

peaceful and united Empire may continue to flourish under Your Majesty's gracious rule.

To which Address His Majesty was pleased to return the following gracious Answer:—

The Queen and I are glad to receive your loyal Address on behalf of the inhabitants of the six Urban Districts which you represent, and We thank you sincerely for your welcome and good wishes.

Sharing in the beneficent work of the Metropolitan Water Board, you may be proud to see the completion of the great Reservoir which We have come to-day to inaugurate, and We hope that as part of an unrivalled water system it may prove a source of health and well-being to the citizens of London no less than your beautiful Forest of Epping, dedicated to the nation by Queen Victoria in 1882, which has provided them with the benefits of country air and opportunities for recreation.

I pray that success may constantly attend your efforts in the difficult and important work of local government with which you are entrusted.

Upon Their Majesties' arrival at the Reservoir the following Addresses were presented:—

THE LEE CONSERVANCY BOARD.

To Their Most Excellent Majesties  
The King and Queen.

*May it please Your Majesties,*

We, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Members of the Board of Conservators for the River Lee, desire to express to Your Majesties our great appreciation of the opportunity afforded us of presenting an Address of loyalty and devotion and of welcoming Your Most Gracious Majesties upon the occasion of the opening of the Chingford Reservoir of the Metropolitan Water Board.

Acting in pursuance of Statutes, some of which are of considerable antiquity, we have charge of the maintenance and administration of one of the most ancient waterways of England, the watershed of which extends over an area of about 600 square miles within the Counties of Bedford, Hertford, Essex and Middlesex.

In its course the River Lee passes through country rich in historical associations. The ancient Town of Ware was destroyed by the Danes, whose fleet sailed up the Lee from the Thames. The strategy of King Alfred subsequently overcame the invaders, who, under the treaty of peace which was concluded in A.D. 879, were compelled to retire within an area of which the River formed one of the western boundaries. It is of interest to recall the words of the treaty which defined the line of demarcation:—

“ Let the bounds of our dominions stretch to the River Thames and from thence to the water of Lee even unto the head of the same water and thence straight unto Bedford, and finally going along by the River Ouse let them end at Watling Street.”

✓ The first stone road bridge in England was erected over the Lee by Queen Matilda, and from the circular form of its arches was called Bow Bridge.

During the great plague of 1665 the watermen of the River conveyed provisions to supply the inhabitants of London, and in return for these services, which were rendered at great risk to themselves, they received various privileges which they still enjoy.

The regulation of the River has been controlled by statute from early times. A record in the rolls of Parliament, 2nd Henry V (1415), shews that the Corporation of London were given representation on all Commissions touching the waters of the Lee, and in the 22nd year of Edward IV (1483) a verdict was given against the Abbot of Waltham for obstructions in the river preventing corn, malt and other commodities from reaching London. The first statutes for improving the Navigation of the River were passed in the reign of King Henry the Sixth, and they were succeeded by many similar enactments, notably during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Shortly after the accession of King George the Third a statute vesting the control of the River in a Board of Trustees was passed, and they continued in office until by an Act of 1868 their powers and duties were transferred to the Lee Conservancy Board which was then established.

We, as Conservators, exercise jurisdiction not only over the waterway, but have extensive powers to prevent pollution of the river and its tributaries, and, inasmuch as a large proportion of the water supplied to the Eastern and Northern districts of London is taken from the River, our duties are intimately associated with the work of the Metropolitan Water Board. We witness with pleasure and gratification the completion of the vast water reservoir which Your Majesties have graciously consented to declare open.

We desire, in conclusion, to express our loyalty and devotion to Your Majesties, to whom, with Your Royal Family, we pray that all blessings may be vouchsafed.

To which Address His Majesty was pleased to return the following gracious Answer:—

I thank you very cordially in behalf of the Queen and Myself for your expressions of loyalty and for your good wishes.

The River Lee over which you exercise so wise a jurisdiction has claims on Our grateful remembrance, not only for its remarkable historic associations, to which you refer in your interesting Address, but also for its beneficial service in securing to London an ample supply of pure water.

Your labours, as you remind Us, are united to those of the Metropolitan Water Board in the control of London's vast water system, and for this reason you have a special interest in the inauguration of the great Reservoir at Chingford which We are here to-day to celebrate.

You will, I am sure, meet the increased responsibilities which the opening of this Reservoir cannot fail to create with zeal and wisdom, and I wish you every success in your labours.