

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. G. S. McArthur).—As suggested by the Minister of Transport, I shall arrange for a copy, in suitable form, of the motion, and the speeches of members, to be forwarded to Sir Clifden Eager.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. G. S. McArthur).—I have to report that His Excellency the Governor attended the House this day, and was pleased to make a Speech, of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. As the Speech is printed, I take it that honorable members do not desire that I should read it to them.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE
(Ballaarat Province).—I move—

That the following Address, in reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor to both Houses of Parliament, be agreed to by this House:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the Legislative Council of Victoria, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the gracious Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

This day has indeed been a memorable and moving one for me, more particularly because I am deeply conscious of the privilege and honour conferred upon me and the people of the province of which I am a representative in my being selected to move this motion. To see for the first time the opening of Parliament, with its pageantry and tradition is a very moving experience. This heritage, not only of Parliamentary representation but also of most of those democratic institutions that we value so dearly, has been handed down from the Motherland to this State, to the Commonwealth of Australia and, indeed, to many other civilized countries of the world. It is important to realize that the influence of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations is not at an end. The British Commonwealth of Nations, a body of self-governing Dominions not bound together by military or economic domination but rather by ties of loyalty to Her Most

Gracious Sovereign the Queen, is to-day showing the nations and the peoples of the world how to live, play and work together.

In His Excellency's Speech, reference was made to the Government's efforts to consolidate the statutes of this State. The last attempt at the general consolidation of Acts was in 1928. The Government hopes to complete the consolidation of the statutes in the very near future. This work is of the greatest significance, since it affects the duties and rights of all persons in the State. It is important that Parliament should ensure that we do not become over-governed by rules, laws and regulations. It is important also that our Acts shall be clear, concise and free of ambiguity. My hope is that, wherever possible, our future legislation will express the principle that the State exists for the individual—not the individual for the State. It is interesting to note that the great privileges and freedoms of the individual that form part of our democratic way of life are not always protected in the statute-books of Parliaments but are found in the common law of England, a system of law which has been built up over a period of 300 years and which, I am proud to say, we have inherited in this country.

The Governor's Speech sets forth a comprehensive and well-balanced programme of legislation, but the spirit that permeates the Speech is one of optimism in the progress and development of the State. Victoria is to-day receiving more than 40 per cent. of the total migrant population of Australia. Industry is coming to this State, and primary production is increasing. Victoria and Australia must develop and expand. To-day Australia is an outpost of western civilization, surrounded by 1,500,000,000 Asians. Unless, during the next fifteen years, we expand and develop in a manner that we have not yet experienced, we may not then be a part of the British Commonwealth of Nations and an independent part of western civilization in the Pacific. There is a need for us to cultivate a sense of national responsibility and national consciousness. There is no room in the community for the forces of disruption, no

room for class or racial hatreds that destroy the community and national unity. We must learn to think as Australians, for Australia.

Mention was also made by His Excellency of the Government's intention to push on with its programme of housing. Encouragement and support is to be given to co-operative housing societies and the home trust scheme. The emphasis will be on individual ownership rather than on State ownership of homes. Much has been said, even to-day, in the press concerning a housing shortage. Most countries of the world involved in the last world war still have housing shortages. Australia, with its ambitious immigration policy, still has a shortage in housing accommodation, and Victoria, with its growing migrant population, is no exception in that respect. The shortage of houses for the people is a national problem, and the Federal Government cannot disassociate itself from a share of responsibility for that deficiency—at all events, not while it holds the purse strings of this country.

The Government encourages home ownership. There is a fundamental belief in most communities that the average person should have the right to own his own home, but Governments cannot compel citizens to acquire homes. There will always be a section of the community the members of which will desire to rent homes or flats, but all those who wish to own homes, no matter what occupation they follow, should be given the opportunity of purchasing or building a house, by the payment of a small deposit and small weekly repayments of low-interest loans over a long-term period. The housing problem is really a legacy of the last war and it is of fundamental importance. Many of our social ills can be traced to the housing shortage. Frequently, lack of suitable housing accommodation leads to broken homes and marriages and some juvenile delinquency. A person who owns a home has a stake in the community and this responsibility makes him a better citizen, thus leading to the creation of a better community.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.

I suggest that the housing shortage should be tackled as a national problem similar to the way in which the problem of war was tackled. Between 1939 and 1945 this country fought for survival and more than £1,000,000,000 was borrowed in order to expand our Army, Navy and Air Force and for the purchase of munitions. Although we are still repaying those loans, there has been very little direct return to the community for the large sum spent. Why should not the Commonwealth Government raise a loan of not less than £50,000,000 for the specific purpose of housing? If members of the community knew that the money to be raised would be allocated to the States in proportion to their present population and likely increased population and if in turn it were reallocated by the States to co-operative housing societies or to home trust schemes, I have no doubt that the loan would be over-subscribed in a short period.

Financial institutions such as insurance companies, assurance companies and banks have a responsibility in connexion with the provision of funds for housing purposes. I suggest that these bodies which in many cases make profits in country areas—my own Province, for instance—should invest their surplus funds in the districts in which the profits are earned and not channel all their investments to Melbourne or Sydney. In the Ballaara Province there are many co-operative housing societies which are seeking finance, but I know of only one case where assistance has been given by a fire insurance company. I commend the Government's support and encouragement of the co-operative housing societies and of its intention to further support the Home Finance Trust. These schemes enable people to purchase homes by the payment of small deposits and low weekly instalments.

His Excellency indicated that it was the Government's intention to finalize the soldier settlement land scheme as quickly as possible. I doubt whether any honorable member would deny that that scheme has done a lot for the State

of Victoria so far as increased productivity of rural industries is concerned. When soldier settlement has been concluded, the Government will go ahead with a plan of general land settlement. It is unfortunate that in this country, which prides itself on the fact that a large percentage of its national income is derived from primary production, no young man can settle on the land, irrespective of what farming experience or training he may have had, unless he is provided with Government assistance or some other financial backing. It has often surprised me that a co-operative farming scheme on similar lines to co-operative housing societies has not been established in order to make it easy for persons to purchase farms.

I believe that steps should be taken to enable prospective farmers to take up land on the payment of 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. of the purchase price of a livable area and to repay the balance over a period of 30 years. I have little doubt that the proposed general land settlement scheme will be a great boon to many young Victorians throughout the State.

The Government intends to continue with its support of youth clubs and other youth organizations. It will continue to finance youth leadership courses and to provide grants for youth clubs. The inquiry conducted into activities at Langi Kal Kal was of great benefit to the Government in its fight against crime and juvenile delinquency. The inquiry concerned itself not only with the security and administration of this penal establishment for youthful offenders on the Ballarat-Beaufort road, but, also with the problems of youthful offenders and methods of training at, and examination of penal establishments generally. Judge Nelson's report will assist the Government in its fight against juvenile delinquency and crime generally in the State. This problem is not solely the responsibility of the Government; it is also a responsibility of the community. Last year crime cost the people of Victoria more than £6,000,000 indirectly, and therefore the fight against the evil affects everybody. The building of expensive youth clubs and

the training of youth leaders does not itself solve the problem of juvenile delinquency. These clubs require the interest and the help of the parents themselves. There is still great truth in the saying that there are no juvenile delinquents, only delinquent parents.

I join with His Excellency in trusting that our deliberations may, under Divine Providence, advance the welfare of the people of Victoria, and I sincerely hope that I and the other members of this House can contribute in some way to the happiness and well being of every man, woman, and child in the State of Victoria.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS (Western Province).—It gives me much pleasure formally to second the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. It is a great honour to me to have this opportunity and it is also an honour to the people of the Western Province of which I am a representative. As a member of a country district, it is pleasing to me to learn that the Government has seen fit to undertake work designed to help agricultural production. Dookie and Longerenong agricultural colleges are to be greatly expanded and that work will be of great benefit to Victoria in assisting more young men to receive training in farming practices. Over the last three years the Government has also increased the number of scientific officers in its employ but even more are needed. Many problems troubling our farmers are as yet unsolved. There is much work still to be done in connexion with pasture development and many other matters, despite the fact that research stations have been expanded and new ones erected. The economics of farming under modern conditions demand that the agricultural community should be given the answers to the problems that are confronting them. At the present time a plague of cockchafer grubs is infesting the Western District and doing an immense amount of damage. Departmental officers have not as yet complete knowledge of the habits of these grubs or methods of controlling them. In the last twelve months prices obtained for our wool have