

should bear in mind the experience in the last war of such English cities as Plymouth, Southampton and Coventry where destruction of the commercial centre resulted not only in the loss of vast quantities of food and commodities, but for a time virtually paralysed the whole city and added enormously to the difficulty of feeding the people who had been dependent on these centres. Effective decentralisation of the commercial and administrative activities of Melbourne would be a valuable contribution to civil defence.

## SATELLITE TOWNS

Some people believe that the answer to many problems of the large city is decentralisation of activities to satellite towns. These people will probably criticise this planning scheme because it makes no provision for the establishment of such towns, and they may point to what is being attempted round London and near other English cities.

There is no doubt that satellite towns serve a useful purpose, and the time may come when they will be desirable here. Geelong, with the only significant harbour outside Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley, now provide the amenities and opportunities for the establishment of new industries linked with metropolitan industry, and for the decentralisation of other activities, but closer in, centres such as Werribee, Whittlesea, Lilydale, Ferntree Gully, Bayswater, Dandenong, Frankston, and places in the Mornington Peninsula, are worth investigating with a view to further development.

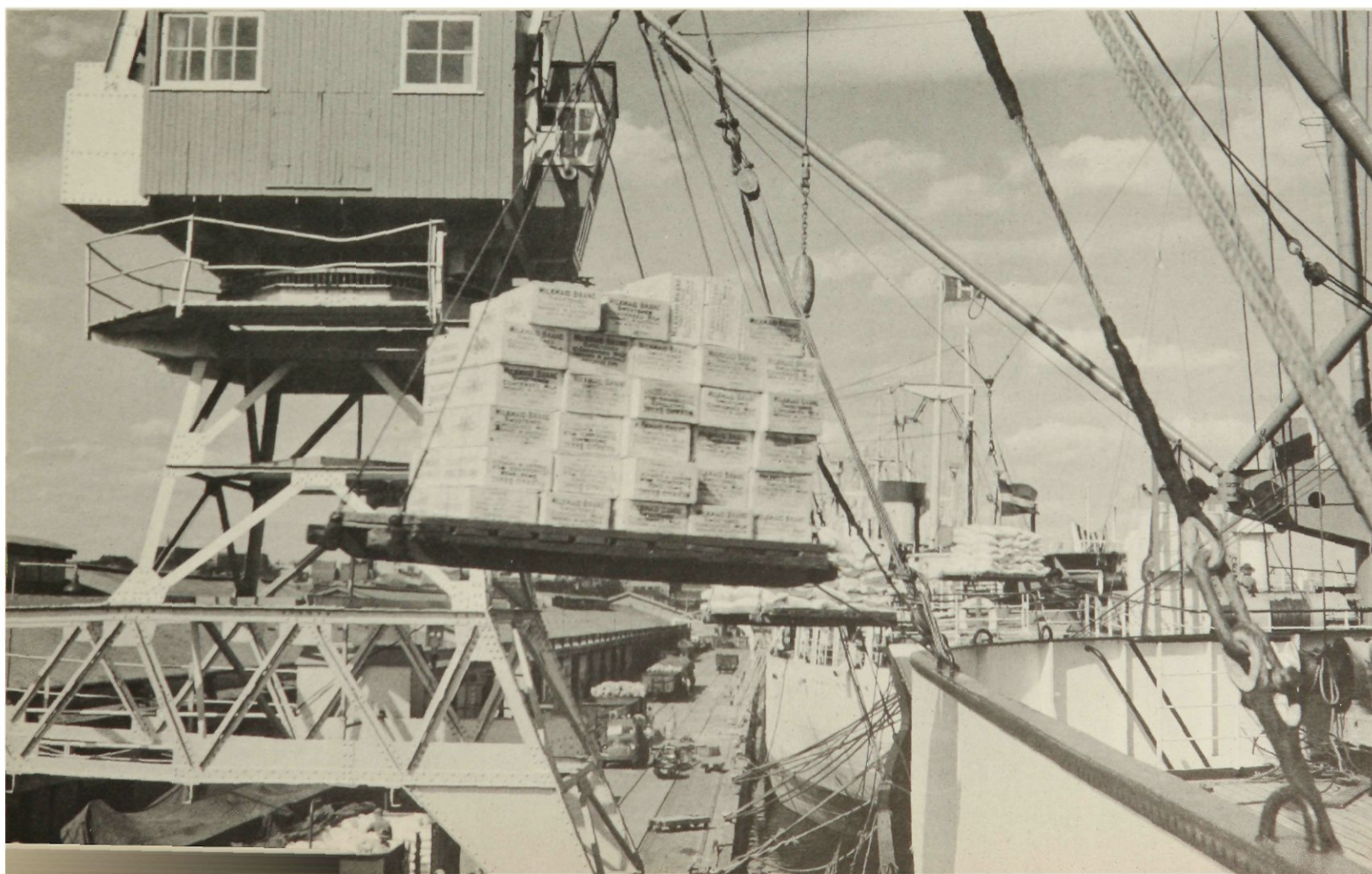
However, except for Dandenong and Frankston, whose expansion is envisaged in the planning scheme, all these localities are outside the metropolitan planning area and therefore lie outside the Board's responsibility. It was obviously not the intention of Parliament that such broader regional matters should be dealt with, because the boundaries of the planning area, as defined by the legislation, do not, in any sense, enclose a geographic region. They have been drawn merely to define an administrative area of sufficient extent to permit the planning of the metropolis itself.

Moreover, it must be borne in mind that however desirable it may be to encourage the growth of satellite centres around a large town, factors which have led in England to the development of the new towns do not operate here. Although London and Melbourne both sprawl over vast areas of country, the problems of the two cities are dissimilar.

In London, as indeed in all cities of the Old World, the problem is the congestion of population tightly packed into the central areas.<sup>(1)</sup> The major task in recent re-development schemes has been to find some way in which the population of these densely settled inner areas can be moved out to more congenial surroundings, and thus make way for better living conditions in the old locations. It is for this reason that the British Government has adopted a policy of decentralisation to the satellite new towns as a means of relieving overcrowding and of removing unsuitably located industries.

(1) For example, the net population density in some parts of London, such as Greenwich, reaches 200 persons an acre. In the older parts of Glasgow densities are up to 700 persons an acre. In corresponding areas in Melbourne the densities are only about 120 persons per acre and then only in very limited areas.

*"We find Melbourne . . . the centre of import and export*





The situation in Melbourne is the opposite. Our population is so thinly spread that it creates its own problems. Paradoxically as it may seem, although there is need for decentralisation of some activities, there would be some advantages if more people could be induced to live in the inner suburbs. At least the population now living in these suburbs should be re-housed there under more suitable conditions and should not be further dispersed. We have seen also that there is still room within the present urban boundaries for a greatly increased population and that the continual extension of the urban area is resulting in the wasteful use of existing assets. Our problem is not to disperse excess population, but to encourage a more compact and more economical community structure by filling up the open spaces which have been left as the city has expanded.

The whole question of development beyond the limits of this planning scheme should be considered many years, possibly twenty or more, before the population reaches the 2,500,000 for which the scheme provides. If the decision is to have satellite towns, they must be planned and developed before the available land within the urban zones becomes scarce and values move up unduly. Only in this way can the householder, the industrialist and the businessman be given an opportunity to exercise their choice, and new towns be built up of free citizens and not economic exiles from the metropolis.

### DECENTRALISATION WITHIN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

To better appreciate the impact on metropolitan problems of concentration in a single city of so many State activities, let us consider the two important ways in which cities have grown.

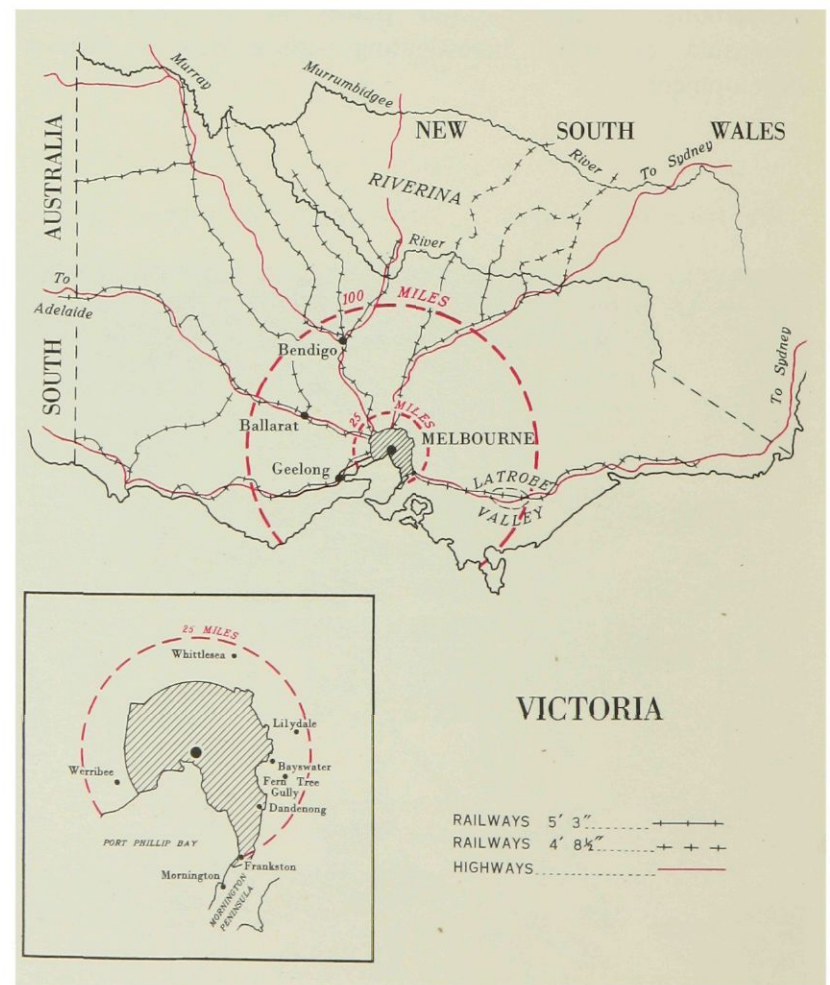
In the older cities there has been the gradual fusion over the centuries of ancient settlements into one large entity. An example of this can be seen in the case of contemporary London. Centuries ago, what is now known as the City of London was a unit by itself surrounded by open country in which were scattered townships and villages. The city and the settlements gradually expanded and finally merged, and their identity was lost in the vast extent of the modern metropolis. One interesting result of this natural but unplanned growth has been the separation of some of the city's functions, some degree of decentralisation.

In London the two important functions of business and shopping are still in the main separated. The City of London is the centre of trade and commerce, and the "West End" the main shopping district. Industry has its place apart from these activities. It is difficult to imagine what conditions might have been like today in that great and busy city if business and shopping were intermingled, and were concentrated with industry in and around the city centre.

The second important way in which cities have grown is by continual expansion outwards from an initial focal point.

This is what has happened in Melbourne. Building began in the centre and gradually spread outwards. In the original centre were naturally concentrated those functions of a city for which a central location is advantageous — commerce, shopping, industry, administration. There were no surrounding satellite communities to which any of these activities might have been attracted. As the city has grown, these various activities have likewise grown to keep pace with the needs of the people. It is natural that new enterprises have been attracted, at least initially by the advantages of a central location, and have jostled with each other for positions in the limited space around the city centre. For lack of space they have gradually penetrated the older residential suburbs, producing those undesirable conditions discussed elsewhere.

Therefore today we find within a radius of about half a mile practically all the large business and commercial offices, many with ramifications extending over the whole Commonwealth, the administrative offices of Commonwealth and State Governments and of public authorities, all the major cultural facilities, the Art Gallery, the Museum, the Public Library, and not far away the University, the principal theatres and other main centres of amusement, and the principal shopping centre to which people come not only from the whole metropolitan area but from the whole State, and where forty



3 MELBOURNE AND NEARBY COMMUNITIES