North is really one for the Employment Council, and I am not aware of the facts in connexion with it. However, I promise that I will look into it. As regards the complaint of the honorable member for Carlton, honorable members know that the Sustenance Branch was transferred to offices at the west end of the city in order to bring two very important offices, the labour bureau and the Sustenance Branch, together.

Mr. BARRY.—Are they not still separate departments?

Mr. MACKRELL.—Yes, but they are now under one Minister, and they are much nearer one another. I know that the location is inconvenient to honorable members, but it is also inconvenient to me. However, the Government owned the building in Flinders-street west, and the necessary space was available there. We have brought those departments together, and they are working much more

smoothly than before, as the honorable member for Carlton will concede.

Mr. BARRY.—Hear, hear!

Mr. MACKRELL.—The honorable member comes to my office a great many times, because he has a very difficult constituency, containing a large number of unemployed, to look after. I do not know the name of the man concerned in his particular complaint, nor do I know the name of the rapacious employer who makes people work 70 or 80 hours a week.

Mr. BARRY.—It does not matter what the case is, it takes five days to settle it.

Mr. MACKRELL.—It must be a bad case if it takes five days to settle it. If the honorable member will give me the name of the person concerned I will look into the case and endeavour to get it settled.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.1 p.m., until Tuesday, July 13.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, July 13, 1937.

The **SPEAKER** (the Hon. W. H. Everard) took the chair at 4.42 p.m., and read the prayer.

MINERS' PHTHISIS.

COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCES—PROCLAMATION OF ACT.

Mr. A. E. COOK (*Bendigo*) asked the Premier—

1. How many men are receiving the miners' phthisis compassionate allowance?

2. If it is the intention of the Government to increase the allowance to ex-miners and to restore the children's allowance?

3. Whether the Government intends to proclaim the Miners' Phthisis Relief Act passed last session; if not, what alternative legislation is contemplated to provide compensation for miners—(a) Who are at present afflicted with miners' phthisis; and (b) who may contract the disease in the future?

Mr. A. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer).—The answers are—

1. 889.

2. This matter has not been considered by the Government.