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STATE INTELLIGENCE

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The following Address was presented to The QUEEN on the occasion of the inauguration of the Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir at Walton on 30th March 1962:

The Members and Staff of the Metropolitan Water Board respectfully beg to express their gratitude and thanks to Your Majesty for graciously consenting to visit this site today.

Your Majesty's Grandfather and Father honoured the Board by inaugurating reservoirs which were completed during their respective Reigns, and it is indeed gratifying for us to be able to show Your Majesty the latest of these great inland lakes, constructed to store water for the needs of the Metropolis.

The new reservoir will take several weeks to fill and when full will hold nearly 4½ thousand million gallons of water. It has been designed and supervised by the Board's engineers, and constructed by W. & C. French Ltd.

Over two-thirds of London's water supply comes from the River Thames, and it has been the Board's policy for more than half a century to construct storage reservoirs in the Thames Valley as and when required. In pursuance of this, Parliamentary powers were obtained in 1935 to build a reservoir on this site, and work commenced early in 1939. Just over six months later the Second World War commenced and in the following January the work was suspended. Owing to post-war difficulties it was not until early in 1957 that it was possible to start work here again.

This reservoir, which is the Board's third largest, is also the deepest, and probably the deepest of its kind anywhere. Several novel engineering features have been incorporated in its construction and it will bring our total storage capacity to nearly 30 thousand million gallons. Thirty years ago this quantity would have been regarded as an ample reserve against any possible contingency, but today the demands of industry and the vast improvement in housing conditions have resulted in an ever increasing demand for water. In a normal year we can meet all the demands of our consumers, which are now at the rate of 360 million gallons a day. But we must be ready for that occasional phenomenon—a hot dry Summer—and we must plan for the anticipated demands of the future.

We are very conscious of our responsibilities and will continue in our endeavours to provide for the present and future needs of the citizens of London whom we are privileged to serve. In this, we are assisted by a gifted and loyal staff, and I should like to commend them to Your Majesty—all of them

from the most highly skilled engineer to the humblest workman—for their share in bringing this great new reservoir to completion.

Today, in this troubled World, we all humbly pray that peace may accompany Your Majesty's Reign for many, many years; that the arts of peace may flourish, and that we may discharge this essential duty of providing 6½ million of Your Majesty's loyal subjects with an ample supply of pure and wholesome water.

May it please Your Majesty to honour the Board by inaugurating and naming the reservoir.

To which Address Her Majesty was pleased to return the following gracious Reply:

Mr. Chairman,

I am grateful for your kind words of welcome and very glad to be here today to inaugurate this new reservoir.

The history of London's water supply goes back many hundreds of years. Early in the Seventeenth Century a predecessor of mine acquired an interest—and it was a profitable one—in the New River Company which was set up to bring water to London from the springs and wells of Hertfordshire. As London grew, other water companies were set up and several Local Authorities established their own undertakings. At the end of the last Century, however, there were outbreaks of disease as well as accusations of malpractice and profiteering. As a result, the Metropolitan Water Board was brought into existence.

It may be true, Mr. Chairman, that good cannot come out of evil, but I am sure we can all agree that in this case a good result was evolved out of an evil situation.

Those of us who live in London are apt to take for granted that there should be a never failing supply of water—not only for the house but for the garden too.

Owing to the forethought of the Board in building reservoirs in the Thames Valley, the skill with which these constructions were carried out, and the devoted attention with which the system is maintained from day to day, we get really remarkable satisfaction for our demands.

This new reservoir, with its immense storage capacity will help to meet the cumulative demands of the growing Metropolis for water. It will make a valuable contribution to the well-being of all who live and work in the area. I congratulate all who have taken part in the planning, design and execution of these works.

I am glad to recall that the Reservoirs at Littleton and Staines were named after my grandmother and my father and it is with much pleasure that I now open this one and name it "Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir."