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1901-06-20

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ACTING CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr. SPEAKER, in pursuance of standing order 25, laid upon the table his warrant nominating Mr. Batchelor, Mr. Kirwan, Mr. McDonald, Mr. Piesse, Mr. Salmon, and Mr. V. L. Solomon to act as temporary Chairmen of Committees.

QUESTIONS

ISSUE OF HANSARD

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister if it is a fact that there is no corrected copy of Hansard for distribution to the different parts of the Commonwealth before the bound volumes are issued. I understand that, although corrections are made, they are not put into the ordinary copies of Hansard, which are available during the session. I wish to know if that is correct.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- The facts are these : It was the intention to issue the paper-bound proof copy to honorable members, and afterwards to issue a revise; the revise, of course, to be bound up finally into volumes at the end of the session. There has been a proposal since then that each honorable member should receive a galley proof of his own speech, on the night on which it was uttered, in order to enable him to see whether it was correctly reported - not, of course, to alter it - and that then those would be taken together and put into the revised copy, without issuing any bound proof copy. That was the proposal which emanated from the President, and from you, Mr. Speaker, and which, we thought, would be a very advisable thing to do, and one which the sense of the House would approve. The present position of the matter is that the Government Printer of Victoria does not yet see his way to be able to do this, because his opinion is that it would involve more labour than the previously accepted process, while, as honorable members understand, his office is altogether overburdened pending the arrival of the new machinery. " I have no doubt that, in conjunction with the President and the Speaker, the Government Printer will probably arrive at some acceptable method of doing this business, so that honorable members may be best convenienceed.

MEETING PLACE OF PARLIAMENT

Mr PAGE

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the expressed dissatisfaction of members of the Victorian Parliament, at this building being used by the Commonwealth Parliament, it would be possible to hold the sittings of this Parliament in Sydney, where no doubt we would be received in a true federal spirit ?

Mr BARTON

- I do not anticipate that the complaints which appear to have occurred in another place will continue, because I am assured that the arrangements for the comfort and convenience of honorable members of the State Parliament will shortly be effected in such a way that they would rather be there than here.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister whether, if he contemplates a change, he will come to Hobart, where the State will give him the Parliament House ?

Mr BARTON

- I must ask that honorable members will give notice of any questions which may have ambulatory results.

GOVERNOR - GENERAL'S INSTRUCTIONS

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Mr CROUCH

- I desire to ask the Prime Minister if he will inform honorable members where a copy of the Governor-General's instructions can be seen, and if he proposes to publish them in the Commonwealth Gazette.

Mr BARTON

- A copy of the Governor-General's instructions was laid on the Table of the House a good many days ago, and undoubtedly they will be gazetted.

PENNY POSTAGE IN VICTORIA

Mr POYNTON

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister whether it is true that, in consequence of Victoria going in for penny postage, the additional cost resulting therefrom will have to be borne by all the States equally 1

Mr BARTON

- That is a question of law to which I am not called upon to give an answer. It is really a question whether this becomes transferred expenditure or new expenditure, and on that point the Cabinet has not yet arrived at a conclusion.

RAILWAY PASSES FOR MEMBERS

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister, 'in the absence of the Minister for Home Affairs, what arrangement has been made by the Government in reference to the cost of passes of the members of this Parliament over the railway lines of the various States. Has any absolute bargain been made, and if so, of what nature 1

Mr BARTON

- Perhaps my honorable friend will forgive me for asking him to give notice of the question so that the necessary information may be obtained from the Minister for Home Affairs.

PUBLIC SERVANTS: ASSURANCE

Mr THOMSON

asked the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice -

Whether he will, before dealing in committee with clause 44 of the Bill for the Regulation of the public service, obtain and place the House in possession of the following information : -

At what annual premium per £100 are life assurance companies prepared to issue a policy on a first-class life, conferring all the benefits provided for in the clause, at the ages of 16, 20, 30, and 40 years respectively ?

The extra annual premium per £100 that will be charged on a policy at each such age when five years' loading is imposed ?

Whether the companies will provide the increased assurance required by subclause (d) without medical examination prior to each increase ?

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

- On behalf of the Minister for Home Affairs, I understand that inquiries have been instituted with a view to obtain that information.

REBATE ON SUGAR

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice -

Whether, in response to communications from Messrs. H. Jones and Co., of Hobart, he has satisfied that firm that justice will be done to Tasmanian jam manufacturers in regard to the rebate on sugar used in the manufacture of their jams, whereby they will be placed upon an equal footing with the jam manufacturers of other States ?

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- The formal answer to the question is - No ; but I may add that the right honorable member will probably see that the Government cannot give to any firm or person any assurance in any way connected with the Tariff, or in anticipation of any proposal relating thereto which Ministers may hereafter have to make to Parliament. At the same time I might say that any written communication on the subject forwarded to us we shall carefully consider, but deem it our duty not to discuss it at the present time.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

What are the intentions of the Government in regard to the Northern Territory of South Australia ?

Mr BARTON

- The Government desire to take over the Northern Territory when suitable terms and conditions can be arranged between the Commonwealth and the State of South Australia, as to financial and other questions, upon which we are instituting inquiry.

DUTY ON TYPE

Mr CRUICKSHANK

asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice -

. Whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the materials used in type-castings are comprised of tin, antimony, lead, and copper, all products of Australia ?

Whether, in view of the act that at the present time there is no duty on type in any of the States, it is his intention in the Tariff proposals to impose an ad valorem duty on type imported ?

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Mr KINGSTON

- Pending the introduction of the Tariff, Ministers cannot see their way to indicate what may, or may not, be their intention regarding the matter mentioned.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF MAIZE

Mr CLARKE

asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice -

Whether he will cause to be prepared and to be laid before this House a return showing -

The quantity of maize imported into each State of the Commonwealth during the past three years, and the countries from which it came ?

The amount of maize exported from each State for a similar period, and where sent?

Mr KINGSTON

- The answer is, yes.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF TIMBER

Mr CLARKE

asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice -

Whether he will cause to be prepared and to be laid before this House a return showing -

. The amount of timber imported into each State of the Commonwealth during the past three years, and the countries from which it came ?

The amount of timber exported for a similar period from each State,, and where sent ?

The number of saw-mills in each State, their annual output, and the number of hands employed directly in each mill ; and the number indirectly employed in supplying timber to such mills ?

Mr KINGSTON

- As to the first and second paragraphs, yes ; but as regards the third it will require some time to collect the necessary information, and probably by the time it was collected it would be of no use. Therefore, I hope that the honorable member will be content with the information given in reply to paragraphs 1 and 2.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Swearing in of members.

Mr CAMERON

- Before the orders of the day are called on, I desire to make a personal explanation. It is probably well known that I have expressed strong opinions on the legality or otherwise of the swearing in of honorable members last month. In fact, I sacrificed a considerable sum in order that I might be personally sworn in. There are now two courses open for me to take ; one is - and I propose it in a friendly spirit, with the consent of other honorable members, who, I hold, have not been sworn in - to submit the question to a third person, whose decision shall be final.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order. I understand that the honorable member desires to make a personal explanation.

Mr CAMERON

- So I do.

Mr SPEAKER

- So long as the honorable member confines himself to a personal explanation I shall not interrupt him, but I must ask him not to travel beyond an explanation of his own personal action.

Mr CAMERON

- I can if necessary move the adjournment of the House, and then I shall be in order in saying what I have to say ; but I did not think it necessary to do that. The other course, and it is the course which I shall be compelled to take, will be to institute friendly proceedings in the Supreme Court for the purpose of testing the legality of what was done. I may say that in the event of my succeeding and a penalty being inflicted, I shall not accept- -

Mr Watson

- I rise to order. I want to know from you, sir, whether the honorable member is in order in telling the House what he is going to do? That is not a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER

- I have already warned the honorable member that he must confine his remarks to a personal explanation. I do so again.

Mr CAMERON

- I think I am entirely within my rights, because I am making a personal explanation of what I intend to do.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member may not make a personal explanation of that kind. He may explain any words or any action of his in the House, which has been misunderstood, but he may not refer to something which he may or may not propose to do in the future.

Mr CAMERON

- In order to enable me to speak,. I move -
That the House do now adjourn.

Mr SPEAKER

- It will first be necessary for five honorable members, including the honorable member, to rise in concurrence with his action.

Five honorable members having risen in their places,

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Mr Crouch

- I rise to order. The honorable member, if he has any position at all, must address you, sir, as Speaker, but he is assuming that you are not a member of the House.

Mr CAMERON

- I have been sworn in, and the honorable member is out of it.

Mr Crouch

- My point is that the honorable member is addressing you, sir, and assuming that you are not a member of the House. If there is anything in his contention, there is no quorum present.

Mr SPEAKER

- I cannot forecast what the honorable member is about to say. As he has now placed himself within the standing orders, and live honorable members have risen in support of his motion, it is competent for him to move the adjournment of the House, and to discuss the matter.

Mr CAMERON

- I desire to thank those honorable members who supported me for their extreme courtesy. I desire to assure the House that I am not animated by feelings hostile to any member or members, but holding as I do strong opinions on the legality or otherwise of the position of honorable members, I deem it my duty, in the interests of not only the House, but the Australian Commonwealth as a whole, to press the question to its legitimate issue. I desire to assure honorable members, as I was going to do when I was interrupted, that the proceedings to be taken by me in the course of a few days in the Supreme Court for the purpose of testing the question, will be taken in a friendly spirit, and in the event of my obtaining a verdict and receiving a small sum, which I suppose I shall do, it will never be claimed.

Mr Thomas

- That is very kind.

Mr CAMERON

- I think I may tell the honorable member that he will be one of them. I have not the least doubt that he will feel equally satisfied when the verdict is given against him. I beg to withdraw my motion for adjournment.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. -It will be within the recollection of the House that when the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, proposed the other day to discuss, on a notice of motion which he then gave, the question whether the Ministers of State should receive, in addition to the salaries provided under section 66 of the Constitution Act, the allowance of £400 a year, which section 48 says every honorable member shall receive, I told him that I would endeavour to make an opportunity for the discussion of the motion, because obviously it is of such a kind that the Government would incur some discredit if they did not give an early chance to proceed with it. I am now happy to assure my honorable and learned friend that the Minister for Home Affairs being absent, and the proceedings in respect of the Public Service Bill being conducted by the Attorney-General, although there will be a delay of public business, perhaps there will be less delay by discussing it now than there would be at any other time. Therefore, if he is ready to go on-

Mr Glynn

- I am.

Mr BARTON

- I move-

That all Government orders of the day be postponed until after notice of motion No. 1 .

Question resolved in the affirmative.

EMOLUMENTS OF MINISTERS

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Mr GLYNN

I move -

That, in the opinion of this House,' the Ministers of State should not in addition to their salaries receive the allowance of £400 a year payable under section 48 of The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act. At the outset I thank the Prime Minister for his courtesy in giving precedence to the motion over the Government business of the day. I have moved it in accordance with what I believe to be the desire of a good many honorable members, that the question whether Ministers should draw allowances as Members of Parliament in addition to the salaries provided for by the Constitution Act should be considered by the House on a specific motion. I believe that the Ministers, with delicacy and a good taste which the House will acknowledge, have not drawn the allowances of members in addition to their Ministerial stipend, being desirous that the question of the expediency of then doing so shall, in the first place, be submitted to the House. . The considerations which affected me in tabling this motion have relation to the offices, not to the men who occupy them. If I were to consider the ability, the industry, and the personal sacrifice made by members of the Ministry, especially the professional members, I might perhaps be somewhat reluctant to dispute the adequacy of the salaries to the merits of the men who receive them. But we all know that even Members of Parliament have to make personal sacrifices in attending to their parliamentary duties.

The allowance paid to members is given rather as a set-off against expenses than, a salary, which indicates the inadequacy in some cases of the payment. We receive not only monetary compensation for our services ; but we also have that compensation which arises from a gratified sense of personal ambition, which is the blessing, and sometimes the bane of us public men. If salaries have to be graded according to the personal sacrifices made by Ministers, the same principle must be applied to members, and I am unaware that any grading of salaries according to the sacrifices made by members would be likely to be acceptable to the House, or expedient. The considerations that really operate are these - the necessity at the outset of being economical; the fact that the sphere of federal jurisdiction is, as compared with the sphere of State jurisdiction, somewhat limited-; and the fact that the work of organization which makes the greatest demand on the time and ability of Ministers is certainly temporary. I am also affected by the fact that the salaries are proportionately greater than the salaries attached to offices elsewhere, which demand as great a sacrifice of time and ability on the part of the occupants of them who are in some cases equally eminent ; and by the very strong factor that Australian practice, and, I believe, Australian opinion, is in the direction of the motion. And now as regards practice and opinion. In New South Wales there are nine Ministers of State, two of whom receive £1,820 each, while the others receive

£1,370 each. In that colony there is also of course a parliamentary allowance of £300 a year,, which is deducted from the salaries of the Ministers.

Mr Barton

- Not deducted from.

Mr GLYNN

- It is credited against them.

Mr Barton

- They do not receive it.

Mr GLYNN

- They do not receive it. the allowance that is not paid during their Ministerial term.

Mr Barton

- It is a provision in the Payment of Members Bill that they shall not receive it.

Mr GLYNN

- The fact is as I have given it, though I have not the Act with me. In Victoria there are nine Ministers, of whom the Premier receives £1,400 and the other Ministers £1,000 a year each, and the provision in section 126 of the Constitution Act of that State is that no member in receipt of an official salary or an official payment out of the consolidated revenue shall receive any allowance as Member of Parliament. In Queensland there are eight Ministers, of whom the Premier receives £1,300 a year and the others £1,000 each. In that State there are also travelling expenses for members, with an annual allowance of £300, which is not paid to those who receive official salaries. In South Australia there are six Ministers at £1,000 each, and the member's allowance of £200 a year is not paid during the tenure of office. In Tasmania there are four Ministers, with £750 each, with an allowance to members, included in the £750, of £100 a year. In Western Australia there are six Ministers, of whom the Premier gets £1,200 and the other Ministers £1,000 each. I have been unable to get the Western Australian Act of last year, under which I believe provision for the payment of a salary to members was made.

Mr Kirwan

- Western Australian Members of Parliament get £200 each.

Mr GLYNN

- I am informed that Western Australian members get £200 each, but I am not sure whether the amount is included in Ministerial salaries.

Mr Kirwan

- No.

Mr Salmon

- But the amounts paid are not statutory - they are simply a lump sum.

Mr GLYNN

- It really does not matter. So long as a Minister's salary is drawn, then credit is given to the extent of the parliamentary salary, which cannot, according to the statute, be drawn.

Mr Salmon

- I think the honorable member is in error as regards Victoria.

Mr GLYNN

- I think the honorable member will find I am not in error.

Mr Salmon

- I think the honorable member is wrong in regard to the amounts, because while the McLean Government was in office the Premier drew the same salary as other members of the Government.

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Mr GLYNN

- If I am wrong I shall be most happy to have the honorable member to set me right. I have been unable to look at some of the Acts owing to the fact that for the last three days I have been occupied with private business. So far, then, as regards Australian practice. As regards Australian expectation in the matter, I think I am entitled to refer to the debates in the Federal Convention. The clause submitted at the Adelaide sitting of the Convention provided for a payment to Ministers of £12,000 - the words "a sum not exceeding," now in the Act, having been inserted during the Sydney session. So that there may be some strength in the argument of the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne that there is really

no appropriation in the Act of £12,000 for the payment of Ministers salaries. There is a distinction between the Constitution Bill as it was in Adelaide providing for the specific sum of. £12,000, and the Constitution Act as it came from -the Sydney sitting of the Convention with the limitation "not exceeding" £12,000. 'I do not say that is conclusive, but there is something more in the contention of the honorable and learned member -for Northern Melbourne than I was inclined to admit when he first put forward his argument. At the Sydney sitting of the Convention, on an amendment from the Legislative Council of South Australia, to the effect that the £400 should be included in the Ministerial salary, a discussion, confined to the Prime Minister, Sir Josiah Symon, the right honorable member for Swan, and the member for Northern Melbourne, took place. The Prime Minister thought that the amendment - I am not quoting- his exact words - ought not to be carried.

Mr Barton

- Does the honorable member remember the page in the Hansard reports of the Convention %

Mr GLYNN

- Page 996. The Prime Minister thought the amendment ought not to be carried because, to quote exactly what he says - " It is a matter of legislation for the Commonwealth to consider," and we are now considering it. Sir Josiah Symon agreed with the Prime Minister that this clause ought not to be embodied in the Constitution, because he thought it unlikely that Ministers should draw their parliamentary allowances. Sir Josiah Symon said that if the need for doing so arose, Parliament could interfere, -and in the event of a provision of the kind being necessary it would be for the Federal Parliament to pass it. The right honorable member for Swan was particularly emphatic against the two salaries being drawn. He thought that Ministers ought not to receive two remunerations, and he relied on the Australian practice. The honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne thought that the matter could be provided for in the Constitution in connexion with clause 48, which makes provision for the members' allowance. I think honorable members will agree with me that Australian opinion, so far as we can get its indications from the most representative Australian body that ever met before the Federal Parliament was elected, -would support this motion, and Australian practice seems to be. uniform with .the principle .underlying it. As regards the adequacy of. the salaries paid to Ministers, £12,000 a year gives £1,714 per annum each. If that is not sufficient for the Prime Minister, and perhaps it may not be, the salaries can be graded by members themselves, or, as is done in Canada, the salaries which should attach to each office might be declared by Parliament. The latter I believe to be the true course to adopt. The thing would then be done constitutionally. There may be some doubt as to whether members of the Ministry are not entitled to draw, in addition to their Ministerial salaries, the parliamentary allowance provided for in clause 4S. Personally, I think they are legally entitled to do so. "What we are considering is the expediency of their doing so.

Mr CONROY

- To alter the arrangement would be to tamper with the Constitution Act.

Mr GLYNN

- Certainly not. The honorable member must remember that the section says "until Parliament otherwise provides." What I am now doing is to ask Parliament to make provision. The Constitution .does not- limit our action in the matter.

Mr McMillan

- This motion cannot be taken as Parliamentary action.

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Mr GLYNN

- I can give only a direction to the Ministry on financial measures. I cannot introduce estimates or financial proposals ; I can only by an abstract motion give direction to those in control of the finances. In England there are now twenty Cabinet Ministers - the largest Cabinet I believe there ever was in England. The second greatest office there - namely, that of the Lord President of the Council, has attached to it a salary of £2,000. The greatest professional, as well as the greatest parliamentary functionary - 'the head of the Navy of a nation which according to all admission, is supreme in naval matters, and whose flag streams to almost every breeze that sweeps the sea - -has a salary of £1,500 a year attached to .his office in addition to his professional salary of £1,825. In Canada there are thirteen ministers, of whom the Prime Minister gets £1,600 a year.

Mr Conroy

- We do not want the Sir John McDonald frauds repeated here.

Mr GLYNN

- We are not likely to. If I can put my finger upon the pulse of Australian honesty, we are not likely to have here anything like what took place in Canada in 1885, in connexion with the transcontinental railway frauds. That, at any rate, is my diagnosis of Australian morality, which is not going to be affected by the payment of £400 a year more or less to Ministers. What we are considering is whether this is a departure we ought to make. In Canada there are thirteen Ministers.

Mr MAUGER

- Our Constitution departs from the Australian practice.

Mr GLYNN

- The Federal Constitution departs from Australian practice, and the question is whether that is justifiable. I am considering the expediency of making this departure. We all have to make departures, and sometimes they are in the wrong direction, and sometimes in the right direction. In Canada the Prime Minister gets £1,600 a year, and the other Ministers £1,400 a year, and their population is in excess of ours.

An Honorable Member. - Does the Prime Minister get his parliamentary allowance in addition?

Mr GLYNN

- I am not quite sure, because I am laying before the House the result of an incomplete research. There is an allowance for expenses in Canada, with a maximum of 1,000 dollars for a session.' So that the salary of a Minister is less in Canada, even if the parliamentary allowance be paid to him - on which point I am uninformed - than the salary allowed here. I was about to remark that Canada has resources equal to ours and a population quite as great, and that the Dominion calls for as much detailed administration and at present more detailed administration than does the Australian Federation.

Mr O'malley

- C - Canada has seven months of snow.

Mr GLYNN

- In Canada they are under difficulties much greater than we have, as honorable members will admit. In the United States there are eight Ministers, who, of course, have not seats in Parliament They get £1,600 a year each to control the federal destinies of 70,000,000 people. The American Government has to deal with foreign relations of which we only touch the fringe.

Mr O'malley

- The The United States Ministers do not get half enough salary.

Mr GLYNN

- Perhaps the honorable member will show how that arises. Honorable members may perhaps admit that big salaries are not required to get efficiency. The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, will acknowledge that the traditions of the American bench and of the Presidency are admirable, notwithstanding the fact that comparatively small salaries have been attached to those offices. So that I do not think any diminution of our greatness can be anticipated by making salaries no more than adequate to the work done. These are the facts, and I thought I ought to give honorable members an idea of what was occurring elsewhere.

Mr Watson

- What does the Attorney-General of England get ?

Mr GLYNN

- Lawyers everywhere are exceptional in money matters, and have a marvellous capacity for attracting coin. The Attorney-General last year got, I believe, about £16,000 altogether.

Mr Watson

- £18,000.

Mr A McLEAN

- What does the New South Wales Attorney-General get?

Mr Watson

- £2,000 a year, and private, practice as well.

Mr GLYNN

- The two great exceptions in England are, I believe, the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General,

whose salaries and allowances last year totalled about £33,000. But some of the followers of the conservative Government are kicking against these high salaries, and the matter has been drawn attention to in the press. All I wish to say is that we should practice economy. We have no new sources of revenue. We have, according to the contention of some honorable members, which I do not altogether agree with, to rely for many years on Customs revenue, and that revenue is not likely to be increased until the people increase. The States, as a consequence of federation, will have to apply the pruning knife and go in for the reduction of salaries and retrenchment in some cases, and we ought to teach them an example by applying retrenchment to the offices at the top of the ladder.

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Mr THOMSON

- I have very much pleasure in seconding the motion, and, in doing so, without following all the arguments of the honorable member who submitted it, I must say I was rather surprised that Ministers have allowed this matter to come before the House at all. It would have been far better in their own interests and in the interests of Parliament that they should, without requiring the decision of Parliament, have recognised that in taking this additional sum - additional when compared with the custom in the different States - they were on such delicate ground that it would have been better, rather than create a doubt or fear in the minds of the people of the Commonwealth, to be content with the salaries provided by the Constitution. If, in reply to the arguments of the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, it is stated that the remuneration, even with the additional £400, is not at all adequate to the services rendered, I for one will not dispute that statement. But I would ask - Has that principle ever been established in the British Parliament? Has it ever been established in the Parliaments of these States that remuneration is to be given for parliamentary services at a rate equivalent to the value of those services? I venture to say that if that principle be accepted there will have to be a total revision of the rates of remuneration paid, not merely to Ministers, but to Members of Parliament, and not merely to Members of the Federal Parliament, but to Ministers and Members of every State Parliament.

Mr Ewing

- Why have payment of members at all?

Mr THOMSON

- It has never been agreed that the allowance is remuneration for services. It has simply been regarded and is referred to in the Acts of Parliament as an allowance.

Mr Ewing

- It comes to the same thing!

Mr THOMSON

- It does not come to the same thing, as the honorable member knows, though some people may consider it the same thing. If you give payment for services it ought to be in proportion to the services given. This principle has never been established in any British Parliament. The Federal Parliament has been brought into existence amidst the doubts of many of the people in New South Wales, where there was a very large minority against the Bill - one of their doubts being that federation would lead to extravagance and to expenditure on the top of the present parliamentary expenditure of the different States, which would be excessive for our population. One of the fears of the electors in connexion with federation was that immediately the federal Parliament came into being the members would magnify the value of their services, and perhaps magnify too their salaries and their privileges, and thus entail an expenditure on the States of Australia which the smallness of the population of those States would not justify. The Prime Minister the other evening remarked that this is the Parliament of a continent - the only Parliament of a continent, I think he said - and that its operations should be in keeping with that. But I put it forward as my opinion that it is not the consideration of the extent of territory which we control, but of the population which has to bear the taxation necessary to provide for the expenditure, which should guide us; and when we find, as the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, has shown, that in countries with immensely larger populations, and where Ministers have far greater responsibilities, salaries not higher, and in some cases not so high, as the salaries provided in the Constitution apart from the allowance, are accepted, surely such a comparison should guide us. It may also be pointed out that there is nothing to prevent Ministers, like other honorable members, from following their ordinary avocations, so far as their parliamentary duties will allow.

Mr Watson

- Neither Ministers nor members can do that.

Mr THOMSON

- Some honorable members and some Ministers are, either by themselves or through those associated with them, able to follow their ordinary occupations or to obtain revenue from their ordinary occupations.

Mr Thomas

- They can be directors of a hundred companies without anybody saying anything about it.

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Mr THOMSON

- It has been said that the Attorney-General of England is allowed to have private work. Very well; so can the Attorney-General of this Ministry, if he has the time. I admit that the time of Ministers will to a great extent be occupied by their parliamentary duties, at least whilst the House is in session; but I wish to point out, as it has been stated that the privilege is conferred elsewhere of allowing Ministers to follow their ordinary avocations, that the same privilege exists here. There is no interference with that, opportunity.

Mr Barton

- The only difference is that, it is impossible here.

Mr THOMSON

- If it is impossible here, it is equally impossible in larger spheres.

Mr Mauger

- That does not follow.

Mr THOMSON

- It is a fact that the leading Ministers of England cannot, follow their private occupations. Mr. Mauger. - They are rich men.

Mr THOMSON

- They are not all rich. Even if they were, is that to decide what the salaries of Ministers shall be? Is it to be a question of whether they are rich or poor? If so, we shall need to have a financial statement as to the means of Ministers. That factor should not enter into the consideration of this question. I say that at the inauguration of our national government there should be extreme delicacy in all our acts, and especially in an act involving the taking of money for ourselves or for our Ministers. I have no hesitation in saying - speaking, of course, of the State which I know best, New South Wales - that a very keen fight took place there over every question of expenditure embraced in the Constitution Act, and I daresay the people of the other States could also be spoken for by their representatives. It was very well understood in New South Wales that the limit of the payment to Ministers was to be the £12,000 provided in the Constitution. It was never thought that there would be a departure from the system adopted in the different States, under which Ministers abandon their allowance as members when they receive their Ministerial allowance.

Mr Hughes

- I think the honorable member is in error in that statement. It was very well understood that it was all part of the business.

Mr THOMSON

- I can speak only from my own knowledge. I know that the question was asked me in the federal campaign: in New South Wales - "Is not £12,000 an excessive amount for Ministers to receive?" I defended the amount, but I never anticipated, nor did the public generally anticipate, that, in addition to that sum, there would be another £2,800 to be divided amongst Ministers. Mr. Page. - I do not believe that the public gave it a thought.

Mr THOMSON

- In the State which the honorable member represents all matters may not have been so fully discussed as they were in New South Wales. One of the strongest objections raised by the leaders of the Opposition to the Bill in New South Wales was the expenditure to be involved in the salaries of honorable members and of Ministers.

Mr Hughes

- Can the honorable member name one leading man who mentioned it?

Mr THOMSON

- Dr. MacLaurin was one.

Mr Watson

- I did not hear him.

Mr THOMSON

- Dr. MacLaurin raised that question.

Mr Barton

- Honorable members do not know Dr. MacLaurin very well. If it had been suggested that the amount should be eighteen pence he would have called it a large sum.

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Mr THOMSON

- At any rate, the fact must be admitted that it is a departure from the custom, to which people in the other States have been used, and therefore likely to create an impression amongst the people of Australia that this Federal Parliament will not pursue a policy of economy, but will commit itself, when occasion arises, to a policy of inflation and extravagance. It is not the extra £2,800 that is involved. That is: nothing in the expenditure of the Commonwealth. But it is an indication to the public of the direction in which the Commonwealth Parliament is likely to go when Ministers - having in the Constitution Act the provision that they shall receive a salary not exceeding " £12; 000 a year, which does not mean that they shall get £12,000 - go to the extreme limit of that Act, and take £400 a year each in addition. In the interests of this Parliament, I think there should be great delicacy about overstepping the anticipations of the people and going to the extreme bounds of the Constitution Act. I believe Ministers would do much to create that confidence which is so desirable in connexion with the first actions of the Commonwealth Parliament if they graciously agree - if, without taking a division on this matter, they find that there is considerable opposition in this House to the payment, quite irrespective of whether there is a majority against it or not - to waive the right to the allowance and to follow the custom which has been universally followed throughout the different States.

Mr Conroy

- Will the honorable member support an alteration of section 66 %

Mr THOMSON

- There is no necessity for an alteration of that section. The amount the Ministers are to receive could be fixed at £9,200 a year if Parliament chose. There is nothing in the Constitution to prevent it. I certainly enter my protest against this new course of procedure, and I believe, as I have already said, that the Ministry will do something to encourage the confidence of the people in the Commonwealth Parliament if they show that, whilst having the right to receive a larger remuneration, they are willing to accept the basis of remuneration which has been recognised in the different States.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- With all his fairness of character, I do not think that the honorable member for North Sydney puts this matter quite justly when he asks the Ministers of the Commonwealth to come to a decision in this matter upon such a motion as this. I take it that we have done all that is required of honorable men in giving the very first opportunity to this House to come to a decision on the subject. In order that that opportunity may be perfect and complete, Ministers do not propose to cast their own votes.

Mr Mauger

- That is not right.

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Mr BARTON

- There may be some doubt as to whether we are taking the right course, and for the reason that if this matter is settled on the present motion the determination will affect the salaries of future as well as of the present Ministers. It is a matter of public policy, and, therefore, Ministers would not be subject to the parliamentary rule which forbids men from voting where their own financial interests are involved. At the same time, I reiterate that personally I shall not vote on this motion, and I think my colleagues will follow my example. The question as to the future is not in one way so important as the question of the present, for this reason: it is better that Ministers should not be under any imputation of self-seeking. The question of what salaries they are to receive from time to time is a question of the future as well as of the present,

and can be settled at any time. I do not say that I do not feel some diffidence in addressing myself to this question.

Certainly I shall not seek unduly to influence the vote of any honorable member of this House, but I feel bound to make some statements, some, of which will be by way of - putting matters - straight. For instance, the honorable member for 'South Australia, Mr. Glynn, quoted some of the salaries received by Ministers in the United Kingdom. I do not admit that, one way or the other, these are very much of a guide to us, but perhaps it is just as well that honorable members should know the whole facts. and I will give them. In England the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs receives £5,000 a year ; the Secretary of State for the Colonies, £5,000; the First Lord of the Admiralty, £4,550 ; the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, £5,000 ; the Secretary for India, £5,000 ; the Treasurer, £5,000 ; the Postmaster-General £2,000 ; the Lord of the Privy Seal whose duties- are certainly not important - £2,000 ; and the Lord Chancellor, £10,000. Some reference has been made to the positions of the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General in England. Their emoluments, together with fees - because when private practice was taken away from them, they were compensated¹ by being allowed to receive certain fees - average £15,000 a year each. On the one hand it may be contended with fairness that these are Imperial positions of greater importance than those in this continent, but on the other hand it is not quite fair to contend that there is no force in the argument that we are now dealing with a continent, because we are dealing with an administration* which on most important subjects embraces the affairs of the half-dozen States which form the continent, and the population of which aggregates 4,000,000 people. To forget one thing would be- as improper as to forget the other. Our population is a larger one than that which either the United States or Canada had when they federated, and every one will know that government in our States has embraced a much larger area of subjects than it does in most other countries, so that the administrative work of Ministers in all the States has been very much larger than the corresponding administrative work elsewhere. I am not going to unduly urge- the House to come to any conclusion ; I am merely stating the facts. Reference has been made to Canada ; but the speaker omitted to state that there are fifteen Ministers in Canada, and that their aggregate salaries come to nearly double what is provided for in our Constitution. Their salaries aggregate £24,596, and most of them receive £1,440 a year each. It must be recollected that in most of cases separate Ministers are appointed for duties which are combined by Ministers of the Commonwealth, who, on the same computation, would be entitled to receive £2,880, in Canada there being fifteen Ministers instead of seven.

Mr KING O'MALLEY

- T - They receive sessional allowances, too, in Canada.

Mr BARTON

- Yes, and they receive sessional allowances ; but into that I do not wish to go. I am not arguing the question, but simply pointing out the facts. Reference has been made to the fact that in New South Wales there was a great protest against extravagance. I agree with the honorable member for North Sydney to this extent, that in the arguments over the referendum it was constantly contended that the new expenditure under the Commonwealth would be £750,000 a year, and it is to the opponents of federation that he really alluded. We know very well that the Finance Committee's estimate in Adelaide was £300,000 a year. In that estimate the salaries of 75 Members of Parliament were included - and that number of course covered every one of the Ministers - in addition to this sum of £12,000. Yet the total estimate came to about two-fifths of the amount which the enemies of the Bill put forward, and amongst them my honorable friend was not enrolled. At the same time we must not omit to remember that while it may be expected that in the course of years we shall reach something like that £300,000 a year, the ordinary expenses of the Commonwealth, apart from such matters as the inauguration of Parliament and the necessary military and social expenses entailed thereby, have been shown by the Treasurer to be at the rate of only £120,000 a year. The honorable member for North Sydney has referred to comments in New South Wales. I ask him if he heard at any meeting at which he attended - I attended every meeting that I possibly could on both those referendums - or whether he read in the newspapers any special comment on the question whether Ministers who did the work of Members of Parliament as well as of Ministers should receive nothing for the one service but all their remuneration for the other?

Mr Thomson

- I will answer the honorable and learned gentleman in this way. There was a general opinion that

£12,000 was the whole amount which would be received by Ministers, and it was suggested that that was too much.

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Mr BARTON

- It was not the general impression. I am as well qualified as any one to say what the general impression was, inasmuch as I believe that I attended more meetings than any one else in Australia, and I never heard that view put forward, while it was often explained by me that in addition to the appropriation for members there would be £12,000 for Ministers. The words of the Constitution are. that every Member of Parliament shall receive £400 a year. I may call my honorable friend's attention to the words " not exceeding." The words, " the Ministerial salary shall not exceed £12,000," have been relied upon as if they meant that there was no. special appropriation. In the Appropriation Act of the State from which the honorable member for North Sydney comes the words "not exceeding" are invariably used. I shall give him an instance : In the Consolidated Revenue Fund Acts of New. South Wales, in which sums are appointed for the various departments, every vote begins - "a sum or sums of money not exceeding," and then the items are given, the fact being that usually these sums are exceeded, although it is directed that they are not to be exceeded. So much for the operation of the words "not exceeding," which seems to me - I shall not say to be a mere quibble, because that is not a fair way to describe an argument which is seriously used - but which seems to me not to be of much importance in connexion with' the question. As to the argument that Ministers are entitled to carry on private business, I think my honorable friend should consider, if he was arguing seriously, if that is possible to any one in my position. Here I am, for I have no doubt half the year, attending to the administration of a department, attending Cabinet meetings - and I am putting myself on the same level, of course, with all my colleagues - and giving consideration to various matters in the morning, and coming here at half -past two o'clock and not leaving until the House rises. I should like him to inform me by what means he thinks I am to attend courts of justice in Sydney at quite unexpected times,, or how I am to practise in Victoria and enter the courts at night or at i o'clock in the morning! These things are quite impossible. When statements of this kind are investigated I am quite sure that the very makers of them will see how far they go beyond what the facts really support. I am quite sure that many of those statements are made in perfect innocence and good faith. Nevertheless, the facts do not support them.- An honorable member may live in Melbourne, and living there be able to do some private business, but I defy him, Minister or member, if he does his duty, to do much while the House is in session. I do not want to make any comment in that regard which may be supposed for a moment in any sense to tinge the discussion. I think I" have said enough to point out what are the facts in the connexion in which honorable members who preceded me have spoken. I do not wish to colour this debate to any greater extent. I do not wish to make Ministers advocates for one course or another in this matter. If my honorable and learned friend who moved the motion thinks that Ministers have taken a delicate course hitherto in not receiving this allowance notwithstanding that the Constitution, as he admits, undoubtedly permits it to be received - I wish to make myself consistent in his view, and in that of the rest of the public, by not unduly advocating one course or another. The object of my rising was to explain the position of Ministers, and also to see, so far as the statement of facts had been made, that the matter should come before the House in its true light. Beyond that exception, X shall take absolutely no part in the discussion.

Mr WATSON

- I intend, to vote against the motion. It has always seemed to me that there is too great an appearance of economy on the part of those charged with the governing of institutions of this character, as opposed to what really is the essence of it, and so we find that while in order to catch the plaudits of the unthinking, who do not go into the necessary calculations in regard to work of this description a number of honorable members not only in this House, but in similar Chambers are willing to cut down the salaries of those who come most under the public eye, they agree, on the other hand, to most exorbitant salaries in cases not so subject to criticism. I have always, held the opinion that unless - even in State, affairs - -we are. prepared to make some reasonable recompense to men of high character and ability to take up positions of this sort, we cannot expect any large number of such persons to accept them. We can certainly get, I admit, many men who would come in and take the position of Minister at £1,000 a year, or even at £500 a year, and we can get many men who would offer themselves to electors, and be willing to come into this Chamber to do the work for nothing. But I ask, are we justified in placing the whole future, so far as the

business of the country is concerned, in the hands of one class - those who can afford to give their time practically for nothing to the service, of the State. I maintain, even if that were desirable as a general principle, we have not that large leisured class to draw, upon in this young country, where every, person is concerned in making a living for himself, that they have in the old country.

Mr Mauger

--A good job too.

Mr WATSON

- It may be a good job, and I believe it is in some respects, but I admit that the politics of England have lost nothing in one aspect from the fact that they have that class to draw upon. For we find some of the most democratic, able, and radical men coming from the -ranks- of those who have made politics-a profession - that is, who do not need the pay, and have made politics a profession, as far as the study and understanding of political questions was concerned. But in this country every man practically speaking, is earning his livelihood in some shape or other, and is it fair to the best men from the political stand-point, that we should offer no inducement to them to take up politics, which would be done if we cut down the salaries that are to be paid to the various Ministers.

Mr Glynn

- Does the honorable member apply the same to members' salaries ?

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Mr WATSON

- I do apply the same to members' salaries. I think the discussion which took place the other day with respect to members' salaries was somewhat out of order, it was not germane to the point under discussion, and I am not prepared at this stage to consider it, but I shall be prepared to vote for an increase in members' salaries in the next Parliament, believing that it will widen the choice of the electors. We are considering what -is the proper sum to be paid to gentlemen who are asked to give up all their time to the service of the State. Taking the view which has been put forward as to what was intended by the Convention at Adelaide, I of course do not pretend to know the intention of honorable members who sat there, but I hold that this Parliament is a much more representative body than the Convention could be, with all respect to those of whom it was composed, because we have been elected after this thing has been thrashed out, - after people had begun to know something of what the principles involved in federation mean. Therefore I contend that we are a more representative body than one which was elected when everything was. in a nebulous condition, and when a large number of persons did not quite understand what the whole business meant, could possibly have been. In the various States we are paying to the Judges on the bench more than it is proposed to pay to the Prime Minister, even if this motion is lost.

Mr Mauger

- We pay them too much.

Mr WATSON

- Intrinsically, as compared with the work which they do, perhaps we do. But on the other hand we must recollect that if we want men to give up the practice of a profession at which they are earning a very large sum per annum, we cannot expect them to do that unless we give them a larger salary. In the same way it paid us in New South Wales, and I believe paid us handsomely, to give Mr. Eddy a salary of £3,000 to manage our railways. And I believe, speaking broadly, that in many cases it would pay to give £10,000 to a man who was sufficiently capable to save the State, perhaps, many thousands, or tens of thousands per annum, by his application of system, as against a haphazard method which might otherwise be imposed.

Mr Thomson

- Does the honorable member imply that any of the Ministers will resign if they do not get this money?

Mr WATSON

- I do not imply anything of the sort, but I am not looking to these Ministers. They are the creatures of the hour, if one may use the term without offence. But there are Ministers to be in existence, I trust, in this Parliament for centuries to come.

Mr Thomson

- We could raise the salaries at the end of three years.

Mr WATSON

- We may have another Ministry in power in the course of a few months for all we know. There is a noticeable absence of members from the Opposition benches, and yet we expect men to come down from Sydney and other places, who are earning large sums in their professions, to look to the business of the country. Under the present conditions that expectation is vain ; they are not here.

Mr Cameron

- Select leaders who will attend.

Mr WATSON

- That is all very well ; but when the ablest man happens to be one who is, comparatively speaking, poor, and who must make his living, you must be glad to get his services at times rather than do without them altogether.

Mr Thomson

-. - This resolution does not affect that.

Mr WATSON

- I know that ; but I am speaking of the general position. Coming back to the position occupied by those who will-be Ministers, I hold, that if a man has to give up all his time-

An Honorable Member. - Where is the comparison?

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Mr WATSON

- The comparison is in this fact, that the leader of the Opposition gets nothing while he is in Opposition beyond his allowance, and when he becomes leader of a. Government some honorable members want to tie him down to a sum that will only about keep him. I think that is a mistaken view. The opportunity of following the- practice- of their profession is absolutely absent, except so far as one or two members of the Ministry who reside in the State in wwhich Parliament meets, and even that will be limited when we shift, as I hope we shall soon do, to the federal capital ; because wherever the capital is placed in New South Wales, from the professional and business point of view, it will be the home of not one of the Ministers who will compose the Administration, it means that they will have to give up all their private occupations. They cannot follow the practice of a profession for more than, perhaps, three months in the year at l the very outside, and I doubt if they can do that. Honorable members who have any knowledge of law know that if a man goes away for, say, six months from the place where he usually carries on his profession, it is not only what he loses during that time , which has to be considered, but the fact that he gets out of touch with the solicitors who would otherwise employ him. They get into other grooves, ana probably do not go near him during, the remaining six months, when he is there, unless it may be now. and again when there is a rush of work on. I do not pretend that the present Ministers are worth any more than their successors may be, but on the broad general ground that they have the most important work it is possible to conceive of, affecting the lives, the liberties, the prosperity, and the happiness of the millions in Australia, I think it would be a false policy on our part to indulge in any cheeseparng. I think the sum inclusive of the allowance of ?400 a year is little-enough indeed for those who undertake the onerous, responsible, and highly honorable work which the Federal Ministry have.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I rise to support the motion, because in my travels in South Australia during the recent electoral campaign, the great question raised in reference to this Parliament was the cost of its administration. It is all very well for the honorable member for Bland to endeavour to exaggerate the importance of the position of the Ministers on the Treasury benches, but I venture to think that, in comparison with the salaries paid in the States, the provision of ? 12,000 for Ministerial salaries was deemed by most of the States ample, and by some of the State Legislatures even too much. I would call the attention of the honorable member to the fact that amongst the suggestions made, I think from South Australia, as to that provision, was. one that it should be reduced to ?9,000 or ?1.0,000, and although the Prime Minister has stated that hi the calculation of the probable expenditure of the new Federal Government, which was prepared for the Convention's Finance Committee, of which I had the honour to be a member, the full number of members' salaries was included, I would like to point out that that was a rough and ready calculation, that the question of a few members, more or less, was not considered, and that the point as to whether the members of the Ministry should receive ?400 in addition to their salaries was never before

that body at all. . The right honorable gentleman has alluded to the debates on this question in the Convention. The question was not allowed to pass without comment there.

Mr Mauger

- But we have nothing to do with conventions.

Sir Edward Braddon

- We had though.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- We have something to do with the Convention, and I think that the people of Australia had something to do with the recommendations of the Convention and the Draft Commonwealth Bill, whatever the honorable member's position may be in that respect. At any rate, it is on the records of the proceedings of the Convention that a proposition was made when this very matter was being considered that - No member of the Senate or of the House of Representatives, whilst in receipt, out of the general revenue, of any official salary or annual sum shall be entitled to receive any such payment as aforesaid, except in so far as such payment may exceed the amount of such official salary or annual sum.

Mr Mauger

-Which Convention was that?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The Sydney Convention of 1897, and for the information of the honorable member, as he evidently has not closely read the debates, I shall give him the opinions of some of the members, including the Prime Minister, upon this very point, as to whether two salaries should be taken or not. The right honorable gentleman said -

I would suggest that we should not pass this proposed new clause. It is a mere matter for the Legislature of the Commonwealth to consider.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon thought

It would be undesirable to agree to this proposal. It is very unlikely that any Minister would refuse to deduct from his official salary the salary he receives as a member of the House of Representatives. Besides that, if any provision of the kind be necessary it will be competent for the Federal Parliament to pass it.

Mr Mauger

- That shows the question was quite open to doubt even there.

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- No, it was not open to doubt at all. They simply avoided putting a provision in the Constitution, and left it to the good sense of the Ministers themselves, knowing what the position was in the various States, to decide whether two salaries should be accepted any more than two positions. For myself I never anticipated that a motion such as that tabled by the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, would be necessary in this House. I never anticipated for an instant that the honorable members of the first Federal

Government intended to receive two salaries any more than that they intended to receive two positions. A similar question arose in the Convention as to whether a member of the Federal Parliament should be entitled to retain the position of member of a State Parliament, and that question was argued at some considerable length, but it was left, just as the question under discussion was left, to the good sense of the Federal Parliament, or the good sense of the States, as the case might be. I do not know whether the example of South Australia has been followed by any other State.

Sir Edward Braddon

- By all the States.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- In the South Australian Parliament a motion was tabled by myself and was at first opposed by the then Government, but subsequently allowed to pass without a division, providing that no member of the State Parliament should at the same time retain a seat in the Federal Parliament, or take two salaries for filling the two positions. The question most prominent in . the smaller States - which, after all, are most closely interested in the financial question, as they can least afford to have their finances put in a difficult position by extreme charges or extravagance in any shape or form in Parliament- was the question what Members

of Parliament were to receive as salaries and what Ministers were to receive. Not only that, but it was no uncommon thing - and I am sure you, air, must have experienced it in the course of your electoral campaign in South Australia, and other members also - to have questions fired at candidates as to the probable cost of the new Federal Parliament.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member got through all right, notwithstanding.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- No doubt I got through-; and how did most of us get through? I say emphatically that every member returned from South Australia was returned more prominently to stand for absolute economy in the new Federal Parliament than on any other question. The fiscal question - the question of free-trade and protection - was a mere nothing compared to the fear on the part of the bulk of the people that the Federal Parliament was going to be a very expensive toy.

Mr Mauger

- What is economy ?

Mr Cameron

- Not spending more than one has got.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- A very excellent definition. Perhaps I may say that my idea of economy is certainly not the extravagant exaggeration of the importance of our position as members of this Parliament, or as members of the first Federal Government. We private members have to neglect our business in adjoining States and sacrifice a great deal, for a stipend which does not in many instances make up for the loss and inconvenience we have to put up with. But the honour of the position as a member of the Federal Parliament of United Australia is something beyond the mere stipend of £400 a year, and the honour of being a member of the first Federal Government should count a great deal more than the loss of a few fat fees to the leader of the bar in an Australian State.

Mr Watson

- Starve with honour !

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Starve with honour ! I am indeed surprised at the honorable member for Bland, who is the leader of the labour party, showing such a large-hearted-

Mr Mauger

- Good sense.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Large appreciation .

An Honorable Member. - Of other' people's money !

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Such a largehearted appreciation of federal positions. Not only were members' salaries and the salaries of Ministers challenged, but there was raised the question of the salaries to be paid to the members of the Inter-State Commission and to members of the new judiciary - all those positions which over and over again, not only in South Australia but in the other colonies, were sneered at as providing good fat billets for a large number of those who were the most' earnest enthusiasts in the cause of federation. Those taunts were thrown at candidates who took a prominent part in the federal movement, in other States, as-much as in South Australia.--

Mr Mauger

- Surely the honorable member does not pay any attention to that sort of argument ?

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- Undoubtedly, so far as I am concerned I do pay attention to that sort of argument, and I intend to follow my pledges given on the platform, and pay attention to them in the House. I think that the salaries voted for Ministers under the Bill should have been considered sufficient, and should even now be considered sufficient, just as our salaries, inadequate as some of us deem them, should be considered sufficient. The whole question is this : There have been rumours that members of this Parliament consider that they are underpaid and that it is the duty of Parliament to raise their salaries, or give special allowances. I indorse

every word uttered by the honorable member for Coolgardie when he said the other day that we entered Parliament, as the Ministers took their seats on the Treasury benches, knowing exactly under the Constitution what salaries were provided for us. As that honorable member said, we should have considered before we asked the electors to send us here, whether the salaries were sufficient with the added honour of the position, to make up for any loss we might have in business or in our private professional practice. I take it that Ministers assumed office with a distinct knowledge that a sum of £12,000 or not exceeding £12,000, was the vote included in the four corners of the Constitution.

Mr Mauger

- Plus their allowances.

Mr.V.L. SOLOMON. - There was no question of plus any allowance. If a precedent be necessary, what is the practice in the rest of the States ? The fact that in the other States it is not the custom for Ministers of the Crown to continue to take their parliamentary salaries in addition to their Ministerial salaries should have shown what was the ultimate intention of the Federal Constitution. I do not suppose the Commonwealth of Australia is going to be wrecked by an extra expenditure of £2,800. We shall presently have to consider the question of salaries in regard to even more important positions than the position of a Minister of the Crown - I allude to the position of Judges of our High Court, and to the position of the members of the Inter-State Commission - and, just as we shall have to exercise reasonable care in the expenditure in these as in every other direction, even in this matter of £400 we should show the people who have consented to federation - somewhat tardily in some States, it appears - that we do not intend to weight the Commonwealth with more expense than can possibly be avoided. I do not support this motion from any opposition, stand-point at all. I do not recognise the honorable member's now on the'

Treasury benches except as occupants who may be there for a few months, or it may be a few years ; but if it is found necessary in the future to increase their salaries, if we find that this Commonwealth, this partnership into which the States have entered, is of such a nature as to increase the prosperity of the whole of the States, and that the advantages more than make up for the expenditure, then will be time enough for Parliament in its wisdom to provide for the increase of those salaries, if it is desired to increase them. In the meantime, I think the salaries are sufficiently good for Ministers to be satisfied with ; and they are salaries which were expected by nine out of every ten of their electors, who voted for the Constitution. While suggesting to Ministers that it would be better they should not take this question to a division, I am in supporting this motion only carrying out one of the pledges I gave to the people of South Australia to make economy the very first plank of our federal platform. I trust the majority of the House will see fit at this early stage of our history to support the motion proposed by the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, and so to give an earnest to the whole people of Australia that economy is to be closely considered whenever opportunity arises.

Mr A McLEAN

- I am very pleased to hear from the observations of the Prime Minister that the Government have taken up an absolutely neutral attitude in regard to. this important question. That relieves myself and a good many others of much of the embarrassment we felt in regard to this motion. I certainly wish the Government had seen their way to go a little further, and initiate legislation to prevent any person drawing a second salary. I was a little surprised by the leader of the labour party, the honorable member for Bland, in the attitude he has taken up. My experience of the labour party in the past has been that they were strenuously opposed to anything beyond a reasonable remuneration - that they were strenuously opposed to anything in the way of high salaries.

Mr Mauger

- What is a high salary?

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Mr A McLEAN

- Does the honorable member for Bland wish to take up the attitude of the clergyman who preached, "Do not do as I do, but do as I say V The honorable member let drop a hint of his intention to follow this up next session by supporting an increase in the remuneration paid to honorable members.

Mr Watson

- The remuneration to be paid to the members of the next Parliament ?

Mr A McLEAN

- I sincerely hope that attitude will not be indorsed or supported by the good sense of the House. For my own part, I was one of those who warned the people against undue expenditure when the Commonwealth Bill was under consideration. It is rather singular that I should find myself now -compelled to defend the interests of the Commonwealth against the" strongest advocates of federation, who told the people that it would- not result in. the imposition of any undue additional taxation on them. I do not mean to say for a moment that the £2,800 which is proposed to be paid to Ministers will make any appreciable difference. Of course, in this regard, I think it is understood all round the House that we are not considering the present occupants of the Treasury benches. We are .discussing this as a permanent question - the permanent remuneration to be allowed to Ministers of the Crown.

Mr McCay

- The- only people who are not doing that are the Ministers themselves.

Mr A McLEAN

- I should' be very, sorry indeed to think that the. position of a. Minister of the Crown or that of a Member of Parliament should be sought for the sake of the remuneration attaching to it. Have Ministers or Members of the State Parliament ever claimed the remuneration they considered adequate to their services? Does the mayor of- a city claim remuneration for the time and talents he devotes to the discharge of his duties, or does the president of a shire? When members aspire to represent the people in the Legislature of the nation, they should be . actuated by some higher motive than that of personal gain. The sordid consideration of pounds shillings and pence .should not enter very largely into their calculations. I have always been-.a strong advocate of the system of payment of members. I support the system on the ground that it affords the humbler classes of the community the opportunity of sending into Parliament men of small means, who cannot ;afford to give their time unless' they receive-some remuneration. These are the grounds on which .I have ever supported the principle of payment of members - in order to enable every section the community to be represented in the legislative halls of the nation. I never did' support payment of members on the ground that the remuneration should be equal to the sacrifice that is made by either professional or business men. Well-to-do men do not require any large stipend for the time they devote to the public interest.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- There are not very many well-to-do men in politics.

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Mr A McLEAN

- I am very sorry to say a good many well-to-do men prefer -to look after their own selfish interests outside politics ; but I am pleased that we have some like the honorable member for Melbourne. Will that honorable member tell us his time is adequately remunerated .by £400 a year? I venture to say the honorable member would very often make that amount in one day, or even in one hour. I do not think we shall improve the character of Parliament by inducing men to. come here just for the sake of the remuneration attaching to the position. It would be a very unfortunate thing if we at- ' tempted to do anything of the kind. I was pointing out, when I was interrupted, that' I did not consider the £2,800 involved as in itself a very' serious consideration, but there is a very large and important principle involved in this expenditure. It is a true saving that he who rules over free men should himself be free. How can we consistently advocate economy if we begin with anything .approaching extravagance at the very root of Government ? If we claim full and adequate compensation for ourselves, whether we are members of the House or members of the Government, for the time we give to the service of the country, how can we be expected to exercise economy in any other direction ? I was very pleased to find that the proposals .of the Government have been so far in keeping with their professions of economy. The appointments we have made up to the present have certainly not leaned to the side of extravagance in any single instance I know of. There is my worthy, old friend the Cleric sitting in the chair at the end of the table, who gave up £1,200 a year to accept position in the Commonwealth at £900 a year. And other positions have been similarly taken. Surely it is unfortunate that the only one departure :from the wholesome principle of economy so far, should be in the- direction in which we ourselves are personally interested. Of course we know that this is the introduction of the thin end of the wedge. We know that not only the salaries of Ministers are involved in the decision. We know perfectly well that if we commence our political career by increasing the remuneration attaching to the office of Minister, that will be followed by increasing the

remuneration of members all round. If we decide to make the union unpopular, and to create an agitation for the undoing of that union, we cannot do better than begin by extravagance at the very seat of government. If we do that, we know perfectly well that we must follow it out in every other direction. I hope that the good sense of the House will rise superior to any such selfish considerations. I hope that honorable members will have regard to the importance of making the union popular throughout the Commonwealth, and I feel assured, whatever the verdict of this House may be, that if this question were referred to a referendum of the Commonwealth, the proposal that Ministers should draw two salaries would be negated by at least ten to one.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Not if they understood the subject.

Mr A McLEAN

- They understand it perfectly well. It has never been recognised in any of the States throughout the Commonwealth as a desirable principle that men should be fully remunerated for the time which they devote to then-parliamentary duties. It would be most unfortunate if it were so recognised. If honorable members get a reasonable reimbursement of expenses or sufficient to enable every class of the community to be represented in the Legislature of the country, that is as far as we should go in the direction of expenditure in connexion with our parliamentary system. If we observe due economy at home, then we can consistently preach economy abroad j but if we begin by extravagance within the walls of Parliament, we cannot consistently or reasonably advocate economy outside

Mr. MAUGER(Melbourne Ports).Largely on the grounds on which my honorable friend who has just resumed his seat based his contention, I rise to oppose the resolution submitted by the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn. On the ground of public economy I urge that Ministers should be paid adequately, and that, at the inauguration of this Commonwealth it should be well understood that the payment which they receive as salary is the only claim that they can have upon the Parliament. The honorable member for Gippsland well knows that the men who sit upon the Treasury benches make a considerable sacrifice.

Mr A McLEAN

- Are not the services of the best men in the Commonwealth available without any additional salary ?

Mr MAUGER

- That all depends. It is a matter of opinion. My honorable friend knows well that quite a number of excellent men who have given their services to various States are now being maintained by those States because they did not get adequate payment for the work which they did when in office. He knows that one of our best statesmen had to submit to the indignity time after time of being saved from absolute starvation, and that at the present moment the State is paying him an annuity to enable him to keep himself and his family from want.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Would that have been altered if Ministers had been paid more ?

Mr MAUGER

- It would have been altered to this extent, that we should not be in any way responsible. If we understand that at the inception of the Commonwealth we are going to pay Ministers adequately, and that such payment is going to relieve ' us from all further responsibilities, we should be adopting the best possible form of economy.

Mr Thomson

- We cannot . guarantee them a continuance of office.

Mr MAUGER

- I am not speaking of that. What I am contending for is that the occupants of the Treasury benches should be adequately paid, and that then they should have no further claims on the public Treasury.

Mr A McLEAN

- Should the man who can make £15,000 a year get a similar amount if he occupies a position on the Treasury benches 1

Mr MAUGER

- I do not thinlthat this House has anything to do with that question. What we are- concerned about is as to what amount constitutes a reasonably adequate payment for the duties which. Ministers are called

upon to perform.

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Mr Thomas

- Does the honorable member think that the extra £400 will be adequate.?

Mr MAUGER

- Certainly not ; but we should be getting nearer to an adequate amount. To my mind it is a matter for regret that the Government do not see their way clear to vote upon this question. It is not a personal matter at all, but a matter of principle.

Mr A McLEAN

- I believe they will vote the right way.

Mr MAUGER

- I am sure of it, and they have indicated that the right way is to give them the extra £400 without any reduction. I believe they are unanimous in that opinion. The honorable member for Gippsland professed surprise that the leader of the labour party had given expression to the sentiments which he has uttered. I am not surprised, but I am exceedingly glad that the honorable member for Bland recognises that he would not be assisting his party, or the workers in whose interests he so frequently toils, by refusing adequate payment to those in high and responsible positions. There is an idea abroad that if we cut down the salaries of Ministers and Governors, we shall increase the income of the working classes. If I thought that this £400 could be transferred to the pockets of the men who really want it, I might adopt the position taken up by my honorable friend the member for Gippsland. But it will not benefit a single member of the community.

Mr Poynton

- That argument applies to everything.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does it not affect their taxation?

Mr MAUGER

- It is not a question of taxation. To the Commonwealth the sum is infinitesimal, but to the individual it means a great deal. The amount distributed over the Commonwealth only represents something under a halfpenny per head.

Mr Cameron

- - But it is the principle involved.

Mr MAUGER

- - The principle involved is that we should see that we give an adequate payment, and demand for that adequate payment adequate services in return. The honorable member for Gippsland appears to think that if a vote were taken on this question throughout the Commonwealth, ten to one would vote against the Ministerial suggestion. No doubt if my honorable friend were to stump the country and deliver speeches such as he has delivered in this House the result would be so. But there is a very great deal in the way in which a matter is put before the people, and if some of us who entertain different views were following in the track of the honorable member and replying to his statement of the case, I doubt whether the proposal would meet with the fate that he has predicted. Speaking for myself, I have not met a man who is not in sympathy with the proposal to pay Ministers adequately, and to give them to understand that that is the only claim which they have a right to make for services rendered.

Mr A McLEAN

- I have sufficient confidence in Ministers to know that they would do the work equally well if they only got half their present salary.

Mr MAUGER

- There are some services that money cannot pay for - the best services money cannot pay for. I believe that Ministers will give the Commonwealth their best services, and no money can pay for them. But the question under consideration is - "Is the £12,000 provided for in the Constitution, plus the £400 allowance to each honorable member, too much to pay Ministers for the discharge of the responsible duties appertaining to their office?" My honorable and learned friend (Mr. Glynn) has cited the payments made to English Ministers. I would remind him that from time to time in England, as here, the public exchequer has come to the rescue of men who have done the State great services, and has paid their private debts

to an enormous extent.

Mr Glynn

- Not so very much during the last century.

Mr MAUGER

- They have also been given pensions when they were out of office. In citing the case of English Ministers the honorable and learned member ought to have cited the whole case. He ought to have remembered the immense amount of money which the English public have paid to Ministers.

Mr Thomas

- They have paid more for the debts of princes.

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Mr MAUGER

- I am not dealing now with what they have paid for the debts of princes. But I do know that Pitt and others received very handsome sums with which to pay their debts. Those sums were paid because the Parliament recognised that the men had performed for the State yeoman services, which were not adequately recompensed. I am told that the family of a deceased statesman in a neighbouring State is receiving £500 a year from the consolidated revenue, but yet that fact has not been taken into consideration by those honorable members who have quoted the salaries of Ministers.

Mr.G. B. Edwards. - If they had been getting £10,000 a year it would have been just the same.

Mr MAUGER

- That does not touch the question that I am arguing. We should start on a true economical basis by adequately paying the occupants of the Treasury benches. I am just as anxious as the honorable member for Gippsland that this Parliament should begin on an economical basis. The whole question is - "What is economy?" There is true economy and false economy, and would it not be false economy to pay Ministers inadequately and by-and-by have to grant them annuities or to support their children. I urge just as strongly as the honorable member that in the interests of economy this House should begin by paying adequately for services rendered by those in its employ/ whether those services be rendered by Ministers or by the humblest servants of the Commonwealth.

Mr POYNTON

- I intend to support the motion. I referred to this matter when speaking on the Address in Reply. It is not the amount involved about which I am concerned. It is rather a matter of principle. The practice in all the States has been that when a Minister accepts office, he ceases to draw his allowance as a member. I have no hesitation in affirming that, as far as South Australia is concerned, the people of that State were almost unanimously of opinion that the £12,000 provided for in the Constitution Act covered the whole of the Ministerial charges. I am positive that if a referendum were taken there to-morrow, they would decide against Ministers drawing the £400 allowance which is made to other honorable members. I believe that honorable members should come to this House and carry out the pledges which we made to our constituents. If there is one question that was raised more prominently than another in the State of South Australia during the federal campaign it was this question of economy. If Ministers are permitted to draw the ordinary member's allowance of £400 a year, I agree with the honorable member for Gippsland that it will be but the thin end of the wedge towards getting more salary. If that amount is 'allowed to Ministers, then no fault can be found with giving an increase of salary to honorable members.

Mr Mauger

- Is that a fair thing to say?

Mr POYNTON

- I say that is the position.

Mr Mauger

- Personally, I repudiate it.

Mr POYNTON

- If the cap fits, the honorable member for Melbourne Ports can wear it. The question to be considered is - "Did any of the States previously permit their Ministers to accept the allowance made to members of the local Parliament in addition to the amount paid to them as Ministers?" The answer is - "No, not one of them." 'What was prominent in the minds of the electors during the recent campaign was the practice in vogue in the various States. It is idle for honorable members to talk about paying a salary which will

enable Ministers to make provision for themselves in the days to come. Why, if we were to give some men £10,000 a year it would not be sufficient to make provision for them. Besides, we are not here for that purpose. I knew, when I contested the recent election in South Australia, the amount of remuneration that would attach to my position, and I am equally confident that the total sum which was to be divided amongst Ministers was generally accepted as £12,000. I shall certainly vote for the motion.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- Upon this matter it may perhaps be well for honorable members to refer to the discussion which took place in Sydney during the Federal Convention sittings.

Mr W H GROOM

- That does not bind this Parliament.

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Mr CONROY

- It was clearly recognised there that a payment of £400 a year to Ministers would be made in addition to their Ministerial salaries. It is perfectly true that the following clause was debated on the suggestion of the Legislative Council of South Australia, which objected to that course being adopted : -

No member of the Senate or of the House of Representatives whilst in receipt out of general revenue of any official salary or annual sum shall be entitled to receive any such payment as aforesaid except in so far as such payment may exceed the amount of such official salary or annual sum.

The Convention, after discussing that provision, negatived it. That clearly shows that its members recognised it as quite probable that Ministers, in addition to the £12,000 to be divided amongst them, would draw their allowance as members of the House of Representatives. I, for one, should like to see some addition made to the £12,000 which section 66 fixes as the amount to be divided amongst Ministers, " till Parliament otherwise provides." In one way it might have been better to alter that sum by introducing a Bill, and to have fixed the amount at £17,000, or even at £21,500. Such a course would at all events have allowed us, if necessary, to increase the number of Ministers, and to give them a fair payment. The question which presents itself to my mind is, " what ought to be the allowance to a Minister?" It appears to me that we cannot do better than take into consideration the fact that the Ministers, or at least five out of seven of them, are at present not located in the respective States, where as a rule they carry on their businesses or professions. Whilst Melbourne is the seat of government, it is perfectly clear that at least five out of the seven Ministers cannot carry on their ordinary avocations. If we look at any great financial institution, and compare the salaries they pay to their chief men with the salaries this Parliament is asked to pay to the Ministers here, we find that capital generally knows very well how to take care of itself, and certainly does not en- on the side of extravagance if there is no necessity for it. We find that these banks - and I have taken the trouble to go through the returns of four or five of the chief of them - pay no less than from £3,000 to £3,500 to their chief managers, and in the case of at least one banking company, salaries of £2,000, and residences with other allowances, are provided for their managers. If we find that done in the case of a bank where men are looking after the interests of investors and capital, if we find the shareholders willing to pay these salaries, then it is perfectly fair that we should pay Ministers a salary proportionate to the work they do, and based on similar lines. It has been said by the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, that of course there is a sense of gratified ambition in being 'a representative in Parliament, and that especially applies when one is a member of a Ministry. That is perfectly true, but I do not think that the people of Australia ought to try and trade upon it. We ought to give to each man, so far as we can, exactly that sum which his services are worth, and we should presume here that the people of Australia have sent in the men whom they consider the best. It is true that there may be certain selections made in error, perhaps, by constituencies, but we take it on the whole that all of us here were the best men who presented themselves - at all events were the men whom the electors viewed with the most favour. Therefore, it can fairly be said that we are entitled to some consideration on that account alone. Honorable members are not asked at the present time any question as to an extra allowance to themselves, and therefore in voting on this motion it is clear that we are considering the public interest. The decision we- shall come to cannot affect the great body of us, because we do not hope to become Ministers. We do not all think we can give due care and attention ; nor do we always think, even if we have the ability, that we could fill the positions successfully. In voting on this question we are giving perfectly disinterested voices, because to the great bulk of us it is of no concern whatever. But let us see what Parliament has already done in some States. In New South Wales

I find that six puisne Judges receive in all the sum of £18,500 per annum. It may be that there are many persons who think that a limitation ought to be placed on the amount of salary which any man ought to receive, but until that time comes along, I think that all those who wish to see proper work done, and the best men appointed to the positions, will take care to offer a salary at all events which they can earn outside. In New South Wales, although no less than £18,500 per annum is paid in salaries to the six puisne Judges and the Chief Justice, still we find that even that is not very tempting, and that many barristers have been known to refuse to take a judgeship. I do not suppose it will be argued for a moment that the position of Minister of State in this Parliament is less worthy than that of a puisne Judge, or Chief Justice in New South Wales. While I would have been glad to have seen some advantage taken of section 66, and the House directly asked to vote a salary, still at the same time, considering as I do, the salaries paid in other positions, and that various banking institutions find it to their advantage to pay sums such as I have mentioned, I think the members of the Federal Ministry will not be overpaid if in addition to the sum allowed under section 66, they draw the member's allowance of £400 a year. Therefore I intend to oppose the motion,

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I think it is to be regretted that the House has been called upon to discuss this matter in this manner. At the same time I think Ministers are to be commended, first for not drawing the members' allowance of £400 a. year in addition to their salaries, and next for the chivalrous attitude which they adopt in not voting on this motion. The question, as it appears to me, is one which has been suggested to many other honorable members in the same way. As far as my experience goes, we were all committed to a distinct promise to support economy in the administration of the Federal Government at the outset. There can be no sort of question that the people throughout, at any rate the State of Tasmania, for which I can speak personally, look to us to see that economy is exercised in every possible way, and to go behind the Constitution, as we should do in some degree by allowing Ministers to draw the member's allowance, would be to open the flood-gates to extravagance, and to give our sanction to that which we should all reasonably deplore. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports has said how delighted the people would be to pay Ministers adequately, to pay everybody adequately, and he added that if the allowance of £400 per annum were taken "from Ministers and were to go into the pockets of the people, he would gladly advocate that course, but he overlooks the fact that money has to go out of the pockets of the people to go into the pockets of Ministers. I think that those who were at the Convention know that so far as any public action was taken there, so far as debate went on any subject touching this question, members of that body were decidedly in favour of the view that the salary of Ministers was to be a sum not exceeding £12,000, and certainly was not to include any addition by way of allowance. We have had laid upon the table an estimate of yours, sir, showing the probable expenditure of the Commonwealth Government at £300,000 per annum. In that estimate it is quite true that the Ministers' salaries are put down at £12,000, and that the allowance for the full number of members is put down. But that was one of many estimates laid before the Convention. It was never considered, and never discussed, and has no sort of authority as the result of any debate or motion upon it. I hope that honorable members will not be misled by that paper, as being something which has the authorization of the Convention. And really when one has said that, one has said nearly everything there is to say on the matter. We have undoubtedly at the outset to exercise the most rigid economy. We have to pay salaries which, although they may be small as compared with salaries paid to bank managers and specialists in other lines of life, are not small as compared with similar salaries paid throughout the States, and also in every other civilized community. The salaries which we offer in the Constitution to Ministers are ample by comparison with any standard that we can set up, as the honorable and learned member for South Australia has shown, and I hope that we shall support Ministers in a somewhat tardy spirit of renunciation, and see that they get merely their salaries and no allowance. The remuneration of members does not enter into the question at all. There is no sort of reason why, at the present moment, we should discuss that question. The Minister for Home Affairs has said that many honorable members are already dissatisfied, and will resign their positions if their allowance be not increased. I cannot understand any honorable member taking up that position. We all knew when we stood for election what we were going to receive, and we all ought, I think, to be satisfied with the allowance. The very utmost that could be allowed to be done is to place those from the

more distant States on the same footing as those from the States closer at hand. Some allowance might be paid for their passages by steamer and coach and so forth, which would bring about an equality. I can say that, although I am a member for a distant State, because I should never make any charge on the public exchequer for my expenses, inasmuch as I should do no travelling to and from Tasmania during the session. I hope that the motion will be carried, and that we shall* show to the people that we have the courage to be economical, to be saving of their rights and taxes, and to exercise the high privilege we enjoy in attending here to carry out that which is for their best material welfare.

Mr. W.H. GROOM (Darling Downs).I have no wish to prolong the debate, but I wish to make my reason clear for the vote I am about to give. I am accustomed to the word economy. I have been accustomed to the word for the last 40 years. I have heard it mentioned on the platform and on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, and I have known the most ardent economists when they have got into office prove the most extravagant Ministers the colony ever had. I have had a good deal of experience of what is called economy. There is an economy which leads to wisdom, and there is an economy which leads to unwisdom. I take it that in discussing this motion our remarks will not be taken to apply to present Ministers, that we are dealing with the question generally. I have always maintained from the time when payment of members was first raised in Queensland that it should never be taken into consideration in connexion with Ministers' salaries, which ought to be distinct and separate altogether. Unfortunately I was not supported in my contention in that State. Ministers in receipt of £1,000 a year have their parliamentary allowance of £300 stopped, so that they have to carry on their departments, and do the heavy work of a young and growing colony, on the very small salary of £700 a year more than is paid to an ordinary member. In Queensland they even go to the extent of applying that principle to the Chairman of Committees. The salary awarded to the office is only £500, and the member's allowance of £300 is not paid, so that he has to discharge the heavy work of Chairman of Committees for six months, besides the work he has to do in the recess, for the small additional salary of £200. That, I think, is carrying economy to extremes. I have always thought so, and I see no reason to alter my opinion. I cannot support this motion, which I have no doubt is moved from the highest motives ; but it is well that at this early period of the session the matter should be decided one way or the other. "We talk a good deal about Ministers' salaries, but have we really gone into the question in an "intelligent way as it affects other countries ? My honorable and learned friend, Mr. Glynn, knows that the Prime Minister of England receives £5,000 a year. Is it not an historical fact that during the last year the late Lord Russell was Attorney-General the income he derived from contentious cases in which the Crown was engaged amounted to £30,000. In our State the Attorney-General receives a salary of £1,000. He is allowed to take no cases against the Crown, but he is leading counsel in all contentious cases for the Crown. In Queensland in one year, according to a parliamentary return, the Attorney-General received £3,500 for Crown briefs in addition to his salary of £1,000 a year, while the Prime Minister, who had to bear the whole responsibility of the government of the country, had to be content with a salary' of £1,000. I consider that the sum of £12,000 which is appropriated for the salaries of Ministers is not at all excessive, and that if the House refuses to pass the motion it will not be paying them an excessive amount. I am consistent in the course I am going to take. I have always advocated that Ministers of the Crown should receive adequate salaries for discharging their duties in connexion with Ministerial office. But they have also to discharge their duties as members ; they have to answer all the correspondence of their constituents, to attend deputations and to do various work in connexion with their constituencies, so that I think they should receive the member's allowance also. I believe this motion has been moved from the highest and most patriotic motives; but, to be consistent with my past political life, I shall be fully justified in declining to vote with my honorable and learned friend (Mr Glynn) on this occasion.

Mr. G.B. EDWARDS (South Sydney).I exceedingly regret that I cannot support the motion, and I regret, too, that the subject has been discussed at all in the first days of this Parliament. Undoubtedly it is the custom in all the States that Ministers shall not take the allowance paid to Members of Parliament. Undoubtedly it was the opinion of the people of this Commonwealth that this allowance would not be taken by Commonwealth Ministers, and it is a duty incumbent on the House to see- that the initial stages of the Commonwealth are entered into with every regard for economy. The Ministry have acknowledged the existence of the custom, and the feeling of the people in this matter by staying their hands from drawing the allowance in the' first instance. If it had been clear, as they say it is made in the

Constitution, that the parliamentary allowance should be drawn as well as the Ministerial salary, there was no reason why Ministers should have delayed taking it. But I contend that Ministers themselves knew that the feeling of the people and the custom in the States are decidedly against their taking it, and they have put off taking it until such time as they could get an expression of opinion from this House as to the rights or wrongs of that procedure. I hope the House will express itself in no unhesitating way, and show that we are determined, at any rate, in the initial stages of the Commonwealth, to stop anything like extra expenditure. It is essential for us to show people that we are going to carry on the work of this Commonwealth, as the honorable member from Kalgoorlie said last night, on a system of simplicity and economy. We want to feel our way, and to do all we can to make the nation strong in its first stages, and I regret exceedingly that Ministers have not exercised the self-denying ordinance by the declining to accept members' allowance, and so prevented this subject being gone into at all. It has been urged against this motion and in favour of increasing Ministers' salaries by tacking on this allowance, that we have had cases of statesmen and leading politicians in Australia who, after some years of occupancy of Ministerial office, have come to hard times and to want. There is one particular instance in my own State where a pension of £500 a year is being paid to the widow and orphans of a statesman. Every member of the House knows well that if such men had been in receipt of any salary up to £10,000 or £20,000 a year their position would have been precisely the same. It is an extraordinary fact that amongst a certain class of colonial statesmen and politicians we have accompanying their brilliant abilities a sort of Micawber-like vice which renders them unable to make any provision for old age or for the future wants of their families, and we can never get them to make this provision by increasing the salaries of Ministerial officers. The House has already shown its desire to work with economy by cutting down the proposed salaries of two of the highest officials of Parliament. Having done that, we have no reason to vote for what is a practical increase of the salaries of the occupants of the Ministerial benches. In saying this, I do not refer to the present occupants of the Treasury benches. This question should be approached without regard to personal considerations whatever, and discussed without party feeling. But having shown a desire to economize in one case, and seeing that there is no more reason for consideration in the one case than the other, we ought to see that economy is practised in this particular instance. I am fully persuaded that the people of the Commonwealth are looking to us not only not to incur any extra expense, but to keep expenses down to the lowest point, so that whatever be the outcome of ' the first few years of federation, people will not be inclined to think they have made a mistake in joining the Commonwealth. Two or three honorable members have referred to the question of the allowance to members. I hope - and I am fearless in expressing the hope - that the acceptance by Ministers of the member's allowance is not a stage towards increasing the allowance of members all round. There is, no doubt, a feeling on the part of some honorable members that they are underpaid, and I am not one to say they are altogether wrong in that feeling, but it is an ill time to bring forward questions like this in the first months of our parliamentary existence, and to propose to vote money to ourselves. If this motion be carried, and members are free to draw this allowance, it is almost inevitable - although I do not think for a moment it is the intention of some who are supporting the ' motion - that there will be an application for some increase of the present allowance to other members.

Mr MAUGER

- Deal with each on its merits.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I am prepared to do that. But this is the thin end of the wedge, and I, for one, by my voice and any other influence I can exercise, will work against it. If we are patriotic in this matter, and determined to give expression to the will of the people so frequently expressed, now is the time for self-denying ordinances. There may be a time before this Parliament ends when we may consider rightly and fairly the question whether the salaries of Ministers shall not be increased after the next general election, and also whether the members' allowance shall not also be increased. To some extent it is an indelicate thing for members of the House to be voting increased salaries to themselves or existing Ministers.

Mr PIESSE

- I think the strongest arguments advanced and the strongest speech made against the motion - was that made by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports. That honorable member said a great deal about

paying Ministers inadequately, and he also urged that it was necessary to make considerable payments to prevent future claims by dependents of Ministers being brought before Parliament. That argument has been sufficiently answered by the honorable member for South Sydney, who has pointed out that there are men who, however much money they have, are not likely to put by for the future. As to the plea of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, for adequate payment, I did not notice that he gave a definition of what he meant by "adequate payment."

Mr Mauger

- Nor was any definition given of what was meant by "moderate payment-" or "economy."

Mr PIESSE

- I think there are two rules by which we may gauge what is adequate. One would be what men of similar calibre and ability practising their professions, or carrying on business would earn outside Parliament. If that be the rule" we are to adopt, then I am much afraid we shall never get inside this Parliament men of sufficient calibre and capacity, because we are not likely to attach to the office of Ministers such salaries as will bear comparison with what men of their class are realizing outside Parliament. Therefore we have to depend on some other motive than the mere money remuneration attached to the office to lead men to seek to be Members of Parliament and to be Ministers. That motive is the public spirit which calls men to aspire to these offices. It is no use our attempting to attract the men who are necessary to carry on the business of the country by attaching to the offices of Ministers money consideration which will be an adequate return for the services they render. If we were free to discuss the question - if nothing had been said about this matter previously - it might be that we should perhaps think that the payment of £400 a year, more or less, not worth talking about. But before I deal with the point as to whether we are free to discuss the question, I would like to say there is another measure of what is adequate remuneration. Some honorable members say that adequate remuneration is that which would be sufficient for a Minister to live on. What is sufficient altogether depends on the standard of living we lay down for Ministers, and I, for one, desire to say - and I think I am voicing the opinions of a great many - I do not expect any one in an official position because of that position to spend money on functions, or go to any expense of the kind.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- They have to do it, all the same.

Mr PIESSE

- They should not be expected to do so, and to a great extent we have to form the public opinion that Ministers are not required to go to such expense. We ought to establish a standard of simplicity. This desire for extravagance and display is at the root of a great many of the evils which threaten the community. Let us be honest and not expect anything of the kind, and a great many of the difficulties will disappear.

Sir Malcolm Mceacharn

- One must extend the ordinary courtesies to visitors.

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Mr PIESSE

- Those ordinary courtesies might be very well curtailed, and if a great many of these courtesies were not exacted by friends and members there would be no need for great payments and salaries. I consider that we are not free to discuss this question purely on its merits. I take quite a different view to that taken by the honorable member for Werriwa. He led us to understand, and he was right, technically speaking, that a proposal which was submitted at the Convention to prevent Ministers drawing their parliamentary honorarium in addition to their salary was negatived. Truly the proposal was negatived, but why 1 It seems to me that the proposal was negatived - and I want to draw honorable members attention to this - on the assurance that it was not necessary to place any such restriction in- the Constitution. If that be so, all the arguments which may be drawn from the mere fact of the proposal being negatived, absolutely fall to the ground. The words which I rely on are these -

We rely on the Parliaments of the different colonies to provide against the receipt of two salaries by their members while members of the Commonwealth Parliament, and the Parliament of the Commonwealth will make a similar provision in regard to its own officers.

These words were used by the right honorable gentleman who is now Prime Minister of Australia.

Mr Barton

- It was because I thought these matters should be left to the Parliaments concerned that I first voted to have that proposal negatived ; and I took the action I am taking now to leave Parliament free to come to a decision.

Mr PIESSE

- Of course, we must all form our own conclusion from the records, and my impression is that the statement then made so swayed the members of the Convention that they did not consider it desirable to put in this provision. At the Convention the present Minister for Defence said, with regard to the position of a Minister -

I should say he ought not to receive two remunerations.

The whole of what was said during the very short discussion went to show there was no necessity to make provision, and therefore the amendment suggested by South Australia was not insisted on. With those facts before the public, those who stood for election to the Federal Parliament, when they were questioned On the point, took the view that Ministers' salaries would not exceed the £12,000 reserved under the Constitution. And they were borne out in that by the practice throughout Australia of deducting members' allowances from Ministers' salaries. Looking at these facts, I feel that if I were to vote for this addition to the Ministerial salaries, I should be committing a breach of faith with those who sent me here, because they understood, and I led them to understand, that there would be no increase of Ministers' salaries beyond the £12,000. With these views, I shall be obliged to support the motion of the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn.

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Mr FOWLER

- While recognising the generosity of the Ministry in allowing members to discuss this matter absolutely freely, I could wish that generosity had gone a little bit further, and had obviated the necessity of having this discussion at all, with a division at the end of it. Although it is true the amount under consideration is comparatively trifling, there are other matters in regard to the question which enable me, without any hesitation, to vote in favour of the motion. Those of us from Western Australia who took an active part in the federal campaign there were continually being confronted with the allegation that federation was going to mean a considerable accession to the burdens of the people, and that many fat billets were going to be made for those taking part in federal work. I and others who took part in that campaign as federalists replied to those allegations with a certain amount of confidence, having read the debates which took place in the various conventions. We felt sure that to say a policy of rigorous economy should be strictly enforced by the Federal Government for some time to come, was a very safe deduction from those debates. I think it is a thousand pities that in this particular case Ministers did not show themselves more willing to set the example of economy, and, if necessary, self-sacrifice, so that we should be able to carry out the same policy right through the public service, at any rate during the first few years of the life of the Commonwealth. The member for Melbourne Ports has given us some rather pathetic pictures of statesmen of a past generation and of their families living in penury. I fail to see what he wishes us to infer from those pictures. Does he wish us to imagine that by giving this extra £400 a year to Ministers we shall enable them to avoid such an unfortunate position as that? Or does he wish us to take up the position that we shall be obliged to be sufficiently generous to Ministers to prevent any such contingency as he has pictured? I take it that this opens up a vista of possibilities before which even the most luxuriously inclined politician would shrink. We have heard also of the necessity of adequately remunerating not only the Ministers but Members of Parliament. I do not see that this question of adequately remunerating members of the Federal Parliament or Ministers is at all to be placed on the commercial basis indicated by those gentlemen who advocate that aspect of the question. I do not see that Members of Parliament are at all on the same basis as gentlemen who sell their services in the open commercial market to the highest bidder. We come here prepared, if necessary, for a certain amount of self-sacrifice, because we presume we are interested in the politics of the country and in the welfare of its people. The question of remuneration is simply one of enabling members to come here and to exist under ordinary comfortable conditions. That, I take it, is fully provided for both in the case of Ministers and members by the amounts that have been appropriated for the purpose.

Personally, I shall oppose in every way any attempt to raise the salaries of either Ministers or members,

because I believe the necessary provisions for securing the best men have already been placed in the Constitution.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- I think a great deal too much has been made of the fact that during the election campaign it was stated that economy was to be observed by those who direct the affairs of the Commonwealth. Undoubtedly the people of Australia look to us to practise economy, but at the same time it is not to be supposed that, sitting here as we do, representing the whole of Australia, we are to be charged with extravagance, because some of us think that the £2,800 which represent the aggregate parliamentary allowance of seven Ministers should be added to their Ministerial salaries. I think that the States made a very great mistake when payment of members was introduced in deducting the allowance made to ordinary members from the salaries of Ministers. I have always held that, at any rate in Victoria, Ministers were paid a great deal too little, as the deduction of £300 a year from their salaries reduced them in some instances to £1,100. What is really proposed in this motion 1 We are proposing really to make the Ministerial salary £1,300 a year, because as ordinary members of the Commonwealth Parliament Ministers would be entitled to an annual allowance of £400. Section 48 clearly distinguishes between Ministers and ordinary members, inasmuch as it speaks of "allowances," whereas section 66 speaks of "salaries." That seems to me conclusive that Members of Parliament who take up the duties of Ministers are to have the sum of £1 2,000 divided amongst them as salary, in addition to which they are each to receive £400 as an allowance. I shall vote against the motion. I am quite convinced that the sum allotted to Ministers is nothing like sufficient for them. It is true that even £2,000 or £2,100, which would represent what I believe they are now entitled to receive under the terms of our Constitution, is not anything like adequate remuneration. It has been said that Ministers go on to the Treasury benches prompted only by public spirit. I think they go there from a good many motives, but I do not think they would go there unless they had some pay.

By our local Acts of Parliament and by the Commonwealth Constitution we recognise that they are entitled to some payment, and though £2,000 a year may not be adequate compensation, yet it is a proper recognition of the duties which Ministers have to perform in addition to their work as Members of Parliament. Honorable members know that our allowance of £400 a year very soon disappears, and I think that Ministers also will find their allowance ebb away, and that will not leave them very much for salaries. I shall vote against the motion.

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Mr CAMERON

- The motion submitted by the honorable and learned member for South Australia (Mr. Glynn) is one of considerable import* ance. What particularly struck me in the earlier part of the proceedings when honorable members were speaking was, that the opponents of the motion insisted upon quoting the salaries paid in various other portions of the Empire. They compared England and Canada with Australia. It seems to me that such a comparison was absurd on the face of it. Australia with a population of something like 4,000,000, and with a revenue as far as the Commonwealth is concerned of £2,500,000, which is all that we can legitimately hope for without resorting to direct taxation, is not to be mentioned in the same breath with England, which has a population of 40,000,000 odd and a revenue of £110,000,000. Turning to Canada, what do we find 1 We are told that the Canadians pay their Ministry £21,000 per annum, and that there are fifteen Ministers. But on referring to Canadian statistics I find that the general revenue of that country amounts to very nearly £10,000,000, whereas even New South Wales and Victoria have a 'revenue of about three times as much as that of the Commonwealth. -We know perfectly well that the people of the Commonwealth were induced to support the Constitution Bill and to federate on the distinct . understanding that taxation would be as light as possible and that no increased expenditure would result. We were told in the various States that die local Parliaments would be reduced in numbers because they would have less to do. Yet so far what has been the result ? Not one State can be said to have attempted to curtail its expenditure by a single sixpence. As the local Parliaments have so far forgotten their obligations, it is the duty of the' Commonwealth to show the way. I was opposed to the establishment of the Commonwealth from start to finish, ' but the States, having accepted the Constitution, I am prepared loyally to do my duty to the people as a whole. I am not in the habit of making long speeches, and I wish some honorable members who have addressed the House would follow my

example. There is one point, however, upon which I feel that it is my duty to touch. The honorable member for Gippsland in the course of his speech said that if he were allowed to go round the country he could get a majority of ten to one in favour of the motion. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports said it was quite possible if the honorable member for Gippsland did stump the country alone, that he might succeed, but the honorable member for Melbourne Ports gave the House to understand that if he followed, the result would be exactly the reverse. It may be that the honorable member for Melbourne Ports is as eloquent and persuasive as he asserts, but I would point out that he came over to Tasmania advocating protection, and, as the result of his eloquence, four of the five men returned to this Parliament by that State are free-traders.

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I think honorable members will agree with me, that, no matter how interesting, this has been a very unpleasant subject to debate. I must confess that I have seldom in my political career felt such painful misgivings in coming to a conclusion upon any question. This is a very important question, and I think that a great deal of the debate has been taken up with very irrelevant matter. It does not seem to me that this is a question of economy at all. It is a question whether every Member of Parliament, irrespective of his position as a Minister, should, as a member, take the salary which is given to him under the statute. The question as to whether the Ministers of the Crown are paid or underpaid is one for this House to consider upon another occasion. As far as usage is concerned, there is very little difficulty in coming to a conclusion. We find that in every Parliament throughout Australia the custom has been for a Minister not to take his salary as a Member of Parliament. We have certainly allowed the other principle to obtain dealing with the Speaker of this House and the President of the Senate, but whilst I am inclined to give a very considerable amount of weight to that, we must allow that it was done under exceptional circumstances to get out of a difficulty. We found that certain salaries were reasonable for those positions, and, as these gentlemen had a statutory right, we had no power, under the circumstances, of dictating to them. Therefore we resorted to what one may call the device of reducing the salaries provided on the Estimates so as to bring them, with the allowance made to Members of Parliament, within the scope of our ideas. It has been said by some honorable members that the allowance to members of Parliament ought to be increased, and it is just possible that that may become a matter for debate in the future. That has made the difficulty with me in coming to a decision on this question, because, though honorable members may think that the present high salaries of Ministers, plus the allowances of Members of Parliament is not too much, in years to come the allowance to Members of Parliament may be considerably increased, and a mixing up of these two matters might cause a great deal of confusion. I do not for one moment say that Ministers of the Federal Parliament are over paid. I think there is no analogy between their position and the position of Ministers in other countries to which reference has been made. I think their expenses will be very great, and I am very much afraid we shall have to place, year after year, on our Estimates, a large amount of money for special allowances, owing to the peculiar nature of the duties which they have to perform. It will be a very objectionable item, and will often give rise to a great deal of unpleasant criticism. At the same time the Government themselves have, notwithstanding the statutory right under which they can draw their allowances, asked us to consider the whole question in the light of the Constitution. Therefore, whatever may have been the events happening in the Convention, whatever may have been the opinions expressed there, these matters are now open to us for our decision. I do not hesitate for one moment to say that it was the understanding in the Convention that the usage in vogue throughout the Australian States would be the usage of the Commonwealth of Australia. I believe that that is perfectly clear. I feel a great difficulty in that I think it is the opinion of the people of the Australian States, that in reading this Constitution they had to read it that the amount of the salaries provided for Ministers was the whole amount which they would draw.

Mr Sawers

- Until otherwise provided.

Sir William Mcmillan

-Until otherwise provided. That being so, it seems to me in this particular case, while i allow that it is surrounded by great difficulties, that there is a safe course to pursue. Of course members will vote according to their convictions. i am voting with considerable hesitation, but i am voting for what i believe

after all is the safe principle under all these circumstances, and the principle which was understood to underlie the provisions of this Bill. Therefore, while I shall be willing if any opportunity is given to consider further the salaries of Ministers, because the Constitution has put no limitation on the power of Parliament in that respect, I am obliged - I confess very reluctantly, and after the most careful consideration - to come to the conclusion that as a matter of constitutional usage which is in vogue in these Australian States, and as the safer course under all the circumstances, the Parliamentary allowance should not be added to the Ministerial salary.

Mr HUGHES

- I desire to say just a word or two upon this matter, since considerable importance appears to have been given to it, and since, on questions of this sort, it is inadvisable to record a vote without attaching to it some few reasons for doing so. I notice that a number of honorable members have delivered themselves of speeches and of reasons which seemed to me with the echoes of the recent elections ringing in my ears, to savour too much of the hustings, and too little of the forum. The speeches we have heard about economy delivered from a balcony to the people, would, I think, gain many votes. They are useful to refer to in the pages of Hansard by and by, and when the elector asks his elect what has he done, he will say, "You turn up to page so and so in Hansard, and you will see where I made, with some few others, a noble stand against those who would have looted the Treasury." Then, although his sins may be as scarlet, although he may have shamefully neglected his duties, although he may have absented himself on scores of important occasions when the Constitution may have been tottering to its fall, since he has saved £2,800 all will be forgiven him. He will be taken into the fold once more, and held up to admiration. He will be the man who saved £2,800, which, as an honorable member, with a gift for arithmetical calculation which I do not possess has pointed out, represents a halfpenny per head of the entire population: I have always attached myself to the party advocating economical and good government. But I do not belong to that party whose solitary appearance in politics belongs to the period when the Estimates are being reviewed, and when some salary is being attacked the attack upon which brings a certain amount of cheap notoriety. We had in our State Parliament a man who spoke only once in twelve months, and passed the intervening period in a sort of peaceful hibernation, but on the appearance of the Estimates he was the apotheosis of wakefulness. His raucous voice was then heard hour after hour, and perhaps the sum total of his efforts for the year was that he saved under £100 to the people. But they accepted him at his own valuation, and I presume that the race of those electors is not yet extinct. I propose to approach this question from the constitutional standpoint with which some of my honorable friends have dealt. It appears to me that the Constitution is very clear. It says distinctly that the Ministers are to take, or rather it does not say that the Ministers are not to take, the allowance of £400. I do not see why they should not take it.

An Honorable Member. - It does not compel them to take it

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Mr HUGHES

- I cannot blame myself that the Constitution was accepted by the people of Australia or of New South Wales. I was always in the very forefront of the anti-Billites. I did what I could to defeat the Commonwealth Bill, but, unhappily, as my honorable friend Mr. Cameron says, not having been successful, we now have to make what he calls the best of a bad job. And in that connexion I may join in his mournful deprecation of the fact that the Parliaments of Australia have not as yet effected any economy, that they have not been reduced by a solitary member, and that not a penny has been knocked off the allowance of any member of a State Parliament. But there has been an economy effected, because, I understand that he has donated practically £40 to the Commonwealth Treasury, which in itself - since we are not discussing the amount but the principle - is a distinct gain, and an indication perhaps of many similar donations.

If we are going to give Ministers a salary, we should give them such a salary as they could get outside. I see no reason why we should not, and I do not. agree with those who say that this is an allowance to Ministers. It is an allowance to members, if you like; but it is a salary to Ministers. I should be one of the first to complain if Ministers neglected their duties to pursue their private occupations, and I think the House would complain too. Since we ask every Minister to devote his whole time to his duties, are we to ask him to do so for a sum which is miserably inadequate when compared with the princely remuneration

which men get for similar and perhaps less responsible duties from private firms in Australia? If we want a good man we must pay the market price for him. Whatever the price is we must pay it, and we must make up our mind to pay it. As I am not influenced in this matter by any consideration other than the desire to see that this country is governed properly and well, and as I have never yet understood that these small petty savings, effected anything .but a false economy in the end, I am certainly prepared to vote against the motion. I do so in spite of the fact that cheap notoriety would easily be gained by a frenzied adherence to and support of that principle. I have been in public life for some years, and I have never yet been driven to support any proposition which I did not think would result in a real and tangible benefit to the people, and although many men have many reasons for what they do, I cannot for a moment suppose that any man here is actuated in his opposition to or his support of this motion by anything else than a desire to carry into effect the principles which he believes in. Still I am one of those who think that, under the circumstances, the Ministers are ill enough paid, and as they have given us the freest and fairest opportunity to discuss this question without any dictation from them, as they propose to take the evidently fair course of abstaining from voting ; and as it is so trivial an amount, I intend to vote against the motion, in spite of the fact that some honorable gentlemen say that a principle is involved. There is, in my opinion, no other principle involved than this, that every man is worthy of his hire, and I think the hire set down in the Constitution is none too much for the gentlemen who are now engaged in carrying out the work which pertains to the very responsible positions of Ministers of the Crown in the Commonwealth.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I for one take the opportunity of resenting the suggestion just thrown out that those .who support this motion are seeking cheap notoriety. Such an assertion is almost an insult to the House.

Mr A McLEAN

- It is an insult to the judgment of the people.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Certainly the suggestion comes with a very bad grace from one who represents, or pretends to represent, the democracy of Australia.

Mr Hughes

- I represent it just as fairly as the honorable and learned member does.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I feel inclined to resent any suggestion as that this House ought not to regard fairly and on their merits propositions in the direction of economy, even though they come within the definition of cheap economies.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Or false economies, perhaps.

Sir JOHN QUICK

-- I am not talking about false economies - I am talking about cheap economies. We are asked to regard this proposal with contempt as a cheap economy. I am not at all surprised at such an attitude as that being assumed by an honorable member who seems to glory in the fact that he was an anti-billite.

Mr Hughes

- - It- was a thankless course to pursue, anyhow.

Mr Crouch

- What has that to do with the question, anyhow ?

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- Probably the honorable and learned member disregards the possible effect of this Ministry insisting upon accepting the two remunerations. But the honorable member for West Sydney is an opponent of the Ministry. He glories in the fact that he is an opponent of the Ministry, and probably he is not at all anxious that they should keep in a safe course. I, as a supporter of the Ministry, am anxious that they should keep in a straight course. I am anxious that they should not take a false step - a step which might affect their position in this House or in the country, and those of us on this side of the House at any rate, who wish this question to be discussed calmly and dispassionately, are anxious, too, that the Ministry should receive the fair advice of their supporters, and that they will not consider that anything like coercion or dictation is being attempted. In my opinion, the Ministers of State can take the two remunerations with

perfect legality, and with perfect constitutionality ; it is only a question as to whether they ought to exercise that power. On a previous occasion I took the opportunity of suggesting, without attempting to dictate, the advisability of not accepting the full measure of their legal rights. There may be times when principle is at stake, when men ought to accept the full measure of their legal rights ; but in this case it is a very serious question as to whether, both for their own sakes, and for the sake of their supporters, they ought to do so. I feel some difficulty, like other members do, in deciding how this question ought to be put to the House. I would like some proposition to be put that might act rather as a suggestion to the Ministry than a pronouncement in this bold form, which they might take into consideration, and not regard as a dictatorial intimation.

Mr Mauger

- They have indicated that they will not accept this.

Mr Kingston

- No.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I do not like to give a vote to deprive men of legal rights if they insist upon them. But I certainly would like to- give a vote that might act as a guide to these responsible gentlemen in arriving at a decision hereafter. I am quite sure that the attitude they assume is not based on a selfish desire to appropriate the two salaries. It may be that they wish to assert a principle, because they know the rights at issue are not merely their own rights, but those of Ministers to come after them. It has occurred to me to suggest whether this question might not be put in a modified form such as this -

That in the opinion of this House section 48 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act ought to be so altered as to provide that Ministers of State should not, in addition to their salaries, receive the allowance of £400 a year.

Sir William McMillan

- Would it not be better to put in something like this - That the constitutional usage of the other States of Australia hitherto should be followed ?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- No; I think this is being dealt with as a legal and a constitutional principle, and whatever may have been the custom and the practice in other States, it may be that that custom and practice have been founded on their peculiar local constitutional arrangements.

Mr Kingston

- Express provision.

Sir William McMillan

- What does the honorable and learned member propose in the meantime 1

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I propose that this question shall be dealt with by the expression of an opinion that section 48 should at a subsequent stage be altered in order to give effect to the views which I am advocating, namely that there shall be no double salary.

Mr Kingston

- If the motion is carried, of course it will need a Bill to carry it into effect.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Of course it will. But it seems to me that an expression of opinion that section 48 should be altered so as to regulate this matter in a legal and constitutional manner would not be so aggressive, and might not be so offensive to the gentlemen whose interests are at present at stake. I think the question ought to be dealt with by legislation and not merely by resolution.

Mr Glynn

- I only want to affirm the principle ; the method is for the Ministry.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Before any change is made it is advisable that there should be an amendment of that section.

Mr Deakin

- If the motion is carried the question will be dealt with by legislation.

Mr Kingston

- The motion is a direction to bring in a Bill.

Mr Glynn

- I admit that this may be the wrong way.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I need scarcely point out that the suggested . alteration of section 48 may be made by the Parliament without the necessity of a referendum. As the section begins with the words " until the Parliament otherwise provides," Parliament has an unfettered hand in regard to its amendment, and it can easily be amended by inserting words to the effect that all members except Ministers of State shall receive an allowance of £400 per annum.

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Mr Thomas

- A referendum would be a good way of testing public opinion upon the question.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- There is no necessity for a referendum. I think the Ministry will accept the views of the House as a full expression of public opinion. I move -

That the question be amended by the insertion after the word "House" of the words: - "The provisions of section 48 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act ought to be altered so as to provide that. "

Mr Glynn

- I will accept the amendment, but there is no necessity for it.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I think it would be less objectionable to deal with the matter in this way,

Mr Glynn

- But effect can be given to our determination only by Act of Parliament.

Mr O'MALLEY

- - I deeply regret to have to differ so widely from the famine party of this House. I have the profoundest respect for the mover of this motion. I had the honour of being with him in the House of Assembly of South Australia for three years, and I know he is the soul of honour.

An Honorable Member. - He did not make much impression upon the honorable member.

Mr O'MALLEY

- V - Very few men make an impression on me unless' they are going straight for democracy. It seems to me that this motion is an absolute nullification of the Constitution. That there is no better authority on the Constitution in this House than the last speaker we all admit; but sometimes in his zeal for one specific point a man forgets everything else in his chase after that point. A great, many honorable members have come in, no doubt, pledged to keep down expenses, and so have I ; but I have not come in here to do anything that is going to destroy the foundations of the Constitution, and it seems to me that this motion is an indirect way to destroy payment of members. When a beginning is made in this way there is no telling where it will end. Whatever may he said or done, I cannot see why the House cannot start itself without quoting Canada, Russia, England, or the United States. Have honorable members no originality in their carcasses at all ? Surely we have not come here to be echoes of some other country. I hope I am regarded as a living voice at least. We have had custom and usages spoken of. What is custom ? Why, custom is the ignorant dead of past ages riding on the head of the living and enlightened present. What is usage ? Because our grand fathers did something are we to continue to do it ? I met a man once walking from Leeds to London, and when I inquired why he did not take the train, he replied that his father never rode, and that he was not going to pay money for railway fares. There is another thing that caused me to think this afternoon. I noticed that, with few exceptions, honorable gentlemen who are thoroughly able financially to come here when it pleases them, are helping in an attack which is the beginning of the destruction of the Commonwealth Constitution. I regret my friend Sir John Quick misunderstood my friend

Mr. Hughes.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member is not in order in alluding to other honorable members by name.

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Mr O'MALLEY

- I - I am sure the member for West Sydney never in any way intended to cast any reflection when he spoke of cheap advertising. What he said was that he himself could obtain a cheap advertisement. And

so could I. What is a statesman ? A man who understands the past, who solves the present, who moulds the future is the statesman, and not a little tinpot local rooster plucker. What we have to do is to carefully consider this matter. I hope the honorable and learned member for Indi, the late Attorney-General for Victoria, will give us an opinion on this subject, because he is admitted to be one of the soundest lawyers in the Commonwealth of Australia, and I hope the matter will be looked into very seriously. If in America in the early days of nullification they had crushed it out, they would never have had to fight their great war, and many of their most able and best citizens would not be sleeping in Southern battle fields now, without stick or stone to mark their last resting place. That war arose because the question was not settled aright, and no question is settled until it is settled aright. They allowed the nullification doctrine to get headway. That was the beginning. What was the end ? In the end it had to be submitted to the arbitrament of war, in which slavery went down. I hope that will not happen here. I am behind the Government in this question. Mr. HIGGINS(Northern Melbourne).This is a kind of question which forces individual members to their legs against their wills, because they feel obliged to explain their attitude. It is an unusual question, and I am beginning to resent my honorable friend bringing it forward. I am sorry we could not have had the debate without such recrimination as that between the honorable and learned member for Bendigo and the honorable member for West Sydney. I do not think the honorable member for West Sydney was in the least suggesting that all members who voted for the motion were actuated by a desire to stand well with their constituents or with the public, but was simply warning us, if I understood him aright, that we ought to put aside mere popularity if we found ourselves face to face with the question of our duty. T. agree with the honorable member for Bendigo that if the motion be carried it must be followed by a Bill which, I understand, will be brought in by the Government, and if the motion be carried it had better be carried in the form indicated by the honorable and learned member for Bendigo. For my part I shall vote against the motion. There is no one who feels more than I do the importance of practising economy in order not to alarm the people at the beginning of the working of our Commonwealth. But when I am asked to reduce the salaries of Ministers I say that it is a relative question. If men like the commissioner of the public service and other functionaries are appointed, they, no doubt, will get at least £2,500 a year, and is it fair to give to a man who has only a fraction of the public work of the Commonwealth to supervise, that salary, and to give to a Minister who may be turned out of office in a month or two, and who has to give up his whole private business during the time he is a Minister, and perhaps ruin that business, only £1,500 or £1,600 a year?

Mr Fowler

- If the honorable member wants to be relatively fair, the Minister must be given £5,000 or £10,000 a year.

Mr HIGGINS

- There may be a great deal in that, but it is not proposed to give £5,000 or £10,000 a year-. I am sure the honorable member for Perth knows there is a terrible strain on the Minister during his period of office in regard to expenditure. In Victoria the late Commissioner for Railways was paid £3,500 a year, and the commissioner of the Commonwealth public service will no doubt be paid £2,000 or £2, 500 a year.

Mr O'Malley

- T - The manager of the Mount Lyell mine gets that.

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Mr HIGGINS

- That may be so; but here it is proposed to pay £1,500 or £1,600 a year to a man who very often sacrifices a great deal in order to do public work. He has to stand the racket of attacks in the House night after night, and have objections made to every step he takes, and who has to use up his energy to an extent that no other man in the country does. He may be here that with his £1,300 or £1,700 a year to-day, and gone to-morrow, with nothing to show for it. I do not think there is any work more thankless than that of a Minister of the Crown. In constitutionally governed countries there is no . work so important as that of a responsible Minister. I would be the last person to blame those who vote for the motion. I perceive that there is considerable difficulty in coming to a determination, and we all feel the responsibility. This is the beginning of our Commonwealth, and I can understand the feeling of the honorable member for Wentworth when he said he had come to his conclusion with very grave doubt. We must respect one another's feelings in this matter. The honorable member has come to his conclusion with doubt, and I think that every one of us will do the same. I am as anxious as any one to keep down

expenditure. I happened to face a meeting of my own constituents the other evening, and I found that an extreme desire and anxiety in regard to the expenditure of the Commonwealth existed. But the place now proposed is the very worst place to begin cheeseparing. We want the greatest skill that Australia can get at the table in this House. And the choice of men is limited if we say that Ministers are to get less for their precarious tenure than a Commissioner or some other public servant outside Parliament. We have been in the habit of paying too much for a great many services in Australia, but at the same time, if there has to be a reduction, we must reduce all round. We are outrunning the constable altogether in a great many ways, and we might with all humility follow the example of Canada. The Dominion is not so much poorer a country than Australia, as has been said, and in Canada the salaries are much less all round. But I object to taking away the parliamentary allowance from men who have such tremendous pressure on them as have the Ministers. As to the terms of the motion, I think that the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, is, to use the ordinary phrase, "barking up the wrong tree." If he desired to attack the amount received by Ministers he might have attacked the £12,000 a year, because this amount by the Constitution is open to discussion.

Mr Glynn

- I could not possibly do so ; the initiative in all financial matters must come from the Ministry.

Mr HIGGINS

- It is provided in section 66 that the amount to be paid to Ministers of the Crown is not to exceed £12,000 a year.

An Honorable Member. - Until Parliament otherwise provides.

Mr HIGGINS

- Until otherwise provided by Act of Parliament. ' Up to the present time we have no guarantee that the Ministry will be paid this £12,000 per annum, and the House ought to be asked to consider whether Ministers should get that amount or not. It is quite open to the House under section 66 to say that Ministers shall not receive more than £1,000 a year amongst them, and that is the point to which the honorable and learned member ought to have directed his motion.

Mr Glynn

- I suggested that the other day.

Mr HIGGINS

- I am very glad to hear it.

Mr Glynn

- But I cannot initiate a financial proposal.

Mr HIGGINS

- I know that the honorable member is not good at following other people's advice, but why should he not follow his own?

Mr Glynn

- Because I do not pay for it.

Mr William McMillan

- This could not have been dealt with in the Supply Bill. It was made a statutory appropriation.

Mr HIGGINS

- I take the point that this £12,000 ought to appear on the Estimates.

Sir William McMillan

- No; it was not in the message.

Mr HIGGINS

- If it was not, it ought to have been. I am in a difficulty to know how Ministers, as things at present stand, will be able to draw £12,000 a year, there being no Supply Bill. It was not on the Estimates, and there is no verdict of the House in favour of it. The House can always reduce an estimate, and supposing there should be, as I expect there will be, an Appropriation Bill brought forward with that £12,000 included, it will be quite open, without any Governor's message, for the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, to move to reduce the amount if he thinks it should be reduced.

Sir William McMillan

- That is very questionable.

Mr HIGGINS

- I think it is always open to private members to move the reduction of any item on the Estimates ' and supposing that £12,000 be put in an Appropriation Bill, I see nothing at all to prevent the honorable and learned member from moving that it be reduced by £2,800.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Would a reduction not require a special Act ?

Mr HIGGINS

-I am just indicating that there is no need for an Act. Ministers will find that they must bring before the House the appropriation of this £12,000.

Mr Glynn

-i do not think the Ministry are going to do so - that is the point.

Mr HIGGINS

- Then I do not think the Auditor-General will pass the payments. I am speaking of this only as a difficulty the Ministry will have to face. I cannot see how the Auditor-General can pass a payment which has not been a special appropriation by virtue of the Constitution, or is not in the Appropriation Bill.

Sir William McMillan

- Parliament can do what it like3 up to £12,000. Unless Parliament takes special action in the matter the Ministry are within their constitutional rights in drawing the money.

Mr HIGGINS

- The position I take up is, that until Parliament does take some action, none of the £12,000 can be paid -to the Ministry.

Mr SPEAKER

-That is somewhat outside the point we are discussing.

Mr HIGGINS

- One thing, as you will see, sir, dovetails into the other, and it is impossible to deal with the £400, unless I also deal Svith the £12,000, because it is because of the £12,000 a year that it is said we ought not to pay another £2,800 a year. As soon as the question comes up I shall vote in favour of the full £12,000 a year. After a great deal of hesitation I shall vote most decidedly against the motion of the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn.

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Mr SAWERS

- I should not have risen but for some observations that fell from the acting leader of the Opposition, though I am quite in ignorance now as to whether that honorable member is in favour of the Ministers receiving a high or a low salary. The ground he seemed to take was that instead of dealing with the matter on this motion we should amend the pro vision in the Constitution Act, but I remain in ignorance as to whether the honorable member is in favour of the higher or the smaller salary.

Sir William McMillan

- Will the honorable member allow me to explain that I said this was a matter - that had nothing to do with economy at all ? It has nothing to do with Ministers' salaries, but with the principle whether they should draw the members' allowance .also.

Mr SAWERS

- Still I am in ignorance as to whether the honorable member is in foavur of the larger or smaller salary,
Sir William McMillan

- I would be in favour of a larger salary if that were put to the vote to-morrow.

Mr SAWERS

- And yet the honorable member has indicated his intention to vote for the motion. I draw attention to the fact, that whether it be a- wrong way or a light way, there can be no question that this means a test vote as to whether Ministers are to expect a salary equal to a division of the £12,000 amongst them with £400 each in addition.

Sir William McMillan

- That is exactly where I differ from the honorable member - I hold that that is not the point.

Mr SAWERS

- Just so; that is why I rose. I imagined I had seen the drift of the. honorable member's mind, and I wanted to point out what seemed to be clear to my mind, namely, that this is a test vote, and if the motion be

carried, it will mean that Parliament has affirmed that Ministers are not to receive more than £12,000. I think the present is the best time to deal with the question. It might be brought forward in a better way, though I am not responsible for that. The honorable member for Wentworth says he has some hesitation in voting for the motion, but I have no hesitation in voting against the motion, for the reasons advocated by the honorable member for Northern Melbourne. There is only one other phase of the question I desire to say one or two words about. It is an extraordinary circumstance in my mind - and I say this with all diffidence and humility - that in a great question of this kind, although it affects Ministers personally for a limited period, they should not abandon their responsibilities. I was not in the chamber at the time, but I understand that the Prime Minister has indicated that Ministers will not vote on this question. If the seven Ministers are not in the chamber during the division it means that seven votes will be taken away from one side.

Mr Thomson

- Not necessarily.

Mr SAWERS

- Members of the Government as a Ministry are agreed on this matter, which has probably been made a Cabinet question. Members of the Cabinet may hold individual opinions, but the opinion expressed will be that of the Ministry. Although this question affects all Ministers personally, I think that they should take a somewhat wider view, and not be too thin-skinned about it. It is not a question of the salaries paid to A, B, C, and D. We are voting the salaries now of Ministers for all time to come. I say, therefore, with all humility, that Ministers would take up a better attitude if they put aside this sensitiveness, and voted according to their principles, because it is not themselves they have to consider, but Ministers of the Commonwealth for all time.

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Mr CROUCH

- I think it is necessary, in view of the desertion by Ministers of their supporters, for every honorable member to justify his vote. The honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, spoke of the chivalrous action of the Ministry. I can quite imagine that if the Ministry had a life tenure of office, that there might be then some sense of personal feeling in this matter. But it is not so, and although we might like this Government to live for ever, I do not think it is fair of them - if they believe strongly in the matter - to refuse to vote with their supporters, who do not desire that this motion should be carried. It strikes me that the matter is one of principle and not of personality. That is why I intend to oppose the motion which the honorable member for South Australia has submitted. If honorable members refer to section 48 of the Constitution, they will find that the £400 a year which it is proposed to deduct from the salaries of Ministers is not in the nature of salary at all, but in the nature of an allowance. When it is said that that amount should be deducted from the sum they should receive, it really means that the sum allowed them as reimbursement for expenses incurred as members, is to be deducted from the amount that they will receive if this House does not carry the motion under discussion. The section referred to says that Ministers shall receive their parliamentary allowance! it is not a question of "may" at all. If they have not received it up to the present time I think they have been abrogating the provisions of the Constitution.. We have to remember that in this connexion the word "salary" is used in section 66. That means that in addition to their remuneration as Members of Parliament, for which an allowance or reimbursement of expenses is made, they are to be paid a salary for the services they render as Ministers of the Commonwealth. That was the intention of the Convention when it finally passed the Bill submitted to the people, as is shown by the different words employed, in the two sections to which I have referred. Whatever the Ministry may decide to do, as the result of this motion, I do not think that their action will bind their successors, unless an Act of Parliament is passed; and if such a Bill is brought forward I shall oppose it. It is not at all fair to use as an illustration the position of Ministers in the States. Ministers of States gradually work their private businesses to the capitals of their respective States. It is quite impossible for Commonwealth Ministers to do that under this Federal Constitution.

Mr Glynn

- They will have to reside at the federal capital.

Mr CROUCH

- The capital around which most honorable member's interests centre is the State capital. That can be

seen by the way in which honorable members look to their own State capital newspapers for light and leading. A Minister in a State can pursue his profession in the State capital, but a Minister of the Commonwealth has to give up the whole of his time to Commonwealth affairs, and I think it is quite right that he should do so. When I think even now of the high pressure under which Ministers are working in order to meet the demands of this House for legislation, the idea that it can be suggested that any Commonwealth Minister can carry on any other professional duties seems' an absurd one.

Mr Thomas

- Does the honorable member think that Ministers would give a guarantee not to engage in private business for the sake of the extra £400 a year ?

Mr CROUCH

- I think that even if they did not give a verbal guarantee not to engage in business, they , must necessarily do harm to their Commonwealth positions if they attempt to follow their professions. Even in the case of the Ministers who live in Victoria, if they give that attention to their departments which the Commonwealth will demand for years to come, it will be quite impossible for them to carry on their businesses. We have also to remember that Commonwealth Ministers are also Members of Parliament, and that they have the same demands made upon 'them by their constituents as other honorable members of this House. It will thus be seen that this allowance should be continued to' them for the main purpose for which the Convention intended it, namely, that it should be an allowance, and not in the nature of salary. Instead of agreeing to decrease the Ministerial salary by £400, [would increase it not only by £400, but by a larger amount.

Mr Mauger

- That would be true economy.

Mr CROUCH

- Various parallels have been drawn by some honorable members in regard to the position occupied by Ministers in other countries. But so far no one has stated that a Minister of the Crown in England, if he retires from office in -an impecunious position, is entitled to receive an allowance from the State. No such proposal has ever been made here. I am sorry that the forms of this House will not permit, after the motion has been put, of an amendment being moved upon it. If this motion is to be carried, I should certainly like, an amendment to be added, by which, if this £400 a year is to be taken away from Ministers, that amount shall be put into a pension" fund, which fund shall be available in future years for impecunious Ministers of State.

An Honorable- Member. - There are none.

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Mr CROUCH

- At the present time there are not. Perhaps we ought to be very glad of it. But that is really an argument in favour of my suggestion, simply because it allows of time in which the pension fund might grow. If £2,800 a year, with the interest which would accumulate upon it at the rate of £84 per annum, were placed to the credit of a pension fund, it would, in a comparatively few years, be sufficient to keep Ministers of the - Commonwealth who had fallen upon evil days- in a position of affluence. It would only be following out the example adopted for many years in the United Kingdom.

Mr Conroy

- If a man is a Cabinet Minister for five minutes in Austria-Hungary he is entitled to a pension.

Mr CROUCH

- I find that other countries have also adopted this system, and, under the circumstances, I should like, if the motion is carried, for some such amendment as I have indicated to be made. I have no option but to oppose the motion.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- I can quite see the difficulty that the Ministry have felt themselves in in deciding that they will not vote upon this question. I feel, however, that they have not done right in coming to that conclusion. It is not a mere question of the amount involved, but a question of principle, and, under these circumstances, I think that their vote should be given with those who intend to vote against the motion. I gather from what has been said that there is a feeling on the part of those who are supporting the motion that the Ministry should be able not only to attend to the affairs of the country but to have time and opportunity to attend to

their own businesses as well. I do not look at it in that light at all. I consider that the very important and onerous duties which they have to perform will occupy the whole of their time and attention. Therefore, I feel that they should be recompensed, not in the manner in which they would be recompensed if engaged in their ordinary business, but by being given such a sum as any ordinary business man would consider fair if he were asking any one to undertake such duties as they are called upon to perform¹. I am quite sure that some honorable members of this House have had to employ men to undertake very important duties, and they know very well that there are many who are called upon to perform onerous duties to whom they would not offer less than £1,800 or £2,000 a year. If we go to our banks, or to any financial and insurance institutions, we all find that in many instances they pay £3,000, £4,000, and £5,000 for the discharge of duties not nearly so onerous as those performed by Ministers of the Commonwealth. I say that we should give Ministers a fair recompense. If they are fitted for their positions we get fair value for what we pay, and if they are not so fitted, it is our duty to remove them. I do not feel disposed to cut down their salaries. The motion submitted really involves more than the cutting down of their salaries, because it 'contemplates taking away from Ministers what under the Constitution they have a right to, and I shall be no party to it.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I am one of those who very strongly objects to what appears to me to be a very distinct violation of our Constitution. We have a law under which we voted to our senators and members of the House of Representatives a sum of £400 a year. If the honorable and learned member who has moved this motion had waited till such time as it was proposed to distribute the whole sum allowed for salaries, that would have been the time that the matter could have received the fair consideration of this House. But to pick out a section in the Constitution, under which it is directed that each member of the Senate and of the House of Representatives shall receive a fixed salary of £400 a year, and to place this motion on the business-paper in regard to it is a thing that a majority of this House ought not to tolerate. I have not felt that great delicacy and indecision that has been referred to by so many honorable members, who have spoken in favour of the resolution. I have felt, and I have always stated, that, for the sake of the purity of Parliament, we should have purity in our Ministerial officers. Not only do I think that we should have good salaries paid to our responsible officers, but in our public life we should hold these high positions so much above the ordinary public offices that men of transcendent ability would lay themselves out to gain them, and be willing to cast aside their opportunities for gaining a living otherwise. I feel that a Minister of the Crown should be in the position to give up his entire time to his public duties. I think it is degrading to have this cavilling about the payment of Ministers when we know the great demands made upon the pockets of public men.

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Mr PAGE

- Having listened to the debate that has taken place I consider it is only right that Ministers should have their allowance as members' as well as their salaries as Ministers. The honorable and learned member, Sir John Quick, expressed surprise that the honorable member for West Sydney should, as a democrat, support this proposal; but if democracy means sweating - and that is how I regard the proposal to deprive the Ministers of their allowance as members - then I am no democrat. I know that if the allowances to members were not included in the Constitution Act, I for one would not have been in this House, and there are several other honorable members to whom the same remark applies. No honorable member has yet explained why the parliamentary allowance should be kept back from Ministers, and therefore my vote will go against the motion.

Mr.E. SOLOMON (Fremantle). - I would like to give my reasons for voting in support of the motion. In Western Australia when a Bill for the payment of members was brought forward there was a special provision in it that the members' payment should merge in the payment to Ministers, and that was carried unanimously by the House. It seems to me that if this matter is not settled now the probability is that we shall have a debate each session similar to that we have had this evening. If it is really necessary that the payment to Ministers should be increased, I would be in favour of increasing the amount rather than they should accept the allowance given to ordinary members. In all likelihood there may be some motion before the House to increase the payment of members, and although the probability is that it will not be carried - and I for one would not vote for it - if such an increase were to occur, the Ministers would get a

still further allowance. I think that there should be some finality arrived at at once in this matter, so that future Parliaments may not have it to decide.

Mr Cruickshank

- This motion affects the senators as well.

Mr E SOLOMON

- I think it a pity that any member should have thought that this motion was brought forward by the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, in any spirit of antagonism to Ministers, or from any illiberal motives, because I feel sure- that the honorable member has acted more as a matter of principle than in any other way. Although I am not given to cheeseparing in regard to wages -because I think every man is deserving of fair payment for the work he does, and I do not think Ministers are overpaid by receiving the amounts provided for them in the Constitution Act - I still think it is undesirable that we should allow them to draw the two allowances.

Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

- I intend to support the motion of the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn. As this House has already been told, there is no question upon which the representatives of the State from which I come have received a more direct mandate from the people they represent, than that the Federation must not be overweighted by any unnecessary expenditure - that there must be all possible economy. I do not say that the salaries drawn by Ministers, even with the member's allowance added, are too large. I think good men should be adequately paid ; but I am quite sure that salaries greater than those provided for in the Constitution Act - that is, £12,000 a year, leaving out of consideration the parliamentary allowance - are not needed to attract good men to the positions of Ministers of the Commonwealth. References have been made to Pitt, and to the need for paying Ministers salaries within which they can live ; but it seems to me that that is hardly a matter for us to go into. I am reminded of a picture I saw the other day in an illustrated paper. It represented a man and his wife discussing domestic concerns. The husband was depicted as saying to his wife, "You don't appear to be so happy now that I get £5,000 a year as you were when I got £2,000 " ; and the wife replies, "No. You seem to forget the great difficulty there is in living within your income when you get £5,000 a year." There is the possibility of something similar happening in the case of Ministers if we make their salaries too large. But, inasmuch as we who come from South Australia have an explicit command from the people of that State to keep down expenses as far as possible, I shall support from a sense of duty, if not with pleasure, the proposition of the honorable and learned member, Mr. Glynn. There may come a time when it may be well to increase the salaries of Ministers, but I do not think that at this early stage in the history of federation we ought to make their salaries greater than at present provided for in the appropriation of £12,000 a year.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- When the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, placed his motion on the notice-paper, I was inclined to be in sympathy with it, but I am not now so favorably disposed towards it. Much has been said by honorable members regarding economy, but there is such a tiling as false as well as true economy, and I do not think it would be true economy to reduce the salaries of responsible Ministers. I have listened- very carefully to the arguments brought forward by honorable members on both sides of the House, and each speech has seemed to be better than the other. Still with all the arguments that have been brought forward I have' not been able to make up my mind that it is necessary for me to vote for the motion, and I have been obliged to fall back on the Constitution. In section 48 it is provided that -

Until the Parliament otherwise provides each senator and each member of the House of Representatives shall receive an allowance- of £400 a year, to be reckoned from the day on which he takes his seat. It is very clear that this allowance is intended for Ministers as Members of Parliament. It is further provided 'in the Act that -

There shall be payable to the Queen out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Commonwealth, for the salaries of Ministers of State, an annual sum which until the Parliament otherwise provides shall not exceed £12,000 a year.

This distinctly states that £12,000 shall be set aside for the salaries of Ministers, and it does not interfere

with the allowance which each member of the House receives. If it should be the good fortune of any one of us to become a Minister of State, we shall have the right to receive a share of the £12,000 in addition to the £400 a year. Now, the position of Ministers of State is a very important one. They are obliged to devote the whole of their time to the affairs of the Commonwealth, and if they have any private business even here in Melbourne, they cannot look after that business and conduct the affairs of the Commonwealth at the same time. Four or five of the Ministers come from the other States, and it is a matter of impossibility for them to look after their businesses or, their practices at this distance from their homes. I think that Ministers are entitled to this £400 a year, and that the people of Australia are quite willing that they should be well paid. The members of this Government or of any future Government could easily make more than they receive as Ministers of State. If they could not they are very much less capable men than I have been led to believe. During the years I have been in business I have not made less than the salary of a Minister amounts to, and I feel certain that if any of the Ministers were to direct their attention to private business or practice, as the case might be, their emoluments would be very much larger than they now receive as Ministers of State. I intend to vote against the motion.

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Mr W KNOX

- I am sorry to have to detain the House on a subject which has been sufficiently debated ; but I am unwilling to occupy an exceptional position in the Chamber because I shall soon be about the only member who has not spoken on the subject. In whatever form the motion is put to the Chamber, it is my intention to . oppose it in order that Ministers may have the right secured to them to draw their £400 a year in addition to the salary which they receive under the Constitution Act. My belief is that the circumstances of the Ministers of the Commonwealth are exceptional, and that they have duties to perform which are not analogous to those of the Ministers of the various States. They have to travel from capital to capital, and have to undertake obligations which, so far as I know, are not connected with any other similar office. My own feeling is that whilst I am here I should do everything that is within my power to secure economy in the expenditure of the Commonwealth funds ; but I do not consider that it is effective economy to reduce the salaries of those who are in the supreme control of our Commonwealth affairs. I believe, as was well said by one speaker, that it is inconsistent that a Minister who has control of a great and important department should be paid an amount inferior to what would have to be paid if we had to go outside Parliament and ask some person, because of his special knowledge, to take charge of that department. I may be permitted, perhaps, to refer to the fact that I am associated with large enterprises in the various States. In the control and conduct of those enterprises we have to pay very large salaries indeed, and I find that effectual results and also economies are secured by paying liberally the men whom it is desirable to have placed in such positions. I want to make the positions which Ministers occupy such that every honorable member may aspire to them, and feel that while he -must of necessity sacrifice in the interests of his country a very great deal, . his sacrifice will not be such as to make him feel that he is entirely surrendering all natural opportunities which come to him. It is a question of principle on which I am voting. I should have preferred to see the Ministers voting on the motion. I quite recognise the somewhat delicate position -in which' they might feel themselves _ placed, as they are to some extent interested in the result of the division, but I apprehend that they would take a higher course if they voted.

Mr Cruickshank

- Theirs is only a temporary interest.

Mr. KNOX. - I hope they will be interested for a very long time. They ought to take the broader view that we are dealing with a question of principle, and to give their vote not as though it affected only the positions they occupy. They have to look forward to others occupying those seats, and they are to-day guarding the privileges, the rights, and the emoluments of the offices which they so worthily hold. I would rather that the Ministers came forward and recorded their votes straight out on the principle. Speaking for honorable members round me here, if I may venture to do so, I think we should all have liked to see the Ministers taking that step. Nevertheless, I am deeply sensible that they may feel some delicacy in the matter, which we well appreciate. Whilst we are charged to see economies exercised as far as they may be possible, I do not think that this would be a departure in the direction of economy, and I think I am justified, in the interests of the people I have the honour to represent, in giving my vote against the

motion, so that ; whatever its spirit may be, the Ministers may carry out the letter of the Constitution, by which .they are permitted to receive an allowance of £400 a year in addition to the sum of £12,000 which they are entitled to draw and distribute among themselves as Ministers.

Mr BAMFORD

- I take this opportunity to congratulate the honorable gentlemen who occupy the front Ministerial benches on what I consider will be a long tenure of office. I cannot disabuse my mind of the idea that had there been any possibility of what the Prime Minister terms a perambulatory pilgrimage from this side to that, we should not have had this motion emanating from a member of the Opposition. It has been said by the honorable member for North Sydney that there is a certain amount of indelicacy in the Ministers not having refrained from letting this question go to a vote. In my opinion, the indelicacy comes from the other side. I think it would have been more becoming and in better taste if they had allowed the proposal to come from this side.

Sir William McMillan

- The honorable member is making a party question- of it now.

Mr BAMFORD

- -Not at all. It is not my desire to do so, and it is not necessary, because I am perfectly certain that the Government are going to win. From that side, I think, it comes with very bad taste indeed. It is not very long since, a direct attack was made on the Treasury .benches, and, coming so immediately after that attack, I think it is - not to use the harshest term - a matter of indelicacy.

Mr Thomson

- May. I say that it was an honorable member on the other side who first raised it - the honorable member for Gippsland t

Mr BAMFORD

- I shall refer to that honorable member directly. I have the honour to represent a constituency which never took this question into account at all. It was never brought tip by myself or by those whose votes I was canvassing, and I am delighted to think that my constituents would not consider . the question in the mercenary way in which it has. been discussed here. I- have gone into figures, and from a cursory examination I find that there are 900,000 electors in the States. Now, 900,000 electors at fd. each would more than cover the £2,800 in question.

Sir Edward Braddon

- One can make that calculation for everything until the j'd. become £3.

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Mr BAMFORD

- I am sorry that the right honorable member's arithmetic is. so deficient. The principle, I think, is that a man should be paid an .adequate sum for adequate work. I have been an employer of labour, and .I always delighted to pay, those who were competent to do the work the highest rate pf. wages. We listened recently to a most eloquent speech in another part of this building, wherein we were asked to admire the State coach. I would indeed be sorry to see the State coach washed away._by. an avalanche of extravagance, or wrecked by what I might term an economical eruption. That is what I fear. We cannot be too careful. I heard .the honorable member for Gippsland, and I think the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, too, say something as to the entertaining qualities of the Ministers,. He said that Ministers should not entertain. Now, it is only a short time since we had some functions in this . State at which Ministers were expected to support not only the dignity of their own positions, but the dignity of the Commonwealth. A great many of us, I may say, are still suffering from .what I might term abdominal abrasion through our desire to express our ultra loyalty, and we must come to the conclusion that on that occasion Ministers acquitted themselves in a manner that reflected the highest credit on themselves and the Commonwealth in general. I am going to vote against the motion, and with no conscientious qualms. I shall face my constituents and abide with perfect content by the result. I am convinced that they will indorse any action I may take in supporting the Ministry in receiving the extra salary to which I consider they are entitled. Underlying this motion there is the principle for which honorable members who stand on the same platform as I do have fought for years, that is, payment of members. I consider that that principle* is being attacked in an insidious way in this motion.

Mr Glynn

- No.

Mr BAMFORD

- I am bound to accept the honorable member's disclaimer ; but, at the same time, there is that principle underlying the motion, and I think that those who support the motion are aiming a direct blow at it.

Mr. HENRYWILLIS (Robertson).I followed this debate with considerable interest, and I must say :T have taken the cue from the Ministry as to the way in which I shall vote, because, when we started out on this federation, I found that the Ministry had determined that we should manage our affairs as economically as possible. At the risk of not obtaining the very best men for the civil service, they offered but a small salary for the higher positions. When it came to the granting of the salaries of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of this House, we found the Government bringing down an estimate of £1,500 a year for each office, showing again that they were desirous of economizing expenditure. If, then, -we are to take the cue of economy from the Government, there is no reason why the House should grant them more than the £12,000 a year, which is appropriated in the Constitution. Indeed, there is every evidence that Ministers have no desire that we should do so, because they have not made this a party question. They would not be guilty of voting in favour of receiving the further sum of £400 a year each - the further sum, I say, because they have not yet taken the allowance..

Mr Mauger

- But they have said why they are taking up that position - simply because it is a personal matter.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It occurred to me that if this motion is rejected, and the Government take it that they are to appropriate ±'400 a year each, there will be some necessity for bringing down a Bill. As a large number of honorable members are not here, and not having paired, are not likely., to record their votes, there is some risk of that Bill being brought forward. Will this Bill, on being introduced by the Government, be a party Bill ? Will the Government resign if it is not accepted ? That is the question which is occupying my attention just now. I think with the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne that it would be much better if this matter had been brought forward in such a way that we might if we thought fit reduce the £12,000 a year which is granted to His Majesty for the Ministers of State under section 66 until Parliament otherwise provides. If the Bill were brought down at a time, when federation was fairly established, and we knew exactly what the new expenditure of the Commonwealth would be, and also had some knowledge of the Tariff to be imposed on the people, and if we found the Government bringing forward a policy consistent with the views held by gentlemen on this side of the House, and consistent with the views held by a majority of the people in the State of New South Wales, I, for one, would be ready to grant even a larger sum than £12,000 to Ministers. I would be prepared to do that if it could be shown that the amount of salary was inadequate for the close attention required to their duties, and the loss they sustain thereby. But on this occasion, I take it, we must follow the cue given by the Government, and vote in favour of the motion proposed by the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn. In the course of the discussion certain references have been made to what people outside will think of the proposal. The honorable member for Gippsland has said - and I think he said it on a previous occasion - that a large expenditure will make federation unpopular. While I agree that it is not desirable to grant this sum to Ministers, I am not disposed to go the length the honorable member goes, and say such a grant would make federation unpopular. The sum of £2,800 a year is not likely to ruin federation. Indeed, if the proposals of the Government are carried out to the full, as indicated by the Prime Minister in his address to the country, and the railways are taken over, then, according to the estimate of no less an authority than the late Mr. Eddy, we shall save £300,000 a year which is the amount of the estimated new expenditure, so we have no need to fear, I think, that federation will become unpopular because we spend the small sum of £2,800. At the same time, this is not the moment for granting any further sum to Ministers, and I shall record my vote in favour of the motion of the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn.

Mr. GLYNN(South Australia) in reply. - I shall not detain honorable members long, because really the debate has been of a most comprehensive character, and, with one or two slight exceptions - not of design - marked by the best of taste. I really think the honorable member for Bland, when he referred to those who were supporting the motion as being desirous of obtaining the " plaudits of the unthinking"-

Mr Watson

- It was not I who said that.

Mr GLYNN

- Yes, the honorable member did, but the words were, I think, used undesignedly, because they are not marked by the good taste which characterized his previous utterances. To make such an assertion is to use a dangerous and a poisoned weapon, and like most poisoned weapons, as we know from the play of Hamlet, it can be turned and used against the man who handles it. I am sure that the honorable member for West Sydney, speaking from my recollection of his remarks, did not impute the motives which have been attributed to him. Several members have said that I ought to have introduced the motion in a different form ; but I can simply affirm the principle. In a previous discussion on the question, I suggested that the proper way would be for the Ministry to move in the matter by putting £12,000 on the Estimates or bringing in a Bill to deal with Ministers' salaries, grading the salaries according to the importance of the office, and then the £400 a year - which I acknowledge is constitutionally payable to the Ministers under the terms of our Constitution - could, by a provision in the Bill, be deducted from the salaries of the Ministers. But it is purely a matter of method. I cannot introduce Estimates. It is not for a private member to initiate proposals for expenditure. He can only table an abstract motion and declare a principle. As to what is meant, there can be not the slightest possible doubt on the part of honorable members. I can see no harm in passing the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, because that is merely another method of accomplishing the principle of the motion. The honorable member wishes section 48 to be amended so as to allow the reduction of £400 a year. I may point out to the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne that this was his suggestion in the Convention, though now he seems to think it well to deal with the matter on the Estimates. These are merely methods of obtaining the end, and I confess I am somewhat doubtful which method is the more constitutional. For that reason, as I said the other night, and as I said in my opening speech, I ask honorable members by passing the motion to affirm the principle, and let the Government take the initiative in regard to legislation. The Prime Minister has mentioned, though with rather a mistaken sense of propriety, that Ministers will not vote on the motion. It would be perhaps rather an unfair inference to say that if they voted they would vote against it.

Mr Barton

- It would be an unfair inference.

Mr Deakin

- We are quite prepared to vote for the payment of the allowance to future Ministries.

Mr. GLYNN.- The Attorney-General will remember that I said I was quite willing not to make it an ex post facto piece of legislation. For the first year the £400 might be drawn by members of the Ministry, because under the letter of the Constitution they are entitled to it, and because the work of organization is particularly onerous.

Mr Higgins

- We expect the Ministry to be here for more than one year.

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Mr GLYNN

- Perhaps their expectations are not so great as those of the honorable member. As a matter of fact, I think that if the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Bendigo be carried-

An Honorable Member. - There is no amendment.

Mr SPEAKER

- I may say that since the amendment was moved, I have been informed the honorable and learned member for Indi seconded it.

Mr GLYNN

- I speak subject to the correction of the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, but I think the effect of accepting his amendment will be that the salaries shall be drawn by the present Ministers until the requisite Act is passed. That would exactly accomplish what I should think should be done under the circumstances. The Prime Minister, in stating that the Ministry will not vote, has put himself in rather a peculiar position. If every time the House deals with these personal matters members are not to vote, how many will remain in the House when the question of the reduction of members' allowances arises? We would find ourselves in the paradoxical position of a Parliament trying to transact business in the absence

of its members. The same principle applies in each case. It has been properly put by several honorable members that the Ministers are referred to in regard to the question of principle, and not in their private capacity. We are dealing with official salaries and not with matters of contract between themselves as private individuals and the State, and therefore I think they should vote on this occasion, and let their constituents know what their opinions are. The Prime Minister has referred to English official salaries. I find that the total payments to Ministers and members of the States Parliaments in Australia and to the Ministers and members of the Commonwealth Parliament, including the £400 a year allowance, total £213,000 per annum in round numbers. In proportion to the English expenditure, that amount for 4,000,000 of people seems somewhat excessive, seeing that the parliamentary stipends drawn in England by Ministers do not total £100,000 a year, if there be deducted the £30,000 drawn, not as salary, but as fees for special work done, by the law officers of the Crown.

Mr Watson

- There is no payment of members in England.

Mr GLYNN

-- I am taking the total sum drawn out of the State coffers in connexion with the work of government. That reminds me of a statement of the honorable member for Bland. Enunciating a platitude always acceptable to people if they do not examine it too closely, he says that, if we want to get good men we must pay them. But we must remember what men America has had. There the Supreme Court Judges started with comparatively meagre salaries, and I think they have set an example of purity and competence even to Australia.

Mr Higgins

- But they have permanent tenure of office.

Mr GLYNN

- Will the Commonwealth Supreme Court Judges not have permanent, tenure?

Mr Higgins

- Ministers of the Crown will not.

Mr GLYNN

- I am speaking on the question of salaries. If the principle of payment in proportion to the work done be affirmed in regard to Ministers we shall, as has been suggested to-day, be willed on to apply it to members themselves, and also to judicial salaries.

Mr Higgins

- We should not pay Ministers less than we pay our high officials.

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Mr GLYNN

- Does the honorable member think that pertinent to the question. I heard some honorable members say that because a bank -manager gets £3,000 a year for competency to discharge services for which he has been qualifying for, say, 25 years in the fiercest of competition, the veriest tyro in politics who, by party action, gets on the Treasury benches, should be entitled to proportionately greater allowances. If we are to measure the service by the amount paid, the best example I can think of is the Transvaal, where they drew pretty stiff Salaries when the machinery of the Government was working badly. I have heard, some honorable members refer to the salaries of railway commissioners. That is clearly an argument one can push too far. I believe the secretary of the huge steel trust in America gets the comparatively moderate salary of \$1,000,000 a year, and I am sorry some supporters of the Government did not think of that splendid instance of the necessity for high wages when putting this class of argument forward for the consideration of honorable members. As to getting the best men, do honorable members- seriously think that these heaven-designed legislators will always come clothed in all the splendid requirements as Minerva jumped fullpanoplied from the head of Jove¹ We will not get them. Occupancy of the Ministerial benches or the Opposition benches depends not on the personal qualifications for Cabinet office, but on the qualification to voice the electors on matters of broad principle, such' as for instance free-trade and protection. Do honorable members think that men qualified to become Ministers are going to be sent here on any other considerations than those of broad policy, personal leaning, or, to some extent, the ability to voice local wants ¹

Mr Mauger

- Is the public not more discriminating than the honorable member thinks?

Mr GLYNN

- With all respect to the public, I am not going to set them up as angels until they die, because while we are on this side of the horizon of eternity we have to acknowledge that the sin of Adam sticks to us more or less. I do not wish to detain the House longer. Considering that compared with the States the federal functions are limited, and that about 98 per cent. of the legislative work of the community still remains with the States, where is the necessity of attaching to the offices of the Commonwealth Ministers such large salaries? Is it because we have extended the geographical area over which the Ministerial duties extend 1 Did we extend the functions of the Attorney-General because the geographical area over which his office extends is greater than the State area?

Mr Higgins

- During the first few years Ministers will have a tremendous amount of work.

Mr GLYNN

- I quite acknowledge the fairness of a Bill being introduced, which will not have a post facto operation. I am ready to accept the amendment, and I hope honorable members will support the motion.

Mr. BARTON(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - I wish at this stage to make a brief explanation. It arises from the fact that it was not until after the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, had spoken at some little length in reply that it became known to me that the amendment of the honorable member for Bendigo had been seconded, and was therefore before the House. I do not ask leave to make a speech, but merely to offer a short explanation as to the position of the Government. The Government feel bound to vote against that amendment, and for this reason. We invited a discussion on some specific proposal of the kind made by the honorable member for South Australia in order that we might get a definite guide as to our future course of action. On that understanding it was that the public business was set aside to enable this discussion to take place, and it having taken place upon a specific proposal, will guide the Government in their future action. I only ask that the House may come to a decision on the matter which the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, has brought forward, without any amendment. If the motion is carried, assuredly the Government will introduce a Bill to give effect to it. We shall vote against the amendment, although we shall not vote on the motion.

Sir John Quick

- In view of that intimation, I beg leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put. The House divided -

Ayes 22

Noes 30

Majority 8

Question so resolved in the negative.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

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In Committee(consideration resumed from 19th June, vide page 1309). "(1) In this Act the following expressions shall unless the contrary intention appears have the meanings hereby respectively assigned to them namely : - (a)" Governor-General " means the Governor-General with the advice of the Federal Executive Council :

" Minister" means the Minister of State for the time being charged with the administration of this Act, or the Minister of State administering the Department of the Public Service wherein is employed the officer in connexion with whom the term is used or is applicable, as the context may indicate ;

" Officer" means any person employed in any capacity in the Public Service of the Commonwealth whether appointed or transferred thereto before or after the commencement of this Act ; .

"Act "means any Act of the Commonwealth ; and

Mr. DEAKIN(Ballarat - Attorney-General). - I propose to move the omission of the definition of Governor-General, which is rendered unnecessary owing to the anticipated passage of the Acts Interpretation Bill, in which a meaning is assigned to the term Governor-General wherever it may appear in our legislation. I also intend to propose the omission of certain words in sub-clause (b) and sub-clause (a) for a similar reason. I move -

That the following words be omitted : - ".(a) Governor General means the Governor-General with the advice of the Federal Executive Council. "

Mr Thomson

- Will it be safe to omit this definition until the Acts Interpretation Bill is passed 1 We do not know what may happen to the Bill in its passage through the Senate, so that it might be well to retain this definition.

Mr DEAKIN

- I will undertake, that if the Acts Interpretation Bill should fail to pass or should be amended so as to affect this definition, this Bill shall be recommitted for the purpose of restoring it.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr DEAKIN

- I propose now to omit the words " Minister of State " from sub clause (b).

Mr McCay

- Some difficulty may arise in some of the clauses of the Bill as to whether the Minister administering the Public Service Act or the Minister administering a department is referred to.

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

- Then perhaps we had better postpone this sub-clause until I have had an opportunity of considering it further.

Mr Piesse

- But the Act does not apply to the Inter-State Commission.

Mr POYNTON

- It would apply to their staff, and the position would be that no railway man would be eligible for employment in the public service of the Commonwealth.

Mr Higgins

- The railway men serve the State, and the men to whom the Bill will apply serve the Commonwealth.

Mr POYNTON

- Yes; but we have heard argument after argument in this Chamber that we ought to exhaust the public service of the States before we go outside in making appointments to the public service of the Commonwealth, and whilst we are protecting all those who are coming over from the States' services we ought to protect the railway men, so that any present or accruing rights may be preserved to them.

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Mr DEAKIN

- Without entering into the merits of this question at present, might tell the honorable member that the proper place for him to make his amendment would be in clause 29, which relates to transfers from the public departments of the State to the public service of the Commonwealth without limitations as to age, or the passing of preliminary examinations, or the other qualifications to which the honorable member has alluded. If the honorable member moves the introduction in that clause of the words he wishes to introduce - and I will gladly prepare the amendment for him - he can thus secure the interests of the railway servants in the way he desires.

Mr Poynton

- That is all I want.

Mr DEAKIN

- I move-

That the following words be omitted : - (h) "Act" means any Act of the Commonwealth " and "

The word "Act" is already defined in the Acts Interpretation Bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3 -

Unless otherwise expressly provided, this Act shall not apply to any honorary officer ; or any officer the right to appoint whom is not vested in the Governor-General in Council ; or any examiner under this Act who is not an officer.

Mr DEAKIN

- There are two words in this clause which are rendered unnecessary owing to the definition in the Acts

Interpretation Bill of the words " Governor-General" as the " Governor-General in Council." I therefore move -

That the words "in Council," in line 4, be omitted.

Mr Batchelor

-What is the meaning of " honorary officer " ? Is there any possibility of the appointment of honorary officers who are bound by the provisions of this Bill ?

Mr DEAKIN

- They are specially exempted.

Mr Batchelor

- But could they be considered as in the public service.

Mr DEAKIN

- There might be a suspicion that the provisions of the Bill referred to them because they were in the public service although honorary officers.

Mr Batchelor

- I can hardly conceive of such a case. I would also ask what sort of officer is an examiner under this Act who is not an officer ?

Mr DEAKIN

- That provision refers to examiners who conduct examinations for candidates for admission to the service.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr McCAY

- I desire to propose an amendment, which I hope will cause considerable discussion, and will ultimately be carried, and I would ask the Attorney-General whether we are fit to discuss at this stage an amendment which goes to the root of the Bill. I propose to add after the words "Governor-General" the words "or commissioner," and I intend to raise now on a substantive amendment the whole question to which I referred in general terms yesterday when I spoke on the second reading, as to how far the actual exercise of executive power by the Governor-General is to go. Whether my view be right or wrong, this is a question of the highest importance, and one that this committee should very carefully consider before deciding. I heard the Attorney-General's eloquent speech on this matter, but it has not cleared my mind.

Sir William McMillan

-Would not clause 5 serve the honorable member's purpose better?

Mr McCAY

- No, I think not, because clause 5 will stand whether the Governor-General or the commissioner make the appointment. This raises the whole question as to whether the commissioner is to appoint officers. I hold that the commissioner, and not the Governor-General, should appoint officers. I think the Attorney-General will agree with me that this is a very fitting and proper place in which to raise the issue. My amendment raises it fully, because by putting in the words "or the commissioner " we distinctly imply that the commissioner will be the appointing officer.

Mr Isaacs

- Where does the honorable and learned member intend to insert the words ?

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Mr McCAY

- In line 4, after the words "Governor-General," I propose to insert the words "or the commissioner." . Obviously the Commissioner will have to be appointed by the Governor-General, and it may be that the inspectors also will be appointed by the Governor-General, but the great bulk of the service, if not the permanent heads too, should be appointed, in my view,, by the commissioner. I certainly shall have to speak for a little while on this matter, and I hope my remarks will create sufficient interest to raise a full discussion on the matter. Summarizing my views, the Bill makes the Governor-General, with certain exceptions, the executive power over the public service of the Commonwealth, and the commissioner purely an advisory officer. I desire to make the commissioner the executive power so far as the officers are concerned, although not so far as offices, salaries, or regulations are concerned. The sole question at issue between any two parties, or any number of parties, in the Chamber now in connexion with the Public Service Bill can only be as to how far we are to go before we, so to speak, cut off the supply of the

Governor-General. I propose to cut off the supply of the Governor-General at a very much earlier stage in the evolution of the public service and its work than the Government propose to do. Some amendments later on in the Bill will show clearly which of these two persons is to exercise the power of appointment, because I hope that if my amendment is carried the Government will make consequential amendments to determine in which of these two authorities the power of appointment will be vested. For example, in clause 16, where the Governor-General appoints after officers have served their probationary period, I would substitute the commissioner, and I would do the same in similar clauses. But I would say again to the Attorney-General that this is a big question, which I do not think we should begin to discuss at this hour.

Mr Deakin

- The first question is whether this is the best place to raise the question.

Mr McCAY

- In my opinion the best place to raise a question of importance relating to the whole construction of a Bill is the first place, and this is the first place. We can get a clearer issue on this clause than we can in almost any other clause, because if I propose to substitute the commissioner for the Governor-General in any other clause, besides that general question there will also be the particular question raised as to whether, in the particular circumstances of that clause, he ought to be substituted. That issue will have to be discussed on the other clauses as they arise, but like we can discuss the whole question. I ask the Attorney-General again whether we are to start the discussion to-night.

Mr DEAKIN

- I am very desirous of obtaining from the committee an intimation of its wishes in regard to the important issue raised, and on one or two other matters. My only doubt is as to whether the committee is yet quite at a stage to appreciate the point he makes. What I understand he desires is to raise the issue as to whether the Governor-General shall have any authority at all in connexion with the public service.

Mr McCay

- Oh, dear, no.

Mr DEAKIN

- If the Governor-General is not to have any authority, the honorable and learned member will require to attack the proposal for giving, him the limited authority which the Bill suggests, and to propose, in contradistinction to that, some limitation which he thinks more effective and necessary.

Mr McCay

- I propose to do that.

Mr DEAKIN

- If the honorable and learned member will undertake that burden at once, I think it would be of great advantage. I doubt if we shall be able to exhaust the question, or be prepared to come to a final decision on it this evening, and suggest that we should have the advantage first of hearing the honorable and learned member, and then of seeing his remarks as reported in Hansard, before we do so.

Mr McCay

- Uncorrected I may say.

Mr DEAKIN

-The honorable and learned member is fortunate in never needing to correct his speeches. After we have had the advantage of seeing his remarks in Hansard, we shall better appreciate the magnitude of the question which he has raised. I trust, therefore, that he will proceed with his remarks to-night, inasmuch as we have not yet advanced very far with any of the machinery Bills, and some of them are bound to take time which will shortly be required for even more vital measures.

Mr McCay

- I have no objection to wearying the committee to-night instead of doing it on Tuesday.

Mr Cruickshank

- Could we not go on with other business now ?

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I should like to ask the Attorney-General if, in view of the very exhaustive debate on the question, he has taken into consideration the general desire of the Chamber to strengthen the hands of the

commissioner'!! I understood that he was to prepare some amendments. If those amendments can be prepared by the Government in proper shape it is much better than private members taking a hand at it. I think the general feeling has been that in all matters of arranging salaries, changes in a department, and everything besides the actual discipline of the department - its current going, so to speak - the commissioner ought to have a much stronger position than he has under the Bill. This is a complicated measure, and it is not easy to interweave ideas into a Bill which has been constructed on rather a different principle. What I had intended was to ask the Attorney-General when we got to clause 5 - I had no idea that any issue would be raised at this point - whether he had any proposals to lay before the committee which would give us an intelligent grasp as to his views on the whole question. I think perhaps, if ray honorable and learned friend the member for Corinella would not mind, it might be better if we first had some remarks from the Attorney-General with regard to the result of the debate, and his views as to the reconstruction of the Bill to meet what I think are the wishes of the majority of honorable members. Mr. McCAY(Corinella). - I understood from the Attorney-General last night that he did not see the necessity for any reconstruction.

Mr Deakin

- Not in that particular.

Mr McCAY

- There might be details to be amended, but in principle the Governor-General appeared in the Bill where the honorable and learned gentleman thought he ought to be in the Act, and consequently there is nothing he could suggest which would meet with the desire of the acting leader of the Opposition. I move

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That the words "or the commissioner" be inserted after the word "Governor-General" line 4.

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Mr Deakin

- I have prepared a great number of amendments to embody suggestions which were made during the debate on the second reading, but I do not think I could describe any of them as making anything like so vital an alteration in this particular as that which the honorable and learned member proposes.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I understood from the Attorney-General that he saw his way in clause 9 to enlarge the powers of the commissioner very much in the direction which the honorable and learned member for Corinella proposes. It seems to me that this clause gives a very considerable power, and it might be enlarged sufficiently to cover the scope of his ideas.

Mr. McCAY(Corinella).- The Bill, as I take it, is in essence as follows : - After considering all the possible ways of carrying on the working of the public service, the Government have come to the conclusion that, having the advice and the assistance of a commissioner, with his subordinates, the inspectors, the whole control of the service shall be "in the hands of the Governor-General, which, as we know, means the Minister. It seems to me that in building up our public service we start first with an Act creating the services under which the Governor-General very properly determines the offices, not the officers necessary to exist in order to carry on the public work. In doing that, Parliament, or its creature the Executive, also settles the salaries and allowances that are attachable to the offices, and in a short space passes certain regulations dealing with similar matters, because unfortunately Parliament cannot pass all its legislation. Regulations by the Governor-General after all are only imperfect, and sometimes unsatisfactory substitutes, for legislation. When one looks at the last clause of this Bill and sees the various subjects on which the Governor-General is given the power to make regulations, one perceives at once that a number of them at any rate are matters on which Parliament can not possibly spare the time to legislate. It must trust to somebody to do the work. But regulations in their essence are the same as legislation, and therefore are matters which to my mind should properly be delegated by the Parliament to the Governor-General in Council, and to the Governor-General in Council only. But it seems to me that having got that far, then we ought to avoid the political influence or political patronage, as it has been termed, which is so undesirable in any public service, and not merely political patronage, but even the suspicion of it. I might refer to cases which are common in the courts as to bias on the part of the bench. Verdicts will not be upset when bias on the part of the bench is proved, but when there is a reasonable suspicion in the public mind that bias exists. I do not say that is a literally accurate statement of the law, but it is near enough for my purpose. In the same way we do not want to have such a state of affairs with

our public service as will give rise to a reasonable suspicion, either in the minds of the public or in the minds of the service, that political patronage can or may exist. And the moment we start dealing with individuals who are to fill the positions which Parliament in its wisdom, by itself or its executive, has declared shall be brought into existence that moment we get into a relation with the public and with the intending members of the public service, -which, not improbably, I might say from my own point of view, probably, would give rise to this suspicion. I was referring to the speech of the Attorney-General last night, in which he drew our attention to an» almost superhuman commissioner and set of inspectors who were to be absolutely infallible and whose advice was always to be right and was always to be accepted. By the time he had finished his speech he had wafted me into Utopia so far as the public service is concerned.

Mr Deakin

- Why leave Utopia ?

Mr McCAY

- Unfortunately, one cannot stay in Utopia very long. As a small boy in the nursery I was taught that Utopia is a pleasant place, but how we could get there we never could tell. I now know that the way to Utopia is by passing the Attorney-General's Public Service Bill. I have said that once we get past the constructive and legislative part of the work, then it seems to me the proper functions of Parliament - direct parliamentary interference and direct political control - have ceased. The Attorney-General last night took as his text, parliamentary control - without political patronage. But I say unhesitatingly that the whole speech and the scheme, which he outlined, did not follow the axiom at all. It was not parliamentary control without political patronage, but political control without parliamentary patronage that he described. Although this at first sight may appear to be a mere juggle of words, it is not so. All the influence and power that is exerted in connexion with the service should be exerted on the floor of this or the other Chamber of the Legislature. If the Governor-General be left to do the work which should go to the commissioner, the result will be inevitably to create, .at any rate, the suspicion of patronage, and in that way to injure the service. There are exceptional cases which are referred to in the various clauses which the Attorney-General drew special attention to last night, such as those relating to jumping subdivisions and classes, and matters of that kind, which might reasonably be said to be less of an executive character than the ordinary promotions. They might be said to be a fresh creation of offices, and Parliament might have reserved to it through the Governor-General the power of determining those special cases. That is a matter for separate discussion, but I do not bind myself to exclude these from the Governor-General's sphere of control, though I do exclude the other things. As to appointments, ordinary promotions, removals from one department to another, excess officers and dispensing with their services where there is no transfer possible - all these are executive matters which Parliament cannot do, and which Parliament ought not to do. The proper test is that what Parliament ought not to do, should not be done by the Governor-General. He should be the parliamentary delegate only for things Parliament can do but which Parliament has not time, or is not fitted by the Constitution to do. We had from the member for Melbourne Ports a short speech or interjection as to the dissatisfaction that exists in the Victorian public service. To-night I wish to take two portions of the Victorian public service with which I have most acquaintance, namely, the public service of Victoria and the railway service of Victoria. It is, unfortunately, true that in both these services there does exist dissatisfaction on certain points among the servants. I venture to say that every single instance of dissatisfaction, except those arising from individual grievances, arises from the fact that the Governor in Council is doing things he should not do. That is to say, the Governor in Council has power he should not have, and it is a power which is also given to the Governor-General in the Bill.

Mr Higgins

- Take the case of McHale, where the Railway Commissioner would not hear an appeal.

Mr McCAY

- That was the case of an individual. It was a case in which a railway porter was found guilty, if I remember rightly, of some alleged offence by an inquiry board, and was refused the appeal to the commissioner which the Act gave him.

Mr Higgins

- The commissioner refused to hear the man ?

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Mr McCAY

- The commissioner refused to hear the appeal he should have heard. In other words, the commissioner did not do his duty. That was not the fault of the system, but the fault of the commissioner in not obeying the instructions Parliament had given him. That is a very different thing from error arising from the wrong distribution of power. In what respect does the dissatisfaction exist in the public service of Victoria? It exists, in the first place, because the members of the public service of Victoria, especially the clerical division, consider that the allotment of salaries under the scheme of the Victorian Act of 1893 is not satisfactory, and they want a reversion to the original Act of 1890. That is a matter - the settlement of the scale of salaries - the Parliament itself, or the Governor-General as its deputy, should settle, and we are settling it in the Bill in regard to the clerical division. We are leaving the Governor-General to settle it by regulations apparently, in regard to some other divisions, and that is perfectly proper. The public service of Victoria is dissatisfied in this emitter, not because power is vested in the wrong person - it is vested in the right person, namely, the Governor in Council or Parliament - but because the power has not been exercised in the way the public servants think it should be. Consequently members of the Victorian Legislative Assembly on the floor of the Victorian House, have raised the question which is a parliamentary and legislative question, and should be raised, if at all, on the floor of Parliament. But this has not arisen because there is a Public Service Board, or because the Governor in Council has not the power he should have, or because Parliament has abrogated its powers. Parliament retains under the Victorian Public Service Act practically the powers which Parliament retains in the Commonwealth Public Service Bill. I need not go into details as to differences, but will say that in essence the powers are the same. Troubles have arisen not because power has been wrongly distributed or has been given up by Parliament, but because Parliament has not exercised the power in the way a largo number of public servants think it should have been exercised. What is their ground of complaint? It is that promotions have not been carried out in a satisfactory manner. In the first place promotions have not been made when they should have been, and it is the Governor in Council who has not made them. They have not been made from motives of economy, and the Victorian service is full of acting officers instead of officers in full service. The complaint first of all is that promotions have not been properly carried out. That is a function the Governor in Council has in Victoria, and one that he has not exercised to the satisfaction of the public service. It has been said that the promotion goes too much by seniority and not by merit, and that is purely the result of the Act, and purely the result of the Public Service Board in Victoria having taken the line of least resistance in regard to its recommendations. Here honorable members will see the position is exactly the same as in the Commonwealth Public Service Bill. We have the Governor in Council as the executive power, and the Victorian Public Service Board or the advisory board is exactly the same as the commissioner. No argument in favour of the Bill - can be adduced" from the example of the Victorian public service, for the simple reason that it is working practically under the same conditions as it is proposed the Commonwealth service shall work under. I know the Attorney-General can point to a score of differences between the Bill and the Act, but I am speaking of their general principles, and I think that the Attorney-General will agree with me that I am practically right. There is one active commissioner with active inspectors instead of a somewhat supine board, but in other respects the conditions are practically the same. As to the distribution of power and the appointment of some one to advise, the positions are practically analogous. Consequently, when the honorable member for Melbourne Ports says that the Victorian public service is seething with discontent and something else - I forget the word--- An Honorable Member. - "Disloyalty."

Mr McCAY

- I do not agree with the honorable member there.

Mr MAUGER

- I did not use the word. " disloyalty " in the general acceptation of that term.

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Mr McCAY

- I know that. When the honorable member says that the Victorian, public service is seething with discontent he is uttering as strong a condemnation of the principles of the Bill as could well be uttered, because the Bill and the Victorian Act are practically the same in principle. I will take as another

illustration the Victorian railway service. The Victorian railway service, speaking again in general terms, is under a commissioner, who has far more executive power than the Public Service Board has in regard to the public service. It approaches more nearly to my suggestion in regard to this Bill than it does to the Victorian public service. But what is the trouble in the Victorian railway service? The chief difficulty - and I think the honorable member for Melbourne Ports will agree with me - has arisen because of a classification by the commissioner the service did not like. This classification is a settlement of Salaries, and the power given to the Railway Commissioner is one that should not be given to him. It is a legislative and not an executive power, and should be retained by Parliament, and it is a power which, by my proposal, will be retained by Parliament and by the Governor-General. As to the discontent which exists in the service, much of it can be traced - at least I can trace it - to the dissatisfaction which arises, not from the bestowal of power in the manner in which I propose to bestow it, but from retaining power in the manner the Bill proposes, or from the bestowal of power Parliament should not have parted with. The Victorian railway service has been promised by Parliament a classification scheme year after year, and the Governor, if Parliament has not time to do the work, is the proper person to give that classification. So far as I know, no serious complaint has arisen in the railway service because of the manner of the commissioner's dealing with the officers. As a matter of fact, the commissioner has the power of appointing officers, with the exception of those who get salaries of over £500.

Mr Higgins

- There is grave, discontent.

Mr McCAY

- I said there was .no grave discontent. The honorable member Says he has found grave discontent. The honorable member happens to represent a constituency which contains fully half of the railway servants of Victoria. I know that there are complaints of the commissioner's appointment. I have even heard suggestions of nepotism, but I do not for one moment say that they are true. I venture to think that there are no greater complaints in the railway service than there are in the public service on these grounds. So far as my experience of the Victorian Legislature was concerned, I may say that I had more railway men in my electorate than other public servants, but I did not find that there were more complaints amongst the former than amongst the latter. I am not going to weary the committee by malting a long speech. I believe that strong objections can be urged to the course which I propose should be taken. Indeed, I do not know of any course that any one could take in connexion with settling the principles of this Bill to which strong objections could not be urged. I do not know of any method | of distributing the power, against which weighty arguments could not be offered. But after all we have to select the least objectionable of the various courses open to us. The Attorney-General last night did not outline a system of political control without political patronage. The Bill simply says that the Governor-General shall do everything, although he has to take all sorts of people's advice. Let us take the three clauses to which the Attorney-General directed attention, namely, clauses 21, 36, and 38_ When the Attorney-General was about to deal with clause 36, I interjected that before he left clause 21, he might tell us whether the promotions as recommended under that clause to the Governor-General took place as a matter of course. He did not answer either "yes" or "no," but I gathered from what he said afterwards that practically any ordinary promotion recommended by the Governor-General would be carried into effect as a matter of course.

Mr Deakin

- Hear, hear.

Mr McCAY

- But if any ordinary promotion recommended to the Governor-General has to be carried into effect as a matter of course, why take up the time of the Governor-General by merely making him a register of the recommendation of the commissioner 1

Mr Deakin

- The honorable member might have a good horse, but he would not attempt to drive him without reins.

Mr McCAY

- AVe would not attempt to drive him with half-a-dozen sets of reins, or referring more particularly to the composition of the House, with seventy-five sets of reins.

Mr Deakin

- No, with the reins of the Executive, that is all.

Mr Salmon

- There may be only one set of reins, but seventy-five persons with their hands upon them.

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Mr McCAY

- That is so. If we come to clause 36, we find that that relates to the ordinary appointments to vacancies, the basis of promotion or transfer being efficiency. I heartily approve of efficiency being the basis instead of seniority. Seniority is to be the determining factor other things being equal, but not otherwise. That is the only stimulus that can be properly applied to the public service of the community. It is the only substitute for the ordinary business stimulus of hoping to get on in the world. I ask honorable members whether it is more likely to be believed that favoritism is used in connexion with these promotions if the promotions are made by the Governor-General than if they are made by the commissioner ?

Mr Isaacs

- Are they not to be on the nomination or recommendation of the commissioner?

Mr McCAY

- Yes ; but if the nomination or recommendation is to be accepted, as a matter of course-

Mr Isaacs

- It is not necessarily.

Mr McCAY

- But the Attorney-General has not said that it is not necessarily to be accepted as a matter of course.

Mr Deakin

- Either we know our man and we trust him, or we know him and we do not trust him.

Mr McCAY

- Should the Government not trust the commissioner they had better get rid of him at once. It would pay the Commonwealth to pay him his salary for the rest of his period rather than have the Executive taking the nominations of a man whom it did not trust. I see there is a power in this Bill to transfer the inspectors to some other place in the service. The reason for that I presume is that the Government may not be able to trust them. But we have to start by assuming both a trustworthy Executive and a trustworthy commissioner. If A, B, C, D, E, and F are officers in order of seniority, and A retires, and F is promoted, B, C, D and E are still living in the Attorney-General's utopia if they do not think there is something wrong about what has been done. There is far less probability of influence being brought to bear, if these appointments or promotions are made by one commissioner for the whole continent than if they are made by an Executive which is under the control of seventy-five members of this House, and who come from and reside in various parts of the Commonwealth. The commissioner is far less likely to have the tentacles of influence stretching out to various parts of the Commonwealth than is the Executive through honorable members. But assuming that the commissioner was so bad as to put all his friends into positions in the public service, he would not be able to fill the service, because he would not have that many friends in the community. In these interjections, criticising what I am saying, it is just assumed that the commissioner is sitting free and unfettered to do what he chooses. But the commissioner is limited in the first place by this Act, in the second place by any schemes of classification which are embodied in the Actor regulations made by the Governor-General, and in the third place he is limited by all the regulations made by the Governor-General dealing with the fourteen or fifteen subjects with regard to which the Governor-General is entitled to make regulations. Let us assume, for example, that the commissioner appoints persons improperly to enter the service. He cannot do so if the Governor-General does his work, because the regulations have to state in what way people are to be allowed to enter the service. If the commissioner violated those regulations by appointing people who were not fit for the positions, he would be disobeying the orders given to him by his master, the Parliament. If it is said that the commissioner may promote a person not entitled to promotion, there would be regulations dealing with the promotions as to how promotions shall be made. And if it is said that the commissioner would not select the most meritorious, then I say that he is just as likely to appoint the most meritorious as is the Governor-General.

Sir William McMillan

- Does the honorable and learned member want to give the commissioner power without any veto ? .

Mr McCAY

- I want to make him master in all the ordinary dealings with the members of the service.

Sir Edward Braddon

- How can we differentiate the ordinary dealings?

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Mr McCAY

- I would differentiate in the Bill. As a matter of fact they are so differentiated. I am aware that there are two or three exceptional cases in which it is possible for men to jump a class, but those are extraordinary cases. In promotions outside the ordinary cases, provided for in clause . 21, I would specify either in the Bill or in the regulations, that cases in which there would be a veto allowed over the commissioner's action or over his decision. I would not allow the Governor-General power to veto everything which the commissioner recommends. From the beginning to the end of this Bill the commissioner can do absolutely nothing. He can recommend a host of things, but he can do nothing. As the Attorney-General says, he is merely a watch dog. But it is often said that it is no use keeping a dog and barking oneself, which is exactly what this Bill does. The Governor-General is going to do all his own barking, when he might be much more profitably employed. I ask what cases would arise under such a system, which would be more likely to be unsatisfactory than under the system proposed in this Bill ? If honorable members say - "But under your proposals such and such a thing may happen," it is perfectly true. I admit that these things may happen, but on the other hand we must look to see if these things cannot happen under the Governor-General's regime.

An Honorable Member. - But the Executive will be responsible to Parliament.

Mr McCAY

- But what did the Attorney-General tell us last night? Did he not tell us that if the commissioner nominated - other people having to recommend, or not having to recommend in various cases - and the Governor-General adopted the commissioner's recommendation on that, of course the commissioner would not be considered responsible for the action. In other words, the Executive, according to the Attorney-General's own statement of the objects and scope of the Bill, says that the Governor-General would only accept responsibility when he differed from the commissioner.

Mr Deakin

- Only accept special responsibility.

Mr McCAY

- In other words, the Governor-General would only be responsible on a charge of general maladministration .or general lack of administration, the ordinary want of confidence motion, no doubt. He would not be responsible for each specific case, and I ask whether it is wise to make him responsible for each specific case. Are we in every case of an appointment, reduction, or dismissal to have the whole existence of the administration, the whole question of the public service, brought up before this House, and are the Government to be liable to a vote of want of confidence on all sorts of occasions ? I think that would make the whole thing unworkable. It may be admitted that there are objections to the course I urge, but it is open to fewer objections than the course proposed by the Government.

Sir William McMillan

- To what extent does clause 9 fall short of the honorable member's proposal ?

Mr McCAY

- Clause 9 gives proper power to the commissioner, because it deals with the individuals and not with the offices-. If the honorable member will refer to clause 1C, he will see that the Governor-General settles the scheme of offices and places, which is a proper thing for him to do, whilst under clause 9 the commissioner .settles the officers in their places. That is exactly how it ought to be. But if honorable members will look at the other clauses throughout the Bill they will see that in no case does the commissioner promote or appoint.

Sir William McMillan

- Can we not amend the Bill as the honorable member proposes as we go. on ?

Mr McCAY

- The reason I propose my amendment now is that it will necessitate a number of other amendments. I do not say that the carrying of my amendment would require all the alterations I have indicated, because you may find some of the cases on the border line between the power of the Executive and that of the

commissioner.

Sir William McMillan

- Up to what grade does the honorable member want to give complete power to the commissioner ?

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Mr McCAY

- The inspectors should not be under him, and I doubt whether the permanent heads should be, but excepting in those cases the rest of the service should come under the one control. If things are to be done, as we know they will be done, as a matter of course, on the nomination of the commissioner, we ought to put the power where the responsibility really is, and relieve the Governor-General from being a mere register of the wishes of the commissioner. Further than that it accords with the principle that governs all these matters. I do not say, like some of our free-trade friends, that if the theory and the facts come into conflict, so much the worse for the facts j but I say, on the other hand, so much the worse for the theory. What I think we should ann at doing is to keep the legislative and executive work in connexion with the carrying out of the business of the community quite distinct. Parliament should be relieved not from the control of the service, 'but from the management of it. This Bill does not relieve Parliament through its Executive from the management of the service, and it does not even relieve the House itself. If honorable members will observe the various provisions in the Bill for the production of reports and for the exercise of parliamentary power, they will see how far the House itself is involved in the actual management of the service. Sub-clause (3) of clause 6 provides that Parliament may remove an inspector or a commissioner for cause shown. In clause 11

Parliament has to receive the commissioner's annual report through the Minister, and not through the Governor-General. In clause 21, sub-clause (8), it is provided that a copy of the recommendations as to special promotions shall be laid before Parliament. In clause 27, sub-section 4, it is set out that where the Governor-General does not approve of any person who may be nominated by the commissioner the reasons for his non-approval are to be as soon as practicable laid before Parliament. In clause 34, the reasons have to be given for prolonging temporary appointments, and under clause 38 it is provided that where the Governor-General does not approve of promotions, the reasons for his non-approval shall be laid before Parliament. In every one of these cases, except the one regarding the annual report, the attention of Parliament is drawn to specific cases to which Parliament should not be required to devote its time unless it is conceived that a wrong has been done. Parliament is asked to directly manage the public service in these exceptional cases, and I think there are many reasons why these cases should be dealt with by the Governor-General. I direct the notice of the committee to these cases to show that Parliament is being asked to attend to matters which it should not be asked to attend to unless some one comes forward and says that a wrong has been done. As there are special wises occasionally, I quite admit that it may be urged that Parliament should be enabled to deal with these, but that does not affect the principle which I am now laying down. I have spoken at greater length than I had intended, but I would again say that the law and the regulations, the schemes of classification, and the fixing of salaries and allowances, the settlement of the amounts of fines, and things of that kind, which are really legislative and constructive work, should be done by Parliament, or by its creature the executive, but that the administrative duty of settling who is to do the work, and of how the work is to be done, and the appointment and promotion of officers, and the general filling in and clothing of the skeleton with living flesh, should be done by the commissioner. Parliament should watch, but it should not be called upon to do the actual work. Therefore, the whole of the law dealing with the appointment and promotion and the fixing of salaries should he settled by Parliament. But the appointments themselves should be made by the commissioner, who should be the executive officer of the legislative power. I say again that our experience in Victoria has shown that whether this is a right scheme or not, at any rate the Public Service Act and the Railway Acts have alike failed as regards the services, either because the legislative powers which properly belong to Parliament, have been handed over by them to an extent which has been more than desirable, or administrative powers have been retained by them instead of being handed over. Therefore, I ask the committee to very seriously consider whether we should not make a departure from existing practices.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I go a long way with the honorable member for Corinella in his criticism of the Bill, but I would be no

party to creating such an independent autocrat as he desires to make of the commissioner.

Mr McCay

- I do not do that at all.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The honorable member would create a commissioner and would place him in office for seven years, subject to dismissal only by the resolution of both Houses of Parliament. He could be suspended, and that is all that could be done, and the honorable member desires that that commissioner should have the absolute right to make all appointments.

Mr McCay

- I said he was to be subject to regulations which would settle how all these things are to be done.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The point is not destroyed in any way whatever, because the right to make personal appointments would give the commissioner absolute control.

Mr Higgins

- There is no one over the commissioner at all.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- In other words, instead of his making suggestions and nominations and submitting them to a responsible Minister, the Minister would have to go down on his knees and apply to the commissioner, and all the pliability which we have a right to look for in a Bill of this kind, in view of the possible necessity for going outside the public service to get special men, would be lost, and the power of appointment would rest solely with this autocrat of a commissioner.

Mr McCay

- He would not have such power as the Victorian Railway Commissioner.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I go a long way with the honorable member when he wishes that the commissioner in every case of appointment or transfer from one grade to another and everything that affects the life of the public service, should have the right to be consulted and report, so that if he disagrees with anything that may be done a record may be made of it, and it can come before the House in his report. Furthermore, while I think we want to make our measures as complete as possible in starting this Commonwealth, we do not want to begin with an unnecessarily drastic enactment. Let us try to create a system by which we can suppose that the responsible Minister and the permanent heads and the commissioner are all individually trying to do their best for the public service of the country. If we find that, notwithstanding all our commonsense regulations, and the check upon check that we are introducing into this Bill, corruption and political influence are still having their sway, it will be time enough for us to resort to more drastic measures. I would again ask the honorable gentleman in charge of this Bill if he will candidly tell us that he accepts to a large extent, as a direction to him and the Government, the almost universal expression of opinion that the right of the commissioner to be heard on every question connected with the life of the public service should be recognised.

Mr Deakin

- It is provided for in the Bill already.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- Then, of course, if it is provided for, there is no necessity to alter it. But I was speaking as a layman. My honorable friend has called attention to the provision in clause 5 -

Such commissioner shall submit for the consideration of the Governor-General reports as to any matters requiring to be dealt with by the Governor-General under this Act.

If that is sufficient to guarantee that everything that comes under the purview of the Governor-General shall be reported on, including the recommendations made by the commissioner, then it seems to me that we go as far as we can in providing a check on the public service of this country. That is all I want. I desire the commissioner to be a real living entity, and I want Parliament to have an opportunity of referring to the commissioner's report, so that they may exercise a check upon all matters connected with the public service. It is also desired that the commissioner should have such real power that any feeling that Ministerial interference may be carried too far, or that political influence is being brought to bear from

outside may be dissipated. We want the commissioner to have such power that every man in the service may feel that he has a fair field and no favour. I do not for one moment allow the parallel that has been drawn between the Com- ' missioners for Railways and the machinery we are creating for this public service. There is no analogy, except in a general way. The railways are a distinct commercial business of the State. They are common carriers, employed by the State and have arisen out of the necessities of our Australian evolution.

Mr Isaacs

- A trading concern.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- Here is a political system, not a trading system, and we must apply to it more complicated machinery, closer checks, with a general view to the whole conditions surrounding it. We can see reading between the lines that the Minister who is now looking after this measure had a great deal to do with it in its initiation, and if it carries out from a legal point of view the principles I have laid down as a layman, I shall be satisfied.

Mr HIGGINS

- ' I t think this debate may be shortened if we look at the real scope of the amendment. Although my honorable and learned friend Mr. McCay does right when referring to this clause to show how his amendment will dovetail into the other clauses, still the clause simply deals with appointments. The only question with my honorable and learned friend at present is as to whether the commissioner is to be the final authority as to appointments.

Mr McCay

- Oh, no; I cannot move twenty amendments at once. If I indicate the extent to which I want to go, it ought to suffice.

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Mr HIGGINS

- I think we might be careful to limit our discussion now to that one single point, which is really the only one raised. I admit that my honorable and learned friend is right in showing the relation of his amendment to other clauses, but the only proposal here is to alter clause 3, which provides that - Unless otherwise expressly provided, this Act shall not apply to any officer the right to appoint whom is not vested in the Governor-General in Council.

The honorable and learned member wants to add "or the commissioner." The only effect of the alteration would be that the Bill would not apply to any officer the right to appoint whom was not vested in the Governor-General or the commissioner. It simply involves this, that the commissioner may appoint, and in the after clauses the honorable and learned member may bring an amendment to the effect that the commissioner is to have the appointment.

Mr McCay

- No. The honorable and learned member could not have listened to my speech.

Mr HIGGINS

- I listened to every word the honorable and learned member said, and every word was worth listening to, but at the same time I differ totocaelo from him as to the suggested remedy, and I think very much for the reasons given by the acting leader of the Opposition. Absolute government is not good for any one except sometimes the governed. That appears to be a paradox. Sometimes it is useful to the governed, but it is not good for a commissioner or anybody else. What would it mean? We have a commissioner for all Australia. He has under his control three or four departments. He cannot know the departments. Whom does he rest upon - inspectors? We have one inspector for each State. Whom does the inspector rest upon? He has to go the round of the departments, no doubt, but he has to take a great deal of his information from the chief officer, or from the heads of the rooms. Heads of rooms, we all know, have as much influence in the transactions of the departments as any one else. The only thing which this amendment will affect is clause 26, which gives the power of appointment. It says - After the period of six months on probation has expired the Governor-General may on the report of the permanent head and nomination of the commissioner confirm or annul such appointment. What the Government provide is that the initiative is to come from some nonpolitical source. It provides that the Ministers can do nothing, and, supposing they say, being pressed by constituents or being

pressed by members, "Well, we are very sorry that we cannot do anything. It all rests for initiative on a responsible commissioner " ; it is a tremendous protection to a Minister at the proper stage. But then the point is that supposing we leave the commissioner the absolute autocrat that no person can appeal from, we simply will allow abuses to come up, and when honorable members know abuses and hear of them, they will appear on the floor of the House, and there is no one that they can call to account for them. I have seen our Minister for Railways, although I admit there is a difference between the Railways and the other services of the State, sitting at this table when the Railway estimates came up, and he has had abuse after abuse called up before him. I may say in passing, that quite as many abuses have occurred' under a railways commissionership as had occurred under the political system. As I say, I have seen the Minister for Railways sitting there and listening to abuse after abuse, and getting up finally and saying, in effect - "Well, gentlemen, I cannot do it; it has been done by the commissioner. I have no say, no power. I can do nothing at all. You may suspend the commissioner if you like." No one of course will take that responsibility. The more I have watched it the more I have found that the greater finger the people as a whole get on the Government, the more certain people try to shift powers away from Parliament ; the more . grip that the people as a whole get on the making of Parliament and the character of its members, the more tendency there is in reactionary quarters to try and take away from Parliament the powers which ought to be in it.

Mr McCay

- The honorable and learned member does not mean that I am a reactionary ? I have been called many things in my time, but never that.

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Mr HIGGINS

- I think my honorable and learned friend will recollect that I have not him always in my mind when I am speaking of these things. It is a difficult problem, but I am quite sure that it is not got rid of by shunting responsibility on to an irresponsible person. I think the experience in Victoria, as it must be in New South Wales, and also, I gather, in Tasmania, is that we do not prevent abuses by putting the responsibility on a man who cannot be touched by Parliament. There are just as many abuses. I have seen a good deal of the railway men and of the public servants, and I know that there are quite as many complaints when we have an irresponsible head appointed for seven years or thereabouts, who is left to do everything at his own sweet will.

Mr O'Malley

- H - He is bossed in the clubs.

Mr HIGGINS

- The more I turn this matter over in my mind the more I think that the Government have, if not hit on a final solution, hit on an experiment, which I think is well worth trying, in the system they have adopted. That experiment, I understand, is this - to give no initiative in these matters to the Governor-General in Council. That is a protection against political pressure - and then to give no finality to anybody except the people's representatives. The idea is that the initiative ought to come from the commissioner and his officers, and then of course he will lean on his officers, the inspectors, and others. After he has spoken, let the responsibility for every act fall on the Ministers. Let the Ministers feel that they cannot get rid of their responsibility to the country by saying that it 'is all done by some one over whom we have no control.

Mr Deakin

- They must throw the reins on the horse's neck.

Mr HIGGINS

-Quite so. Although the honorable member for Corinella has proposed an amendment in regard to the system of appointments, and although the discussion might be limited to that amendment, I might say, in order to save time hereafter, that when it comes to a question of promotions, transfers from department to department, and all those dangerous powers, the same principle might be carried out as is carried out in regard to appointments. That system is to leave the initiative with some person not the Governor-General in Council, and to leave the final sanction and responsibility of every act with the Governor-General in Council. I hope, therefore, that this particular amendment will not be carried, although I feel that it has given us a very able and useful contribution to the debate.

Mr EWING

- No person could have listened to the debate without feeling that opinions, however well seasoned, are liable to a considerable amount of readjustment. No one, for instance, could have heard the thoughtful speech of the honorable member who has just resumed his seat without feeling that there is a great deal in the suggestions he has made. The honorable member for Corinella, who moved the amendment well and creditably, does not, I think, endeavour to create the state of things which the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne has described. For instance, the honorable and learned member talks of the commissioner being made an absolute autocrat if he be given the right of appointment. That is not exactly a true representation, and it rather spoils the fairness of the honorable and learned member's speech. It would appear from the speech of the honorable member for Corinella that the public service of Victoria has pretty well the same rights as are provided for in this Bill, but the Parliament of Victoria has failed to give justice or satisfaction to the public service. Then, again, we learn that the Public Service Commissioners, with their very full powers, have failed also to give satisfaction to the public service. But honorable members know that we will never give satisfaction to all the public servants until we allow them to appoint themselves and decide their own salaries. We desire to be fair, and the question before us is whether the commissioner shall have the power to appoint. My opinion, though it is subject to re-adjustment, is that the commissioner ought to have the power of appointment. Although I think he ought not to be an absolute autocrat, he ought to be given power to appoint. Some means ought to be found of controlling him, and those means could be found possibly in a board of inquiry, the appointment of which would remain in the hands of the Executive in case of any suspicion of wrong-doing. I do not think that the Parliament or the people would stand an autocrat. Could the commissioner not be given the right to appoint, and the Executive have power to inquire as to the fitness of the appointments?

Mr Deakin

- The power cannot be taken away from the "Executive - no statute is needed to create the power.

Mr EWING

- The commissioner should know that his work will be subject to inquiry if necessary.

Mr Deakin

- It is subject to inquiry now.

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Mr EWING

- The commissioner cannot now appoint a man, and the whole question is whether, under any circumstances, the commissioner should have the right to appoint. I would give him the right to appoint, but would find a method of affording reasonable protection even against the commissioner, whom we cannot expect to be perfect.

Mr Higgins

- That is all we want.

Mr Deakin

- That is all we have got.

Mr EWING

- The Minister in charge of the Bill knows that we have only one end in view, and that is not, under any circumstances, to permit any parliamentary control or parliamentary patronage. Every one of us knows what parliamentary patronage means - the cruelty it involves to individual members and the rottenness it causes in the State. We must endeavour, if we possibly can, to avoid even the appearance of political patronage, which comes always pretty close to political corruption.

Mr ISAACS

- The honorable member for Corinella has placed this question before the committee in a very proper and distinct manner, but I think it has been pretty well demonstrated that we are not going to surrender the right of executive responsibilities. Reverting to the speech of the Attorney-General last night, I must say that the only reason why I was not satisfied with it was that it did not proceed to deal in the same fashion with the other aspects of the Bill. I was perfectly satisfied with the way in which the honorable gentleman put his case as to the parts of the Bill which he treated of, but I was waiting and anxious to hear him deal in the same lucid and convincing manner with other portions of the Bill. But this particular branch of the subject - the right of the Executive to take part in appointments, and also in transfers and promotions, which are the necessary corollaries - I think he put beyond any doubt. I am able to speak from various

stand-points, not only as a citizen and as an old member of the public service, but as one with some experience 'in administration. I desire to say very shortly than when the matter is properly considered, there is no doubt whatever that there must be for the efficient working of the public service three distinct safeguards - a permanent head, the commissioner or somebody in his position, and finally the Executive sanction. First of all the permanent head must express the wants of his particular department. Then the commissioner has to express his views for the benefit of the public service without regard to political considerations, and then there must be the connecting link between the service and the general public, namely the Executive, to finally come in and pronounce judgment. I did not understand the Attorney-General to say last night that the Executive, or the Governor - General as representing the Executive, was to be in all cases or even as a rule to engage in a mere perfunctory exercise of power. I did not understand the honorable gentleman to say, that usually, as a matter of course, the Governor-General would adopt the recommendation or nomination of the commissioner. The responsibility of the Executive is a real and very serious one, and no commissioner, however earnest he may be, is free from a tendency to slip into grooviness, and to lose touch with public requirements, and new notions. To say, as the honorable member for Corinella said, that if we are going to let the Governor-General deal with this matter of appointment it is virtually handing it over to Parliament, and that Parliament is unable to do it, is going too far. I think the analogy fails, We might as well say that no department should be administered by a Minister, seeing that Parliament has the oversight of that Minister, on the ground that Parliament cannot administer a department. .

Mr McCay

- I was detailing the list of the cases in which reports are specially presented to Parliament.

Mr ISAACS

- We will not be able to avoid that if we have a commissioner appointed. We cannot exclude from Parliament cases which individual members like to bring forward as a last appeal for justice. When we take into consideration the whole matter, I think we must agree that to exclude the Executive would be a fatal mistake. We have examined the various systems. We have Canada on the one hand, where there is an absolute executive system. There, the Governor-General in Council appoints, transfers, promotes, and dismisses, practically without the intervention of a commissioner or any other official.

Mr.O'Malley. - Hear, hear, and it works well.

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Mr ISAACS

- I am not prepared to say anything about that. On the other hand in New South Wales we get the other extreme. There is a public service managed practically by a board without any controlling power by the Executive. That as we have heard has given rise to an enormous amount of dissatisfaction. We have actually heard from the honorable member for Parkes, that notwithstanding the almost complete severance of the Board from the Executive we had the extraordinary spectacle of the commissioner being sent for by the Premier of that State and practically commanded to cut down the salaries of the service by about £200,000 a year. Is that any safeguard 1 None whatever. In Victoria we have the combined system - the system of the permanent head first of all accepted to express the wants and requirements of the particular department of which he has charge. Those wants are placed before the Public Service Board which makes its recommendation with a view to the efficient discharge of the duties required and the claims of the various officers within the service. Then the Ministerial head comes in. He is above all others, and his function is to see that justice is done not only to the service but to the public outside. That system is, it seems to me, the best that can be devised. I hope it will be adopted, and I think the only thing we can do is to make the system as perfect as we possibly can.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 -

For the purposes of this Act the Governor-General may from time to time appoint Some fit and proper person to be Public Service Commissioner and not exceeding six fit and proper persons to be inspectors. Such commissioner shall submit for the consideration of the Governor-General reports as to any matters requiring to be dealt with by the Governor-General under this Act ; such commissioner shall have the

powers, duties, and authorities in this Act vested in or imposed on the commissioner, or as may be prescribed, and shall, in addition, perform such other duties as may from time to time be imposed upon him by the Governor-General ; and each inspector shall exercise during the pleasure of the commissioner such powers, duties, and authorities under this Act of the commissioner or inspectors as the commissioner thinks fit to assign to such inspector.

The commissioner and inspectors shall each be appointed for a term of seven years, and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

If any officer of the Commonwealth is appointed commissioner or inspector his service as commissioner or inspector shall for the purpose of determining all his existing and accruing rights be counted as public service in the Commonwealth, and if any officer in the public service of a State is appointed a commissioner or inspector he shall have the same rights as if he had been an officer of a department transferred to the Commonwealth, and were retained in the service of the Commonwealth.

In the case of the illness, absence, or suspension of the commissioner or any inspector the Governor-General may appoint some other person to act as the deputy of such commissioner or inspector during such illness, absence, or suspension and no longer ; and such person shall, during the time for which he acts as such deputy, have all the powers and perform all the duties of such commissioner or inspector.

No action or suit shall be brought or maintained against any person who is or shall have been a commissioner or inspector- for any nonfeasance or misfeasance in connexion with his duties nor shall any action or suit lie nor any costs be payable in respect of any proceeding before the commissioner or inspector.

Out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Commonwealth there shall be payable to the commissioner a salary at the rate of pounds per annum and to each inspector a salary at the rate of pounds per annum ; and the Consolidated Revenue Fund is to the necessary extent hereby appropriated accordingly.

The commissioner in addition to his duties as commissioner may also at any time exercise and perform all or any of the powers, duties, and authorities by this Act imposed on inspectors.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I think that as we are at this point coming to the crux of the Bill we might adjourn.

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Mr DEAKIN

- I had no notice of any amendments in the earlier part of this clause, but there are certain verbal amendments which I intend to propose. They will not alter the sense, but I think they will make the first sub-clause more precise. In that sub-clause, line 5, I propose to omit the word "such," to insert the word "the," and to make a number of other verbal amendments. Sub-clause (1), in the form which I suggest by way of improvement, will read as follows : -

For the purposes of this Act the Governor-General may from time to time appoint some fit and proper person to be public service commissioner, and not exceeding six fit and proper persons to be inspectors. The commissioner shall submit for the consideration of the Governor-General reports as to any matters requiring to be dealt with by the Governor-General. The commissioner shall have the powers, duties, and authorities vested in or imposed on him or as may be prescribed, and shall in addition perform such other duties as may from time to time be imposed upon him by the Governor-General. Each inspector shall exercise during the pleasure of the commissioner such powers, duties, and authorities of the commissioner or inspectors as the commissioner thinks fit to assign to him.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN.- Might I suggest to my honorable and learned friend that, as he has some amendments to move in this clause, that we might have them printed by Tuesday next? There may be other amendments, and the Attorney-General may be able to meet the general wishes of all by some sort of moderate compromise that I know he is such a master of at all times.

Mr DEAKIN

- I shall have no objection to take that course, but perhaps it would be just as well to make these purely verbal amendments, which simply improve the clause.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The point is that we are now really coming to the provisions relating to the commissioner, and I think, therefore, that it is time to say "pause," so that we may consider this measure.

Mr DEAKIN

- Of course I cannot press it, though I would have liked to have made a few verbal amendments with a view to simplifying this clause. In order not to keep the House waiting, the Bill was published without final verbal revision. I will undertake to have printed and circulated all the amendments that alter the Bill more than verbally. I may mention that I have specially made a provision for officers of the general division being able to enter the clerical division on passing examination. I have taken the regulations of New South Wales, which will be very useful in that regard. I intend also making a proposition which, I hope, will be acceptable to those who suggested that automatic increases should be given till a living wage is reached. I have an alternative proposal which will enable men to obtain a living wage on proof of their qualifications. With reference to the appeal board, I have a proposal to permit a member to be chosen from the particular division of the service in which the person against whom the charge is made is employed, and a number of other amendments which are more or less important in regard to the working of the measure.

Mr Conroy

- Do I understand that the honorable the Attorney-General intends to amend clause 35 so as to provide for officers of the general division being transferred to the clerical division ?

Mr DEAKIN

- Yes. I hope that we shall make this Bill the main business for consideration on Tuesday, although there may possibly be some time devoted to the introduction and explanation of another Bill in order that members may have the measure in their hands and prepare themselves for its discussion on the following day. One honorable member made a suggestion with regard to the return of superannuation allowances, but I have not been able to go as far as he would desire. In the case of officers who have been recalled to the service we may fairly ask them to refund their compensation, but we cannot ask them to repay their pensions, which have been providing them with the means of subsistence after they have left the service. Sir Edward Braddon said something with reference to superannuation allowances, and I would like him to refresh my memory on the subject.

Sir Edward Braddon

- My desire was to have the whole of the superannuation funds conducted on the one system, and not to make one lot of men insure their lives whilst providing for others under an entirely different arrangement.

Mr DEAKIN

- I regret to say that have not been able to alter that, and the right honorable gentleman will have to use some further argument to show me that such an alteration is advisable. The advantages of the insurance system are much greater than those attaching to the alternative system of superannuation, which was only designed as a safety-valve to prevent hardship.

Sir Edward Braddon

- Would it not be a desirable thing in the interest of the public service ?

Mr DEAKIN

- At present I am under the impression that it would not. Of course I am open to conviction, but think that the honorable member will realize that there is great difficulty surrounding the question.

Mr THOMSON

- I would like to know if the Attorney-General will be able to give us the information he promised as to the rates of insurance.

Mr DEAKIN

- Yes, before we finally deal with that part of the Bill.

Mr Crouch

- Are the Government going to provide for the transfer of members of the defence forces to the public service ?

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Mr DEAKIN

- The Government are not able to accept the precise proposal which was recently made in that direction, and which has been most adversely criticised in this State.

ADJOURNMENT

Friday Sittings : Bills Affecting State Rights

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I understand that a Bill in which J. was interested has been dealt with in another place, but that a certain intimation that we are expecting will not reach us until to-morrow. I notice that there is very little business on the paper for to-morrow, and I understand practically only one motion that will provoke any debate, and that a very short one, so that I am not asking the House to depart from the usual meeting hour to-morrow. In answer to what the honorable member for Wentworth said, if I see any sign of congestion in the business paper for Fridays I shall adopt his suggestion, which was in the mind also of the Government, and alter the sessional order so as to meet in the morning on Friday, but that necessity has not arisen yet. I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr ISAACS

- I wish to draw the attention of the Prime Minister to one matter which may be of some importance. Amongst the Bills which are distributed there are, and probably in the future to a still greater extent there will be found, provisions affecting the States in various ways, in connexion with the railways and other matters. I would ask the Government if they would take care to send in every such case an intimation to the various State Governments of the proposals in that regard. I have had my attention drawn to the fact that important proposals were made, and that it was some time after the authorities in another State had received an intimation of them that they reached the Victorian Railway department. I would ask the Government if they would kindly see that the States do get timely intimation of any proposals, and also that all the States get the intimation at the same time.

Mr BARTON

- I understand that a Bill which was in draft and not ready for submission to the House, was sent in its rough state to certain gentlemen of experience in a particular direction for the purpose of seeing whether they had any suggestions to make. That was an intimation to the State authorities in respect of the Bill. If there was any difference, if in another State any intimation of that kind was received before a similar intimation was received in Victoria, that was entirely on inadvertence, and I shall take care that the practice is made as equitable as possible.

Mr HUME COOK

- As I have the first business on the paper for to-morrow, I desire to intimate that it is not my intention to go on with it. The fact is that I have asked for certain information from the Government which they have not been able to give me, and they in turn want to get information from other States. I propose when the motion is called on to-morrow to ask that it be taken on the 16th August. That will leave the motion as to old-age pensions at the head of the list. I make this intimation so that honorable members may not be without knowledge as to what business is coming on.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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22:30:00

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.