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1901-07-31

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker

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

PETITIONS

Mr. CLARKE

presented a petition signed by 100,371. electors of the State of New South Wales, comprising ministers of religion, Ministers of the Crown, ex-ministers of the Crown, members of both branches of the Legislature, members of the municipal bodies, of the various professions, and" of all classes of the community, praying that clauses 54 and 55 of the Post and Telegraph Bill may not be passed into law.

Petition received and read.

Mr. CLARKE

presented a similar petition from 386 electors of New South Wales.

Sir JOHN

QUICK presented a petition from the National. Christian Citizens' League, praying that clause 54 of the Post and Telegraph Bill may be passed into law.

Mr. PIESSE

presented a petition from the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Tasmania, praying the House to consider the claims of the children of the State to protection against legalized gambling.

Sir WILLI

AM McMILLAN presented a petition from the shipping firms of Sydney against the shipping clauses of the Interstate Commission Bill.

Petitions received.

QUESTION

LIGHT-HOUSE AT WEST POINT

Mr O'MALLEY

- In view of the importance of the passenger traffic between Cape Schanck and Tasmania, will the Prime Minister have a light-house erected at West Point, where the Australia was lost?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- The Constitution Act provides for the taking over of the control of light-houses, light-ships, beacons, and buoys by the Commonwealth, upon proclamation being made ; but it is not thought that the time has yet arrived when that can be conveniently done. In the meanwhile, I think that an application such as the honorable member has made should be made to the authorities of the States concerned.

Mr O'Malley

- They are too slow.

INTER-STATE COMMISSION BILL

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Do the Government intend to go on with the Interstate Commission Bill this session ? If it were shelved for the present - and I think that would be a very good thing to do with it- a great deal of agitation which is going on now would be allayed. If the Bill is not to be shelved, perhaps the right honorable gentleman will make a definite declaration as to when it is likely to be dealt with.

Mr. POYNTON.- Before the Minister replies, I. wish to remind him that, while it may suit the people of Victoria and. New South Wales to have this measure hung up, there are other States who are as much, if not more, interested in the matter with which it deals, and who wish the Bill to be dealt with and a settlement come to at an early date.

Mr BARTON

- There is no intention on the part of the Government to abandon the Bill, or to defer its consideration until another session. The Bill will be proceeded with this session. Its consideration has been delayed largely because of the absence simultaneously of the chief law adviser of the Government, and of the Minister of Home Affairs, who is in charge of it : but, as soon as possible after they are both again in their places, the second reading debate will be proceeded with.

ADJOURNMENT

tenders for bicycles.

Mr MAUGER

- I wish to intimate that I desire to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., " the supply of bicycles to the Postal department."

Joseph Cook. - This is a put-up job. '

Mr MAUGER

- I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the interjection that this is a put-up job. This is no put-up job, so far as I am concerned, and I think that the interjection is unruly.

Mr SPEAKER

- The interjection of the honorable member for Parramatta was disorderly, and I ask him to withdraw it.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- If you rule, sir, that the interjection was disorderly, of course I withdraw it; but I am under the impression that it was not disorderly.

Five honorable members having risen in their places,

Question proposed.

Mr MAUGER

- There are many reasons why this matter should be discussed at this early stage.- Honorable members will remember that ' this House almost unanimously decided that in all public tenders provision should be made where practicable - and I know nothing to prevent it being made, in this tender - for fixing a minimum rate of wage. Nothing of the kind has been done in a tender, or in any of the specifications pertaining to it, for the supply of bicycles to the Post-office. The whole system which is being adopted here is decidedly objectionable. The bicycles are to be hired, and the time at which the tenders close is as early as next Saturday. Now, the State of Victoria has been paying as high as £9 per bicycle per annum for hire. New South Wales, on the other hand, has been purchasing bicycles right out for about £14 per bicycle : and I am told that South Australia also purchases the bicycles right out, and effects the repairs in her own workshops. I have yet to learn why the Government should not make these bicycles in their own workshops- in the instrument room at the Post-office. At any rate, if they cannot make them, they can insist that the bicycles should be made in Australia, and that the repairing shall be done in their own workshops. I think we ought to inaugurate our Commonwealth by laying it down as a principle, irrespective of the fiscal issue altogether, that where articles can be manufactured in Australia our workmen should have the preference. The Metropolitan Board of Works in Melbourne at present hire for its officers, under proper specifications, at the rate of £5 per bicycle, bicycles made in the State, so that the State-made articles are a great deal cheaper, and quite as good as those imported ; and, while satisfying the Board of Works, they give our people work.

Mr Conroy

- Are they cheaper on account of the duty ?

Mr MAUGER

- There is no duty on bicycle parts.

Mr Barton

- Where are they made ?

Mr MAUGER

- They are made at Lincoln, Stuart, and Co.'s, I believe; but, at any rate, they are made in Victoria.

Replying to the interjection of the honorable and learned member for Werriwa, I may tell him that there is only a 10 per cent, duty on bicycles, so that my honorable friend is allowing his zeal to get the better of his discretion.

Mr CONROY

- I beg the honorable member's pardon ; he is quite correct.

Mr MAUGER

- If the Metropolitan Board of Works can make such an advantageous arrangement, and give our colonial workmen the preference, why should not the Commonwealth Government do the same thing ? This is a matter upon which I feel very strongly, because I think that we ought to insist, as far as possible, that our

work shall be kept in Australia, and that it shall be performed under proper conditions, and that every contract shall provide for a minimum rate of wage and proper labour conditions. If possible, the Government should do their own work in connexion with the manufacture of bicycles and instruments for the Post-office. I do not desire to detain the House any longer than necessary, but I do hope that the Government will consider this matter, and at the outset declare a definite policy in regard to it.

Mr WATSON

- It does seem to be peculiar that the Postal department should propose to proceed in the way described with regard to the arrangement for bicycles, because under the alterations made some time ago in each of the States, and I think more, particularly in Victoria, bicycles are coming into demand to a very large extent for the collection of mails from the various postal pillars and other receptacles throughout the metropolitan area, and to think that the Victorian authorities should pay £9 per annum for the hire of each bicycle is extremely humorous to my mind.

Mr Watkins

- It is very serious, although perhaps it has its humorous side.

Mr WATSON

- I will guarantee absolutely that if the Government were to undertake the making of these bicycles in their own workshops - I admit from imported parts - they could turn out good bicycles at the rate of £10 each.

Mr Mauger

- The fire-brigade make their own.

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Mr WATSON

- I will guarantee that the Government could make the bicycles right out for the sum I have mentioned. Probably the tires would require renewing in about eighteen months' time, but the cost of renewals -and repairs would be a comparatively small matter, and out of all proportion, as far as cheapness is concerned, to the cost of hiring such as has been mentioned here to-day. In any case, however, I think the Minister in charge of the Post office should take steps to insure beyond all doubt that the bicycles required for his department are obtained in the cheapest possible way, consistent ; of course -with the payment of . fair rates to those employed, and also with the assurance that there is no doubt about the quality of . the machine, because I do not . think that there is anything more dangerous than to have a bicycle which cannot be relied on in cases of side slipping or other . peculiar circumstances. I trust that the matter will be considered by the Cabinet, with a view to their at least following the practice adopted in the other States if they cannot go to the full extent of initiating a factory for the building of Government bicycles. In New South Wales, although they do not use as many bicycles as in Victoria, they bought the machines right out, and fitted up their own repairing shops, in which they are enabled to keep their bicycles in repair at a comparatively small cost each year. In South Australia, I am informed, the same practice is followed, and the Victorian system does seem at least a most unbusinesslike proceeding.

Mr.BATCHELOR. (South Australia).I am glad that the honorable member for Melbourne Ports has brought this matter up, because, had he not done so, it was my intention to speak about it on the motion for the adjournment of the House. I brought this matter under the notice of the Postmaster-General some few weeks ago, and I was anxious to hear what his intentions were, as I had heard that what has now occurred was likely to happen. I was somewhat surprised to find that the Postal department had decided to call for tenders in such a very vague way without specifications, or without having any clause inserted in the contract that a minimum wage should be paid - in fact, without any details whatever. I was equally surprised at the proposal to call for the supply of bicycles throughout the whole of the Commonwealth. That means that only one company can possibly put in a tender, because there is only one company in all Australia which does business in all the States, and therefore there could be no competition. There are a number of reasons, some of which have been already urged,, why either there should be one Government workshop in which these bicycles could be made, or why they should be made by the Governments in the various States. It does not matter much which course is followed, but probably the cheaper plan would be to let each State make the bicycles necessary to meet its own requirements. There are enough bicycles in . use by the Commonwealth Postal . department 'to necessitate the

employment of a sufficient number of hands to make the tiling a success, and the conditions in this respect would improve as time went on, because more bicycles are being used every year. The method that has been adopted of calling for tenders for the hire of bicycles is particularly objectionable. We learn that it costs some , £9 per year for the hiring and repairing of each bicycle in Victoria, and in the State of Queensland I believe it costs as much as £14 per year for the hire of a bicycle. In New South Wales they have bought their bicycles right out for , £14 each, and in South Australia we payprecisely' the same amount for an entirely local machine : and I may mention that although we have a 25 per cent. duty, the price paid is just the same as in freetrade New South Wales.

Mr Conroy

- For the same class of bicycle?

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Mr BATCHELOR

- The honorable and learned member for Werriwa would probably at once jump at the conclusion that the South Australian bicycles are not equal to those in New South Wales : but I think the honorable and learned member would find that they are quite equal to the imported articles, and that they give the Postal authorities every satisfaction. I am quite sure that the Postal authorities in South Australia would not throw up the local machine for any imported machine in existence, because the bicycles they have in use suit their conditions better. So far as the repairing of bicycles is concerned, it will be very much cheaper for the department to do the work instead of hiring it out. In South Australia the cost has been very small, although there area sufficient number of men employed to keep the bicycles continually in repair. The advantage of having their own workshops is that every time a machine comes in and requires the least bit of attention it is at once put in good order on the spot. On the other hand, if the repairing work is hired out, a machine is never sent into the workshop until it has some serious fault, and the damage done by using the machine when it is not in perfect order causes it to go completely out of use all' the sooner. The working parts of a machine will last perhaps five or six years, and the Victorian method of hiring machines brings the price of a bicycle up to close upon £50, as compared with the £14 paid in New South Wales and South Australia. If it can be shown that the bicycles can be made more economically within the States by the department, I hope the Government will arrange for that being done, and that they will not hesitate to build the bicycles themselves, or certainly have them made within the States if they can. I do not believe in having them made within the States at any price, but at the same time I believe as, no doubt, every free-trader believes, that, other things being equal or nearly equal, the preference should be given to the local workmen and manufacturers. There is no advantage to Australia in having bicycles made in Canada, but there is a great advantage in having them made in our own States, and that could best be done in Government workshops.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I do not intend to refer to an interjection that was made by an honorable member for any purposes of discussing a question of order.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Prime Minister has no right to.

Mr BARTON

- I only desire to say this, that the honorable member for Parramatta cannot be be aware of this fact, that I was so little aware of any intention on the part of the honorable member who moved the adjournment, to take that course, that I have not had an opportunity of obtaining information from the Postmaster-General on the subject that has been referred to. I wrote to the Postmaster-General, but I found that he was engaged in moving the second reading of a Bill in another place, so that it was impossible for him to give me any help in replying to the honorable member for Melbourne Ports. The House certainly should understand how entirely incorrect it is to suppose that there has been any attempt on the part of the Government to connect itself with something - I do not know what - that has been described as a " put-up job." In answer to the honorable member who has moved this motion, I may say that there is very great interest and importance attached to the statements he has made, if they are borne out on investigation.

The question whether the

Government will construct its own bicycles is, to a great extent, a question of policy, and involves very

much larger issues of policy, upon which it would be necessary to consult the Cabinet before any determination is come to on such a point. But if there are opportunities for the Government, whether by constructing the bicycles themselves, or giving the work to local manufacturers, to get their bicycles cheaper than at present, there is no man, whatever his fiscal opinion may be, who would not agree with that being done, because the free-trader who prefers to buy in the cheapest market, and the protectionist who prefers to buy in his own, will be at one on that point. I can go no further than I have stated, but it must be fully understood that local industry bears a different meaning from that which it bore before the 1st of January. Local industry does not mean New South Wales, Victorian, or South Australian industry, but it means industry which has its home in the Commonwealth, and therefore anything that the Government might do on a subject of this kind would have to be based on a spirit of fair play, with equal opportunities to those who conduct these industries in whatever State they may be situated.

Mr McDONALD

- I think the remarks of the Prime Minister go to show that it would be wise for members who intend to move the adjournment of the House to give the Minister notice of their intention. I think that in a case like this - where an important matter is to be submitted for consideration - notice should be given. Otherwise we shall get no information from the Minister. Of course, nobody can blame him for not having it.

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Mr Batchelor

- I brought the question up three weeks ago.

Mr. McDONALD. - But I do not think that the Postmaster-General thought this matter would be brought before the House to-day. We naturally expect, when the adjournment of the House is moved, that we are going to get some information in exchange for the trouble to which the House is put. But if we do not give the Minister in charge of the particular department interested, or the Government, an opportunity of gaining the required information, what is the use of moving the adjournment? Unless notice has been given it is not a wise thing to move the adjournment at all. The wisest course to follow would be to give the Government notice. Then, if the Minister, who is chiefly concerned, comes down and is not able to give the House the information desired, he will have to be responsible for his negligence.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This motion was made up in a hurry.

Mr MCDONALD

- I am sorry for that, because I understand that another motion of very much greater importance was likely to be submitted, and my remarks are equally applicable to the motion which it was intended to move.

Mr Barton

- I suppose that I should have received as little notice in the one case as in the other 1

Mr McDONALD

- My remarks apply equally to every honorable member who moves the adjournment of the House. Occasionally I have moved similar motions in the State Parliament of Queensland, but I have always taken the precaution of sending a letter to the Minister in charge of the department interested, notifying him of my intentions. Then he had a right to come down fully prepared to meet any statement which I might make. Regarding this question of the hire of bicycles, I certainly think that there could be a great improvement made upon the system adopted by the various States. I hope that before any contract is entered into for the hiring or repairing of bicycles the fullest inquiry will be made. I have had some little experience of the bicycle. I suppose that there are very few men who do more rough riding upon bicycles than I do over the western part of Queensland. I know that the amount paid in Queensland for the hire of these machines is out of all proportion to their cost. The idea of asking £9 a year to keep them in repair is simple robbery. There is no other name that can be given to it. I have ridden a bicycle as much as 15,000 miles, and during the whole of that time it cost me only about £5 for repairs, and that outlay was principally for tyres. Surely upon the good roads to be found around the cities, cycling firms ought to be able to keep bicycles in repair for much less than £9 a year. I am pleased that the Government intend taking into consideration the remarks of the mover of this motion, and that before any contract is entered into the fullest possible consideration will be given to the whole subject.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I think this is an opportune time to say that it is a great pity the Government have not their own

supporters better in hand, because much of the delay which has been caused during this session has come from honorable members on the other side of the House. As far as this particular question is concerned, it could have been equally answered by having a series of questions put to the Minister in charge of the department, which questions could have been categorically replied to without any of this waste of time.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I certainly think that it is treating the Government . with very scant courtesy to move a motion af this kind without first having intimated to the Prime Minister or the Minister in charge of the Postal department that it was intended to submit it. Not only is it treating the Government unfairly, but it is practically wasting the time of' the House, because honorable members who desire the best information on the matter are left in just the same position that they occupied before the discussion took place. It may be that the honorable member who moved the adjournment has a very good case, and is taking up a matter which requires urgent attention. But at least it is due to the Government that they should be afforded an opportunity of stating the whole facts of &It; the case to the House. I am inclined to think, on the brief statement of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, that the matter is one of considerable importance, and that if the facts were before us we should probably come to the conclusion that the Government could economically attend to their own repairs in such a large department as the Post-office, and perhaps could enter profitably upon the manufacture of the bicycles required for their own servants. I do not see that there is likely to be any difficulty in a matter of this kind, and I accept the assurance of the Prime Minister that he will give it very close consideration. If it is really found that this work can be conducted with economy to the State and with advantage to the service, .1 understand that he will seriously consider whether the Common.wealth cannot undertake the manufacture of their own machines. But I rose chiefly to point out - not with any view of finding fault with the mover of the motion for adjournment, but in fairness to the Government and the House - how undesirable it is to project discussions upon the House without having first given Ministers due notice of what is intended to be done. In such circumstances the Minister himself is not able to speak to the House and, the country -with the same authority and. information as he would be able to do if he received something like reasonable notice. In the present instance we can only accept the Prime Minister's statement that the matter will receive his serious consideration. I am inclined to think that upon investigation it will be found that the honorable member who moved this motion has made out a case; although he said very little in support of it.

Mr Mauger

- So as not to waste time.

Mr.F. E. Mclean. - Exactly. I believe it will be found to the advantage of the Commonwealth to repair; if not to manufacture, these bicycles with their own labour.

Mr. CONROY

(Werriwa). - I think that the debate so far as it has proceeded is chiefly remarkable for two admissions. The first was made by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, and the second by the honorable member for South Australia,

Mr Batchelor.

A short time ago the honorable member for Melbourne Ports was good enough to tell us that the difference in the price of an article was of no account whatever, so long as the money spent upon it was still in the country. Now, however, we find him complaining that a bicycle should cost £14 in one State as against £9 in the other. On the principle that he has laid down I do not see why he should object to the price being £ 1 4 in the one case. A rental of £9 a year for five or six years would amount to £40 or £50. I hope the honorable member will carry out the principle which he has enunciated, and double the wages of his workmen. Upon his own theory the result will not matter, because the money will still be in the country. The honorable- member for South Australia,

Mr. Batchelor,

pointed out that under a Tariff of 25 per cent. prices would be lowered. I do trust that as the imposition of duty will make the prices of articles lower, the' honorable member will not vote ' for any principle which will compel' the manufacturers of Australia to accept a far lower price than they have hitherto had to accept. If the imposition of a duty lowers the price of bicycles, so also will it lower the price of other articles. I hope

that the honorable member will carry out the principle which he has enunciated. There is another point upon which the Prime Minister might give the House some information. He might tell honorable members whether allowances come under the heading, of bicycles, and whether, when an officer is allowed £2, 2s. a week - : -

Mr SPEAKER

- Order. The honorable member is travelling beyond the subject.

Mr CONROY

- The price of bicycles is extremely high,, and, therefore, if a man wanted to hire half-a-dozen or more, I suppose it might be found quite necessary for him to receive an allowance - a large allowance, which is not given to Members of Parliament. Possibly the Government may be able at another time to explain that there will be a very large allowance- needed for officers who ride bicycles. I think that this question ought not- to have been brought forward to-day. I must confess that I am rather surprised that the honorable member for Melbourne Ports should have- introduced this matter to the notice of the House. It may have been a nice strategic move, and possibly the honorable member has prevented the House from discussing some other matter. Possibly that is the reason why he has taken this action. I notice that the Minister for Customs does not quite agree with it. I would ask the Minister for Customs whether he is quite sure that no notice of the motion for adjournment was given?

Mr Kingston

- I knew that the motion was going to be moved a couple of' minutes before it was submitted, and I asked that it should not be so moved.

Question- resolved in the negative;

SELECT COMMITTEE ON COINAGE

Mr SPEAKER

- I have to inform the House that I have received the following message from the Senate : -

The Senate acquaints the House of Representatives that leave has been granted to Senator J. T. Walker to give evidence before the select committee of the House of Representatives on coinage if he thinks fit.

EXCISE ON BEER BILL

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InCommittee:

Resolved

(on motion by

Mr. Kingston)

-

That it is expedient that an appropriation of revenue be made for the purpose of a Bill relating to excise on beer.

Resolution reported.

CUSTOMS BILL

Consideration resumed (from 30 July, videpage 3170).

Mr ISAACS

.- I do not know whether this is the right time to bring the matter forward, but the Minister for Trades and Customs, during the discussion in committee, said- that he would give me an opportunity later on of movingtheinsertionof anew sub-clause to clause 49. Is this the proper stage at which to submit, the sub-clause?

Mr KINGSTON

- I did give the promise, and if the honorable and learned member so desires I will assist him to deal with the matter now.

Resolved

(motion by

Mr. Kingston)

-

That the Bill be recommitted for the further consideration of clause49.

In Committee

(recommittal) :

Clause 49 (Prohibited imports)..

Mr. ISAACS

(Indi).- I move-

That the following new sub-clause be added : - ' Infected cattle, sheep, or other animals, and hides, skins, horns, hoofs, or any other part of cattle or other animals, the importation of which may introduce any infectious or contagious distemper or disease."

The effect of that amendment, which I suggested when the Bill was originally in committee, would be to make such imports absolutely prohibited, and place it beyond the power of any Minister to permit the introduction, either by accident or otherwise, of any cattle which were actually infected with disease, or any parts of those cattle which might introduce any infectious or contagious distemper or disease. At the time the Minister asked me to withdraw my amendment in order that it might be considered, he promised to give me another opportunity to -bring it forward, and this -he has been good enough to give me now. I say again that I know of nothing more important than this which ought to be put into the list of prohibited imports. We have absolutely prohibited works which infringe copyright, manufactures by prison labour, exhausted tea, oleomargarine, butterine, and so on.. But surely there is no comparison in regard to the importance of the matter to the pastoral and farming interests of Australia between the tilings which I. have mentioned or most of them, and those which I now desire to add . to the list of prohibited imports. Under the Victorian Customs Act there is an absolute prohibition of such imports.

Mr Kingston

- Not quite.

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Mr ISAACS

- Some articles are left to the discretion of the Governor in Council, but infected cattle or sheep, or any other animals, or portions of them are absolutely prohibited. I want to see that by no possible chance will that protection be taken away. I am not quite sure whether the Minister is opposed to the suggestion that the goods I have mentioned shall be prohibited, but I do not see any ground, on which he ought to be opposed to it. There- are provisions in the 'Victorian Act which remain, or may remain, giving power under certain limited circumstances to prohibit these imports. But that power is not so full as this - not so complete or so strong - being a certain limited authority in certain limited cases. I do not want any possible protection to be taken away, and I ask the Minister not to oppose the introduction of this new sub-clause. No possible harm could be done by its introduction, and a great deal of good might be done by it. I want to make sure that our flocks and herds are kept free from the introduction of disease, and I cannot understand that there can be any possible objection to the proposed sub-clause.

Mr. SYDNEY

SMITH (Macquarie).The proposed sub-clause is important, but the Government ought to go further. I intend shortly to give honorable members an opportunity of discussing a matter which I regard as of great importance, not only as affecting stock, but also as affecting, fruit trees,, diseases in fruit, and so on. This is a matter of great importance to the producing interests of the country, and I think the Minister can accept the amendment proposed, which can do no harm, and may do a great deal of good. I hope, however; that at the same time the Minister will not lose sight of the important question of quarantine. I know that according to the opinion of some honorable members we have no power to deal with the quarantine laws as affecting stock. I differ with honorable members who take that view, because I think that under the Constitution we have full power to do so. The proposed amendment will deal with the matter in an incomplete way, but at the same time, as I have said, it will do no harm, and may do good until the Government have had an opportunity of dealing, with the question in the way in which its ought to be dealt with.

Mr. KINGSTON

(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - The idea of the Government is not to restrict the powers which are possessed by the proper authorities for the prevention of the introduction of disease. At the same time we are disposed to think that, if a clause of this, sort be put into the Bill, we may be laying down a rule which is not really required, and which may in some cases operate to the disadvantage of the community.

Mr Isaacs

- Why did the Government insert oleomargarine and those other things in the list of prohibited imports?

Mr KINGSTON

- I will show the reason why. ' There is no clause quite such as the honorable and learned member proposes in any of the Customs Acts.

Mr Isaacs

- Yes, there is in the Victorian Act.

Mr KINGSTON

- No ; I will put it broadly, and afterwards deal with it in detail. Such a provision as that proposed is not in the Victorian Customs Act, and is not in the Imperial Customs Act. It is not to be found, I think, in any of the Customs Acts. But what is found is a specification of certain things, the introduction of which may be prohibited, by Order in Council. The Bill differs from various other Acts to which I have referred in that in sub-clause (g) there is power given to prohibit -

All goods the importation of which . may be prohibited by proclamation.

Mr Thomson

- Does that cover cattle ?

Mr KINGSTON

- It undoubtedly covers cattle. The word " goods " is used in the largest possible sense as including all kinds of moveable personal property. I think that if there is one class of property more movable than another it is that which goes on four legs, and may be called " cattle and other animals." Here is the English provision -

Infected sheep, cattle, or other animals, of carcasses thereof, and hides, skins, horns, hoofs or any other parts of cattle or other animals which the Privy Council may by order prohibit in order to prevent the dissemination of any contagious disease or distemper.

Mr Isaacs

- The first part is absolute.

Mr KINGSTON

- I do not think it is.

Mr Isaacs

- It must be.

Mr KINGSTON

- I am inclined to think it is all governed by the exercise of the power of the Privy Council in relation to the prohibition of the importation of these particular goods. Here is the Victorian Act -

Infected cattle, sheep, or other animals, and hides, skins, horns, hoofs, or any other parts of cattle or other animals which the Governor in Council may prohibit in order to prevent the introduction of any infectious or contagious disease or distemper. .

I take the true construction of that section - I think in the whole, and I am sure in part - to be that in order to prohibit the importation of these particular goods there must be an Order in Council. As I say, the power being so limited it seems to me that we do not want the proposed new sub-clause at all, because we have under sub-clause (g) a general power to prohibit - a power which is not contained in the Acts to which I have called attention. I venture to think that so long as there is sufficient power for dealing with the matter we should not lay down a hard-and-fast rule. Under the proposed sub-clause we could not subject the cattle to quarantine, and that seems to me to be a most mischievous thing.

Mr Thomson

- There might be a temporary infection.

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Mr KINGSTON

- There might be a temporary infection, and we could not let the cattle in subject to quarantine. I go further, and call attention to the fact that in the Bill there is ample provision for the protection of State legislation in connexion with matters of this sort. We have, for instance, by clause 27 thrown the duty on the Customs officers of executing the laws relating to the inspecting or testing of imported goods. Then in clause 51 we read -

All goods lawfully prohibited to be imported into any State shall, as regards that State, be prohibited imports for the purposes of this Act.

I would point out to honorable members that here we have made sufficient provision for recognising anything a State may do in this connexion. I go further and say that these matters are much better and more effectually dealt with by general legislation as regards quarantine than by the insertion of an arbitrary sub-clause such as is proposed, and which would be incapable of relaxation. In support of that, I may mention that I have looked into the matter more particularly in reference to the law of Victoria, seeing that that is the State which the honorable and learned member has in his mind. But the Victorian legislation does not go much further than does the legislation of the other States. It absolutely sufficiently provides for all matters of this sort. I allude first to the Health Act of 1890, section 267 of which reads -

The Governor in Council may from time to time make, alter, and repeal such orders as may seem to be necessary for the purpose of prohibiting or regulating the introduction into Victoria from any country or colony, or part of a country or colony (in which respectively any disease in sheep, cattle, horses, dogs, swine, or other animals of the same or any other kind or kinds whatsoever is known to exist), and for the detention in quarantine in such place, and for such period, as the Governor in Council by such order appoints or directs of all sheep, cattle, horses, dogs, swine, or other animals of the same or any other kind or kinds whatsoever, or of meat, skins, hides, horns, hoofs, or other parts of any animals, or of hay, straw, fodder, or other articles -

It is rather amusing to observe how the clause runs on - likely to propagate amongst men or other animals any infectious or contagious disease whatsoever.

The draftsman was evidently so delighted with the classification of man amongst the inferior animals that he repeats the expression time and again.

Mr Isaacs

- Does the Minister think that that is kept alive as to cattle coming from any other State?

Mr KINGSTON

-That it can be kept alive ?

Mr Isaacs

- That the Minister in the Bill keeps alive the provision as to cattle coming from any other State.

Mr KINGSTON

- It does not interfere with the Health Act.

Mr Isaacs

- What !

Mr KINGSTON

- I most certainly do not think we are depriving any of the States of any powers they possess in connexion with the Health Acts.

Mr Piesse

- The Minister is not proposing to help the health authorities, as they are now helped by their State customs law.

Mr KINGSTON

- Yes-; I have full power to do it, and in addition to the provision in paragraph (g) of clause 49 there is the provision of clause 51 that -

All goods lawfully prohibited to be imported into any State shall, as regards that State, be prohibited imports for the purposes of this Act.

Then we have the Victorian Stock Diseases Act which provides that -

The Governor in Council may from time to time make such regulations as may be expedient for prohibiting the introduction into Victoria, either by sea or land, of any stock found to be diseased for the inspection of newly-introduced stock for the seizure and destruction of any diseased stock - and contains other similar provisions giving full power to the State Government to deal with this matter. The position I take with regard to the amendment is this : If we put in the proposed new sub-clause we fix an arbitrary fine. If it is necessary to make a proclamation, the Government have already full power to make it, and the State legislation is preserved intact. The State legislation more adequately provides for regulations in matters of this sort than we can provide for them in this Bill ; and I think, therefore, that it is better to allow the matter to be dealt with by provisions of the character to which I have already referred, and the general legislation to be found in all the States, supplemented if necessary by proclamation, than

to lay down the hard and fast line here proposed. Such a provision is not to be found in any other Customs Act, although it has, in whole or in part, attached to its enforcement the condition of a proclamation. '

Mr MANIFOLD

- I hope that the committee will not insert a clause of this kind in the Bill, because I do not think that this is the right measure for such a provision, and that the subject could be better dealt with in a Quarantine Act. If a slightly infected animal could not be quarantined, it would have to be destroyed immediately. In the past the Victorian regulations dealing with this matter have worked against the importation of stock from the other States. Supposing it happened that a disease similar to the cattle tick disease developed in New Zealand, and an animal very slightly affected with that disease arrived in Sydney or Melbourne, I understand that, under the provision of the honorable and learned member for Indi, it would have to be destroyed. The sub-clause would not allow such a beast to be sent into quarantine until it got rid of the disease. A great many animals arrive" here from the old country which may be suspected of disease, or which may have some disease in a very mild form.

Mr Thomson

- A disease of a curable nature.

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Mr MANIFOLD

- Yes. But if the proposed sub-clause were put into the Act, such animals would have to be destroyed.

Mr.A. McLEAN (Gippsland). - I do not think that the honorable and learned member for Indi intends to go quite as far as the Minister seems to apprehend. I understand that he desires to prevent the importation of imported stock which are: infected or the parts of animals which may be infected with disease. I am sure that he would not desire the destruction of stock which were found to be only slightly infected, if the disease could be got rid of by quarantining, them.

Mr Harper

- But what does the honorable and learned member's sub-clause say ?

Mr A McLEAN

- If an . alteration of the proposed sub-clause is necessary, we can amend it. This question is a very important one. I go as far as honorable, members in my desire that stock should be imported, because if we fail to import fresh blood,, we deprive ourselves of the means of improving the breed of our flocks and herds. We should not place any restriction upon the importation of healthy stock.

Mr Kingston

-Does not the honorable member think that the existing legislation is ample ?

Mr A McLEAN

- I have not looked into the question lately, but I do not think we can go too far in the way of preventing the importation of animals which are known to be diseased. I have had a great deal to do with the eradication of disease amongst stock, and I know that when disease is introduced it is a very costly, matter to get rid of it. In Victoria, it has cost tens of thousands of pounds to eradicate scab, and a very great expense has also been gone to to deal with such disease as pleuro-pneumonia, tuberculosis, and other diseases of stock. I agree, too, with the honorable member for Macquarie that we should do all we can to prevent the- introduction of fruit pests, because such pests seriously menace the interests of our orchardists and vignerons. It is difficult to realize the extent of the loss occasioned by the introduction of either animal or vegetable diseases. I suggest that the proposed new sub clause might be amended so as to make provision for quarantine in certain cases instead of total prohibition. The provision for total prohibition might be made to apply where an animal is seriously diseased, or where the disease is a very infectious one ; but where the disease is one that might be got rid of by quarantine, provision should be made for quarantining, It very often happens that stock which have passed a most careful inspection develop disease when travelling, and that what were perhaps clean stock when they started are diseased stock upon arrival at their destination.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I should like to understand the practical effect of the proposal of the: honorable and learned member for Indi. I understand that it is his: opinion that as there are a great many State laws, known or unknown, dealing with the subject of the. importation of stock, which may or may not conflict, it is necessary, now

that the Commonwealth have taken over the control of the Customs, to insert in this Bill a clause which will give the Commonwealth Government power to carry into effect the regulations of the various States.

Mr Isaacs

- The proposed new sub-clause goes further than that.

Mr Kingston

- It is a rigid provision.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I suppose the honorable and learned member would not insert a provision to deal with a subject already dealt with by a regulation having force under the operation of a State Act.

Mr. ISAACS

(Indi). - The proposed new sub-clause is intended to go further than to give power to make regulations. At the present time, according to my reading of the Victorian Act, the importation of infected sheep or cattle and other things, is prohibited, and the proposed new sub-clause provides definitely that no infected sheep or cattle, or any parts of them that may introduce disease into our flocks and herds, shall be imported on to the mainland of Australia. There is nothing to prevent the quarantining of infected animals until their recovery, when, of course, they may be allowed to land. All that is prohibited is the importation of infected animals.

Mr Manifold

- The honorable and learned member prohibits them from landing.

Mr ISAACS

- Yes, so long as they are diseased.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Would it not be better to deal with the matter by a Quarantine Act ?

Mr ISAACS

- The word " importation " is used in the Bill to denote actual landing.

Sir William McMillan

- Does the honorable and learned member desire to give the Commonwealth Custom authorities power to prevent diseased Queensland stock from landing in New South Wales?

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Mr ISAACS

- No; the subclause deals only with infected animals imported into the Commonwealth from abroad. It puts a rampart of protection round Australia from the importation of diseased foreign, cattle. There is nothing to prevent the Minister from allowing such stock to be quarantined until their recovery, -when they might be imported,

Mr E SOLOMON

- Where could they be quarantined ?

Mr ISAACS

- That is a matter for, regulation. I draw a distinction between quarantining and landing. I object to the landing of diseased animals. on the mainland of- Australia. The owners of- such animals may do anything, they like with them except land them, because' I say that it is imperative that we should at all hazards prevent the importation- of animals which may spread tuberculosis and other diseases amongst our flocks and herds, and even amongst our people.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It appears to me that this is a most valuable discussion, because it will show the Minister the necessity for appointing a competent inspector under the regulations of the Quarantine Act- Under that Act we shall be able to prohibit the importation of cattle and other animals affected by disease. It will be the duty of the Minister to say by proclamation what animals : shall be prohibited from coming into the country, and it seems to me that that will cover the grounds which the honorable and learned member for- Indi and other honorable members wish to cover. The honorable and learned member seems to be afraid that the Victorian Act does not go far enough, although, the Acts of the other States may do so, and that as a result, while infected cattle and other animals may be kept out of the other States,- they will not be kept out of the- State of Victoria.

Mr Kingston

- There is ample power under the Victorian legislation to prohibit the importation of- infected animals into Victoria.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- If that is admitted to be- so, and there is a competent inspector in the department, the Minister can prevent the importation of infected animals, or of anything else under the provisions of paragraph (g) of clause 49* The arrangement seems to me to cover the whole ground. But I would impress upon the Minister: the* necessity for appointing a competent inspector. Some honorable members have stated, that- infected cattle, may- recover in quarantine, but the experience of stock breeders has been that although cattle may apparently recover from diseases like pleura-pneumonia, they will introduce the disease amongst other- cattle if they are allowed to mix with them. A competent man at the head of affairs would prevent such cattle from landing at all. The importation of pigs and other animals might be dealt with in the same way. The chief need is the appointment of a competent inspector, and then, the provisions of clause 49 will be- complementary of the quarantine Acts now in force, and the desire, of honorable members to prevent the importation of infected animals will be carried into effect.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I think it would be entirely out of place, to put a provision of this kind into the- Bill because it is purely a matter of quarantine legislation. I do not agree with the honorable and learned member for Indi that the present State laws are inadequate to meet the case-. My impression is that if they are properly administered they are adequate.

Mr Ronald

- Some of them will cease to exist if the Bill, is passed.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Not provisions relating to quarantine. In New South Wales the feeling is that the laws are not administered in Victoria with sufficient stringency. So far 'as dogs are concerned, we absolutely prohibit their importation from abroad for at least six months from the time of their arrival here-. We put them in strict quarantine for that period. It is, however, a common thing, in the case of dogs, for the importers to have them sent to Melbourne, and landed' here and placed in private quarantine. It therefore, seems to me that if Victoria would simply fall into line in connexion with the administration of her present laws, it would be very much better than to mix up the question of quarantine and customs duties in the way now proposed. I hope to see comprehensive quarantine and health laws introduced by the Commonwealth Government, and then will' be the time to deal with the matter mentioned by the honorable and learned member.

Mr A McLEAN

- Is there uniformity in the State laws in this respect 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Not exactly.

Mr Isaacs

- That is one good reason, for insuring uniformity now.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is a, good reason for introducing as speedily as possible 1 a uniform law*

Mr Isaacs

- We could not do that more speedily than by adopting the amendment.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

-- 1 say that this is not the proper place to make the provision, because we should throw the onus of the administration of the law in this matter upon people who are not competent to deal with it. The Customs officers may be competent to carry out the purposes of a Customs Act, but are certainly not competent to administer a Quarantine or Health Act, and in the interests of the health of the community it would be better to leave such matters in the hands of those who understand them. I hope that the proposal of the honorable and learned member will not be persisted in in connexion with this Bill at any rate.

Mr PIESSE

--I think that the honorable member for Parramatta would hardly find his objection tenable if he looked at the existing legislation on the subject. He says it is not a proper thing to put such a provision in the

Customs Bill, but, as a matter of fact, we have provisions in the Bill, to which exactly the same objection might be taken. For instance, we have provided that literature of a certain character shall be a prohibited import, and yet literature has nothing whatever to do with the Customs. In Customs Bills it has been found necessary, even in our State legislation, -to insert provisions which are not immediately the subject of customs laws.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is very easy to deal with what is objectionable in literature, but it is not so easy to diagnose disease.

Mr PIESSE

- It has already been shown that there is no novelty about the proposed provision, and I desire to comment upon the Minister's reading of this clause, in connexion with which he stated that all these things should be made the subject of orders by the Governor in Council.

Mr Kingston

- I said certainly in part, if not as to the whole of them.

Mr PIESSE

--A11 these tilings are specifically prohibited by the Victorian Act, which excludes infected cattle, sheep or other animals, and hides, skins, horns, hoofs, or any other part of cattle or other animals which the Governor in Council may prohibit in order to prevent any infectious or contagious disease being, introduced. The Order in Council refers only to cases where it is necessary to extend the prohibition already made by the law in regard to the particular animals referred to. Then the Minister asks why we should not trust our health laws ; but I would point out that our health laws have been administered in conjunction with laws of this character* The way in which I understand the matter proceeds is that the stock inspector gives notice to the Customs officer that a certain animal on board ship is diseased. Now, the stock inspector has no power to prohibit the landing of cattle, but the Customs officers can, and, therefore, with the two officers working together we get that measure of prohibition which is desirable in the interests of the pastoralists and breeders of cattle in the Commonwealth. I think it is necessary to have some such provision in the Bill, and I .support the contention of the honorable and learned member for Indi.

Mr RONALD

- I would point out the apparent inconsistency between the present provisions of the clause and the contention of the Minister. The Minister has asked us to trust to the Health Act to guard us against all dangers ; but we find in this clause that bad tea is one of the prohibited articles, and surely if it is necessary to prohibit the importation of bad tea, it is equally desirable that diseased meat and diseased stock should also be kept out of the Commonwealth.

Mr Kingston

- Would the honorable member put tea into quarantine 1

Mr Isaacs

- We do not want to put diseased meat into human beings.

Mr RONALD

- We find that there are inconsistencies in the various States Acts dealing with these matters, and I think that the opportunity at present presented of securing uniformity should be availed of. No one can deny that something ought to be done in this direction, and if, as the Minister says, provision is already made it will make assurance doubly sure if we carry out the suggestion of the honorable and learned member for Indi.

Mr Kingston

- I say it is best done under some other Act.

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Mr RONALD

- We might as well have no quarantine whatever if we are not going to adopt every means of restricting the importation of articles which constitute a direct menace to the public health.

Mr. THOMSON

(North Sydney).Even admitting the claims of the honorable and learned member for Indi - and we all admit that it is desirable by every proper means to prohibit the importation of disease in stock - I do not see that we should follow his suggestion. The objection which I took long ago to the insertion of special

classes of articles in this clause is shown to have been correct, as it is now considered necessary to introduce other items which are equally objectionable. I would point out that, as with the human animal, cattle, sheep, and dogs may have infectious or contagious diseases which may be curable, and whilst it may be very objectionable to allow these animals to go among their fellows with the disease and communicate it to them, it is just possible that during two or three months quarantine the whole of the objectionable features might be removed. The provision now proposed, however, absolutely prohibits the landing of

any

such stock.

Mr A McLEAN

- The honorable member does not desire to prohibit the landing as far as quarantine is concerned. He says that the sub-clause would not prevent them from being quarantined.

Mr THOMSON

- The honorable and learned member said that importation meant being landed on the soil of the Commonwealth.

Mr Ronald

- Nothing is landed whilst it is in quarantine.

Mr THOMSON

- If we take the reading of the honorable and learned member, which is a common-sense reading, the effect of this provision will be to prohibit the landing of stock even at a quarantine station, and if the proposal of the honorable member does not intend to go that far, it is clear that this is not the proper place to deal with the matter. There would be no other way of dealing with such stock as is contemplated except destruction, and yet the drastic provisions of the clause would apply with full force to valuable stud cattle, which might be very useful and beneficial to the farmers and breeders of the Commonwealth if they were treated for a time in quarantine. For these reasons apart from any others I think it is undesirable that we should attempt in a paragraph that is not constituted to deal with such cases to regulate matters which can only be thoroughly and effectively provided for under our quarantine laws, when we take them in hand. In the meantime, the different Acts of the States will continue in force and will prove an effective protection against the introduction of diseased stock.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The honorable member who has moved this amendment has the good wishes of every member of the House as far as his intentions are concerned, but it occurs to me that even if his efforts were successful the words he proposes would be only declaratory, and could have no effect apart from the quarantine laws and health laws of the States. Moreover, since the Minister already has the power to prohibit imports, and since we have already made ample provision in the Bill to cover all cases, I feel that there is no object to be gained by burdening the Bill with clauses that can be carried into effect only by the Customs authorities acting in conjunction with the quarantine and health authorities. We know perfectly well that in practice the Government will prohibit the importation of everything that is contrary to the laws of the State, or is likely to introduce infection or disease, and I do not see any necessity whatever for any further words in the clause. The - > honorable and learned member for Indi is simply clamouring to have something put into the clause so 'that there shall be no mistake about the power of the Minister, when there is actually no mistake on that point at all. If the amendment were passed, it would not give the Minister a single power beyond those he has already, but, in order to be logical, it might- be necessary to follow it up by providing against the importation of a number of other articles, including fruit and vines.

Mr Kingston

- Which should be dealt with by special legislation.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Yes; we have that kind of legislation in every State, and the importation of undesirable goods is effectually prevented under it.

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Mr KNOX

- I must confess that, personally, I am in sympathy with the addition which has been suggested by the honorable and learned member for Indi. At the same time I do not think that he has done himself sufficient

justice by making it clear that he wishes proper provision to be made in regard to the introduction of stock as to which there may be some doubt whether it is diseased or not. If he will undertake to provide that stock in regard to which there is any such doubt shall be landed in a quarantined area, I think the committee will be with him, and I am disposed to think that the Minister in charge of the Bill will give way, on the ground that the Supreme concern of honorable members is the public health. Notwithstanding that this matter may be provided for in State legislation, the repetition of such a necessary provision in this Bill, in order that it may have Commonwealth effect, will not be inappropriate. It will not be doing any distinct harm, and cannot be taken in any way to interfere with the existing laws so long as it 'accomplishes the object which is intended to be attained. My own impression is that, viewed from that standpoint, and as another safeguard to the public health, it would be well for the Minister to give way, so long as there is this qualification : that cattle about which there is any doubt shall not be destroyed without first undergoing proper supervision and proper inspection.

Mr. MANIFOLD

(Corangamite). - I move -

That the following words be added to the Subclause : - "Provided that such goods may be landed for the purposes only of quarantine."

I am sure that the honorable and learned member for Indi will accept the amendment.

Mr Isaacs

- Hear, hear.

Mr MANIFOLD

- I have not the slightest doubt that the Minister for Customs will also accede to it.

Mr.KINGSTON. - This proposal shows the difficulty of trying to introduce into a Customs Act part of a Quarantine Act. When one difficulty in connexion with the amendment has been pointed out it is attempted to introduce part of a Quarantine Act. I submit that the best plan is to leave out this provision altogether, relying on the State Acts and on the powers which the Governor-General can exercise.

Mr. ISAACS

(Indi).-I have very much pleasure in accepting the amendment which is proposed by the honorable member for Corangamite, and I am surprised that the Minister, who prides himself upon preferring principle to precedent on every possible occasion, should on this particular occasion, when the public health is concerned, suddenly abandon his usual course. We have, heard a good deal about a white Australia; and I think it is of supreme importance that we should have a healthy and a clean Australia. In view of what is transpiring in other parts of the world, our astuteness in this direction ought rather to be sharpened than otherwise, and we should take more care than usual to prevent disease being introduced into Australia from abroad. I said the other day in connexion with certain observations that I made upon the question of the establishment of a National Department of Agriculture, that America, when its herds were threatened "with destruction on account of an outbreak of Texas fever and pleuropneumonia, only succeeded in eradicating the diseases after a tremendous effort. I wish to prevent any diseases of that kind establishing themselves here. I agree with the honorable member for Parramatta that we should as speedily as possible take precautionary measures, 'but when I propose to do so he thinks that the matter ought to be deferred. To my mind there is no time like the present for doing this, and I do urge the Minister to accept the proposed amendment. I feel bound to press this matter, because the welfare - both material and personal - of the inhabitants of Australia, seems to me to be at stake.

Mr HARPER

- I did not intend to speak upon this matter, but I think that the remarks of the honorable and learned member for Indi are calculated to place those who differ from him in regard to the precise method which he thinks should be adopted in a rather difficult position, by making it appear that he, and those who think with him, alone have regard for the public health, and that those who are opposed to him are less careful in regard to that very important matter.

Mr Isaacs

-Oh, no !

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Mr HARPER

- The honorable and learned member spoke with considerable force and vigour upon that point. It seems

to me that the matter is in a nutshell. The Minister has explained to the satisfaction of many honorable members that the very object which the honorable and learned member for Indi seeks to secure, has been attained in the clause as it stands. It seems to me that the Minister's contention is a good one. The right honorable gentleman pointed out, first of all, that under sub-clause (g) the Governor in Council has power by proclamation to prohibit the importation of anything. That of course is a very strong power to possess, and the Minister has called attention to the fact that this provision is not in any other customs law. Therefore, the Minister has the power which the honorable and learned member for Indi wishes to vest in him. But the difference between the Minister's proposition and that of the honorable and learned member for Indi, is that the Minister says 'this power will be exercised in the light of the circumstances of the case - that it is a flexible power - while the honorable and learned member's proposal is an arbitrary one, which may lead to very great public inconvenience.

Mr Isaacs

- The honorable member wants to shut the door after the steed is stolen.

Mr HARPER

- The honorable and learned member is quite mistaken. All the States have their Stock departments, their Stock Importation Acts, and their stock inspectors..

An Honorable Member. - Is it so in Victoria ?

Mr HARPER

- Yes. In addition to that the Health Act contains very stringent clauses. As a matter of fact, in the event of the introduction of any diseased meat or animals the Stock department or the Health department would immediately take action.

Mr A McLEAN

- That is, after the disease has been introduced.

Mr HARPER

- The honorable member for Gippsland is, I know, well versed in stock matters. But he is not aware perhaps that all stock coming into Victoria is inspected before it is allowed to land. 'Notice has to be given before the arrival of the stock. Immediately it is suspected that any animals are infected with disease, orders are given for that stock to go into quarantine.

Mr Poynton

- That is under the State laws?

Mr HARPER

-Yes ; that is under the State laws. I would point out that we cannot supersede State laws.

Mr Piesse

- We ought to help the 'State laws.

Mr.HARPER. -We have power to do so under sub-clause (g).

Mr A McLEAN

- How is it that we cannot get a horse from South Africa? They are absolutely prohibited.

Mr HARPER

- They are absolutely prohibited by virtue of the Statelaws.

Mr Isaacs

- The honorable member will notice the complications.

Mr HARPER

- I am not a lawyer, and I do not understand the complications to which the honorable and learned member refers. The proposal of the Government is calculated to simplify matters by providing a latent power which can be exercised in any case where it is desirable to exercise it.

Mr. HENRY

WILLIS (Robertson).I certainly think that the honorable and learned member for Indi has gone out of his way to give publicity to the view that honorable members opposed to his amendment are in favour of allowing the importation of diseased meat and cattle into the State's.

Mr Isaacs

- Surely not.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Indeed, the honorable and learned member made an interjection to the effect that we would close the

door after the steed was stolen. In other words, he implies that if we do not accept his proposed amendment we shall be precluded from the opportunity of prohibiting the importation of diseased meat and stock. But one does not require to be a lawyer to exercise a little common sense, and to know what is the usage in the several States. We know that there are Acts in all the States which will prevent the importation of diseased animals of every kind. I do not think there is an Act which will prevent the importation of hoofs and skins that may come from diseased cattle; but the Minister for Customs has taken precautions against that condition of things in sub-clause (g), and in order to satisfy the contention of the honorable and learned member for Indi - who has had a very great deal to say upon this sub-clause on several occasions - has come down with a special clause which is now numbered 51a. That clause gives an interpretation to subclause (g), so that any article or any animal which is brought into this country and infected with disease may be prohibited by proclamation. I take it that honorable members will not submit to a further waste of time upon clause 49, because it has been before the committee on three or four different occasions for four or five hours each time. The honorable members who are now making so much fuss about this proposed amendment are the very members who occupied so much time in discussing these matters unnecessarily.

Mr. WINTER COOKE (Wannon). - I hope that the committee will accept the proposed amendment in the form suggested by the honorable member for Corangamite. The Minister for Customs relies upon the power given by sub-clause (g).

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Mr Kingston

- And upon the State Acts, which make ample provision for everything.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- One support upon which the Minister relied was subclause (g). But if he relies upon that subclause, why does he also insert subclause (f)? He might equally have left the power to prevent the introduction of oleomargarine, butterine, &c., to proclamation. He did not do so, however, and he prefers now to rely upon sub-clause (g) to prevent the importation of infected cattle. This matter is so urgent that we should, at the very establishment of the Commonwealth, show to Australia that we wish to prevent the introduction of infected goods by the insertion in some Bill of a provision of this kind. It is true that all the States have Acts prohibiting the introduction of diseased stock; but, personally, I do not know the extent to which those Acts go. In Victoria the Act is pretty stringent, but no harm can be done by the insertion of the proposed amendment here. I should not have voted for the amendment as it was originally drawn, but with the addition which is now proposed to it, I can take no other course. It simply provides that all cattle will have to be quarantined, that though they are not infected when they land, they may be kept in a quarantine station under regulation. Surely no harm can result from the adoption of that course. On the principle that oleomargarine was included in the list of prohibited imports, I think that infected cattle should also be included.

Mr HIGGINS

- If this sub-clause is pressed to a division I shall have to vote against it ; not because I do not sympathize with the proposal, but simply because I think there is a place for everything, and that everything should go in its proper place.

Mr Conroy

- Is the Minister accepting this amendment ?

Mr Kingston

- I am accepting the amendment of the amendment.

Sir WILLIAM

McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I understand that an amendment of the amendment has been proposed, and I would suggest that we allow the amendment on the amendment to pass, and then vote on the whole question.

Mr KINGSTON

- I fancy there would be no objection if the honorable and learned member for Indi submitted his amendment in the amended shape, without troubling the Chairman to put the amendment of the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN

- I think the better way would be to submit the amendment on the amendment first.

Amendment of the amendment agreed to.

Question. - That the sub-clause as amended be inserted - put. The committee divided -

Ayes 14

Noes 36

Question so resolved in the negative.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported without further amendment.

Report adopted.

Mr KINGSTON

- I hope honorable members will be prepared to assist the Government in passing the final stages of this Bill now. Under the circumstances I move -

That the standing orders ' be suspended to enable the Bill to pass through its remaining stages without delay.

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Mr CONROY

- I object to the standing orders being suspended in this House so often as they have been. We are setting up one of the very worst precedents possible. Even when proposed by my own side, when it might have been to our advantage, I objected to any suspension of the standing orders being allowed this afternoon, and I certainly object now. I hope we shall not fall into the habit of suspending the standing orders. If Ministers are not able to conduct the business of the House, there are gentlemen on this side and on the other side who will be quite ready to ease them of their duties. We ought not to allow Ministers to ask for the suspension of the standing orders so frequently, and I for one most decidedly object.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- It would have been well had the Minister explained to the House in a few words the reason for his proposal to suspend the standing orders. I understand the Bill has been again under review this afternoon simply to discuss one sub-clause, and that that was done out of courtesy to the honorable and learned member for Indi.

Mr Kingston

- It was a promise.

Mr Isaacs

- It was not a matter of courtesy, but a distinct promise on which I withdrew my amendment on a previous occasion.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- We will not quarrel about a word. At any rate, it was a matter in which the Minister acquiesced in order to give the honorable and learned member an opportunity of debating this one particular sub-clause. We are exactly in the same position as before the recommittal. No amendment has been made in the Bill, and while I think it is a serious thing to suspend the standing orders, and it ought not to be the rule, still, under the present circumstances, in order to save the time of the House, which I am very anxious should be saved in view of the time occupied by these machinery Bills, I think we ought to agree to the motion of the Minister.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Some very good reason ought at all times to be given for suspending the standing orders. There can be no pressing necessity to carry the third reading of the Bill this afternoon. If we were approaching the end of the session, and it was a matter of great importance to get the Bill to another Chamber in order that it might pass through its stages there, there might be a very good reason for suspending the standing orders. But, as a matter of fact, both Houses are now full up with work, and if this Bill passed its third reading this afternoon, there would be no advantage to the Government and no advantage to this or the other House. It cannot be urged as a matter of importance that the standing orders should* be suspended, and I think the honorable and learned member for Werriwa has taken a right position in saying that there should be no suspension except in most urgent cases. I agree that the Bill has been before us quite long enough. It has been under discussion in committee for a very long time, but that is no argument in favour of departing from the ordinary procedure of Parliament and fixing the third reading for

another sitting day. For aught we know the Ministry, between this and to-morrow, might discover some reason for making a further amendment in the Bill. I hope that the Bill will pass its third reading at the next sitting, and that we shall not be asked to go into committee again to reconsider any of the clause's. No good public purpose can be served by suspending the standing orders when there is no urgency. The acting leader of the Opposition has taken a generous position towards the Government, and I appreciate that generous attitude, knowing that the honorable gentleman does not wish to waste the time of the House or the country. But I submit that the House itself, apart from all considerations of party, should preserve its rights, and should refuse to give up the right of discussing Bills at every stage unless there is some very pressing reason for suspending the standing orders. I do not see any pressing or urgent reason this afternoon. The report has been adopted, and the third reading can be taken in the course of to-morrow, probably without debate. Why not carry out the ordinary procedure of Parliament without asking the House to suspend the standing orders?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - My right honorable colleague in charge of the Bill practically asked the House whether the suspension of the standing orders would be acceptable, and there seemed to be scarcely an objection.

Mr Kingston

- - There was no objection.

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Mr BARTON

- My colleague says there was no objection when he first asked honorable members to consent to the suspension of the standing orders. There is no possibility of any harm being done by the suspension of the standing orders, simply because this Bill cannot be rushed any further in this House. I agree with the honorable member who spoke last that the suspension of the standing orders is not to be done inadvisedly, and that in important matters it is not to be done unless there is extreme urgency. This is not a case of extreme urgency, except in a sense which every one will admit ; but it is a common practice everywhere to suspend standing orders when the remaining stages through which a Bill must be passed are purely formal, and the remaining stages through which this Bill is to pass are such. It is in order that no day may be lost in sending the Bill to the Senate that this course 'has been proposed. A number of honorable members opposite have been pressing very hard for the introduction of the Tariff, but they know very well that the Tariff cannot be brought down until this Bill has become law, because we must have means for regulating the collection of duties before we proceed to collect them, and the Bill provides those means. However, if honorable members who profess to be very anxious to see the Tariff dealt with, think that it is of vital importance that the third reading of this Bill should be postponed until another day, I will defer to their wishes, and ask the Minister of Trade and Customs to withdraw his motion. In doing so I must cast the responsibility for delay upon them. My belief is that the House could lose nothing by suspending the standing orders on this occasion, and that some reason should be shown why the purely formal stages through which the Bill has yet to pass should not be gone through as soon as possible.

Mr. JOSEPH

COOK (Parramatta). Those on this side of the Chamber who object to the suspension of the standing orders cheerfully accept the responsibility which the Prime Minister wishes to cast upon them. Our reply to the right honorable gentleman is that if he is so anxious to have the Customs Bill passed, he should not have continually alternated its consideration with the consideration of the Inter-State Commission Bill, the Defence Bill, the Post and Telegraph Bill, and Other measures which are not of so much importance. We agree with him that the Tariff should be dealt with at the earliest moment, but the Government have taken three months to pass the Customs Bill through the House, although they could have put it through in one month if they had been disposed to do so. The Prime Minister spoke tonight without exercising that common sense which he so glibly urged upon me last night, when I ventured to adopt a similar course to that which is now being adopted. We are standing up for the maintenance of the ordinary procedure in connexion with the consideration of measures by this House, and we are objecting to the taking away, at the arbitrary caprice of the Ministry of the day, of all those checks against hasty legislation which have been imposed by the good sense of the House. We say that the practice of suspending the standing orders is fraught with serious menace to the liberties and privileges of honorable members, and could be

used, if any Government were disposed ' to so use it, to practically stifle opposition to any Ministerial proposal. If a Ministry liked to use our present standing orders as they could be used, they could make an opposition appear very small indeed. I am waiting for the time when the proposed new standing orders will be submitted to us, so that we may get rid of some of what I may call the senseless provisions in the temporary set by which we are now governed. However, for the time being we must accept the standing orders now in force, but it is open to honorable members to protest against their arbitrary incidence and the abuse by Ministers of the privileges which are thereby given to them. I join in the protest which is being made, and I congratulate the leader of the Government upon the very nice way in which he replied to honorable members on this side of the House to-day as compared with his abrupt manneryesterday.

Mr THOMSON

- was prepared to sink my strong objection to the suspension of the standing orders until the Minister stated that he would cast upon those who objected 'to the motion the responsibility for delaying the Customs Bill. I do not think that that was the right attitude for him to take. The responsibility for delay will not rest upon those who object to the suspension of the standing orders. It must lie with the Minister in charge Of the Bill. He chose to recommit the measure.

Mr Kingston

- I hope that I shall always fulfil any promise that I may make.

Mr THOMSON

- The Minister fulfilled his promise by a previous recommittal of the Bill.. That was when the honorable and learned member for Indi had his opportunity to deal with the question which he brought under our consideration to-night.

Mr Kingston

- But he was not here.

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Mr THOMSON

- Nevertheless the Minister gave him an opportunity then.

Other honorable members who were not here had to lose their opportunity.

Mr McDonald

- Why this exceptional treatment ?

Mr THOMSON

- I do not object to the courtesy shown to the honorable and learned member for Indi ; but I wish to point out that he had on opportunity to deal with the matter when the recommittal of the Bill was first moved.

Mr Isaacs

- I understood the Minister to say that the Bill would be recommitted, so that I might have an opportunity to deal with the matter.

Mr THOMSON

- But it was recommitted previously, when the honorable and learned member had an opportunity in common with other learned members to deal with any matters affecting it. The Minister, however, was generous enough to give the honorable and learned member special consideration, and although I do not object to that, I wish to point out that in doing so he knew that he must delay the third reading of the Bill, because objection has been taken on this side of the House to the frequent suspension of the standing orders. The Prime Minister says that the reason for the suspension of the standing orders on this occasion is to allow the Bill to pass through purely formal stages, but the Bill is just in the same position as other measures, and the remaining stages for its consideration may be formal or otherwise, just as honorable members choose to make them. No urgency has been shown in many of the instances in which the standing orders have been suspended, and it is quite right that honorable members should object to the evident intention of the standing orders being constantly evaded, because the intention is that they should not be suspended unless as a matter of urgency.

Sir William McMillan

- If there is any serious objection to the motion I think it is better not to press it.

Mr. KINGSTON

(South Australian Minister for Trade and Customs). - The position which the Prime Minister has intimated he will take up is, that if there is any serious objection to the suspension of the standing orders, the

motion shall not be pressed.

Mr Thomson

- He threw the responsibility of delaying the Customs Bill upon those who objected.

Mr Barton

- It must belong to honorable members opposite; it is not our responsibility.

Mr Thomson

- It belongs to the Minister for Trade and Customs, because he consented to there committal of the Bill.

Mr KINGSTON

-The responsibility does not lie with me. I did not move the suspension of the standing orders until I had suggested to the House that the Government thought that course desirable. I waited for an indication of dissent ; but none was given, and then I moved the motion. I feel that under the circumstances honorable members cannot say that I was not amply warranted in what I did. I believed that there would be no objection 'to the motion. Something has been said about the delay which has been occasioned by the recommittal of the Bill to allow of the consideration of the question brought forward by the honorable and learned member for Indi. All I can say is that we gave a promise to the honorable and learned member. I might have contended that the honorable and learned gentleman had his opportunity when the recommittal was moved before, and when he was not present ; but I thought it was more courteous and fair to him not to take that objection, and I believed that our sense of fair play would be reciprocated, and that honorable members would not wish to see the Government embarrassed because of their generosity. If I am disappointed in that belief, it cannot be helped. The Bill has been a troublesome measure to deal with. It was brought in at the earliest possible moment, and we have given the fullest opportunity for its discussion.

Mr.Conroy. - No.

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Mr KINGSTON

- Furthermore, we have continued its consideration as closely as the business of the House would permit. Something has been said about the consideration of the Defence Bill and Inter-State Bill being allowed to interfere with the progress of this Bill. Of course it was only right that the second reading of those Bills should have been moved in order that honorable members might have an early opportunity to consider them in the light of the explanations afforded by the Ministers in charge of them ; but nothing further in the way of delay has taken place, except that, at the instance of the leader of the Opposition, the consideration of the measure was postponed one night to enable him to speak on the Defence Bill and the Inter-State Bill.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- A delay of an hour.

Mr Barton

- An hour and a half.

Mr Thomson

- That occurred because the Minister in charge of the Inter-State Commission Bill had delayed its consideration by his unavoidable absence.

Mr Barton

- It was a distinct concession to the leader of the Opposition, at his own request. He wanted to speak upon both measures, and we willingly gave him the opportunity as a matter of courtesy, although it threw the Government business out of order.

Mr KINGSTON

- No doubt if we had persisted in going on with the Customs Bill on that occasion we should have made such progress that it would have long since left this House. "We thought that the course which we are now proposing would have been concurred in, but as it is not. I withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

EXCISE ON BEER BILL

Report adopted

DEFENCE BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed (from 30th July, vide page 3214) on motion by Sir John Forrest -
That this Bill be now read a second time.

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Mr HUGHES

- I desire to say a word or two upon this Bill, which I regard as a measure providing for one of the most important, if not the most important, function that the Commonwealth is called upon to exercise. I think there has been, if not a general expression, at any rate a general feeling of regret at the inadequacy of the Bill. The honorable member for Bland last night, in saying that there was nothing new in the measure, did not quite describe its deficiencies. It is an ollapodrida a jumble of clauses and provisions extracted from the various Defence Acts of the Commonwealth, without any regard to symmetry, or to the important nature of the question. The Minister of Defence, who introduced the Bill, seems, as the honorable member for Bland said last night, to have been quite satisfied with things as they were, because they were so. He apparently has learned nothing from the recent cataclysm in the military history of Great Britain. The South African war has passed over his head and has taught him nothing. He is quite satisfied with the organization of our forces as they exist at present, unreformed, unaffected by anything that we have lately learned, but which the very much more conservative country of Great Britain has to an extent profited by. The Minister apparently has made, and contemplates making, no provision with regard to obsolete weapons, no provision for the abolition of what may be termed the tinsel and glitter of military life. In fact, it is a matter upon which we may heartily congratulate ourselves that the discovery of gunpowder was made prior to the Minister's time, otherwise I am firmly persuaded he would have been an ardent advocate of the primitive bow and arrow. He seems absolutely to belong to the neolithic or prehistoric period, to have dwelt in a cave of his own - hitherto successfully keeping out any crawling or prowling marauder, and now, whether driven out or simply crawling out of his own accord, he obtrudes ideas admirably adapted to the cave into the more extended sphere of federal life. What does the Bill provide? It has been asserted, both in the press and in the House, that there are some new features in this Bill; that there is at any rate one new feature. The Bill provides for a permanent force, a partially-paid force, a volunteer force, a cadet system, rifle clubs, and for a levy en masse. Now I decline to recognise the levy en masse as being a new feature at all. It is true that it is asserted in so many words in the Bill, but it is no new power conferred on the Government, for every Government has, by the very nature of government, the power to 'call out its citizens in a defence of the country. Therefore the Minister, who, by a supreme effort has inserted in the Bill provision for this last and rare resort to the power of Governments, is entirely wrong in imagining that it gives any power to the Government that it does not already possess. I do not know whether the Minister or the Government thoroughly realize the position so far as it affects us to-day. We might regard it first of all from the stand-point of a possible bombardment of our ports, and secondly, from the stand-point of a possible invasion. On all hands men are ready to realize and recognise the possibility - nay, even the probability of a bombardment of our ports. Now, what provision does this Bill make, other than that already in existence, and which is notoriously ineffective and inadequate for repelling such a bombardment? - absolutely none. We may look in vain throughout the Bill for any indication even that the Commonwealth is an island continent. One would imagine that one was living in the mountain recesses of Switzerland, where the sea can never come within two or three hundred miles of the limitations of the territory. There is absolutely no sort of indication to be found in the Bill that we are a maritime nation, any more than as the Swiss have lakes, and possibly boats thereon, so there is found an indication that we also may, at some time or other, have to take, if not to the sea, at any rate to the water. Now, perhaps it would be tiring the House if I reminded honorable members of the very great necessity for the improvement of the conditions under which the auxiliary squadron is maintained in these waters. In the Articles of Agreement under which the squadron is here and at our service, we find the following -

Clause 2, Art. VII. The colonies shall pay the Imperial Government interest at 5 per cent, on the first prime cost of these vessels, such payment not to exceed the annual sum of £35,000.

Clause 3, Art. VUE. The colonies shall, in addition, bear the actual charge for maintaining from year to year the three fast cruisers and one torpedo gun-bout which are to be kept in commission in time of peace, and also of the three other vessels which are to remain in reserve, including the liability on account of retired pay to officers, pensions to men, and the charge of relief crews; provided always that

the claim made by the Imperial Government under this head does not exceed the annual payment of £91,000.

Clause 3, Art. IX. On the termination of this agreement these vessels to remain the property of the Imperial Government.

Now, for the last ten years we have been paying the sum of £126,000 per annum as our contribution towards the maintenance of the squadron. In the aggregate this amounts to £1,260,000. The prime cost of the squadron was as follows : - H.M.S. Mildura, £116,062-; H.M.S. Tauranga, £128,101 ; Ringarooma, £128,076;

H.M.S. Wallaroo, £115,995; and H.M.S. Katoomba, £116,719, making a total for the cruisers of £604,953. The H.M.S. Boomerang and the H.M.S. Karrakatta, gun-boats, together are valued at £97,611, making a grand total of £702,564. Now we have, as J. have said, paid for the use of these boats and their crews during the last ten years £1,260,000 ; and it is notorious that, with the exception of the flagship, H.M.S. Royal

Arthur,

the vessels of the squadron are obsolete, and that they would be quite inadequate to meet anything like an attack by up-to-date cruisers, such as would obviously be sent here in case of attempted invasion. We have been paying £126,000 a year for these ships, and had a businesslike provision or contract been entered into, rather than a sentimental one, we should now have been in a position to own these vessels, and should have seen our way fairly clear, at any rate, to man them.

Mr Conroy

- What has been the cost of keeping them up ?

Mr HUGHES

- I am not in a position to say what has been the actual cost of the maintenance of the crews as they now are on the station, but I do say that it would have been possible with skeleton crews, and the expenditure of say, £70,000 a year to a sinking fund, and the payment of so much a year for interest on the prime cost, to have fully manned these boats.

Mr Conroy

- I thought we did not even contribute enough for their bare maintenance.

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Mr HUGHES

- I realize that that has been asserted, but at the same time it must be borne in mind that we have by no means the exclusive right to these cruisers. We have only the first call, which, in a time of danger, would become the last call. There is no sort of doubt whatever in the minds of any reasonable men that when the hour strikes that the Empire of Great Britain shall really be in danger, not from a handful of farmers, but from an assault by a great and powerful combination of the nations, the auxiliary squadron will be detailed perhaps to China or elsewhere, to guard the places where the Empire is naturally most vulnerable to attack. One may read in Lord Brassey's Naval Annual the clearest evidence of the fact that in spite of monumental efforts on the part of Great Britain to keep up the "two nations" strength of the navy of the Empire, she is year by year falling back in that effort, and, therefore, we have nothing more than the use of this squadron in time of peace, when it does absolutely nothing but police duties round our coasts and among the islands. We shall soon have to make another agreement, when vessels of a more up-to-date character will have to be contracted for. Is there any mention of anything of this kind in the Bill - is there any hint of there being any necessity for vessels of a superior kind ? The Minister has apparently retired into the recesses of his cavern; and not even- the remotest echo can be heard from him as to the necessity of replacing the obsolete vessels of the auxiliary squadron by up-to-date warships. Now, since our chief danger to Australia must take the form of- a bombardment, we have a- right to demand that- the first feature of our defence scheme should be to provide complete and satisfactory means for protecting us from that possible and even probable contingency. I want honorable members to realize that this question of a bombardment, or of an attack from a marauding expedition, or whatever you may please to term it, is by no means a chimerical idea, but it is the one thing which has made federation- possible in these States. For what reasons, other than a Customs union and union for defence, had we to federate at all? And after having federated, and after: in our various States, having given up so much, we are met face to face with a scheme of defence which is notoriously inadequate,

and wretchedly obsolete in every particular and every detail. Now, I have said so, much, on the question of a marauding expedition or bombardment, and, so far, I believe honorable, members will agree with me, as every man, I think, realizes that we- are peculiarly open, to attack from the sea. We have- a coastline so prodigious in its extent that it is almost hopeless for us to guard it in any other way than by means of a fleet ; but there is also the ever, present danger- of an invasion. Now, it can- hardly be said that men who hold my particular opinions are likely to exaggerate the danger of an invasion ; but I think there is too much tendency to regard it as absolutely outside the pale of possibility, to regard it as something to talk about but not to prepare against. Obviously no: preparation is made in this Bill for any such contingency. It will be easy for me to show that. So long as it is conceived that Great Britain holds command of the sea all will be well. But on the very first day that her empire of- the -sea. is challenged, our first means of defence, will be withdrawn. Of course I mean our fleet. Possibly it may not be wholly withdrawn, but it certainly will be weakened. But it is even not a. matter of- whether it is withdrawn, or weakened, because we. know that it is notoriously inadequate to repel any such projected invasion. I know; of course, that many people regard the idea of invasion as chimerical. Why ? First of all it is said that no nation would, ever- dream- of attempting such a task. It is. urged that we are a harmless, peaceful community or,- as one philosopher said of the Boers, who have cer'tainly belied Iris dictum, "a peaceful and a pastoral nation." Well, we may be. But peaceful and pastoral as' we are, there are not wanting nations to-day who are ready to pounce down upon us directly there is an opportunity. What provision do. we make to repel such an attack ? It is said that no nation- in Europe would undertake- the task; that the. Council of Nations would rise and protest against such, an outrage on civilization. Yes - if any one nation did so - I agree with those who say that. But if we asked ourselves what has been the history of the last 50 years, we. should find that it has been a sharing of the spoils of the weaker nations amongst the great, powers of- Europe. We have seen India fall like a ripe plum into the hands of Great Britain; - we have- seen spheres- of influence extended into protectorates, pro: tectorates extended into colonies, and colonies extended into empires and nations. We have seen, and we continue to see, day after day this process of eating up the unoccupied or weakly defended portions of the world, and are we to suppose that if ever Great Britain's power- is broken one of the first and primal things that will occur to the nations will not be a division of the spoils of that empire? Will not India fall into the hands of that nation whose claws are the most powerful and whose might is the most resistless ? As a matter of fact, does any man believe that Australia - since she has elected to take the part, for good or for ill, of standing by the mother-land - will ever- be permitted to .stand out as though she were an indifferent, factor, entirely unconnected with the great British Empire? I do not think so. For good or for evil, she- has allied, herself to. the fortunes of Great Britain, and she must- share, alike, in her glories and in her defeats. Whenever the time ta which I refer comes, whether it be soon or late; we shall have to rely upon, ourselves When that day dawns, if we> have, such a scheme of defence as is outlined in this Bill, it does not require one to be much of a prophet, to foretell the result. What is our main line of defence, apart from the coastal defences; many of which are very, far from being complete, besides being officered in many cases by men who, I regret to say, have not so. much knowledge of gunnery as the rawest recruit in gunnery under- their command ? We have obsolete guns, which in any case are quite inadequate to deal with an invader who may elect to come to a port or to some, other place. For, as the honorable member for Illawarra .pointed out the other night, Port Kembla extends an open invitation to the enemy to enter. Does any one suppose that if we fortify Port Jackson or Port Phillip an enemy is1 going to come in there? Will he not rather-select the weakest point in our armour? That being so, the question arises - " What are our land defences " ? There is our permanent force, our militia or partially-paid men, and our volunteers. Then under this Bill there will be our cadets and rifle clubs, and the levy en masse. Regarding, the permanent force, I have nothing to say, except that they are too few in number to do any good.. If they could be all massed with the militia at one particular point it would be very well, but it has been the continued complaint of the . commandants of the States- that the break of railway gauge- and other things render the rapid transport of troops with:pro.visions almost an impossible and. hopeless task. To concentrate the available forces of the Commonwealth at one particular place, nay, to concentrate them in, any conceivable place, is certainly something which cannot be accomplished with the means at our disposal. The Bill provides, in addition to the militia and the permanent force, for the volunteer system and for. rifle clubs. The honorable member for Bland and one or two others who seem particularly partial to the volunteer system.,, appear to derive considerable

satisfaction from the idea that we now rest securely under the aegis of the volunteers of this- country. Well, "a volunteer," the- maxim goes, "is worth a dozen pressed men." Yet the volunteer is very like snow in the summer. He melts away when the glamour and the- novelty of the thing has worn off, when he realizes that after all there is in military tactics and preparation a good deal of hard work .to be done. The volunteer, unless he be an .enthusiast, such as these shores do npt contain a large proportion of, melts away in such circumstances. Take the- case, of the men who volunteered for service in.- South Africa. They were largely composed of men who never belonged to any volunteer force at all.

If any- man can sit easily- down under the volunteer forces -of this country, and believe that with all their virtues and enthusiasm they constitute a sufficient force to repel an invasion from a European or. Asiatic source he is easily content.. For my part, I think that they are quite inadequate for the purpose indicated. I have spoken of an invasion on the part of European powers and of the- partition of Australia. Would it -be a profitable thing, for the Great Powers to do? I think that it obviously would. That they would regard it as a, profitable thing is obvious from the sacrifices which the nations make in. pushing: their trade in Africa, , and China. What is the object of the combination, of powers which is today hammering at the gates, of China ? Is there not under the surface. a desire to extend their sphere of operations and to make possible greater opportunities for trade- in short, to extend both their influence and their commercial opportunities. That will be done here, if the day ever comes when it can be done safely. I have no desire to sit down under the- dominance of any power other- than that which now rules us so- lightly. Some may. say that there is one easy way out of these difficulties, namely, by separating ourselves from Great Britain. I would remind those -who say so that we should by so doing render ourselves- a still more easy prey to the very enemies to which I now allude. Therefore, it appears to me that there is no sort of security in time of danger, but that which comes from an efficiently drilled, adequately paid, and sufficiently numerous body of men in our own country. This Bill does not provide for that. None of the qualifications of an efficient defence force are there to be found. But there is one thing winch. I do see. The Bill' provides for a military establishment which I distrust. It provides for a military establishment on a permanent, footing, which, while it is wretchedly inadequate- to repel a foreign invader, is sufficiently strong . to overawe on some occasions- perhaps on many - the citizen in. his pursuit o£ constitutional reform op in. the maintenance of civil liberty and right. This is a Defence Bill which, upon being, analyzed and laid bare- does nothing- to, provide for that which is the. very essence and corner stone of£ a Defence Bill, namely, our defence in our time of need.. But it does, indeed - so far as there is any. power in it so to do - raise up a military power which can, and, nay, will - if history goes for anything - in time to come overawe the citizen if he wishes to do anything in the direction of resorting to other than constitutional methods to achieve his liberties. It has been th custom for Englishmen who have enjoyed liberty so long to regard democracy as being the culminating effort of mankind - the culminating effort in the art of government. Beyond that, they think there is nothing except that we climb ever upward and upward towards the now invisible peaks of a perfect system of democratic government. But if history has any lesson to teach, it is this, that of all forms of government there is none so unstable, none so evanescent, as democracy itself. I have in my hand an extract from one whose word upon this matter is worthy of credence. Maine, writing upon popular government, points out that although it is customary - as I have said - to regard democracy as being settled on the firm and broad basis of the people's will, and, as therefore permanent and enduring, it is, nevertheless - tried by the standard and the light of history - a government which, in no case has endured for any considerable period. He says -

The opinion that democracy was irresistible and inevitable and probably perpetual, would, only a century ago, have appeared a wild paradox. There had been more than 2,000 years of tolerably well-ascertained political history, and at its outset, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy were all plainly discernible. The result of a long experience was that some monarchies and some aristocracies had shown themselves extremely tenacious of life. The French monarchy and the Venetian oligarchy were in particular of great antiquity, and the .Roman Empire was not even then quite dead. But the democracies which had arisen and flourished, or had fallen into Extreme insignificance, seemed to show that this form of Government was of rare occurrence in political history, and was characterized by an extreme fragility.

He goes on to point out that for over 1,700 years there had been, prior to the beginning qf this century, a continuous and almost uninterrupted tendency towards kingship rather than towards democracy, and that democracies, both .in the early days and later, have always, without any exception, been overwhelmed

and swept out of existence by military despotism. If honorable members will cast their minds back over the teachings of history from the time of the overthrow of the Roman Republic down to the fall of the French Government under the despotism of Napoleon, they will find, right from Cesar downwards, that without any exception democracies have been short-lived, and have always perished beneath a military despotism. A democracy has, first of all, abandoned the care of its territory, its country, and its liberties to the hired soldiery, and then it has gone down, and gone down willingly, kissing the hand of the man who was to cut its throat.

Mr Higgins

- Will that happen to America 1

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Mr HUGHES

- To America ? America is a creation of yesterday. If you ask me, America is a country where, although democracy is based upon the broad basis of manhood suffrage, yet, nevertheless is tied by such rigid bonds constitutionally, that we see there to-day the most extraordinary division between those who nominally are equal. We see there power vested really in the hands of men who, although they are not distinguished by aristocratic titles, have nevertheless very real and actual possession of that power. We see too that America has already known what it is to quail beneath a military despotism. We saw not very long ago that a hired band of soldiers - or detectives, no matter what you call them - were called out hired by private individuals and permitted to shoot men down because of a difference of opinion as to what should be or should not be done in a question of industrial dispute. Such a thing would never be possible in this country - at least I hope not. Such a thing has' never been done in Great Britain, and, in any case, we may leave it alone, and say, granting that America is all that the honorable and learned member would have it to be, England, which at any rate has enjoyed her liberties for a longer period, and whose progress, although not so rapid, has been more continuous and more steady, stands in no way as a contradiction to the statement that I put forward, namely, that, first of all, democracies are short lived, and, secondly, that all have perished under the heel of military despotism. I know, of course, that some people do not regard the teachings of history as worthy of too much consideration. Yet, if there is any light by which we are to guide the infant footsteps of our nation, it is by the teachings of history. If honorable members imagine for a moment that it is impossible that the existence of the proposed military force could in any way imperil our liberties, I would remind them that in every case, as I said before, it has been with the will of the people that they have embraced a military dictatorship. The coup d 'etat of the third Napoleon was achieved by a plebiscite. It is through the medium, and by the shibboleths, of democracy that liberty is stolen from democracy. I have no fear of an open declaration of hostilities to the ideas of democracy, but it is by those insidious methods that have been employed from time immemorial, that I fear attack on this, our hardly -won Constitution. What is the remedy 1 The remedy appears to me very simple, though I realize that it is one which will with difficulty be accepted by honorable members. I have indicated that democracy becomes imperilled when it hands over to other people the custody of its liberties - when it fights not its own battles, but hands them over to a section, either of its own people, or, as in the case of the mediaeval Italians, hired mercenaries, It appears to me that the responsibility of citizenship carries with it the right of defending one's country.

Mr Knox

- Hear, hear ; that is the basis of it all.

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Mr HUGHES

- It is in return for the privileges we enjoy in a free country that we should do something - do everything that lies in our power to defend it in the hour of need. It may be urged that the happy thought of the Minister for Defence in respect of the levy en masse provides us with that power. But what is the difference between a mob and a trained soldiery t Only that one is disciplined and the other is not. If the hour strikes, and the invader is here, and a proclamation is issued, and the citizens are mustered, how much do they differ, or in what do they differ, from an ordinary mob 1 In nothing. They have neither discipline, nor ideas, nor skill. It is very well to take comfort in the stubborn, and in some measure successful, defence made by the Boers. But we must remember that the Boers are a people who live largely in the country, while we, unhappily for us, find that our civilization locates us principally in towns,

and that the Boers are all admirable shots, while we unfortunately are not. Therefore to rely on what they relied on would be a mistake, and would be to rest in a fool's paradise. Yet the Boers are all subject, and not only subject, but actually subjected to regular and periodical drilling. It appears to me that the only remedy, the only sure and certain method of defence, is a scheme, if you like to call it so, of a national militia. I believe that every man should do what is done in Switzerland, that particularly favored country, so far as liberty is concerned. Every man there, from the ages of eighteen or nineteen to 60, has at periodic intervals to undergo training in the use of arms and drill. Honorable members may say if they like that that is conscription. But if honorable members' idea, when they use that term, is an idea based on European conscription, then I say that such an explanation does not clearly or well explain what I mean. In Switzerland, for instance, a man is not called out, nor 'has- to serve for three years, two years, or one year. He serves a certain number - of days in alternate years. There are a number of rifle clubs, and every man may attach himself to one of those, which are open to all citizens. Instead of being the intolerable burden that Europe imposes on her population and her people by the system of conscription, the Swiss method is a mere summer holiday. But whether it be a summer holiday or not, the Swiss have found it to their advantage and to the safety of their liberties to adopt the system. Yet Switzerland is safeguarded by a specific treaty on the part of the powers that she shall not be interfered with. While Switzerland may not interfere with the European powers or make war on them, on the other hand the European powers may not declare war against her. But, in spite of this, the Swiss have never rested on the empty declaration of a parchment treaty, but have armed their citizens and have been at all times ready. In the war of 1870, when the French army were driven over the border, or rather went over the border into Switzerland, and the Germans were preparing to follow and make war on Swiss territory, 80,000 Frenchmen were compelled by the Swiss militia to lay down their arms, and the Germans were compelled to refrain from crossing the frontier. As to efficiency, the history of Switzerland proves conclusively that the Swiss is as able a soldier as any. He was for centuries almost the able infantryman in Europe. What I propose is simply this - that every adult male in this country from the age of 18 to 60 should undergo a period of training. I propose that from 18 years of age to 21 every man should put in a period of six weeks training, of which three weeks should be continuous, and three weeks isolated drill; that from the age of 21 years to 30 years each man should put in a period of six weeks of which ten days should be continuous and the rest isolated drill; that from the age of 31 years to 40 or 45, every man should put in a period of six weeks training of which seven days should be continuous and the rest spread over isolated drill. When I speak of drill, what I mean is perfecting himself in everything that goes to make an efficient soldier at the present day. I entirely agree with the honorable and learned member for Corinella who last night said that too much time was spent in merely formal and parade drill, and that too little time was spent in making a useful soldier on the field of battle. Therefore I say that the prime necessity is to make our citizens good rifle shots. If that can be done in less than three weeks continuous training in each year, very good. But at the same time that it is necessary to make a man a good rifle shot, it is also necessary that he should be subjected, and should subject himself, to discipline and to order - that he should know, when he is called on to fall into line, where to fall in and whom to obey. I have heard incidentally from gentlemen very many objections to the scheme I propose. It is said that it will interfere in business; that it will be distasteful to the people, and that it is opposed to the British ideal. Taking the sentimental idea first - the objection that 'the scheme is opposed to sentiments' - I would say that the question we have to deal with is not one of sentiment, but one of common sense. Is the scheme opposed to common sense? I do not think so. Is it not a natural corollary of citizenship - of the privileges of citizenship - that a man should, as incidental to those privileges, defend his country? Are we to consider what is or what is not at the present time the sentimental desire of the people? Are we not rather to consider what is the only sure and safe method by which we may secure that which we have obtained with so much difficulty and so much loss? I distrust a military despotism, I distrust an army, because of that inherent dislike to militarism which stamps every Britisher. England to-day is distrustful of its soldier: until the present war a soldier in uniform was not allowed to go into many places of amusement, and it is notorious that he was regarded as a pariah and an outcast. The law of England provides that the army shall be a yearly institution which may be disbanded at the will of the Commons. The history of England has taught Englishmen that their only safety lies in the supremacy of the civil law. Here there is no excuse, because there is no necessity for a standing army. A standing army is necessary to Great Britain for the protection of her enormous

possessions in India, in the colonies here and elsewhere. But we are not called upon to do more than defend the shores of Australia. It is not an army of offence but an army of defence that I have spoken of - an army which will be exclusively confined to the defence of the shores of this country from an invader. Therefore there seems no good and sufficient reason why the citizens of Australia should not themselves* perform this duty. If it be said that an employer would find it insuperably difficult to allow his employe to take his place in the defence force, my reply is that under the proposition which I am making all employers would be on the same level. An honorable gentleman said last night that one of the reasons why the partially-paid men could not get three weeks' continuous drilling each year was that it was found to interfere too much with the business of employers. That may be an excellent reason while one employer has a militiaman in his employ and another has not. But when all employers are subjected to the same conditions no greater hardship can be inflicted upon one than is inflicted upon another. I would not compel any man to serve in the militia who is desirous of evading service, if he chooses to pay a tax for the maintenance of some one to serve in his place. Any man who, because of religious scruples, business interests, or any other reason was unwilling to serve, should be exempted from service, provided he paid a "capitation tax. Whether it meets with the approval of honorable gentlemen here, or of the people of the Country or not, I lay it down as a basic proposition that it is the first duty of every man to defend his country, and if he is not willing to do so he should pay some one else for doing it. Under the present system a volunteer may train himself to the best of his ability for the defence of his country, and he must also pay a tax to meet the expenses of some one else defending it. Other individuals pay that tax but do nothing else for the defence of their country. Some citizens seem to think that they have done enough for the country that has done everything for them when they put their hands into their pockets and contribute something towards the happy despatch of troops to South Africa. But the beginning and the end of the responsibility of citizenship is not there. It should begin with his readiness to defend his country, and it should end only in making himself effective for that defence. I do not know that I care to amplify my remarks at greater length. I am content to think that I have put forward, however inadequately, what I conceive to be the only true and certain method by which this country and the people in it may be safeguarded against a foreign invader and the domestic tyrant, against the open enemy and the insidious friend. I believe that, as a nation, we may extend the right hand of fellowship to all civilized people. We may welcome all that they bring us, and all the benefits which flow in the train of commercial relations ; at the same time we should be ready to present to an enemy such a firm, undaunted and formidable front that no nation would dare to attack us. I am persuaded that the Bill affords us no reasonable insurance or provision against the risks of our position. I conceive it to be a measure devoid alike of originality and of merit. It is, as I have said, a measure which is essentially pregnant with the spirit of the neolithic period - of the man in the cave. It makes no sort of provision for the imminent dangers from which, according to those who are now loud in their support of it, federation would give us a sure and certain defence. I ask any reasonable man, is this sure and certain defence to be found within the four corners of the Bill? Is it not rather a jumble, a scissors and paste compilation - and a most unhappy one - of the provisions of the existing State Acts - something, in short, that is just, enough to create a militarism which may overawe our civil liberties, and at the same time be utterly inadequate to repel the foreign invader.

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- It is with some hesitation that I rise to address the House on the second reading of this Bill, because I feel that we have a right to conserve our time as much as possible, having so large an amount of work before us, and because a great many of the points to which I intended to refer have been touched upon by honorable members who are far more conversant with this subject than I am. I cannot help feeling that this is one of the most important Bills that could be brought before this Parliament. I do not mean to say that it is an all-important measure, because I think that the most important Bills with which we shall have to deal will be those which will tend to build up, to mould, and as far as we can, to assist the great industrial civilization of the Australian continent. But we must conserve that great industrial fabric that four millions of men have built up. to the wonder of the world. We must preserve our shores inviolate against every swashbuckling foreigner who attempts to invade them. The defence of Australia is of even more vital importance at this stage of our career than it may be in years to come. We have an island continent with 8,000 miles of foreshores, a large portion of which is now practically uninhabited. In the course of

years, as population grows, almost the whole of the littoral of Australia will be occupied by enterprising people, and it will be impossible for a foreigner to invade it. We are now in the most dangerous period of our existence, and no doubt we must depend to a large extent upon Great Britain for our real line of defence. I feel that the Bill will be debated at great length in committee, and no doubt it is a measure which requires the closest scrutiny and the utmost criticism. At the same time, it must be in its structure a mere skeleton, and we must intrust the clothing of the flesh and the impenetration of the spirit to a just, vigorous, and patriotic administration if it is to be made effective. It will be well therefore for us to consider the different points of this administration. At the head of it stands the Minister of Defence. When the present Ministry was formed it was absolutely necessary for the Prime Minister to take into his Cabinet men who had occupied prominent positions in the different States, and no doubt in the allocation of offices it was very difficult to put the right man in the right place in every instance. Every honorable member must be glad that the prominent man who did so much for Western Australia in the earlier period of responsible Government there holds a portfolio in the first administration of the Cabinet. But the portfolio of the Minister for Defence is essentially one which should not be bandied about and placed in the hands of a mere chance

Minister. I do not say that the Minister of Defence should be a professional soldier, and indeed I hope that he will always be essentially a civilian; but if we are to have a citizen soldiery, if every man is to be a volunteer, I think it will be well if in the future the portfolio is placed in the hands of a man who understands the technology of a volunteer system of defence. "We want at the head of this great department a man who has a certain knowledge of soldiery, and one who is imbued with an enthusiasm which will send its current right through the Commonwealth. Standing next to the Minister will be the officer commanding the forces, who will control the whole of the troops. He must be a man of large military experience, a man who has seen active service, and who is a good organizer. But besides all this, in a territory comprising the large area which the Commonwealth comprises, we want a man of magnetic influence who will make himself felt throughout the length and breadth of Australia. I think that one of the most responsible tasks that will fall to the Government and those who advise them will be the selection of a general officer for this most important position. I take it that although we may have to bring to this country officers who are special experts in particular branches of the service, we shall lay down at once the principle that practically the only officer we shall take from the Imperial Government is the one man who will be placed over the whole of the Australian forces, because I think it is absolutely necessary that we should do nothing in any way to discourage the Australian soldiers in the path of promotion. In this Bill some restrictions are placed upon the commandants of the different districts, which districts, I suppose, will be coterminous with the different States for the present, although I think we should abolish as much as possible those arbitrary divisions. Now the position of commandant will be the blue ribbon of the Australian army, and I think we ought to do everything to encourage those who occupy that position, because we may depend upon it that the success of our Australian forces, whatever it may be, will to a large extent depend upon the skilled officers who command the troops. The next important branch is the civil administration, and I want to draw the attention of the House to a very important point, upon which depends the success or failure of the whole of this system. There has been a sort of feeling - and perhaps a very natural feeling - that the civil authority ought to be supreme, and no doubt the civil authority will be supreme in the person of the responsible Minister; but anything like an absolute line of divorce in administration between the General in command, the whole of the forces, and the civil administration would be a fatal thing. I remember some years ago when a distinguished officer, whose name I need not mention, came out to Australia, I had an interview with him, in the course of which he represented to me some of his difficulties. I told him that, at any rate in our then stage of military development, where one of the great essentials was not merely effectiveness but economy, he ought to make himself as thoroughly conversant with all matters connected with expenditure as the Treasurer himself. I do hope, therefore, that when this administration comes into operation, we shall have no unnecessary friction between the officer in command and the civil administration, because after all it is the man at the head of affairs who will, by his magnetic influence, if he possesses it, give life and vigour and create an esprit de corps throughout the whole of the branches of the service. Then the next question that naturally arises is that of the training of officers. I agree with those honorable members who say that it is absolutely necessary that we should have a military training college. After all military business, like everything else, is continually

developing, and besides the ordinary branches of military knowledge, which almost any man can learn in a short time, we shall have to deal with the scientific improvements which are made from time to time, and with which we must be entirely conversant if we are to keep pace with the rest of the world. Therefore, we must give every opportunity to every man in Australia who may be anxious to serve his country as an officer, to accomplish his military education. I believe there are many men of independent means who would readily place their services at our disposal. I do not mean to infer for one moment that anything but merit should be the test of progress, but if we have a number of men of independent means, who will not take the position of professional soldiers because there may be no avenue of promotion open ' to them here, but who wish to make themselves thoroughly capable officers in the citizen army of Australia, we are bound to give them the opportunity - if they like to give up years of their time to the training necessary - to make them thoroughly efficient. After all, everything in warfare depends upon the skill of the officer. The men, if they have confidence in their officers, will follow them to the very death, whereas, if we have an army in which, by any loose system, one man is practically as good as another, and there is no confidence in the skill and science and knowledge of the officers, that army, under many circumstances, will be simply a rabble. According to this Bill, the foundation of our military system is to be the cadet corps. I do not at the present moment see how we are going to interfere with the cadet arrangements of the different States. I do not see how, as a Commonwealth, while we can exercise power over the volunteers and the permanent forces and the militia, we are also going to actively interfere with the cadets, because the drilling that the cadets undergo is part of the educational system which is carried out under State laws.

Mr Mauger

- Unfortunately it is only sectional.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I am coming to that. I think that if every man is to be a citizen soldier, he ought to be trained in the schools of Australia. I think, moreover, that, in the first place, it ought to be compulsory in our public schools to undergo a military training, and that, in the second place, there ought to be an effort made by the different States - possibly by the Commonwealth - to induce every school, whether public or private, to make drill instruction part of its curriculum. Furthermore, I would go so far as to debar from certain civil privileges any man who could not show a certificate that he had gone through a certain course of drill at school. It seems to me that we must begin right at the very beginning of the system, because it is, after all, at that period of life when the mind and the body are supple that we can lay the groundwork of that training and discipline which are absolutely necessary to bring an efficient army into existence. The next matter I have to deal with is the permanent force. I have heard a great deal about the necessity of keeping the permanent force within very limited bounds. I would, however, point out that the permanent force is not required entirely for the manning of our batteries. There is something in the military business besides the firing of a gun from a battery. There is a certain amount of military training, including engineering and other matters, in regard to which men must be thoroughly instructed if we are to have the nucleus of an army. Some honorable members have made a very strong stand against the militia as a system. I am not sufficiently versed in military affairs to give a decided opinion on this question, but if we do not have a considerable number of militia as practically our second line of defence, as men practically trained up to a certain point, we must increase our permanent force or give more training to our volunteers. There is no doubt that it is impossible to have an army without a large nucleus of really trained men, and we must recollect that we have an enormous field of operations, which will cover the whole of Australia, and that when we divide up our 1,400 or 1,500 men in the permanent force by 6, the number of absolutely trained permanent men in each State will be infinitesimal. I feel myself that 100 men properly trained are better than 1,000 men with very little training.

Mr Conroy

- Not for the fighting there would be here, though.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I believe we may be very much misled by the experience gained in the South African war. We have in this stage of our development a large number of men in the interior of this country - men who have been shooting kangaroos, who have been used to the rifle, and who for the purposes of the war in South Africa

were the very best material that the British Army could possess. But we are changing our conditions. Closer settlement will alter our conditions a great deal in the interior of New South Wales and other large States. Under the policy forced by certain gentlemen who believe in it, we are increasing our town populations and are increasing our manufactures, and the effects of this policy will be absolutely against the creation or maintenance of that class of men who proved themselves so useful in South Africa. Therefore, I feel strongly that we must not be led astray by the glamour of recent events, or by what feeds our vanity, into thinking, as we are such splendid men, that within a few weeks we can become as good soldiers as those belonging to the Imperial army. The very essence of soldiership is discipline and training, and if we are to make soldiers fit for every condition of warfare - and the conditions of warfare may be very different on our shores from what they were in South Africa - I say that whatever system we adopt, we must either have a larger permanent force than is proposed, with every possible new and scientific equipment, and then the citizen soldiers, on the other hand, with a moderate amount of training ; or we must resort to the militia system, and so increase the number of men, that, at any rate, when the time of danger comes, before we bring out our reserves we shall have a large trained force capable of fighting under ordinary conditions. There is another thing. No doubt every honorable member is imbued with the feeling that economy is necessary. In this Parliament, we are waking up to the fact that with 4,000,000 of people, and an enormous territory to govern, and with six State Governments and our Commonwealth Government to provide for, it is absolutely necessary in the interests of the Treasury that we should be as economical as possible ; but what I want to point out is that, in dealing with military matters, we might follow on lines of the false economy. New South Wales has improved its military forces of late years ; there were great improvements before the South African war began at all. At the same time on many occasions, through the intermittent policy of the State, and through injudicious parsimony and want of proper camps and training, the men began to lose heart to such an extent that there was a chance of almost universal disbandment. Therefore, if -we are going to make our military force effective, we must recollect that it is a force that -may have to be mobilized at any time, either in sections or as a whole, and may have to be diverted to any portion of this enormous continent. Consequently, if we are going to be ready for a time of danger, even if we have to spend money, we must be ready to do so in order to give our citizen soldiers opportunities for gaining experience similar to what they would have in actual warfare. And although there is a sort of understanding in this Bill that under certain circumstances there may be, a levy en masse, I put that consideration aside altogether. I put aside the whole idea of compulsory service. The only advantage which it might have in the case of the older men would be that they could not run away, and it would be their duty to face the foe, because when he gets to a certain period of life it is almost impossible to make a soldier out of a man. Therefore, I think that we can readily put aside all those dangers which the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne so much fears. We can accept the compulsory clause as simply meaning that there is an inherent power in the Government, if the country is in danger, to call out everybody to the last man. But there is no such chance. The effective force of any country must be the men who are between 21 and 35 years of age.. The rifle clubs which are recognised in the Bill will probably spread very much, and will, I feel sure, prove to be a matter of great expense. While the idea is a good one, and while no doubt the first qualification of a man as a soldier under modern conditions is to be able to shoot ; still I think that if large subsidies are granted to these rifle clubs in all parts of Australia they ought to be made effective. It ought to be seen that their establishment is not a mere matter of play, and that money is granted only where effectiveness is secured. I can clearly see that the expenditure upon rifle clubs, if we are not very careful, will be about half the expenditure upon our whole defence system. Then we come to the question of naval defence. To my mind there is no doubt that the cheapest bargain we can make is to allow Great Britain to defend us upon the seas. We have an enormous coastline. The honorable member for West Sydney gave us some remarkable figures with regard to the operation which would have been carried out if we had bought ships for ourselves. I do not think that those figures are correct. At present we have this advantage : that if a type of vessel is introduced, which becomes obsolete, Great Britain bears the expense. If new vessels replace those now in use, they will have to be furnished by Great Britain. When we consider that we contemplate an expenditure of £500,000 a year upon the military defence, whilst we pay only £125,000 to Great Britain for our naval defence, surely we must regard the latter as' very small matter indeed. My opinion is that we ought to be generous in this respect. We ought to lay down the

principle that Great Britain is to defend our shores against invasion ; but I think there might be means adopted by which a larger number of our young men could be introduced to the British Navy, and by which we should have the right to the nomination of a very much larger number of cadets, under reasonable examinations, every year. One of the great dangers to Great Britain at the present time is the want of seamen for her defences. I am very much afraid that in Australia/ - where there are so many other pursuits and avocations - we are neglecting to train men for naval purposes. After all, we shall ultimately, no doubt, have a navy of our own. But seamen, unlike volunteers, cannot be made in a few days, and it would be a good thing if the Commonwealth Government considered the necessity of purchasing a training ship, and the possibility of creating material for the navy, even if that material at the present time went over to the British Government. But if we ask the British navy to defend our 8,000 miles of Australian shores, we ought to be ready to second that navy in its efforts. Every strategic point in Australia ought ultimately to be reached by railway communication. Of course, we should man the forts, defend the coaling stations, and be ready to carry our army to any particular point. But at the present time I think that, in view of the military necessities of our position, it would be well to get a thorough report with regard to a railway both to Port Darwin and Western Australia. Then having made these two great trunk lines there ought to be an obligation on the part of the States to make a railway to every strategic point within their borders, because the system will be complete only when every strategic point is easily accessible. It is like a chain, the strength of which is equal to that of its weakest link. If Great Britain is going to defend us with her navy at an almost nominal cost, we ought to be prepared by every means of locomotion to mass our troops at every strategic point throughout Australia. As regards our position in the Empire, I believe those who are utterly opposed to the spirit of Jingoism will be at one with others in accepting our 'share' of the responsibilities of the Empire. It is not, as some people attempt to make out, a responsibility which we have no right to incur. The connexion between Great Britain and us at the present time is that of mutual interest. We believe that the connexion with Great Britain is as much a matter of interest as of patriotism. We have found during the past 30 years that nearly every nation in Europe has had "the most bitter hatred of England. We know that several nations at the present moment are grabbing every bit of habitable land that they can take from strangers. Our interest - if we are going to keep together this great Empire in which we are all mutually interested by trade and by ties of affection and every other link - is to work with Great Britain in its defence. Therefore, it seems to me that it is not an unreasonable thing to provide in this Bill for the possibility of our helping the mother country in parts beyond the seas. I do not think there should be anything in this Bill which by any possible construction could lead to the view that our citizen soldiers could by any order of the Government operate beyond the seas.

Mr Higgins

- They can be compelled here.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I believe that technically my friend is right ; but that provision can be altered in committee. I do not believe that is the intention of the Bill. I believe it is a wise provision; that we can practically send our permanent force wherever we like. It might be necessary to send them to some places outside of the Commonwealth in defence of the Empire. They are not likely to be sent so long as they are in their present numerical strength, because there are only sufficient to man our batteries ; therefore, that is no danger which we need apprehend.. I do not think that we ought, in time of danger, to discourage the volunteering of our men for service in other parts of the world.

Mr Higgins

- The difficulty is not in discouraging our volunteers, but has reference to compelling men to leave Australia if they become members of our force.

Sir William Mcmillan

- I do not believe in any man outside the permanent force being compelled to leave Australia. .

Mr Higgins

- Why should even the members of the permanent force

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- The members of the permanent force are soldiers by profession, and I think they have a right to go

wherever they are sent. But in the future there might perhaps be certain limitations with regard to the men who would be sanctioned as volunteers. At the same time we ought to know that there is nothing like experience in any business, and if Great Britain has her small wars in different parts of the world it would be very reasonable for men who could afford it to learn on the actual field of battle the experience which they cannot get anywhere else. At any rate, we do not want a Bill which will be so inelastic that it cannot meet conditions which cannot be foreseen. Whilst this question with regard to the militia is one difficult to decide, I say that, whatever we decide, we certainly ought to see that the soldiery which we create - even citizen soldiers under the Commonwealth - shall be as effective as possible so that they may not fail us in the time of danger.

Mr KNOX

- I must ask the indulgence of the House, suffering as I have been, for some time past from a very severe cold, which has prevented me from having the privilege of hearing the speeches of the Minister who introduced this Bill, and of other honorable members who followed him eloquently and instructively. I have heard to-night two excellent speeches, and although it may have been my duty to read all that has been said upon this subject, I believe honorable members will agree that Hansard is from the length of our debates becoming so bulky, that, with ordinary attention to the necessities of one's health, to read it is more than one white man's burden. I have not been able to do more than partially read what the Minister for Defence said in introducing this measure. I was, however, struck by one of his remarks, which was to the effect that the Bill was not for a day, but for all time. I am rather disposed to think that that is one of the mistakes which we are making. In this early period of our Commonwealth life, we are endeavouring to make our Bills too comprehensive, and to cover an amount of ground¹ of which, as yet, we have had no experience. So far as this particular Bill is concerned, I believe it is the most important that has yet been presented to this House. While it is a machinery Bill, it is the first measure to deal with our national life - the first that comes right out into the open and appeals to each of us as citizens of the Commonwealth, to consider what are our privileges and what are our responsibilities.

Mr Mauger

- It is a Bill containing very vital principles.

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Mr KNOX

- The Bill contains very vital principles, ' as the honorable member interjects, and perhaps I may be able to deal with some of those principles. Underlying the measure is reliance on our citizens' life - reliance on it because we may probably have to defend this Constitution for which all of us have worked so hard, and have believed in so much in the past because of its privileges and obligations. I am one of those who believe that an eager people throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth are asking for some indication from Parliament as to what those privileges are. They are getting practical information day by day that the obligations are very great. It seems to me that we shall have to be careful and cautious in the measures that are passing this House, and in this measure in particular, in order that the citizens of the Commonwealth who have been expecting so much from the Constitution may not be disappointed, and led to believe the undertaking is a more expensive one and a more cumbersome one than they ever imagined. When I read the speech of the Minister for Defence in introducing the Bill, I was satisfied that he took a broad and proper view of the situation, recognising our privileges, and the responsibility we have of protecting those, privileges ; and am prepared in the main to support the measure. The Minister intimated that as the first line of defence, he desired there should be a permanent force. I cannot agree with the position taken up earlier in the evening by the honorable member for West Sydney, that such a force is unnecessary and a menace to the democracy of this country. On the contrary, I believe 'that such a force is absolutely necessary as an instructive centre for the defence forces that are to be organized in connexion with the Commonwealth. A permanent force is also necessary as a protection to the democracy against those who would do it harm and mislead it into injurious ways, and bring about its destruction in¹ the way that was so ably demonstrated by the honorable member who advocated that we should have no permanent nucleus of this character. In my judgment, the honorable member contradicted himself in a most able speech. I unquestionably believe that one of our necessities is a permanent force as a nucleus or centre round which all the other forces will gather for the protection of this land against a foreign foe. As a second line of defence I believe in a

paid militia. But behind that permanent force and a paid militia, is the great force on which the protection of this Commonwealth depends, namely, the citizens themselves.

However important these first and second lines of defence are, I heartily agreed with the honorable member for West Sydney when he demonstrated that we have to look for support and help in times of trouble to our own people and to our own citizen soldiers. It has been well pointed out that these citizen soldiers must be systematically and regularly instructed. If they are not to have, as we desire, officers whose whole time is employed in learning their professional work, we shall have ineffective instruction which will be detrimental to the whole service of the Commonwealth. As probably some honorable members are aware, I have consistently and strongly advocated the extension of rifle clubs. I believe that no man should have a right to citizenship unless he is able to show that he can defend his country by the use of his rifle. Every man should be able to show that for a certain period of each year he has practised with the gun and is able to use that necessary weapon in defence of his country. I recognise the truth of what the honorable member for Wentworth said, namely, that at the very basis of the whole system are the cadets. I have already in my humble way tried to urge strongly and consistently that it ought to be compulsory upon every boy who is physically fit, to learn the elements of drill and the use of the ordinary Francotte rifle. I use the word "compulsory" advisedly, not in the sense that a child is to be taken away from an unwilling parent, but in the sense that at this period of a boy's life he may be instructed in the elements of drill and in the use of his rifle. in such a way that he will never forget, no matter to what age he may attain. I use the word " compulsory " in the same sense that I would apply it to the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Every boy who is physically capable, and whose parents have no objection on the ground of religious or other scruples, ought to be compelled to learn what I have indicated. The youth, growing into manhood, should be accustomed to the military habit. I do not for a moment desire that this or any other measure which passes this House, should spread throughout the country the bombastic- idea that, because we have raised ourselves to Commonwealth level, we are going to start a big military system. I do not wish to do anything of that kind. What I desire is that each man should feel an individual obligation and an individual wish to make himself competent and to gain sufficient experience and knowledge to be able to defend his home and his hearth in the time of his country's need. That must be the basis of all this legislation : and if we once depart from that basis it seems to me that we shall drift into something which will be so unwieldy and so large that I question whether the resources of , this Commonwealth would be able to carry the burden without resentment on the part of the people, because of its undue weight. I feel that I cannot too strongly urge the need of impressing on the Bill the principle of giving assistance to rifle clubs. Unless the Minister for Defence is prepared to give the rifle clubs the means of practice in the shape of ranges, and unless he is prepared to put into their hands up-to-date weapons, it will be quite idle for him to give them rifles at all. The equipment must be complete ; and if I have any complaint at all in regard to this measure, it is that we have no adequate intimation from the Minister of what the general proposals and intentions of the department are in regard to the personal equipment of the military, the militia, the volunteers, and the rifle clubs. I do not wish to weary the House with the statement of well-known facts, but we have here weapons which are utterly out of date, and which, if an attack were made upon Sydney or upon Melbourne, would be demolished by the more modern and superior weapons of the enemy. All these obsolete guns ought to be properly replaced, and yet the Minister gives us no explanation of his general intentions in this direction.

Mr Poynton

- How much does the honorable member think it would cost to do what he suggests 1

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Mr KNOX

- I am not in a position to answer that question, and it could be answered properly only by the officer who will be in command of the forces, after he has obtained the best advice on the subject. We might, however, expect from the Minister for Defence a statement which would supply us with some information on the subject. In my opinion one of the most just causes for the borrowing of money by the Commonwealth will be the equipment of our land forces and the putting of our fortifications into proper condition. I believe that not less than £500,000 will be required for this work, and so large a sum will require careful and judicious consideration in its disbursement. The Minister for Home Affairs has

informed me that the military equipment of New South Wales is much better than that of the other States. In Victoria our forces have been absolutely starved in the matter of equipment, during some years past. Recently there appeared to be some justification for a not too precipitate expenditure, since the department was about to be taken over by the Commonwealth, and as there would naturally be re-organization it was thought undesirable to deal with our forces in a piecemeal fashion. It has been stated that the Bill makes no provision for naval defence. I am perfectly satisfied that the more honorable members consider the enormous expense which would be necessary to create a fleet at all adequate to our requirements of coastal defence, the more they will be inclined to agree that the Minister has acted wisely in deciding that for many a long year to come we must depend upon the mother country to assist us. It is important that we should have her to depend upon, and, as one honorable member interjected, what would be our position if we had not the protection of Great Britain ? Another honorable member stated that if we stood alone we should be less liable to attack. I hold that if we stood alone it would not be long before envious eyes would be cast upon this continent, and we should have very little strength to resist the great forces that might be brought against us. I regard any suggestion that we should attempt to organize a naval defence of our own as utterly beyond the possibility of realization. The matter is- one which cannot be brought within the range of practical politics for many years to come. We must continue to look to the old motherland for assistance and help in time of need, and we know that we shall not look in vain. I think, however, that the time is not far distant when it will be necessary for us to contribute more than we are now paying for the protection which we receive from the mother country. We have taken upon us the privileges and the responsibilities of nationhood. Our brothers and our sons have gone to South Africa, and they have done their duty there well, so that the eyes of the civilized world have been fixed upon us. But while we have been brought into prominence, and have obtained the advantages of nationhood, we must not forget that we have also its responsibilities to face, and must meet the risks which our prominence has brought us. While it will be impossible for us to organize a naval force which will to any extent be adequate for our protection, we should have a service which will be useful for the protection of our harbors and fortifications. Such a force would provide means for the absorption of a large number of our youths who at present have no regular employment. In it they would be disciplined and be given occupation, and they would be made serviceable citizens and defenders of the Commonwealth, should occasion arise. It will also be necessary to have a school of military instruction established within the Commonwealth. Inasmuch as we are an island continent, we should have within us the resources necessary for the instruction and education of those who are to take command of the various divisions of our military service. I hold, too that all small arms and ammunition should be manufactured within the Commonwealth, and that the time is not far distant when we shall be able to cast our own ordnance and large guns. Now that our defence forces are to be organized on broad lines, there is no reason why we should not make them complete. While I hope that we shall be for ever associated with the mother country, . I trust that we shall be a unit, capable of standing by ourselves, and of doing all that is possible for our own defence. There has been considerable dispute as to what the classification of the service which is made in the Bill really means. I am disposed to think that the Minister placed it in the Bill to indicate what men would be required in the case of national emergency to come forward to defend their country; but in my opinion, if the country were ever in danger, no compulsion would be necessary to obtain defenders. The difficulty would be to hold our people back. The Minister wisely and well indicated that in his opinion, and in the opinion of the experts who advised him, the classification in the Bill should be the order of those who would take their places in the line of battle should emergency arise. I hold the view that there is an inviolable and unbreakable obligation on every man to respond to the call of duty,- and to defend his country when necessity arises. His rights of citizenship are bound up with that duty, and he is unworthy of citizenship if he is not prepared to perform it. In this democratic age, I say that no man should have the rights of citizenship no right to record his vote as a citizen until he had shown *a qualification in his ability _ to protect his country in case of need. With regard to the question of national emergency, I think "that probably some amendment might be inserted which would make it clear that what is referred to is an emergency of national disaster or of invasion by a foreign foe. I think that the desire of the House is that this should not be an aggressive measure, but purely a Defence Bill. Therefore I do not see any necessity for the power which is proposed to be given for sending our forces outside the limits of the Commonwealth. Unless it is shown that it is necessary for our defence, our forces should

never be sent outside the limits of the Commonwealth without the sanction of Parliament, which in a real emergency would not be difficult to secure. I have read all the penal clauses which take up so large a portion of the concluding part of the Bill. I am disposed to think that unless the motive for service rests in the hearts of the people, and in their love and respect for the Commonwealth, and their affection for the land in which they were born, very many of these penal clauses will be inoperative and ineffective at a "time of disaster. Doubtless, however, many of them are necessary, but other honorable members will probably agree with me that some of them will require from the Minister an explanation, which he will no doubt be ready to give. I say this with considerable diffidence, because I am aware that this Bill is the outcome of careful consideration by a body of men whose lives have been spent in military pursuits, and who have had not only their own experience, but the history of war to guide them. Still I apprehend that it will be competent for every one of us to do as we have had to do in legal matters - namely, while respecting the technical opinion of those thoroughly trained to the subject, to hold ourselves at liberty to take a common-sense view of the situation. I strongly feel that the foundation of our whole defence system is to be found in our cadet corps, and that if we implant in our cadets the necessity of having instruction in elementary drill and the use of the rifle, our lines of defence will always be adequately filled. Whilst it may be necessary for us to retain the power, irrespective of any mention in this Bill, of calling upon every man who is physically capable to come forward and defend his country in case of necessity, I hold that we shall find in any case of national emergency that our men are ready to defend their country. They must, however, be led properly, and they must have proper instruction and equipment. I feel, therefore, that the whole measure is one of such importance that it fully deserves that careful consideration which I am sure every honorable member will give it. We should, however, keep constantly before our eyes the one fact upon which we can and must rely - that our citizens will come to our aid voluntarily in hundreds of thousands in any case of national necessity.

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Mr MANIFOLD

- I think this is one of the most important measures that we could have before us. It deals with the question that has perhaps more than any other brought Australia together, because the States separately could not deal with the defence of our shores in the same way, or with the same effect as can the Federal Parliament. Now that we have become a united people we must remember that what we do will be looked upon by the outside world in a different light altogether from that in which our actions as States have been regarded in the past. We are going to be brought into closer connexion with the old country, and perhaps it may be our privilege to have, a voice in the external affairs of the British nation. It has been argued by some honorable members on the other side of the House that this Bill is too indefinite, too much of a skeleton, and the honorable member for West Sydney has stated that there is nothing new in the proposal, and has expressed a wish that the Government should come down with a new proposal, I would, however, ask those honorable members who argue in that way what they would have said if the Government had come down with a scheme involving a very large expenditure for naval or military purposes. We are asked to deal with this Bill only in order to regulate the forces at present in existence, but I have not the slightest doubt that in the future the Government will have to spend a great deal more money in the defence of the Commonwealth than they have done in the past. It is unquestionable that the day will come when we shall be called upon to take our share in the wars of the world - unless some system of arbitration is adopted under which all war will cease. That is what we should all strive for, but it seems almost impossible to bring about any such condition of affairs at present. The Bill deals almost entirely with the military forces, and to a very small degree with the naval forces, but this is owing to the fact that we have practically no navy, whereas we have a considerable number of soldiers, and principally citizen soldiers. I should have liked to see more attention paid to the naval side of our defences in the Bill. We have in the past contributed a certain amount of money to the British Government towards the maintenance of certain war vessels on the Australian station, but I believe we shall, in a short time, have to increase that subsidy, and I hope that we shall then insist upon it that these vessels shall not be taken away from the Australian station. Some honorable members have stated that in a case of emergency the vessels forming the Australian squadron would be taken away to China or elsewhere, but I think that when we contribute a larger amount towards the expenditure of the navy we should insist upon the assurance that these vessels will be used for our defence, and our defence only. It

is impossible for us at the present time to think of having a navy of our own, because we know the cost of battleships, and that to obtain only two or three of a first-class type would absorb a very large amount of our revenue, and would impose on us a heavier tax than we could bear. We must, therefore, rely upon the assistance of the British Government, and we should certainly take a hand in helping that Government to maintain its navy. If we do increase the amount of our subsidy towards the Australian squadron, we should endeavour to obtain a larger number of vessels on this station. Some honorable members have contended that it will be impossible to do any good with our fleet unless we have vessels of the very first class ; but I would point out that it is improbable that any of the first-class men-of-war would be sent out to attack Australia, as their heavy coal consumption would almost prohibit them from taking such a long voyage. They do not carry a very large quantity of coal ; and it is very probable that no ship beyond the rating of a second-class cruiser would be sent out to molest us. The reserve ships we have at the present time remain in Sydney, and rightly so, because Sydney is the naval depot of the station, but we should, endeavour to increase our naval brigades, or what might be called our naval reserves, and endeavour to have the warships forming our squadron distributed over various important centres throughout the Commonwealth. It would be useless to have naval reserves unless we had ships upon which we could train them, and I think it would be a great improvement if the ships that are in reserve were not entirely retained in Sydney but sent where there would be sufficient forces to man them. It would not be necessary to have the most improved class of ships for this purpose, because, as I said before, it is improbable that first-class battleships would be sent out to this station. Another matter that might receive attention is the desirability of always having a sufficient number of guns on hand in the Commonwealth so that some of our merchantmen might be fitted up in case of emergency. We know that the British Government subsidizes merchant steamers in order that she may have the call upon them and equip them for service in time of war if she should think it necessary. A merchantman would not of course be so good as a man-of-war, but what we have particularly to dread in the event of difficulties in which Great Britain might be involved, is that our commerce, both- Inter-State and with parts beyond the sea, might be practically, destroyed by an enemy. Honorable members can very well imagine what would happen if a fast cruiser - even a merchantman - were sent into these waters. She could capture practically the whole of our merchant steamers, and we should not only suffer the loss of our vessels, but we should give the enemy facilities for replenishing his coal supply, and so enable him to cause us a great deal more trouble than would otherwise be possible. In the future I hope that all the principal ports of the Commonwealth will, wherever practicable, be fortified. This, of course, will involve a very much greater expenditure of money than we have hitherto incurred. We should have a sufficient number of men to man all our forts, but I do not think it is necessary to have our forts fully garrisoned by permanent men. We should have a sufficient number of permanent men to work the guns and man the forts with the assistance of members of our militia forces in the neighbourhood. It would be impossible to get members of the militia force down to the forts from a distance in time to assist the permanent men in meeting an attack, which would probably be made very suddenly ; but we should take care that all the men required from the militia forces are always ready to assist those who are permanently employed in the forts. It would assist a foreign power very much in making an attack upon us, if we left certain ports open which the enemy's men of war could enter and make coal depots of. They would then be able to run into these harbors without any opposition at all, and replenish their bunkers whenever required.

Mr Conroy

- What port is that?

An Honorable Member. - Warrnambool, for instance.

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Mr MANIFOLD

- They could hardly get in there. But there are certain ports of the Commonwealth into which they could get. Some limit might be placed upon the supply of coal which is kept on hand. That is a point which should also receive attention. The permanent force is a necessity, and I think it is almost a necessity to increase that force. The guns of to-day want a great deal of working, and I have known - with all due deference to the artillery of Victoria - a battery to be taken down for practice to the heads, and when the men were put to use the guns it was found that they could not hit anything at all. Perhaps it may be that the guns were to them what the revolver is to a novice. In other words, the guns were probably more

dangerous to them than they would be to an enemy. That is owing to the fact that we have not a sufficient supply of guns on hand. These men are drilled with the old fashioned weapons, so that when they are turned out to active service they are asked to use a gun which they have never seen before. Clause 71 of the Bill compels railway authorities to carry troops. In a case of this kind do the Government intend that the railway authorities shall be paid for carrying those troops ? I hope that is so, because whatever service we get for nothing is generally very badly performed and is not worth having. If it was a commercial arrangement, we could insist upon better treatment. I know that the volunteers and militia, when going into camp - especially in Victoria. - are treated very badly indeed. When coming from the country districts they are kept practically a whole day upon the railway line. In the case of mounted men, when they arrive in Melbourne with their horses on board, they are perhaps told that the train to convey them to the encampment will not leave for three or four hours. I have known occasions when men have left their homes at three or four o'clock in the morning, and have not reached camp till nine o'clock in the evening. These men were volunteers, and naturally felt a little sore over treatment of that character. I hope that the cadet system will be maintained throughout the Commonwealth. The honorable member for Wentworth said that the cadet corps and rifle clubs would prove a source of great expenditure to us. Other honorable members have argued that the cadets should be trained entirely by the Education department. I think that they should be looked after by the Defence department, and that proper treatment should be meted out to them. To argue that these boys should be trained with dummy guns is, I think, to suggest an absolute farce. Surely if it is worth while training the cadets at all, it is worth while giving them a small rifle to drill with. To ask the boys to drill with a sham rifle, and to give them only a few genuine weapons with which to practice, would provoke great dissatisfaction, and deprive them of very necessary encouragement. Honorable members no doubt have noticed the cadets marching along the streets in their uniforms and carrying their guns. How would they look if asked to march along with a piece of wood, no matter what its shape might be ? Most of the Australian citizens would be ashamed of the parsimony of the Government in such circumstances, and the cadets would not be half so proud of their association with the forces as they are at the present time. The rifle club movement is one which should receive every consideration. Undoubtedly there is a certain number of men who have joined these clubs who are unfit for active service. But that is owing to the regulations. The clubs need to have a certain number of members before they can be established. This is a mistake. I do not say that some elderly men are not as fit to fight as some of their younger brethren, -but there are quite a number in these clubs who are utterly unfit to go. upon active service. To make this class of men good shots is simply a waste of money. As regards the matter of appointments, I think that every appointment should be made upon its merits, irrespective of where the officer may come from. Before a man is allowed to get a commission it is proper that he should pass through the ranks. Such officers are almost invariably the best men. They understand the routine. When ordering their troops to do a certain thing they know exactly how it should be done, and the proper way in which to give the order. The establishment of a military college is a step which should receive the careful consideration of the Government. We have a great number of men in our forces who, if they received a certain amount of training- and in this connexion I am not of the same opinion as certain honorable members who have spoken this evening, and who consider that a military college should be established for " swells" or for an idle class of men who have practically nothing to do - might develop ' into very efficient officers. The Government should assist any man in the ranks who is qualified to take a commission by allowing him to attend such a college and learn all that he possibly can in, say, three years. I am perfectly certain that under such circumstances many men would prove a great acquisition to the forces. It is of very little use to talk about how we are going to raise or maintain our troops, unless we supply them with proper up-to-date rifles and artillery. If an invasion took place under the present conditions, we should have a certain number of men - practically the whole of the male population of the Commonwealth - willing to fight, but what would be the position ? Hardly any more than the present forces - the men who have their rifles in their own possession or in the barracks - would be able to arm. The Government of the day would simply have to refuse to enrol any more men, because they would not be able to supply them with rifles. An ample supply of rifles and guns is absolutely necessary, but these too will be useless unless we are able to make our own ammunition within the Commonwealth. In the case of war breaking out, our connexion between Australia and the old world would be practically cut off. If a few reverses had been sustained by the British, Australia would soon be cut off from communication with the

outside world. I hope that we shall see the establishment- -not by a private company, but under the Government - of an ammunition factory and also of an explosives factory. I do not see why the two should not be combined. In the future, too, I think that we should be able to make our own arms within the Commonwealth. It is to be regretted that the Minister for Defence is absent upon an occasion of this sort. No doubt valuable suggestions have been thrown out, and I hope that he will hear of what has taken place.

Mr Barton

- I have taken care to make a note of every suggestion that has been made.

Mr MANIFOLD

- I hope there will be no meanness exhibited in connexion with the management of our forces. Of course I realize that money should not be wasted, but I look upon the defence expenditure as an insurance fund. It is of very little use to keep our money in our pockets if we are to have our homes taken away from us by a foreign power. Every encouragement should be given to the military forces. There are some clauses in this Bill with which I do not agree, but taking into consideration the various matters with which it is intended to deal, it is as good a measure as could be introduced at the present time.

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Mr HUME COOK

- I might preface my remarks this evening by expressing the opinion that the House is very much indebted to the honorable member for West Sydney for the splendid speech which he has delivered. For my part I thought that he brought to bear a large amount of information and judgment in discoursing upon the topic which is before us. I do not agree entirely with what he said, but we ought, I think, to recognise meritorious performance wherever it is evidenced. I desire to pay the honorable member this tribute for the treat which he gave us, and for the matter which he placed before us. The subject of defence is a very important one. The honorable member for Corangamite said that it was one of the first purposes of the federation. This Bill must be taken as evidence of the fact that the Government are desirous of placing the defence forces of Australia upon something like a uniform basis. While that is so, I do not gather from the proposals of this Bill that the promise which was held out to Australians in federating is likely to be redeemed to the full. We expected to procure uniformity in connexion with defence matters by means of federation and to guarantee comparative safety ; but I think that we also expected to exercise economy. I fear that, instead of economy being the order of the day in respect of the defence forces, the proposals contained in this Bill are more likely to lead to expense and extravagance than is any system which we have previously known in the history of the States. It has been suggested that it is necessary to spend a large amount of money in order to get better results. I do not know that any honorable member grudges the expenditure of money which will place our defence forces upon something like a sound basis, but there is not a man, either in this House or outside of it, who would not regret exceedingly a drifting into extravagance in connexion with the management of those forces. I fear that what the honorable member for West Sydney has said is about to take place. He used a very admirable phrase. He said that we were likely to get a military establishment which would be prolific in expenditure, but very barren - from an analysis of this Bill - of actual defence purposes. It seems to me that no other conclusion can be arrived at. There will be any number of appointments to make at, I suppose, very good salaries. The power of the Minister is unlimited in this respect. There are to be inland districts created, and although we are led to believe that these districts will be coterminous with the States, there is nothing in the Bill to say so. In fact, the power given to the Minister by the measure is unlimited, and any number of districts may be established. These may be subdivided again, and, in fact, right throughout the Bill powers are sought to be obtained, - all of which involve an outlay of money which is not justified. Clause 37, for example, gives extraordinary powers to the Governor-General, which to the mind of a peaceful citizen like myself are alarming. The Governor-General has the right to construct boats, ships, build defence works, and I do not know what besides. These sort of things it seems to me ought to be done only by a Bill brought down to Parliament. It may be, of course, that the whole of the works are to be constructed out of revenue. If that is so the only opportunity to criticise them, or any proposals of expenditure in this regard, would be when the Estimates were before Parliament. But where powers are given to build huge defence works, and actually to build ships of war, as seems to be the case under this particular clause, Parliament ought to have greater control over the expenditure than it appears likely to have under this Bill.

Mr Barton

- The Government could not carry out any one of these works without a vote of this House.

Mr HUME COOK

- I am aware of that. I have already said that if this were a matter of building out of revenue we should have only the right to criticise the expenditure when the Estimates were before the House.

Mr Barton

- And prevent the expenditure, too.

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Mr HUME COOK

- It would be a preferable course to discuss these public works, as they would be in a certain sense, in detail under a Bill. That is, I know, a matter of opinion. But if large undertakings of the kind are to be gone on with, we ought to have the fullest opportunity of discussing them in detail. I do not wish to obtrude State politics into a question of this kind, but I recollect that in similar circumstances in Victoria, when it was proposed to expend money in this way, a certain proportion of the surplus was set aside and Bills brought forward, so that they could be dealt with in detail by the House. That practice proved very satisfactory. What I fear is, that we are creating a sort of octopus of militarism, which will spread its tentacles in all directions, and grasp with a power which may eventually crush us. I am not averse to spending money which will put the defence forces of the Commonwealth on a sound footing; but I am extremely averse to expending huge sums without adequate or proper result. The Defence department is the one department over which we have least control - in which money may be most easily expended, and in which the best, or rather the most plausible, excuses can be put forward for the expenditure. It is necessary to protect the interests of the Commonwealth, it is said - it is necessary to protect life and limb, and so on and so forth ad infinitum - of such excuses we get no end. What I say is, that hitherto we have managed to defend Australia, or, at any rate, to be so far free from attack, without expending a very great deal. Speaking from memory and under correction, I think that something, under £1,000,000 sterling has been sufficient up to the present to carry on the defence of Australia. Under this Bill the sum that may be asked for is from three quarters of a million, to a million and three quarters, and the only possible means so far as I can see of checking the expenditure will be when the Estimates are before us, and that is a most unsatisfactory way. A single item is challenged, and an amendment is perhaps carried, reducing a particular officer's salary. The committee feels that it has vindicated itself and hundreds of thousands of pounds, and possibly more are passed in items of expenditure of which we know nothing, but which in the aggregate may come to much more than the particular item that may have been discussed, and which seemed of such importance at that particular time. Our military or defence expenditure ought to grow, if it grows at all, only in proportion to our industrial and commercial development. If the finances of the Commonwealth improve in the way we all hope they will improve, under the better trading conditions that are presently to be observed - if our population increases and our riches grow proportionately - we shall be prepared, of course, to spend a larger sum of money in defence of the Commonwealth. But to expend moneys in a large and generous fashion in the absence of any such industrial or commercial development would be a suicidal policy - a policy we could not possibly endure. It may be all very well to say that the peaceful nations of the earth - the democracies of the earth - have been swept aside by military despotism, but it is just as fair to say that the powers of the earth, particularly the continental powers, are to-day groaning and struggling under a weight of military expenditure, incurred in order that those countries may keep their positions in the world's affairs. Which of the two is the worse case would be very hard to determine. For my part, I prefer to expend money in trying to make Australia worth fighting for, rather than have the Commonwealth saddled with a large expenditure without corresponding possibilities of industrial or commercial development. We want to make Australia as far as possible an attractive country, where man will get the finest, fullest, and freest opportunity of employment with the certainty of the largest return for individual labour. We cannot do that by building up huge taxes and raising levies from the people. We cannot do that by building up a huge military system; but we may do it by making savings in this regard, and expending those savings in the development of those great resources which are ours by natural endowment. I say, therefore, that I would infinitely prefer to take some of the risks of democracy rather than incur the certain penalties of a huge military expenditure, and the disabilities which that expenditure involves, as we can see in other countries of the world, and particularly in the

Continental countries. I am very much inclined, in view of the alarming expenditure which appears to be taking place in connexion with the Commonwealth, and of the possibility of still greater expenditure for defence and other matters in the future, to support the proposal which was put forward by the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, as to a Council of Defence. It seems to me that some check will be required upon the sums which are being increasingly spent in connexion with Commonwealth affairs, and this particular department wants watching more than any other in connexion with our government. There may, therefore, be something to be said for the proposal that the honorable and learned member has put forward for a Council of Defence, not exactly to control the method of working our defences, but to watch as far as possible, and to guide and guard as far as possible, the expenditure in connexion therewith.

An Honorable Member. - What sort of council does the honorable member suggest?

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Mr HUME COOK

- I would suggest a council, partly civil and partly military, but my suggestion in this regard may go for very little. I do not pose as an expert in matters of defence, and I am not here to say what are the right sort of proposals for the defence of Australia, because I know very little about the matter. I am speaking rather with regard to my apprehensions as to the amount of expenditure that will be involved in the proposals under the Bill. That being so, I rather support the suggestion for a Council of Defence as being a safeguard against undue and lavish expenditure. I am the more inclined to support that proposal because I hear it suggested in several quarters that there ought to be a military college established in connexion with the Commonwealth. These proposals are all very fine and large, but they involve huge sums of money, and I do not know that the practical result to be obtained from the establishment of such a college would justify the expenditure. Our principal purpose is defence. We are not a predatory nation - we are not about to seize on other territories, or to add to our material possessions in other parts of the world. We are asked simply to defend what we have had given to us. A military college, while it might afford an opportunity for training certain men whose business and profession will be connected with military affairs in the future, might not be, and in my judgment would not be, such a sound undertaking as the sending of some of our men to the more up-to-date military establishments on the Continent or in the old land, where they would learn the latest developments in the art of war. It might pay us much better to send some of the promising Australians who have elected to follow the military profession to English or other colleges on the Continent.

Mr O'Malley

- To America.

Mr HUME COOK

- Or even to America, as suggested by the honorable member for Tasmania. At such places up-to-date information would be obtained, and probably at a less cost than would be involved in establishing a college which in a very short time might be just as obsolete as the guns we have heard about in connexion with some of the forts at some of the ports in Australia. These are just a few of the reasons which actuate me, as I have said, in supporting the proposal for a Council of Defence, or some such body to act as a check on undue or lavish expenditure. I feel that something ought to be said against the proposal to have so much of the military element introduced into our defences. I rather agree with honorable members who have suggested that our first line of defence is naval. We are to resist attack, not to make it. If we were to have an effective naval patrol along this immense coast-line of ours, it would be much more efficacious than having troops scattered throughout the length and breadth of the continent, costing an immense sum of money while not being too easily mobilized.

An Honorable Member. - It would cost a large sum to build a navy.

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Mr HUME COOK

- I quite agree that it would cost a large sum to build a navy, and I am not going to suggest that we build a navy. I quite agree that it would take a large sum yearly to maintain anything like an adequate patrol, but at the same time we might extend the use of the Australian squadron, and the various boats lately owned by the State Governments, for the purpose I have indicated. In the place of spending money on the establishment of military centres in various parts of the Commonwealth, we might advantageously spend more on what has been termed our first line of defence, namely, the navy or naval brigades, or whatever

they may be, which would take the place on the sea of the projected troops or military contingents on land. As I have already said, what we desire is to make Australia so attractive that we shall have something to defend. If every opportunity were given to the individual, no matter how humble he may be, to get for himself a decent living, and to establish his own home, there would be no great need to provide elaborate precautions such as are outlined in the Bill for compulsory service. When a man has something to defend he does not need to be compelled to defend it, but is quick to look after his own interests. Our chief care ought to be, as I have said more than once, perhaps, before, not to build up a huge military system, but to seek to build up a strong nation of individuals, prosperous each in his own way, and having something to defend, and therefore a settled interest in Australia and Australian concerns. I have no hesitation in saying that it would not be found so easy for a military despotism to sweep aside a democracy of that kind. Those of us who have read of the American War of Independence, know full well that in spite of the fact that the troops that were operating on the American side were untrained and the rawest of raw recruits - and we have this on the testimony of men who led them - none fought better or more bravely. They were fighting for their own hearths and homes out of a patriotic spirit that made them the very best of soldiers. The very same thing would happen in Australia if she had to be defended, and if the individual properties of citizens were in jeopardy. Men would fight in the same way and in the same spirit, and these elaborate precautions as to what has been termed conscription are therefore not necessary. I hope that this particular clause, when we get into committee, will be struck out. It is entirely foreign to everything Australian that men should be compelled to give military service.

Mr Mauger

- It is foreign to everything British.

Mr HUME COOK

- As the honorable member for Melbourne Ports interjects, this compulsion is foreign to British methods, and I do not approve of it at all - first, because it is un-British and foreign ; and secondly, because I do not think it is at all necessary. As to the other suggestion which has been made, that we should have something like a compulsory system of drill instruction, I do not know that there is any great need for it. -The proposal put forward was that we should follow to a large extent the system adopted in Switzerland, where for a certain number of days in each year every citizen has to carry his rifle, and to go through a certain prescribed course, in order that he may be ready to shoulder his rifle in the defence of his country should he be required to do so. I do not believe in any such proposal. If we make the fullest - and the best use of the cadet movement we will get all that we want. There are those who think that it is a mistake to bring the cadets under the control of the Commonwealth. There are those who feel that in training the young Australians in this direction we are engendering a military spirit which in the last resort may be bad for the Commonwealth. There are those who would lead us to believe that there is no occasion for any kind of military provision. I am not one of them. I feel that there is some necessity for precautions being taken, so that if a foreign power thinks it is worth while to make an attack upon us, we shall be able to defend ourselves. While I am opposed to the elaborate precautions proposed by the Bill, I feel that every man ought to have some kind of military training ; that he ought to know the mechanism of a rifle, and how to fire it, and that he should also have some slight knowledge of drill. Therefore, I support a much larger extension of the cadet movement. Apparently, although the Bill recognises the cadet movement, it only contemplates the establishment of junior corps. Senior corps are to be wiped out of existence. That is my reading of the Bill, but I shall be glad to hear that I am mistaken. I support the cadet movement for other reasons. Of course I see, as all other honorable members have seen, that if we train cadets in military exercises they will not forget that training when they are called upon at a later stage to shoulder their rifles in defence of their country. What they have learned in their early years will come back to them, and will make them soldiers much more readily than if they had received no training in their youth, but I think it is necessary that something should be done in this direction, for other reasons. Some time ago I had occasion to ask for a return from the Victorian military authorities as to the number of persons rejected, on the ground of physical unfitness, on presenting themselves for admission, to the permanent forces. That return is two or three years old, but the figures are somewhat interesting. It showed that 71 per cent, of those who presented themselves for examination had to be rejected on the ground of physical unfitness. Allowing that the standard was very high indeed, it must be admitted that that percentage is exceedingly high. I also had occasion to call for a similar return with respect to the Victorian

police force, and the information¹ which I obtained showed the percentage - of rejections on the same ground was likewise exceedingly high there. We have been led to believe that young Australians are active and muscular, but when figures like these are put before us we are somewhat inclined to doubt such statements. For my own part I am inclined to think that the Australian youth is not quite as physically strong as we could wish.

Mr Bamford

- That only applies to Victoria.

Mr HUME COOK

- But what may be true of Victoria may also be true of the other States.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What about the 974,000 that the Minister talked about ?

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Mr HUME COOK

- I very much doubt that statement. I was about to say that the school systems of the Commonwealth are largely responsible for the fact that young Australians are not so physically strong as they might be. I was very much struck recently by a report laid before a medical congress at Brisbane, which referred to the great increase in the number of children suffering from shortsightedness, and nervous disorders of one kind, and another, such as failure after reaching a certain stage to make any further progress in their school studies. I believe that the lack of physical culture in connexion with our school system in Australia is having a deleterious effect upon the manhood of the country. For that reason alone I would strongly support the extension of the cadet movement. It provides that physical exercise which is so very necessary for developing a healthy manhood in Australia. Further than that, it will have the effect, I trust, of rendering the youth of Australia prompt, obedient, and more respectful to their seniors than they are alleged to be in many cases. In many other ways the cadet movement must help to make them brighter and smarter citizens.

Mr Mauger

- They are smart enough now.

Mr HUME COOK

- I am not denying their smartness in certain lines, I am only speaking of their physical strength. The cadet movement is to be the basis of our military organization. That being so, I hope that provision will be made for senior as well as junior cadets, and that as the result of the inclusion of the former we shall have no necessity for extending the military system in the way proposed in the Bill. There are proposals for all sorts of corps and all sorts of military districts and sub-districts, which must run into a very large annual expenditure. In committee we shall require the very fullest explanation as to the amount of money which will be involved in constituting our defence forces on the lines proposed by the Bill. We must be fully satisfied that the amount of money which will be annually asked for will not exceed to any great extent that amount which has already been found sufficient for defence purposes in Australia, and that our defence expenditure will not grow at any faster rate than our industrial and commercial development.

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Mr THOMAS

- I confess that I am one of those who was very much disappointed by the Bill, and also by the speech with which the Minister for Defence introduced it. My disappointment with the Bill sprang from the fact that it is simply drawn up on old lines. During the last eighteen months or two years the British Empire has been engaged in a war in South Africa, which has been a disastrous one in many ways ; disastrous to many a military reputation, and disastrous to many preconceived ideas of military tactics. It does appear to me that in starting anew - as the Federal Government has an opportunity of doing - they ought to avail themselves of the knowledge and experience gained by that war. We are all prepared to admit that the British War Office is about the most absolutely conservative and hopelessly incompetent military authority in the world. We might well expect the British War Office to start on absolutely old lines, but we did expect the Federal Government to do something better. I, personally, did not expect very much from the Federal Government, but, nevertheless, I thought they would do something better in this direction than might have been hoped for from the British War Office. If the war in the Transvaal has done anything, it has certainly shown that the old system of drilling troops until they become mere machines places them at

a great disadvantage in the battlefields of the world today. I am . disappointed with the speech of the Minister for Defence, because I think we wanted something more than an explanation of the Bill. What the country wanted was to learn the aims and the ideals of the Ministry in regard to the great question of militarism and defence generally. We wanted that, rather than a lucid explanation of the Bill, however honest. Of course, it may be. argued that the Bill itself is the policy of the Government on this question. I venture to say, . however, that if it is, the people of this country will be very greatly disappointed. We heard a great deal from various Ministers; when they were on the hustings, about a citizen army. They were very prone to tell us then that they favoured a citizen army. The answer of the people was that the citizen army should be something different from what we have to-day. ' We understood that in future we should not have to depend so much upon a standing army as upon the citizens of the country ; that the citizens would be prepared to undergo a certain amount of drill, so that in time of war we should be able to fall back upon them rather than upon our permanent forces. If this Bill is an answer to the Ministers' statements on the hustings, I fear that the people will be disappointed. It will be said that on the hustings they promised us bread, and that now they have only given us a stone. We as a people asked for fish, and it seems to me that we have got a serpent. This Bill might just as well have been drawn up by the most ardent jingles - a Cabinet composed of such fiery spirits as Lt.-Col. Neild.

Mr CONROY

- I would ask, Mr. Speaker, whether the honorable member is in order in referring to a member of another House.

Mr SPEAKER

- r do not think the honorable member for the Barrier is out of order at all.

Mr THOMAS

- I did not refer to a member of the Senate at all, but to a distinguished officer of New South Wales. As I said, this Bill might have been drawn up by a lot of jingoes, instead of by a Cabinet consisting largely of peace-loving men like the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Trade and Customs. This Bill provides for a permanent force on absolutely the old lines, and for militia and volunteer forces also on the old lines. Perhaps it would be only fair for me to say that I am against war. I see no glory, no pomp in war. There are some men - I believe even so distinguished a man as Lord Roberts - who say that no nation can become great unless it goes through the troubles and trials of war. Personally, however, I have no sympathy with the idea that a nation can become great only as it wades through blood. I can never see any glory or pomp in war. I can never see the flags flying or the drums beating .but I only see the tears of the widow and the fatherless, and to me war is simply hell let loose. But with all that, we have to admit that, as long as society is constituted as it is, we must make some preparations for our1 own defence. If a nation like England, that we till love, that we believed was the first nation in the world for liberty and righteousness, was prepared, at the behest of an unscrupulous Minister like Chamberlain, to go to the Transvaal in order to take the country away from the people who owned it, then we must suppose that Russia, or France, or Germany, might be equally, prepared to look with envious eye's on Australia.

Mr Ewing

- The honorable member knows that that is not in accordance with the facts.

Mr THOMAS

- I say that if England was prepared to go to the Transvaal and take it from the Boers, we might expect Russia or France to act similarly towards us.

Mr Chapman

- That is a libel on England.

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Mr THOMAS

- Therefore, I say that we must make some preparations for defence against any enemies who might come here.

I am prepared to admit that there are some indignities that are worse than death itself, and I personally would rather die than see some foreign flag waving where the British flag waves over us to-day I admit that ' I am not an authority on military matters, like the honorable member for Dalley, Captain Wilks, and various other honorable members who have spoken. My military experience is a very limited one, for I have never fired a rifle, and I have only attended two reviews, one in Melbourne fifteen or sixteen years

ago, and another, the celebrated review at Flemington during the Duke of York's visit. If the Boer War has taught us anything, it seems to me that it has taught us that men are prepared to defend their country without any ceremonial drill, that in the defence of a country there is no necessity for a very gaudy uniform, and that it is very useful - and in all probability most useful - for the people to know a good deal about the geography of their country, so that they make use of its natural advantages in the matter of defence. I believe we must have a citizen army of a certain kind, and I think that army ought to 'be well officered. It should be a great object with us, therefore, to try and get proper officers, and these officers should constitute our only standing army. I am prepared to agree that we should have an army of experts, who should be trained to take the position of officers, either commissioned or non-commissioned, in time of war. I quite disagree with the view of the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, who said that he was not prepared to give precedence to military men even in military matters. I am prepared to "give precedence in purely military matters, to purely military men, only I want to make sure that they know their work, and that they have been properly trained. Every one who joins our training force should, I think, be enlisted at the age of eighteen years, and I would not impose any special restrictions as to height or chest measurement. It will be necessary for those who join our army to have certain physical qualifications, but I would also lay great stress upon their mental qualifications. The men should have to pass certain mental examinations before they were allowed to join. From the ages of 18 to 21 they should be trained, and in that time it could be seen if they had any aptitude for their profession. If they did not show such aptitude, they should be dismissed in the same way as from any private employment. If, on the other hand, they showed any special fitness for the work, they should be allowed to go on, and it should be necessary for them to be continually passing examinations before not only military, but also civil examiners. I do not like the idea of barrack life altogether, but I do not see very well how it is to be avoided while our young soldiers are passing through their military training. I would be prepared to pay them a certain wage, say 10s. to 15s. a week, besides providing them with board and lodging, so that the poorest person might have an opportunity of joining. From these men all our officers should spring ; and, whilst there should be nothing to debar the richest man in the country from joining, at the same time the poorest person should have an opportunity of being trained as an officer.

An Honorable Member. - Would these men have to be withdrawn from their ordinary occupations 1
Mr THOMAS

- Certainly they would.

Mr Higgins

- It would be optional with them to join?

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Mr THOMAS

- Certainly it would be optional; but immediately they joined the army they would have to give the whole of their time. I would suggest that, at the end of the three years' period I have indicated, the young officers should, on showing aptitude for their work, be permitted to devote the whole of their life to the profession. After the age of 21 they should certainly have an increase in their pay, so that at a very early age they might be in a position to marry. I am not going to deal with this matter at very great length, because it is not a nice subject, but, on the contrary, rather a nauseous one. I say there is one great curse connected with a permanent army, and that is the large number of men who suffer from sexual diseases. I find, on looking into the English Hansard, that the Secretary of State for India had to admit that something like 4.8 per cent, of the men in the Indian army suffered from these complaints. I cannot say what is the percentage as regards the English army, because I have not the definite figures, and although I feel sure that the percentage is very large, I do not care to give my impression, because it might be very unfair to do so. Honorable members know that the percentage is a very high one. We know also that on the Continent of Europe this matter is becoming a very serious one, not only as regards the army, but owing to the fact that the soldiers become husbands and fathers, and thus it has a very widespread effect upon the national welfare. I am one of those who say that we have no right to sweat soldiers any more than we have-1 to sweat policemen or any other persons, working in the service of the State, and I say further that I would rather that the waves of the ocean that surround us should, sweep over the continent, and give us a deluge even more complete than Noah's,, than that we should create something to defend us, and that the outcome should be a scourge in our community that would be even worse than death itself. I would

be prepared to give these men a wage so that at an ' early age an opportunity would be given to them to marry. In this army those men mostly noted for physical abilities should be selected to look after the guns, whilst those more remarkable for mental than physical qualities should be detailed to look after the intelligence and strategical and commissariat departments, which are so very important. Those who give evidence of possessing the greatest powers of observation should have an opportunity of being sent to » the old country, to the continent of Europe, and to America, so that they may see what is best in the various armies and military systems of the old world. . Further, I would . provide some plums in the service, so that, men of the keenest intellect would be prepared to devote themselves to military pursuits for. the benefit of the community.. I am entirely opposed to the idea of the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, that precedence should not be given to the permanent military men, because I think that those who are experts in any particular department should be placed at the head of affairs. If in legal matters we want to have anything done, we go to the lawyers, and if I were being tried for my life I would rather have the right honorable leader of the Opposition to defend me than any layman in Australia, however brilliant he might be. I feel sure that the honorable member for Melbourne would not agree to have an ordinary suit of clothes, much . less the uniform in which he appeared here one day - which was a sight for the gods and the envy of mortals - made by an amateur tailor, nor would any of us, if we had a pet corn, like to have a pair of boots made by an amateur cobbler. I say that the officers of our military forces should be highly trained men, and whilst I would be prepared in times of peace to allow men to pander to their vanity and become officers in our volunteer forces, immediately war broke out I would supersede them by men who knew something about what they had to take charge of. I am one of those who think that the uniform should be altogether abolished, except when men are upon duty. There is no necessity, it seems to me; for men to be strutting about the streets or even attending public functions in blazing uniforms. We know that policemen have to use a uniform when they are upon duty. That is quite proper. But immediately they go off duty they are like other people, and wear a decent suit of clothes. A railway guard or a tram conductor has to wear a uniform when upon duty, and the same' remark applies to a station-master. But immediately these' officers are free from duty they go about dressed like ordinary citizens. I cannot see why our soldiers should not adopt the same practice. Instead of military officers going to balls and public functions clothed in all the colours of the rainbow, I do not see why they should not attend dressed in a similar fashion to other people. Personally I would be in favour of doing away altogether with the uniform, except when officers are upon duty. There must, I believe, be a citizen army. I. am one of those who are not prepared to pay that citizen army anything. Consequently I would do away with the militia altogether. The reason why I am of opinion that a citizen army should' not be paid is because I think that citizenship carries with it a certain amount of responsibility. Every man who is a citizen should be prepared to go through a certain number of drills. These could be gone through when he is between 16 and 21 years of age. They need not be very many. The Boer War has proved that it is not necessary, in order to make soldiers, that there should be continual drilling. I think that the boys at school ought to be taught to shoot. I would not object to saying that, unless a man could get a medical certificate that it is impossible for him to pass an examination in rifle shooting, he should be required to pass such an examination before being placed upon the electoral roll. If we have men who are able to shoot, and who understand a certain amount of drill, such as is necessary to teach them the rudiments of discipline, I venture to say that we shall have all that we require in this country. I am not in favour - except under most extraordinary circumstances - of sending troops away from Australia. What we want to do is to create an army for our own defence. I am prepared to admit that in defending ourselves it is sometimes better to send troops to South Africa or to India than to keep them at home. I would rather that a war should be carried on in New Guinea or in New Caledonia than in. Australia.

Mr Higgins

- The enemy will not give us our choice.

Mr THOMAS

- What we want to do is to train the troops in the idea of home defence. If we can do that, it is all that the Empire can reasonably expect of us. If those troops have to go away they will have Imperial officers in charge of them who can use them in other ways. I admit that there is some little difficulty in. connexion with this compulsory enlistment of all citizens. I have received - I presume in- common with every other honorable member - a communication from the Quakers upon this subject. In the circular to' which I refer

they say that -

All war, and therefore all preparation for war, is opposed to the spirit and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can not, therefore, take up arms or otherwise engage in any occupation directly or indirectly concerned in preparation for or prosecution of war, and we appeal to you to protect us, and all who believe with us, in the due observance of our religious principles in this respect.

I am always willing to concede a great deal to any one who has religious scruples upon any subject. I have one or two scruples myself, religious or otherwise. I do not like to give way upon them, but I like other people to have the same liberty as I have myself.-' There will be some little difficulty, perhaps, if we lay it down that everybody shall be liable for service, seeing that the Quakers object upon principle. They are not a very numerous body of the community.

Mr Mauger

- They are protected in Canada.

Mr. PIESSE.-So they are in Tasmania.

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Mr THOMAS

- Then we might get over the difficulty in that way. But upon broad principles, I am prepared to say that every man who has the privileges of a citizen should carry with him the responsibilities of citizenship, and I would not object, therefore, to a provision compelling every citizen to go through a certain number of drills until he attains a certain age. Personally, I am disposed to assist the rifle clubs in every possible way. If we taught the youth of the Commonwealth to qualify as marksmen until they were 21 years of age, I think there would be so many who would learn the use of the rifle that after they had passed that age there would be quite a sufficient number available for all the rifle corps that we desire. I am quite in favour of a small arms factory being established by the Government. I do not agree that such an undertaking should be carried on by private enterprise. It is essentially a matter which the Government ought to undertake. I think that we might very well leave the cadet corps to the State Governments : but the Federal Government might with advantage offer substantial prizes to the schools that were able to turn out the most efficient corps. Examinations could be held throughout the Commonwealth, and the Federal Government might give to the schools showing the most proficiency some substantial prizes. That to my mind would overcome some of the difficulties connected with the cadet corps. This Bill contains so much that I personally object to that I feel strongly tempted to vote against the second reading. I should like to see it sent back to the draftsman to be altered, lock, stock, and barrel. I may not vote against its second reading, but unless there are material alterations made in committee, I shall not hesitate to vote against the third reading of the measure.

Mr MAUGER

- I think that every honorable member will agree that there is great need for a Bill of this description. For a very long time past 'Victoria has felt the need of a Bill clearly defining the position of the defence force and that of the civil authorities. I should like to say that if the South African war, with all its terrible results; has brought home many lessons to Great Britain, it certainly - if we are wise - should bring home to us many useful and telling lessons. We have been despatching a number of volunteers to the seat of war. Difficulties, scenes, and troubles in connexion with their despatch evidenced on more than one occasion that a very great struggle was going on- of which the public knew little - between the civil authorities and the military authorities. I can recall a striking instance that occurred in this State, where the Minister of Defence, thinking that one man who had enrolled should be -detained, exercised his authority in that direction. A very long and unpleasant fight took place between the civil and the military authorities, with the result that in the end the Minister gave way, and the man went to South Africa and took- part in the war. I have nothing to say upon the merits or demerits of that case. I merely wish to put out that we ought to have clearly defined in a Bill of this kind the position of the civil authorities and that of the military authorities, at all times retaining to the civil authorities the dominant power. I recognise the need for this Bill, because in Victoria no soldier in the regular forces can rise from the ranks to the position of an officer. He may be clever, sober, and have given the best years of his life to the service of his country, but, owing to the class distinctions which exist, only two men, so far as I am aware, have succeeded in rising from the ranks to the position of officers. Surely this is wrong, and shows the need for a very great change. Then our military examinations have been exceedingly unsatisfactory. Surely if officers are to retain the

confidence of the men whom they command, those men should feel that the officers are in; every way qualified. We have no assurance that the officers filling those positions are qualified, and it is notorious that on the eve of the consummation of federation appointments were made concerning which the Government would do well to appoint a Royal commission. I am quite sure many of those appointments if inquired into would not bear the light of day.

Mr Page

- So soon ?

Mr Barton

- When was this?

Mr MAUGER

- On the eve of federation.

Mr Higgins

- Was it done by the State Governments?

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Mr MAUGER

- It was done by the State authorities} but not necessarily by the State Governments. I am assured on the very best authority that in each of the States - possibly in all of them - there has been an amount of pointing and wire pulling which is a disgrace to any system of military service. This is a matter sufficiently serious to be inquired into. For all these reasons I rejoice that the Government have made an attempt - to my mind a disappointing attempt - to deal with this matter. The Bill appears to me to be a mixture of the British Army Act, the regulations of war - a term that is obsolete in the old country - and our State Acts. It would have been very much better if the Government had taken the English Army Act, applied the sections that could be applied to the Commonwealth, and added what were necessary to meet our own particular circumstances. In this Bill provision is made for regular soldiers. I will yield to no man in my desire, not only to see the military spirit checked, but to see established here a Commonwealth which will be without the military spirit. I would like to see emblazoned on the banner, of every cadet corps especially - " Defence, not defiance." I would like to see the cadets educated up to a sense of the duty of fighting for their country, and at the same time informed of all the horrors and distress of warfare. I am inclined to think that we have just overstepped the mark in our anxiety to be loyal and to serve the old country, and that we have engendered here a spirit of militarism that is likely to be detrimental at no distant date. I say that without laying myself or other honorable members open to a charge of disloyalty. We are anxious to see England hold her own ; and I believe the manhood of these States would be willing to help England in the hour of trial and distress. We can say all that and mean it, and at the same time deplore the military spirit and military "jingoism" that has played so large and prominent a part in our discussions in connexion with recent events. I recognise that we must have a certain number of regular soldiers; but I hope these regular soldiers will be well paid and well drilled, and will not number a man more than is required by the exigencies of the case. In America the people developed to an unparalleled degree in the history of nations, without a standing army, and so I believe we can develop here in Australia without anything approaching a standing army. The number of men necessary should be kept to the lowest possible limit, and they should be well trained and well paid, with the opportunity of advancing from the lowest rank to the highest. There are provisions in the Bill for the establishment of militia and volunteers. I have had no direct connexion with military experience of any kind, but had the honour and pleasure of being chief officer for many years of the volunteer firemen of Victoria, an association numbering some 3,000 volunteers and over 100 companies. ' I know something about the relative value of partially-paid men or militia and volunteers, and while I give the volunteer firemen and the volunteer soldiers credit for a desire to do the best under the circumstances - while I recognise that in Victoria the volunteers in our military system do good drill and reflect credit on their respective corps - still I am forced to the conclusion, after considerable experience, that if we want to get good work, if we want to get good discipline, if we want to get the very best results, we cannot, especially in large centres of population, depend upon the purely volunteer system. I am confident that the displacement of the militia by the regular men in connexion with the fire brigades in Victoria has been a distinct improvement and a step in advance, and I am certain that the displacement of volunteers for militia will be a distinct improvement in connexion with the Defence force. While I can quite understand that the ideal position would be that

depicted by the honorable member for the Barrier - a nation in which every citizen would be ready to volunteer and be prepared to put in the requisite number of drills - I am afraid we have not yet arrived at the ideal of citizenship that would permit so desirable a condition of things.

Mr Thomas

- I spoke of compulsory service from the age of sixteen to twenty-one.

Mr MAUGER

- - I am not prepared to go in for anything compulsory in connexion with our defence forces. I do not like the word "compulsion" as applied to military matters - I do not like the word in any sense - and how the honorable member can in any way identify the volunteer system with compulsory drill I am at a loss to understand.

Mr Thomas

- I did not call them volunteers, I called them a citizen army.

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Mr MAUGER

- My experience is that if we want to get good and effective drill, we will have to give the men some kind of retaining fee, and at any rate out of pocket expenses. I know there are large numbers of men not in a position to give the time and make the sacrifices necessary for effective drilling. My experience in connexion with the fire-brigades organization impels me to support a militia as against a volunteer system pure and simple. The honorable member for Bland, speaking last night, urged that a volunteer and a militia system could not work side by side. I quite agree with the honorable member if he means that, in Melbourne for instance, we could not have a volunteer corps and a militia corps on exactly the same basis, and forming the same arm of the service. But we have in Victoria a militia system and a volunteer system. In the country districts, especially for mounted corps, the volunteer system is likely to be infinitely more successful than in the city districts, where there are so many other attractions.

Mr Salmon

- Is that because the country people are more patriotic?

Mr MAUGER

- I do not think so for a moment.

Mr Salmon

- Then why is it?

Mr MAUGER

- It is because the people in the country are not so badly pressed by business, and have not other attractions which present themselves in the cities. I would not for a moment admit that the men in the country are a bit more loyal than the men in the city. I do not think that the young men of Melbourne, Ballarat, Sydney, or Brisbane are a bit less ready to do their duty than the young men in the back blocks, or that the former are in any way less loyal. But country life is monotonous and unattractive, and anything in the form of a little mild excitement or of comradeship is more likely to be successful and maintained in the country than in the city. We have had lauded, and rightly so to a degree, the cadet system. But the cadet system in Victoria is, to my mind, exceedingly defective. I know quite a number of lads whose parents were anxious for them to be cadets but who could not join a corps, simply because the parents could not afford to purchase the uniforms. If we want an effective cadet corps, if we want those young people trained as it unfortunately appears necessary they should be, that training should be part of the school curriculum, and if it is necessary to have uniforms they should be provided by the Government. If the cadets are worth training they are worth providing uniforms for. I do not know that uniforms are necessary, but in any case there should be no distinction between those who can afford to pay for uniforms and those who cannot. If we want the cadet force to be successful, we must see that the drill is made universal, and made part of the school curriculum. It was urged by one honorable member that this Bill is the result of the wisdom of the commandants in council assembled. I have not one word to say in disparagement of those gentlemen. They may be excellent soldiers, and they may be, and I believe they are, loyal and earnest citizens. But they are military men, and they look at this matter through military spectacles. That reminds me of a story which illustrates my position. A young lady and a clergyman were asked what the new moon reminded them of. The young lady said that it reminded her of a wedding bow, and the clergyman said it reminded him of the steeple of a cathedral. The clergyman was thinking of

ecclesiastical preferment, while the young lady was thinking of a wedding about to take place shortly. On the point of view depends the conclusion one is likely to arrive at. The military commandants looked at this measure, and prepared their recommendations from a military point of view. I have no doubt they were quite earnest and quite loyal and sincere in their recommendations, but the very fact that they are military men, who do not understand civilian life, and the point of view from which civilians look at the matter, is a very strong reason for closely scrutinizing the Bill, and determining that the civil authorities shall be paramount. They considered, amongst other things, the payments that should be given to the various officers and men, and I find that at the head of the list stands the Lieutenant-General at £730 a year. That salary, however, is minus allowances, and I think the House should know what these allowances will be. I have reason to believe that this £730 a year will mount up to at least £1,000 a year, although men who should know tell me it will amount to considerably more. The payments go down until we arrive at the lowest officer, whom the commandants propose shall be paid £91 5s. a year. Then we come to privates at 2s. 3d. per diem, boys under eighteen, 1s. and 1s. 6d. per diem.

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Mr Higgins

- Where does the honorable member get those figures?

Mr MAUGER

- From the suggestions in the report of the commandants.

Mr Barton

- The report was laid on the table.

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Mr MAUGER

- I am anxious to impress on honorable members that the man who does all the work, the man who has to work night and day in training and making soldiers, will under these suggestions receive £91 5s. a year: Surely, if an officer should be paid, it is the drill instructor, but here we find he is to be paid less than any other officer. I suppose he is of the lowest rank, and on that ground receives this low pay. But if we are to have a military system worthy of the name, we ought to see that those who do the hard work are paid more than the young ladies who work our telephone service. I quote these figures to show that the commandants are not in touch with the lowest ranks of the service - the lower ranks of officers and men. Look, for instance, at the payment of 2s. 3d. per day to the privates. I am informed that there is a growing feeling in England that the whole system of payment should be changed, and that soldiers should be paid at least 30s. per week, and allowed to live outside the barracks, coming to drill at stated periods. I am told by some visitors who have recently returned from the old country that that idea is gaining strength, and that if it could be carried into effect the great objection that was raised by the honorable member for the Barrier would to a very large extent be removed. Barrack life, in towns that are largely inhabited by regular paid soldiers who are compelled to live under these conditions, is a menace to the health and morality of the community, and any proposal that would tend to improve the moral position of the soldier and the moral position of the citizen, would, I am sure, be heartily welcomed - unless we are going to say that the soldier shall not have family life; that he has no right to marry or have any of the privileges of citizenship. The proposal to 'pay him in this sunny land of Australia 2s. 6d. per day looks very much like sweating, and a condition of things that ought not to be consented to by this House. We have touched on the question of naval defence, and to my mind this is a matter of very great importance, in regard to which I have some interesting figures here. By a parliamentary paper just published in London I find that Australia spends on naval defence 1/2d. for every £1's worth of trade, whereas the United Kingdom spends 1s. 5d., or 34 times as much; for every ton of Australian owned shipping Australia spends on naval defence 10s., as compared with 57s. spent by the United Kingdom; and Great Britain devotes 4s. 4d. out of every £1 of public revenue to the naval defence of the Empire, while up till now Australasia has spent only 1s. 1-J-d. But I would urge that instead of increasing our subsidy or attempting to establish a naval power, we might with advantage increase the number of our properly paid regular naval force, and make the men an arm of the service that would be useful in an emergency. There is a great deal in the suggestion that arrangements could be made with Australian steam-ship owners to use vessels which could be easily converted into partly-protected cruisers. When required for war, or for training purposes, modern armament could be placed on board, and the vessels could be worked by

officers and men supplied . from our naval brigade or reserve, the ordinary-officers- and crew being retained to navigate the vessels. That has been tried successfully in America, and should receive the attention of the Government. I should like to allude to a matter of considerable interest in connexion with the manufacture of ammunition. I agree with the honorable member for the Barrier, that the manufacture of ammunition should be taken in hand by the Government. I have no wish to bring, the State into competition with private enterprise. I believe we have fairly complete cartridge factories, and the Government has already entered into contracts with them.- I should like to know the nature of those contracts ; how long, they will last, and what .are the provisions contained in them. If it were possible for the Government to acquire these factories at anything like a reasonable figure, I think it would be better for the community and the department. I must confess to having been shocked the other day at seeing .the young life of our nation, and particularly young girls, employed in these factories.- The girls appeared tome to be too young altogether to be away from school. I have no wish to blame the proprietors. I am assured by them that these girls are appointed as the result of the importunities of parents anxious to find appointments for their children. To me, however, it is a sad reflection that in a factory with which the Government deals our young female life should be employed at miserable wages. When we visited the ammunition factory we learned that there are men employed there who absolutely carry their lives in their hands. The foremen receive £2. 15s. per week, and the journeymen £2 per week.

Mr Barton

- The honorable member refers to the explosives factory ?

Mr MAUGER

- Yes. I was told by the journeymen that their wages compared favorably with those received in other factories for similar kind of work, and the men I spoke to appeared to be satisfied with their position. But the work of these men is very dangerous. We were- told that it was even dangerous to visit the factories ; that there was at all times the most imminent danger ; and we were assured that if an accident took place it would be impossible to save the lives of these men. I should like to know whether the Government has not some responsibility in regard to the lives of these workmen and the position of their wives and families in the event of an accident taking place. In all probability we are going to use these factories for the manufacture of our ammunition. Is it not our duty, if this work is done, to see that the lives of the men are insured by the Government, if no insurance company will take the risk, and that the wives and families of those who are doing tin's necessary but awful work are not left to the mercy of the public, in the event of accident 1 This is a matter which to some may seem of little moment, but to my mind it is very important and far-reaching..

Mr Conroy

- What constituency is that factory in ?

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Mr MAUGER

- Never mind that. I am here not to discuss constituencies, but great principles;and I hope the honorable and learned member will: not make light of a matter of such great importance. I do hope that the Government, when they find it necessary to enter into fresh contracts with either of these factories, will take care to make proper conditions as to the insurance of the lives of the men, so that those dependent upon them will be looked after. I would like to direct the attention of the House to one or two inconsistencies running through the Bill. For instance, let us take the definition of the Army Act. There are no articles of war. The Army Act takes their place, and it is the particular statute law of England. There is no necessity for the articles of war, and reference to the clause makes me think of the dark ages. The same thing applies to the Naval Discipline' Act. It seems to me that two sets of definitions appear to be necessary - one set giving the meaning of the words and phrases when used in the Commonwealth Act, and another set giving the meaning when it is intended to bring the Army Act into use. I am assured by the military authorities here that they often feel that they may be acting illegally, because they do not know where they are. The defence regulations are so hopelessly muddled that they are really not able to ascertain their position: Some of these doubts will be perpetuated in the Bill. We allude in the Bill to the Army Act, to the articles of war;, and to our own Defence Act. Surely it would be better to place this House in the same position as the House of Commons; which is able to review everything in connexion with the army. Every one of the regulations appertaining to the Army Act are placed on the table of the House of

Commons. Then clause 11 deals with the prescribed regulations. To my mind, there should be an addition made to this clause, providing that -

The examination of officers to be conducted by an independent board on the approved syllabus half-yearly. The board to be appointed by the Governor in Council. All officers permanently employed holding field rank to be examined on the Imperial lines at an early date.

If we are going to have officers in whom the men will have no confidence we must expect disastrous results. We cannot expect our men to have confidence in officers whom they know do not possess the necessary knowledge to fit them for commands. In clause 15 reference is made to an ordnance store corps. The employees in the Victorian ordnance-store are civilians, and some of them are past middle age. Why is an exception made in regard to these employees? Is it intended to organize a corps from employees in the ordnance stores? To my mind it is absolutely necessary to inquire into some of the appointments which were made on the eve of federation, and to put the present army on a proper footing. I should like to allude to another very important matter before I resume my seat. In January last the following provision was enacted by the Legislature of the United States: -

The sale of or dealing in beer, wine, or any intoxicating liquors by any person in any port, exchange, or canteen, or army transport, or upon any premises used for military purposes by the United States is hereby prohibited. The Secretary of War is hereby directed to carry the provisions of this section into full force and effect.

The voting in the House of Representatives was 159 to 51, and in the Senate 34 to 15. In both Houses the majority was more than two-thirds. The experience of the United States is that such a clause is absolutely necessary. Personally, I am of opinion that the Australian forces will be all the better if such a clause is inserted in our Defence Bill.

Mr Bamford

- The very latest advices from America are quite the contrary.

Mr MAUGER

- Those advices must be very recent then, because it was only in January last that the Congress and Senate of the United States of America passed the clause which I have just read. I have here testimony received by the last mail from many of the leading officers in America, who have pointed out the absolute necessity for such a clause as this. I am not going to press my own personal views upon honorable members, but if you want a strong man, if you want a reliable soldier, you must have a steady man. We are responsible if we put temptation in the way of these men. These, briefly stated, are my views on the Bill. I sincerely hope that the result of our deliberations in committee will be that we shall produce an infinitely better Bill than the Government has placed on the table of this House. I also hope that we will set our faces against anything in the form of conscription. I trust we will rely upon the loyalty and dutifulness of our own citizens. Make this a national home. Give every individual an opportunity of developing his physical, mental, and moral life. Let him rear good and loving children, and when the hour of crisis comes we shall find tens of thousands of volunteers ready to fight for home and country.

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Mr PAGE

- I do not know whether honorable members will regard me as an authority on the Defence Bill. I saw a little service in South Africa during five or six years, though I was not an officer. I only held the rank of gunner, and I intend to give the House the benefit of my experience from a soldier's point of view. We in Queensland, and in Western Queensland particularly, expected great things of this Defence Bill; but I must say, from my own point of view, its general principles are bad and misleading. They are purely military from one end to the other. My honorable friend, the member for Melbourne Ports, has told us that there was a conference of military commandants. If that conference wanted to make Australia a military nation more than any other country they could not have done better than have made the proposal contained in this Bill. If we had sent to France for a Bill on French lines providing for conscription, we could not have got a better one than this. If we are not going to start the new nation with a spirit of militarism, the sooner we knock these proposals on the head the better. Militarism is the danger which I fear, knowing the feeling that was aroused in my breast when men started volunteering for South Africa. Like an old war-horse I could smell the battle from afar, but I was told by the Premier of Queensland that I would do better if I stayed at home. Little did that gentleman think at that time that I would be returned as

the very first federal member for Queensland. I took his advice, and here I am to-day, speaking against the principle I advocated in Queensland at the beginning of the Boer war, when the spirit of militarism was rampant within me, and I volunteered to go to South Africa. I remembered those beautiful lines -
Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said :

This is my own, my native land- and when I thought the old country was in danger, I threw everything on one side to go and help her. I would do the same tomorrow, and there' are thousands of others imbued with the same spirit as that which animated me then and animates me now. So far as the conscription clauses of this Bill are concerned, there is no need for them in Australia. I am entirely in sympathy with the rifle club movement, and if honorable members knew of the good work that they are doing in Queensland, they would never be afraid of an invasion. Every one of the members of these rifle clubs are making themselves perfect in shooting, and I am very pleased to say that an officer like Lord Roberts has shown himself prepared to admit that the Australians know how to fight. I was in South Africa in 1881, when I passed through a very similar experience to that which befell the troops under General Buller on the banks of the Tugela, at Colenso. I was at Laing's Nek, Ingogo, and Majuba Hill, and we passed through the same experience there. The men were brave and gallant, and would go wherever they were told to go, and I have seen men, especially at the Battle of Isandula, where the Zulus cut up the main column of our force, sent to their certain death. I saw 250 men sent to their death in trying to turn the flank of 30,000 men. It was an officer who told the men to do that, and yet they talk about not taking men from the ranks. These men did as they were bid, and were slaughtered back to back, and found six months afterwards by Lord Chelmsford in the positions in which they had fallen. As far as the rifle clubs are concerned, they are going to be the backbone of the Commonwealth defences. The men belonging to these clubs are being taught the first principles of defence - that is, how to shoot. I am at one with the honorable and learned member for Bendigo when he says that we should have an efficient navy, but the question is whether we are in a position to raise one, and I maintain that we are not. The leader of the Opposition, however, made a very wise suggestion when he pointed out that the ships belonging to the Australian auxiliary squadron might be available as training vessels, and that they might be manned by' the men whom we have here, who are willing and capable of following a seafaring life, and who might prove a valuable reserve in the event of Britain being placed in a position of necessity. I do not believe in taking the men of our defence forces beyond the Commonwealth. When the rifle clubs were formed in Queensland, one of the features of the legislation that was passed was that the men should enrol themselves for defence against invasion only, and I venture to say that if the members of these rifle clubs knew that they were to be taken out of Queensland for service abroad there would not be one of these clubs to-morrow. Many of these men hold good positions in business, and in professions, and their whole life interests are bound up in the localities in which they live. However loyal they might be, and however they might wish to assist the Empire, they would not consent to render themselves liable to be ordered beyond the limits of the

Commonwealth for military service. As the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne has pointed out, our forces here might be called upon to quell a rebellion in Ireland, and I should certainly vote against a clause that would permit anything of the kind being done. The honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne has also pointed out the very wide definition that might be given to the term " emergency," and I am perfectly sure that if any attempt were to be made to take any members of the rifle clubs beyond the shores of Australia they would refuse. That would amount to an act of mutiny, which would render the men liable to trial by drumhead court-martial, and to be shot. One honorable member suggested that the men might in such a case appeal to the High Court. But what would be the use of appealing to the High Court after they were dead. I am quite sure that we should have plenty of dead riflemen, because the authorities would probably take out the irreconcilables and shoot them for the purpose of over a wing the rest. If this provision in the Bill is not altered, I am afraid that the rifle club movement will become a failure, and such a result would be a disaster to the Commonwealth. Even supposing it were to cost a little more to make every member of these rifle clubs effective as riflemen, I think the money would be well spent. It has been remarked that Members of Parliament are to be exempt from military service, and on that point I would like to say that if we are going to exempt Members of Parliament from service they should also be prevented from becoming military officers. Why should they

be allowed to act as military officers on a fine day and find a substitute and stop inside on a wet day. It seems to me that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. With regard to the cadets, I may say that I did not know that Victoria had such a system as she has until I came down to the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament, and if there is one thing that Victoria deserves credit for - and I am now speaking as a military man - it is her cadet force. My eyes were opened when I saw the boys drilling on the Exhibition grounds, for they went through their movements with a precision that would have done credit to older men, and at the military review at Flemington the schoolboys were par excellence from a military point of view. If we train our youngsters how to shoot, and give them proper military training, when they attain the age of manhood they will be imbued with exactly the same spirit as I was, and will want to join the ranks again. They will thus form the nucleus of a real good army; and when we have this nucleus, I am certain that we shall be perfectly safe from aggression. Some honorable members object to permanent forces, but I would point out that it is eminently necessary that we should have a certain number of trained men. When I joined the Royal Horse Artillery I went through two courses of training, first in the laboratory and then through a course of rough-riding, in order to become an efficient remount officer, which secures an extra shilling a day and immunity from a good deal of manual drill. There are many men who offer themselves, but few are chosen". The consequence is that they get experts, and I assure honorable members that they take very great care of these experts, and do not put them in any position where they are likely to get shot, and although there were many of my comrades who did get shot, I escaped. There is another point in connexion with the gunnery course. Special inducements were held out by the Royal Artillery Institution to the men to go through a course of gunnery at Shoeburyness, with the object of their qualifying for engagement as gunnery instructors to some of the colonial forces, at the high rate of £91 per year and found. The soldier who gets that rate of pay at home considers himself well remunerated. In connexion with this course of gunnery the men have to make themselves proficient in the laboratory work, which consists in obtaining knowledge as to the composition of shells and time fuses, and so on, so that when they go out to the various colonies they are very effective men. We want a permanent force of that description in the Commonwealth, to form a skeleton for the different corps that are to be raised in connexion with our citizen soldiery scheme under this Bill.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- How many permanent men would the honorable member propose ?

Mr PAGE

- I think 500 men would be enough for the whole of the Commonwealth. Take the case of the Agricultural College of New South Wales. There are not many men there, but experts go all over the world from that institution, and the men who receive instruction there soon make experts of others. If we have a small number of military experts in our permanent force, we shall soon form a much larger body of efficient men, because the Australian has shown that he is to be easily modelled into a good piece of fighting material. The honorable member for Wentworth said that the men must be disciplined, but it is well known that what has won a reputation for the Australian in South Africa has been his own resource. The Australian has shown that he is as full of resource as the Boer, and has beaten the Boer at his own game, whereas poor Tommy Atkins has been led up like a piece of machinery and shot. If we can make good fighting material so quickly out of the bush lad or the town lad in Australia, what need have we for a big standing army? The fact of the matter is that if we discourage the idea at the commencement it will never be found that it is wanted. So far as uniforms are concerned, I was once told by an officer in the Royal Horse Artillery that his uniform cost him £650 - that included the horses, saddles, and the whole of his uniforms.

Mr Henry Willis

- What was the rank of the officer ?

Mr PAGE

- A lieutenant in the Royal Horse Artillery. Honorable members can easily understand that only men of wealth could join that corps, which is one of the crack corps of the British service. The honorable and learned member for Corinella stated, byway of interjection, on a former occasion, that an officer's uniform only costs £1.5, but I saw a letter in the Argus contradicting that statement, and saying that it cost at least £100.

Mr McCay

- I have since contradicted the contradiction, and repeated my original statement as being correct.

Mr PAGE

- I say, do not let the uniform cost the individual a penny. Let the Government find the uniform, and let it be one which is destitute of gold lace.

Mr McCay

- I said that too.

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Mr PAGE

- I will admit that. When we went into the first engagement with the Boers in 1881 the officers fell like skittles. Directly after the battle at Laing's Nek the officers could not be distinguished from the private soldiers. Until they spoke and put that characteristic affectation into their voices they could not be distinguished from the ordinary Tommy Atkins. ' ' Why did you not salute me ? " asked one officer of a man in the Connaught Rangers. "Sure," he said, " you ought to salute me, you have a private's coat on." The fact is that while danger was imminent the officers did not want the gold lace. When we went down from Majuba to Pietermaritzburg the officers were giving the boys in the streets 3d. to see how their spurs . and swords jangled. We want nothing of that sort in the Australian army. The labour party are pledged to a citizen soldiery, and we are going to have it. We desire to have no distinction at all between the uniforms of officers and men - not even a brass button, as the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, put it. If the officers want buttons they will have to keep them out of sight.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- He proposed to give them a brass button.

Mr PAGE

- I do not propose that they shall be given a brass button. I merely propose to give them a bone button. 'The honorable and learned member for Corinella has said' that in his military experience he did not remember the case of one man who had been debarred from becoming an officer on the score of expense.

Mr McCay

- I said that I had known of no instance in which the expense of his first kit had kept a man out of the citizen soldiery,

Mr PAGE

- I beg the honorable and learned member's pardon ; I thought he said something else. I know of three different instances. I know of men who enlisted with me and became proficient in gunnery. One man, who was unusually smart, within five years became a . gunnery instructor, which is -one rank beneath that of a lieutenant, in the Royal Artillery. He was offered a commission on four different occasions, but was compelled to decline it because of the expense of the kit, which precluded the possibility of his purchasing it. There was a loss to the British army. That man took all the prizes at Shoeburyness for gunnery. He was an expert gunner ; in fact, when the authorities wished to give an exhibition to any of the foreign ambassadors they sent for Tunks, who could always take the flag-staff off the target. I know of others who have taken the position of warrant officers in the army hospital corps and the army transport service rather than accept commissions in their own corps, where they would have been of extreme value. I fought with Hector Macdonald when he was a sergeant-major. What is he to-day ? He is one of the best generals in the service. How many more, if they only had the opportunity which Hector Macdonald has had, would be in exactly the same proud position ? The honorable and learned member for Corinella referred last night to the reserves of ammunition. What are we going to do ? Are we going to fire the canteens off the soldiers' backs like the Highlanders did at Majuba? That was all the ammunition they had at Majuba, and the Commonwealth is exactly in the same position as were the Highlanders there. We have no reserves of ammunition. We were on the top of Majuba with a Hotchkiss machine gun - seven of us - but when we got there the men with the ammunition were absent. That is just the position which the Commonwealth occupies to-day. We have the material, but not the ammunition. The honorable and learned members for Corinella and Corio spoke of our obsolete guns. They must be obsolete. When I was in the service 21 years ago they had the Martini rifle then.

Mr Mauger

- They have had to re-arm all the men since.

Mr PAGE

- They have had to re-arm them twice since, but the Imperial authorities had a lot of Martini-Henry rifles in stock which they did not know what to do with, so they palmed them off on to the Treasurer, and told him that they were the best weapons he could get.

Mr McCay

- They were Martini Enfields, which are the worst 303 rifles in existence.

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Mr PAGE

- They are not the best anyhow. But as long as the Imperial authorities can get rid of their old stocks, they will palm them off upon the States. The honorable and learned member for Corio told us about the beautiful armaments to be found at Queenscliff. I asked the people at Geelong what guns they were armed with there, and they told me that the weapons were muzzle loaders. If this is not playing at soldiers, I do not know what is. In every newspaper received from the old country we read of the beautiful wire guns which are being manufactured, in which new tubes can be inserted, and yet Australia, which is supposed to be the left hand of the Empire, only possesses obsolete weapons with which to fight and to drill its men. One honorable member has said that the old Brown Bess was very good at close quarters. That is just the position of the guns within the Commonwealth - they are very good at close quarters. The trouble is that the other fellow will stand off and give us a devil of a peppering before he comes to close quarters. The sooner we get the proper guns the better. Even if we only have a 'few by all means let us have the best.

Mr O'Malley

- Let us get a couple of dynamite guns.

Mr PAGE

- They used the dynamite guns in America, not with disaster to the enemy but with disaster to themselves. We do not want to bring any of them into the Commonwealth. Our population is not so great that we can afford to kill a few people offhand and replace them in a week or two. The honorable and learned member for Corinella referred last, night to the question of transport. Every man who has read anything of the war in South Africa knows that what kept the army back so long when Lord Roberts reached Bloemfontein was the inadequacy of the provision which had been made for transport. From inquiries which I have made, I find that there are about half-a-dozen ambulances, two or three reserve ammunition waggons, and two or three Cape carts in Victoria. I suppose that in New South Wales and the other States they have even fewer.

Sir William Lyne

- I think that we have more than that.

Mr McCay

- New South Wales has about the best transport service.

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Mr PAGE

- If we drew on them for the best, it would even then be a bad best for the Commonwealth. The means, of transport in the service is the belly of the army. Unless we can feed an army the men comprising it cannot fight. I remember when Lord Wolseley came to Zululand to take possession from Lord Chelmsford, he said - "I cannot make out why the horses of the artillerymen are so fat, whilst all those of the infantryman are so poor." But we used to look after ourselves and do a little bit of foraging. I suppose that the same sort of thing would apply to the Commonwealth. Australians are very good at foraging in the Transvaal, and if they were as good at it in Australia it would be a sorry thing for the Commonwealth. As regards the establishment of a small arms and ammunition factory, I think that we cannot do better than have our own. We should then know what we were getting. There is a small arms factory at Enfield, which is a little way out of London, where they make all the arms for the British service, and from whence they palm off the old stocks upon the States. But the day for that, I think, has now gone. Even if we have fewer weapons, let us have them up-to-date. The way to get them up-to-date is to manufacture them ourselves. The conditions under which the ammunition factory in Victoria is conducted are most appalling. The British Government - conservative as it is - does not do things in such an offhand manner as does the Government of Victoria. In England, from the moment a man goes into these factories his life is insured

by the British Government. Occasionally they have a blow up - the machinery gets obsolete and something goes wrong with the works, and at such times there are a lot of widows left, who come in for the insurance money, so that there is no chance of the Government being involved in any litigation. For this reason alone, I think that we should have our own ammunition factory. I do not intend to delay the House any longer. I have given honorable members as much knowledge as I possess in regard to military affairs. Before concluding, however, I should like to say that I altogether disapprove of the proposal to establish a military academy. If we establish such an academy we should be making militarism a profession, and we do not want to do that in Australia. Let us do as Napoleon did - if a man shows ability and smartness let us promote him ; if he still shows ability and smartness let us promote him again. That is how Napoleon got his field marshals and fighting men. Let us take pattern by him. If we see a man of undoubted military ability, let us send him home to the military colleges and get the benefit of the experience -which he will gain there. I believe in a thorough militia system. I believe in a partially paid force, and for this reason : None of us like to do work for nothing. My experience of the volunteer system is that volunteers are all very well so long as they have Saturday afternoon or fine weather parades. Subsequently, when they take a dislike to their officer or some other disaffection creeps in, they stop away from drill, and after stopping away a few times, they lose all interest in the movement. We know very well what some volunteer officers have done. There is a little joke told about the battle of Chowder Bay, in New South Wales, when a junior officer was told the military tactics which he had to go through. This junior officer did not go through those military tactics, but used his Australian common sense, and captured the field-marshal or lieutenant-general, or whoever he was, whilst the latter was conversing with some lady friends, and telling them how he was going to wipe out the junior officer. When he was captured, the field-marshal said - " These are not the tactics laid down in Kelly-Kenny's book : you have disregarded those tactics altogether, and you must consider yourself under arrest." Thereupon the senior officer ordered up a file of men, although he had been taken prisoner ; and from what I have heard I believe that both junior officer and senior officer are suffering from arrest yet.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- Is that Major Neild ?

Mr PAGE

- Some of my New South Wales friends may know who it is. That is an example of the volunteer system it is sought to force down our throats. If this lieutenant-colonel or lieutenant-general had been met by a foreign foe what would have been the consequence? The junior officer who used his brains would have shot the lot, and taken the general prisoner. We have in the House of Representatives the valiant and gallant member who, as a volunteer, committed this wonderful deed of valour in New South Wales, and from what I have heard he has never donned volunteer uniform since. I shall not detain the House any longer, but merely express the hope that when the Bill gets into committee every honorable member will do his best for Australia and the Commonwealth.

Debate (on motion by Mr. Salmon) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Commonwealth Officers' Allowances : Federal Capital :

Allowance to Governor-General :

Revenue Contribution of South Australia:

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

In submitting this motion I would remind honorable members that last night I said I would obtain some information with respect to a question which was raised in debate as, to sundry living allowances, and as to journeys to Sydney. I find that in regard to the Department for External Affairs I made a slip. There have been allowances for living from two guineas down to £1, and I apologize for having made a mistake, in saying the minimum allowance was ten shillings ; it was defective recollection on my part. I sent for the information since the House adjourned last night, and I find that these allowances begin with the secretary and go down to the chief messenger, who alone has on any occasion been to Sydney as a messenger. The total amount of these allowances amongst the seven persons engaged in the

department would be £10 7s. per week, or in the case of a six months' session about £260. I find also that a similar allowance of £2 has been made to the secretary of the Vice-President of the Council. I am not aware how often he has been to Sydney, but I think that he has been very seldom or scarcely ever since the sittings of Parliament began. I am told that allowances are also granted in the Department for Home Affairs, and in the Post-office. As to the Post-office, I have no official information, but I will get it if necessary to-morrow. So far as the Department for Home Affairs is concerned, there have been very few officers appointed yet. In the newspaper paragraphs which were published yesterday a great many things appear to have been assumed as the intention of the Government without any warrant or authority. The Secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs has an allowance of £2 a week, and a typist and shorthand writer has had an allowance of £1 10s, while a messenger has had an allowance of £1 in the same way as the messenger in my department. As to railway passes, the Secretary in the Department for External Affairs has a pass over the Victorian and New South Wales railways given by the Railway Commissioners of the respective States, in each case temporarily, pending permanent arrangements. Honorable members will recall to memory that with regard to the . federal service definite and permanent arrangements have not been made as to the terms of business with the Railway Commissioners. That is particularly so with regard to the civil servants. Honorable members will also remember that in the civil services of the States the principal officers hold railway passes and travel on them constantly or very frequently..

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Only a few of them.

Mr BARTON

- I say the prominent officers.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Not all the prominent officers, but only -a -very Jew.

Mr BARTON

- If the honorable member will allow me I will say most of the prominent officers. We need not bicker about this. I "will give the honorable member all information, if he will kindly allow me to 'go on. No Other officers in the department of External Affairs have passes. Tickets have been obtained when required, and the visits have been so -few that I think that that has cost almost as little as if- they had had passes. The secretary has been to Sydney twice without me. 'On those occasions, I am 'bound to say, he did so for Urgent domestic reasons. On each occasion he was commissioned by me to transact important business 'by interview with persons "whom it was preferable to consult personally rather than by letter, and I will vouch for the fact that the business he did was of great 'advantage to the public service. Further, I 'should add that my own secretary has not been to Sydney since "his appointment without me. My visits, which will cover his visits, amount to these : I -came to Melbourne on the '10th April for the purpose of holding Cabinet meetings. I held a series of Cabinet meetings, and on the 19th I went back to Sydney for a couple of days, - and returned on the 22nd or 23rd ; at any rate after two or three days. I was not at Sydney again until I left on the 31st May to attend the celebrations at - Sydney. I went to Sydney again on the 5th July until the 8th, 'and again from the 26th until the 29th. There was an interval between my visits after April of four or five "weeks until the end of May. Then' there was a lapse of five weeks (until the 5th July, and then again after my -return there was a lapse of more than three weeks until the 26th July, and I expect my next visit will' be about the 6th September, or six weeks hence. Honorable members from these facts - -and I promised to give them the full facts - will -be enabled to judge of the enormous charge on the country entailed by these visits. On each occasion, I cannot help confessing, the whole of the Sunday was occupied by me and my secretary -with departmental papers. It will be seen that I did not go to Sydney for a holiday on any occasion,

As to the Home department, I have already said there are three officers receiving living allowances. The following further information has been given : -

Orders for -railway tickets have only been issued to officers Of this department when travelling on duty - coming to Melbourne to take up work, &c.

It being found that it would be necessary for an -officer and a messenger to frequently visit Sydney to carry on the work when the Minister was there (no officer being permanently stationed in Sydney), and

the system of taking out tickets each time proving expensive, it was decided to take out two half-yearly tickets, by which a large saving was effected.

That was natural, because 'the visits of the -Minister of the Home department have to be 'more frequent than in the case of my department.

In connexion with Mr. Pollock's-

He is the under-secretary to the New South Wales Attorney-General - service with this department, a condition was made by the State in lending him that he should return twice a month and it was found more economical to take out a monthly ticket between Melbourne and Albury ; for the rest of the journey he used, his pass as an under-secretary of the State of New-South Wales

There, Mr. Speaker, is .the whole of the information of which I am possessed on the subject. A great deal of information has been conveyed to honorable members by the newspaper comment that has taken place. I said last night that I would endeavour to obtain a comparison of the rates of the salaries paid to Commonwealth officers with those paid to the officers of the two principal States.

Mr CONROY

- That was a misleading rate given this morning.

Mr BARTON

- That rate was not given by me. I have given no authority whatever for any statement in the newspapers on this subject. I want to say that I will have this information 'prepared and laid before honorable -members in order that they may judge if there is anything whatever in this charge of extravagance.

Mr Watson

- Will the right honorable gentleman say -what are the intentions of the Government in reference to these allowances t

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Mr BARTON

- The subject, of these allowances will lead -me to something presently which I think is rather interesting. I am of opinion, and I think those who have made a study of the Constitution are also of opinion, that two things are a fact - first, that it is not intended that the seat of Government shall be fixed in any particular place pending the choice of the - federal capital. Of course, while Parliament is in session the administrative work must be carried on in Victoria, -and for that time Victoria is the seat of Government. There is no provision as to what shall 'be the seat of Government when Parliament is not sitting ; and, as I said before, it is to my mind .clear that under the Constitution the - object is that, there being no fixed seat-of Government, it shall be carried on 'wherever the public convenience is most suited. In the absence of express provision, it seems to me that that is a necessary consequence. I .fixed those rates, for which I am concerned, on the assumption that .Parliament .was not to sit permanently in Victoria, and . that the duty of the Governor-General would probably be to distribute his residence. 'to -a large extent between the principal States.and-such other States as he could find it possible to visit. For the greater part of the year, the parliamentary session, he must reside in Victoria, and for .a large part of the remaining time in a State which is -more populous than Victoria. Before coming to the question .of what will be done -with these allowances, I want to say most .positively that I .do not subscribe to the contention that it 'is a necessary or a , proper thing that the whole of the business of .the Government, ;and residence of every one connected with it, should be in Melbourne .all the year round. I did not come to Melbourne with that -view in my mind, -nor did I ever know ;any public man to .advance that view That being so, these allowances were granted on the assumption that this was but a temporary occupation, ,and that it would not be necessary for these -men to uproot their homes .and disturb their 'families. What follows upon that? Anyone who has read these newspaper comments - comments made by very able newspapers, which I view with every respect that is due 'to them - cannot fail to observe their object. Beading between the lines it is 'plainly seen that their object is that the entire Government shall be directed to Victoria, and 'maintained .there till the federal capital is chosen and occupied. No one can read these paragraphs, especially those which appeared in the Age, without coming to that "conclusion. As it is not .wrong for newspapers to impute motives to -public men, I may surely say that I believe the object in view in this case is - perhaps a natural and patriotic one on the part of the newspapers - to make it impossible to carry on except in Melbourne, at any rate until the federal capital is chosen, , and Ave can

go into .occupation of it. I am not going to descant on that at this late hour. I will recall to the minds of honorable members what they have read and I want them to understand -what is -the object of the criticism in the newspapers. As to that object I have not the remotest doubt in my mind. Honorable members will recognise that I have at 'all -times taken the federal ..side in politics that I have endeavoured to clear my mind of any provincial views, and the question is now whether an eminently provincial object should receive too much attention at : the hands of a -national Legislature. Lr the meantime, , until the Cabinet has considered this matter-'and there is a Cabinet meeting to-morrow, at which several important matters will be considered- these allowances are suspended. The whole matter will be considered to-morrow. That I undertake. In my. own view, it is better that. everything which is to come .to a- public servant should come to him -by way of- salary, and not by way of allowance. I have always held that view in .politics and I hold it now. These allowances, .however, were granted at a time when the salaries were unsettled ; when, if Parliament had been summoned, it was not to meet for some time. They have now existed for -some three months, and, so far as my own,de.partment is .concerned, the cost will be about £120.

Mr Poynton

- Why did the Prime Minister not take us into his confidence when -we were discussing these salaries 1
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Mr BARTON

- I saw no occasion to do so. It seemed to me to be . the most natura] :thing, pending the settlement of affairs, and the final determination of salaries, and that general. organization which we were then just beginning, that men who 'were taken away from their homes should be given some compensation for the loss they suffered when, as in most cases, their- wives had to be left behind in Sydney. -If we take away this allowance, then, in- the case of three or four of the officers, I do not see how they can continue doing their duties, except by a very great struggle. I am informed that two of them will apply .for a re-transfer to the public service of .New South Wales.

It may be said that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it ; but one does not like to see his department disturbed in this way. It must be put up with, however, as far as the principle is concerned. One of these persons receives only £100 per annum, and the other £140 a year. One is a despatch clerk, and the other a messenger. The messenger came from New South Wales, and he receives a much less salary than I find it is customary to pay to men discharging similar duties here. In these cases the struggle for existence would be very great indeed, without an allowance of the kind alluded to.

Mr Mauger

- Could not the Government increase their salaries ?

Mr BARTON

- I think the proper thing would be to ask for an increase, and if the House will support me I will provide on the Estimates for increases of all these salaries. That will solve the whole question.

Mr Watson

- It depends on what the men are getting now.

Mr BARTON

- I do not mean to convey that I intend to provide for an increase to any officer who is receiving more than £500 per annum, nor will I recommend my colleagues to do so. Men receiving such a salary can struggle on without an increase, but others cannot do so without some concession.

Sir Langdon Bonython

- Are there any allowances other than those which have been mentioned?

Mr BARTON

- I am told that there are some in the Post-office, of which I have not yet been able to get the details. The Postmaster-General has been conducting the business of the Senate all the evening, and I have not been able to go to the Senate myself.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- On what principle are these allowances granted? Some officers do not get any at all.

Mr BARTON

- The officers who came over with me have all got them. Applications have been made by two officers, one from Tasmania and another from Western Australia, but I have them in reserve until this question can

be settled. I thought that was just, because whatever applied to the particular case of an officer from New South Wales under the circumstances I have described might be held possibly not to apply to these cases. I wish to act with justice to all these other men. Whatever I have to do in that regard will have to be done upon the Estimates.

Mr Poynton

- There are a number of transferred officers who do not receive these allowances.

Mr BARTON

- -The transferred officers are nearly all living in the States in which they previously resided. There are a few exceptions I know. If we take all these departments we shall find of course that there are a few exceptions. I am not acquainted with all of them, however. In the case of the Defence department I have not had an opportunity of consulting the Minister or his secretary, nor have I had an opportunity of getting particulars of cases in the Post-office. Therefore I cannot give the House that information. But I have done all that I can. If anything else comes before me, I shall not have the slightest objection to lay it before the House. Honorable members can see how far these comments in the newspapers are justified, and I would like to say that I can see for myself very plainly that there is the motive, mixed or unmixed, that this Government may be obliged to have its permanent residence in Melbourne from year's end to year's end. I am not speaking of any motive on the part of honorable members, but of something which has happened outside. No suggestion of that sort has been made by honorable members of this House. As to the representatives of Victoria, I may say that they have not uttered even a whisper of any ulterior intention of that kind, but if I can see such a motive in 'certain newspaper comments, I think I am entitled to say so. I feel very strongly that this is so. If I did not, I would not say it to-night, for I am speaking with no undue irritation. If certain things were done, as, for instance, the abolition of allowances of this kind, and the House did not afterwards, in the exercise of its discretion, make some increase of salary, the result would be that none of these officers, except those who live in Victoria, could afford to maintain themselves decently in the civil service, under the grade of salaries which would have to be paid to them-

Mr A McLEAN

- Will the Government carry out that principle when they get to New South Wales? Will they increase salaries then?

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Mr BARTON

- When we remove to the permanent capital, which is to be the permanent residence of the Governor-General, only varied by an occasional visit which he may make to any State, there will be no warrant whatever for any allowance of the kind. I think, however, that there has been, if not a warrant, a fair reason for what has been done. At the same time, this allowance was given only as a temporary measure until other means could be taken. As I have said before, they are discontinued now at my request, pending the consideration of the Cabinet, and as far as Cabinet consideration is concerned, I think I may say that the system of allowances will be done away with, and that the question of what can fairly be done for the officers of the Commonwealth generally who are under any disadvantage, or who are under any hardship, will occupy the attention of the Cabinet on the Estimates. There is no other information I can give, but I am pretty sure of this-

Mr Wilks

- This will hurry on the selection of the federal capital site.

Mr BARTON

- There are a great many reasons for getting into occupation of it at an early date. I say so without complaining of the treatment that we have received as a Federal House in Victoria, because, notwithstanding one or two small matters of irritation, I think we can all say that the people of Victoria have behaved kindly and hospitably to us. I do not say that the federal capital may well be placed, without undue haste, in the site which is finally destined for it, because of any complaint against the people of Victoria.

Sir Langdon Bonython

- Is there any truth in the report that an allowance has been made to a distinguished person in the Commonwealth?

Mr BARTON

- I have not heard of any; I do not know what the honorable member means, and I cannot answer him unless he is more specific.

Sir Langdon Bonython

- The Governor-General.

Mr BARTON

- No. No allowances have been made to the Governor-General up to the present time. As far as I understand, the Governor-General is likely to lose from £16,000 to £18,000 a year owing to the amount by which his expenditure will have overtopped the allowance he gets. That, however, is a matter for future consideration, and no allowance has been made to the Governor-General that I am aware of. If there is any such allowance made I will inform the House. It is easily understood that the result of criticisms and an agitation of the kind to which I have referred is to make it very difficult for people who come here from another State, without some allowance or other, to remain in the public service of the Commonwealth. Unless such officers are put to extreme hardship, and are content with a mere living wage, their places will have to be supplied by people from the State of Victoria. Such Victorians might be very good public servants, but the effect of their coming into the service would practically mean that the whole of the servants of the Commonwealth would belong to the one State.

Mr FULLER

- I do not propose to go into the matters referred to by the Prime Minister now, because I intend to move the adjournment of the House tomorrow in order to give honorable members, who are desirous of discussing the whole question, an opportunity of doing so. I hope by then the Prime Minister will have ready the information which he has promised to lay before the House.

Mr Barton

- I cannot promise, but I will try.

Mr FULLER

- I hope the Prime Minister will give us the fullest information he can to-morrow.

Mr Barton

- I would ask the honorable member to consider whether the same subject can very well be discussed three times, and whether it would not save time if he made his remarks to-night.

Mr FULLER

- It is now too late to go into the matter.

Mr KNOX

- I desire to express my regret that the Prime Minister has found it necessary to suggest that there has been any breach of faith, or any suggestion of breach of faith, in connexion with the understanding which distinctly exists, that as soon as is fitting and right the Parliament of this Commonwealth shall meet in the place appointed for it in New South Wales ; or that any effort is being made to keep any of the officers of the staff here unnecessarily. As one of the representatives of Victoria I desire to distinctly disclaim any such suggestion. .

Mr Barton

- The honorable member has misunderstood me. I distinctly stated that I made no imputation against honorable members representing Victoria or against the people of Victoria.

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Mr KNOX

- I wish it to be clearly understood that, so far as I am aware of the public feeling of Victoria,, the intention is to honorably and fully respect the obligation which has been entered into under the Constitution.

Mr A McLEAN

- I must confess that, like the honorable member who has just sat down, I felt greatly disappointed at the remarks of the Prime Minister. I think that --Parliament* and the people, and the press, of Victoria have acted in all good faith in this matter. A compact was, I think foolishly,, entered into in framing the Commonwealth Constitution, that, the choice of the Federal Parliament, in regard to the capital should be restricted to one State, but, that provision having been placed in the Commonwealth Act, I am perfectly satisfied that the public, and, so far as I can judge, the press of Victoria desire, to honestly carry it into effect without any undue delay. I think, therefore, that it is very unfair to make any reflections, such as those which have fallen from the Prime Minister. With regard to the matter, of expenses, I regret that we

should have- to refer to it so often. I think there has been more complaint in regard to expenses during the few weeks we have been in session, than I have heard for years in the State Parliament of Victoria; and that certainly is not a very good omen. This sort of thing may be very disagreeable, but I think the Government will find that their best friends are those who warn them of dangers ahead. It is not a wise thing to rush into expense until we have some idea of what our revenue and our means of paying the cost of Government are likely to be. We have no knowledge of that at the present time. I think that the Supply Bill; Parliament dealt very fairly with the question of salaries in regard to all the officers, and if it were considered desirable to increase any of the salaries; Parliament should have been taken into the confidence of the Government, and we should have been told the reason of the increases. I do not think that increases should have been made by the Cabinet behind the back of Parliament - increases ranging from £52 to £104 per year. I believe in a well paid public service, but I think the public servants should give fair value for the remuneration they receive; and I should like to know whether the work that is being done is worth the additional allowances. If it is worth it, then the officers who are not getting these living allowances must be underpaid, and that is not a good thing. Either they are underpaid, or the others are overpaid to the extent of the allowances. I do not think that the fact that an officer comes from another State is any reason for giving him a permanent increase of salary. I do not complain of the travelling expenses, because I think that if it is necessary to send an officer to another State, the Commonwealth is bound to pay his expenses, but that is a matter quite different from increasing his salary by either one or two pounds per week. What we require to do is to pay a fair value for the work done, and no more, and if it does not suit the officer, no matter what State he comes from, to accept that remuneration. I do not think the Commonwealth is called upon to pay anymore. We should pay our officers fairly, and even liberally, but I see no reason for paying them additional salary during the time - it may be three or four years - the Federal Parliament may be sitting in Melbourne. I see no more reason for paying an increased salary in Melbourne than in Sydney, because the cost of living is no more here than there. There would be as much justification for permanently increasing the salaries of officers who may have to remove from other States when we transfer the Federal Government to its permanent seat. With regard to the statement that 'it is necessary for the Governor-General to spend the greater portion of the recess in the other States, I see no reason why he should not do so; but if I know His Excellency correctly and I believe I do know him, he would be the last man to put the Commonwealth to any additional expense on his account, and he would not object to come from any State; where he might be for the time being, to attend Executive Council meetings. As regards any other matters upon which it might be necessary to communicate with His Excellency, that could just as well be done by telegraph or post, as if the Ministers were present. I would like to know whether the Prime Minister would consider it necessary for the Governor-General to spend a portion of the recess in Melbourne, or some other capital after the federal city has been established in New South Wales; and for Ministers to remove their staffs, there, at additional expense to the Commonwealth!

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Mr Barton

- I have answered that question. .

Mr A McLEAN

- If the interests of the Commonwealth required it, I certainly would not complain of the temporary removal of the seat of Government to New South Wales, or to any other State; but I say that it should not be done at the cost of efficiency, or at additional expense to the Commonwealth.

Mc. F. E. MCLEAN (Lang). - I do not intend to speak on the question of allowances which the Prime Minister has referred to; because another opportunity will be afforded for discussing the matter. The Prime Minister has referred to the question of the temporary capital, and some exception has been taken to his remarks by honorable members on his own side of the House. I think that the right honorable gentleman was justified in these remarks, in view of certain articles that have appeared in the newspapers, and particularly in an evening paper, in which it was clearly indicated that the Constitution provides that the seat of Government shall be in Melbourne until the federal capital site is chosen. I do not think the Prime Minister or any member of the Government would put that interpretation upon the Constitution, and I think that he has a perfect right, while acquitting the members of this House of any

intention of- keeping the Government permanently located in Melbourne, to put before the House and the country the true position in- regard to the seat of Government. It has been stated in this evening's paper that there are grave objections to the suggestion of the Government, that the departments shall be transferred to Sydney or other places, when the parliamentary session is over. I take it that the facts that the Prime Minister himself formed his Government, that the Ministers and the Governor-General himself were- sworn in in the adjoining capital, are all arguments why the temporary capital should not be located for any undue length of time - in one State. The State Of Victoria is getting all the advantage of a very hard-driven bargain in regard, to the Parliament meeting in Melbourne.

Mr A McLEAN

- I think that the people of New South Wales should be the last to complain, seeing that they have secured the permanent capital site.

Mr F E McLEAN

- There is no necessity to complain, as we are all very happy together, but I say that the State, of Victoria has received all the advantages that come from the parliamentary session being held here for the present, and I quite accept the statement of the honorable member for Gippsland and other members who have spoken, that they will respect to the letter the compact laid down in the Constitution.. In view, however, of the very- emphatic statements contained in the newspaper paragraphs, I contend that the Prime Minister was, perfectly justified in making a statement as,, to the actual position of the question in relation to the seat of Government. I think that so far from causing the slightest dissatisfaction on his own side of the House, or on any side of the House, a statement of the kind should be received with every satisfaction. I do not intend to touch upon the question of allowances, beyond saying that the sooner all allowances to public servants are- dispensed* with: fund sufficient salaries, are provided to pay for the services rendered, the better it will be.

Sir Langdon Bonython

- I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will consult this House before he takes any action with respect to the Governor-General's allowance 1

Mr Barton

- Most decidedly. It could only be done by Act of Parliament.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- As a sup* porter of the Government,, I have felt some misgivings as to the statement which has been published with reference to allowances. I do not wish to be drawn into a discussion upon the question of the site of the federal capital. It is not necessary that that matter should be debated- at the present stage. It is only obscuring the real issue, which is-" Under what circumstances have these allowances been paid, and under what authority " ? By. what authority has the Treasurer signed the necessary documents to make these allowances payable 1

Mr McCay

- They come under, the contingency vote, I suppose.,

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- "Contingencies "are not intended to deal with the remuneration or payment of public servants. I contend that if it were intended that any moneys should be- paid to public servants in the shape of allowances, provision of an express character ought to have been made upon the Estimates, so that it could be openly discussed. I tell the Ministry that they are. treading upon very dangerous ground in taking action of this kind. It is calculated to injure them in the country and to place their supporters in a false position. It is impossible for us to sit here and hear statements of the character that have been made without entering a protest. I think it behoves the supporters of the Ministry to speak plainly upon this occasion, feeling sure that what has been done has been rather through an error of judgment than through any wilful constitutional wrongdoing. I do hope that the Prime Minister will take this matter into serious consideration. It may be that he has received advice from the heads of departments which has led him astray. I hope that he will take the precaution hereafter of considering the constitutional aspect of these matters, and not regard it as a matter of sentiment to deal generously with the public servants. I am glad to have had the assurance that no allowances will be paid after to-day. If any allowances are to be paid as a matter of right, express provision ought to be made for them upon the Estimates. No payments of

this kind should be made in an indirect way, because such an action places the House and the Government in a false position.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- We have the assurance of the Prime Minister that this question of allowances will be considered to-morrow. Until that consideration is given, I think that we might hold over this discussion. Some reference, however, has been made to the site of the federal capital. I should like to say that the people of New South Wales are thoroughly satisfied with the action taken by the Commonwealth Government in this connexion. I do not believe that they have any fault whatever to find with the people of Victoria or with the members of this House in regard to their attitude upon the question. But we have very grave cause of complaint against the Government of New South Wales for not taking action in the matter, and for neglecting to give proper attention to the correspondence relating to it which has passed between the Federal Government and themselves. This fact should be given publicity to, because if, through the medium of the press, the neglect of the New South Wales Government is made known, they will be brought to account, and forced to give that attention to the matter which its importance deserves.

Sir William McMillan

- What does the honorable member refer to ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I refer to the fact that certain correspondence is alleged to have passed between the Commonwealth Government and the Government of New South Wales, and the latter have been dilatory in attending to that correspondence. If the Government of that State will not take action in the matter, the onus of the responsibility will rest upon them.

Mr Barton

- I am not making any complaint against the Government of New South Wales.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It is rumoured that they have not attended to correspondence on the subject. Is that so?

Mr. Barton. - I think that they have fairly attended to it.

Mr POYNTON

- I believe that I am in order in asking the Treasurer a question. From the report of the South Australian parliamentary doings published in to-day's papers, I find that the Treasurer of that State has said that the Federal Treasurer had received from South Australia during the past half-year £479,967, and had retained £147,728 of that amount. So as to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the electors of the State referred to, I wish to ask how much of the amount retained comes under the heading of what may be termed the new expenditure of the Commonwealth.

Treasurer

Sir GEORGE TURNER

. - My honorable friend was good enough to mention to me early in the evening that he proposed to ask this question. I am glad that he has done so, because it might appear to any one reading the paragraph without a full knowledge of the facts that the Federal Government was spending a very large amount of money. So far as the State of South Australia is concerned I may say that out of £147,728 received by me the sum of £135,214 was for transferred expenditure - for the payment of moneys which the State would have had to pay if the departments had not been transferred. South Australia's proportion of the new expenditure for the six months was £12,514.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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11:40:00

House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.