

was appropriate that Mr. McDonald should mention the Constitutional Convention. I certainly hope this meeting will be the beginning of better things.

If I had not believed in the Federal system, I would not be a member of this House. I believe the Federal system is under threat because of the stranglehold which the Federal Government exercises and can exercise in revenue-raising matters.

In conclusion, I am mindful of the responsibilities that I now have as a member of this House, and as one of the elected members for the Western Province. I am extremely fortunate in that I share the duties and responsibilities with an experienced and senior member of this House, Mr. Gross. I am conscious of the contribution made by my predecessors in the past to the well-being of the province and the Government of the State.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province).—I am pleased to support the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech and to express the loyalty of the electors of the North-Western Province to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I congratulate His Excellency the Governor on the way in which he has represented the Crown in Victoria. Sir Rohan Delacombe has been tireless in travelling the length and breadth of the State and has repeatedly visited many areas. He has been ably supported by Lady Delacombe and both His Excellency and Lady Delacombe have endeared themselves to the people of Victoria.

On one occasion when I was Mayor of the City of Mildura, I had the privilege and honour of being host to His Excellency and Lady Delacombe. I was amazed at His Excellency's knowledge of various matters affecting north-western Victoria. I particularly noticed that the vice regal couple were fond of children and that wherever they went groups of children gathered to talk with the Governor and his wife.

I am proud to represent the electors of the North-Western Province with my colleague, Mr. Dunn. It is a huge province of almost 21,000 square miles, nearly one-quarter of the size of the State. Its boundaries are part of the South Australian border, along the River Murray to Swan Hill, thence through Wycheproof, Donald, Murtoa, Dimboola Kaniva and Nhill to the south and from there to the border. The people in the area are hospitable and frequently it is difficult to travel without accepting overnight hospitality or having a meal with one's hosts. Generally speaking, they are not wealthy people, but they are rich in the other things of life that matter. They have the problems of droughts, bush fires and floods. They have shown outstanding qualities of courage and tenacity—especially the women folk—and those qualities have pulled them through. I might add that at all times the men are loyally supported by their wives. In days gone past they did not have refrigerators, hot water, air conditioning or all of those things which we now take for granted.

I should like to refer to particular areas within my province. Swan Hill is a prosperous and rapidly growing centre. I am sure that most honorable members would be aware that at Swan Hill there is a Pioneer Settlement which would be probably one of the greatest single tourist attractions in Australia. It is visited by hundreds of thousands of people every year. A number of people in the district have been responsible for the development of the settlement. One who played a predominant part in its development was a former councillor, Ross Mellor. I realize, also, that the Premier and the Government of the State of Victoria played an important part in this project.

Unfortunately, Swan Hill has been beset by several problems which, undoubtedly, will find their way into this Parliament by way of representations which will be made. One of

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the problems concerns the Pioneer Settlement. It is alleged that it has become so large that it is now too big for the city. Another problem in Swan Hill is that the sewerage farm, which was designed for a population of 3,000, now has to meet the needs of a population of 9,000 in that city. It is therefore hopelessly overloaded. The problem is accentuated because breaks in the sewerage mains take in saline water which, when applied to pasture, causes a great reduction of productivity on the land; in fact, there has been a court case on this subject. It involved a settlement of \$44,000. It is proposed that a new farm will be established adjacent to the present farm, but there is a strong body of opinion that the new farm should be established $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther away. Among others, the Victorian Farmers Union supports this view. An independent inquiry is being held into the matter and I have no doubt that the problem will be raised in Parliament.

I now refer to the disastrous floods which have taken place within my province. Yesterday, I flew over the affected area for an hour, and observed low lying land which has been completely inundated. I pay a tribute to the people who have been involved in endeavouring to save as much farm land and as many farm houses as possible. The actions of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Minister of Water Supply and the State disaster organization were most efficient, and members of the shire and other farmers and citizens of the area played an important role in attempting to reduce the damage caused by the floods.

His Excellency, Sir Rohan Delacombe, and Lady Delacombe have visited Mildura on a number of occasions, and on each of them the Vice-Regal carriage has been placed at a siding which is close to the River Murray. I imagine that they would have had a magnificent view looking out of the carriage towards the rising sun on the other side of the gleaming water and seeing the hundreds of

birds in the area. Unfortunately, there must be progress, and a large river front improvement scheme is being planned. This has led to the removal of the siding and, consequently, His Excellency will no longer enjoy the magnificent view.

Mildura has a romantic history in which a former Minister of the Government played a part. I refer to Alfred Deakin who later became a Prime Minister of Australia. Following the droughts of 1885, Alfred Deakin was sent to investigate irrigation practices in California. Subsequently, he completed a monumental book which even today is relevant to the subject of irrigation. While in California he met two brothers named Chafey who were pre-eminent in irrigation matters in California. Originally, they had come from Ontario in Canada. Deakin persuaded them to come to Australia, and eventually they established their project in Mildura. They constructed channels for irrigation purposes, and settlers arrived from all parts of the world. One was Lord Ranfurly, who subsequently became the Governor-General of New Zealand and, I believe, was the first president of the Mildura Club.

Great difficulties arose in connection with the irrigation project. I have not time to describe all of them, but a major one was the fact that the River Murray was dry more often than not and, as a consequence, fruit could not be transported to Swan Hill which was the nearest rail point. By 1903 the railway line had been extended to Mildura, and the success of the settlement was then assured.

In addition to its dried fruits and citrus industries, Mildura has a flourishing tourist industry, so much so that it is expected that tourism will provide the City of Mildura with \$15 million this year. There are 16 motels and 15 caravan parks within the city, and 3 more motels are being constructed.

A plan of balanced development began 25 years ago with the construction of streets, footpaths, a sewerage system, and so on. Ninety per cent of the streets in Mildura are sealed, and 96 per cent of homes are seweraged. I commend the Minister and the Government for the interest that they have taken in this programme of balanced development.

I should like to mention a matter which has caused some heartburn in Mildura and Swan Hill and for which perhaps the press deserves a mild censure, because the press has indicated that the flooding is worse in built-up areas than it actually is. A great deal of damage has been caused on the flood plains, where one would expect it, but there is no way in the world that Mildura and Swan Hill and their tourist facilities can be flooded. No doubt the press reports were responsible for a loss of 33 per cent in tourist revenue during the recent school holidays.

The sitting was suspended at 6.25 p.m. until 8.3 p.m.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT.—Prior to the suspension of the sitting I was discussing the two cities of Swan Hill and Mildura in the North-Western Province. Now I wish to refer briefly to the primary industries in the province. No less than 97 per cent of the State's dried fruits is grown within North-Western Province, mainly in the cities and towns of Merbein, Red Cliffs, Mildura and Robinvale on the River Murray. I grew up as a son of a soldier settler at Red Cliffs and have vivid memories of those days and the soldier settlers. They were a rugged band of men—they had to be to have survived the first world war.

Robinvale was settled in a different way from Red Cliffs. At Red Cliffs the land was opened up and the soldier settlers were told, in effect, "There is the land—go to it". At Robinvale the land was planted, homes built and many improvements made before the settlers moved in and this gave them a reasonable chance of success.

Unfortunately, three of the past five years have been bad years because the grapes have been damaged by storms. It says a lot for the resilience of the growers that they have been able to carry on. It is fortunate that this year the price of dried fruits has greatly increased so that overall the growers will receive a return similar to that which they received for the good season last year. Dried fruits production is more a way of life for them than a means of making a lot of money.

Seventy-five per cent of the State's citrus production is grown within North-Western Province, and it is pleasing to note the great success of the juicing of citrus. This production has expanded considerably, and only last week one of the largest co-operative packing companies in Mildura requested that an approach be made to the appropriate Minister for the provision of six homes for executive staff. This request is pending, and I hope it will meet with success.

The remaining principal towns and centres in the province are the wheat growing centres of the State. No less than 60 per cent of the State's wheat will be grown in the North-Western Province in the coming year. These centres include Wycheproof, Hopetoun, Murtoa, Woomelang, Dimboola, Kaniva, Nhill, Warracknabeal, Ouyen, Werrimull and Sea Lake. One problem, to which I direct attention is the high cost of freight on wheat. The wheat grower works no less than one year in five for the Victorian Railways. I certainly advocate that some consideration should be given to the wheat growers of Victoria in this regard.

Within North-Western Province are located 14 municipalities, 2 cities and 12 shires. Two of the shires are the largest in the State. I do not wish to dwell on local government at this stage, except to say that of the three arms of government in Australia I consider that local government is under the greatest stress financially.

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Swan Hill, Mildura and the other cities along the River Murray would not exist but for the river. Australia is considered to be the driest continent in the world. This is illustrated by the fact that fourteen of the great rivers of the world individually have a greater outflow into the sea than all the rivers in Australia put together. Honorable members have possibly read the book entitled *Water into Gold* by the famous author Ernestine Hill. This does not refer to the local chemist or aerated soft drink manufacturer but to the romantic history of Mildura and the people who reside along the River Murray.

Salinity of the River Murray constitutes a serious problem. The River Murray Commission has produced a report on salinity, and I consider that more action should be taken without delay. I am delighted that construction of Dartmouth dam is to proceed as planned, and I pay a tribute to the Premier and the Government of Victoria for standing firm on this issue.

The problem of saline water should be tackled, probably by a combination of two methods—firstly, recycling the saline water back into the river and, secondly, directing part of it into drainage basins away from the river. If the latter method were adopted care would have to be taken to avoid damage to properties situated along the pipeline taking the saline water to the drainage basins.

I consider that the River Murray should be a community of interest for the people who live along its banks in the various States and should not necessarily be a division. It is tragic that the great Murray cod is disappearing from the river and is being replaced by a species of fish known as the European carp which is increasing in numbers at a tremendous rate. In fact, I have been informed that a female carp will spawn three-quarters of a million offspring in one year. It is evident why this fish is becoming a serious problem.

I now wish to discuss various difficulties which concern border towns. Several weeks ago I was informed of the case of a professional fisherman who wished to fish for carp and applied for a Victorian professional fisherman's licence. He already held a New South Wales licence, which may be obtained without any experience. He was informed that in Victoria two years' experience in professional fishing is required before a licence may be obtained. This is an anomaly which should be attended to by legislation in the future because this man has a big market for the sale of carp to the lobster fishermen in South Australia and he is unable to supply it.

Another problem relates to motor transports proceeding from Sydney to Adelaide. They travel along the Sturt Highway and pass over 70 miles of Victorian roads. The load limit in South Australia and New South Wales is 22½ tons for a 6-axle type of truck whereas in Victoria the limit is 18 tons. I am pleased to say that the Minister of Transport has considered this anomaly and has agreed that a change should be made in the near future, and further economic loss avoided.

The various businesses which operate along the border have to pay for two licences to obtain the same amount of return as businesses elsewhere in the State. For example, an estate agent pays at least \$150 in Victoria for a licence and also pays between \$150 and \$200 in New South Wales. He obtains approximately the same turnover as an estate agent elsewhere but is obliged to pay an additional amount for his licence. I could detail various other problems, such as driving, private fishing and shooting licences. I consider that the boundary between New South Wales and Victoria should have been the deep water mark of the river. At present many difficulties are caused because it was decided that the border should be the southern bank of the river. For example, if a person is drowned in the river

fairly close to Mildura, the authorities from Wentworth, 20 miles away, have to take care of the various formalities. Members of the legal profession in this Chamber will probably recall a famous case in which a person was acquitted of a crime because it was held that the offence was committed outside Victoria. In fact, it was committed on the Lock Island which is between the southern bank of the River Murray and the lock chamber which leads to the downstream side of the weir.

His Excellency mentioned decentralization. Members of the Country Party agree with the development which is occurring in the Albury-Wodonga area, but I hasten to add that it would be tragic if this hindered the development which could take place in other provincial centres of Victoria, such as Swan Hill, Mildura, Horsham, Wangaratta and Shepparton. These places should have equal opportunity for development. They have many recreational and cultural facilities, and, generally speaking, excellent services such as pure water supplies. They also have cheap land. Land can be purchased at about \$1,000 an acre in some of these provincial cities. Similar land in capital cities costs between \$60,000 and \$100,000 an acre. This in itself is a considerable incentive to anyone contemplating the establishment of a decentralized industry.

There is a stable workforce in the country. There is almost no absenteeism, and sick leave is at a minimum. From the point of view of the employers, these things are good. However, from the point of view of employees, the difficulties in obtaining employment and housing are inhibiting factors. The general disabilities of decentralization are the cost of paying freight two ways, transport problems, and communication difficulties. In addition, parents with children undertaking tertiary education like to live close to them. Equalization of telephone charges should be brought

about. That would probably be one of the most important factors in assisting decentralization.

His Excellency referred to youth, sport and recreation. In the Sunraysia district, there are no dog racing facilities for 200 miles. There are plans to form an association to apply for a further licence, and I commend the project to the Minister. I have been involved in sport all my life, having represented the area in a number of sports, and I believe that fitness is vital. Unfortunately, in Victoria and in Australia generally, we are becoming a nation of spectators rather than players.

The Housing Commission proposes to build a number of homes in the country. This is commendable. It is proposed that 55 homes be built in the City of Mildura. Unfortunately, it is doubtful whether there will be any suitable tenders for their erection. I have discussed the matter with various builders in the area. Because they can operate on a 15 per cent profit margin in the private sector they are reluctant to tender for building commission homes at a 6 per cent profit, particularly in view of the close supervision of that work.

Perhaps too much emphasis is given to tertiary education. I suggest that more attention be paid to primary schools. In the North-Western Province at Swan Hill and Wycheproof there are two primary schools almost 100 years old. They should be bulldozed to the ground and new schools built.

Mr. President, I commend the meeting you held with new members of the Legislative Council. It was very valuable and similar meetings should be held in future. I appreciate the great assistance given to new members by the officers and staff of the Parliament. Considering the number of hours which Parliamentarians work, I was appalled at the lack of facilities provided to members outside of Parliament and within their electorates. Perhaps I am echoing what has been said by members who have been in

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this House for some time. Members who have been engaged in business and have had the assistance of secretaries and office staffs realize how great is the need of assistance for members within their electorates.

I repeat that I am proud and privileged to be one of the members representing the North-Western Province. I follow in a great tradition. The Honorable Percy Stewart, an uncle of my wife, was one of the first four Country Party members of this Parliament in 1917. He resigned shortly after his election to contest the Federal seat of Wimmera, which he won. He became the Commonwealth Minister of Works and Railways in the Bruce-Page Government and he died, whilst still a member of the Federal Parliament, in 1931, and he is still highly spoken of in the area. Wonderful service was given to this Parliament and the State by the late Sir Percy Byrnes and also by my immediate predecessor, the Honorable Arthur Mansell, C.B.E. Both were tireless in their work for the province and were beloved and highly respected by the electors. I commend the work of Mr. Mansell in compiling a history of Mildura and district and the river towns. Mr. Mansell must have put hundreds of hours of work into this project. The four volumes he produced include photographs, written material, and copies of titles and conveyancing documents. Mr Mansell is to be commended for his gift of these volumes to the Parliament.

Again, on behalf of the electors of the North-Western Province, I wish His Excellency and Lady Delacombe a long and happy retirement.

The Hon. R. J. LONG (Gippsland Province).—It is a little unfortunate for me that on the occasion of my maiden speech in this Chamber I should have to follow two such fluent speakers making their maiden speeches.

It is an honour to be able to express my loyalty and that of the electors of the Gippsland Province to Her

Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. Perhaps I should exclude Mr. Kent from that statement because, no doubt, he will express his own loyalty later in the debate. I pay tribute to His Excellency, Sir Rohan Delacombe. Over the past few weeks I have had the privilege of seeing the Governor in action. He has visited many areas in the province which I represent. His Excellency has the ability to speak to people at their own level and with his keen sense of humour it is no wonder that people have grown to love and admire him.

I publicly express my thanks to the electors of Gippsland Province for giving me the opportunity of representing all shades of political opinion in this Parliament. I am the first member of the Liberal Party to represent this province and I shall do my best for every elector. My predecessor, Mr. May, represented the province for almost sixteen years. On behalf of all the electors, I thank him for the work he did so efficiently.

Gippsland Province covers a vast area. On the assets side it has, amongst other things, rich agricultural areas, large forests, industry, brown coal deposits, parks, beaches, lakes, and oil and natural gas deposits. On the liabilities side its biggest disadvantage is the lack of a deep-sea port. This problem has exercised the minds of many great Gippslanders. If it could be solved, Gippsland's potential would become unlimited.

His Excellency's Speech dealt with a large number of matters all of which may be summed up in his own words—

The emphasis will be on quality of life, on the protection of the environment and on the total welfare of Victorians.

I believe that the topic uppermost in the minds of the electors is that of decentralization or balanced development. It will be noted that I do not differentiate between country and city electors. City electors realize, at last, that Melbourne cannot be allowed to grow any bigger, and country electors realize that, for