

gentleman will receive many applications. I know that the Country Roads Board has received applications for special assistance from shires in my electorate to alleviate the problems caused by the present floods. Nathalia, for example, has many miles of sealed roads—some sealed only recently—which have been completely broken up by exceptionally wet weather conditions. The Government should assist shires to help them overcome the extensive flood damage that they have suffered.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the courtesy and assistance that you have afforded me since my election—I am sure it is not because your son is a constituent of mine—and, looking into the future, I hope that I am able to spend a reasonable time in this Chamber so that I may make a positive contribution to the Parliament.

Mr. RAMSAY (Balwyn).—Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency, which was so ably moved by the honorable member for Bendigo some weeks ago. In so doing, I express my loyalty and that of my constituents in the electorate of Balwyn to Her Majesty the Queen who, in Victoria, is represented by His Excellency Sir Rohan Delacombe. I express loyalty not only to a person, but to a heritage—the heritage of Parliamentary democracy. It is one of the most precious gifts we have received from our forbears and one of the most precious gifts we can pass on to those who come after us. It is precious, and we must cherish it.

I must not fail to acknowledge the work of my predecessor in this House, Mr. A. W. Taylor. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly for eighteen years, and in that time I believe he made a notable contribution, particularly as a member of the Committee of Public Accounts. He brought a tremendous sense of responsibility to this House and was always prepared to stand up and

speak without fear or favour. He was a Parliamentarian through and through.

In drawing attention to the Governor's Speech which was made some two months ago, I point out that it was a speech which contained a charter for and a commitment of both this Government and Parliament. His Excellency said—

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 the 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.

In the spirit of this passage I have read, Mr. Speaker, I draw attention to two distinct areas of life in this State with which I have been fortunate to be in touch recently. As Chairman of the Develop Victoria Council, I have had the opportunity of visiting many country centres in connection with the conduct of the 1973 Premier Town Contest. Any town is entitled to compete in the contest, which is designed to improve quality of life and community involvement. I have been to Warrnambool, Hamilton, Hopetoun, Mildura, Edenhope, Horsham, Colac, Sale, Traralgon, Wangaratta, Benalla and Echuca. In each of those centres, which were selected from a much longer list of entries, there is a clear indication of community participation and a very real concern for the quality of life that those communities are achieving. I shall give three examples. The first is the indication of imaginative development. This is obvious in the unique lake scheme which is being developed at Horsham and which involves the damming of the Wimmera River, in the river front beautification work which is being carried out along the banks of the River Murray at Mildura, and in the City of Wangaratta where a town planning scheme designed to improve the quality of life of the residents of that city is, I believe, second to none in this State. Further, there is

evidence of community involvement. A regional body based on co-operative effort has been established in Echuca by a number of voluntary organizations. An outstanding level of community participation in town planning has taken place in the Gippsland town of Sale. The third example is evidence of a real human concern that can be seen even in the relatively small country town of Hopetoun in the northern Wimmera. A first-class village for the elderly is nearly completed, and similar villages can be seen in the other towns I have mentioned.

On the subject of child care, a day training centre for mentally handicapped children, which is only in its infancy, has been established in Benalla. A similar centre in a much more advanced stage is located at Colac.

A real spirit of enterprise and concern exists in our community. The people want action. They do not want someone else to do the work but wish to participate themselves.

Apart from my visits to country towns, I have had the good fortune to be close to the activities of the VATMI organization—Victorian Aid to the Mentally Ill. Basically, this body was established in 1958 on the initiative of Dr. Cunningham Dax, who was then director of the Mental Health Authority, on his return from overseas. The possibility of the use of industrial process work for the rehabilitation of people in mental institutions became recognized. The Mental Health Authority consulted the Melbourne Trades Hall Council and eventually, with the co-operation of the Victorian Employers Federation, VATMI was established as a non profit-making body designed to co-ordinate available industrial process work for the various mental institutions.

I visited some of these workshops last week, including St. Nicholas Hospital in Carlton; Willsmere in Kew; Larundel at Bundoora; Mont Park and Janefield, which are situated close to

the city. I pay tribute to the wealth of dedicated workers who are involved in this exercise of bringing the industrial process work—a type of occupational therapy—to these patients, who find it of tremendous value. Occupational therapists have the patience of Job and great dedication to this important work.

VATMI has a store in Collingwood to which it gathers industrial process work from 400 firms across Melbourne. Transport is arranged to seventeen institutions of the Mental Health Authority covering 44 workshops. In August of last year a count was taken which indicated that 1,793 patients were receiving direct benefit from this work. VATMI is an example of the initiative of the people of Victoria. At no cost to the State it provides untold benefit to needy citizens.

These are examples of people at work to improve the quality of life in the truest sense. This concern is not the prerogative of one side of this House or the other; it is not the prerogative of one age group or another. Indeed it is widely shared among the youth of the community today who will be the strength of the community tomorrow.

I shall cite a small example of this. Recently the students at the University of Melbourne conducted an "Earth Week". It was not exactly a return to nature but a return to the awareness of what we as a generation may be doing to damage our environment. The type of demonstration which the students undertook has been to leave their motor cycles in the garage and instead travel to and from the university by push bike. No doubt it is good news for the bicycle manufacturers, as one may have seen from recent reports in the *Melbourne Herald*. It is but a small example of the concern shown by the younger members of our community. Can we take this spirit of enterprise, this spirit of adventure, this willingness to "have a go" and this concern for others, and make

it the spirit of this Parliament and Government? Can we underwrite the work that is going on in the community and help to build it further? It has been described as a quality of life. As a Parliament, I believe we could look to our laurels and build an equal quality of Government. It behoves us not to use our energies in clearing the way for casinos or patronizing permissiveness but to give a lead to the sort of enterprise in our community to which I have referred.

At present State Governments are under challenge. The present Canberra incumbents may well stifle the initiative of our people by adopting the spirit of handouts for all and selling our birthright of opportunity for a mess of mediocrity. I hope our Government's programme will give us a firm and resolute lead in those areas so rightfully identified by His Excellency the Governor in opening Parliament as being of first importance to our people.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).— On behalf of the constituents of the electorate of Geelong North, I express my loyalty to the Crown. I also congratulate the speakers who have made their maiden speeches. Not only have their remarks been informative but they have expressed themselves in a manner which has shown that they will be assets to this House as long as they remain here. Depending on our political affiliations, we may agree with many of their remarks and disagree with others. At least, in a democracy, we have the right to express ourselves one way or the other in this House.

I should like to refer to the ever-growing problem of the road toll, particularly in Victoria and generally throughout Australia. Frankly, until recently I was like most honorable members and took only a casual interest in road safety. I realized that there was a high toll of death and injury on the roads in Victoria. I said that accidents were tragic occurrences and that we must do something to

overcome them. I would pick up the newspapers each Monday morning and, like most people, would look at the front page, turn to the back page, then read with curiosity to see who was killed at the week-end.

It was not until some weeks ago when a friend of mine was maimed in a road accident that I realized how close tragedy was to us all. I realized that, whatever our role is in this Parliament, we must make every effort to minimize the tragic accidents on the roads. Although the Government and the Chief Secretary have made efforts to reduce risks on the road by improved crossings, the introduction of rocket signs and the installation of traffic lights throughout Victoria, the unrevised issue of driving licences has perhaps been neglected. Undoubtedly, 95 per cent of injuries and deaths on the road are caused by drivers and perhaps it is time that the system of issuing driving licences was reviewed.

The first test which a person has to pass to obtain a driving licence should involve minimum skills. After the applicant has passed the test a probationary licence is issued and, following the expiration of a certain period, a full driving licence is issued without any further check being made to determine whether there has been any improvement in the driver's skill or experience since he obtained the probationary licence.

Many people obtain a driving licence merely for the purpose of driving a vehicle to and from work at 25 to 35 miles an hour for perhaps 4 or 5 miles. Many women obtain a driving licence simply to drive their children to and from school, again at a slow speed and in an area which they know well and for which they may not need much skill. These people should not have the right to drive at high speeds on the open highway or to tow caravans or trailers unless they can prove that, since obtaining the