

HISTORY OF CONCORD AND YARALLA

*as presented by Mr. L. W. Mutton, M.L.A.,
in his maiden speech in Parliament on 15th August, 1968*

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Official Opening of the Concord Historical Museum on 12th August, 1972
(40796 7.72)*

Mr MUTTON (Yaralla) [11.51]: I am pleased to rise in support of my colleagues' motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, and I congratulate the Government on the programme that it has enunciated. I am conscious of the honour, conferred on me by the electors of Yaralla, of representing them in this Parliament. Especially would I like to thank all those who have supported my candidature on several occasions. I regard my position as one of high privilege and I shall do my utmost always to remain in close touch with the wishes and problems of all my constituents.

My electorate of Yaralla is constituted mainly by the former electorate of Concord with additional areas of Ryde and Parramatta. My predecessor in Concord, Mr Tom Murphy, in a sincere and capable way carried out his work for the electorate and I always found him a worthy opponent. In a similar manner the additional areas of Ryde that I now represent were efficiently represented by Mr Frank Downing, and I pay tribute to the services so ably rendered by these two gentlemen. The name "Yaralla" is an aboriginal word meaning camp or home. I was born in the Yaralla subdivision, which has been in existence for over forty years. I have lived there all my life and I am naturally proud to be the first member for Yaralla and to be the voice of Yaralla in this House.

For the first time in many years this seat of Yaralla embraces virtually the whole of the Concord municipality. This area, located on both sides of the Parramatta River is of great historical significance in Australia's development. When Governor Phillip established a settlement at Parramatta in November, 1788, he expected that its communication with Sydney would be by the waterway. Three years later a rough foot-track was opened, skirting the southern shore of the harbour, to connect the two settlements. That track became known as the Parramatta Road. This road is the southern boundary of the Yaralla electorate which stretches from Concord to Duck Creek, Auburn.

In the early settlement days the distance of about 14 miles from Sydney to Parramatta was too great to be covered conveniently in one day by parties of convicts on foot escorted by soldiers, so a log stockade was built half way along the track, to serve as an overnight guardhouse and staging depot. That stockade was at a place named the Long Bottom—the word bottom there having its old English meaning of low lying land or swamp. Near this historic spot, Concord council is currently planning the Canada Bay reclamation scheme to rid the area of the mosquito-infested mangrove swamp and to provide further large parks and playing areas for the people.

Governor Phillip left Sydney in 1792, to return to England. His successor in charge of the administration of the colony was Major Francis Grose, who was the commanding officer of the military garrison. Two months later, in February, 1793, the first free settlers to arrive in Australia landed in Sydney. Up till this time all inhabitants were convicts, soldiers or civil servants. Lieutenant-Governor Grose gave them their grants near the Long Bottom stockade, in a stretch of country which became known as Liberty Plains. These were the first grants of land made to immigrants who had arrived as free men in civilian status.

On Christmas Eve, 1793, Major Grose signed ten land grants; six were given to non-commissioned officers of the New South Wales Corps and four to free settlers. As a result of this, the popular belief is that the name Concord was given by Major Grose because this was the first area where soldiers and civilians lived

together in harmony and concord. Some historians record that Grose had served as a junior officer in the British forces during the American War of Independence in 1776, and presumably named the Long Bottom area after the town of Concord in Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Land grants made by Major Grose “extended inland from the water’s edge within 2 miles of the district named Liberty Plains.” The grants were located along the shore of Homebush Bay on the western side of the present municipality of Concord. The settlers had access by both water and land to Parramatta and to Sydney, and had easy boat-communication across the river to soldier settlements established there at the Field of Mars and the Eastern Hills of Parramatta, in the present-day Ryde municipality. Some Australian historians, over-emphasising the convict system, have neglected the success stories of the pioneer free settlers at Liberty Plains, Concord, the Field of Mars, and elsewhere near Sydney and Parramatta, but it was those free settlers, rather than the “government men” who chiefly developed the spirit of enterprise and self-reliance that became characteristic of pioneering in Australia.

In 1837 rebellions broke out in upper and lower Canada against Britain’s rule. The rebels in upper Canada were mainly of British descent, and in lower Canada of French descent. The rebellions were crushed by British military forces under the command of Sir George Arthur, later a Governor of Van Diemen’s Land. Some fifty-eight French-Canadian patriots and Canadian patriots of British descent were sent to Sydney, arriving here on 25th February, 1840. The arrival of such a large number of political prisoners was an embarrassment to the Governor of New South Wales, Sir George Gipps, at a time when the British Government, under the pressure of public opinion had decided to discontinue sending convicts to New South Wales to deal with the difficult situation, Governor Gipps segregated the Canadians under military guard in the Long Bottom stockade.

The Canadians were treated as if they were prisoners-of-war, and required to work in a stone quarry at Concord and on the construction of Parramatta Road. They had a certain amount of liberty to wander along the shore of Hen and Chicken Bay where the three bights on the western shore became known as we know them today — Canada Bay, Exile Bay and France Bay. This commemorates one of the most remarkable incidents in the history of Australia. After two years the exiles were given tickets of leave and were able to work for wages in private employment. In 1844 most of them received free pardons and returned to Canada.

The granting of what was called responsible self-government to the Australian colonies in the 1850’s was a direct result of the Canadian rebellion of 1838. The British Commissioner to Canada, Lord Durham, recommended in 1839 that responsible self-government should be granted to a union of lower and upper Canada. This was done, and the same principle was later applied in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, thus enabling the idea of a British Empire based on willing co-operation rather than on coercion. P.R. Stephensen in his book, *The History and Description of Sydney Harbour*, says that in a sense it was the Canadian exiles who should chiefly have been given the credit for establishing parliamentary democracy in Australia. He says further that the rebellion at Eureka hastened a process which they had begun in Canada, and it was those Canadians who gave the name of Concord a special meaning for Australians who see what is significant, and discard what is irrelevant or merely capricious in the foundations of history in Australia.

An ornate pavilion of political interest stands in Cabarita Park, on the foreshores of the Parramatta River. It was in this pavilion on 1st January, 1901, the first day in the twentieth century, that the federation of the Australian colonies was officially proclaimed by the first Governor-General, the Earl of Hopetoun, the representative of Queen Victoria. It was one of the last important events of Queen Victoria’s reign; she died about three weeks later. This pavilion was originally situated in Centennial Park, and Concord Council had sufficient interest and initiative to have it removed to Cabarita Park. It is fitting that Australia’s declaration of federation should be commemorated in this way at Concord, where the Canadian exiles were held as prisoners sixty years previously. The political constitution of the Australian federation and the

freedom that it allows under the Crown were a direct result of concessions won in Canada at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign in 1838.

On the southern banks of the river is the district of Homebush. Here, in 1806, Governor King gave surgeon Darcy Wentworth an estate of 920 acres. One theory is that the name Homebush is short for "home in the bush" and this seems to be the first occasion that the word bush was applied to untilled virgin forest country. In course of time the bush came to mean every part of the country outside Sydney and to this day there is a saying still in everyday use that originated with the pioneers—"Sydney or the Bush"—implying that there are those two contrasting ways of life in Australia.

Sergeant Darcy Wentworth came out here as surgeon on the convict transport *Neptune*, in the second fleet which arrived at Sydney Cove on 28th June, 1790. He spent six years on Norfolk Island as Government medical officer and then returned to Parramatta as resident medical officer in 1800. While developing his Homebush estate, Darcy Wentworth continued as Government medical officer at Parramatta and was appointed also a stipendiary magistrate. He rode daily on horseback from Homebush to Parramatta, and to Sydney whenever official or private business required it. He imported thoroughbred horses from South Africa and India and established at Homebush one of the first racing studs in Australia. While Darcy Wentworth was at Norfolk Island in 1790 his eldest son, William Charles Wentworth, was born. In 1803, William Charles was sent by his father to boarding school in Sussex, England, returning in 1810 to the fine homestead his father had built at Homebush.

In 1805 John Blaxland and his younger brother, Gregory Blaxland, had been granted two square miles of land on the river next to Wentworth's estate. Here, at Silverwater, they built their property, known as Newington. They had extensive land elsewhere, but the Newington estate was regarded by the Blaxlands as their headquarters. Here they established salt pans for evaporating the tide water, and a slaughter house. They salted beef to sell to the ship masters at Sydney and to the government stores as rations for soldiers and convicts. Perhaps this is the origin of bully beef.

William Charles Wentworth became friendly with Gregory Blaxland, his neighbour, and with William Lawson, who had a farm at Prospect. On 11th May, 1813, these three, with four convict stockmen, set out on horseback from one of Blaxland's properties, determined to find a way through the Blue Mountains, which for twenty-five years had frustrated the many attempts that had been made to cross them. Each received from Governor Macquarie a land grant of a thousand acres for this great feat. The success of that expedition was due to its mobility on horseback, and the opening of the great west marked the beginning of the era of horsemanship in Australian outback history. The two large pastoral stations, Homebush and Newington, were the starting points of the immense inland venturing of Australian pioneers on horseback. An Arab stallion named Hector, imported from India in 1803, remained in service at Homebush for nearly twenty years, providing the basic strain not only of Australian racehorses, but also of the stock horses that developed a special breed known as the *Walers*—horses from New South Wales.

Darcy Wentworth was appointed as superintendent of police by Governor Macquarie and established the first police force in New South Wales. Between 1842 and 1849 spectators from Sydney travelled to the racecourse at Homebush by paddlewheel steam ferries or by horseback. When, in 1860, the Australian Jockey Club transferred its headquarters from Homebush to Randwick, the Homebush racecourse became stud and spelling paddocks, and in 1906 the New South Wales Government acquired the land for the establishment of the State abattoirs. In 1863 the adjoining Blaxland property was subdivided and the Newington residence became a Methodist boarding school, named Newington College, which subsequently became one of the great public schools of Sydney. In 1880 the school moved to Stanmore, retaining the name Newington, and Blaxland's original homestead on the Parramatta River was then acquired by the Government as a home for aged women. In recent years, due to the industrialisation of this area, and the erection of a large chemical works some years ago on Crown land alongside the Newington Hospital, this hospital activity was discontinued. The Government has quite sensibly decided to renovate these fine old

premises, and the colonial-built mansion is one of the buildings classified by the National Trust for preservation in perpetuity.

In 1797 Governor Hunter granted 50 acres of land at Concord to Isaac Nichols, an ex-convict, who had served his term of seven years for a petty offence. On the land near Major's Bay—named after Major Grose—Nichols established an excellent orchard of citrus and stone fruits. A man of energy and ability, he left overseers in charge of his Concord farm and built a schooner, the Governor Hunter, in which he traded along the coast to Norfolk Island. In 1809 he was appointed Australia's first postmaster, and in 1840 his Yaralla estate at Concord was purchased by Thomas Walker. The history of Yaralla and this Parliament is linked with the name of Thomas Walker, who in 1843 was elected as one of the representatives of Port Phillip in the first elected New South Wales Legislative Council; in 1845 he was one of the six members of the Council whose signed petition led to the formation of Victoria as a separate colony. In 1860 Thomas Walker commenced building a palatial home on the Yaralla property. The Yaralla estate stretched along the foreshores of the Parramatta River and the Yaralla home is still one of the finest examples of old English architecture in Australia. Thomas Walker was for many years president of the Bank of New South Wales and bequeathed £100,000 to found the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, which is still in existence. One of the two designers of this hospital was Sir John Sulman, after whom the well-known architectural award is named.

Thomas Walker's daughter, Dame Eadith Walker, carried on his philanthropic work after his death, and in 1917, on the Yaralla property, established a hospital for returned soldiers known as "The Camp". Every luxury was lavished on the sick men. Dame Eadith Walker also built several cottages on Concord Road, known as the Yaralla cottages, for elderly people in necessitous circumstances. She also provided endowment for their upkeep. In recent years new accommodation has been added. After Dame Eadith's death in 1938 this House dealt with a bill to enable the trustees to give effect to Mr Thomas Walker's intentions. In addition to the Thomas Walker Hospital and the Yaralla cottages, the bill proposed that the Government should accept money and land for the purpose of establishing the Dame Eadith Walker Convalescent Hospital in the Yaralla mansion. The residue still remains as perpetual trust fund income. Adjoining and dominating the whole of this area is the Repatriation General Hospital, better known as the Yaralla Military Hospital. It is the largest hospital of its kind in Australia. It is a stark reminder of the ravages of war on our country, and is a well-constructed monument to the nursing and medical staff who have so carefully nurtured returned soldiers and their relatives over the past thirty years.

For many years now people residing around the Parramatta River have hoped in vain for the return of the river ferry service which was withdrawn when the depression struck, some forty years ago; many of us feel that the river should again be used for transport service, especially as modern hydrofoil vessels or other speedy motor vessels are now available. This would certainly relieve congestion on the roads and railway services. I hope to see the day when the service can be recommenced. A cruise along the Parramatta River within my electorate reveals an alternation of parks, playing fields, boatsheds, swimming baths and factories of many kinds. These, together with important public works, institutions and the large reclaimed areas by Concord and Ryde councils, display the wide variety of interests in work and in recreation developed in this part of the upper harbour. My electorate consists of the suburbs of Concord, Mortlake, Cabarita, North Strathfield, Homebush, Silverwater, Meadowbank, West and South Ryde, Ermington and Melrose Park. Prior to 1930 Concord was part of the Ryde seat. It has by far a greater percentage of parks and playing fields than any other area of Sydney. In addition, it includes three golf courses—Concord, Ryde-Parramatta, Massey Park—and a further course is proposed by Concord council in Major's Bay. Much of the parkland was obtained by garbage reclamation of mangrove swamps.

Geographically, the Concord electorate is the centre of the Sydney metropolis; it adjoins the site of the proposed Sydney fruit and vegetable markets—another epochmaking decision of this Government. It is ideally situated for transport, being served by electric railway as well as ancillary bus routes. The river is the focal point of the electorate. With these ideal conditions have come large industrial complexes, a

major gas plant, chemical works, paint works, timber yards and a myriad of manufacturing and service industries, including the State brickworks and State abattoirs. Two bridges—a rail bridge and a road bridge—cross the Parramatta River at Ryde. The Ryde rail bridge was built in 1886 as part of the Great Northern line from Strathfield to Newcastle. The Ryde road bridge was built and financed by the Ryde Municipal Council, which recouped its expenditure by tolls. This bridge replaced a vehicle punt that formerly crossed the river. At the western end of the electorate is the Silverwater Bridge and at the eastern end a punt plies between Mortlake and Putney. These two suburbs in Sydney are only a quarter of a mile apart. On the Thames, Mortlake and Putney are 4½ miles apart.

During my term in Parliament I intend to focus my attention on problems affecting my electorate, particularly in regard to further improvements I consider necessary in transport and traffic. Apart from the proposed expressways, the only other way to alleviate Sydney's traffic problem is by diversification of the road pattern and the provision of more bridges over the harbour and the Parramatta River. At least two things, in or near the electorate, cry out for attention—first, a bridge to replace the punt between Mortlake and Putney and, second, a bridge across from Abbotsford to Gladesville. The punt, which was provided in 1928 by the Department of Main Roads, is the only vehicle punt remaining on Sydney Harbour. If a punt has been necessary all these years surely the time is now ripe for its replacement by a bridge, to give a natural flow of traffic from the southern suburbs through Campsie and Burwood to Mortlake, and across to Gladesville—a well defined, south-to-north road pattern across the Parramatta River.

The main northern railway line runs from south to north through the electorate. The Strathfield to Hornsby section was built in 1886. The line was fully electrified to Hornsby in 1929 and substantially the service today remains the same, despite the expenditure of a million or more dollars by the previous Labor Government which left the incoming government the legacy and monument of a half-completed railway bridge and excavation scars along its length. In 1949 the quadruplication of this line was commenced and five or six years later left abandoned. It seems inconceivable that in this day and age a government should leave a work such as this in the heart of a metropolis like Sydney. The uncompleted railway works and railway bridge are a stark reminder of the reckless ways in which public moneys were expended, and I am looking to the day when this work can be recommenced. Because there is only one line each way, suburban passenger trains are often interrupted or delayed by the necessary flow of goods and country rail trains. Out of peak hours the service is half-hourly, as it always has been, because of the non-completion of the quadruplication. Peak hour traffic is inadequate because of its interruption by country trains.

Industry, situated mainly along the foreshores of the river, is such that it provides more job opportunities than are necessary for the electorate. Among the many large industrial concerns are two organisations operated by the State Government, the State abattoir and the State brickworks. I cannot speak too highly of the function of these two enterprises. I have the highest regard for their administration and those responsible for their management. The State abattoir is the largest and most effective meat marketing authority of its kind in the southern hemisphere. The Metropolitan Meat Industry Board has the responsibility of maintaining and controlling abattoirs, slaughterhouses, livestock saleyards and meat markets within the metropolitan abattoir area. Further, it is required to ensure that all meat coming into the area has been slaughtered under proper conditions and passed by a rigid system of inspection. The backbone of these operations is the combination of the Flemington livestock saleyards and the Homebush abattoir at Homebush Bay. Occupying an area of almost 1,000 acres, and employing more than 2,500 men, this enterprise, in facilities and operation, is unmatched anywhere in the southern hemisphere, and is among the biggest in the world.

The erection of these new yards and the associated administrative building was planned after lengthy investigation of the latest overseas facilities. This Government is to be commended for its implementation of the Homebush saleyards, and I am pleased that my first official duty was to attend the opening of these premises with the hard-working former Minister for Agriculture, Mr Chaffey. These saleyards are a showplace attracting overseas visitors interested in the livestock and meat industry, and the favourable

impressions made on them will do much to further Australia's importance as one of the world's leading nations in the export meat trade. Provision has been made for a new concept in the marketing of livestock with the availability of a scale house for the live weighing of cattle. This new development in Australian saleyards will allow producers and buyers the opportunity to negotiate sales by either the existing per head basis or by live weight. Recently a select committee from our sister State, Victoria, examined the new Homebush saleyards and was amazed by its size and efficient operation.

The State brickworks produce approximately 70,000,000 bricks annually, almost 1,500,000 million bricks each working week. It is the largest individual brickyard in Australia and supplies the market at a cheaper rate than any other. I have personal knowledge of the operation of this brickyard over many years, and our own original family home in Concord Road is a fine example of the use of its products. The point I specially wish to make in regard to these enterprises, without wishing to take any credit from the very efficient management I have already mentioned, is that the underlying factor in the success of these authorities is that rates of pay and conditions of employment are directly related to production. In other words, extensive use of free enterprise methods under efficient government administration gives us a remarkable result. Payment is made according to production and, being particularly conversant with the brickyards, I know all the employees make, cart, stack, and transport bricks at a rate per thousand. Having produced their tally for the day by really hard work, they can leave early. All brickyard vehicles are owner driven. The executive staff of the office are public servants who are most diligent and are concerned with the production rate. I wish we could apply this policy in other suitable phases of government enterprise.

Speaking of local-government matters, I feel fully qualified to draw attention to problems encountered by local authorities. As an alderman of Concord for fifteen years, mayor for two years, and a member of the local government executive for several years, I should like to say that my experience in the metropolitan area is that the smaller, local-government areas tend to be more efficient, to have lower rates and are more modest on capital expenditures on themselves than are many larger councils. One of the many local government problems is the indiscriminate disposal of litter on our beaches, in our parks and reserves and on our roads. By far the greatest amount of litter to be seen upon our roads is thrown from moving or stationary vehicles. The footpaths, grass verges, and gutters are spoilt with all kinds of litter. The simplest, most effective and cheapest method of control is on-the-spot fining, and I fail to see why recognised authorities, such as the police and parking police, should not have the power to act. I have sat on local-government anti-litter committees over several years, and on occasions have taken part in the Lord Mayor's anti-litter campaigns. Several attempts have been made to educate the people before taking punitive measures. Despite tens of thousands of dollars spent on such campaigns, education as a method has failed miserably, but not for the want of trying, not for the want of expenditure, and not for the want of provision of garbage facilities. My own council and others have increased the number of garbage receptacles on main roads and in the shopping centres. They are serviced daily, but often are filled to overflowing by some shopkeeper or householder too lazy to use his own existing garbage service.

The habit of throwing soiled paper tissues, cigarette packets, fish and chip papers, and fruit peelings out of car and truck windows must be prevented at all costs. People should clean out their vehicles at home, and paper-tissue makers ought to be supplying all cars with free disposable garbage containers since they promote the sale of disposable tissues. In America, on-the-spot fining cured this habit. There are no two sides to this question: there can be no government and opposition on the subject of litter. Recognising the need for on-the-spot fines, the Victorian Government recently gave the police the right to issue traffic infringement notices to persons caught throwing litter from cars, those charged having the option of paying a fine of \$10 or going to court. This is in contrast with our slow, costly and unworkable court procedures. The only remedy is on-the-spot fining by our police, parking police and, if necessary, local-government officers and rangers. If I do nothing more in this Parliament than bring about a clean-up of Sydney by on-the-spot fining for the throwing of any litter out of stationary or moving vehicles, I shall have contributed much to the improvement in the appearance of the city of Sydney and the State of New South Wales as a whole.

I believe that further drastic action is required to overcome the smog problem. One has only to look from Top Ryde in my electorate, south and west over the areas surrounding Parramatta River to realise how serious this problem is. More often than not the whole western suburbs area is enveloped in unhealthy smog, particularly when a temperature inversion occurs. Our Clean Air Act needs many more teeth to rid us of this problem. I am pleased to see that a select committee of our federal Parliament has already been to Sydney and taken evidence on smog pollution, and I fervently hope that in due course a more genuine all-round effort will be made to overcome this health hazard.

There is evidence everywhere of the pollution of the Parramatta River itself, particularly in its upper reaches, by sewage and industrial effluent. Urgent action must be taken to institute preventive measures before the position becomes irretrievable. The nauseating smell often occurring in the electorate is created by the rotting of algae on the foreshores in hot weather at low tide. This has only occurred in recent years, and it is now beyond endurance in summer time. I am certain the electors of Yaralla would want me to urge the Maritime Services Board to undertake a programme to eradicate this nuisance.

Concord Municipal Council has an exemplary record in reclaiming swampy land. This council pioneered the use of garbage as landfill. An example of this is the Edwards-Massey Park complex, where mangrove swamps have been transformed into an 18-hole golf course, two bowling clubs, one cricket field and four football fields. There are still other bays to be completed. The Maritime Services Board should extend the limit lines in mangrove swamp areas and promote the dredging of bays in partnership with local authority. In Homebush Bay the Maritime Services Board is undertaking reclamation work on a large scale creating financial gain for itself. I am a firm advocate of the self-help concept; I feel the Maritime Services Board should not only subsidise but also encourage dredging and reclamation where the local-government body is prepared to develop and maintain the filled areas as foreshore reserves.

Local government is pleased with the actions of this Government. The decision to have a Royal commission into local government finance was the major breakthrough. For many years local government tried in vain to have an inquiry held, but the previous government would not listen to their pleas. Local-government bodies applaud the local-government grant of \$4,000,000. This is another major step forward and at least a welcome principle has been established. For a long time local government has sought an increase in the subsidies payable under the Library Act and the payment of subsidies on capital expenditure on library projects. It was pleasing to hear His Excellency refer to this in his address. There is no doubt that our Government is a government of decision; gone are the days of procrastination and interminable delays.

Another matter of considerable concern to local government is the spiralling cost of street lighting. The standard of lighting in our streets and highways is continually being improved. I have no quarrel with this, but I do say that the standard is too frequently changed. Every improvement increases the cost per light per annum to ratepayers. Frequent changes in the standard of street lighting is good business for the county councils; it ensures an ever increasing income at the expense of local ratepayers. The rental of the smallest street light is approximately thirty cents a week. More elaborate lights such as those used on main roads cost \$1.10 each a week. It is not so long ago that three times this figure was considered to be a good rental for a home. There can be no comparison between local councils and county councils so far as services, staff and income are concerned.

Municipal or shire councils are essentially service and social welfare organisations; county councils are virtually trading authorities. Electricity is generated by others and sold by county councils. A slight increase in the rate of the electricity unit means a heavy addition to the county councils income. County councils are able to pay higher wages and offer better conditions and inducements to their staff. County councils are, I believe, the over-rich relations of municipal and shire councils. County councils have enough financial leeway to absorb the cost of street lighting, or at least to bear the major part of this cost. Street lighting is of benefit to motorists and every member of our community, not merely the ratepayers. If county councils had to bear the cost of street lighting they would show greater responsibility towards it and

there would be less inclination to have frequent changes in the standard.

Now I would like to refer to road safety. Many lives would be saved by the floodlighting of all marked pedestrian foot crossings, particularly those on highways and secondary roads. Pedestrians place a lot of faith in crossings; where crossings are not so floodlit, their use at night-time is hazardous. The pedestrian does not always have the safety he sometimes assumes he has. I know of a crossing on Parramatta Road in my electorate where, in three years, thirty-three accidents occurred to the employees of one firm. These accidents resulted in the deaths of three people; all the fatalities occurred at night-time. I understand that in Melbourne it is compulsory to floodlight all pedestrian crossings. When this regulation was introduced some crossings were abandoned. The local-government authority was not prepared to pay the cost of floodlighting, which was approximately \$200 per annum. I believe this Government should insist upon all crossings being floodlit. This would save many lives. If the Government adopted this attitude it would reduce indiscriminate requests for pedestrian crossings. I suggest that the cost of providing floodlights should be shared equally between the local-government authority, the county council or electricity authority and, where applicable, the Department of Main Roads.

My interest in road traffic problems in the electorate of Yaralla extends over a period of twenty years. One cannot drive in or out of my electorate without using some improved road patterns which I, as an alderman, have initiated or advocated. In 1953 I suggested that sets of traffic lights should be installed along Concord Road. After many deaths and long delay I convinced the Government of the necessity to implement my plan. Recently a new set of lights was installed in Parramatta Road; it took only a few weeks. This is in direct contrast to the poor performance of some years ago. In 1964 only twenty sets of lights were erected, but already this year eighty-seven sets of lights have been installed. This work is carried out by contractors for the Department of Motor Transport.

In 1955 I suggested that three lanes of traffic should be provided on Ryde Bridge. I also suggested the construction of a secondary road parallel to Parramatta Road through St Luke's Park to Drummoyne. Seven years later the Ryde bridge was three-lane; after a further two years the secondary road was constructed. Little cost was involved in the work carried out on the bridge, and only \$30,000 was expended on the provision of the secondary road. The bridge over Powell's Creek canal at Homebush Bay has been widened and soon at North Strathfield we will have a new, four-lane bridge over the railway line. In the 1959 elections I demanded the erection of the Silverwater bridge. The leader of the Liberal Party mentioned it in his policy speech, and soon after that election the bridge was built. I intend to continue making propositions for the advancement of road safety wherever they are merited.

The final matter I intend to deal with relates to apprenticeship, particularly as it affects the building trade. The Meadowbank Technical College is situated in my electorate and in the past three years the total number of students attending that college has increased by twenty-five per cent, from 3,200 to 4,000. Despite the overall increase, during the same period the number of apprentices doing carpentry and joinery has decreased from 161 to 107. Figures from the Department of Labour and Industry reveal that in 1966 throughout New South Wales 872 lads were apprenticed to the trade; this year the figure dropped to 815. In fact, all trades have suffered a reduction in their numbers of apprentices. Bricklaying apprentices have dropped from 132 to 92, plumbing apprentices from 400 to 300, and plastering apprentices from 64 to 28. All the figures show a sharp downward trend. This is not a reflection on the Government. It is indicative of the trend of building organised by project builders, financiers, speculators and project developers.

Many members of the Master Builders' Association still operate with the time honoured practice of apprentice training. However, with the prevalence of project building the position is deteriorating rapidly. When one considers that an indentureship in the building trade is for five years the position is even worse than appears from the figures. Recently when building tradesmen were granted an increase of \$5.50 the fifth year apprentice, who would have no family responsibilities, received an increase of \$4.40. This last rise made the employment of apprentices far more uneconomic than it already was, and those employing apprentices on these high rates of pay are at a considerable economic disadvantage to most of their competitors who in

the main subcontract all their work, do not employ wages staff and never have apprentices. The building industry should be levied for the training of tradesmen for the future, just as everyone who uses timber must pay a timber levy for reforestation .

In Britain, under the Industrial Training Act of 1964, such an arrangement has been made. The Industrial Training Board has power to impose a levy, and it uses this power. We must adopt the same system to ensure that we shall have sufficient tradesmen in the future. Already New South Wales has a dearth of stonemasons and bricklayers. The suggestion I have made will not interest those whose sole concern is to make a quick profit, but the only way to protect the building industry is to train for the future and levy those who are not willing to participate in this training. The principle of subcontracting is good, but it has affected apprenticeship training. I aim to correct this situation.

For the first time this Government has a good working majority in this House, and I am proud to be one of the Liberal Party's six additional new members domiciled in the ministerial room nearby. The result of the last elections indicates that the people support a government united in decision and action. In conclusion I assure the House and my constituents that I am very happy in my new vocation. I have learned much in the past few short months. I have been encouraged by the help of my colleagues and the courtesy of the staff. I hope that I shall be able to make a worthy contribution to the affairs of community and State.