

have told me that an engineer was about to be sent to examine the premises and furnish a report; yet nothing further has been done.

Perhaps the position is that all the money available to the Attorney-General's Department is being spent upon court houses in the metropolitan area, but surely some portion of that money could be applied to a number of urgent jobs in the country.

The Hon. D. L. ARNOTT (Western Province).—I wish to bring to the attention of the Government the dilapidated condition of the police station at Heywood, which is a very progressive centre. There is now a police constable in charge—a married man with a family—but the accommodation provided is so unsatisfactory and inadequate that he himself has to live in other rooms. I consider that a town of the size of Heywood is entitled to police protection. A constable, no matter where he may be situated, should not be compelled to break up his family life by having to occupy rooms elsewhere.

I ask urgently that consideration be given to the provision of improvements at the Heywood police station. Possibly the Government will be unable to authorise the erection of a new residence, but surely something can be done to provide obvious necessities.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON (Gippsland Province).—Probably the attention of the Government could be drawn to many other situations such as have been aired in the course of the last few minutes. I would regard some of those officials who have been referred to as being rather fortunate, for in Bairnsdale the clerk of courts is living in a caravan. The departmental excuse for that state of affairs is that money is not available to provide a home for this officer. He has to travel at times to places such as Omeo and Orbost. His wife and family are living in Sale and he has to make a home for himself in Bairnsdale in a caravan because he cannot maintain two homes. A sorry state of affairs has been reached when a court official has to live away from his family and in a caravan.

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The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province).—I direct the attention of the Government to circumstances existing in many municipalities throughout the country, which suffered severely about September and October of last year as a result of torrential rains and consequent floodings. I have received several requests from municipalities seeking support for applications made to the Public Works Department and subsequently referred to the Premier in the hope of obtaining a special grant for relief for the repair of roads and bridges. In the Shepparton Shire damage amounting to about £30,000 was done to roads and bridges. In the Borough of Wangaratta the damage amounted to approximately £5,000.

I have referred this question to the Department on several occasions, asking what relief is to be afforded, and I have been informed that the various matters which have been considered and reported upon by the Country Roads Board, have reached the stage of presentation to Cabinet for consideration. Unhappily, we are again experiencing similar weather conditions and further drastic floodings. Many municipalities have been heavily hit, as a result, but as yet they have received no assistance in respect of last year's experiences, and consequently the position is becoming greatly aggravated. Many municipalities are experiencing great difficulty in obtaining finance. Adequate relief for flood damage was not granted last year, and the position will be aggravated by the floods that have occurred recently. I trust that the Minister of Transport will take this matter up with the Premier to see if it is possible adequately to reimburse municipalities for losses sustained by them on account of the flooding of roads and damage to bridges.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Ballarat Province).—Before discussing the particular matter in the Supply schedule with which I am concerned, in this my maiden speech I should like to make brief reference to my honoured predecessor in this Chamber, the late Bert Ludbrook. Perhaps the appropriate time to do so was when I was introduced as

a new member to this House; but not having known the gentleman personally I did not pay tribute to him on that occasion. It has been a matter of amazement to me in my journeyings throughout my province to hear the many tributes paid to the late Mr. Ludbrook. I have also heard praise of him by Parliamentarians on both sides of this Chamber and in another place. Many fine words have been spoken about the work Mr. Ludbrook did on behalf of the province he represented and in the interests of the City of Ballarat, which he loved so much. His work for the children who passed through the Ballarat Orphanage was a very fine and worthy service. Suffice it for me to say that I can only hope that when my time arrives to relinquish my membership of this illustrious Chamber, or on my demise, the same eulogies will be paid to my service as I have heard in praise of the late Bert Ludbrook.

As a councillor of one of our shires, I feel that the provision of funds for sewerage works in country towns has been very inadequate. Naturally, sympathy is always extended in the field of education to those communities which have no facilities as compared with those having such facilities and attempting to improve them. The same remarks apply in respect of water services. If a town has no water supply system it receives more sympathetic consideration than does a town which has a supply that is of poor quality. In the case of sewerage, the alternative is outmoded and unhealthy.

It is difficult for a new member to speak immediately on a Victoria-wide basis, and I feel that of necessity in the first few months of my membership of this House I shall have to localize my arguments. Many towns in the district I have the honour to represent have made great progress in the last 25 years, but they are compelled, in the absence of a modern sewerage system, to retain an archaic method for the disposal of night soil. In these times of great prosperity in the community, municipalities experience difficulty in finding men for that unpleasant job. It is necessary for them to let contracts

for the disposal of the night soil at rates far in excess of the value of the work performed.

It is interesting to note that since 1935 there has been a complete change of opinion by ratepayers in country areas as regards the desirability of establishing sewerage systems. Prior to the war many referendums were held on this subject and the voting was approximately 80 per cent. against and 20 per cent. for the establishment of a sewerage system in the town concerned. I do not know if the reason is that many citizens have erected homes since the war and wish to make them as modern as possible, but polls held in the post-war period have produced exactly the opposite result—80 per cent. of citizens have voted in favour of the installation of a sewerage system and 20 per cent. against it.

I realize that works of this nature cannot be implemented without adequate finance. In Victoria at the present time there are 61 registered sewerage authorities; 30 of them are functioning, 5 are in the process of installing systems, and 26 are hoping to be in a position to provide systems, but are financially unable to do so at present. Of the five authorities now at the stage of constructing systems, none has received much assistance from the Government. The town of Moe took the bull by the horns in 1951 and decided to rely on its own efforts. Far reaching problems were encountered and by 1953 its system was only partially in operation and has not yet been completed. The towns of Maryborough and Stawell raised their own loans and engaged their own contractors—always a great problem. A number of small towns that have registered sewerage authorities have found it almost impossible to commence operations because of difficulties in raising the necessary finance. A colossal sum is required in order adequately to sewer a town of any size. It has been estimated that £7,000,000 will be required to install the sewerage works needed throughout Victoria, but the Government grant for such works last year was only £50,000.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.

Many fine words have been spoken about the desirability of decentralizing industries. Only recently the *Sun News-Pictorial*, one of our leading newspapers, conducted a competition wherein country towns were asked to put forward reasons why they considered their towns to be ideal places in which to live and why industries should be established there. Approximately 30 to 40 towns participated and brought forward solid arguments. However, in few cases were the citizens able to say that their towns had been seweraged. The town in which it is my pleasure to live, Bacchus Marsh, has attempted to attract more industries. However, in many cases the firms concerned decided against the move because sewerage facilities were not available and without that service the industry could not function. Many towns have everything to offer to aid decentralization except a sewerage system, and that is a big factor because so many industries have to overcome big problems in connexion with the disposal of water and waste. In conclusion, may I say that having made my maiden speech—a somewhat awesome experience—I hope that in the future I shall be able to contribute more to the excellent debates in this Chamber.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM (Northern Province).—Before I embark on the particular matter to which I desire to refer, I am sure it will be with the approval of all honorable members if I tell Mr. Dickie how much we enjoyed his first speech in this House. He spoke with clarity and confidence, which augurs well for his career in this Chamber. For a number of reasons it is perhaps unfortunate for him that he belongs to the Government party as he will have few opportunities to speak. The Government has to ensure that its business passes through the Chamber as expeditiously as possible and thus many opportunities are denied to backbench members of the Government party to express their views. From what we have heard, we are all quite satisfied that there is a great deal of talent behind the front bench on the Ministerial side of the Chamber. I congratulate Mr. Dickie on his effort.

I now wish to raise a matter which should interest the Minister of Agriculture. Honorable members who have a working knowledge of the provisions of the Cattle Compensation Act know that when a stockowner sells cattle he has to pay a stamp tax. The revenue obtained is paid into a cattle compensation fund, and when diseased stock are destroyed on the order of a stock inspector, compensation is paid to the owner of the cattle. There is special provision in the Act to cover stock which enter Victoria from another State and are found subsequently to be suffering from pleuro-pneumonia. No compensation is payable if the cattle are destroyed within three months after arrival in this State.

I understand that this provision originated in the days when Victoria was the only State that had cattle compensation legislation on the statute-book, and was probably designed to prevent unscrupulous people from bringing diseased cattle into Victoria, arranging for them to be destroyed here, and then claiming compensation. Now, of course, New South Wales—the State with which I am particularly concerned—has its own cattle compensation Act. During the past two years a large number of cattle suffering from pleuro-pneumonia has come into this State. These animals have been destroyed and no compensation has been paid to the innocent purchasers. I consider that the Government should amend the Cattle Compensation Act to ensure that no injustice is done to a person who innocently buys diseased stock and within three months is forced to have them destroyed. I suggest that the Minister, on those occasions when he confers with Ministers of Agriculture from the other States, should endeavour to come to an arrangement with those Ministers whereby innocent persons who lose cattle as a result of destruction at the request of a stock inspector will not be at a disadvantage.

The Hon. WILLIAM MacAULAY (Gippsland Province).—I am particularly concerned about the status of the Mines Department. If the amount of finance made available to it is any