

news

No. 28 MAY 1974

The section of the Mulgrave Freeway between Jacksons Road and Stud Road was opened to traffic on Wednesday, 10th April, in time for Easter holiday traffic. The opening of this section provided motorists with an 8½ mile length of freeway between Springvale Road and the Princes Highway at Doveton.

The section of freeway between Springvale Road and Jacksons Road was opened temporarily for the 1973 football finals at J.F.L. Park, Waverley, and then opened on a permanent basis in December, 1973. The section from Stud Road to the Princes Highway at Doveton has been in use since November, 1972.

TOUR OF NEW SECTION

A few days before the most recently completed section was opened a tour of inspection of the total continuous 8.6 miles of the Mulgrave Freeway was arranged. Representatives of local government, the contractor, the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, news media, and senior C.R.B. officers accompanied the Minister of Transport, the Hon. E. R. Meagher, M.B.E., E.D., M.P. in a cavalcade of cars in travelling from the Springvale Road interchange through to the Princes Highway. The inspection party also viewed the construction work currently being undertaken on the South Gippsland Freeway between the Princes Highway and the South Gippsland Highway.

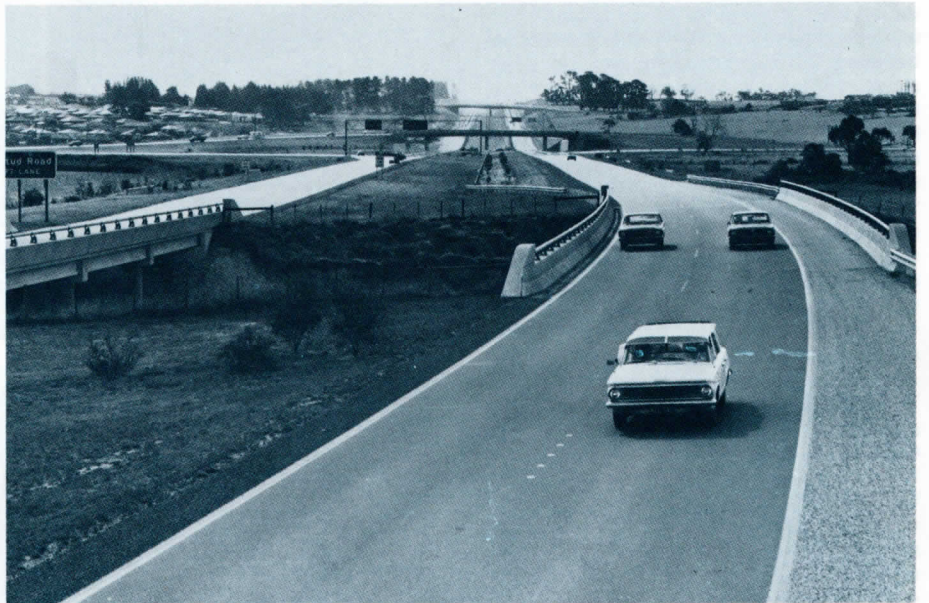
Y-PASSING DANDENONG

Later, the Minister addressed the guests and spoke of the need to develop transportation systems and projects which will enable the community to go about its affairs with the maximum choice of mode of transport. "This freeway system, which is designed to by-pass the heavily congested area of Dandenong and enable heavy traffic to get about its business expeditiously, is one of those projects", said the Minister.

20,000 TREES TO BE PLANTED

Mr. Meagher also spoke of the successful establishment of thousands of native trees and shrubs which were evident on the section east of Stud Road. About half of the intended 20,000 seedling plants have already been planted west of Stud Road. Motorists will find the Mulgrave Freeway to be an attractive and practical alternative to the congested Princes Highway leading to and through Dandenong. Traffic travelling south-east may enter the freeway at Springvale Road Wellington Road, Stud Road, and Heatherton Road. Traffic travelling north-west may enter the freeway at the Princes Highway, Heatherton Road, Stud Road, Jacksons Road, and Wellington Road.

Mulgrave Freeway link completed



The Mulgrave Freeway east of Stud Road.



The Minister of Transport, The Hon. E. R. Meagher, M.B.E., E.D., M.P. addressing guests after the tour of inspection.

M.M.B.W. roading responsibilities transferred to C.R.B.

The Premier of Victoria has announced that as from 1st July, 1974 the M.M.B.W. responsibilities "for the design and con-

struction of arterial roads and bridges including freeways in the metropolitan area will be transferred to the Country Roads Board which will then become the principal road construction authority for the whole State".

Amending legislation to give effect to the transfer was presented to Parliament during the autumn session.

M.M.B.W. staff engaged on work involving roads and bridges will be given the opportunity to transfer to the C.R.B.

Roadside Metrics

On 1st July, 1974, a nation-wide change in road signs to metric units will commence with the objective of completing the change within one month.

Some signs will be replaced entirely, but others will have the numerical information changed by use of an overlay. Whether or not a sign will be replaced instead of having the relevant information changed will depend on the legend of each sign. For example, speed limit signs will be replaced because the numerical figures on such signs represent a large proportion of the total sign area. On the other hand, finger board signs showing both distance and township names, only need conversion of the distance numerals by overlays.

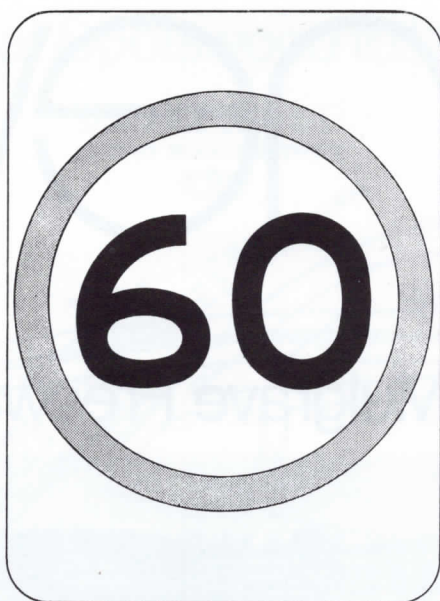
The new speed limit signs will be similar to those used in Europe, except that they will be mounted on a rectangular plate instead of a circular one. The speed value to replace the present 35 miles per hour will be 60 kilometres per hour. Other speed limit values to be posted on the new signs will be 75, 80 and 90 km/h. The absolute speed limit to replace the present trial 60 m.p.h. will be 100 km/h. C.R.B. workmen will change the signs on State highways and roads under direct C.R.B. control. Municipal councils will undertake the necessary conversion of signs on roads under their control. The changing of speed limit signs will be given the highest priority.

Mileposts have been in position for many years on State highways and proclaimed tourists' roads. Even though motorists are familiar with the white concrete posts, with black letters and numbers, which are placed at every mile, they may not realise the additional use of mileposts as reference points for administration and other reasons. For C.R.B. purposes the mileposts play an important administrative role in the accurate location of limits of road works, bridges, surveys, and roadside facilities such as rest areas, fireplaces, etc. They are also used by police, electricity and telephone authorities as reference points.

On State highways radiating from Melbourne, mileposts are presently placed on the left travelling from Melbourne and marked with the letter M and the distance in miles of the post from the G.P.O. in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. The traveller, whether going towards or away from Melbourne, reads his distance from Melbourne. On circumferential State highways, not radiating from Melbourne, the mileposts have indicated the initial letter of the next major town, and the distance from the post to that town.

The C.R.B. has carried out an odometer survey in kilometres on all State highways. The opportunity was taken to remove discrepancies accumulated over the years from improvements to the road system.

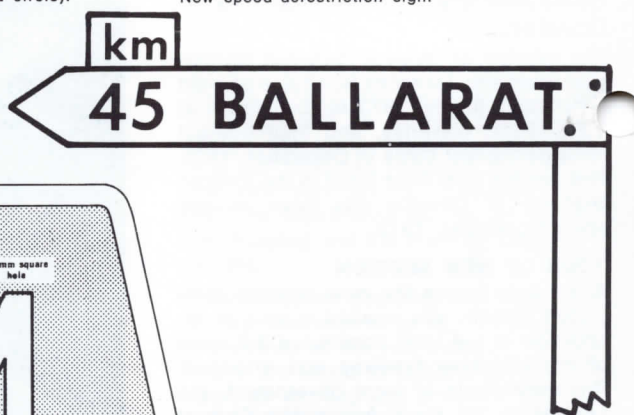
On metric conversion the C.R.B. will use two kinds of markers to indicate distances in kilometres. In general, at every 5 kilometres there will be an aluminium distance marker mounted on a steel post. The marker will consist of a dark green plate with a white reflectorized initial let-



New 60 km/h. speed limit sign. (Red circle).

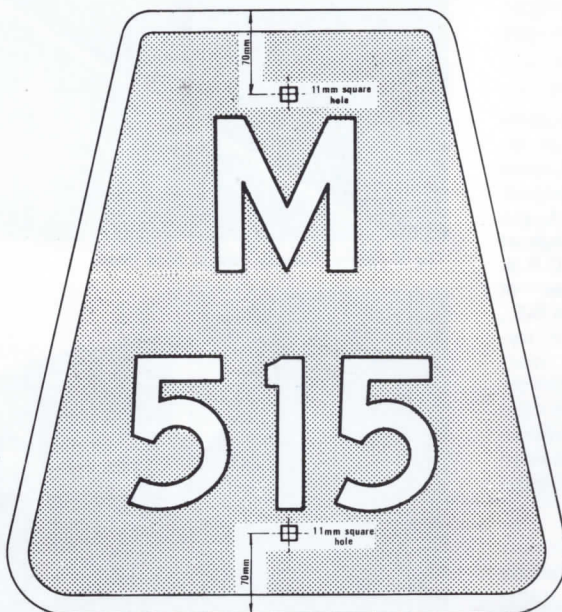


New speed derestriction sign.



Fingerboard sign.

(Km plates will be removed after a year).



Kilometre distance marker.

ter and distance numeral, and a white reflectorized border. At every intermediate kilometre there will be a white 4-inch (100 mm) x 2-inch (50 mm) guide post with a white reflectorized legend on a small black plate near the top of the post. The old mileposts will be retained in their present positions for as long as they are required for reference purposes.

A vast amount of recording, planning, re-quisioning and manufacturing has gone into the conversion. For example, every fingerboard under C.R.B. control has been recorded so that the appropriate new metric number for each can be determined. In total, some 40,000 individual numbers will be required. These together with many kinds of overlays for larger signs have been manufactured at the C.R.B. workshops at Syndal. Other signs requiring complete replacement, or new items

such as the kilometre distance markers are being obtained commercially. When totalling the new numbers for ordering, it was found that there are more numerals 1 and 2 required than any other, and that the distribution of the other numerals is not uniform.

The cost of converting all signs on roads declared or proclaimed under the Country Roads Act is being met by the C.R.B. The cost of converting speed limit signs on all other roads is being met from a special grant made available by the State Government to the Road Safety and Traffic Authority.

A wide publicity campaign will be conducted by a committee formed by the Metric Conversion Board some weeks prior to and after 1st July. Through all news media, the public will be informed of the imminent change to metric motoring.

Matthew Flinders Memorial Cairn

At the Little River Rest Area on the Princes Freeway, the Chairman of the C.R.B., Mr. R. E. V. Donaldson, officially rededicated a monument to Captain Matthew Flinders during a ceremony held on Friday, 22nd March, 1974.

In 1952, on the 150th anniversary of Flinders' ascent of the You Yangs, a cairn was unveiled by the then Mayor of Geelong, the late Councillor B. E. Purnell, on a rocky outcrop on the west side of the Princes Highway at a point 32.93 miles from Melbourne. This cairn was composed of honeycomb basalt rocks put together with the help of boys of the Geelong Grammar School to indicate the general area of Flinders' line of march between Port Phillip Bay and the You Yangs.

With the progressive change to freeway conditions along the Princes Highway it became necessary, from a safety point of view, to remove the Flinders cairn from beside the highway.

CONVENIENT REST AREA

A convenient place for resiting the cairn was in the rest area developed by the C.R.B. some 0.7 miles nearer Melbourne, and an examination of Flinders' journal and survey information by an officer of the C.R.B. revealed that the rest area lies very close to Flinders' line of march.

The cairn itself, estimated to weigh between 7 and 8 tons, was found to be supported on a concrete slab 6 inches thick, facilitating the lifting, transporting and relocating of the cairn in one piece. Relocation was carried out early in February with the agreement of the councils of the Shire of Corio and the City of Geelong, and the Geelong Historical Society. A new sign has been placed alongside the cairn to inform travellers that **"This cairn commemorates the fact that Captain Matthew Flinders, R.N., made the first survey of this district from the summit of the You Yangs, which he named Station Peak. The arrow shows his party's line of march from the Bay."**



At the plaque unveiling ceremony — (left to right) Sir John Holland, Chairman of the Flinders Bi-centenary Citizens' Council, Lady Holland, Mr. R. E. V. Donaldson, Cr. J. F. Deppeler (Corio Shire President), Mrs. Deppeler, and Cr. J. W. Pettitt (Corio Shire).

Princes Freeway Drouin and Warragul section

The C.R.B. has recently revised preliminary plans for the 14 kilometre (9 mile) section of the Princes Freeway which will be constructed to by-pass the towns of

Drouin and Warragul on the Princes Highway.

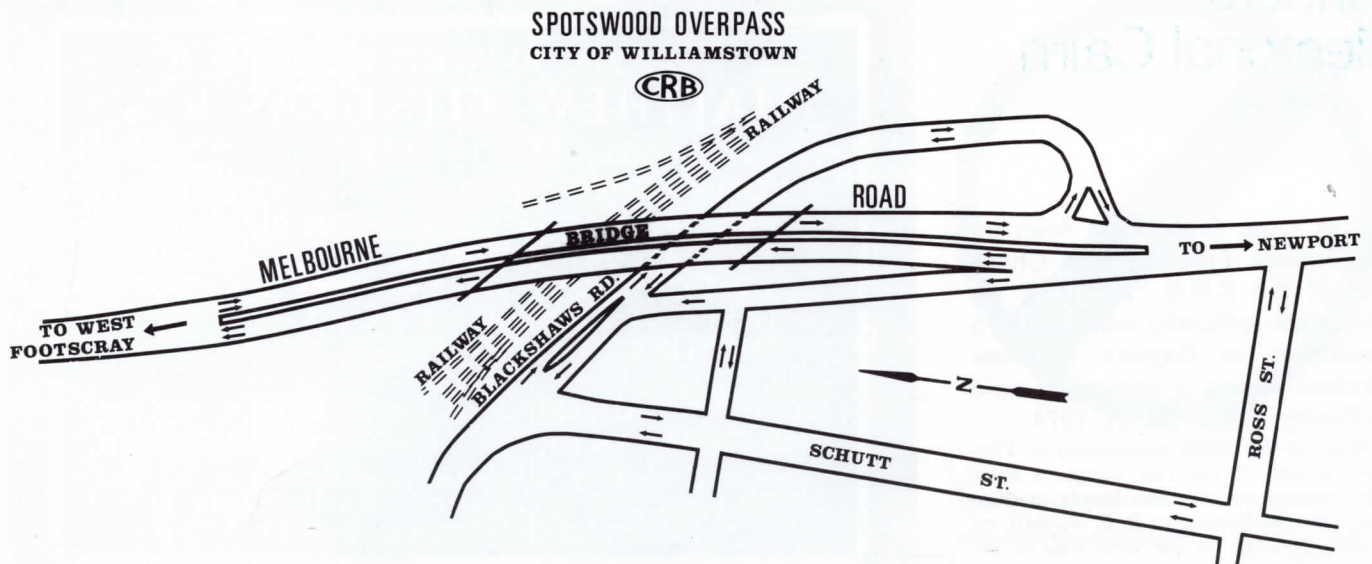
Plans have been forwarded to the Shires of Buln Buln and Warragul for consideration by the Councils.

This follows a period of review and more detailed investigation of the project since its original conception several years ago. The freeway will have dual carriageways and will by-pass Drouin to the north and Warragul to the south. Full grade separation at interchanges, control of access and the construction of alternative local

roads will be included in the project. It is intended to provide interchanges for access to and from the freeway at Robin Hood, at the Princes Highway, between Drouin and Warragul, and east of Warragul. Subject to finance being available, it is hoped to commence major work on the project late in 1975 and to complete the work about four years later. The cost of the project is currently estimated to be \$15,000,000.

Planning for the project is being co-ordinated by the C.R.B. Divisional office at Traralgon.

Rail level crossing at Spotswood to be eliminated



The C.R.B. has invited tenders for the construction of a steel and reinforced concrete bridge to carry Melbourne Road traffic over the railway at Spotswood.

Construction of a road over rail overpass will eliminate the existing railway level crossing where closures of the manually operated gates cause serious delays to the flow of traffic between Footscray and Williamstown. At peak hours cars are often held in queues of half a mile in Melbourne Road while waiting to pass through the crossing.

The total project consists of the construction of a composite steel and reinforced concrete overpass structure 105 metres (345 feet) long by 20 metres (67 feet) wide carrying four traffic lanes plus footways for pedestrians, new approach embankments, and improvements to local roads in the immediate vicinity of the new overpass. The eastern half of the new structure will be built first and then used to carry traffic while the remaining half of the overpass is completed.

COST OF PROJECT

The estimated cost of the project is \$1.6

million, which under the State Government's scheme for the abolition of level crossings will be shared by the C.R. (50%), the Level Crossings Fund (45%) and the Victorian Railways (5%). When the new structure is completed late in 1975 its appearance will be enhanced by landscaping and the planting of trees and shrubs.

Construction activities may cause temporary restrictions to the traffic flow in the vicinity of the rail crossing, and motorists are urged to observe carefully and heed all warning and direction signs provided for their safety and convenience.

Municipal Engineers' conference

A conference of Municipal Engineers sponsored by the C.R.B. in conjunction with the Local Government Engineers' Association was held at the C.R.B. Offices, Kew, from 19th to 22nd March.

This thirtieth annual conference was officially opened by the Minister of Transport, the Hon. E. R. Meagher, M.B.E., E.D., M.P.

In his opening remarks Mr. Meagher referred to the Government's decision to transfer to the C.R.B. the roadmaking responsibilities of the M.M.B.W. as part of the objective of centralising all transport administration under the one Ministry. "It is highly desirable", said Mr. Meagher, "that we have one road authority looking after the State as a whole". Mr. Meagher assured the gathering that the establishment of one State Road Authority would not mean a reduction in the funds available to country municipalities for roadworks. Rather, he hoped there would be more money to spend on roads everywhere.

ENGINEERS REPRESENT ENORMOUS EXPERIENCE

Mr. Meagher also mentioned that local government engineers represent an enormous amount of experience, and it was essential that the ability to make deci-

sions at the local government level be retained.

Topics discussed during the conference included the development of major sporting complexes, new towns in overseas countries, deep strength asphalt road

pavements new plan production techniques, reflective sign materials and the application and use of small computers and calculators.

Approximately 240 engineers attended the conference, representing most municipalities in Victoria and several other departments and authorities. Some engineers from Tasmania also attended.



The Minister of Transport addressing the opening session of the conference. Mr. Meagher was introduced by C.R.B. Chairman, Mr. R. E. V. Donaldson (right).

Some thoughts about the motor car

CRB NEWS SUPPLEMENT

By Professor Sir Colin Buchanan, C.B.E.,
Director, School of Advanced Urban Studies,
University of Bristol.

The following article is a slightly abbreviated version of an address presented by Professor Buchanan at a conference on multi-storey and underground car parks held in Britain. The motor car — “just about the most convenient device that we ever invented” — is not being adequately catered for according to Professor Buchanan. The article is considered to be of particular interest in Victoria because it presents problems which closely relate to the traffic situation existing in Melbourne and other urban centres.

At the present time my desire to be objective is being sorely tested. In view of the wholesale abandonment of urban road proposals which has been taking place recently, and the accompanying proclamations concerning sweeping but loosely-specified and quite unproven reforms of public transport, it is comforting to find that anyone should be thinking about parking structures for that apparently despicable object, the private motor car.

So I will give you some thoughts about the motor car which seem to me to have been overlooked in recent changes of policy. In a letter to “The Times” in March, I pointed out the curious juxtaposition which has appeared in the columns of that paper in the few days previous. On one page there had been letters bemoaning the motor car and new roads in town and country, and facing these letters had been four supplements on the European motor industry which conveyed in essence the determination of the industry to meet the demand for cars in the lower income groups where lies the big potential expansion of the market. I implied that if the industry were to succeed in its aim then some additional road space would have to be provided; if the space were denied the eventual result would be a curtailment of car ownership, and the people to suffer would be the working men and their families just coming to the point at which a car could be afforded. This, I suggested, posed an extremely tricky political issue.

COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC

I am not saying, of course, for one moment, that the case for increasing the amount of road space rests solely on the need to cater for cars. It rests also and strongly on the need to cater for commercial traffic which strikes me as the arch-destroyer of urban environments when given the run of existing streets, but which is certain to remain the absolute backbone of the urban transport system for goods, commodities and many services. There seems to me to be much chronic misunderstanding about commercial traffic and even about the way towns work in the most elementary terms. But my concern in these few remarks is with the car and the need to preserve some sense of realism about it and not to adopt an ostrich-like attitude towards it in the hope that it will disappear. I feel very concerned lest the people who see cars as anti-social will, by thwarting urgently needed schemes, actually inflict far worse damage to the environment than the roads they are afraid of, and will prejudice the legitimate desires of many ordinary members of the public.

CONVENIENCE

What, I ask, has been the reaction of the general public to the attacks which have been levelled against the improvement of the road system? It has turned a deaf ear to them. It has not shown the slightest interest. It has just gone steadily on investing in cars at an unabated rate. Why does the public behave like this? Some

people say it is all on account of the manufacturers and their ad-men ramming the car down the public's reluctant throat. I do not believe a word of this. Individual manufacturers obviously seek to promote the sale of one make of car rather than another, but I have no doubt that the real reason why people buy cars is because they are such extraordinarily useful and attractive things. Status-seeking, ‘keeping-up-with-the-Joneses’, are irrelevant side-tags — it is the sheer convenience of the car that is its own best salesman. We ignore this fact at our peril. When I say something like this the critics pounce and say this terrible person is advocating cars for everyone for all possible journeys, with no trains or buses nor any kind of public transport, with towns cut to pieces by new roads, and the young and the old and infirm and the people who cannot drive or dislike cars for some reason will be left immobilised. I am advocating no such things. My colleagues and I have done more than anyone in this country to portray the traffic-environment conflict, and to demonstrate the difficulties that arise in crowded centres if everyone seeks private car mobility. We have proved the case time and time again for improved public transport services with accompanying restraint measures on car usage in crowded centres, never for one moment have we forgotten the claims of that sizable minority which for a variety of reasons cannot avail itself of the convenience of the private car, and I myself have pointed out the need for public transport subsidies for many years. But at the same time I have not been such a

fool as to overlook the really big thing that is happening, namely the rapid extension of car ownership through the main bulk of the population, nor have I been so arrogant as to say this tide is anti-social and must be checked.

ENRICHMENT OF LIFE

I have never managed to make very much money, and for the most part, in my half-century of motoring, I have made do with second-hand cars. But what an enrichment of life has resulted! Marvellous holidays — camping, caravanning, much of Europe at our disposal in a three-week vacation. Short visits in infinite variety — to relatives and friends, to the sea, out into the country, to great houses, gardens, zoos and parks. Spur-of-the-moment trips — it is a fine Sunday, so out we go. What a God-send to the wife — the kids, the shopping, the bathing things, the buckets and spades, the potties and nappies, the gum-boots, the macs, the toys, the dog, the picnic meal, the radio, the books — all bundled in as easily as possible. What a blessing is the car as a modest load-carrier, what a contrast to struggling onto buses when you are loaded up with children and shopping. What a boon has our car been for all kinds of modest services — taking the parents out when they were alive, taking aunty out now, rushing the kids to the doctor or dentist in some childish emergency, giving lifts in many circumstances, occasionally getting to work when public transport is broken down or on strike. What a versatile device is the car — one and the same vehicle will take you to the post office with a parcel or the whole family to Athens or Istanbul.

All this and far more have we enjoyed, and a very ordinary typical family at that. I say that the critics of the car, and those who would ban it, with their sweeping generalisations about public transport, are as blandly disregarding of the value of all these social and casual journeys (which add up to a way of life which people show not the slightest sign of giving up) as they are ignorant of the complex patterns which the journeys trace when depicted on a map. It is a fault of transport studies to date that they have done so little to illuminate the nature of car journeys and the motivations that prompt them.

ROLE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

No-one can accuse me of being a car fanatic for saying these things. In the course of most of a lifetime spent working in central London I have been as stalwart a user of the public transport system as anyone you could name. Of course, we need public transport systems better than we have now, but a lot of nonsense is talked about their capabilities. The fact is that public transport is highly specialised in the services it can perform. The essence of it is the conveyance of people in bulk, so it needs concentrated loads over regular runs. The journey-to-work in urban centres is the classical example where public transport has a clear role. But if you try to compel the transfer to public transport of movements for which it is not suited, such as the mass of random criss-cross social journeyings which I have been describing, and for which the car is pre-eminently suitable, the result will be that the movements will not be made at all, and life will be all the poorer.

TOWN-COUNTRY RELATIONSHIP

Some people seek to draw a division between town and country. They reluctantly accept the need for more road space in the country, but reject it in the towns. This viewpoint overlooks the fact that the great bulk of the population of this island lives in towns, including the suburbs and the great scattered fringes. It is in the towns where car ownership is building up because this is where people live. This is where all the journeys begin and end. This is why we have traffic in towns. This is why there is traffic in Bath. When people advocate "declaring war on the urban motorist" I do not think they understand what they are talking about. They do not seem to understand what people are, where they live, how they live, what they do with themselves, where and why and how often they move around, nor how a community functions. Declare war on the car commuter to urban centres if you like, it makes sense because up to a point alternative modes of travel can be contrived. But to speak of declaring war on the urban motorist is ignorant and dangerous talk.

The town-country relationship is very important in this matter. For many years there has been a tendency, within the limited resources allocated (and perhaps because of them) to tackle the easy part of the improvement of the road system, namely the open country roads. I would say that this part of the system is at long last beginning to shape up. The prospect of easier cross-country journeys naturally encourages people to travel — why should it not? But, as I have said, the vast bulk of the journeys begin and end in the towns and it seems to me ludicrous to think that we can go on improving the open country system without undertaking the complementary measures needed in the towns for effecting the local distributions?

BALANCED POLICIES

I do not advocate, and never have advocated, going the whole hog with the motor vehicle. Like many things in life when used in excess it is a curse, but in moderation it can be a boon. I believe a half-way house can be found. I and my colleagues, and many other planners, have striven earnestly over the last 10 years to devise balanced policies for many urban communities. Now we are seeing the results of years of patient and devoted labour thrown out of the window for what seems little more than short-term political advantage. How else can one explain the action of the GLC Labour group who, when in opposition, announced that no matter what the Layfield Panel of Inquiry (that incredibly meticulous investigation) reported they would tear up the London motorway plans? What is the hope for long-term planning or for staff morale in this kind of atmosphere? The result, I am afraid, will be worsening environmental conditions for thousands of people living alongside existing roads, and, in the end, the denial of car usage for many people who despite all the talk of public participation have never had this issue put to them. Why cannot we be less hypocritical, and admit that a motor car is just about the most convenient device that we ever invented, and that possession of it and usage in moderation is a perfectly legitimate ambition for all classes of people?