

Honorable members recently saw the activities of the volunteer civil defence workers in the Kerang floods when they were called upon to help in a particular way. In the past emergencies have arisen and these men have volunteered to assist in the community, State or national interest. Occasions have arisen when the nature of the work performed has led to their suffering severe injury.

With the passing of this measure all volunteers will be covered by the Workers Compensation Act and the Insurance Commissioner will represent the Crown at deliberations of the board. Today, irrespective of what action people may be involved in and irrespective of the extent of injury, costs are demanded by those who are injured. These demands will increase as the number of motor car accidents increases.

Workers compensation cover for volunteer civil defence workers has been awaited with eagerness and now, in the interests of the public, these volunteers will be able to carry out their work more effectively in the knowledge that they would have this cover which they did not have in the past.

The clause was agreed to.

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

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS BILL.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of this Bill.

STAMPS BILL.

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GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The debate (adjourned from September 11) on the motion of Mr. McClure (Bendigo) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South). —I acknowledge the honour conferred on me by the people of Gippsland South in electing me to this august House. I hope that I shall have the privilege of serving them for many years. It will always be my endeavour to serve them faithfully and well.

I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to your high office. The occasion of your election gave the new members of Parliament their first experience of Parliamentary procedure. It was pleasing to hear so many tributes to you from all parts of the House. The way in which you have carried out the difficult functions of your office since you were elected to it confirms the belief of all honorable members that you will perform your duties with courage and impartiality.

I am sure that the people of Gippsland South join with me in expressing loyalty to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The reign of Her Majesty, with whom, I am pleased to say, I am somewhere contemporary in age, has been characterized by a devotion to her duties which has brought the Royal Family into the highest respect throughout the world. As an Australian, I am proud to be one who shares the growing consciousness of nationalism and maturity of this country which has been experienced over the past few years. I am equally proud of our continuing links with our Sovereign; this causes no conflict in my mind. The Australian flag, with the Union Jack in the top left-hand corner and the Southern Cross in the background is a tangible and fitting symbol of our national heritage.

The great feeling of loyalty to the Crown which is particularly apparent in Victoria is due in no small measure

to the manner in which the Queen's representative, His Excellency Sir Rohan Delacombe, and Lady Delacombe have carried out their duties and have moved among the people. Because of the actions of Governors of Victoria of late the institution of governorship is possibly held in more genuine esteem than it was when I was a boy.

I pay tribute to Mr. Bert May who represented the Gippsland Province in another place for sixteen years, who capably served the people of the province, and who is closely identified with it. I also pay tribute to my immediate predecessor, Mr. Taylor, for his successful term in this House. I hope to follow in the footsteps of those two gentlemen.

I am the first Country Party member to follow that well-known gentleman, that patriarch of Parliament, the late Sir Herbert Hyland, in representing the people of Gippsland South. Sir Herbert represented this electorate for more than 40 years. I am sure he is well remembered in this House. He is certainly well remembered in Gippsland South, where his name is still a household word. During the time he represented the people whom I now represent, Sir Herbert was able to carry out many small personal services which, in the long run, tend to keep a man's name before the public even more than any great services rendered. Of course, Sir Herbert did render great services to the State. The Hyland plan for the Country Roads Board was a major achievement and was mainly due to the efforts of Sir Herbert.

There are five rural shires within the electorate of Gippsland South. There is the Shire of Avon, based on Stratford, with its historical association with Stratford-on-Avon; the Alberton shire centered on Yarram; the Rosedale shire centered on the town of the same name; the South Gippsland shire based on Foster; and the shire with the tongue-twisting name of Woorayl, based on the thriving town of Leongatha. In addition, Gippsland South encompasses the

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City of Sale, a growing centre comprising some 13,000 people and the only city within the electorate.

Geographically, the electorate of Gippsland South covers 2,900 square miles and includes a considerable stretch of the southern coast of Victoria. It has fine beaches as well as rugged scenery, two small national parks, Bulga and Tarra Valley, and a major national park, the Wilson's Promontory National Park, the southern tip of which is the southern-most point of the Australian mainland. The rest of the electorate is made up of fertile hills and irrigated drier plains given over to the production of beef, milk products and fat lambs.

Primary industry is still the mainstay of the electorate. As I have indicated, there is a fine dairying industry and, with the consolidation of milk production facilities in Victoria, the electorate is becoming a high production area. A large number of beef cattle are raised in the electorate. The number of sheep is smaller but the area is well known for fine, clean, burr-free wool. A little over twelve months ago confidence in primary industry had been badly shaken, not so much by the drought—most people on the land are prepared to endure the ups and downs of weather patterns—but by financial institutions, which, based on the predictions of misguided economists and other ivory-towered individuals and pundits of gloom, would not make finance available to farmers. Towards the end of the drought there was a serious withdrawal of the financial under-pinning of farming properties in the Gippsland area. It was serious, because there is a crying need for food production all over the world. This is a basic need which will continue. During that time the farmer was left to sink or swim. He had few friends and fewer sympathizers. The common attitude to subsidies and support was that if the farmers could not manage, they should go to the wall. Today there are fewer head

of stock and pastures have been depleted because of lack of fertilizer due to tight liquidity. Is it any wonder therefore that prices for primary products are comparatively high?

It is a slow process to restore production after a drought and it cannot be achieved overnight. It is not like a factory that can be shut down and the power turned off for a month, after which normal work can be resumed again. This is one of the facets about primary industry that must be kept in mind. The present prices for beef should enable farming to become a business and not a way of life, as it has been for so long.

The returns from the dairying industry have not been unduly high, as the figures, which would have been available to honorable members, indicate. People still work long hours in the dairying industry.

The Government is committed to improving the quality of life—the expression is commonly used nowadays—and I should like everybody to share in the improvement that is effected. There is no intrinsic value in hard work for its own sake. I believe in hard work, but it should be adequately rewarded. People on the land, who must work in all types of weather and must take certain risks, should receive the reward which is their due.

Much has been said about the delights of the country including blue skies, clear weather, fresh air and the like. Much discussion centres on redistribution of population to the country or to specific growth centres but there will be no real move to the country until this can be made financially and socially rewarding. People do not like to leave established homes unless the move will be permanent; they do not like to accept a job unless it is a career. The majority of people do not just want housing, but a chance to make a home and raise their families around them. They

do not want a second-class transitory existence, but an opportunity of enjoying a satisfying and rewarding vocation in a harmonious environment.

It has been said that there are three criteria for growth centres. The first is topography—the availability of flat land and waste discharge facilities. The second is transportation, whether it be rail, road, sea, or air, and airports will become important in future years. The third and most important criterion is “livability”. This refers to the quality of life and embraces opportunities for recreational and cultural stimulation and the chance to be happy and raise a family in a suitable area.

Gippsland South satisfies all these criteria, and development of a growth centre should be encouraged. It need not be a centre like the proposed Albury–Wodonga complex which will have a quarter of a million people, nor do I have in mind a Bathurst–Orange type development, because it would take 50 years to build a centre of that type. An enormous amount of money would be needed to establish such a growth centre. Unfortunately, there are only four or five such large centres planned at present in Australia, whereas about 75 are needed.

There must be a second tier or level of growth centres. Smaller cities with populations of 12,000 to 15,000 can be assisted. For cities of this type, a population target of 50,000 to 75,000 could be set for the next fifteen to twenty years, and this would provide social equality for the residents; and achieve the desired redistribution of population.

The City of Sale has a current growth rate of 7·4 per cent a year. It has a diversified population of about 13,000 people; a large, permanent Royal Australian Air Force base for almost 1,000 people—probably about 3,000 people are dependent on it—and a large industry about which I will speak later. Sale, which has all the attributes for

the development of a growth centre, is the type of city that needs special support. Since 1965 the petroleum industry has made Sale a city of national importance, which is welcomed. However, the establishment of the petroleum industry has placed severe burdens on Sale and neighbouring shires. More roads and services have been provided and facilities have been upgraded in providing for the growth of the population. Sale is a good example of planning at an early stage. Demand exists for housing and educational and social amenities. Payment for these facilities has stretched the resources of ratepayers almost to breaking point. There is an undeniable and immediate need in Sale at present for \$1 million to be spent on these facilities.

Housing has recently been discussed. An area of 900 acres of land could be made available for housing purposes if \$400,000 were provided for drainage. This would enable housing blocks to be provided at reasonable prices. Because of the petroleum industry, \$1 million a day is flowing down the pipeline.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I appreciate that it is the honorable member's maiden speech but I notice that it is now 6.35 p.m. Would the honorable member care to continue his remarks after dinner at 8 p.m.?

Mr. McINNES.—Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The sitting was suspended at 6.35 p.m. until 8.5 p.m.

Mr. McINNES.—Before the suspension of the sitting I referred to the fact that Gippsland South achieved national fame because of the discovery of oil and gas a few years ago. I am told that this industry has now developed to the extent that approximately \$300 million has been spent on capital works, and the quantity of oil and gas which is flowing through the pipeline to Melbourne is worth \$1 million a day. The industry in that area is supplying

almost 62 per cent of Australia's crude oil requirements and all the natural gas requirements of Melbourne and a number of other cities and towns.

To a large degree the whole of Australia is dependent on this national industry, which is located in one area, and so far has paid \$200 million to \$300 million in royalties to the State and Federal Governments. Is it any wonder that it is widely thought that some of that money should flow back to the area to enable the area to be further developed?

Gippsland South, in common with some other country areas, has, in full measure, the natural advantages required to enable the tourist industry to be developed. To be candid, in the past very little was done in the electorate, with the exception perhaps of the Wilson's Promontory National Park. This is an area with an unmatched potential for tourism, but so far Government support has been limited to the odd launching ramp, certain foreshore improvements, and some facilities for the public within the national park; small things, considering that it is an area which has world-class topography.

Last month in Singapore I was present at a travel industry conference attended by more than 1,000 delegates from Australia and other parts of the world, and I was interested to learn that people from South-East Asia and countries farther afield are keen to visit Australia. Groups travel to Borneo or Singapore from Europe, and they are keen to visit Australia also. But when one sees the facilities provided in Singapore for tourists one realizes why we cannot attract people. The reason is that the world-class facilities and modern hotels which are needed to cater for tourists just do not exist here. It is thought that a sum of \$2 million would be required to establish the necessary facilities.

The Government makes a proud claim to be very interested in the development of country areas, and I am sure its heart is in the right place, but the Government must attend to practical requirements. Like justice, Government has not only to be involved, but also be seen to be involved; and I believe it should move confidently and offer financial support for the establishment of a world-class international tourist resort. Such a resort could be established in Gippsland, perhaps in the Wilson's Promontory area. The off-shore waters there lend themselves not only to commercial fishing but also to sporting fishing. In the past it has been difficult to get things done at Port Welshpool, because it has always been said that there is only limited economic justification for it, but I suggest that the measures I have mentioned will assist with the economic viability of the area.

I shall summarize some of the measures that could be taken to assist the electorate that I represent. I shall not go into all the details because I have no doubt that they are common to all electorates and, on future occasions, will be traversed by myself and other honorable members. A larger proportion of the money that is flowing out of the areas should be remitted to the municipalities, not in any gratuitous way but because it is the most economic method of development. It would stimulate the economy in those areas.

The Local Government Act ought to be amended to enable councils to carry out drainage schemes and to permit municipalities to recover the costs from people who will later benefit from these works. From the farming point of view an agricultural college should be established in Gippsland South. My predecessor mentioned this subject in his maiden speech, but a college is still no closer to reality. In concert with this project, a diagnostic centre should be established in the western

part of the electorate, possibly at Leongatha, to serve a large part of the farming population.

I highlight the word "confidence" because it is needed to get people into the country. It should be an operative word, not a nebulous one. It must be translated into visible terms. Country businessmen and contractors should have a heavily loaded preference in the allocation of contracts for the areas in which they live. Some planned continuity should be built into public programmes in order to reduce the ups and downs that particularly plague country contractors. They should be given confidence to upgrade their operations. Far too often, metropolitan companies tender for works in country towns just to obtain a little more utilization of plant or diversification. This should be discouraged, and country contractors should be given more access to this work.

Finally, I thank honorable members for the hearing they have given me tonight. I look forward to presenting in this Chamber the views of the people who elected me. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, your officers and the staff for the courtesies they have accorded me in my introduction into this House.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).— I compliment the honorable members who have made their maiden speeches during this debate. I listened with interest to what they had to say and I trust that their stay in this House, however long that may be, will be pleasant. I am sure they will make further contributions to the debates. During his Speech His Excellency said, *inter alia*—

In this session the Government will bring before you a variety of measures designed to promote the happiness and well-being of the people of this State. The emphasis will be on quality of life, on the protection of the environment and on the total welfare of Victorians, with particular concern for the rights of the individual citizen and for the family unit as the basis of society.

They are noble words. As honorable members know from experience, the Governor's Speech is