

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

them to attract industry and to enjoy all the amenities of life, their areas must be developed.

I believe that so far as decentralization or balanced development is concerned, a number of topics mentioned by His Excellency follow automatically. His Excellency mentioned youth, the physically and mentally handicapped, the underprivileged, the elderly, education, conservation, transport and health. Without wishing to be parochial, and realizing the intense interest in decentralization, I suggest that decentralization cannot make any progress at all unless these subjects are dealt with as matters relating to decentralization.

How can people be expected to settle in the country unless they are provided with the same amenities as they can obtain in the city? They must be provided with youth centres, better than average educational facilities, better transport, and social welfare centres if we are to succeed in this mammoth task.

I congratulate the Government on its concept of regionalization. Every country person realizes that every country town cannot afford a live theatre, an art centre, and a full sporting centre. Consequently, they are prepared to accept regional live theatres and art centres and sporting complexes in the near vicinity. If these are available people will not be deprived of a better way of life by moving to the country.

Living in the country already has natural advantages. One simple advantage is that people in the country can become personally involved in projects, and this leads to a better way of life. This is important in an age of increasing leisure time. If these amenities can be provided, decentralization will become a reality.

I welcome the Government's announced intention to assist local councils in developing facilities for education, sport, recreation, and the arts. In regard to the aged, the

Government intends to build geriatric wards or nursing home units at suitable country hospitals as rapidly as possible and as finance permits, and to introduce a domiciliary care programme called Spectrum, bringing a range of services to the aged.

In the field of social welfare, the Government intends to establish two emergency reception centres, one at Geelong and—I am pleased to say—the other in the Latrobe Valley. Swimming pools are provided in nearly every country town and sporting complexes are appearing in greater numbers. The new fund to support the building of performing arts centres on a \$2 for \$1 basis is a real contribution to decentralization. I sound a note of warning. Municipalities may find that, with the present sparsely populated country areas, the financial load may be too heavy for ratepayers, and the councils may not undertake the load.

The Government may have to reconsider the matter, and I hope it will increase the subsidy in the light of the financial load already on councils. The Government has made tremendous strides in its decentralization programme. The pay-roll tax rebate, the Victorian Development Corporation's programme, when fully implemented, and the existing decentralization powers given to local councils will make decentralization really work.

Earlier I mentioned transport. I hope the new Railways Board will adopt a positive approach in an endeavour to improve the railways. Already the time-tables in many areas have been altered to provide speedier service. I hope the board will cut out stops at smaller stations and, if necessary, use feeder bus services and improve the standard of carriages. It is a pleasure to travel by train on the Gippsland line. It is possible to go from Warragul to Dandenong, a distance of 45 miles, in 43 minutes. To travel that distance in that time in a motor car, a person would have to break every rule of the road.

The Government realizes that improvements must be made to highways, but as is so often the case the whole question comes down to one of finance. In his policy speech, the Premier announced a number of proposed road improvements in country areas, and I am pleased to note that the Princes Highway is mentioned to the tune of \$17.6 million.

Water conservation has concerned Gippslanders for many years. Gippsland has been neglected in the past, but the Government has recognized the need for the Mitchell River and Thomson River storages.

Finally, I refer to the plight of the farmer. Certain moves recently made by the Federal Government have not assisted the farmer. He has suffered more than anyone else from the effects of revaluation, tariff cuts, the loss of tax benefits and inflation. The farmer is having trouble competing in world markets. In almost every primary industry in Victoria production cannot be consumed on the home market, and the farmer is forced to rely on the export market to dispose of his surplus. Perhaps he can withstand all the home effects except inflation. The farmer must pay more for labour because of inflation, and the price of his product is either static or falling. Perhaps meat is an exception at present, as it is enjoying a temporary boom.

A lot of rubbish has been talked of late about labour prices being controlled whereas commodity prices are not controlled. If every increase in the wage structure was determined by arbitration or wages boards I might agree, but at present wage increases are caused by collective bargaining or blackmail, and these increases flow on to the farmers and vitally affect the cost of their production.

Mr. President, I thank the House for hearing me in the customary manner, and I support the motion.

On the motion of the Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, September 25.

### CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This small Bill contains only two amendments—one of a machinery nature, and the other to permit societies to make larger indemnified advances.

Sub-section (2) of section 72 of the principal Act sets out the composition of the membership of the Co-operative Housing Advisory Committee. Paragraph (f) provides that one member, who shall be appointed by the Governor in Council, shall be nominated by the Institute of Building and Housing Society Secretaries (Australia).

Recently the institute became incorporated as the Victorian Division of the Building Societies Institute Incorporated, which is a national body with headquarters in Sydney. To ensure nomination by and representation of the correct body in the future, it is necessary to effect the amendment proposed in sub-clause (1) of clause 2 of the Bill. Sub-clause (2) is merely a saving provision designed to protect the prior appointment of the member currently representing the first-named institute on the Co-operative Housing Advisory Committee.

Sub-section (1) of section 76 of the principal Act provides that, in any case where a society makes an advance which, when reduced by the value of the share capital of the member, exceeds 80 per cent but does not exceed 95 per cent of the value of the security, the Treasurer of Victoria may indemnify the society against such of the loss sustained by