

after the purchases have been made. Applications are made by indigent parents in February and they are reimbursed in April. It should be possible for application to be made in December so that the money will be available to purchase books without undue delay.

The particular problem to which I direct attention relates to State wards who attend primary schools and who come within the jurisdiction or guidance of the Family Welfare Division of the Social Welfare Branch. In these cases, application on their behalf is made by the head teacher to the Education Department, in the first instance, for an issue of free books and requisites. Many State school committees or head teachers purchase books and requisites in bulk to ensure that the same books and materials are used throughout the school. When application is made to the Education Department for free books, the Department usually issues books which are different from those in use at the particular school. This adversely affects attempts by the Family Welfare Division to assimilate these State wards into our society.

To overcome the problem, the system used in relation to secondary and technical school students should be extended to primary school students. The head teacher should estimate the annual financial requirements of State wards at a particular school, and application could be made to the Department for the necessary finance to purchase books and materials so that all students would have the same books and there would be no class distinction between those who receive the Education Department's hand-out and the other students at the school. This arrangement would assist the assimilation of State wards into the community family life. I ask the Government to take steps to rectify the problem.

The motion was agreed to.

The resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

WAYS AND MEANS.

The House went into Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development).—I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1966-67, the sum of \$3,572,910 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. 4).

Leave was given to Sir Henry Bolte (Premier and Treasurer), and Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary) to bring in a Bill to carry out the resolution of the Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development) brought in a Bill to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue the sum of \$3,572,910 to the service of the year 1966-67, 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.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The debate (adjourned from September 12) on the motion of Mr. I. W. Smith (Warrnambool) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Shepparton).—It is a privilege for me to support the expressions of loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen contained in the motion so graciously moved by the honorable member for Warrnambool and seconded by the honorable member for Mitcham. I am very much aware of the responsibilities I now have in representing the new electorate of Shepparton in this House. The word "new" is something of a misnomer because, up to about twelve or thirteen years ago, there was an electorate of Shepparton. At that time, as a result of a

redistribution of electorates, the then electorate of Shepparton, like so many other country electorates was abolished. The old electorate was very well represented by Sir John McDonald, at one time Premier of this State, who is well known to many honorable members.

It is indicative of the growth and prosperity of the Shepparton area that, as a result of another redistribution, the electorate of Shepparton has been recreated. The main centre of population in the electorate is, of course, the City of Shepparton, which comprises some 18,500 people, and its close neighbour, Mooroopna, which has a population of some 3,000 people. The other towns in the electorate are Murchison, Rushworth, Tatura, Stanhope, Tallygaroopna and Colbinabbin. The area is closely settled and its settlement has been brought about by, perhaps, the most successful of all methods. As a result of water being made available, properties have been subdivided and resubdivided. Perhaps the area is best known as a fruit growing area, and two giant canneries service the industry, the Shepparton Preserving Company cannery at Shepparton and the Ardmona Fruit Products cannery at Mooroopna. However, within 5 miles of Shepparton itself, dairying is a more important industry and there are butter and cheese factories in this area. The other primary industries conducted within the electorate are so varied that they virtually cover the whole field of primary industry in Victoria.

The City of Shepparton has a growth rate which is unique in Victoria; it is greater than that of Melbourne. Unfortunately, such a rate of growth is the exception to the rule. No other provincial city or major town has a comparable growth rate. The population of Melbourne is increasing at a greater rate than that of the rest of Victoria, and this presents a real problem which must concern every member of this House and is one to which Parliament must give serious consideration.

Mr. Ross-Edwards.

My electorate is a prosperous one, and the community is most progressive, but, like all areas, it has problems. Tatura has the distinction of having the third worst primary school in Victoria. The smaller towns in the electorate suffer from a lack of industry within their boundaries. This deficiency is, of course, common to many centres of the State. The area has been served by the district base hospital at Mooroopna for well over 90 years. As time has gone by, because of its lack of facilities, the hospital has become no longer capable of performing the task for which it was established. The City of Shepparton has given a site for the new Goulburn Valley Base Hospital and the first of four sections of the hospital has been built. The community was charged by the Hospitals and Charities Commission to raise \$300,000 as its contribution towards the cost of the hospital. The money was not to be used on the first section of the hospital but on the other three sections. There now exists the extraordinary state of affairs that the sum required was over-subscribed and the money has been invested in trustee securities. The community is now waiting for what it hopes is the not so far off time when the hospital will be completed.

Perhaps the most exciting event to occur in Victoria in the 20th century has been the recent discovery of natural gas and oil off the coast of Gippsland. Provided that further discoveries are made, as we all expect, the finding of natural gas and oil could have as dramatic an effect on the State as the discovery of gold in the 19th century. We must guard against any action that will result in only a part of the State benefiting from the discoveries. We must ensure that the whole of the State will share in the benefits. Victoria may face the ironic situation that, if natural gas is supplied to Melbourne and Geelong before it is supplied to the rest of Victoria, it could lower costs of production in the industries established in those great

cities and they would have a further cost advantage over the rest of Victoria. It is difficult enough now for industries in electorates such as mine to compete with industries in Melbourne and Geelong. If further advantages are received by those cities, decentralization in Victoria will receive the greatest setback it has ever experienced.

To ensure that natural gas is available in other areas, it is not necessary to have a complex system of pipe-lines covering every corner of the State. It would not be practical to distribute natural gas by such a method, but it is possible to distribute it by other means. Natural gas can be transported by road or rail to the major centres of Victoria so that it will be available in those centres at the same time and at the same price as it is available in Melbourne.

The prosperity of the Shepparton electorate in particular, and of Victoria in general, is dependent upon the existence and security of Australia as we know it to-day. That security is being safeguarded at the moment by a small, resolute and efficient force which is fighting in Vietnam. The men serving there are fighting what is, perhaps, a harder and dirtier war than we who served during the second world war were engaged in. Whatever differing views people may hold about the situation in Vietnam, all Australians must be proud of the way in which our young soldiers are conducting themselves there. After experiencing two world wars during the past 50 years, Australia has accepted the principle that those who fight for her should be looked after when they return.

This State has planned and implemented many soldier settlement and other schemes to benefit returned servicemen, and has probably led Australia in this field. It is vital that opportunities similar to those provided for men who returned from other wars should be given to the servicemen who return from the war in Vietnam, both from a practical

point of view and to indicate to the community that these men must not become a forgotten group. There is no reason why, when settlement areas are allocated in years to come, preference should not be given to those who have fought overseas for Australia. Obviously, some of those men will need to obtain further experience in farming when they return, but that is to be expected.

I have been elected to Parliament at what is a most exciting part of this century. I am fortunate to be a member of a Parliament which is not faced with the divisions within the community that exist in the old world—divisions of nationality, colour, religion, and inequality of wealth. None of the problems resulting from such divisions exists in this country, and, as a result, Parliamentarians in Australia have what is almost a unique opportunity to pass constructive legislation. Whether my term of service in this House is long or short, I shall endeavour to make a constructive contribution to the legislation in this House.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park).—Having sworn that I am a loyal subject of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, I feel myself relieved at the commencement of some brief remarks from doing more than sincerely endorsing the eulogistic references that have been made to Her Majesty's official representative in Victoria.

I offer compliments for well-considered speeches to the mover of the motion before the House, the honorable member for Warrnambool; the seconder, the honorable member for Mitcham; the honorable member for Moonee Ponds, who was the first speaker on behalf of the Opposition; and the honorable member for Shepparton, who filled a similar role for the Country Party. It is regrettable that the suggestion by the honorable member for Moonee Ponds for the holding of an arts festival to mark the opening of the Arts Centre was rejected so summarily by the Premier,