

authorities have taken over the site and the health and recreation camp has ceased to operate. I believe that step should not have been taken until facilities were available elsewhere for the continuation of the scheme. I do not know what the prospects are of an early resumption of this activity. Some blocks of land have been offered but the fact remains that there are now no buildings and no facilities to continue this excellent work in the interests of the children of the State.

It is rather hard that such a small facility as the Crow's Nest camp should be required by the Department of the Army which has so many other properties at its disposal. It is wrong to deny this excellent institution to the children merely for the training of a handful of service personnel who could have been accommodated elsewhere. I have raised the matter with my party and our leader has protested to Mr. Calwell, the Deputy Leader of the Federal Labour party. I am astonished that the children's camp should have been closed and nothing substituted in its stead. Perhaps the Minister of Education or the Education Department may have something in view, but the fact remains that a magnificent enterprise which would have been of great benefit to the future manhood of Victoria has been ended. Those responsible for the closing of the camp have shown little regard for the under-privileged children of the State. I hope the Government will expedite the replacement of this commendable enterprise.

The sitting was suspended at 6.29 p.m. until 7.55 p.m.

The Hon. G. L. TILLEY (South-Eastern Province).—There are two matters of vital importance to the electors in my province to which I desire to direct the attention of the Government. The first relates to the recent flooding in the Chelsea-Carrum area and the second to the provision of suitable housing for miners employed at the State Coal Mine, Wonthaggi.

The Chelsea-Carrum district is a newly built-up suburban area consisting in the main of homes occupied by the families of workers the majority of whom travel

to and from their employment by train to Melbourne. The local residents have erected new homes of which they are justifiably proud, many of them being purchased on a long-range finance basis. For some time these people have been confronted with the possibility of their homes being flooded. Many of them recall the dreadful experiences to which they were subjected during the floods in 1934, but unfortunately little has been done in the district since that time to overcome the possibility of future flooding.

Up to about fifteen years ago, the district could have been classified as a rural area, and the drainage then provided proved inadequate. Building of homes in the area has proceeded apace, and to serve those properties new roads have been formed. Unfortunately, the district is not sewered and as a result effluent from the septic tanks and drainage from the new houses and roadways finds its way on to the swamp lands adjoining the Chelsea, Carrum, and Frankston districts. The existing drainage facilities have not been able to cope with the problem of rapidly clearing away to the sea this increased inflow of water.

During the recent floods many local residents were forced to vacate their homes, their properties were damaged by the swirling flood waters and debris, and their gardens, of which they were justifiably proud, were destroyed. It is natural that they look to the future with some degree of trepidation, fearing future flooding, unless prompt action is taken to give them necessary protection. The existing drainage channels had been allowed to become overgrown with trees and weeds, the presence of which impeded the rapid outflow of excess waters. The flood has undermined the banks of the existing channels.

Recently local residents held a protest meeting at which they agreed to request the Government to take immediate action to prevent future flooding. It was the most emphatic protest meeting I have ever attended. Residents were of the opinion that nothing was being done to alleviate existing conditions. The

view was expressed that because of the condition into which the channels had deteriorated, if further heavy rainfalls were experienced in the near future—which is quite likely as we are only half-way through winter—even worse flooding than had already been experienced would follow. The meeting decided to ask that the report and recommendation of the Parliamentary Public Works Committee which inquired into drainage conditions on the Carrum swamp should be given effect as quickly as possible. The area affected is not a scattered settlement but is a closely knit new suburban area. Local residents feel that every time rain a little above the average is experienced in the district they should not be faced with the possibility of having to vacate their homes and seek refuge in local halls.

People in the district have forwarded to me a memorandum setting forth what they think the Government should do immediately to overcome this problem, and I do not think that what they ask is too much. Their requests are that temporary pumping plant should be installed to pump out the water enclosed in the area bounded by the Mordialloc creek, the Patterson river and the main drain, the pumps to be operated until an effective drainage and sewerage system has been installed in the city of Chelsea; that immediate effective repairs should be made to the banks of the Mordialloc creek, the Patterson river, and other drains, with adequate arrangements to keep them clean; and that prompt action be taken to implement the report and recommendations of the Parliamentary Public Works Committee for the effective drainage of the area.

I hope the Government will take this matter seriously. As I said before, it cannot be left unattended from year to year. The people have their homes to consider and they feel that action should be taken.

A further subject that I desire to bring forward comes from my home town, Wonthaggi, where is situated the most modern coal mine in the field. I refer to the Kirrak mine, where plant valued at £200,000 is lying idle. If it were worked, this mine would have an output

of at least 100,000 tons of coal a year. At present the State Coal Mine at Wonthaggi has an output of 129,000 tons a year. If the Kirrak area mine, now lying idle, were opened—and the only difficulty preventing that is labour—the output of the State Coal Mine would be doubled. To open the Kirrak mine 200 men are needed. Previously, men for this purpose were hard to find, but now, with unemployment becoming more pronounced throughout the State, 200 men could easily be engaged to work the Kirrak mine at Wonthaggi.

In the last three months, thousands of Italians have been coming to the town from employment at works closing down in other parts of the State. A large number of them have been given work at the mine, but the position is that there is no place to house them. In the circumstances, the State Coal Mine has to turn back additional labour because the town cannot provide accommodation. There are neither guest houses, hotels nor ordinary houses for married people. To operate the mine at Wonthaggi successfully, two hostels for single men and approximately 150 homes are required. Those requirements may appear rather heavy, but I would point out that at the present time the Government is paying more than £10 10s. a ton for imported coal. Approximately £6 10s. a ton is being paid for New South Wales coal, a difference of £4 a ton. The price of coal produced at Wonthaggi is even less than has to be paid for New South Wales coal. If the Kirrak area were opened—the only factor stopping that is lack of housing—it would be possible to produce a minimum additional quantity every year of 100,000 tons. This, on the basis of a saving of £4 a ton, would mean a total saving of £400,000 a year by the State Coal Mine on behalf of the taxpayers.

I think that the proposition must commend itself to the Government; it is only a matter of adopting a policy of looking ahead a little, and that policy should undoubtedly be given effect by the Government. In that event the township of Wonthaggi could be developed and the taxpayers saved £400,000 a year. The Government could also obtain revenue by way of rent on any houses constructed

The Hon. G. L. Tilley.

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in the locality. Furthermore, opening the Kirrak area would give employment to many men in this State, apart from being of assistance to the coal mining industry generally. To me it is absolutely absurd that a mine as modern as the Kirrak area coal mine, with its most expensive plant, should be lying idle at a time when men are needing work and the Government could save £400,000 a year. That situation obtains simply because there is nowhere to house men who are looking for employment at Wonthaggi.

The Hon. J. J. JONES (Ballarat Province).—On this Bill relating to Supplementary Estimates, I propose to discuss several problems of concern to the electors of the province that I represent. The first is the lack of accommodation in two of the schools in my area. At the Stawell State School No. 502, the headmaster, Mr. Aldie, is deeply concerned about the accommodation problem that will confront him next year. Only last month he was faced with the task of providing accommodation for 40 new pupils who were due to begin their studies at the school on the 1st of July. This problem has been serious, not only to the headmaster, but also to the parents and the pupils; so much so, that a start was made in drawing up a petition to present to the member who represents the district in the Assembly, with the view of trying to determine what he could do about it. But before it became necessary to go the full length with the petition, the Education Department was able to make provision for the pupils by resorting to the use of the recreation hall at the school. This means that the school is now deprived of the use of that hall. Still, the main problem is that which will arise in 1953. In the Stawell area there are several country schools that have not been used for some years, and if one of them could be shifted into the township of Stawell that would tend to solve the problem of accommodation.

The next difficulty associated with school accommodation applies to the girls' secondary school at Ballarat. At the invitation of the school committee and the headmistress, Miss Mozley, I visited the girls' secondary school last week. There is a new school in the

course of construction for the pupils of that secondary school; it is quite a big job, the estimated cost of which is about £80,000. I should mention that before I paid my visit to the present school, in the company of the Ballarat Inspector of Public Works, Mr. James, I examined the construction at the new school. The work has been proceeding for some time with only slight progress, and the contractor informed me that the slow rate of progress was due to inability to obtain building materials, particularly the type of bricks required. The building is being constructed of what are known as "pink" bricks, which are hard to obtain. We paid a visit to the firm that manufactures these bricks in Ballarat and were informed by Mr. Selkirk that in recent years heavy demands had been made on the bricks supplied by the firm. He added that, with improved facilities for handling the clay in the winter months, he hoped to be able to produce bricks at a greater rate from then on. He assured us that he ought to be able to supply a reasonable quantity to the contractor for the construction of the school. From my observations, it will be at least twelve months before the work on the new school has been completed.

On visiting the present school, I must confess that I was amazed at its state of disrepair. It is a weatherboard structure which seemed as though it had been there for many years. As I walked into the gate I could not help but notice the dilapidated appearance of the building which, obviously had not been painted for many years. I was conducted through it, and all the time received the same impression that it was in a bad state of repair. Three army huts had been erected to assist in relieving the accommodation problem. As I inspected these I noticed that in each case the hut had been divided into two classrooms, the pupils being huddled together under conditions that in my opinion are not conducive to the proper development of the minds of the young students. The ceilings of the class-rooms were unlined and in one of the rooms sparrows were nesting. Honorable members can