

FILL LAKE EYRE

*Says MICHAEL SAWTELL, well-known author,
traveller and member of the Aborigines' Welfare Board*

The news of the latest scientific discovery, that it is now possible to obtain power from the sea, opens up wonderful possibilities for our mighty inland Australia.

This discovery, with the aid of solar energy and power from the sun's rays, should make it now possible to fill Lake Eyre from the sea, change the inland climate and improve the rainfall.

This mighty project was first suggested in 1883 by Sir Richard Baker, a well-known South Australian. But that was in the pick and shovel days and it was found after surveys that the scheme was not practical. However, modern science and mechanisation have now made this far-reaching work necessary and possible.

I have had all the scientific data supplied to me by the Research Bureau of the Adelaide Public Library and also I have Bonython and Mason's Report to the Royal Geographical Society, when they visited Lake Eyre in 1950 and boated over the lake.

The Lake Eyre river basin is, I believe, the largest inland river basin in the world. It is enormous. It is well over 500,000 square miles and you have to be something of a bushman to realise the vast area that the lake drains.

It takes in all Central and Western Queensland, much of the Northern Territory, both sides of the Simpson Desert, also much of the southern end of the Northern Territory, and all the north of South Australia.

Alice Springs is also really in the Lake Eyre river basin. The bed of the lake is nearly 4,000 square miles and is 39 feet below sea level, but 10,000 square miles of the surrounding country, taking in much of the railway line between Maree and Oodnadatta, is also below sea level.

The nearest sea point to the lake is Port Augusta, which is 315 miles away, and is 8 feet above sea level, but much of the intervening country is over 100 feet above sea level.

But the Snowy River Scheme has shown us what modern mechanisation can do to dig great channels and drive tunnels through the hills.

You might say, "Why do we want a filled Lake Eyre?" We need it, to change the climate and to improve the rainfall, which is now only about 6 inches a year. Really, letting the sea into the lake would only be supplementing the filling of the lake, for during the big floods the lake is filled by fresh water, more often than most people know about.

A filled Lake Eyre would supply the high rate of evaporation, which is about 100 inches a year, to create the raw material to produce the clouds, and then the C.S.I.R.O. could make those clouds burst into rain, for we will within certain limits be able to make rain.

However, that is not all the story. We will also need to grow great belts of trees in the Inland, which is seriously deficient in trees.

Our main objective before our future Australia is to fill Lake Eyre and make Alice Springs the capital city of Australia. Read what our prophet poets, Barcroft Boake and Henry Lawson, had to say about the future of mighty Terra Australia.



**Pastor Frank Roberts at Tabulam with two new brides,
Mrs. Percy Green and Mrs. Robert Robinson**