

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong West) - I should like, on behalf of members of the Opposition, to endorse the expressions of loyalty to Her Majesty, which have been moved so capably and so sincerely by the honorable member for St. Kilda and seconded in a similar manner by the honorable member for Lowan. I am deeply honoured at the privilege given to me, and particularly to my constituents, of being the first member of the Opposition to speak on this motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor.

It is extremely gratifying to have been chosen by the people of Geelong West to represent them for the duration of this 43rd Parliament, and I trust that I can perform that task both fairly and adequately for so long as they will allow me this honoured distinction. As a member of the Opposition in this Parliament I am fully aware of the responsibilities of members of the Opposition and of the contributions they make in the administration of this State. We must always act, think and speak in a constructive or a destructive manner, as the occasion warrants, so that the people whom we represent will be served in the manner in which they are entitled to be served.

As I am a comparatively young man, I should like to focus attention on matters which I believe are important for the future welfare, progress and development of the State. I refer to recreation, decentralization and education. It has been my personal good

fortune to have been associated with many sporting and recreational clubs, both as an active participant and as an official, and I know only too well the value of active recreation in the development of our young citizens. Failure by the Government to provide properly equipped recreational facilities in new housing development areas may well have a serious consequence in the future. It is unhealthy both physically and mentally to deprive young people of the full enjoyment of their recreation time.

To-day many municipal councils are unable to bear the cost of improving undeveloped land to a stage at which it constitutes an adequate recreation facility. The electorate which I represent contains large Housing Commission estates at Norlane and Corio. The local shire is in debt to the extent of many thousands of pounds as a result of developing recreational areas. Too much of the burden of this expense is falling on people with young families who can least afford it because they too must bear the additional expense of financing school development as well as finding the money for the purchasing of their own homes. It may be said that such development is in order if it can be achieved, but where is the money to come from? One source could be the many thousands of pounds which are lent or given to a few favoured firms-for example, the Alcoa company at Geelong. If some of this money were directed into other channels, the burden on the people would be lessened.

In regard to decentralization, it is well known that the people who advocate the promotion of country industries in Victoria have been fighting a losing battle. Bold policy measures have been lacking. The heavy concentration of industries and population in the capital cities of Australia exposes our nation to social and, in the international sphere, defence hazards. The problem is not peculiar to Australia, but other countries are facing the task in a more realistic fashion than are the Governments in Australia. Our geographical position makes the problem a very urgent one.

In Victoria, the lethargic attitude to this great national problem has been particularly marked. The most recent example has been the decision to establish the third university in the metropolitan area. I contend most emphatically that the third university should have been sited in a nonmetropolitan area. Some of the world's oldest universities are situated outside major cities. At

Geelong a site is readily available for a university. If the powers-that-be had chosen this site, tertiary education would have become far more accessible to the whole western portion of the State and at the same time would have assisted in checking the drift to the metropolitan area. Students from Camperdown, Warrnambool, Colac, Hamilton, Ballarat, the Wimmera and even from the western suburbs of Melbourne would have been inconvenienced.

It is said that Victoria has the heaviest concentration of population in Australia. Seventy per cent. of our population, or approximately 2,000,000 of the State's population of 3,000,000, live in Melbourne. It has been estimated that in the past ten years the natural increase in country areas of Victoria has been 250,000 persons, although the statistical increase has been a mere 75,000 persons. This pattern of development is not only very erratic but also potentially dangerous.

I now wish to quote a few examples of what is happening to country industries to-day. In the Wimmera, flour mills are closing down. The tobacco-growing industry in the Ovens Valley and at Gunbower is on the verge of collapse, and the flax mills at Myrtleford have ceased to operate. The tomato-growing industry in northern Victoria is fighting for its existence because of importations from overseas. At Geelong, the Phoenix woollen

mill, which has been in existence for 95 years, recently closed its doors. One of the greatest tragedies has been the transfer of portion of the Ford motor company's works from Geelong to Broadmeadows. In order to assist this transfer, Housing Commission land less than 10 miles north of the city was practically given to the Ford organization.

In conclusion, I wish to make a few brief remarks about the important field of education. The population of Victoria has increased rapidly in recent years, and a large percentage of the population now consists of children of school age. Therefore, the educational programme over the next three years will have a vital bearing on the development of Victoria. Bold, imaginative action must be taken now. It is not enough for us to say that we have built so many classrooms or schools because the measure of our educational programme cannot be judged by finance alone. At present we are unable to staff our universities and secondary schools with sufficient fully-qualified teachers. This problem is only one of the major challenges facing this Parliament. Very few of our secondary schools are equipped with the modern requirements of education, and the libraries of Victoria are both insufficient and inadequate. Where qualified teachers are available, quite often their standard is lessened by the fact that schoolrooms are overcrowded, despite the fact that we were informed to-day that there were 21 pupils to one teacher. I challenge the Premier's statement in that regard.

In many instances buildings and fittings are unsuitable for the type of class being conducted. Unfortunately, in the existing circumstances, the students who come from the lower income, families suffer more than those from the higher bracket. This situation must be remedied quickly. I realize that a large amount of responsibility rests with the Federal Government which controls much of our finance, but in addition to finance we need proper and sound administration. The raising of technical colleges to degree status must not be undertaken until we are satisfied that degrees obtained in these colleges will be recognized not only in Victoria but also interstate and overseas. I mention this point because many leading educationists deny that such degrees will be so recognized.

I believe that a full, independent and public inquiry should be undertaken into the whole aspect of education. Such an inquiry would not only give the Government of Victoria an appreciation of how our educational programme is progressing but it could also place Victoria in the forefront of

world educational affairs. This is a big task, but the present Government is in, a very favourable position to institute remedial action to put education back on a high plane. I have mentioned several of the major challenges that face us in this 43rd Parliament, and I trust that these challenges will be accepted and remedies found for the problems that exist so that the fullest development of Victoria's potential may be achieved.