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1901-07-19

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker

took the chair at 3:30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Mr KNOX

asked the Minister of Trade and Customs, upon notice -

Whether he is in a position to any on what date the return authorized by the House, on 7th June, relating to manufacturing industries and their employes in the various States, will be circulated ; and whether it will be convenient to have any portion of the information laid upon the table in advance of the completed return ?

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- Immediately on the motion being carried, steps were taken to give effect to it. The additions made to the motion originally proposed have, however, considerably increased the time requisite for its preparation. No precise date can be fixed as to when the information asked for can be supplied, but there will be no unnecessary delay; and it will, perhaps, be convenient to lay the information before the House from time to time as desired.

FEMALE TELEPHONE OPERATORS

Mr KIRWAN

asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

Whether, in connexion with the circular issued to female probationers in the telephone service in Melbourne, dispensing with their services, similar circulars have been issued to female probationers in any or all of the other States of the Commonwealth; and, if so, whether he will inquire into the advisableness of having such circulars withdrawn, so that the evident wishes of Parliament may not be defeated ?

Minister (without portfolio)

Sir PHILIP FYSH

- The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows : -

The Postmaster-General is not aware of any other State in which female probationers are employed under the same conditions as those in the telephone service in Melbourne. It has, therefore, not been necessary to issue similar circulars.

DUTY ON SPIRITS

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

asked the Treasurer, upon notice -

Whether he will provide, when making his Budget proposals, that shipments of spirits on the way, which cannot be stopped by cablegram, shall pay the new duty proposed, but shall be permitted to come into the various State under the conditions now existing in those States as regards allowance for under-proof strength on spirits in cases

Treasurer

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The matter referred to by my honorable friend is. one of considerable importance, and I should like to have an opportunity of consulting the Minister for Trade and Customs with regard to it, before making any statement. If the honorable member will be good enough to ask the question again on Tuesday next I hope to be able to give him an answer.

COMMONWEALTH OFFICERS

Mr WILKS

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

The names of all persons appointed by the Federal Government to positions in the Commonwealth service who were not transferred from any State service, and the salaries paid to each respectively?

<page>2806</page>

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- The information asked for by the honorable member can be more conveniently furnished in the shape of a return. If the honorable member will give notice of his intention to move for such a return I shall offer no opposition.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr CROUCH

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

. Whether his attention has been directed to that part of the Governor-General's instructions, dated 29th October, 1900, where His Excellency is commanded to act on the instructions of the Privy Council or through one of His Majesty's Secretaries of State?

Whether he is not aware that the references to the Privy Council and Secretaries of State are not to the Australian Executive Council or Ministers of State, but to their English counterparts ; and. that it practically means that the Governor-General may receive advice and instructions from the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain or the officials of the English Colonial-office ?

Whether he does not regard this advice and these instructions as an interference with the rights to responsible . Government of the Australian people, inasmuch as

they are addressed to His Excellency solely as Governor-General of the Commonwealth ;

under Section 64 of the Constitution Act Ministers of State are provided for, the Governor-General representing the King :

by this practice the Governor - General acts on the advice of persons not responsible to the Parliament of the Commonwealth ?

Whether he will, on behalf of the Commonwealth, and as His Majesty's principal Minister of State in Australia, respectfully protest against the re- issue or continuance of such instructions, as subversive to responsible Government and to the rights granted the people of Australia under the Constitution?

Mr BARTON

- The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows : - 1, 2, and 3. The

Governor-General's instructions recite the Letters Patent constituting the office of Governor-General, and authorizing that officer to act according to the Letters Patent and Commission, and such instructions as may from time to time be given him under the Royal sign manual and signet, or by any orders of the King in Council, or by the King through a Secretary of State, and also according to the laws of the Commonwealth. The second section of the Constitution Act enacts that the Governor-General shall be the King's representative in the Commonwealth, and shall have and may exercise in the Commonwealth during the King's pleasure, "but subject to this Constitution," such powers and functions of the King as His Majesty may be pleased to assign to him. Thus the Governor-General is bound by the Constitution and the laws of the Commonwealth. Section 62 of the Constitution provides that there shall be a Federal Executive Council to advise the Governor-General in the Government of the Commonwealth: -that body advises him accordingly under the

Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth when there is nothing in the instructions to contravene, nor can any advice or instructions to the Governor-General from any quarter avail to override the Constitution or the laws of the Commonwealth. Consequently there is no interference with the rights of the Australian people to responsible Government, and the Governor-General acts on the advice of Ministers responsible to this Parliament.

I do not see that it is necessary to do so.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Resolved

(on motion by

Sir Langdon

Bonython) -

That leave of absence for a further period of a fortnight be granted to the honorable member for South Australia (Mr. Glynn), on the ground of continued ill-health.

DECIMAL COINAGE COMMITTEE

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I move -

That the number of members appointed to serve on the Select Committee on Coinage be increased to nine, and that Mr. Hume Cook and Mr. Fowler be additional members of such Committee, and that the Committee have leave to report the minutes of evidence from time to time.

I understand that the Government do not oppose the motion. The reason for it will be apparent to most honorable members.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

FEDERAL CAPITAL SITE

<page>2807</page>

Mr O'MALLEY

- I move.

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable in the interest of human progress, that the Government secure as federal territory an area of not less than 1,000 square miles of land in a good, healthy, and fertile situation, the freehold of which shall for ever remain the property of the Commonwealth; the ground only to be let on building or other leases to utilizers, all buildings to be erected under strict Government regulations, with due regard to public health and architectural beauty.

I deeply regret that an abler member of this honorable House does not occupy my place in connexion with so important a question. We all recognise, Mr. Speaker, that there are three things which live to-day. One unfortunately is this - that the master-key of this sordid age is practical utility. The two others are - joyfully so I think - first, that the essence of democracy is equality of sacrifice, and secondly, that the spirit of democracy is equality of opportunity to all. Now, recognising that honorable members are not in as good a position as I am to-day in. having the first opportunity of talking to the House, I shall limit my speech to the shortest possible time, in order to give others a chance. I shall thus conform with, the spirit of democracy. If no one is more conscious than I am of the prophetic fact that, as the Commonwealth grows older, new issues will be evolved of time, progress, and experience, and old issues perish but the great fundamental principles of democracy commended and sanctified by the voice of the united Australian people remain, and will ever remain as the only indestructible security for the perpetuation of free and responsible Government. The safeguarding of individual rights, the reserved rights of the States, the equality of all His Majesty's subjects before the law, and the supremacy of the Commonwealth within the specified bounds of the Constitution must form the legitimate foundation of human freedom, human justice, and human rights in this southern empire. Not only so, but the surrender of any of these rights will for ever destroy that parity of rights and powers which will enable this southern empire to develop in peace and harmony, and to be sustained by means of our own local self-government. Every nation has its peculiar trait, genius, type, or characteristic, and this is absolutely unchangeable. It also has its particular mission to fulfil in the economy of the world, certain fundamental truths to reveal, certain fundamental thoughts to unfold and develop. The great Commonwealth has now before it a supreme specified duty to perform in the erection of the federal capital upon ground held in the fee-simple of the nation; property that shall belong to the whole people, and not to a few comatose monopolists. The federal capital, or the home of the people of the Commonwealth should be built in harmony with the artistic spirit of progressive civilization, and not in accordance with the ideas of artistic vulgar savagery. When we look about and see the modern cities of the world, surely we must come to the conclusion that the designers or the builders could not have been far removed from barbarism. I am glad that my hat enables me not to continuously gaze on these in artistic structures. I believe in devoting my attention to the artistic structures designed by the Divine Architect. We all admit that we want to see this federal capital a success; we want to see a great commercial and industrial beehive of humanity grow up in a new portion of Australia, a home of the people of Australia. The Constitution says in section 125 that the federal territory shall not be less than 100 square miles in extent. One hundred square miles is 10 miles square. Will this new city be erected in the centre of the 10 miles square? Supposing it is, the very moment that we lay the first stone there will be a syndicate, and, naturally so, that will start and buy the land outside the town site. We all realize that the Britisher is most anxious to own the freehold of his property. The syndicate will say - "You can come here and have the freehold on payment of a small sum in advance," A tramway will be built from the Post-office, and what will be the result? The city will be on freehold, and the Government will expend the people's money on building Government buildings, and we will just have our own political

residences there. Every dollar spent by the people of Australia in 'the erection of that capital will create an unearned increment in the property for miles. and miles around, because it will create a new market for the people. The question now is, are the people of Australia prepared to spend thousands and thousands, yea, millions, and then lose the benefit of the product of their own expenditure ? That is the question that honorable members have-, to ask themselves to-day. Take the case of Melbourne. When Melbourne was laid out it was never intended that Flinders lane should have the great warehouses of the city, but high prices were charged for the property in the big streets, and low prices-, for the property in the side streets, and. the strong merchants went to the side streets and made them the main streets Now that is precisely what is going to happen if we limit the area of the federal capital site to 10 miles square. Take the case of Washington. That city has an. area of 10 miles square, and has "towns on all sides of it which contribute not one dollar to wards keeping it in repair, although they derive all the advantages attached to the expenditure of the people's money. Some honorable members may think that 33 miles square is a large area, but we have bull runs in Texas of greater area than that, and"" wheat fields of similar extent in Dakota. Now another point to which I; would like to direct attention is, that we want to have the waterworks of the federal capital, within the Commonwealth area. We cannot attain this object if we have an area of only 10 miles square. We want to make sure that if an enemy invades the Commonwealth, we shall have our waterworks so situated that we cannot be cut off as Santiago "was when attacked by the Americans. What is the first thing that the enemy goes for when he attacks a town? Why, the waterworks. That was what happened at Johannesburg when Jameson made his raid. The Boers had the waterworks and it was all up a tree with Jameson's friends. Some honorable members will say that we could not get such a large area of land as I have indicated ; but if the honorable member for Eden-Monaro is right he has a spot picked out in his electorate as a site for the capital which cannot be surpassed. Of course in the event of that site being selected we should lose the services of the honorable member in this House, because no man could represent the federal area. The honorable member tells me that we could get all the land we require in Monaro without the slightest difficulty. We shall have to build railways to the federal city at considerable expenditure, and we should take up a sufficient amount of land to make it impossible for others to work up a big land boom on our borders. Only lately I have been speaking to some clever up-to-date men. Of course there are some clever up-to-date men in this House, but I mean money-makers, and politicians do not generally make money. These gentlemen tell me, and there is no doubt about it, that the very first opening afforded in connexion with the federal site, wherever it may be, will be taken advantage of to work up an immense land boom on the borders, if the site is only a few miles square. I want to make it impossible to have such a land boom, and the only way in which we can do that is by starting on the right lines'. We must remember that in this matter we are not acting for ourselves alone, but for countless millions of unbegotten generations of future ages. Now, the question is whether the Commonwealth Government are equal to the great task before them. I think they are, or I would not be sitting here. As soon as I lose confidence in the Government I shall sit on the other side of the House. I think the Government are equal to the task, but they want this House to spur them on. I have had a lot of experience of the Minister for Trade and Customs, and I know that the harder we fight him the better he goes. When the federal city is. started we shall have to lay out thousands of acres in botanical parks, zoological gardens, and boulevards, and we shall have to build a Government House, and create artificial lakes. The honorable member for Eden-Monaro says, however, that we shall not require artificial lakes, because the Snowy River is up in his country. If we wish to make a failure of the federal city we shall confine ourselves strictly to an area of 10 miles square. I think the people of New South Wales owe an eternal debt of gratitude to the right honorable member for East Sydney, Mr. Reid, for getting the capital located within that State, and, on the other hand, I think that we owe him an eternal debt of ingratitude, because he has limited our area of selection. I know plenty of spots in Tasmania that would make splendid sites for a federal capital. I do not desire to take up the time of the House any further, but I say that the unearned increment created by the expenditure of the people's money belongs to the people, and that the vesting of the land in fee simple in the people is an inalienable right. The building of this capital is a vital question and of great importance to humanity, and it is for the Federal Government to crystallize the whole thing into a living tangible reality for the benefit of the people. Even the most ordinary people admit that the federal capital will be the political centre of the Commonwealth, but I claim that it will also be the precise territorial centre of the southern archipelago; equi-distant from the equator and from the

setting sun. There is no doubt about that. Therefore I claim that we ought to add all possible attractions to our federal city, by selecting a soil of unsurpassed richness with a fascinating, undulating beauty of surface, in a locality with a health generating climate capable of nurturing a sympathetic and noble-minded people', worthy to be the central pivot of this southern empire of Australia.

<page>2809</page>

Mr HUME COOK

- I desire to second the motion. In doing so I would like to say that I do not exactly bind myself to all the details contained within the motion, but rather to the principles which it bodies forth. Personally I do not think there is any necessity to lay stress on the capital being the property of the people of the Commonwealth. I am inclined to think that the Constitution Act, as given to us,' necessitates and renders mandatory that whatever land is required for the Commonwealth capital purposes must belong to the people as a whole. I believe that was the intention of the framers of the Constitution, and that the first portion of section 125 of the Constitution Act makes that quite clear. That section provides - 'The seat of the Government of the Commonwealth shall be determined by the Parliament' and shall be within territory which shall have been granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth, and shall be vested in and belong to the Commonwealth ; and shall be in the State of New South Wales, and be distant not less than 100 miles from Sydney.

The point I wish to make is, that if the area for the federal capital is to be vested in and belong to the Commonwealth, according to the language of that section, it cannot belong to any private persons, companies, or others. That seems perfectly clear, so that whatever area is chosen, whether it be 100 square miles or more, the whole of that territory so obtained for Commonwealth capital purposes must belong to the people and cannot be sold or otherwise parted with, unless an alteration of the Constitution is made. I do not think, therefore, that there is any great necessity to affirm in connexion with this particular motion that the area shall for ever remain the property of the Commonwealth, because I hope that is to be the case under all circumstances. Neither with respect to the size of the area do I think there is any great necessity to make any affirmation in the present motion. The Act is clear that the area shall not be less than 100 square miles, but there is no limitation as to whether it shall be 100 square miles, 10,000 square miles, or 20,000 square miles. It is within the province of this Parliament, and within the province of this Parliament alone, to determine how great an area shall be obtained for this particular purpose. Personally, I have every confidence in the Government securing a sufficiently large area to fulfil all the purposes which my friend the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, has so ably put forward.

Mr Wilks

- So long as it does not make for delay.

<page>2810</page>

Mr HUME COOK

- I do not think there is any fear of delay ; I should hope not, anyway. So far as I am personally concerned I suppose may say, without appearing in the slightest degree selfish, that I hope an area will be obtained as soon as possible, and a start made with the capital as soon as ever steps have been taken to determine the position, and what is to be done in connexion with it. There is no reason for delay, except the delay caused in choosing a particular site. But I do not wish to be drawn from the point, namely, that there is no necessity to name in this motion any particular area. The Government is undoubtedly just as wide awake as the members of the House are in respect to the advantages of a large area, and will, as far as possible, make the best bargain that can be obtained for the Commonwealth of Australia. Under these circumstances, it is not so necessary to dwell on details in connexion with the motion as to affirm certain principles. The first principle I wish to affirm is, that the area for the capital, when obtained, ought to be larger than the area named in the Constitution Act, and that every portion of it should be controlled and managed by the Government in the interests of the Commonwealth. I only repeat that for the purpose of affirming, as the Act itself does, that this property should belong to the Commonwealth, and should be vested in and belong to the Commonwealth for all time. But I would desire to go somewhat further. If we are to build a city, that city will require certain conveniences. We cannot have an up-to-date city without having attached to it all sorts of conveniences in the shape of railways, and, it may be, tramways, but certainly conveniences for lighting in the shape of gas works or

electrical works, together with waterworks and various other establishments, j all of which are incidental to a capital city, or indeed to any city. I hope that not only the land on which the city is built will belong to the people of Australia, but that every one of the public conveniences connected with' the city, such as waterworks, railways, tramways and gasworks, will be owned, controlled, and managed by and in the interests of the people. We have an opportunity that is possibly unique in the history of the world. If we seize that opportunity, we shall be able to present to the world a spectacle such as the world has not previously seen - an entire, city, and all connected with the city, owned and managed for the people of Australia. That being so, let me add that if there are to be any profits coming from the area itself, all those profits should go into the pockets of the people - not merely the profits from the city itself, or the area on which the actual buildings are erected, but from the whole area, whatever it is. Whether the land be built on or leased for agriculture or other purposes, all the rents or profits coming from the ground itself ought to flow into the national treasury. By that means,' what the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley,' desires, will take place. The unearned increment which must necessarily arise in connexion with a city of this kind, will go not to persons, companies, or syndicates, but to those who have a legitimate right to it - the people. The area should be large enough to secure several distinct advantages. In the first place, we are necessarily limited by the Constitution. The area, wherever it is, must be in New South Wales. It is somewhat a pity that we are restricted to one particular State. That restriction in my opinion was a mistake, but inasmuch as it is embodied in the Constitution, we have to abide by it and do the best we can under the circumstances. I, at any rate, propose to abide by the Constitution in -this regard. In the next place, we should "seek to get an area which, as a first essential, has a good climate : and, as a second essential], is easily accessible. We must have a first-class water supply, and the. capital city, wherever it is, ought to be within reasonable distance of the more central parts of the Commonwealth. In this second condition there are really three divisions - climate, water supply, and accessibility. At the same time, as has been pointed out by writers in the press, and I think by some honorable members of this House, the city should be sufficiently inland and remote from immediate attack to be quite safe. It would be unwise to build a city of this kind right on the coast. We do not want an enemy to make a raid, and destroy a city which ought to be, and I hope will be, an artistic monument, as well as a centre of usefulness. The site ought, therefore, to be sufficiently far inland to preserve the city itself, and also to preserve the national treasures, which, I suppose, will be properly stored there. But I think further, and this is the main point of the argument, that the area of land ought to be large enough for something more than a mere city. There ought to be the benefit of agricultural and industrial development quite apart from the ground rents of the business premises connected with the city. We ought to secure an area which will feed the city quite apart from the city's own resources. We should choose a site which, as far as possible, will give us those advantages. The city should be fed, and perhaps clothed, out of its own resources, and for that reason all the area surrounding the city for many miles - I am not going to limit myself to any particular aim - should be owned by the Commonwealth All that comes out of agricultural or industrial development round about. this city ought also properly to belong to the Commonwealth. This can only be obtained by acquiring an area greater than 100 square miles. It is generally agreed that that area is too small. I do not know of any man who regards it as sufficient. The aim that we are striving after can only be achieved by increasing the size. I hope that no town or hamlet will be chosen just because it happens to be in existence. I do not favour any of the cities where large interests are already created, such as Albury, Orange, or any other of the larger places that have been mentioned. If we buy up huge interests such as these, we shall be making a very great mistake from two points of view. In the first place the site of the capital would cost us more than it should. In the second place we should not be able to build that artistic and sanitary city, which we hope to create, without pulling down or reconstructing any one of the towns already indicated. Personally, as far as possible, I would seek to build a city which would be new from centre to circumference; which would be up-to-date in every possible respect, and which would include no existing town or village. If a town must be included within the federal area, then the smallest possible place ought to be selected, so that we should have to pay as little as possible for reconstructing or removing it. Moreover, if we purchase country where no such vested interests exist, it will be very much easier for us to carry out the ideal we have in view than if we select territory where they are to be found. The more we look at this question, the more it will appear to us that the least we have to do with existing towns or hamlets the better it will be for us. Another result of buying

land which included a town might be to give to persons, already looking forward to making some profits, greater claims upon us than they have any right to possess. I do not know exactly how this matter can be overcome. It may be that the Government will be able to induce Parliament to pass an Act providing that the land required for the federal capital site shall be taken over at the municipal valuation at a certain date plus a certain amount for its compulsory resumption. It might be enacted that the municipal valuation at an existing date shall be the basis of purchase, plus 10 or 15 per cent, as compensation for taking away the necessary land required for Commonwealth purposes. I am not certain whether that could be done.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Have we the right to do so ?

Mr HUME COOK

- I do not know, but something should be done to forestall, as far as possible, the disproportionate and unfair 'claims which the residents of some of these towns may make against us when we come to build our capital. I do not desire to take up the time of the House by discussing details in connexion with the question of how the money is to be raised to carry out this work, nor do I wish to name any particular site which may appear to me to be sufficiently good for the purpose. I have no wish to deal with any other point incidental to the broad question. My view is that we ought to treat this matter to-day rather from the point of view of principle than from the point of view of detail. I hope that when the federal capital is created it will have an influence upon the political and social life of the community at large. Every new city is a new centre of thought. There are too few such centres of thought in Australia. We are too much dominated by the great cities of Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, and too much dominated in those cities by ' the particular newspapers that we take. Every new city created will therefore, to a large extent, help to mould and develop the thought of the continent, and the capital city of Australia ought to be the apex of the thought of the continent. It ought to contain within its four corners the best and the brightest intellects that the continent can gather together, and it ought to be a centre from which shall radiate the very best that is in Australia. That is the ideal view of the question. We may never reach that ideal ; but if we do not aim high we shall not hit much. I should like to see the ideal aimed at. I should like to see this city a commercial centre. The commercial element cannot be excluded or overlooked. The capital city, however, should also be something like a model or type of art and refinement - the artistic element cannot be overlooked. If we read the words of the motion itself it will be seen that this is a point which the honorable member who moves it has not forgotten. As we listened to his flowing sentences we must have felt that the aesthetical and ' artistic, from his point of view, was more to be considered than any other matter to which he referred. The building of this city may take some time ; and, whilst we have no right to delay it, we have no right to hurry it. I hope it will embrace these three tilings - the commercial element, the public element - wherein everything shall belong to the people of Australia - and the artistic element, which will make the city a fit repository of the nation's treasures, and something like a symbol of its greatness, its liberty, and its progress.

Mr WILKS

- As a representative of New South Wales, I am pleased that the honorable member for Tasmania has brought this question forward. I hope that later on in the debate the Prime Minister will make some statement to the House as to the intentions of the Government. We have listened to-day to the grandiloquent language of the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley - to his rounded periods, and his wealth of imagery - language which coming from me would sound very much like the words of a quack medicine advertisement. I do not wish to repeat his style, but simply to say that we now have an opportunity of dealing with this question, although this is only an abstract motion. The Constitution provides that the area of the federal capital shall be not less than 100 square miles. Since the passing of the Constitution Act, however, the Premier of New South Wales - a State which has a lot to do with this matter - has said that the Government of that State are prepared to grant an additional area of 15 miles square, making a total of 25 miles square.

Mr Barton

- They made a reservation of 15 miles square.

<page>2812</page>

Mr WILKS

- That would mean 225 square miles as against 100 square miles, which is the area provided for in the

Constitution.- The Constitution ' Act also requires that . the site of the federal capital shall be not less than 100 miles from Sydney. Although it may not seem fit after the speech made by the honorable member for Tasmania to deal with this matter from a utilitarian stand-point, I cannot help saying that the granting of 225 square miles, mainly comprised of Crown lands, is no small present to the Commonwealth.

Mr O'Malley

- "We want to pay for it.

Mr WILKS

- It would be difficult to find in New South Wales an area suitable for the purpose larger than I have named. I hope that there will be no restrictions placed on the question of area. New South Wales wants this portion of the bargain completed speedily.

Mr. O'Malley. - And so do we.

Mr. WILKS. - I quite understand that the honorable member for Tasmania may hold a brief for the Government whip, the honorable member for Eden Monaro, who represents Bombala. He did his work very well indeed; but I do not wish to anticipate. Honorable members are to have an opportunity of visiting the various suitable sites in New South Wales for the purpose of obtaining information, and for the purpose, I trust, of coming to an early decision. All that has been stated by the last speaker, and by the mover, goes almost without saying. We trust that the erection of a suitable city on up-to-date principles will be carried out; but we are not prepared to wait until the time when the boy in the street will use the beautiful language which the honorable member for Tasmania used in introducing the motion. Nor are we prepared to wait for the city in the clouds, which the last speaker so airily sketched. All we hope is that the site will be selected, and that the city will be laid out to meet the requirements of the day and with possibilities for future development. I am not one of those who think that, because we have a federal capital, immediately around that capital will gather the intellect of the Commonwealth. Nor am I prepared to see raised within a week, or a few hours, an Aladdin city which will astonish the world. I do not expect anything of that sort, nor do I think that the people of New South Wales will expect it. Perhaps we may be cast in an inferior mould ; but we do hope that a suitable site will be obtained at an early moment, and that it will not be such an area as 1,000 square miles. I cannot understand why the honorable member did not suggest 2,000 square miles, so that we could resume the whole of Tasmania for the site of an ideal city. One of the reasons for accepting the Commonwealth Bill in New South Wales was that the federal city would be established within the territory, and the compromise made by its Prime Minister, Mr. Reid, with the Prime Minister of Victoria, Sir George Turner, was that that city should be not within 100 miles of Sydney. The reason for inserting that restriction to my mind was so that neither the commercial city of Sydney nor the commercial centre of Melbourne should obtain any preference. That was the idea thrown out, and it was expressed, I suppose, by men in their calmer moments. The people of New South Wales expect that city to be built where all the surroundings are suitable, and that it shall be as close as possible to that 100-mile line. Although the Constitution says that it shall be not within 100 miles' of Sydney, the people of New South Wales expect, all things being equal, that it shall be as near as possible to that line.

Mr Chapman

- Not all the people of New South Wales.

<page>2813</page>

Mr WILKS

- The larger portion of the people who decided the life of the Commonwealth Bill. Hundreds and thousands of persons voted for the acceptance of that Bill for the consideration that an area of not less than 100 square miles as close as possible to that line should be the federal territory. But even on that point I do not think the people of New South Wales feel so strongly, that if a more suitable area were found some miles outside that line they would not be prepared for their representatives to support the selection. .I hope that this motion will elicit from the Prime Minister a statement as to whether any action has been taken, and if so, when the people of New South Wales can expect the choice of the federal site to be determined. So far as the erection of the capital is concerned, I hope that when a site has been chosen by the authorities and approved by this House, it will not be necessary for this Parliament to wait until a palatial structure can be erected to suit either the demands or the wishes of honorable members after the style which was suggested by the mover or the last speaker. I hope that the Commonwealth will keep the bargain which was made with

New South Wales and obey the spirit of the Constitution, and that immediately a site is selected a structure will be run up for the housing of the Parliament. After that it will be a matter of development. I do not think that any man in his calm senses anticipates that for many years the federal city, because it is the capital, will be surrounded by the wealth and prominence which some honorable members expect. It will be simply a matter of development. It will be the natural resources around that area which will attract the population, and not the fact that it is the political centre of Australia. I hope that the Prime Minister will give an expression of opinion, because the people of New South Wales, although not pushing the question are as much concerned in its determination as is the honorable member for Kalgoorlie, who gave notice of a motion this afternoon in regard to what he considered a bargain on behalf of Western Australia. We simply wish the provision "in the Constitution to be carried out, and the opinion of the people, so far as it can be interpreted, is that, all things being equal, the suitable site should be as close to the 100-mile radius as possible. Of course I can understand the honorable member for Tasmania being carried away by his aesthetic nature into regions represented by the most seductive member who represents Eden-Monaro.

<page>2814</page>

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I feel a little cold, after warming myself at the beacon fires lit by the honorable member for Tasmania, now that I have been placed under the cold douche of the speech of the honorable member for Dalley. We have had the sentiment of the matter fully developed in one direction, and we have had a good deal of common sense, perhaps not quite optimistic enough, from my honorable friend on the other side. The question that has been raised by the honorable member for Tasmania cannot be said to be inopportunistically raised, nor can any complaint be made as to the terms in which he has brought forward his motion. But I think the House will agree with me, that, considering the difficulties that may arise in connexion with the selection of a capital, it would not be a good thing for the country at large to have too many restrictions laid down at this stage. We all know that 'the site which we are to choose must be a healthy one. We all know that it must be well watered.

It will not do to have a capital, the population of which will from time to time increase, and to find after a generation or two, or perhaps even earlier if the place is lucky, that the needs of the population in respect of water supply are insufficiently met by any reasonable engineering use of the facilities in the district, and that therefore the capital has to be removed, although a village may remain in the old spot. That would never do. In the same way we must not insist on fertility, within the particular area as an essential requirement. And why? Wherever the capital is there 'will be Inter-State free-trade. It will be able to derive its supplies from the surrounding country, and so long as it is near to land which is fertile that will be sufficient so far as its own supplies are concerned. I can easily imagine a case in which the choice might be between good agricultural land, well watered for the raising of crops, but too low and not healthy enough for the site of the capital, and good hilly country, quite near to it, with an abundant water supply, which would more amply satisfy all conditions both as to picturesqueness and healthiness of situation. That is one reason why we should not tie ourselves down. I intend to move an amendment which will go as far as the Government, think we ought to go in the direction of any restriction. In that amendment I have not provided for any particular area by way of measurement, because it strikes me that that would be fatal to the very object we have in view. Now, as to this matter of area, which would be the better thing - to take 1,500 or 2,000 square miles of land not perfectly suitable to contain the capital city and its appanages, or to take 700, 800, or 900 square miles of land perfectly suitable for all the purposes of a capital territory? It is clear that if we lay down the minimum of 1,000 square miles, we may find ourselves passing by the most adaptable site we could find in Australia. The Constitution has made a restriction that shuts out two of the most eligible sites in Australia, one in New South Wales and the other in Victoria. I refer to the Moss Vale district and the Ballarat district. For, whatever may be said as to the site of the capital, I think every one to whom I have spoken on the subject agrees that among the finest sites are the two districts I have just named. But the Constitution having, by its own operation, cut us off from the selection of either of those places, has reduced the number of suitable sites; and I think we should see to it that we do not further reduce them by unnecessary restrictions. I agree with a very great deal of what has been said by the honorable member for Bourke as to the requirements. I agree with his line of

argument against undue restrictions. We might leave a good deal 'of common ground between the motion and the amendment I intend to submit, and avoid the dangers into which I think we should fall by adopting the motion as it stands. I propose to omit all the words after " area " with a view to substituting the following, in which I retain some of the words of the motion : -

Of land well watered, healthily situated, and large enough to fully meet all probable requirements, and secure to the Commonwealth the benefits to accrue from the position of the capital, such area when secured to remain for ever the property of the Commonwealth, the ground only to be let to utilizers, all buildings to be erected under strict regulations, with due regard to public health and architectural beauty. I think that amendment should satisfy the desires of the honorable member who has moved this motion, and should also satisfy the House, without running into any undue restrictions which might limit our choice hereafter. The question of water is so very important in Australia that it is necessary to be very careful in our choice from that point of view.

Mr O'Malley

- We can get that in the Snowy River district.

Mr BARTON

- There are some well watered spots that would never do for a capital, and there are many badly watered spots' that, if they were not in that condition, would be among the best sites in Australia. We are restricted enough by nature as matters stand; do not let us add to the restrictions unnecessarily.

Mr A McLEAN

- Is it wise to pass any motion? We are all agreed, I think.

Mr BARTON

- If we were to negative this motion, there are propositions in it of such a character that it would seem to all Australia that we had improperly negatived it. We are in that difficulty. The wiser course to pursue, if we do not negative the motion, is to alter it - because as it stands it would unduly restrict our choice - and add other words which would place the matter upon what we consider to be proper lines. I may state further that the Government have been in communication with the Government of New South Wales, and are likely to receive "further assistance from them, upon the subject. With regard to the area," we were told in a paper received from the Government of New South Wales that in the sites recommended by the Federal Capital Commissioner, Mr. Alexander Oliver, Crown land of an area of 15 miles radius was to be reserved from sale. We found soon afterwards that it was not an area of 15 miles radius, but of 15 miles square. The radius was of course the better thing both for the Commonwealth and for New South Wales, because that would mean something like 700 square miles, whilst an area of 15 miles square would only represent 225 square miles. We have made a representation upon that subject to the New South Wales Government, and have no doubt that in anything in regard to the matter we shall meet with an attentive and willing hearing from the Ministry of New South Wales, who, judging from the attitude which they have assumed hitherto - and which I think would be the attitude of any Government existing in New South Wales - will give every facility for making a fair and free choice. As to the area question, there are some who even think that we should have 10,000, 50,000, or 100,000 square miles. That is not within the contemplation of the Constitution. It was never intended that any federal territory in a fairly densely populated state should reach such dimensions. It is all very well to have presented to us some hundreds of millions of acres, in the Northern Territory of South Australia.

Mr V L SOLOMON

-For a moderate consideration.

<page>2815</page>

Mr BARTON

- Yes, under a burden of £100,000 a year, which might put us in the position that Lord Rosebery deprecated the other day when, in his letter to the City of London Liberal Club, he declined to place himself in the situation of a "strong ass between two burdens." It would not do to take for the capital a territory which it is not intended to develop into a State, and to endow it with an area which would really qualify it to be a State. Therefore, I do not think it was within the contemplation of the framers of the Constitution at all that we should go beyond that which will be handy and adaptable as the territory of the Commonwealth, particularly in consideration of the fact of its being situated in one of the largest States, and also, as it must be, fairly accessible to a large population. Now, the provisions of the Constitution in

this respect seem to me to point very clearly to what is intended. In section 125 we are told that -
The seat of Government of the Commonwealth shall be determined by the Parliament, and shall be within territory which shall have been granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth, and shall be vested in and belong to the Commonwealth, and, if New South Wales be an original State, shall be in that State, and be distant not less than 100 miles from Sydney.

Then we find another reference to the question in the 122nd section, which tells us that -
The Parliament may make laws for the government of any territory surrendered by any State to and accepted by the Commonwealth, or of any territory placed by the Queen under the authority of and accepted by the Commonwealth or otherwise acquired by the Commonwealth, and may allow the representation of such territory in either House of the Parliament to the extent and on the terms which it thinks fit.

One may well suppose a territory like that of the northern part of South Australia becoming in time a State, but I do not think it was ever the intention of the framers of this Constitution to dictate, or to require in any way, that the federal territory should become a State, unless some overwhelming necessity arose that it should do so. There is another reason why I should be strong in that contention, and that is this : If such a territory became a State it would require to be represented in the Senate, and probably would obtain a representation equal to that of those much larger areas of which Tasmania is the smallest, though it is still much larger than any territory we should secure for the capital.

Mr Crouch

- Is that so for new States?

Mr BARTON

- No, but if we make a new State, we must give it representation in the Senate, and that might lead, to a large extent, to an overwhelming of that balance or equilibrium between States which we have attempted to institute, and do not want unduly to unhinge or destroy. I do not want to speak at great length on this matter. Honorable members will see from the way I have dealt with it that there is no prejudgment as to sites on the part of the Government. This territory is no doubt to be ultimately selected by the Federal Parliament from such land as shall be offered to it by New South Wales. I think the Constitution itself contemplates that the offer shall be made under any circumstances by New South Wales, and any action beyond the acceptance of one of the offers made is not intended to be undertaken by the Commonwealth except as a last resource. That I feel secure about. But I do not think we need fear great difficulties on that point, when we consider how ready that State has been, so far as we have gone, to offer further areas. Honorable members will find from the correspondence, which they can see, that the Government of New South Wales is willing to offer further areas beyond those mentioned in the commissioner's report. It has asked our opinion upon that subject, and we have replied that we think it is for New South Wales to make the offers in the first instance, and that we shall be ready to receive any such offers. That is in the first instance, of course, because the Constitution must not only be consulted, but it is a matter of tact and good policy to consult the wishes and feelings of the State which is most concerned. That does not of course prevent any last recourse there may be under the Constitution, but I hope the day for that is far distant, and that we shall never have any resort to it at all.

Mr Wilks

- At what date is the Government likely to deal with this matter ?

Mr BARTON

- The honorable member may just as well ask me at what date we will bring in the Tariff.

Mr Wilks

- In November or December, or what month?

Mr BARTON

- We cannot deal with this matter in any particular month, because there is a continuous dealing with it going on. There is correspondence going on with a view to arriving at something definite as to what can be offered in addition to the sites already placed under offer and mentioned in the commissioner's report.

Mr Wilks

- I am referring to the inspection of sites.

<page>2816</page>

Mr BARTON

- There, again, I have a difficulty ' in answering the honorable member, and I think he will appreciate it. The work of this session is very full, and the business - paper contains a large number of most important measures. I think we shall be lucky if we get away from here much before Christmas. If we were to lay it down that we would institute an inspection of the sites, and fix the time now, we might be throwing ourselves beyond any proper date at which the session ought to close. I am, therefore, reluctant to name any date within the session for the purpose. It is not a tiling to force in any way, because the site requires the satisfaction of this Parliament, as well as the satisfaction of the State of New South Wales. While we are strong in our desire to have an early choice made - and no one feels more strongly than I do that the matter should be dealt with as early as possible - we feel that we must have the good-will of Parliament with us in making the choice. We must, therefore, allow for inspection by Member's of Parliament at the proper time. Now, as to the proper time, the question arises whether the sites should not first be narrowed down by some reference to such questions as accessibility, engineering facilities, and an abundant supply of water. All these conditions must exist, and of course an abundant supply of water is the first requisite. The inquiry which will be instituted on these points will show to what extent the sites can be narrowed down, in respect, for instance, of the water question, which is the most important of all. When once we have information upon that point, I think we shall be able to arrange for visits by the whole Parliament, or by a committee of Parliament in the first instance, as may be determined. But I cannot hold out a promise that that can be done while we have the immediate pressure upon us of all the matters that are engaging the public mind at the present moment. Honorable members may rely upon this, that there is no one more anxious that this question should be brought to a speedy determination, consistently with good judgment, than I am. I welcome the co-operation of all honorable members in the matter. This, least of all, is a party question. It is one in which Ministerialists and Oppositionists can work heartily together, giving, of course, every consideration to the interests of the State concerned, but realizing that the interests of the future generations of this Commonwealth are the most important of all. To me, as a native of New South Wales, it is a subject of especial gratification, that for all time the capital is likely to be in that State. But my nativity there, and my natural prejudice in favour of the place in which I was born, do not blind me to the fact that the choice should be careful, and, if necessary, very deliberate - although it should not be too prolonged - so that we may have a capital which will preserve the best conditions for the future of this Commonwealth, not merely in respect of the particular fad or eccentricity of any of us, but in respect of the interests of the generations that are to come.

Mr Mahon

- Before sitting down will the right honorable gentleman say whether he will ask the Government of New South Wales, in the event of the Commonwealth having to acquire any territory, to pass an Act, so that the land may be acquired at the prairie value.

<page>2817</page>

Mr BARTON

- It is the intention of the Government to see that there is no room for the land gambler in respect of the acquirement of this site. Wherever else he may have free play, I think his claws should be off the site of the federal capital. Our desire is, and we intend to secure it if it is humanly possible, that there should be some date fixed as the date on which the just value can be ascertained. My own opinion is that the date can be fixed at, or anterior to, the 1st of January of this year, before speculative and fancy values began to attach themselves to certain areas. If that can be done, it will enable the Commonwealth to acquire land within the capital, so much land as policy deems it requisite to acquire, on terms which will enable the people of the Commonwealth to reap the benefit of the leasing of that land. It is not our intention to consent to the alienation of any land that we acquire within the capital area. We propose to be lessors of that land. I ask the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, to leave out the words "on building or other leases," and to use only the words "to be let to utilizers," because I think that covers the whole ground. We do not intend that there shall be any alienation of the freehold so far as we are concerned. We do intend that all the buildings shall be erected under strict regulations, but I propose to leave out the word "government" because that will give us a free hand to have the regulations framed by such authority as might be appointed. With regard to the last phrase -

With due regard to public health and architectural beauty. .

I take that to be a mere matter of course which we should attend to though it were not laid down in the

'resolution. But I do not view it with "any prejudice when I find it there. I move - That the motion be amended ' by the omission of the words <- " not 'less than '1,000 square miles of land in a good, healthy arid¹ fertile' situation, the freehold of which shall for ever remain," with a view to insert in lieu thereof the words "land, well watered, healthily situated, and large enough to fully . meet all probable requirements, and 'Secure to the ' Commonwealth the benefits to -accrue from the position of the capital ; such area when secured to remain for ever."

Mr. CHAPMAN

(Eden Monaro).Realizing the 'great importance of this question, I feel sure' the House will be "with me when I say 'that the country -will 'read with interest the speech' which- has' just been delivered by the Prime 'Minister, in the spirit in which I think- a great question like this should be approached ; and will -also welcome the contributions to the debate which have been made by several honorable members on both sides of -this House, as proving, even at this early stage, that there will be no feeling Other than the feeling of patriotism 'displayed in fixing the site for the federal capital. Coming as I do from an electorate that has put forward eel-tain claims to 'have the federal capital in its midst, I may say 'at once that I am in accord with the resolution as moved, "and also with the amendment, which, I think, goes even further, -and I feel sure that the honorable member for Tasmania will' be only' too pleased to accept-' the amendment, which will find 'favour right throughout the whole of this continent. T do not propose to pose as- a special pleader for an}' particular 'site, because, although it will afford me ' the greatest pleasure if ' the federal capital should be placed within the four corners of my- electorate, I believe that if there is one vote more'than another in regard to which a man should allow his patriotism ' to have full sway, it is in the matter of fixing the site Of the" federal capital. Very few people realize the vastly important influence this capital will have on' the prosperity of the country. We need -not look too far ahead for this great prosperity, because, after all, this -is an age when people are prone to look to the benefits which accrue in the immediate' future; and; being one of those who hope to derive, same

benefit, and to see the country and the people derive some benefit from the selection of the federal capital, I welcome the statement of the Prime Minister that - no unnecessary delay will take .place, that every facility will be 'given to members of this House for coming to a conclusion, 'and that when that conclusion has been arrived at, no time will be lost in taking the Steps requisite '-for the erection of - the necessary buildings. In connexion with this matter, I "may direct the attention of honorable members to the ."fact ' that at the present time we are confronted- seem to be always confronted - with ' the "fact that we have . 'a lot of - surplus labour for which it is difficult 'to 'find employment. 1 One can easily imagine that once the site of the federal capital has been selected,' millions of money will -be released 'for expenditure - not only the money Of ' the Commonwealth Government, but also private capital - which ought' to, 'and -no doubt will, absorb most <3f ' this surplus, .and especially the labour that most troubles us - unskilled labour- right throughout the Commonwealth. This- consideration in itself should induce honorable members ' to come to a conclusion as speedily as 'possible. I strongly favour the idea that honorable members should visit the various 'eligible sites for the (federal capital, because I realize that '-no committee or 'body of experts can convey the information necessary to give honorable members ' that 'grasp which -they- ought" to' have of this important subject. Nothing can so well enable honorable 'members to deal with this matter properly as a personal acquaintance with the various 'Sites that may be regarded as suitable. I know that this is no new proposal, but as "there seems to' be some misapprehension as to what the¹ proposal of the New South Wales Government was, I purpose calling attention to one or two slight mistakes that have been made in dealing with: the question. I do not want to make comparisons between the sites, but I intend to deal with the question of ' -the 'area. I agree 'with the 'Prime Minister that it would be a¹, great mistake to bind ourselves to any area,' but at the -same time I assert, from my own' personal knowledge, that not only could -we secure' in one 6f the most favoured portions Of New."South Wales' 1,000 square miles,' but it would possibly be'- to the advantage Of the Commonwealth if we were to secure 5,000 square miles. The larger' the 'area we acquire, the smaller will be* the chance for the speculator, and the better the opportunity for the Commonwealth to reap the unearned increment that will accrue from the establishment of the capital. It. has been demonstrated that 5,000 square miles could easily be secured in southern Monaro. In the comments which have been made regarding

Mr.

Oliver's report, it has been assumed that he proposed to take only a small area as a federal capital site, but if honorable members will turn to page 24 of his report, they will see that he says -

The federal territory site of 125 square miles (80,000 acres) is, in my opinion, altogether inadequate, and an extension of area is suggested which would increase the area up to 1,200 square miles approximately. That is Mr. Oliver's suggestion after having visited all the various sites, and having made the most careful inquiries. Mr. Oliver had the benefit of the opinions of various trained experts, and also the benefit of special surveys of the country, the gauging of water supplies, and other details which were necessary before any one could approach a subject of this kind with any degree of certainty. Mr. Oliver was chosen for this particular task as one having special knowledge of the country, and as being generally well qualified for the work. He recommends us to go even a step further than the honorable member for Tasmania proposes in his motion, and the honorable member must recognise that the Prime Minister is right when he says that we should not hedge ourselves in with any conditions, but that we should be left free and unfettered in our choice. Although I hold the strongest conviction with regard to the best site for the federal capital - and I feel quite satisfied that the great majority of honorable members will agree with me after they have visited the various sites - nevertheless, I am open to conviction, and as an Australian, I say that the federal capital ought to be placed on the very best site available. I go further, and say that we ought to require something besides what has been outlined by the Prime Minister, and if I felt disposed to narrow the choice down, I should add to the motion the following words -

Also that the federal territory should embrace within its limits a natural harbor or port over which the Commonwealth should have supreme control.

I feel, however, that if I were to do anything of that kind, I should be acting contrary to the liberal spirit shown by the Prime Minister, and therefore I am glad that the honorable member who placed this suggestion in my hands gave it to the right person. I persuaded him not to move it, because while it would probably denote where the federal capital ought to be, I feel that we ought to have a free and unfettered choice. One honorable member has stated that, all things being equal, we ought to fix the site of the federal capital as near as possible to the port of Sydney; but, although I represent a New South Wales constituency, I refuse to grant that Sydney has any inherent right to the trade that will accrue from the establishment of the federal capital. What right has Sydney to this advantage any more than Melbourne, Hobart, or any other port in the States? No doubt there will be a great trade arise in connexion with the federal capital, and further, it will probably enrich those who happen to have that trade in their control. It is amusing to read the reports in the Sydney daily papers, which point out what an awful blunder was made in limiting the area within which the federal capital should be established to the country beyond 100 miles from Sydney. If we concede to the honorable member for Dalley that, other things being equal, perhaps it might be desirable to establish the federal capital as near as possible to the bounds of the 100 miles limit. We ask are all other things equal? Is there any comparison between placing the federal capital on good open fertile country land, that could be resumed at a small expenditure, and taking land close to the centres of population, which would have to be acquired at prices that would run the Commonwealth into a very heavy outlay, and at the same time result, perhaps, in the city being perched upon some mountain craig or buried in the midst of a swamp? At any rate, if all things were equal there might be something in the contention, but I think the honorable member will see that all things are not equal. Especially, we must not forget the equal rights of those who have been debarred from having the federal capital in their own State. I regret we have not a free and unfettered choice; because if there had been a better site in Victoria, Tasmania, or any other State for a federal capital site, I see no reason why the capital should not have been placed there. But the point having been settled by the Constitution Act, there can be only one reason underlying the insidious suggestion that is being made at times that we might alter the Constitution. It is pointed out that it is the Victorians who are trying to engineer the matter; but this is being done by the monopolists of Sydney, who, if they could break down the provision for the 100 miles radius, would endeavour to have the capital brought right into Sydney itself. It has, however, been fixed by the Constitution Act that the federal capital must be in New South Wales, and not less than 100 miles from Sydney, and any attempt to alter the Constitution in that respect will receive my strongest opposition. I do not want to detain the House, because an opportunity will be afforded honorable members later on of discussing the matter at length. The Prime Minister struck the right keynote when he said that first of all

we must have an unlimited water supply. We must have the purest water supply on God's earth.

Mr O'Malley

- Hear, hear ! Snowy River.

Mr CHAPMAN

- Not only must we have a supply of pure water, but we must have plenty of it. There must be no measurement of gallons per head, or anything of that sort. It would be a fatal blunder if this capital were located in a place where we could not have not only a supply of pure water, but an unlimited supply. There should be sufficient to run through the drains and sewers without necessitating the turning off of a tap in a large city such as is bound to spring up.

An Honorable MEMBER - Where is there such a place ?

Mr CHAPMAN

- The honorable member who puts that question had better ask me where London is. He is evidently not up in the geography of the world, or he would know that the place is in Southern Monara which is " in the running " as the federal capital site, and has more than " Buckley's " chance. There are two sites there which, in my opinion, are superior, to any other sites that are offered. I trust .honorable members will have the opportunity before this year runs out of inspecting that district; and, after the information which the Prime Minister has promised, we will be able to say which is the better of the two sites I have mentioned. But, besides an unlimited supply of pure water, we should have a climate equal to any, if not the best, in Australia. That is another essential we should certainly insist upon. Then we should have a fertile soil, which having been resumed, and being suitable for closer settlement, would enable a large number of people to gain a livelihood, irrespective of the fact that the federal capital is there. These are three essentials, and we should have a good site for the laying out of a model city, built on lines gathered from the best experts and architects of the world, and of which we may be proud. A person will as soon think of visiting Australia without going "to the capital as we would of visiting England without seeing London. Then we want what the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, desires - beautiful scenery, with building materials close at hand, and a central position in relation to the four Or five large centres of population. It is a remarkable fact that Southern Monara is in a central position, and, within a few miles may be said to -be the half-way house between Sydney and Melbourne. I do not believe there is a difference of ten miles, between the distance of Southern Monara from Sydney and the distance from Melbourne, and that is a matter which ought to be considered in the selection of the federal capital site. Then we ought to have a federal port. I would fight strenuously for a federal port that we could fortify and use for our federal navy, and at the same time be under no obligation to any particular State. Such a port ought to be within reasonable distance of the capital, and, at the same time be sufficiently far away to prevent the capital being bombarded from the waters surrounding that port. The honorable and learned member for Werriwa is quite right in saying that a port of this kind is known as Twofold Bay. Another important matter it would be well for us to' consider is how we are going to raise the money for acquiring this area. That is a question which will have to be debated presently, but I would suggest that it might be worth while considering whether we should not adopt a similar system to that adopted in Canada. In the Dominion, banks are compelled to hold a certain portion of their reserves in Government securities ; and by that means we could acquire this territory, even more than 1,000 square miles, and it would cost the people of this country hardly a shilling.

Mr Mahon

- Why does the honorable member not credit the proper authority with that suggestion 1

<page>2820</page>

Mr CHAPMAN

- I was about to say, when the honorable member interrupted me, that I got the suggestion from the Bulletin I am always pleased to admit having taken an idea of the kind from the Bulletin, and I think that if we were to conduct our politics more on the lines advocated by that newspaper we should have a much better country. I am pleased to think that, besides advocating the taking of 5,000 square miles, the Bulletin points out the undeniable truth that there is only one place where that can be done to the advantage of the people, and that is Southern Monaro. I am glad to find that the honorable member for Coolgardie admires the Bulletin, and I trust he will follow that newspaper's suggestion right through, so that we may have the federal capital in the proper place. The same newspaper points out that if 5,000

square miles be taken instead of 1,000 square miles, and that if the site be in the Monaro district, the area might include the great and rising towns of Cooma, Bombala, Delegate, Nimitybelle, Bibbenluke, and Buckley's crossing. The Bulletin goes on to say that Cooma and Bombala are valued at £290,800, Cooma being valued at £218,100, and Bombala at £72,700 ; and that the other places, although they have no municipal valuation, would about make up another Bombala, running up the total valuation of town property to £370,000.

Mr CONROY

- The honorable member has omitted Queenbeyan, which is also in his electorate.

<page>2821</page>

Mr CHAPMAN

- Time does not permit me to refer to the advantages possessed by all the different localities ; but at a future time, when the question as to the federal capital is entered on seriously, I will place facts before honorable members in such a clear and convincing way, that it will not require much advocacy on my part to persuade honorable members as to which is the best site. I feel that it is best for a man to convince himself, and I am sure that as soon as honorable members inspect these different sites they will be able to satisfy themselves on the point. I would say further, that I am quite in accord with the Bulletin again, when it points out that the difference between the Commonwealth Government buying a large area and a small one is that by purchasing a large tract of country they would put the unearned increment- which in the case of the acquisition of 5,000 square miles would amount almost at once to something like £6,000,000 - into the pockets of the people instead of allowing the land speculator to come in. I have no desire to labour this question. I am thoroughly in accord with the amendment, and I hope that the words of the Prime Minister will strike deep into the hearts of honorable members. I trust we shall have no small party spirit in dealing with this question. I have no fear of any line of demarcation between the Opposition and the Government in the matter. It is to be hoped, however, that those honorable members who have the honour to represent the city and suburban constituencies of New South Wales will recognise that Sydney is not New South Wales, and that we have something more to consider than the rights of those who are fortunate, or unfortunate enough, to be located in those big centres. We have now an opportunity of trying land nationalization. Let us see how the policy we have so long preached will come out in practice, and let us show the people of Australia that we recognise that centralization is bad. It would be a grand thing for Australia if we had a great many more cities distributed through the States, instead of having the mass of the people congregated in four or five large centres. We have an opportunity now, and we should avail ourselves of it. We know that the State Government will provide all the Crown lands. Some honorable members, however, appear to me to put too much stress on that point, because they fail to remember that the available Crown lands in anything like reasonable positions are no good. The people have already taken up the good Crown lands, and therefore it is better that we should pay £2 or £3 per acre for good private land than that we should accept a present of bad Crown areas. These private lands have been selected in years past because of their superior quality, and by the closer settlement necessarily connected with the erection of a large city we should soon make it worth £10, or £15, or £20 per acre for cultivation and other purposes. Great profit would thus accrue to the Commonwealth. I welcome this proposition with very great pleasure. I hope that within three or four 3-ears' time at the outside we shall be meeting in the federal capital* I feel confident that the people recognise that the Government are in earnest in this matter, and that they intend at the first opportunity to select a suitable site and build the capital. When the Government propose to adopt such a course, I feel assured that they will have the support of honorable members, not only on each side of this House, but also the support of honorable members in the other Chamber. It is recognised that we are only in temporary quarters here, and every honorable member is anxious to get as early as possible to that home which he will endeavour to make convenient.

Mr O'Malley

- We shall not be there within ten years.

Mr CHAPMAN

- I do not agree with the honorable member.

Mr O'Malley

- We do not want to live in a woolshed.

Mr CHAPMAN

- The honorable member would live as comfortably in a 6x8 tent in Southern Monaro as he would in a mansion in some places. This is one of those matters in which we must necessarily make haste slowly. Having selected the right site, it will, no doubt, be the effort of the Government to secure the erection of a city on the most modern lines, so that the most modern system of sanitation and every comfort that could be desired will be found in that city. I hope that when this great question is settled, it will be settled on the lines of patriotism. Strong as my convictions are in favour of Southern Monaro, I do trust that the best site will be chosen quite independently of any selfish reasons, and that the Government will follow closely the lines laid down in the amendment. If they do so they will meet with the approval, not only of honorable members of this House, but of the people of the continent. The people of Australia are very much interested in this question. The sooner we settle it the sooner we shall give employment to a large number of workers, and lead to the creation of a capital to which, in time to come, it will be the pleasure and pride of every Australian to point as one of the most modern designed cities in the world, built on one of the best sites in the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr. V.

L. SOLOMON (South Australia).The honorable member for Tasmania
(Mr. O'Malley)

has no doubt been forced into the position of tabling this motion, owing to the fact that although the policy speech put forward by the Prime Minister and his colleagues contained an allusion to almost every conceivable subject; which has been within the gamut of political programmes of the various States for years past, it still missed the important point as to the non-alienation of the land to be acquired for the federal site. Of course, we know that the Prime Minister in his speech at Maitland alluded to this question. In that speech the right honorable and learned gentleman distinctly told us that his policy favoured the non-alienation of the lands to be acquired for the purposes of the federal capital ; yet, when the policy speech came down, although it alluded to the necessity of selecting a site for the federal capital, and the exercise of " good judgment and so on, it did not say one word as to the intentions of the Government with regard to this particular and important point.

Mr Barton

- It is still the policy of the Government.

<page>2822</page>

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am glad that it is so. It is one of those points in the Government policy with which I heartily agree, and it is an experiment that possibly in the next generation will satisfy the ideas of those who are very eager for the State to have the increased values of property. The principle of land values assessment has been one of the hobbies of a large section of the people of Australia for some time past. This will give us an absolute chance of trying the experiment in a thorough manner, without interfering with any vested rights. The honorable member who has just resumed his seat alluded to the desire of some honorable members to alter the Constitution in order to remove the restriction as to the site of the federal capital. I think many honorable members will agree with me that when the compromise was arrived at by which it was agreed that the site of the federal capital should be in New South Wales-, not less than 100 miles from Sydney, it was a very great strain on many true federalists throughout Australia to fight for the Bill in that altered form. It was a most unfair and improper compromise. Nevertheless it was made, and those who cared more for federation than for any point as to the site of the capital, fought just as loyally, although a little sorely, for the Federal Bill in its amended form, as they had done before. Now that it is done with, a suggestion to alter the Constitution, in order to go back upon a bargain which was distinctly made, and which was distinctly approved of by the people of the Commonwealth, should certainly not receive much support in either House of the Parliament. I do not intend on private members' day to drag out this debate one moment more than is necessary. The amendment proposed by the Prime Minister is one which my honorable friend and erstwhile colleague in the State of South. Australia can very reasonably accept. It meets his wishes to a very large extent, and it carries out the main points which he desires to see carried out. Of course, when he says that he thinks some site in Tasmania should, have been chosen as the very right proper, site - as the most beautiful and picturesque site for the federal capital, his opinion seems to have changed during the last year or two. I have a rather vivid recollection that within the last ten years

Port Victor, or some place of that kind, was once suggested by the honorable member with poetic ardour and eloquence - such as- he has displayed to-day in favour of Tasmania. Nevertheless, I commend to him the desirableness of accepting the amendment which, I think, will meet with the general support of honorable members.

Debate (on motion by Mr. A. McLean) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Eastern Extension Telegraph Company,

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed, -

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister a question relating to the matter of the cables. He will remember that over a month ago I asked him for the production of a copy of the agreement with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company. Can he state when he will be able to lay on the table that paper, which many honorable members are anxious to see?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I did not know that this agreement had not yet been forthcoming. I shall see that it is placed at the disposal of honorable members so soon as it is obtained.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

<page>2823</page>

15:54:00

House adjourned at 3.54 p.m.