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1901-06-12

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker

took the chair at 2.20 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

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Mr SPEAKER

- I have to remind the House that at half-past two His Excellency the Governor-General will receive the Address in Reply to His Excellency's opening speech, and I shall be glad if the mover and seconder of the address and such other honorable members as may think fit will presently accompany me to the Executive Council Chamber to present it.

The House thereupon proceeded to the Executive Council Chamber, and, being returned,

Mr. SPEAKER

said. I have to inform the House that, attended by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, and other honorable members, I presented the Address to His Excellency the Governor-General, this day, at the Executive Council Chamber, when His Excellency was good enough to make the following reply :

To the Honorable the

Speaker,

and Members of the

House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Gentlemen, - It is highly gratifying to me to receive your Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by me on the occasion of the Opening of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, and I thank you for your pleasing assurances of loyalty to the Throne and Person of the Sovereign.

I earnestly hope that the result of your considerations of the various measures submitted to Parliament will prove of much benefit to the people of Australia.

HOPETOUN,

Governor-General. 12th June, . 1901.

QUESTIONS

IMPORTS

Mr A C GROOM

asked the Minister for Customs, upon notice -

Whether he will furnish a return showing the amount of imports yearly from countries outside the Commonwealth, separately for each State, for the last five years; also, giving the amounts free and dutiable in each instance?

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- Certainly.

THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr CAMERON

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

When, and where, and before whom, the elected Members of the House of Representatives took the oath of allegiance, as provided in part 4, section 42 of the Constitution Act, and if he finds upon inquiry that such oath has not been properly administered, will he at once communicate with the Governor-General, so that Members of the House of Representatives may be properly sworn in.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

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

Of the 75 members elected to this House, 73 took the oath on the 9th May last, at the Exhibition Building, Melbourne, before His Excellency the Governor-General ; the remaining two took the oath on the 21st May, at the Parliament House, in this Chamber, before Mr. Speaker, who was authorized by a commission from his Excellency to administer the oath to such members as had not already taken the same. The oath was properly administered, and the provisions of the Constitution Act were complied with.

Mr CAMERON

I desire to speak to the question before the House.

Mr SPEAKER

-The honorable member may ask a question arising out of the question which he has addressed to the Prime Minister, but he is not at liberty to make a speech.

Mr CAMERON

- Then I presume that I am entitled to make a personal explanation ?

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member is entitled to do so.

Mr CAMERON

- May I make it now?

Mr SPEAKER

- If the honorable member pleases.

Mr CAMERON

- I feel very strongly that a large proportion of the members of this House, including myself, have not been properly sworn. For this reason I desire to make a personal explanation. You are perfectly aware, sir, that as a rule honorable members on being elected to the States Parliaments are called before a commission, whereupon they take the oath of allegiance. The customary proceeding is for the members to be called up.

Mr SPEAKER

- I do not think the honorable member is in order in the line of speech he is following. He is in order in explaining any matter in which he' has been misunderstood, and is at liberty to make any explanation bearing on the business of the House. But I am afraid he is now proceeding to deal with an other matter. I ask the honorable member to confine his remarks to a personal explanation.

Mr CAMERON

- Am I not in order, sir, in referring to the way in which I was sworn in ?

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member is entitled to make an explanation about anything concerning which he may have been misunderstood.

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Mr CAMERON

- My reason for speaking is as follows : It was publicly announced in the newspapers that the Governor-General, on the occasion of the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament, would swear in honorable members at a certain building at a certain time. I attended in common with other honorable members. Upon arriving at the building, in a certain chamber, a sheet of vellum with printed matter upon it was handed to me, and a pencil was given to me later on. No Bible, however, was given to me, nor did I see any Bible on the table for the use of honorable members. After a certain time had elapsed, members, including myself, were called into the presence of His Excellency the Governor-General. I attended, prepared to be sworn in. I saw a number of honorable members sign their names on sheets of vellum before they attended. I did not do so. When I arrived with other honorable members in the room where we were to be sworn in, as I understood, I listened most attentively ; but I was never called up, as the usual custom is, and I was never asked to make and subscribe the oath of allegiance. A reference to the Commonwealth of Australia Act, section 42, will show that a member elected to this Parliament must make and subscribe the oath or affirmation of allegiance.

Mr McDonald

-Did the honorable member do that ?

Mr CAMERON

- No, I did not.

Mr McDonald

- Then why is the honorable member here ?

Mr CAMERON

- I am here because I was duly -elected by the State of Tasmania, just as the honorable member was elected for Queensland. I, attended to be sworn in on the day I have mentioned, but no Bible was handed

to me. The Governor-General himself did not tender a Bible to . me, . and I had no opportunity of taling the oath. Furthermore, I am . prepared to say that a number of honorable members standing near me are in exactly the same position.

Mr Watson

- The . Bibles were . all there.

Mr CAMERON

- They were not handed round as were the vellum sheets. Certainly no Bible was handed to me. I was not sworn in in the usual manner, and I am perfectly satisfied that two-thirds of the members of this House are -in a similar position.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- Perhaps the House will indulge me with -an opportunity 'of -saying a word upon this -subject, -as the action of those who conducted the proceedings at the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament seems to be misunderstood. The -sheets of vellum to which the honorable member referred were intended . to be collected afterwards, and- to 'form the . roll of the House. The vellum sheets had no connexion with the oath except that they -contained the member's "testimony that 'he had 'taken the oath, and were to be accepted as that testimony. It: was not necessary for the 'honorable member for Tasmania to be called -up. An honorable member can call . his Maker to witness' that he is loyal to his Sovereign, without being called to any . particular place. The Governor-General advanced to the front of the dais, and with the common consent of all honorable members who were present, recited to them the words of the oath, which 'they -repeated : after him in several batches. If the honorable member for Tasmania,

Mr, Cameron,

assures this House that . he did not go through that form, and did not utter those words, and did not kiss the book, he is not properly 'here, and he is liable to be fined so' many pounds a . day for being here. On the other hand, if he did what was expected of . -him, and 'that which all other honorable members willingly did, then, on that condition only had he any power to make the statement he has just made. I take it, that if the honorable member is of opinion that he did not repeat the form of words, and did not kiss the book, then you, sir, -will in that case, and any other of the same complexion, very gladly swear the honorable member . now. In order that everything may be done decently, and in -order-and let the honorable member take my assurance that I say this with perfect courtesy-

Mr Thomas

- Has the honorable member 'drawn his month's salary ?

Mr Cameron

- I have not received my month's salary, sir.

Mr BARTON

- Perhaps -the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr Cameron, will take my assurance that I mention this matter in the spirit of the most perfect courtesy. I leave it to him to say whether he did -go through the form of words administered,and whether he did kiss the Bible.

Mr Cameron

- I did . not.

Mr BARTON

-Then I -submit to the House that 'the honorable member should tender himself to -the Speaker to be sworn now, in order to save any question . arising hereafter.

Mr Cameron

- Mr. Speaker, I desire to be- sworn now.

Sir Philip fysh

- Does the honorable member say he has mot received his salary?

Mr.Cameron. - I have-not, but I signed -for it.

Mr SPEAKER

- The necessary papers will be obtained, and the honorable . member will be sworn in a moment or two. I must ask the honorable member meanwhile to , take a seat -behind 'the Bar of the House.

Mr. Cameron

retired.

Mr McDONALD

- I think we ought to have some -further inquiry into the matter, which I regard -as very serious. The honorable-member was sitting in the chamber for several days.

Mr Thomas

-And voting.

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Mr McDONALD

- And not-only voting, but he has also signed a paper entitling him . to receive a month's salary, to which he was not entitled. I do not wish to move in this matter as . a question of privilege, but it had been my intention to conclude with a motion to the effect that a select committee be . appointed to inquire into the position of the honorable member. The honorable member, when he knew he had not taken-the- oath, and had not been properly, sworn in-, should ha-ve at once acquainted the House, and should not have taken' his seat-

Mr SPEAKER

- Is the- honorable member speaking to a point of order?

Mr McDONALD

- I want- information.. I do not wish to rise on a- question of- privilege; and' conclude- with a motion: I do not want to put the House> to that, trouble.. I would ask, however, whether in. your, opinion sir, it would not be much, better- that this matter should be referred to a select committee' for. inquiry:

Mr SPEAKER

- I can.- only take the honorable: member's speech as; being on a point of order, and. taking it as such, I have to say- in- reply to him' that if any honorable member; whose return has been certified- to on the writ, presents himself to be- sworn on the' ground- that he has not already been sworn, I have' no option, but to administer' the oath to him'..

Mr McDONALD

- We shall have' to take further action in regard' to the honorable member's' past' conduct.

Mr HUME COOK

- I would like, on behalf of myself and: other honorable' members, to know whether the votes given, last night by the honorable- member for- Tasmania-, Mr. Cameron-, who- is about to be sworn, intake valid-, or whether they require to be expunged from the records of the House?

Mr SPEAKER

- That is. a; question to which- I cannot take the responsibility, of replying.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

I find that after the ceremony of swearing-in had been- concluded,, the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr: Cameron, put his- signature- to the vellum which he handed to the Clerk- of the House of Representatives; and which I now produce as follows : - the PARLIAMENT of THE commonwealth. house of representatives..

I, Donald Norman Cameron, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, his heirs and successors according to law. So help me God. donald norman. cameron.

That was handed in after the ceremony of administering the oath had been gone through. If the honorable member is of opinion he did not take the oath, although he handed in this authentication of it, then- I take it, Mr: Speaker has no alternative but to swear him for the first time.

The honorable member for Tasmania-, Mr. Cameron, having re-entered the chamber, subscribed; the-oath.

APPEALS BY POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES

Mr. WATSON

for the- honorable member for Parramatta,. asked' the Minister, representing, the Postmaster-General,. upon notice -

When will the appeals now being conducted, as between the Postmaster-General and- the officers of the Post and Telegraph, department of New South- Wales be concluded ?

If already concluded,' when will the determinations be made known ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

- 1. They have been concluded. 2. The determination will be made known- when the necessary money has been provided by Parliament.

#### ARREARS OF SALARY IN POSTAL DEPARTMENT

Mr HUME COOK

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

When the line- repairers' assistants engaged in the Post and Telegraph Department in Victoria receive the arrears-of salary due to them under section 19' of the- Public Service- Act 1900 ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

- No arrears of salary to which line repairers' assistants may be entitled' under section 19 of the Public Service Act of 1900, can be paid until the necessary information has been supplied' by the Public Service Board, who are now dealing with the matter:

#### SUPPLY BILL

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In Committee. - Consideration resumed from. June 11 (vide page 894).

House of Representatives.

Proposed vote, £1,479.

Sir GEORGE

TURNER (Balaclava,

Treasurer). - It. will be necessary, in order to carry out the desire of the committee, to alter the salary of the Speaker from £1,500, as it appears in the Estimates, to £1,100, and to alter the amount to be now voted from £2 18 to £160. I move-

That the figure "5" be omitted from . £1,500 with a view to insert in lieu thereof the figure "1," and that the- figures "£218" be omitted with. a. view to insert in lieu thereof the figures "£160."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr MCDONALD

- In reference to the item, "Clerk to the House of Representatives," against which no sum appears, I would like to know what salary this gentleman is to receive, and what position he occupies in relation to the Federal Parliament. I understand there is some difficulty in reference to his position in the State Parliament, and I would like some explanation of the matter.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - There is a saving in connexion with this salary which renders it unnecessary to ask for any money at present. The Clerk of the House of Representatives, or the gentleman acting as Clerk, is the gentleman who has been the .Clerk of the Parliaments in the Legislative Council of Victoria., and in that connexion he was receiving a salary of £1,200 a year. He is at present, I understand, on leave of absence from the Parliament of Victoria, which renders it unnecessary to give him a permanent appointment here at the present moment. He is acting as Clerk of the House of Representatives. His remuneration during his leave of absence, which extends to July 31, will be at the rate of his salary from the Victorian Government, and until July 31, therefore, there is no question of money for this House to consider, because Mr. Jenkins makes no demand.

Mr Watson

- Why should he not be paid 1

Mr BARTON

- Because he makes no demand ; and I think perhaps that the general consent of honorable members will be obtained to the course which Mr. Jenkins is taking, although he is taking it very, generously. After July 31, if he receives leave of absence without pay, he will be allotted the same salary as the Clerk of the Parliaments - namely, £900 a year. In about two years - having already served. 40 years some time this year, but being under 60 years of age - he will be ripe for retirement from the service of Victoria upon-a pension. " If the intervening service can be arranged with the Government of Victoria, and he can obtain leave of absence, it is intended to retain Mr. Jenkins with a view to his permanent appointment on such an arrangement as can be made. After he has received his retiring allowance, he is content to have his emolument reduced by such an amount as will enable him to be in the same position by adding together

his retiring allowance and any salary that may be allotted to him. take it that in this proposal lie is behaving in a very fair and honorable spirit towards this House. He might have done better ; but at the same time it is my duty to put the position before honorable members, and to ask the House to let the matter stand as Mr. Jenkins wishes. I think the House will consent to that, and will also say that the Commonwealth has made a very advantageous arrangement.

Mr. MCDONALD

(Kennedy).- I think that the salary set down for the Clerk Assistant - namely, £750 - is too much, as is also the amount, £600, which is provided for the Second Clerk Assistant. I must enter my protest against these large salaries being paid. I am not, however," going to move for any reduction. I was defeated last night in my endeavours, and I therefore content myself with entering my protest against these very high salaries being paid at the present time.

Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - I would like to point out to the honorable member that<sup>1</sup> the salary of the Clerk Assistant in the Senate has been set down at £750, and it is scarcely to be expected that this House would allot its own corresponding officer a less salary. There is a considerable percentage more of work to be done in this House ; and whilst it has been thought consistent with the position of the Senate that its officers should be treated as they have been, the argument becomes all the stronger for treating our officers at least on the same grade. As for the Second Clerk Assistant, whose salary is set down at £600 per annum, I may say that the officer filling the position had been 14 years in the service of the Western Australian Government, and had for a large number of years performed the duties of Clerk in the Legislative Assembly there with very great skill and ability. The salary allotted to him for his services to this House is only £100 a year more than he received in Western Australia.

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Mr A McLEAN

- I do not wish to say anything regarding the salaries of the officers of the House, because I think they are fair ; but I would like to say one word more to my right honorable and learned friend the Prime Minister regarding the remuneration of Ministers. It is a very disagreeable subject.

Mr Watson

- I will take your ruling, Mr. Chairman, as to whether the honorable member is in order, now that we have proceeded from general to definite matters, in departing from the consideration of particular items.

Mr McLean

- We are not dealing with the Estimates.

Mr Watson

- The honorable member will have an opportunity of going into the question generally when the Supply Bill has been introduced.

The CHAIRMAN

- The discussion by the committee must now be confined to the items embraced under the heading " House of Representatives." It will be quite competent for the honorable member to discuss any of those items.

Mr McLEAN

- I am aware that it is so. I :was aware that this particular matter was outside of these items, but I thought it would be better - if any objections were to be urged - -to raise them now than to take any other course. However, I do not wish to press it.

Mr FOWLER

- As one of the few who voted in favour of a reduction in the salaries of officers in the Senate, I wish to say at this stage that I did so because I considered that the rate of their remuneration ought to be differentiated, somewhat from the pay that is accorded to the officers in the House of Representatives. I wish to explain, in view of the possibility of divisions in connexion with these salaries, that I shall vote in favour of' their being continued at the figures indicated here. I believe the salaries provided constitute a fair medium between the policy of economy and of efficiency, and on that account I simply wish to make clear my position, voting as I did for reductions last night, that I am prepared to support the figures submitted in connexion with the House of Representatives' officials.

Vote agreed to.

Parliamentary Debates.

Proposed vote, £1,565.

Mr. W.

H. GROOM (Darling Downs).I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether some arrangement cannot be made with regard to the printing of honorable members' speeches, so that proof copies may be supplied to them on the day after they have been delivered

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I do not know what the practice is in Victoria, but I will tell honorable members what is the practice in Queensland. AVE publish -the

Hansard

there three times a week. Let us suppose that the House meets on Tuesday. On the Wednesday afternoon, when the House again meets, every honorable member is supplied with a proof copy of his speeches of the previous day for revision and for the correction of any mistakes. The revised proofs have to be supplied to the principal shorthand writer before ten o'clock that evening. On the same evening honorable members are supplied with a revised edition of

Hansard

containing a complete report of Tuesday's proceedings. I think I am justified in saying that one honorable member has shown me a

llansard

proof of his speech, and it has conveyed quite a different meaning from what the honorable member intended. In fact, the point which the speaker desired to make has been completely lost. Whether this .is owing to honorable members speaking in a low tone of voice I do not know. However, I think the practice I have indicated is a good one. We have found it exceedingly useful in Queensland, and I think honorable members would find it useful here. I ask the Prime Minister whether or not that could be done

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It need not add very materially, to the expense. I would also like to say that' I see nothing in this estimate with regard to the printing of

Hansard.

Mr BARTON

- That is done by the Government Printer.

Sir GEORGE Turner

- -It is in the Treasurer's department.

Mr W H GROOM

- Then I will simply confine myself to the one point, and ask the Prime Minister whether some arrangement cannot be made with the Government Printer by which honorable members can be supplied with proofs of their speeches 1 I do not refer so much to the reports of speeches made .in committee as to those delivered when the Speaker is in the Chair.

Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs).- I am sorry to hear there should be even one case in which an honorable member speaking in this House has failed to find his point properly conveyed.

Sir WILLIAM McMillan

- It is sometimes our own fault.

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Mr BARTON

- I am quite sure that every care is taken. I know that I have sometimes convicted myself - when I read the- reports, which I am sure have- been- very often correct - of- having said something in the heat of debate which was almost the reverse of what I intended- to convey. I think that happens to- everybody. We- are all subject to. that failing. . With reference to. the request of- the honorable- member for Darling Downs;. I wish to say that the mechanical appliances at the service of the Government Printer do- not admit of that course being' taken- at the- present. This Government has caused to- be ordered' some extra machinery for the purpose of meeting the demands1 upon the- Government Printer for Commonwealth printing; such- as- the printing of parliamentary papers and debates. Unfortunately that machinery has not yet arrived, and in the meantime the work that has fallen upon the department of the

Government Printer is very heavy; because it comprises the whole of our- work, in addition to that of- the State- of Victoria, and the present appliances do not serve to meet it. If it could be overcome by the engagement of additional hands that course would be followed at once: But there- is not the machinery for the additional hands until' the machinery that we- ordered! when- the Cabinet was sitting-in Sydney arrives. The machinery has not arrived', notwithstanding that we expedited it as much as possible. In the meantime; the- machinery at the disposal of the Government Printer' is insufficient to- enable us- to put daily proof ' copies of their speeches into the hands of honorable members. The matter will be considered as soon- as the machinery arrives. I quite' admit the convenience to honorable members of that course: There is a- difference; no-doubt, between- the practice in Queensland and our practice; because I understand that in Queensland the newspapers- sometimes- print the Hansard reports. Doubtless, that would be a very handy thing to do here, but we have no assurance that the newspapers of Melbourne would do it. I would like- to give honorable members this assurance, that the parliamentary reporting staff is- working as hard as it can ; indeed, it has already been found absolutely necessary to ask for the services of an additional reporter. If there has been any slight defect so far as we have gone; it has been, perhaps, due to the fact that I did not foresee the very large bulk of work that would fall upon the shoulders of the reporting staff. I am now taking steps to remedy that defect as- soon- as possible.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- May I ask for a little' information on this- question'? The- right honorable and learned member is no doubt aware that in England there is no-Hansard staff, the reporting- of the debates of the House of Commons having always been -contracted for Hansard, from whose name; all parliamentary reports derive their title, became- a limited- company. I should like to know if the- Cabinet, before deciding- to-engage a staff of official reporters; had before- them- a comparison between the- cost of the system- which is adopted by the- House of- Commons- and the system which we- have- adopted here. The importance of my question is this. Most people- who- have studied our Constitution believe' that when- we- have settled down to- our work our- sessions- will not occupy more than- two or three months of the year.

Mr Barton

- That is . a very optimistic view.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- If "that forecast is correct, it is difficult to know what the official reporters will: have- to- do' for eight- or nine months of the- year;

Mr Watson

- What about' the reporting of select committees and of Royal- commissions?

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Well; I should like some information- on- that point. I wish to know whether the comparison, which I speak of was before the; Cabinet prior to a decision being arrived at.

Mr WATSON

- In. England the practice of having-Hansard contracted for, and the practice of- letting out Government printing- generally, has not been the success- which the- honorable and learned member would- appear to- think it.

Mr Mauger

- Its- results have- been very bad from the workman's point of view.

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Mr WATSON

- Not only has there been bad work, and in some cases- absolutely sweated work, but, in addition to- that, the results have not commended themselves to the heads of the departments concerned. The English Government, after an experience of the contract system; extending over the last 40 or 50 years, have recently expended nearly £40,000- in the. erection of plant to do the printing for the Post-office department. ' It would appear from this, independently of the objections which we have heard in regard to other printing done for the English Government, that the printing for the English postal departments has not been satisfactorily done by contractors. Personally, I should object to the Hansard reporting being fanned out to a newspaper, or to a set of newspapers, whose proprietors might have very highly coloured political opinions, and might therefore direct that the speeches of honorable members should be



condensed or mutilated. I prefer that men who, in the execution of their duty, know no politics, and who, from their very training, have acquired something of the judicial habit of mind, who take no interest in individual speeches, and merely attend to the work that is before them, should be employed. I hope that no proposal for the letting out of Hansard reporting will find acceptance with the members of this or the other Chamber.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I have not proposed that the Hansard reporting should be contracted for.

Mr McCOLL

- I agree with the honorable member for Bland that the publication of Hansard should be kept under parliamentary control ; but with regard to the other printing of the Commonwealth, I fail to see why the services of printing firms in this city should not be utilized.

Mr Thomas

- Why the firms in this city?

Mr McCOLL

- I do not "know why we should build up a printing establishment in Melbourne while we are in a state of transition. We have numerous printing firms in this city who could do the work, and there are men out of employment who would be glad of occupation. It seems to me that an arrangement might be made whereby the work that is now being held over might be let out to private firms, in which case I think it would be done as well and more speedily than is possible under present conditions.

Mr MAHON

- Last night I elicited from the Attorney-General the information that the Hansard staff is overworked, and that it will be necessary to appoint additional reporters . in order that the work of reporting our debates may be efficiently carried out. I ascertained from the honorable and learned gentleman that the staff is expected to report the evidence of select committees and Royal commissions in addition to reporting parliamentary debates ; but, as I have pointed out, it will be utterly impossible for a staff of seven reporters to undertake during the session any work in addition to the reporting of the debates.

Mr Barton

- There are nine reporters,not seven.

Mr MAHON

- Yes, but if the Prime Minister has any practical acquaintance with the work of the staff he must know that the time of the chief reporter and the second reporter is entirely occupied in checking the work of the other seven. I would suggest to the Government, not that the reporting of our debates should be farmed out - a suggestion which came from a very proper quarter - but that the House of Commons system should be adopted. We have here a staff of highly skilled and competent reporters, men who have served their time on newspapers, and who, as the honorable member for Bland remarked, have separated themselves from politics; and why should we not allow them to condense the reports of honorable members' speeches ? We know very well that honorable members will repeat their remarks, and why not allow the official reporters to report in the third person, and to condense their reports.

Mr Higgins

- We ought to be our own condensers.

Mr MAHON

- Honorable members are given an opportunity to read their speeches in the proof number, and if any errors occur they can correct them. What is good enough for the House of Commons ought to be good enough for the Commonwealth of Australia.

Mr Crouch

- Not at all.

Mr MAHON

- If you turn up the reports of the speeches made in the House of Commons you will find that, with the rare exception of a Cabinet Minister, speakers are not reported in the first person ; and why should not our speeches be reported in the third person ? I have taken at random, from the library, the House of Commons reports for the period extending from the 17th July to the 6th August, 1896, which comprises sixteen- working days. In the House of Commons, it must be remembered, there are nearly 700 members.

Mr Ronald

- But only one man can speak at a time.

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Mr MAHON

- No doubt three or four sometimes speak at once, as they do here. The record for those sixteen working days is contained in 1,755 pages ; whereas our record for six working days - because on the 9th and 10th May practically nothing was done - fills up 568 pages, the size of the pages and the character of the type being substantially the same in each case. Those facts furnish a strong argument for departing from the usual custom, by allowing the official reporters to report in the third person, and to use their own discretion in the matter of condensation.

Sir William McMillan

- If that system were followed, we should have nothing but debates on mistakes.

Mr Barton

- We should have lengthy debates on the subject of the shortening of speeches.

Mr MAHON

- I think that the practice would make the reading of the debates an easier matter for the public, and would result in considerable economy. Apart from the reporting, the expense of printing continual repetitions is very considerable. I do not expect that my views will be accepted by the Government, but I respectfully submit that, as they find themselves obliged to appoint additional reporters, and as the resources of the printing-office cannot keep pace with the requirements of this House and the requirements of the State Parliament, my suggestion might be taken into account.

Mr SALMON

- I am not in favour of farming out the reporting of our debates. I wish to see the present system retained, because I think that the reporting should be absolutely within the control of Parliament. I do not know if the honorable member for Coolgardie has ever had to fight an election after he has sat as a Member of Parliament; but if so, I feel sure he will recollect that Hansard is the safeguard of the man who has been in Parliament.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Not always.

An Honorable Member.. - Sometimes it kills him.

Mr Wilks

- Some members think that Hansard ought to be burned.

Mr SALMON

- I can understand that an honorable member who is ashamed of some action he has taken in Parliament may wish that Hansard might be burned; but where a straightforward member - such as the Victorian representatives - has to work hard night and day against an unscrupulous opposition, it is only from the official records of the Parliamentary debates that he can provide himself with weapons to disarm and disable his adversary. At the same time I am opposed to the condensation of the speeches by the official reporters. The honorable member for Coolgardie has drawn attention to the fact that some 560 pages have been consumed - in what ? In reporting one of the most educative debates that has ever taken place in this 'State.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- That is a good confession to make.

Mr SALMON

- The debate is. one which has been followed with the utmost interest by the public throughout the length and breadth of the continent. Honorable members, I am sure, appreciate the demands which have been made upon them by constituents for copies - of course, free ones - of the numbers in which this debate is contained. These copies are desired, not only because of whatever historical value may attach to them, but mainly because of the speeches they contain on the momentous question of the probable fiscal arrangements of the Commonwealth,, including the speech of the honorable member himself.

Mr Mahon

- I did not make one. I was one of the silent ones.

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Mr SALMON

- I hope that we shall not have any condensation of speeches, and that there 'will be no alteration of the system which has been followed in the past with such success, and with so much satisfaction to honorable members.

Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - In reply to the question of the honorable and learned member for Parkes, I would say that the Government were perfectly aware that all the printing of the English House of Commons is done by contract ; but we were also aware that in England there is no basis for a comparison between the contract system and the carrying out of such work as the printing of debates by the Government, because in England all Government printing is done by contract,, although there are persons who are styled " Printers to His Majesty." I do not think the experiment of having printing done by Government employees has been tried in Great Britain. It is foreign to the manner in which business is carried on there to have the Government and parliamentary printing done otherwise than under the contract system. But we had a local basis, of comparison, and we knew that, in Australia, to get the work done by contract would cost more than to get it done by the Government Printing Office in Melbourne or Sydney, or -where the Federal Government happened to have printing to do. We find that we are getting our work done by the Government Printing Office of "Victoria as efficiently as the machinery at the disposal of the office will allow, and at reasonable rates, because we are charged only the cost of labour and material - there are no profit charges. When, the machinery which is on the water comes to hand, the cost, I am informed, will be still further reduced. As to the suggestion that the official reporters should condense honorable members speeches-

Mr Higgins

- The condensation is our business.

Mr BARTON

- The time which this debate has occupied is sufficient evidence that if speeches were condensed a debate might easily be started by what I might, for shortness, term a condensed member, which would need all the condensing powers of the Hansard staff to bring within reasonable limits, and which, when condensed, would not compensate for the time it had occupied. Honorable members desire their speeches to be reported fully, because they receive a number of copies and wish to enjoy the privilege of sending reports of what they have said to their principal constituents to enable them to see that they are doing their duty.

Mr Mahon

- Administering to their vanity at the public expense.

Mr BARTON

- No, it is not administering to their vanity at the public expense, because the course involves a considerable saving of public time in this House, which otherwise would be wasted in discussion. There is another reason - the condensation is done by the press, and very often in the wrong place. If an honorable member wishes to set himself right with his constituents, by means of an official report, he should have a reasonable opportunity of doing so. The honorable member for Coolgardie has alluded to the length of the reports for the present session. I am sorry for that. There is a process of condensation conducted by parliamentary reporters themselves, which takes place when honorable members repeat themselves. But I happen to know from the head of the reporting staff that that process was not possible in connexion with the Address in Reply. The process of condensation could not possibly have been applied to the recent debates ; because while some honorable members may have repeated the arguments used by others, which is inseparable from the conduct of parliamentary debate, the speeches of members generally were devoid of self-repetition. It became incumbent, therefore, upon the parliamentary reporting staff, this being the first debate of the Parliament, and conducting our work as we were under the exceptional circumstances connected with the inauguration of the new Parliament, to give a full report of the proceedings.

Sir William McMillan

- It is a question of discriminating.

Mr BARTON

- No doubt it is, but we all have a little bit of vanity which leads us perhaps to regard our own speech as

the only one which ought to be reported at length. I have no doubt that I share that vanity with the honorable member.

Sir William McMillan

- I never said that.

Mr BARTON

- The honorable member must allow me to have my little joke. It may not be necessary hereafter to report the speeches of honorable members at such full length as in the first debate. It may be possible to condense a little more. If that be so, honorable members may rest assured that the parliamentary reporting staff will do it, because the operation will save them much time and labour, if it be only in the taking of a few less notes. The gentleman at the head of the reporting staff has had to work very hard recently, because he had to organize a new staff under fresh and exceptional circumstances. There is in this organization a system of check note taking and revision which entails very long hours of duty upon the principal and second shorthand writers. Unless this system were adopted, however, I am sure that honorable members would soon express considerable discontent with the reports.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- There is no dissatisfaction.

Mr BARTON

- I have gone through the reports, and, though I have not had time to correct my own speeches, I have seen how the work has been done ; and from what I have seen of it, I can confidently say that there is no better parliamentary reporting done in connexion with any Parliament in the world than has been done by this staff.

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Mr Mahon

- There is no attack on the reporting.

Mr BARTON

- There is no attack, I know, except that an honorable member has said that the meaning of some phrase in a speech had been somewhat misconceived. I have had some experience of parliamentary reporting. For four years, while Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, I controlled the parliamentary reporting staff there ; and, speaking from that experience, I may say that I am quite satisfied with the way in which this work is being done here. If it is found that some condensation can take place without injury to the speeches of honorable members, that will be done.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Reverting to the question raised by the honorable member for Darling Downs, I think that that honorable member must have had an exceedingly unfortunate experience.

Mr W H GROOM

- I made no complaint.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I am glad to hear it. A great many honorable members have told me that they have never seen or experienced better reporting than has been done in connexion with this Parliament. Speaking for myself, I have had many years' practical experience of reporting, and I can say the reporting of the proceedings of this House has been exceedingly good, and that the staff must be an extremely capable one. In this connexion I should like to suggest to the right honorable and learned gentleman at the head of the Government whether, seeing that we have a good staff, we could not later on do with less of the check note taking, and rely to some greater extent upon the more capable men upon the staff. A check note is necessary only so long as a chief is not sure of his staff, but having ascertained that the staff is capable of doing its work, this check note taking might be decreased. Can the right honorable and learned gentleman inform the committee what is the character of the new machinery which has been ordered ? I wish to know whether it is the linotype machinery or not?

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Mr BARTON

- We have some machinery arriving very soon, but there will be no linotype machinery arriving until next session.

Mr. W.

H. GROOM (Darling Downs).The honorable member for Coolgardie has referred to the English Hansard.

The honorable member must recollect, however, that in connexion with the proceedings of the House of Commons, the great London dailies make it a point to rival each other in publishing reports of the speeches of leading statesman. Consequently so much attention is not there paid to Hansard. With regard to condensing the reports, the honorable member with his experience of the press should know perfectly well- that one of the rarest qualities in pressmen is ability to condense in such a way as to give satisfaction to the speakers whom they report. I say this as a newspaper proprietor of 40 years' experience. Perhaps the very point which the speaker himself thinks might be condensed the condenser despises, while he severely condenses a point which the speaker regards as being of great consequence. I do not say that reporters do this wilfully or perversely. The practice the honorable member has recommended was tried in Queensland, and gave the greatest dissatisfaction, until the House unanimously decided that when the Speaker was in the Chair every speech of every honorable member should be reported in the first person, and that when the House went into committee, the reporter himself should condense in the way he thought necessary. That practice has given great satisfaction. Another thing about which I wish to make a remark is that I do not despise the usefulness of Hansard. It is a mistake to suppose that Hansard is not read. In 1897 I travelled over 1,800 miles of the back-blocks of Queensland, and there was scarcely a place to which I went where I did not find Hansard. The reason for that was that we give every facility in Queensland for its circulation. The reports are issued three times a week, and honorable members can buy them for three shillings a hundred and send them to their constituents. If any local member is misrepresented in the newspapers that he does not support, or that do not support him, a reference to Hansard is his only remedy. By means of it he can place his views properly before his constituents. I speak from a large experience as to the usefulness of Hansard, not merely as a historical record of the proceedings of Parliament, but as a safety-valve for honorable members who wish to satisfy their constituents that they are doing what they conceive to be right. An honorable member behind me has suggested that honorable members should be supplied with a larger number of copies than twelve. I do not know whether that is a matter of arrangement between honorable members and the Government. In Queensland we supply every member with twelve copies, and if he wants more he can buy them for three shillings a hundred from the Government Printing Office. Here, however, Hansard is issued once a week and is consequently a bulky volume to send through the post. I wish also to say that in what I stated earlier in this discussion I had no wish to cast any reflection on any member of the Hansard staff. I know what the difficulties of reporting are, and I quite agree that the speeches of honorable members as far as this Chamber is concerned have been extremely well reported. I was not speaking personally in what I said, but the matter was brought under my notice by the observations of another honorable member.

Mr. BRUCE

SMITH (Parkes). - I do not wish to prolong this debate, but at the same time I do not desire to be misunderstood. I have never suggested that any alteration should be made in the practice adopted by the Commonwealth Government, but what I wanted to know was whether the gentleman who has decided upon following the practice of New South Wales had really gone into the figures and ascertained that that was the cheaper method.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

-Lyne. - We tried the other plan in New South . Wales.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I believe the other method is in use in South Australia, and what I wanted to know was whether the question had been inquired into. I knew that in suggesting a contract I should touch a raw spot on the left side of the seat I occupy ; but I am prepared to do that, because I know that when those honorable gentlemen buy their- clothes and other things they take care to adopt the principle of contract in order to know what they are to pay. We have not yet in this House arrived at the conclusion that we will set aside the principle of contract where we can save a certain amount of money to the public. I judge from what the Prime Minister has said that these figures have not been gone into, and that it is now too late to do so. But at the same time, I should have liked to know what is the relative cost of the two systems. Although honorable members may say that the contract system does not succeed in the House of Commons, my

opinion is that with ' all the experience of the House of Commons we may take it for granted that so long as they continue a system, whether it applies to Mansard reporting or anything else, it answers the purpose of the highest Legislature in the world. I should have liked to have- some comparison made between the cost of the reporting staff and the printing as incurred in England at the present time and the cost of our own production. I take it that the comparison has never been gone into, and that therefore the information I seek is not forthcoming.

Mr MAUGER

- I sincerely trust that the Government will not listen to the recommendation of my honorable and learned friend opposite.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I have not recommended anything.

Mr MAUGER

- I trust that from the outset the Government will set themselves against any contract system. I for one repudiate the idea of going to a contractor for my clothes. I never do anything of the sort, but always make it a point to see that the people who make them are paid proper wages and work under proper conditions. It is the first duty of the Government to see that the men doing this work are properly and adequately paid, whether it be for reporting, for printing work, or anything else.

An Honorable Member. - The honorable member gets his things as cheaply as he can.

Mr MAUGER

- I do not.

Sir George Turner

- Perhaps the honorable member gets them cheaper than he ought to.

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Mr MAUGER

- That is possible. I do not think my honorable friend the member for Gippsland gets his clothes as cheaply as he can without regard to other considerations ; in fact, I am sure he does not. In regard to printing for the House of Commons, I am in communication with, a number of people in London, in my capacity as secretary to the Anti-Sweating League, and one of the complaints made in regard to printing work in England is as to the printing of Mansard and other publications for the Government. Just recently, at the instigation of the London Typographical Society, Mr. John Burns undertook to bring under the notice of the British Government the fact that their printing was done under conditions that were a disgrace to them. I therefore hope that the Government will not think of adopting the contract system.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- An allusion has been made to the system adopted in South Australia with regard to contracting for the reporting and printing of Hansard. That system is undoubtedly regarded by some as a benefit, inasmuch as the two daily papers which divide the contract present Hansard reports of the parliamentary proceedings day by day, so that the reports reach the whole of the constituencies. At the same time there is the disadvantage that the contract is for condensed reports, and the discretion as to the condensation is left entirely to the reporters, sometimes first-class men, but at other times juniors, who do not know much about the subjects under discussion. The consequence is that frequently

Ave hear complaints in the 'Parliament of South Australia that the reports are not satisfactory.

Mr Crouch

- Are the reports found to be politically coloured ?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I would hardly like to say that the reports are politically coloured, but where junior reporters are permitted under a contract to condense the reports of speeches of members it is possible that some of those reporters may have their favorite members, whom they report more fully than they do other members who are not favorites. Without any reflection on either of the daily papers in Adelaide who publish these reports, I say distinctly that in the opinion of a. very large number of members of the South Australian Legislature the system adopted is not satisfactory.

Mr Barton

- I can corroborate what the honorable member says from personal observation during the Federal Convention at Adelaide.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- There is one point, however, which, although it is not included exactly under this item, has a great deal to do with reports of the proceedings of the Federal Parliament. It has been the subject of some comment in the other States, in South Australia particularly, that the reports of the proceedings of the Federal Parliament as telegraphed to the newspapers are extremely brief. On looking into the question and inquiring from newspaper proprietors and others connected with the press, I find that the reason for these skimpy reports of the debates in the most important Parliament of Australia is that the Post and Telegraph department has not given sufficiently liberal terms for the telegraphing of reports. I do not know how honorable members who represent New South Wales, Western Australia, or Tasmania feel on this question, or what the character of the telegraphic reports given in their daily press may be.

An Honorable Member. - -Very poor.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- But I do know that so far as South Australia is concerned the people and the press complain that the lack of reasonable terms for telegraphing rather fuller reports leads to very little interest indeed being taken in the proceedings of this Parliament. Most honorable members will admit that that is not what we desire. I would ask the Prime Minister to give his especial attention - I do not know who represents this particular department - to the question, whether it is not advisable, in the interests of federation, that the fullest opportunity should be given to the press of the different States to have the reports telegraphed on the most liberal terms. I ask the Prime Minister to call the attention of the Postmaster-General to the question.

Mr Barton

- I will inquire into the matter.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am sure an advance in liberality would meet with general approval from the press, and certainly from the people, of the other States.

Mr POYNTON

- I do not think the Premier has indicated very clearly what his intentions are in regard to what was suggested when this question was first opened as to issuing to members proofs of their speeches. The present method seems to me to be very cumbersome.

Mr Barton

- Perhaps the honorable member will allow me to explain that under present circumstances, until fresh machinery arrives, such a thing as he suggests would be utterly beyond the possibilities of the case. Some of the new machinery is, I believe, now on board ship in the bay, and ! when it all arrives I will take the question

I into consideration. i Mr. POYNTON.- It seems to me that sending a complete copy of the week's Hansard as a proof to every individual member is an expensive way of doing the business. If we carried out the suggestion of the honorable member i for Darling Downs it would be found more economical.

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Mr McCAY

- I desire to say very few words on- this question, but the point to which I specially wish to refer is that of members correcting proofs of their speeches. Like other honorable member's I have had more or less experience of newspaper and Hansard reporting, and of the effect of the various methods of reporting on constituents. I, like others, have sometimes found it useful to travel round with Hansard in my company in order to refute incorrect allegations. Sometimes that is a successful method, and sometimes it is not. But what I wish to draw attention to is the interjection of the Prime Minister in regard to members correcting proofs of their speeches. I should like to hear it determined that members should not be allowed to correct their speeches. I have found frequently, as no doubt many honorable members have, that if I make an appeal to Hansard in confirmation of an allegation as to what I really have said on any given occasion, especially if one happens to be on the unpopular side, it is said by one's opponents, " Oh, yes, we all know that you members correct your speeches and make them suit you." That is an improper charge to make against a member ; but such charges are made, and in some quarters are believed. I have always made a point - and no doubt many other honorable members do the same - of never correcting proofs of my speeches reported in Hansard, whether they happen to be quite correct or not, because I feel it better

to be able to say that the speech was as the reporter had taken it down, irrespective of any correction or alteration on my part, and not to correct what may not amount to very important errors after all. It would be a good thing if the public could know that we trusted entirely to the Hansard staff to report our speeches uncondensed. I certainly do not believe in the condensing system, because it means an omission system. AVe all know that when we are defining our position on difficult questions upon which various opinions are held by the public, the refinements are sometimes very carefully thought out and elaborated, and are perhaps almost too fine for the apprehension of the Hansard reporter in the necessarily hasty manner in which he has to take his notes. Condensation would be injurious, and it is condensation of which, as a rule, we complain when we complain of the reports in the press. I do not think the press deliberately put into a man's mouth words he does not say ; but, in condensing, the 2'eporter may accidentally omit something, and thus considerably alter the general effect of the speech as compared with the report. I trust, therefore, that we shall have Hansard undiluted and unaltered by honorable members, and if the public can be made to understand that there is a rule in connexion with the Hansard staff that the speeches shall go through with all their imperfections, if there be any, untouched by honorable members, it will be found an advantage to have the public apprehension on the point made thoroughly clear.

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Mr CAMERON

- In my opinion the money to be expended on Hansard would be a great waste if the remarks I have heard from honorable members are to be taken as a criterion of what we have to read in Hansard. Apart from that, the suggestion made by the honorable member for South Australia (Mr. Solomon) is one to which the Prime Minister might give a considerable amount of attention. It is well known that very little interest is, as a rule, taken in the proceedings of Parliament unless on a great public occasion when some motion arouses a considerable amount of public attention. More especially is it useless to spend money on Hansard if the reports are going to be laid by ; and if the Prime Minister can see his way to assist the press in the various States by cheapening the rates for telegraphic messages, that would be a move in the right direction. I would like to point out to honorable members the position Tasmania occupies. At the present time, members for Tasmania are empowered to send telegrams on all lines belonging to the Commonwealth ; but unfortunately for Tasmania there is a cable connecting that State with the mainland, and members for Tasmania have to pay the cost of their telegrams over the cable whether the telegrams be on public business or not. I make no complaint on the point, because I am quite prepared to pay for my own telegrams, but constituents in Tasmania are naturally desirous of hearing what their representatives are doing, even if those representatives think it right to be sworn in a second time. I therefore trust that the Prime Minister or the Postmaster-General will endeavour to see that telegrams to Tasmania are sent at a reduced rate for the public prints.'

Tote agreed to. 27ie Library.

Proposed vote, £374.

Mr. McCOLL

(Echuca).- It is the duty of honorable members in discussing these Estimates to guard not only against extravagance, but also against undue parsimony. Under this division there is one of the hardest cases of any officer who has been in the employ of the Victorian Government. I refer to the clerk, who is also librarian; and I make these remarks because there are so many honorable members from other States who do not know the circumstances of the case. This gentleman has been 22 years in the service of the Government of Victoria, and has filled his present position for some fifteen or sixteen years, during which time he has not received any increment whatever; his salary now being the same as when he took the position, namely £200 a year. He has a family growing around him, and the duties of his position, are of a very responsible character. He has to enter up all the letters, and is also assistant librarian, being one of the best librarians in the State of Victoria. He is a linguist and has an excellent education. His case was' brought before the late Victorian Government of which the member for Gippsland was chief, and of which I was a member. The then Treasurer,

Mr. Shiels,

who was, I think, one of the hardest men ever in the Treasury out of whom to get money, was so struck by the unfairness with which this officer had been treated that he gave him a bonus of £100. Had that



Government remained in office, and this officer in the service of the State, I know they would have increased his salary materially. But a change has taken place, and the officer is put down in the Estimates at the same rate of remuneration he has received for the last fifteen or sixteen years. We desire to give fair play all round. I am strongly in favour of economy, but at the same time I am a strong advocate of fair play, and I earnestly commend the case of this officer to the Prime Minister and the Treasurer as one deserving of additional consideration, and when the Estimates are brought down I trust it will be reconsidered, and that he will be paid something like a fair amount for the work which he does. He has to be here early-

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is time this sweating over here was stopped.

Mr McCOLL

- I hope that the honorable member will help us to stop it. The gentleman I am referring to cannot leave until the lights are put out in the library. I trust that the Government will give his case full consideration.

Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - I think I can make a statement which will tend to set at rest the minds of honorable members who are interested in this matter, as I think we all are. From inquiries I have made, I think that this gentleman is not sufficiently well treated. It may be that his salary will have to be dealt with by the State Government, as the library officers are, to use a familiar phrase, being "borrowed" by the Federal Ministry. But, in whatever way it has to be done, I will take the matter into special consideration, and see that this gentleman is more justly treated.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- Before we pass this vote; I should like to draw attention to the position of the librarian himself. It seems to me that £600 a year is a very high salary, especially in comparison with the salaries paid to other officers.

Mr Deakin

- He is retiring.

Mr PIESSE

- The remark made by the Attorney-General leads me to say what I wanted to say upon this item. I should like to know with regard to officers who are taken over by the Commonwealth, but who are not members of transferred departments - upon what terms their pensions, if they are entitled to pensions, will be arranged.

Mr Deakin

- On just the same terms as departmental officers.

Mr PIESSE

- I do not know if that is quite clear.

Sir George Turner

- Can the honorable and learned member give us any particular case? The Constitution provides for that.

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Mr PIESSE

- The Constitution provides, in section 84, that when any department in which there are officers entitled to pensions is transferred, any such officer who is retained in the service of the Commonwealth - Shall preserve all his existing and accruing rights, and shall be entitled to retire from office at the time, and on the pension or retiring allowance, which would be permitted by the law of the State if his services to the Commonwealth were a continuation of his services with the State.

This means that the rights of an officer are preserved. The succeeding portion of the section defines the position as between the Commonwealth and the State in sharing the liability to pay the pension, for it goes on to say -

Such pension or retiring allowance shall be paid to him by the Commonwealth ; but the State shall pay to the Commonwealth a part thereof.

In the last part of this section we deal with officers taken over by the Commonwealth, who are not officers of a transferred department. The section proceeds - -Any officer who is at the establishment of the Commonwealth in the public service of a State, and who is by consent of the Government of the State with the advice of the Executive Council thereof, transferred to the public service of the Commonwealth,

shall have the same rights as if he had been an officer of a department transferred to the Commonwealth, and were retained in the service of the Commonwealth.

There the rights of the officer are guarded and sustained ; but I do not find anything further in regard to the apportionment of the liability for the pension. The section does not go on, as it does in the preceding part, to state in what proportion ' the pension shall be divided between the State in which the officer formerly served and the Commonwealth in whose service he has entered lately. If it be correct that there is this difficulty, as I am inclined to think there is, it behoves the Government to be very careful how they take over officers other than officers of transferred departments, lest there may be some serious question arising in the future as to how their pensions are to be provided. I draw attention to the point because it seems necessary to do so.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- With regard to the heading "Books and Bookbinding," under "contingencies," I would like to know from the Prime Minister what arrangement has been made about buying new books for the library. I see that an. amount of £100 is set down for this purpose. Does that amount refer to books to be provided for the library by the Commonwealth Government ? In the past it has been the custom of the State Parliament to spend so much a year on the purchase of books. I believe the Treasurer can tell us the exact amount.

Sir George Turner

- It has been a comparatively small amount during late years,, because we could not help ourselves.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- Does the item mean that the Commonwealth Government is about to start a library, or is the State of Victoria contributing new books?

Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - The honorable member may recollect the answer which I gave to a question asked a few days ago by the honorable member for South Sydney as to the foundation of a parliamentary library for the Commonwealth. I am now engaged in obtaining confidential suggestions from gentlemen, who are experts on this subject as to the formation of a parliamentary library, for the Commonwealth. When I get their answers I shall proceed to appoint a board or committee to make a report on the subject, and I take it that these answers will give me considerable guidance as to the manner in which I shall proceed.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Cannot the honorable and learned gentleman use the Library Committee for that purpose ?

Mr BARTON

- Not for that purpose, because it relates to such serious matters as the collection of old records relating to the foundation of Australia and the foundation of the Commonwealth. As to the system which it is proper to adopt in a library, the advice of gentlemen experienced in the management of libraries is very valuable. At present we are dealing only with a vote up till 30th June. It will be expended by the Library Committee, and under the arrangement which is to prevail between Victoria and the Commonwealth, matters of this kind will pursue the ordinary course which we found in existence when we came here. At the same time, it is not intended to add materially to the Victorian library by handing over the books purchased to the State of Victoria. Any confusion of that kind will be avoided as far as possible.

An Honorable Member. - Who will own the books 1

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Mr BARTON

- If we buy any books and pay for them we mean to adhere to them, but of course there are sundry magazines and things of that kind bought, which will continue to be purchased in the usual course. We need not trouble very much about them, because they represent a mere trifle. As to the future, the honorable member will see that the course I am taking has not had too much relation to the Victorian Parliamentary Library ; it will have more relation to the proper way in which the library for the Commonwealth capital shall be founded. We shall simply carry on the Victorian library in the way it has been carried on of late years, without unnecessary expense, and without parting with anything that we buy. I have looked into the point raised by the honorable and learned member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse. It seems to me that the final part of the section does provide sufficiently for the cases mentioned. The transferred officers of whom the honorable and learned member speaks are not. officers such as the

librarian. We are not taking over these latter officers, but are merely " borrowing " them for the present. There is no library at the Exhibition-building, and it is easy therefore for the State Government to let us have their services at the present time. The discussion of what may be done in the future may well be left for a little while.

Mr. PIESSE

(Tasmania).- I partly expected that answer from the Prime Minister. There is one case in which' an officer has been taken from a State who is not an officer of a transferred department, and there may be other cases. There is one case from Tasmania, although I am not aware that the officer in question is entitled to a pension. There may be other cases, however, where officers in the civil service of a State who are looked upon as likely to make good officers of the Commonwealth will be taken over, and the point that have suggested should therefore be taken into serious consideration.

Mr THOMSON

- Perhaps the Prime Minister will inform the committee whether the heading "Expenditure" in this list covers all that the Federal Government is responsible for under the arrangement with the Victorian Government - that is to say, it is not merely\* for the present six months 1 May I ask if the heading covers .all the responsibility of the Federal Government to the Victorian Government?

Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - There will be something more to pay after this half-year has expired - and there are only eighteen days left, but under the arrangement pending with the Government of Victoria, it will be a condition that the Commonwealth Government insures the Parliamentary building up to a certain insurable value, which will be reported upon, and that they shall pay for the lighting and items of that kind. There will be some little further charge, therefore ; but it will not be of a very serious character.

Mr MCDONALD

- I would like to ask if anything has been done in regard to getting the leading provincial newspapers of the different States filed in the Parliamentary Library. While we get newspapers from the metropolitan centres, the leading provincial newspapers are not to be found in the library.

An Honorable Member. - They are in the members' room.

Mr MCDONALD

- Take Queensland, for example. I think we ought to have in the library the provincial papers of such important centres as Darling Downs, Toowoomba, Charters Towers, Rockhampton, and Townsville. The same argument, I think, applies to the other States. The leading provincial newspapers ought to be filed in the library.

Mr Barton

- Steps are now being taken to obtain the principal newspapers of large centres in the various States.

Mr. BRUCE

SMITH (Parkes).- I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question in regard to the library. As a member of the Library Committee, do I understand that the arrangement made between the Commonwealth Government and the Speaker of the State Parliament will place in the hands of the Library Committee the management of the Parliamentary Library

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Mr Barton

- To the same extent as has been customary here. This Library Committee will be substituted for the Victorian Library Committee, on the understanding that the library is managed in its leading aspects in the same way as heretofore.

Mr EWING

- I desire to ask the Prime Minister a question. Is the House to understand that the Federal Parliament will make provision to keep the library up in exactly the same way as if it were in the hands of the State Parliament 1 The reason I ask is that it might be argued that the books, after being- bought, become first the property of the Federal Parliament, and subsequently the property of the State Parliament of Victoria. I think that the House will agree with me that, since we have the use of the library for the time being, the Federal Parliament can well afford to keep it up to date.

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Mr BARTON

- As I have already explained, the library will be kept up as has been customary in the past, and when the time comes for this Parliament to move elsewhere, if we have ordered books which make matters more complete in the ordinary sense of providing for a library, I have no doubt that an arrangement can be come to with the Victorian Government, who will want the books which we have collected, while we shall not want them in our library.

Mr. MAUGER

(Melbourne Ports). - I should like to bring under the notice of the Government the amount of work that has been done, and the great amount of overtime that has been worked by the librarian, the clerk, and the messenger. Honorable members will agree with me that the Victorian staff have done their best to make tilings comfortable for us, and they have had to work a great deal longer than has been usual. I would therefore like the Treasurer to make a note of these services, and to grant them some reward for the extra labour and attention which their duties have demanded.

Sir George Turner

- I will make a note of it.

Vote agreed to.

Refreshment-rooms.

Proposed vote, £129.

Mr HUME COOK

- The practice of the Victorian State Parliament has been to make the refreshment-rooms connected with the House partly selfsupporting.

Sir George Turner

- Yes, and these Estimates have been worked out on that basis.

Mr. HUME COOK.- Only £129 is put down for the wages of staff, fuel, light, and incidental expenses, and an allowance at the rate of £50 per annum to the controller. On this basis it seems to me that the rate of wages paid to the attendants will be very small.

Sir George Turner

- This amount is being paid over and above the receipts of the refreshment-room.

Mr HUME COOK

- That is what I wanted to ascertain. I wanted only to make sure that the attendants will get something like fair play.

Vote agreed to.

Water Power for Parliament House.

Proposed vote, £50.

Mr WATSON

- I wish to know if £50 is to be expended every month to provide water power for the lifts of this building.

Sir George Turner

- For the working of the lifts, and the preservation of the building.

Mr WATSON

- If the water power required to work the lifts costs £50 a month, the arrangement furnishes a beautiful example of the advantages of private enterprise. I should like to know how much water is really used in a year.

Vote agreed to.

Parliament Gardens.

Proposed vote, £89. Agreed to.

Federal Executive Council.

Proposed vote, £580.

Mr WATSON

- I wish to. call attention to the item -

Private secretary to the Vice-President, at £400 per annum; from 19th April, 1901, £80.

While I admit that it is a proper thing that the Vice-President of the Executive Council should have a private secretary, I do not see why a mere amanuensis should be paid £400 per annum. It seems to me that an ordinary clerk who had a knowledge of shorthand and typewriting could do the work excellently. A

little further on, the salary of £450 per annum is provided for the private secretary to the Prime Minister. I contend that these salaries are too high for private secretaries, and that £250 a year would be ample.

Mr Deakin

- The term private secretary is a misnomer in this case. The officer is really a secretary, not a private secretary.

Mr WATSON

-At any rate, 'the secretary to the Prime Minister is a private secretary ; though, of course, I cannot discuss his remuneration now. If the secretary to the Vice-President is a secretary in the same sense as an officer filling the position of an under-secretary to a department under a State Government is a secretary, I want to know where is the staff which he has to control?

Mr McDonald

- If he is like other officials, he will soon provide himself with a staff.

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Mr WATSON

- I do not see why the Vice-President of the Executive Council should require anything more than a private secretary. No doubt the Vice-President of the Executive Council will be called upon to act as the representative of the Government in the other Chamber, and it is only right that he should be allowed a private secretary to do his detail work ; but I object to the office of private secretary to the Vice President of the Executive Council being raised to the dignity of the office of an under-secretary, as we usually understand that term.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I suppose that the officers whose salaries are provided for in the division which we are now considering really comprise the administrative staff of the Federal Executive Council, and that the term private secretary is a misnomer for the office of secretary to the Vice-President.

Mr Barton

- It is really more in connexion with the business of the Senate that the services of this officer are required.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I know that there is a feeling that the salaries- of private secretaries should not be too high, but it is better to debate that question when the question of providing for a private secretary is really before us. I rise merely because I wish to have the misunderstanding which seems to have arisen removed, so that there may not be a prolonged discussion in reference to what is perhaps a reasonable arrangement.

Mr GLYNN

- I think this is a convenient opportunity to again ask the Ministry to make some statement of policy in regard to the appointment as Members of the Executive Council of gentlemen who are not Ministers of State. It seems to me that the scope of our federal duties did not justify the appointment of two honorary Executive Councillors to do Ministerial work. The scope of our delegated duties is exceedingly small, and if honorable members look through the list of the subjects referred to us - which has been called our 39 articles - they will see that after a few years we shall be looking round for work, and that, unless we follow the example of America and amplify the Constitution by taking to ourselves powers which, no doubt, many of the States will be unwilling to concede to us, we shall not have much to do. At the start, seven Ministers of State would have been ample to do the work of the Commonwealth. If seven are not enough, I ask how it was that so conscientious a man as the Minister for Home Affairs - a man who, if duty was to be done, would certainly face it - could retain the position of Premier of New South Wales for two and a half months after accepting his present position, at a time when, in addition to the enormous duties which no doubt fall upon him, there was the organization of his department to undertake. Really, the honorable member's action shows that there is too little rather than too much for Ministers to do. In England the Cabinet is sometimes limited to twelve members, and Lord Beaconsfield in the busiest times did not appoint more than twelve Cabinet Ministers.

Mr Deakin

- And on many occasions he did not consult eleven of them.

Mr GLYNN

- That is beside the question. Perhaps I am touching up the honorable and learned member's democratic

instincts a bit. Lord Beaconsfield considered that seventeen or eighteen Cabinet Ministers were too many, and he was content to have a dozen. ' I know that in England the under-secretaries often do the work in the House of Commons that is done by the principal secretaries in the House of Lords. But one must remember that the Ministers of the British Empire have an immense amount to do. The Imperial concerns of England, apart from the internal affairs of the United Kingdom, require an immense amount of care, and the expenditure of an immense amount of time on the part of Ministers. I ask honorable members, however, if they do not consider that seven Ministers of State are ample for the discharge of the comparatively meagre administrative functions which fall to the lot of the Cabinet in the beginning of the life of the Australian Commonwealth. Take the position of Minister for Defence, for example. The administration of the services which have been handed over to him by the States was usually combined in the States with the administration of some other department, and although we may have extended the geographical area of his control we have not proportionately increased his duties. After the perhaps somewhat arduous work of preliminary organization, the Minister for Defence will occupy a somewhat ornamental position, and it might be, perhaps, amalgamated with the Department of the Post-office.

Mr Barton

- - -The honorable and learned member is basing his remarks upon the experience of much smaller departments.

Mr Ewing

- As a point of order, I wish to ask if the question of defence is now under consideration.

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Sir William McMillan

- The honorable and learned member for South Australia is referring to the position of the Minister for Defence only by way of illustration.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable and learned member for South Australia would not be in order in discussing any matter connected with the administration of the Defence department, but I took him to be alluding to the position of the Minister for Defence only by way of illustration.

Mr GLYNN

- That is so. I have dragged in the Minister for Defence because I think it is open to question whether the duties devolving upon him might not be amalgamated with those of some other Minister, as, for instance, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, whose office is now under consideration. I ask the Ministry to explain why under these circumstances they appointed two honorary Executive Councillors. Was it because they were unable otherwise to soothe the injured feelings of Tasmania, having to some extent ignored that State in the selection of Ministers ; or was it that the work of the Senate required the services of Senator O'Connor? Personally, I think that five Ministers for the House of Representatives and two Ministers for the Senate would have been enough, and if an allotment of offices had been made which would have permitted of that arrangement, we should not hear the complaints which are now being made by the Senate that the great bulk of the Bills of the session are being introduced in this House, and that very few Bills are being presented there. If two Ministers of State were in the Senate, the Bills dealing with the departments of which they had charge would have to be presented there.

Mr Salmon

- Does the honorable and learned member want to see measures initiated in the Senate ?

Mr GLYNN

- No ; but I shall be loyal to the Constitution which has been accepted by the people of Australia, under which the Members of the Senate are elected upon the same franchise as ourselves, and are given practically co-ordinate powers in the initiation of all legislation except such as concerns money matters. We must deal with facts as they are, and as they have been indorsed by the people. What the Ministry should have done was to apportion two Ministers of State to the Senate and five to this House. We do not want the Ministerial benches in this Chamber to be too full. We have now six Ministers sitting upon them. We have also an unofficial Minister in the person of the Government Whip, whose appointment was not necessary in a small Parliament like ours.

Mr Barton

- The country has not to pay him. The members of the Government pay him.

Mr GLYNN

- The Government ought not to pay a Whip. I have always condemned the appointment of a paid Government Whip.

Mr Barton

- Has the honorable and learned member ever been in a Government 1

Mr GLYNN

- For a short period. '

Mr Barton

- Did not that Government pay a Whip 1

Mr GLYNN

- The Government of which I was a member was so short a time in office that I really do not know. As the bulk of us were political innocents, who had never been in office before, we had, perhaps, to take the example of other Governments for temporary guidance until we could recast the whole system. Why were extra Ministers appointed - was it because work was required of them, or because the Prime Minister had to apportion at least one Executive Councillor to each State? Why was Mr. O'Connor appointed Vice-President of the Executive Council 1 I cannot see any reason for it. I know that Mr. O'Connor is an able man, and having each been included in the Ministry he will do credit to the Government as well as to himself. But, so far as work goes, I hold that his appointment was not justified, and we have a right to ask for an ample explanation of this policy from the Prime Minister. .

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Mr BARTON

- I think my honorable and learned friend, the member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, might have taken up the time of the committee to better purpose than upon the points he has raised. Any one who is not well acquainted with the work conducted in the Senate, and who is not aware of the importance of the leadership of that House, will find ample reason for the appointment of Mr. O'Connor, if he goes into the Senate Chamber and looks for himself: The object of obtaining Mr. O'Connor's services - which do not cost the country a penny beyond his allowance as an ordinary member of the Senate - was to endeavour to strengthen the administration by procuring the best talent in the country to assist in its deliberations not only for the sake of the Ministry, but for the benefit of Australia. That is an ample answer. It often happens - and no doubt we shall be subject to this treatment in our own case - that honorable members are very angry with political processes which have prevailed in other States, because they are not 'used to them in the States from which they come. Honorable members who have experience of the working of politics in Victoria will remember that it has been a frequent practice to appoint several unpaid Ministers, or honorary Executive Councillors, as members of Cabinets. They have been of material assistance to various Governments, and have also in a large measure helped members of the Administration in cases where there has been stress in the working of the departments. The fact is that this is a system by means of which a great deal of talent is obtained - and obtained in a manner satisfactory to any one who is afflicted with a crane for cheapness.

Mr Wilks

- Are the appointments of honorary Ministers constitutional ?

Mr BARTON

- They are absolutely constitutional. There is no limit to the number of Executive Councillors who may be appointed in a Cabinet. It is the number of paid Ministerial officers in charge of departments that is restricted to seven ; but the number of Executive Councillors is not restricted at all, showing that the plain intention of the Constitution was that these appointments might be made - subject, , of course, to the approval of Parliament.

Sir William McMillan

- Can one of those Executive Councillors perform Ministerial acts under the Commonwealth Constitution ?

Mr BARTON

- Not in the administration of departments ; but the parliamentary work they do is often heavy, as the honorable member will know from his experience in New South Wales, where, in the Legislative Council, an honorary Executive Councillor is often in charge of Government business.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Do the honorary Ministers assist the other Ministers if necessary ?

Mr BARTON

- They might ; but not to the extent of being responsible for departmental control.

Mr Piesse

- An honorary Minister cannot authorize any payments?

Mr BARTON

- None whatever. In the case of the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, we were in this position: We had seven portfolios to allot. It was not possible fairly to allot two portfolios to New South Wales, and not to allot two to Victoria, which approaches New South Wales in population, and is a most important State. There were then only three portfolios left, and there were four other States. Four into three will not go. We could not have three-fourths of a Minister for each State. What we did, however, was to ask my honorable friend Sir Philip Fysh to assist us as a Minister without portfolio. The time may come when Parliament, in its wisdom, may think that another portfolio is justifiable; but, until that time arrives, we could not appoint an eighth Minister with a portfolio. We had no power to do so. But we felt ourselves entitled, if not morally bound, to secure some representative of Tasmania in the Cabinet, if we constitutionally could do so, in order that administrative matters relating to that State might not be decided without a Tasmanian Minister having a voice in the decision. If that could be done constitutionally it was a very desirable thing to do ; and as to the constitutionality we are perfectly satisfied.

Mr Cameron

- Did Tasmania ask for a representative in the Cabinet ?

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Mr BARTON

- She did more than ask. My right honorable friend Sir Edward Braddon has said that if the honorable and learned leader of the Opposition had been Prime Minister, Tasmania would have had a portfolio allotted to her - which was a pretty broad complaint against me. My answer to what has been said is that I have taken a constitutional course. The honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, is quite incorrect in saying Ministers are so numerous that they will be looking round for work to do. There is quite enough for them to do. It is true that the bulk of the organizing work in the early part of our history as a Commonwealth necessarily fell upon the Prime Minister. Furthermore, in the case of my honorable friend the Minister for Home Affairs, I must point out that he was Premier of New South Wales at the time he accepted office in the Cabinet, and had considerable difficulties to solve before he could get clear of his position at the head of the Government of that State. In the meantime, during two and a half months, some of the work of his department, owing to the stress of his labours, before severing his connexion with the Premiership of New South Wales, fell upon other shoulders. That, however, does not give my honorable and learned friend the right to say that Ministers are looking round for work to do, and that there is not enough work for the number of portfolios held. In the case of the Minister for Defence, probably the honorable and learned member has based his calculations upon the size of the . Defence department of South Australia, without taking into account the defences of the whole coast of Australia. Had he taken that into account he would have seen that an amount of work which would justify a separate department in South Australia would more than justify it for the Commonwealth. It is justified by the fact that the Commonwealth will have the administration of the defence affairs of six States, which work will be at least six times as great as the defence affairs of any one State.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- In New South Wales I have been told that it takes one hour a week to administer the Defence department.

Mr BARTON

- I have had to administer the Defence department of New South Wales, and can say that in order to administer it properly the work ought to take many hours a week, which time, indeed, I gave to it. But if a department is allowed to run itself, as some departments have been permitted to do in some places, the public interest is not conserved. Parliament should see that that does not take place in connexion with the departments of the Commonwealth. As to the work of the gentleman designated as private secretary to the Vice-President of the Executive Council, I think there is some foundation for the complaint that he should not be classed as a private secretary. Nor can he be classed as a clerk, because his duties are



totally different from those of a clerk.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Is this a parallel case to that of Mr. Salisbury in New South Wales?

Mr BARTON

- No, it is rather parallel to the case of Mr. Garran in New South Wales. Mr. Garran was allowed to retain the right of private practice. He received £200 a year, and the exercise of his right of private practice was worth considerably more than another £200. And his work in connexion with the Legislative Council was not nearly so heavy as will be the work in connexion with the Senate. To describe the position correctly would take some time, but the duties of this officer - calling him secretary instead of private secretary - are as follows. The Vice-President of the Executive Council has no department, but he is one of the two Executive Councillors who represent the Government in the Senate. The work of Mr. Flannery has mostly to do with the conduct of the business of the Senate, just as the private secretary to the leader of this House has a great deal to do with the duties of his chief in connexion with the proceedings of the House of Representatives. It is not that there is any great bulk of correspondence in connexion with the Vice-Presidency of the Executive Council, as there is in my own case. The positions are different in many respects. The duties of the representative of the Government in the Senate are not such as to require a clerk, or even such as a clerk could perform. The Vice-President is in charge of Government business in the Senate, and if he happens to be absent for a while, the duty falls, upon the Postmaster-General. The secretary to the Vice-President is responsible to his official chief for assisting in the examination of all Government Bills introduced into the Senate. Although he is not a draftsman, he must be acquainted with the terms of these Bills, and he has the duties of suggestion and comment which fall to the lot of all such officers. They are not clerical duties, but they take a considerable amount of brain power for their adequate discharge. This officer has also to revise Bills coming to the Senate from the House of Representatives, in order to see whether any amendments are required ; and he also has to see whether his chief will require the support of constitutional authorities - and it is, often the case in the working of a new Constitution, that frequent references have to be made to the legal authorities of other countries as points of law arise.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Do not those services, require a barrister?

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Mr BARTON

- The honorable and learned member is anticipating me. Wherever there are amendments made in Bills this officer has to go through them with the greatest care. He has to see also that the drafting is correct, because the parliamentary draftsman will have his hands full of work, and it is to the public advantage that in the drafting of Bills regard should be paid to the relations of the two Houses, and that no incongruities should occur. It would be better to describe this officer as the secretary to the leader of the Government in the Senate.

Mr Tudor

- What previous experience has this gentleman had ?

Mr BARTON

- He has not been in a similar position to this before, because there are not many positions in which he could acquire such experience. As to the work he has been doing, I do not wish to indulge in any extravagant eulogy, or I may call down upon myself such condemnation as was evoked by my praises of a permanent officer last night. But he has done his duty with competence and to the satisfaction of his chief. There are many points of procedure which are suitable to other Chambers of Legislature, but which are unsuitable under our Constitution. This is particularly the case in regard to the Senate, which has a popular origin, and with regard to which, therefore, different procedure is necessitated from that required in regard to other representative Chambers. All these are matters which must occupy the attention of an officer of this kind, and I know from the Vice-President of the Executive Council that the work is being done with perfect efficiency.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The Vice-President of the Executive Council receives no salary, I believe.

Mr BARTON

- No. The position of secretary' to the Vice-President of the Executive Council, must be held by one who is acquainted with legal questions. The qualifications of this officer are that he has taken the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws in the University of Sydney. He won the Allen scholarship in constitutional law in 1890, and in 1892 he won the University gold medal. He has been called to the New South Wales bar, where he has been in active practice. The salary attaching to a similar position in New South Wales has been £250, but the duties there are not nearly so onerous as they will be here. In addition to that, the gentleman who occupies the position there has the right of private practice, which will not be allowed here.

Mr TUDOR

- I should like to have an opinion as to whether in voting for this particular item we are confirming the appointment of the gentleman who has been the subject of discussion - whether it will be competent when the Public Service Bill is before the House to discuss these matters, or whether permanent appointments will by that time have been made ?

Mr BARTON

- The position is that the responsibility of the House in deciding the question of salary is simply the responsibility of finding the money. The responsibility of the Government for the appointment continues. If the Ministry make the appointment before the Public Service Board is appointed they will be attackable at the discretion of the House on' their conduct. The Ministry may be attacked on the appointment and censured if they do wrong; and if they make the appointment before the Board comes into existence, according to the exigencies of the case, they will be perfectly prepared to accept the responsibility.

Mr. WATSON

(Bland). - The explanation given by the Prime Minister with respect to this office of private secretary or secretary, or whatever it may be called, to the Vice-President of the Executive Council, leads one to ask what has become of the Postmaster-General, Senator Drake?

Mr Barton

- This gentleman assists Mr. Drake also in connexion with parliamentary business.

Mr WATSON

- Quite so, but it seems that, from the description given of his work, he should be rather termed the representative of the Government in the Senate. It seems preposterous to ask the committee to pass an item of £400 a year for a young man who may be a very estimable young man - I have nothing whatever to say against him, because I do not know him - and I cannot understand the Government putting this sort of proposal before the committee. Does it mean that a number of billets are being found for the friends of Ministers?

Mr Barton

- That is not so.

Mr WATSON

- It certainly bears that complexion when we find such a number and variety of those brief less barristers from Sydney put into these offices. They must have been attempting to make a' living at the bar for some time, and this particular gentleman could not have been successful. He would not come here and take £400 a year after six years at the bar if he had any practice worth talking of.

Mr Barton

- He would not be required if the Minister were paid.

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Mr WATSON

- I should think not. So far as comparison with the office in Sydney is concerned, I think that £250 allowed there is ample for the amount of work performed. I admit there is necessity for the Vice-President to have some assistance.

Mr Barton

- There is not half the work in Sydney that this gentleman will have to do.

Mr WATSON

- I beg to differ from the Prime Minister. During one period, anyhow, of the term when Mr. Garran was acting as private secretary or secretary to the 'Vice-President of the Council in Sydney he had work of a

more trying character than is ever likely to fall to the share of 'the man who takes up a similar position in the Commonwealth. At that time in Sydney we were fighting over a variety of local issues, which practically meant all night sittings month after month. The general average of the sessions in Sydney for years has been somewhere about seven or eight months in the year.

Mr Sawers

- Not in the Upper House.

Mr WATSON

- The honorable member knows the Upper House of New South Wales sits concurrently with the Lower House, though perhaps not the same number of nights. Does the honorable member mean to say there can be a session of Parliament in New South Wales of only one House?

Mr Sawers

- The Upper House had no all-night sittings.

Mr WATSON

- Very often they had, especially when it was throwing out the land tax at the honorable member's instigation.

Sir William Lyne

- Before Mr. Garran was appointed in Sydney, a Mr. Salisbury held the office, and he devoted all his time to the duties and received £500 a year.

Mr WATSON

- I think the honorable gentleman's memory fails him. I remember, well that when Mr. Garran's appointment was made, a row was kicked up in the House about it.

Sir William Lyne

- Mr. Salisbury held the office before Mr. Garran, and gave all his time to the duties.

Mr WATSON

- But I do not think he was paid £500 a year. I think Ministers paid Mr. Salisbury out of their own pockets. The first appearance of the item on the New South Wales Estimates in relation to the office was when Mr. Garran was appointed, and then strong objection was taken by the Minister of Home Affairs to the payment of any sum to Mr. Garran as secretary to the Vice-President of the Council.

An Honorable Member. - The honorable gentleman was in opposition then.

Mr WATSON

- The honorable gentleman was in opposition, which, no doubt makes considerable difference. In my view the position will be fully met by the payment of a salary of £250 per annum. That is a very liberal salary, and the list of duties which the Premier has just read should not impress honorable members too strongly, for the reason that a large proportion should be performed by the Ministers themselves. One or other of the Ministers should go through the Bills that are sent to the other Chamber. I do not say the Ministers in this House should do that, but I presume that in regard to important alterations the whole Cabinet will consider amendments made in this Chamber before they are sent to the Senate.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- This gentleman is secretary to a Minister without portfolio' and without salary. .

Mr WATSON

- I admit that. That is the only reason I would vote for the office at all. The mere fact that the Minister has no salary compels us in a way to find him some one to do the detail work, and to that extent I am willing to go. But a salary of £250 will be adequate.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Would the honorable member allow this officer private practice?

Mr WATSON

- I should not object to his having private practice so long as he could do the work of the office.

Mr Barton

- What practice could he get? He is not admissible to the bar of Victoria.

Mr WATSON

- But the right honorable gentleman knows that the officer will not be here all the year round.

Mr Barton

- I know that a barrister who is six months away from his practice in Sydney need not keep a fee-book at

all.

Mr Deakin

- There is no reciprocity here.

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Mr WATSON

- It is not imperative that Ministers should continue appointing young barristers from Sydney. There is no necessity to restrict all appointments to persons from Sydney, so far as I can see. I am not referring to Mr. Flannery at all - I believe that is his name - but I am looking merely to the office, and I move - That the figures " £400 " be omitted, with a view to insert in lieu thereof the figures " £ 250."

Mr. BATCHELOR

(South Australia).Is this another case of an appointment from outside the ranks of the State public services ?

Mr Barton

- Yes.

Mr BATCHELOR

- Then the Govern- \ ment would be better advised if they were to leave these as temporary appointments, and let the case of each individual whom they recommend come under the board it is i proposed to establish under the Public Service Bill. The Government believe that in all cases the selection of officers should be made by that board to prevent anything like a suspicion of political or personal patronage, and it is highly undesirable that the Government should confirm these appointments when in a very short time we are to have this Public Service Board established.

Sir William Lyne

- What is the use of having a Government at all ? It would be better to be without the Government.

Mr BATCHELOR

- Had I been in the place of the Minister for Home Affairs, I should have taken all sorts of good care that, as far a,s I was able, any person to whom I gave an appointment should not resign the position because there was a considerable amount of newspaper and general opposition, as in the case of Mr. Fegan. I do not want to accuse the honorable gentleman of not standing firmly, but he did not appear to be firm.

Sir William Lyne

- Perhaps I shall have something to say about that matter later on in the evening.

Mr BATCHELOR

- Then I will make no further reference to it now. There are only three or four appointments altogether involved, and why should not the Government allow these to remain temporary? They have been temporary appointments all this time, and they might remain so until they have been considered by the tribunal to be appointed.

Sir William Lyne

- Would a good mim give up a permanent position to take a temporary appointment of the kind ?

Mr BATCHELOR

- The Minister for Home Affairs will see that his argument does not apply. For some considerable time these positions have been held temporarily, and we were told that no permanent appointments were to be made, Is there any reason why these appointments should be made' permanent now ? It would be a great deal better to leave the Public Service Board to settle them.

Mr MAUGER

- I had no intention of speaking on this question, but it is exceedingly refreshing and interesting to notice that the whole of the complaint comes from the State from whence these appointments have been made. I was afraid that some of the new appointments might possibly come from 'Victoria.

Mr McCay

- There are no appointments. | from Victoria.

Mr MAUGER

- Then I think we have a grievance. We ought certainly to have had some Victorians appointed to positions.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- There are no good men in Victoria, apparently.

Mr MAUGER

- Perhaps that is the reason. It seems to me - and honorable members will excuse my saying so - that we have heard somewhat of carping criticism to-night. The Government have certain responsibilities and certain duties to perform,, and, in order to perform those duties and to carry out those responsibilities, they had to make certain appointments.

Mr Watson

- They had certain friends found billets for.

Mr Barton

- That is a wholly unworthy insinuation.

Mr MAUGER

- If they had not been friends of the Prime Minister, they would have been friends of somebody else, and it seems to me that, instead of censuring the Government or finding fault with them, we ought to congratulate them, in view of the opportunities they have had, on having made so few appointments. As to making these appointments temporary, they have either been made in good faith or they have not, and if they have been made in good faith, it is the duty of the House to stand by the Government.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- This salary is not for a particular man, but for an office. The consideration of the man will come on later.

Mr Barton

- It is for an indispensable office.

Mr MAUGER

- Then why drag the man into the discussion? I do not even know the name of the gentleman appointed.

Mr Barton

- He has certainly never been an intimate friend of mine.

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Mr MAUGER

- Some one must be trusted to make such appointments ; either the Government have the confidence of the House or they have' not. If the Government have the confidence of the House, surely we have sufficient faith in them to believe that, without picking out friends or particular favorites, they can make one or two necessary appointments.

Mr Watson. - We will not swallow everything the Government do.

Mr MAUGER

- The Government are not asking us to swallow very much.

Mr Watson

- Not the Government, but the honorable member is asking us.

Mr MAUGER

- My honorable friend is, wrong. I am merely trying to point out that in my judgment the Government have made exceedingly few appointments. I trust that the important business of the House will be proceeded with, and that we shall give the Government credit for taking very little advantage of opportunities which fall to the lot of very few men.

Sir WILLIAM

MCMILLAN (Wentworth). - The Government are themselves to blame for the manner in which they have put this matter before the House. It is the " red rag" of the private' secretary that has given rise to a great deal of this debate. So far as I can see, the duties of the position are not the duties of a private secretary at all, and the question we have to decide - and we must in matters of this kind take the word of the responsible Minister, more or less - is whether this office is necessary. If the work has to be done, it must be done by somebody ; and, therefore, there is not much difference between bringing in an officer from some branch of the public service to do it, and hiding him under some other name and form, and not putting him down under the right head. It seems to me that we must pass this vote of £400 or knock the whole thing out altogether. Certainly, if this public officer has to review Bills, and do a large amount of professional work, we cannot expect to get him for a salary under £400 a year. We might attract a man by a salary of £400 a year - even a practising barrister - but it does not follow that we should attract him by a salary of £250. There is always a limit to which we must go, and I think that if we can attract a professional man fit £400 for this work, that amount is not too much.

Mr Barton

- The only way to catch a man for this work is to catch him when he is young.

Mr A McLEAN

- I am not disposed to go to the length of voting for a reduction of this item. At the same time, I join with those who have suggested to the Prime Minister that appointments should be made temporarily to this and similar positions. My own opinion is good that the office could be dispensed with altogether. Of course we are commencing, a new Parliament, and the members of the Government should be the best judges; but I certainly would advise them to make appointments of this kind, which so far as this State is concerned are entirely new, merely temporarily. I think that in the State Parliament, where we have ten or twelve different departments to administer, the work connected with the different branches of the Legislature is quite as large and a good deal larger in volume than it should be, in the Federal Parliament. The Federal Parliament has only a comparatively limited range of subjects to deal with, and I do not think it would be wise at this stage to make these new appointments permanent. The Government may find it necessary, for the purpose of getting the machinery of the Commonwealth into working order, to get temporary assistance in several directions, and I would be the last to cavil at any necessary expenditure of that kind, but in the interests of true economy we should not create new positions and make them permanent, before we are thoroughly satisfied by a considerable experience that they are necessary offices.

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

. - I have not been able to make a complete research into the Estimates of New South Wales, but on the one small matter of the previous payments made to the officer holding the corresponding position in that State, I have had placed in my hands the Estimates of the expenditure in New South Wales for 1894, which show that the sum set apart for the secretary of the representative of the Government in the Legislative Council was £360.

Mr Watson

- That was the one we cut down.

Mr DEAKIN

- The Estimates show that in 1893 the amount was £250, whilst in 1894 it was raised to £360.

Mr Watson

- We cut it down afterwards.

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Mr DEAKIN

- That shows that practically the same amount as is now proposed was then carried in New South Wales. May I say, in answer to the honorable member for Bland, that because he has heard a recapitulation of a list of the duties assigned to this gentleman, he is not to suppose that the entire discharge of those duties rests upon his shoulders. I need scarcely say that £400 a year, or three times that amount, would not enable us to retain the services of a man in whom we could place such absolute trust. But, if the honorable member will consider for a moment, I think he will follow in the same line of thought as that just expressed by the honorable member for Gippsland. That honorable gentleman has looked at the schedule of the business set apart for the Federal Parliament in the Constitution, and has measured it with the unlimited range of legislation belonging to the State Parliament. Then he has said that within the narrow limits prescribed for the Federal Parliament surely there must be less business to be done.

Mr A McLEAN

- It was the larger number of departments that I mentioned.

Mr DEAKIN

- The honorable member for Gippsland and myself have had experience in administering the same State departments, and I venture to say that for the present, and for some time to come, no such strain has ever been placed upon a State Minister as is placed on Ministers of the Federal Parliament.

Mr McDonald. - All the members of the Ministry look very well upon it.

Mr DEAKIN

- That is owing to the cheerful support which we have received from honorable members who have assisted us to practise economy. At the present time we are confronted, even with regard to the simplest

matters, by the difficulty to which my honorable and learned colleague alluded, of having to satisfy the House that the course followed, and which perhaps has been sanctioned in some one State previously, is as good as the course followed in the other live States. Of course honorable members all believe that the course followed in the particular State from which they come is necessarily the best course. Then, owing to the range of subjects with which we have to deal, we are obliged to turn to six sets of statutes and six sets of practices. "We have to consider the operation of measures over a very much wider area, and altogether the work involves so many difficulties that the amount of research preliminary to action that is cast upon Ministers is infinitely greater than anything which we have been accustomed in the past. The purpose of this officer is to act as junior to his leader, whether that leader happens to be the Postmaster-General or the Vice President of the Executive Council.

Mr McDonald

- Has not the Postmaster-General an officer from the Postal department for his private secretary ?

Mr DEAKIN

- I am not aware whether or not he has a private secretary. If he has, I presume that the office will appear on the Estimates. If the Postmaster-General has a private secretary, it is no new appointment, and such an officer does not deal with the parliamentary side of the honorable gentleman's duties. This particular officer is employed entirely in connexion with the parliamentary duties to be discharged by the representatives of the Government in the Senate. These representatives have no easy task. The Postmaster-General has a department ' which may well absorb the whole 24 hours of his day, and the Vice-President of the Executive Council also has more than enough to do in attending to his parliamentary duties. Honorable members know that we meet at an hour which deprives Ministers of a considerable part of the afternoon, in which they have been accustomed to transact business in State politics. We have to meet early, under fresh conditions, to face intricate problems, and to mark out new paths. All this requires such an amount of research, that unless we have men who can " devil " for us - to use a legal expression - men who can look up points that seem to be worthy of consideration, the work devolving upon Ministers would be quite beyond their powers of performance. This work of inquiry, research, and investigation can be done in such a way under a -Minister's direction as to relieve him of a very great burden. The time of the Postmaster-General is thoroughly occupied. Most honorable members know the work of the Vice-President of the Executive Council. Although he occupies an honorary position, Mr. O'Connor works as hard as does any one in charge of a large department. I know of my own personal knowledge that he has found his time and his resources altogether inadequate, and that he has .been greatly dependent on the gentleman who has been acting as Ids secretary. I know from the Bills that have been returned to me, and the problems submitted to me in notes upon them, that there has been a large amount of work to be done which it was impossible for the Vice President of the Executive Council to do himself.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The present conditions are quite abnormal.

Mr DEAKIN

-I admit that. But I do not believe with the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, that the work of this Parliament is likely to considerably diminish. On the contrary, the more I examine the Constitution, the more it is borne in upon my mind that this great political organism will grow and continue to grow, and will draw to itself strength from whatever source it can. It will continue to expand, so long as it retains public support-

Mr A McLEAN

- It will be an unfortunate thing if it does grow too much.

Mr DEAKIN

- That depends upon circumstances. If it grows at the expense of any other organization or body which is doing efficient work it will be a misfortune. If it grows in attempting to do unnecessary work it will be a misfortune. But if, as the public of Australia come to know it, they are willing to in trust it with larger powers, it must and will enlarge its sphere and its powers-

Mr A McLEAN

- I was referring to expenditure.

Mr DEAKIN

- I beg the honorable member's pardon. As regards the matter of expenditure, I can assure the honorable member for Bland that there is really work to be done at present in connexion with legislation that is before us which it is quite impossible for Ministers to do without the assistance of some such officer as the one under discussion. It is true that the salary is small, but that is because the gentleman holding the position is young appears to have had a brilliant university career, and it is only a young man whose services could be obtained for £400. He takes the position not so much for the salary, but for the invaluable experience which he can gain. Here we are at the beginning of what will afterwards become a federal system of jurisprudence. The training that a man occupying this position will get will enable him to return to his profession all the better equipped for his experience. I can quite understand, therefore, that he should sacrifice a portion of his income for the advantages thus conferred. This question is incidentally related to several others to come before the committee. We have heard something about extravagance. I am conscious of no extravagance or of any step towards it. Extravagance is a term that we might spread over anything. When the Scotchman said, "Bang went sax pence" after two hours' city visiting, he thought that was extravagance. But extravagance is entirely a relative matter, and surely should be judged by the quantity and quality of the work done, but especially by its quality. The work done during the next year or two will be of the first importance. An officer of this kind, capable and energetic as he appears to be—  
An Honorable Member. - We do not know the officer yet.

Mr DEAKIN

- I have had a slight experience of him, which is all in his favour.  
An Honorable Member. - Do not mix up the officer with the office.

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Mr DEAKIN

- I will not. The work of some such officer for the next few years seems to be absolutely indispensable. I can only add that, so far as the legal work of the Government is concerned, it is being attempted by an utterly inadequate force. The task cast upon us will lead to a break-down of some of the staff if it continues in its present intensity. Such an officer as the one under discussion has been able to render most efficient assistance. He has been chosen by the Vice-President of the Executive Council, who knows and trusts him, and those who know the Minister will consider that a very good guarantee of the officer's ability. The sum set apart is certainly no over-payment for the work which is being done and which remains to be done.

Mr. HIGGINS

(Northern Melbourne). I understand that a definite amendment has been moved by the honorable member for Bland; but I sincerely hope that he will not put the House to a division on the question, as that would be going in a false direction, in regard to this appointment. At the same time, I think the Government might and ought to discreetly heed the warning which comes from all sides of the House, that these appointments ought not even to appear to be permanent. I suggested yesterday that some undertaking of this sort should be given, and, although there was no response from the Ministry I see that the idea has been taken up. The more I think over the matter the more I feel that the gentlemen who in the first stress of the work of the Federal Government are giving Parliament their help, should know that it does not follow that they will be public servants of the Commonwealth all their lives, or, at all events, will remain in the groove in which they are now placed. The fact is that we are cutting our coat before we know how much cloth we have. We are arranging for officers before we know what offices are required. I think "that we should go cautiously. We ought to feel that within a year or two the conditions will be changed, and it may well be that officers who appear to be essential now will not be essential then. From what I have gathered, the intention of the Ministry seems to be to have a highly-trained gentleman, possessing legal knowledge, to give the Vice-President of the Executive Council the benefit of his skill and assistance; and £400 a year is little enough to pay such a gentleman. I do not think any one who possesses the necessary skill and training could be got to do the work for less than £400 a year. At the same time, there may be force in the contention that if the duties of the Vice-President of the Executive Council were being performed by one of the Ministers of State there would be no need for this officer. If that is so, it would seem that in appointing him we are to some extent evading the provisions of the Constitution, which distinctly provides that there shall be only seven paid Ministers of State, and limits the aggregate amount



of their salaries to £12,000 a year. A great deal of force is thus lent to the protest which has been made by the Opposition against the action of the Government in creating more Ministers than the Constitution provides for.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- If Senator O'Connor were not Vice-President of the Executive Council this office would still be required.  
Mr HIGGINS

- I know of no State Parliament where there is a corresponding office, and I cannot see why there should be need for the office in connexion with this Parliament. I think that the Government has made a vast gain in securing a man like Senator O'Connor as leader of the Senate. He is a man whom I always feel inclined to vote with, whether he be right or wrong, and I should be disposed to assume that he is right until I had very good reason for knowing him to be wrong. But, while I am anxious that the leader of the Senate should be given all the assistance he requires, I do not think that the Government are entitled to presume upon the willingness of honorable members in this respect by making a permanent appointment. So far as I can see at the present time, the Government have no power to make a contract of a permanent character with any public servant, because I think that the ordinary rule of law, that every public servant holds office at the will of the Crown unless some Act of Parliament provides that he is to hold office permanently, applies to all their appointments. If that view of the law is correct, I hope that Ministers will not compromise Parliament by entering into a contract which they will afterwards tell us they are morally bound to fulfill. I have no acquaintance with the gentleman who has been appointed to assist the Vice-President, though I am sure the Minister himself would select a good man. I feel that in an office of this sort it is requisite that the person appointed should be the personal friend and confidant of the Minister whom he serves.

Mr Watson

- Will he go out when the next Minister comes in ?

Mr Barton

- That was a distinct understanding in connexion with the appointment of my own private secretary.

Mr HIGGINS

- One can hardly expect that the present Vice-President of the Executive Council will always lead the Senate ; and, just as it is important that he should have as secretary a friend in whom he will have confidence, so it is important that the person appointed should not be given a permanent appointment, and that the next Minister should have the appointment of his own secretary.

Mr Cameron

- In which case the new man will have to gain for himself all the experience which the first private secretary has acquired.

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Mr HIGGINS

- That is very true : and all these things must be considered. There is" no position in which it is so important that there shall be full confidence between a chief and his assistant as a position of this sort. I understand that the officer who has been appointed is not a private secretary, but a gentleman who, although he cannot speak in the Senate, will help the Vice-President to conduct the business of that House by preparing Bills for him, considering amendments, and generally making himself useful in putting matters of legislation into order. It is, therefore, extremely important that there should be full confidence between the Minister and his secretary. I hope that the Vice-President of the Executive Council will be allowed to obtain this assistance. To reduce the proposed salary from £400 per annum to £250 would be futile. I would rather see the item struck out altogether.

Mr Watson

- I believe in giving to the "Vice-President a private secretary - a clerk to look after his work - but that is all.

Mr THOMSON

- I feel disposed to take exception to the principle which has been advocated by the last speaker. I think we must oppose the system of Ministers coming into office, and bringing their own suites with them.

Mr Higgins

- That is not what I advocated.

Mr THOMSON

- I understood the honorable and learned member to say that in his opinion the gentleman appointed to the position which we are discussing should be a friend of and intimate with the Minister whom he served.  
Mr HIGGINS

- I said that, in my opinion, it was extremely important in connexion with this particular office ;. but, generally, the principle would be a very bad one indeed.

Mr THOMSON

- I am glad that the honorable and learned member admits so much. I rise to speak because I thought that we might, if we remained silent, be taken to acquiesce in the principle generally. But, even in this case, while the office may be made a temporary one, it should not be temporary in the sense of expecting its occupant to retire with the Minister whom he will serve.

Mr A McLEAN

- The office may not be found a necessary one, when the Government have had more experience.

Mr THOMSON

- That is so. But until it is known whether the position should be made a permanent one, the officer appointed, though a temporary officer, should not necessarily have to retire with the Minister who placed him in his position. I think we should avoid sill appointments of that sort. In reply to the eloquent speech of the Attorney-General, I would say that while, in my opinion, he made out a good case for this appointment, and for the salary paid, I cannot agree with his statement that the members of this House who raised the cry of economy are doing so merely because the Ministry are making appointments to which they have not been accustomed in their own States. That is not so: ' While we recognise that at the inception of the Commonwealth there must be a vast amount of work for Ministers to do, and that they may therefore require a great deal of assistance both clerical and professional, we do not wish to hamper the Commonwealth with permanent officers whose services will become less and less necessary, and perhaps altogether unnecessary, as time goes on. We wish it to be clearly understood that, in our opinion, unless there is good evidence that a position must be a permanent one it shall be filled, temporarily, to meet the emergencies of the moment.

Sir WILLIAM

MCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I would suggest the omission of the word "private" before the word "secretary. I think it is clear, from the speeches which we have heard, that this officer is not a private secretary, in the sense in which the Secretary to the Prime Minister is a private secretary. We ought, therefore, either to omit the word " private," or the officer should be styled " Secretary to the representative of the Government in the Senate."

Mr BARTON

- There are only eighteen days in this month to run, and of the amount set down, all but £10 has been expended.- I will see, however, that when the Estimates for the coming financial year are prepared, the designation of this officer is altered to one which will more accurately describe his duties.

An Honorable Member - Will the right honorable and learned gentleman also see that we are not committed to the continued existence of this office?

Mr BARTON

- Yes.

Mr MCDONALD

- From the last remarks of the Prime Minister, I have come to the conclusion that this officer must be purely and simply a secretary to the Vice-President of the Executive Council.

Mr. Barton. - The Vice-President of the Executive Council, not having a portfolio, could do without a private secretary to attend to his correspondence ; but a secretary is required in connexion with his duties as leader of the Senate. The office is wrongly described by the name given to it in these Estimates.

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Mr MCDONALD

- It seems to me that if the Government had not appointed a Minister without a portfolio to the Upper House, this item would not have come before us. The defence of the Attorney-General was that the Vice-President of the Executive

Council had decided to give his valuable assistance to the Government, and that as he was not able to give his whole time to Ministerial work, but wished to continue the practice of his profession, the

Government had to make an appointment involving £400 a year in order to help him. If the work requires to be done, this officer is not sufficiently paid for the work he is called upon to perform. He is doing the work of a parliamentary draftsman. Under such circumstances he should be put in a similar position or should at any rate be a sort of under-secretary to that officer, so that the Parliament may have his services permanently. But believing as I do that the officer is not required, I am inclined to vote for striking out the expenditure.

Mr McCAY

- Do I understand the Prime Minister aright in his interjection - that this appointment of private secretary to the Vice-President of the Executive Council will last only during the tenure of office of the present VicePresident?

Mr Barton

- I should think so.

Mr McCAY

- And I presume 'the same rule would apply to the private secretary to the Prime Minister?

Mr Barton

- There is in that case absolute arrangement to that effect.

Mr McCAY

- And to the private secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs ?

Mr Barton

- He is a public officer.

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Mr McCAY

- This raises a question which, small as it is at the present stage, is of more importance to the Commonwealth than the mere appointment of a private secretary to the Vice-President of the Executive Council. I am of opinion that the only persons connected with the administration of the affairs of the Commonwealth who should go out of office at the time of a change of Ministry are the Ministers themselves. It may be said-" You are a nice man to support a Ministry, if you oppose them on a matter like this." But we are not supporters in the sense that Lord Melbourne desired to have parliamentary supporters, when he said that his followers should support the Ministry when they were wrong, because it was then that support was most desired. We are here to see that things are done properly. It may be regarded as most ridiculous to say that this appointment is a sample of the spoils system; but small as it is in quantity it is spoils system in quality and character. We do not want that in connexion with the Commonwealth of Australia. Other federal unions have suffered too much from this cause for us to permit it here. If we permit this small evil in this case it will be used as an argument by those who do not feel strongly on the question of having no coloured population in Australia. They will say that the coloured population evil is a very small one here and there, I say emphatically that if Ministers want to have private secretaries who are to hold office only so long as the Ministers themselves hold office, let them have private secretaries by all means, but let them, pay them, as private citizens would, out of their own pockets. But to have political appointments which are to be rewards distributed by members who may become Ministers, means the introduction of a state of affairs that may be made a precedent for scores of other objectionable appointments. The trail of the Governor-General in Council and the Ministry is over the whole of the Public Service Bill which has been circulated, and we are getting a preliminary whiff of it even before the measure comes up for discussion. If I have an opportunity I shall vote against this office, not because I do not think it is a desirable office - at present I think it is, although it may be unnecessary hereafter - nor because I fancy it can be done without merely "because we have done without it in the State of Victoria. In New South Wales I am informed there has been such an office, and I do not draw the conclusion from its absence in Victoria, or the presence of it in New South Wales, that it is undesirable. We must consider the matter apart from whether or not the office exists in other States. I believe that in the present difficult circumstances of the Commonwealth, and in view of the fact that some time or other, owing to the elastic words of the Constitution, differences of opinion may arise with another place as regards Money Bills and matters of that kind, it is desirable that we should have officers watching our Bills, so to speak, to see that they do not contain anything to cause unnecessary friction. There is also a great deal to be done in collating the practices of the various States, so as to arrive at procedure which

will be acceptable to the people generally. But appointments by men who are not politically responsible to the people, who should have the final control of all political appointments, are not, in my opinion, regular. A private secretary, who does not sit in Parliament, is quite as important, apparently - according to the description we have had from the Prime Minister - as the Under-Secretary to a Minister of State. In England Ministers of State have their own private secretaries, and pay their salaries. Let a Minister, of State, of Australia who wants to have a private secretary also pay him. No man who holds office only so long as his chief holds office can detach himself from political considerations. It would be more than human for any man to do so. Consequently the holders of such offices will have political complexions, and that is very objectionable.' I shall vote against this, and three or four other similar appointments. I do not think that Australia will permit any attempt, even on so infinitesimal a scale, to introduce the spoils system here.

Mr PIESSE

- I hope honorable members will pause before they strike out this item. There may be a great deal in what the honorable member for Corinella has said as to the general principles of employing private secretaries but looking to the description of work that has to be done by this officer, I think £400 will not be ill spent if Parliament gets the services of such an officer as has been described. There is no doubt that a little more attention given to the details of drafting, and to carefully overlooking the progress of Bills in all their stages, is well worth paying for. I think £400 a year is little enough to pay for such services in connexion with the passage of Bills through the Senate. I hope that, from that point of view, we shall preserve this item, and that it will not be reduced, even if we alter the wording of the Estimates so as to retain the services of the officer permanently. It will, be well to recognise the wisdom of having permanent officers of this character.

Mr McCay

- If the Prime Minister will say the appointment is permanent the position will be different.

Mr Barton

- My trouble is that some honorable members will have nothing to do with the appointment unless it is permanent, while others will have nothing to do with it if it is not temporary.

Mr PIESSE

- If the officer is only to render services to the Minister in charge in the Senate, he will not only confer a benefit upon the Minister, but upon all members who want to have questions concerning Bills answered at the earliest moment. The officer will thus be of service to the whole Chamber. Any one who has had experience of legislation knows that if Ministers had officers of this kind they would not only be helped themselves, but the progress of business would be facilitated.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- As one who has had a little experience in the Legislative Council of Victoria I feel that an appointment of this kind is very desirable. I am sure the work of the Legislative Council would have been better done in many instances if there had been such an officer attached to it. I was not aware that there was such an officer in New South Wales, but I can quite understand the work there being better done in consequence. With regard to the permanency of the appointment I am a little doubtful, because at present it is not known what the decision of Parliament upon the Public Service Bill will be. I certainly do not favour this officer giving up his appointment when the Minister goes out of office. I am entirely opposed to that principle. I object to the spoils system. I favour the view of some of those honorable members who spoke earlier in the debate. If the Government will tell us distinctly that the appointment will be made permanent, and that the Public Service Board will have some voice in regard to it, I shall be satisfied. That is to say, the tenure of the appointment should be subject to whatever Parliament decides in regard to the Public Service Bill, and should not be held at the will of a Minister of the day. Certainly, £250 a year will not be anything like sufficient for the work that will require to be done. You could not get any man of any worth at all to continue in an appointment of this kind at such pay. I shall vote against the amendment, but I should like to have an assurance from the Government that the appointment will be made permanent.

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Mr ISAACS

- I would seriously press upon the Prime Minister that he should make a distinct pronouncement as to the tenure of the positions in question ; I refer to all appointments of this character. Enough has been said -

and I have listened very carefully to the speeches of honorable members on both sides - to Mr. Wilks. - We want an opportunity of saying afterwards whether the appointment is warranted or not.  
Mr Barton

- The House will have an opportunity upon the Estimates for the year of coming to a decision of that kind.  
Mr ISAACS

- And officers whose salaries are under consideration will not claim that they have been wrongly treated by the House reversing its present decision ?

Mr Barton

- I do not think so. I do not put forward any claim of that sort.

Mr ISAACS

- That clears the ground considerably. It will enable us to deal with the question which has been raised as to the personal character of some of the appointments. If there is a thing we may pride ourselves on in Australia - I am sure of it in Victoria, and I believe it is so in the rest of the States - it is that members of the public service always show their loyalty to the Ministry for the time being, under whom they have to serve. I think that position ought to be strengthened and not weakened. If we find any gentleman, however able, however skilled, however experienced he is, in the position that his salary from the country depends upon his retaining a particular political chief, we may be perfectly sure that his first care will be for himself : and we cannot expect the same disinterested service we have been accustomed to receive. I therefore ask the right honorable gentleman to take this matter seriously into

An Honorable Member. - Yes, we shall.

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Mr ISAACS

- We probably shall not, and it should be open to the House to reconsider the whole question. I am gratified to hear the Prime Minister say we are not doing anything of a permanent nature - that we are now only doing what is necessary in the immediate circumstances of the moment ; and I am therefore pleased to say I shall be able to support the item as proposed by the Government.

Question - That the figures proposed to be omitted stand part of the vote - put.

The House divided.

41

AYES

17

NOES

Majority ... .... 24

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr KENNEDY

- I desire to have your ruling, sir, as to the practice to be followed when the question is put and a division is to be taken. As I understand the position at the present time, the question is put before the division, and it may be decided on the voices. In the event of a division being called for, the bells are rung but the question is not again put, notwithstanding that a number of members may be absent from the chamber when the question was first put. They come into the chamber when the bells are rung, and then the question goes to a division without being again stated to the House after the doors are locked. I simply wish to know your ruling upon this matter in order that when some critical division occurs we may know exactly the position which we occupy, and thus avoid any conflict of opinion as to what course should be pursued when any strong feeling is exhibited.

The CHAIRMAN

- The practice which will be followed in committee will be that when a division has been called for, the question will be again stated. The division bells will ring, and when the doors are closed and the tellers appointed, the question will be restated.

Mr. ISAACS

(Indi). - May I draw your attention, sir, to Standing Order No. 4, which states -

When the doors have been locked and all the members are in their places, the Speaker shall state the

question to the House, and then direct the " Ayes " to proceed to the right of the chair, and the " Noes " to the left, and shall appoint two tellers for each party.

Vote agreed to.

A

Administrative

Proposed vote, £1,444.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I think that a proper consideration of this division may clear the air a good deal with regard to certain matters. I take it, Mr. Chairman, that I can refer generally to the items. It is rather curious to note, -when we take the different salaries under this heading, the position of the officer who is called the private secretary. We have here a secretary at £800 per annum, a chief clerk at £600, and then comes a private secretary at £450, the next clerk receiving £250. It seems to me that the duties of these officers ought to be stated to some extent. With regard to the private secretary, it seems to me that he ought to be a permanent official of the service. I agree with the honorable member who said that there was no analogy between the position, of a private secretary here and that of a private secretary to an English Minister. The private secretary to an English Minister is really a private secretary, and is paid out of the Minister's own pocket.

An Honoraries Member. - He has an under-secretary.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- He has under-secretaries and clerks.

Mr Barton

- English Ministers have two paid private secretaries allowed to them besides the unpaid ones. The honorable member will find that in Whitaker's Almanac

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- That is a system that has arisen out of the character of English administration. A great many of these private secretaries are men who afterwards develop into politicians or diplomatists, and it is often looked upon as a training ground for men of that kind. What I desire to point out, however, is the disproportionate salary of the private secretary in this Estimate. It is well for us to understand what this private secretary is. I take it that he is either purely an amanuensis to the Prime Minister - that he is only a private secretary - or that besides being an amanuensis he gets through a certain amount of work which is practically done by somebody officially and permanently connected with the department. We would not be justified in paying a salary of £450 to any man as a pure amanuensis or shorthand writer to the Prime Minister. On the other hand, it seems to me, probably because I have never had the luxury of a private secretary myself, that the position of the Prime Minister is different from the position of any other Minister of the Crown. He has a great many duties arising out of that position which do not come under the category of another Minister's work. But it seems to me that the position enunciated here to-night is a sound one, and that we should not countenance the bringing in of outside people to the public service of the country who are not doing purely private work, not even the work of an amanuensis, but who are doing the same work as an ordinary officer of the department would do. After all, this is a public work, and there are certain things connected with all public work of a private and confidential character, and I do not think that we should for one moment allow the principle that friends of Ministers should be introduced into the public service, be given a certain standing in that service, and be initiated, as they must in the nature of things, to a great many matters of government which belong to the people and are not the right of any private individual. Therefore, I think we ought at any rate to have a complete explanation from my right honorable and learned friend the head of the Government with regard to the status and work of this particular person. We are now initiating a new system, and it is better, if this thing is the right thing, that we should understand exactly what we are doing.

Mr Barton

- I shall give the honorable member very full information about it.

Sir William McMillan

-If this private secretary is not part and parcel of the department, as I think he really is, the other salaries are of a very moderate character outside of the question of salary that will be referred to by others. I do

not wish to refer to the matter of the secretary, because I think at these early stages of the Commonwealth Government we must trust largely to the wisdom and common sense of the Executive in making appointments, either of a temporary or permanent character. Some honorable members have spoken to-night as if this House could make appointments. We can make no appointments. The Executive makes the appointments, and unless there is something flagrantly wrong about those appointments it is of no use dragging the names of individuals before this House.

Mr Sawers

- The honorable member would have dragged Mr.Fegan's name in if he had been appointed.

Sir William McMillan

- That is a different question altogether. I do not want to resurrect that.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The honorable member would not have done so upon these Estimates.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

-No; that is a different thing altogether. I repeat that unless there is something flagrantly wrong - something of sufficient importance to warrant the challenging of the Government and its bona fides - , we ought not to drag in the names of individuals. We ought to take for granted, unless some principle has been misapplied, that the proper individual has been selected to take the position that we create, and for which we find the money. I do not think there is any analogy between the position of the gentleman, who I believe has been ' appointed - because it is evident it is going to be brought up - and. the question of Mr. Fegan's appointment. I do think, as I said to my right honorable friend during the debate upon the Address in Reply, that it is not quite fair to put this question of the public service as he put it. The Prime Minister said on, that occasion that the . Government retains absolutely its right to go wherever it likes, although it may consider the public services of Australia. I say that the thing should be the other way round. The Government should exhaust the public services of Australia. In the spirit of the very Bill which they have brought in, and which is now on the table of the House, there is a direction that they must exhaust those public services, and it is only after having done so that they may reasonably be expected to make an outside appointment. I do not think that I have anything further to say, but we may save a great deal of time afterwards by laying down at this stage of the debate the principles which shall guide us.

Mr McCAY

- In this administrative division there occurs an item in regard to which. I wish to raise a point very similar to that upon which I addressed a few words to the committee when the last question was before us ;I refer to the item -

Private secretary to the Prime Minister, at £450 per annum, from 1 st January, . 1901 - £225.

I do not know the gentleman who occupies that position, and it is only half-an-hour since I learned his name and became aware that he was actually carrying out the duties of the position. I understand - and I shall be very glad if the Prime Minister will correct me if I am wrong - that this officer was appointed, and is acting, upon the distinct understanding that his appointment is to last only during the tenure of office of the present Prime Minister.

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Mr Barton

- Perhaps I may put the position in a more correct form, so that there will be no mistake about it. I informed the gentleman to whom the honorable member refers, when I offered to him the position of private secretary to myself, that I did not consider that I could give him any claim to be allowed to stay in the federal service beyond the time during which I might be in office : because I recognised perfectly well that in the performance of confidential duties such as those he would have to perform my successor might prefer some other person.

Mr McCAY

- I do not think that that explanation alters the position from my point of view ; if anything, it accentuates it. I do not know whether this gentleman is to be regarded as a permanent officer of the Commonwealth or not.

Mr Barton

- I do not see how he can be so regarded. He does not want to be a permanent officer of the

Commonwealth.

Mr McCAY

- Then, I take it the office is to be permanent, and is to be filled by officers appointed by successive Prime Ministers. I am of opinion that every Minister will require a private secretary, because, from what little I know of these matters, I believe that the services of a private secretary will be very useful, if not absolutely necessary, to Ministers-

Mr DEAKIN

- How would the honorable and learned member define a private secretary?

Mr McCAY

- The Acts Interpretation Bill, which we have recently had before us, was such a success in the matter of definition that I am rather chary about giving the honorable and learned member an answer. According to the Prime Minister, a private secretary is a gentleman who will have such confidential relations with his chief in regard to matters of policy that it is not desirable that two successive Prime Ministers should have the same private secretary. But my view is that in a department like this, any officer to whom the Commonwealth pays a salary should be an officer permanently employed in the department, who will not have to look for the continuance of his salary to the continuance in office of the Minister who may be his chief. Whatever view may be taken of the duties of a private secretary, or however much he may be in the confidence of his chief, his tenure of office should not be absolutely dependent upon his chief's tenure of office, or even possibly dependent upon it. The private secretary should feel that it is his duty to serve the Minister for the time being, and that he has no political object to serve. But, if a man knows that when his chief goes he must go too, his mind cannot help taking a political cast. Small as the matter may be, it seems to me that a great and important principle is involved, and I should not be surprised to hear that there were differences of opinion in the Cabinet upon the subject, just as there are differences of opinion in this Chamber. The fact that the salary allotted to the private secretary is so much greater than the salaries allotted to the other clerks in the department - with the exception of the Under-Secretary and the Chief Clerk, who are administrators rather than clerks - shows that his position is a different one from that of the other clerks, and I hold that it is in the interests of the Commonwealth that he should be a permanent member of the public service, subject to the same rules, having the same tenure of office, and enjoying the same rights and privileges as any other member of the service.

Sir William Lyne

- He need not go out of the service.

Mr McCAY

- Then is he to be given another position in the department at double the salary enjoyed by any other clerk?

Sir William Lyne

-Certainly not.

Mr McCAY

- No other clerk in this department is to receive £450 per annum, and I take it that these Estimates forecast the probable strength of the department for some little time to come, though no doubt it will grow as the work of the Commonwealth expands and increases. If this gentleman is not to be private secretary to successive Prime Ministers, and is still to remain in the public service, ask if it is proposed that he shall be taken from a position where the duties are regarded as worth £450 per annum, and for which it is presumed he has special qualifications, and put into the position of an ordinary clerk, for which the salary of £250 per annum, is considered sufficient; while a clerk who, up to the time of the change of Ministry, has been considered worth only £250 per annum is suddenly discovered by the new political head of the department to be worth £450 per annum, and promoted to the position of private secretary.

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Mr Barton

- There is no person, so far as I am aware, in the grade of those who are receiving £250 a year who could do the work that I expect from this gentleman.

Mr McCAY

- Yet when the right honorable and learned gentleman's successor comes into office, this officer will have to do work, the performance of which is not worth £450 per annum - because, I presume, that although he



may no longer be private secretary his salary will not be reduced to £250 per annum.

Mr Barton

- His salary may be reduced and if it is he will have the option of accepting the reduced salary or retiring.

Mr McCAY

- I have often heard it stated, when the subject of freedom of contract was being discussed, that a man can throw up his billet if he does not like his job. The objection I take is that this officer depends for his continuance in this particular office, if not for the continuance of his salary, upon the political existence of his chief, and, however the position may be justified, the fact remains that under those circumstances he is a political officer who is being paid as a member of the Commonwealth Public Service. This must be a permanent office, whether the person who fills it be permanently appointed or not.

Mr Isaacs

-We have the assurance of the Premier that we are not at the present time to consider any of these offices or officers as permanent.

Mr Barton

- I might remind my honorable and learned friend that there can be no particular consideration given to these officers or their permanency, seeing that the period for which these Estimates provide is within eighteen days of coming to a close.

Mr McCAY

- These excuses are all very well as examples of special pleading, but they do not affect the real issue. I venture to say that these Estimates very accurately foreshadow the permanent yearly Estimates. Can any of us doubt that the office of Private Secretary to the Prime Minister will and must continue ? Is there any doubt that if these Estimates are passed we shall find 'the same items and the same questions to discuss when the ordinary Estimates of the year come before us ? The fact that there are only eighteen days to be provided for does not affect the principle upon which the Estimates have been framed, and upon which the appointments should be considered. If the private secretary's tenure of office depends upon the tenure of office of the Prime Minister, I have nothing but the heartiest good wishes for him'; but if the Minister tells us that when he goes out of office - and we know that all Ministries must die sooner or later-

Mr Kingston

- To every mail upon this earth death cometh soon or late."

Mr McCAY

- I hope that it will be a, long time, in coming in the case of this Ministry, but I want the Prime Minister to give us the assurance that his continuance in office will not affect the continuance in office of his private secretary, and that when his successor comes into office the position of a private secretary will be considered quite apart from political considerations. I regard this as an essential matter, and the Prime Minister must give us that assurance before he can satisfy the doubts and scruples of honorable members. I think that we are entitled to the assurance now, and should not be asked to wait until the ordinary Estimates for the year are before us. However clear an understanding may be arrived at that the first action we take shall not prejudice any future action, we know that it will prejudice it; and the longer any state of affairs is permitted to continue in existence, the more difficult it will be to interfere with it. If we have the assurance that political changes will not be allowed to affect the position of this officer, our difficulties will be resolved, but unless we get that assurance, I shall feel bound to vote against the item, although I believe that a private secretary to the Prime Minister is necessary for the proper administration of the affairs of the department.

Mr WILKS

- In discussing this matter, I do not wish to confuse the officer with the office, and I do not intend to discuss the question whether the officer appointed is or is not capable. The question with which I would deal is whether the creation of the office is warranted. The honorable member for Wentworth has asked the Prime Minister for a definition of the duties of a private secretary. So far we are not seised of it. Last night I thought that the appointment was an excrescence on the Estimates. The only answer that was received was that a private secretary to the Prime Minister is essential, because confidential matters will arise between the Prime Minister and his secretary; and I understood the right honorable and learned gentleman to say that he would take care that when he left office his private secretary would leave with him.

Mr Barton

- I beg the honorable member's pardon. I did not say that when I left office my private secretary would necessarily go with me, but that T. told him I could not hold out to him any hope of being retained after my period of office.

Mr WILKS

- The Prime Minister now says that he informed his private secretary . that he could not guarantee that that officer would be retained. Well, no member of this House can guarantee that any civil servant will be retained.

Mr Barton

- If I did not use the word " guarantee " when I spoke previously it was only because I was describing a certain set of circumstances, and I was not pretending to detail a conversation word for word.

Mr WILKS

- If the position is as now stated, I understand that the experience which this officer obtains in his position will be lost to the State when his chief goes out of office, because certain political relations will have taken place between the Prime Minister and his private secretary, and it would not be wise or prudent in the interests of the Prime Minister resigning to retain the private secretary in his particular office.

Mr Ewing

- That is a matter with which the present Minister has nothing to do ; the next Prime Minister may retain him.

Mr WILKS

- The arguments with regard to a guarantee to the Prime Minister's private secretary would equally well apply to the Clerk of the Executive Council. It is well known that the Clerk of the Executive Council obtains information of the most confidential character ; but we have never known that information to be divulged by such an officer. There is, therefore, very little in that contention. The point is whether there is any necessity for the office at all. I could have understood it if the Prime Minister had had a third clerk in his department, who could have acted in a confidential capacity towards the right honorable and learned gentleman." We can learn something from the experience of other States. Sir Henry Parkes for years carried on the business of the Government of New South Wales without a private secretary. The same thing occurred in the case of the honorable member for Wentworth, and also in the instance of the leader of the Opposition. It was only when the present Secretary for Home Affairs became Premier of New South Wales that there was thought to be any necessity for the appointment of a private secretary.

Mr Sawers

- Ministers always had private secretaries in New South Wales.

Mr WILKS

- If the functions -of a. private secretary to the Prime Minister have regard to his relations with his constituency it is the duty of the right honorable and learned gentleman to pay that secretary out of his own pocket. If the private secretary's duties are to carry out the orders of his chief in private matters the Prime Minister should pay him. A definition is absolutely necessary in order that honorable members may understand the situation. If the duties of the private secretary are such as could be carried out by a third clerk, there is no reason for giving him the title of private secretary, which merely misleads honorable members. If, however, the relations of that officer are of a political character, and his services are employed for purposes of organization and for obtaining information on behalf of the Ministry, then his relationship with the Prime Minister is. purely of a private character, and his salary should be paid out of the pocket of the head of the Government. The same is the case if the private secretary is simply the confidant of the Prime Minister. If, however, he is a departmental officer, and his services are for the general use of the Commonwealth, he is absolutely required, and "we should be told so. He will then be under the control of the Public Service Board ; but at the same time I cannot see how the Public Service Board can exercise any authority over him. They will not know what is required of him, and will have no direct guide to his duties in appointing any one to the office. On the whole I do not see any necessity for voting for the item.

Mr BARTON

- In the first place I should like to say a word or two with reference to what has fallen from the honorable

member for Wentworth. If my honorable friend will take it in good part, I wish at the outset to say that I do not think he really meant to apply the remark to me when he suggested that this might be a case in which those who were "purely friends" were introduced into the public service.

Sir William McMillan

- I did not say that.

Mr BARTON

- I understood the honorable member to use the phrase "purely friends introduced."

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Sir William McMillan

- I certainly do not remember saying that. I think the right honorable and learned gentleman has taken down the words of some other member. I am absolutely certain that I did not use those words.

Mr BARTON

- The note I made of what I understood my honorable friend to say was this - I took down the three words - "purely friends introduced." I understood the honorable member to say that the committee should be on its guard to safeguard the Commonwealth against the appointment to positions in the public service of those who were "purely friends" of Ministers.

Sir William McMillan

- I absolutely never said anything of that kind.

Mr BARTON

- I am glad to hear it. I readily accept the assurance of my honorable friend ; but, whoever said it, the remark will apply in the same way, and without any unnecessary resentment I may say that those who know my public career in New South Wales are aware that I have absolutely never been a party to placing any relation of mine in the public service. There is not one relation of mine in the public service, and I have never been a party to placing any public servant in any position because he was my friend. There are those who, believing this to be a fair practice in the game of political warfare, have complained of me because they thought that while the general won the battle the camp followers had none of the spoils. I wish to dispel the idea that I am capable of asking any one to come into the public service, and of planting him there behind the back of Parliament, simply because he happens to be a friend of mine. But, on the other hand, I may say this : that I am not going to be a lunatic. I am not one of those who think that the proper means of constituting a public service is to fill it with your enemies. Those who think that the appointments of a Ministry are challengeable unless they are made from those very persons who were banded on the other side, will not find a champion in me. I take it that this is a fair way of putting the question. I have not, under any circumstances, appointed any person to the public service on the bare ground that that person was a friend of mine. But I do confess to this : that if there were individuals having equal claims, or where, perhaps, there was a person who had a stronger and better claim than any one else, I have taken greater pleasure in appointing him to an office if he was a friend of mine. And so would any one else. Nothing more than this has occurred with regard to any appointment with which I have been connected. Honorable members can confirm me in this : that some gentlemen have been appointed to offices whose political views were certainly not in accord with mine on the question which is, perhaps, to be the principal one for settlement by this House, namely, the fiscal question. I have made this a principle. I have endeavoured honestly, to the best of my ability, to conserve Commonwealth interests in this respect, and to choose amongst those whose capacity I knew. That is the extent to which I have gone, and no further ; and I am sure there is a sufficient number of honorable members in this House who will accept that assurance just as it is given. The honorable member for Wentworth has remarked that in England the circumstances are different. They are different. I am not going for a moment to compare as identical the circumstances which exist, except by way of a relative comparison. Ministers of State in England have in some cases four or five private secretaries, among whom are generally two who are paid from the public funds. There are also generally one or two private secretaries who are students of politics, and who assist in the kind of work which has to be conducted by a Minister. The work of a Minister in England is not purely departmental and administrative, and private secretaries in this position are enabled to obtain experience in political life, as has been pointed out by the honorable member for Wentworth. In addition to that, there are in England political under-secretaries who represent the Government in each House of Parliament. These go out of office with the Ministry, although of course

only those are Cabinet Ministers who are the heads of departments, whilst the others, though they are parliamentary officers, only act in a subordinate capacity.

Mr Thomson

- They are Members of Parliament.

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Mr BARTON

- I am pointing to that as one of the facts which check the strain of Ministerial labour in England. There is also this to be considered, that Ministers in England do not have to perform a number of duties that fall upon Ministers in Australia. Not only are the subjects embraced within the range of government much more numerous in Australia, not only do our Ministers deal with social problems which bring them in contact with the people to a very much larger degree than in England, but Ministers in Australia are constantly subject - not improperly, perhaps - to have their work interrupted by interviews with deputations and Members of Parliament to a degree that is not thought of in England. The reason is that in England Ministers of State are believed to be so engrossed in the work of their departments that they ought not to be interrupted, and have not time to attend to other work. A Minister of this Commonwealth, it is true, has less to do with petty departmental details and more with matters of policy, than have Ministers of any of the States in Australia. It ought to lie so. But nevertheless they are consulted to a great extent by Members of Parliament and by deputations. Furthermore, the interests of honorable members lead us to fix the hour of meeting for this House at 2.30 in the afternoon, so that all the time that is available for Ministers for the discharge of their work is the morning. Notwithstanding that, their accessibility - of which I do not complain - prevents them from attending during the whole of the morning to their departmental work. Consequently their opportunities are reduced to the smallest dimensions. It is a very good thing to recollect these facts, and that Ministers here not only have to conduct the affairs of their departments, but to receive Ministers and deputations courteously, as I hope they always do. In addition to that, in the case of the Prime Minister there is a large amount of correspondence, which need not be described to honorable members simply because they must know that it exists. What is the position set up? How can a Prime Minister do without a private secretary? Let it be recollected that whenever work does not belong specifically to any department it is shot on to the Prime Minister, whether it is done by interview or by letter, and it is a happy thing that a large portion of it is done by letter. What happens? If I were to attempt myself to deal with the correspondence which falls on me as Prime Minister - correspondence which cannot be exactly classified because some of it is private, some semi-private, and some semi-official - I should fail in the task, and you would not have your Government administered. This position is so different from that of any other position you can imagine in the service of the Government, that if I did not have the services of a private secretary allowed me, I should be so seriously hampered that I should have to consider whether I could do the work. And I do not intend to pretend to do my work for the Commonwealth unless I do it efficiently. I want to make that perfectly clear, and I hope honorable members understand me, because I wish to say it in the most friendly spirit - that unless some officer of the kind is allowed, and in some such way as now, I do not know how I can do the work.

Sir William McMillan

- What I want to elicit is to what extent he will be an amanuensis, and to what extent he will do any really important work.

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Mr BARTON

- I know that with the patience which distinguishes my honorable friend he will wait a minute or two when I will tell him. Having described the position set up, I wish to point out that a very great amount of business naturally falls on the Prime Minister in the attempt to organize a new Constitution and to give it legislative effect. There is, in addition, a large amount of correspondence which falls on a Prime Minister, simply because those who address it to him do not know to which department to send it, owing to the fact that it does not properly belong to any department. These people exercise a right discretion in addressing the Prime Minister, but a lot of the correspondence takes time to mature, and there may be an interchange of several letters for some time before it is in a fit condition to be referred to any department of the State. Then the gentleman who holds this position under me will have in any case to conduct a large portion of my correspondence, because having only the morning, as other Ministers have, for the whole of the work

which falls on me outside Parliament, it would be a total absurdity to suppose I could deal with a mass of correspondence, while it would be equally absurd to say it could be sent to a department, seeing that it is not departmental. A large portion of the correspondence no doubt is private, and struggle with it as I may, I have to invoke the assistance of this gentleman. I suppose anybody who holds my present Ministerial office would fall into public contempt if he did not use some promptitude in answering correspondence. That involves a degree of confidence between the Prime Minister and his secretary, which the Prime Minister cannot be supposed to repose, as suggested last night, in a fifth class clerk. In addition there are a large number of letters which are, and, must be semi-official ; and although these are not departmental, as already explained, still they have reference to public affairs, and they are dealt with by the private secretary, or whatever we call him, when I cannot attend to them, which is nearly always.

Sir William McMillan

- But it is all public work.

Mr BARTON

- It is mainly public work, though some of it is private. It is work for an amanuensis, if the honorable member likes to call the officer by that name.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Call him confidential secretary.

Mr BARTON

- He may be called confidential secretary; I will accept any name which enables me to have the services of the officer in the way I wish. I have no desire to flinch from any criticism. Instead of flinching from criticism I welcome it. But I will, as far as I am concerned, speak frankly to honorable members, and tell them the position ; and if they choose then to deprive me of services without which I cannot get on, I shall know what to think of them. It is suggested that this gentleman does not do my private business. That business I have to negotiate in such time as the House leaves me, which is about five minutes a day. But there is a large amount of correspondence which is called private secretary's correspondence, and which, though it does not deal with any such question as a man's relation with his banker, or anything of that sort, has to do with matters which cannot be called public, and which are confidential. These are matters it would be absurd to expect a clerk to do, unless a clerk can be obtained with qualifications such as I have never yet seen possessed by one. The services are needed of a man who has a certain amount of tact, who is 'himself able to conduct "this kind of correspondence in the way you would conduct it yourself, not in a rude or brusque way, but as becomes any one acting for a Minister of State. As my right honorable friend the Treasurer has just reminded me, this gentleman has repeatedly to interview people for me. Why ? Because, if I had to see them myself, I should not be able to conduct the business of the House at all. Then again, where business has to be transacted between myself and other Ministers - which business cannot be done by taking departmental men away from their work - this gentleman has to arrange for appointments and so forth.. The conduct of this business cannot be compassed by simply minuting on departmental papers ; and in other ways there is a lot of work I want done, but which I cannot take away from departmental officers to do. To go back to my text, there is, as I was saying, a large amount of semi-official correspondence which has reference to matters of the most vital importance ; and honorable members will very well understand that in a department such as that of External Affairs, there are matters constantly passing a vast deal more confidential than it is customary to pass through departmental sources.. I do not press this, argument - I have almost said too much - on gentlemen so very well versed in public affairs as are two or three honorable members. I see. opposite.

Sir William McMillan

- I suppose the work would have to be done by the Under-Secretary if the Prime Minister had not this, gentleman.

Mr. BARTON.

- It could be done by the Under-Secretary. I am glad the honorable member mentioned the point, because the gentleman whom I now propose as under-secretary, if I can have him - we call one officer a secretary - because the responsible officer is called under-secretary - and other gentlemen were doing this and other work, and the pressure became such that I had to make a choice. I told this gentleman that he must take the work of secretary or undersecretary - whichever honorable members like to call it - because I saw this other work could not continue to be piled on him, making him busy day and night. As an ordinary

thing, I am working with this gentleman up till midnight when the House is not sitting. I have to have assistance, which I can get only in a particular way, in order to cover a large area of undetermined ground, none of which is departmental, and part of which is private and part semi-official. It rests on this simply : I cannot promise to efficiently conduct the business of the House and the country unless allowed an officer of the kind. It is asked why I do not pay him myself.

Sir William McMillan

- I. do not ask that.

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Mr BARTON

- My honorable friend does ;not, but it .has been said that I should pay this officer out of my own pocket. Very well ; but do not honorable members think that that is somewhat inconsistent with the general opinion voiced in the House last night - that the salaries of Ministers were already inadequate, even if rightly supplemented by the constitutional provision which entitles them, unless the House holds a different opinion, to draw the allowance which honorable members generally draw ?

An Honorable Member. - There should be higher remuneration for the Ministers.

Mr BARTON

- That is so. . It may be that affairs will demand, before time has gone very far, that matters shall be settled on another basis, and in that case I look for support to those who made the suggestion. But, in the meantime, while we leave things on their present basis, I. have to go on with the work and carry it out efficiently, and I do not think I ought to be called on under the circumstances to pay a private secretary out of funds which are already, in the opinion of a majority of the committee, inadequate for the purpose without that payment. It therefore comes to . this : Some one must do this work. We are not here to quarrel about names or waste hours over names ; the officer may be called what honorable members like.

Mr Conroy

- 'Call him a correspondence clerk.

Mr BARTON

- No. There is already more than one correspondence clerk in the department. Call him secretary to the Prime Minister if you like - I care not what is the denomination - but I must have this work done, and I must appeal to the House - it is not often I take such a strong course - to back me up in this, because I am quite confident that whoever is my successor will need such assistance. Some one has said something about the qualifications of the gentleman last under discussion, but I do not think I need enter into that question in the present case, except to say that the gentleman at present concerned has received far higher remuneration as acting-professor in the University in Tasmania. He was, until he gave up the position for this appointment lecturer on the law of property at the University of Sydney, and acted as examiner in jurisprudence and international law in that university. I will say one word more, to be frank. He belongs to the hated class of lawyers. I will only say on this topic that lawyers are very much misunderstood if they are called a corrupt class of the community. The fact is that there are among lawyers corrupt men, just as, God wot ! there are corrupt men everywhere else. The study of the law never made a man corrupt, but the study of the law has helped many a man already corrupt to be a greater nuisance to his neighbours. That is an absolute fact. If a man is naturally dishonest, his weapons of dishonesty are increased by learning something his neighbours do not know. But we must be just all round, and say that it is equally true of other callings and professions. Let us be fair to one another. When I asked this gentleman to take this appointment, as I have already explained, at a less, salary than he had been receiving for the last responsible work he had undertaken, I told him he need not count on this as a permanent appointment. I said, "I do not know that my successor will wish to have you ; a lot of the work is absolutely confidential, and it is inseparable that it should be so, and different Ministers have different views as to the man who possesses their confidence."

An HONORABLE Member. - Confidence in "regard to the Commonwealth.

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Mr BARTON

- Confidence in regard to the Commonwealth ; but, as the honorable member knows, if a man becomes your private secretary, you are apt to repose a great deal of confidence in him, while your, successor may not like a man in whom you have imposed personal confidence. It is inseparable that this personal "

confidence should exist, and it is inseparable from that condition, that a successor may not desire to have the holder of your personal confidence. So far' as that is concerned, a gentleman of the qualifications of this one might very well look forward, if he chose to remain in the service, to have an equivalent appointment if he were not continued in his present position, and a Public Service Commissioner took what might appear to be a correct view of his duty. I have not said a word to this gentleman to cause him to think that this is a temporary appointment in the sense that he must go out with me, but I thought it a matter of honour to open his eyes to the prospect that he must not count on this as a permanent appointment, and I did so in order that he might not enter the service of the Minister, or the Government, under a misapprehension. I thought that an honorable way in which to treat him, and I expect, in that respect, as in others, to be sustained by the committee.

Mr WATSON

- I do not object at all to the Prime Minister having a private secretary, but on the plan which he has just put before the committee, it would seem that the granting to the Prime Minister of a private secretary amounts to a gradual filling of the public service, or a section of it, with gentlemen who at one time or another have been private secretaries to the different Prime Ministers who will fill the office during the next twelve or fifteen years. The right honorable and learned gentleman says that the probability is that the Public Service Commissioner who knew his duty would place the gentleman who is to be private secretary to the present Prime Minister somewhere in the public service, at an equivalent salary.

Mr Barton

- I said he might or probably would if he knew his duty. I did not say he must do so.

Mr WATSON

- That is precisely what I understood. The gentleman who commends himself as fit for the duties of private secretary to the Prime Minister is to be placed in the public service at an equivalent salary ; and his Ministerial successor on the same principles would have his appointee placed in the public service.

An Honorable Member. - Are we not going to have a Public Service Board to deal with these matters.

Mr WATSON

- But on the accession to office of another Prime Minister, the present head of the Government says the Public Service Commissioner would probably find a place for his private secretary in the public service with a corresponding salary.

Mr Barton

- That is an innocent misrepresentation, no doubt. It conveys the impression that what I meant was that this gentleman might be shovelled out of his position and put in another one in the public service simply because the succeeding Prime Minister did not want him. What I meant was that a gentleman of his qualifications - without vaunting them too much - would be quite fit for an equivalent position somewhere else in the public service. If he wished to continue in the service, and the Prime Minister wished to have for himself another public servant in the position, then it would be perfectly possible for the Public Service Commissioner to find that place for him to which his abilities entitled him. I do not want to be constantly interrupting my honorable friend, but I think that he placed too harsh a construction on what I have said.

Mr WATSON

- I thought I had taken the remarks of the right honorable and learned gentleman correctly. The point I wish to make is this : In the State I come from, it was found compatible with all the degrees of confidence necessary between the various Ministers and their private secretaries that these gentlemen should be taken from amongst the officers already in the public service.

An Honorable Member. - The case is not analogous. They were such large departments.

Mr WATSON

- But we are considering now whether we should create the precedent of appointing private secretaries who are practically apart from the public service. I maintain that they should be of the public service. They should be officers picked at the Minister's discretion from the officers available, but they should be permanent officers of the service. Certainly the same man might not always be chosen to take the position, but I know that the private secretary of one Minister in the last administration but one in New South Wales was afterwards the private secretary of another Minister in the succeeding administration, and he was a very capable and trustworthy man in every respect. I believe he is now private secretary to

another Minister in the Federal Government. There was an instance where two successive Ministers with different policies chose the same man because of his general fitness for the work. There was no attempt to run him out of the service as soon as the Minister who had appointed him had left.

An Honorable Member. - That is not impossible here.

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Mr WATSON

- Quite so. We should not take up the position which the Prime Minister thinks is a proper one, namely, that the Minister should be followed out of office by his private secretary. Apart from that, I do not consider that it is necessary to grant the sum of £450 per year for the work that has to be performed by the private secretary of the Prime Minister or of any other Minister. It does not seem to me that the abilities required in the office justify the payment of such a large sum, and though I will not vote for the abolition of the office, I will vote for the reduction of the amount to not more than £250. I think all that is required can certainly be obtained for that sum, and the person to act as private secretary could be obtained from the officers already in the State services. But I want to move an amendment in relation to the first item in this subdivision. This item relates to the appointment of which I spoke yesterday afternoon - that of Mr. Atlee Hunt. I desire only to say with respect to that suggested appointment that I quite agree with the view put forward by the honorable member for Wentworth that the House cannot expect to make appointments of this character. I quite agree with that, but I say that the House has a right to insist that a certain line of policy shall be followed in respect to such appointments. Without canvassing the qualifications of the individual particularly affected, I think that we can lay down that a certain policy shall be followed with regard to all appointments where important work has to be carried out by the appointee. That line of policy, it seems to me, was well put by the honorable member for Wentworth when he said that the various State services should be exhausted in the search for experienced and capable men before the Government fall back upon men who may be capable but who undoubtedly have had no experience. That is the stand I take up in regard to this matter. I say that in this instance the State services were not exhausted. So far as I can glean, there was no attempt made to gather particulars of the qualifications of men in the various State services who might have been willing to take up a position of this importance. I do not know that any applications were invited from men in the existing services. My view is borne out by a chance remark which the Prime Minister made a little while ago. I wrote it down at the time, and it was to the effect that amongst those whose capacity he knew the right honorable and learned gentleman had appointed the man with most capacity. I ask why should the selection of a man to fill one of the most important offices in the service of the Commonwealth - that of permanent head of the Department of External Affairs, the largest and most important administration of all - be limited to those who happen to have the acquaintance of the Prime Minister? The right honorable gentleman does not embrace amongst his acquaintances all the capable men and all the men with experience in the different States, and yet from the right honorable and learned gentleman himself we have practically had an admission that no opportunity was given to officers in the State services to make application for this important, onerous, and high position. On that ground alone I think that we have cause for complaint. I would just like to correct an apparent error into which the Prime Minister fell yesterday afternoon, in assuming that I had instituted a comparison between Mr. Hunt and Mr. Garran. I made no such comparison. I merely stated that I did not object to Mr. Garran's appointment, because it was practically a legal appointment. The work that he has to do is-, of a legal character, connected with the Attorney-General's Department. He will not have an extensive staff to organize, and he will be concerned with work in which he has had a lot of experience, namely, that of drafting Bills for submission to Parliament. But if Mr. Garran had been appointed to a position such as that to which Mr. Hunt has been appointed, I should have raised exactly the same objection. Mr. Garran has not had the experience to justify his selection for such an important position in preference to men who have had the experience, and who, in all probability, possess equal ability to discharge the duties. I do not wish to detain the House at any great length, because I went into the matter last evening fairly fully. But I desire to test the feeling of honorable members as to whether they approve of the appointment of Mr. Hunt - leaving his personality aside altogether - in preference to adopting the course of inviting applications from-, capable men throughout the various States, for this position. I take the ground that the Commonwealth is not likely to be so well served by the appointment of an inexperienced man as it would be if an experienced man were



first given an opportunity of taking up the position. I move, with a view of testing the feeling of the House on the subject -

That the item, ' ' Secretary at £800 per annum from 1st May, 1901, £134" be reduced by the sum of £i.  
Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - I am not going to take up the time of the House except to correct another false impression that has been circulated. It was said, and said more than once, last evening by the honorable member for Bland, that the gentleman who holds this office, and to whom he now very properly says no reference should be made by name was named Hunt, and that he had left the public service of New South Wales because there was retrenchment going on - that, he had resigned rather than be retrenched.

Mr Watson

- Will the honorable gentleman pardon me just a moment ? The word "retrenched" is usually taken to mean dismissed. I did not mean that he was going to be retrenched in. that sense at all. What I meant was that there was to be reduction in his salary, and that he retired rather than submit to such a reduction.

Mr BARTON

- I perfectly understood that, and that was the sense in which I used the word " retrenched." The facts are these. He was offered an increase on his former salary. Whilst there was retrenchment going, on, there were also increases offered to deserving officers. The increase offered to him after his services did not seem to meet with his views, and he resigned, receiving three months' leave on full pay, with an allowance of £60 in addition, having made up his mind to retire about September in that year, in order to study for the bar. He resigned because the regulations for the admission of barristers, then in force, provided that no student at law could, during his studentship, be a clerk in a Government office.

Mr Watson

- Or follow any other avocation.

Mr. BARTON.- That regulation, I take leave to say, I have always considered a barbarous one: It forced Mr. Hunt, if he intended to pursue the profession to which he thought himself destined, to leave the public service, and therefore, when sufficient remuneration by way of increase did not seem to be offered to him, he resigned his position; he did not resign because his salary was to be reduced.

Mr Watson

- That is not my information ; but I accept the right honorable and learned gentleman's explanation, if he has warrant for it.

Mr BARTON

- I have perfect warrant for. it,, and I think that upon investigation the honorable member will find that it is fully borne out by the facts. The honorable member has unintentionally fallen into a mistake in this matter, and I mention it lest further damage be done to Mr. Hunt by a wrong impression prevailing.

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Mr KNOX

- I propose to speak to the item which has given rise to the debate rather than to the amendment which has been moved. I regard myself as having been charged, so far as one voice and one vote can have effect, to see that proper economy is exercised in the expenditure of public money, and that the patronage necessarily at the disposal of the first Ministry of the Commonwealth is equitably and justly distributed. I am one of those who believe- that it is false economy to give inadequate remuneration for necessary services, and that if you require good, capable, brainy men you must pay them well. The man who has been tied down to an office by long years of experience usually gets into a groove from which it may be difficult to move him. So far as the distribution of patronage is concerned, I have felt that the Ministers have been compelled more or less to associate with themselves - because of the peculiarity of their individual positions - men who were personally known to them, and whose habits and training suited their individual requirements. I could have hoped and wished that the ordinary processes of appointment which have been suggested might have been adopted, and that the positions might have been considered open to the members of the public service of the various States ; because I believe that in the public service of the States there are men of sufficient capacity and ability to fill any of them. But the Ministry have had to undertake the arrangement and organization of. new departments, and unless we

are prepared to accept the explanation which the Prime Minister has made to us, we must do what I cannot regard in any other light than the passing of a vote of want of confidence upon them. I am disposed to believe that they have done the best they could under the circumstances. In my opinion, the Prime Minister has made a perfectly straightforward statement as to the need for the appointment of these various officers, and has given adequate justification for the existence of their offices. I have no knowledge of the qualifications of the gentleman who has been appointed to the office which is now under the consideration of the committee ; but we have the distinct, clear, and emphatic statement of the Prime Minister that he is eminently and specially qualified for the position. The right honorable gentleman has practically said to the committee - "I know no other man who could so adequately and completely fill, the position as the gentleman, whom I have appointed." I accept that assurance, although I regret that the Ministry have not given the public officers of the various States an opportunity to secure these lucrative and responsible positions. I hope, however, that the arrangement whereby a private secretary is to retire with the Minister whom he serves will not receive the sanction of this- committee. It is a practice which is foreign to the departmental arrangements of the States, and it is not a desirable one to introduce. The practice in the States has been to select from among the officers of a department one who is qualified to act as private secretary to the Minister at the head of it. Of course, a Minister must have as his private secretary some one whose habits and manners are congenial to him, and with whom he can have confidential relations. It is absurd . to suppose that any cut and dried official could come into confidential contact with a Minister. But notwithstanding the explanation which has been given, I do not understand whether the gentlemen who have been, or who will be, appointed are to come under the provisions of the Public Service Bill which we shall soon have to consider.

Mr. Watson. - Yes ; they will be servants of the Commonwealth.

Mr KNOX

- Will they come under the provisions of the Public Service Bill?

Mr Watson

- Yes ; except in regard to their appointment.

Mr KNOX

- I am sure that Ministers will see that there is a very general feeling among honorable members against the creation of positions of this kind, and I think that it will be overcome if it is understood that these appointments are only provisional, and will not be made permanent until they have been considered by the authority which will be appointed by the Public Service Bill to control the Public Service of the Commonwealth.

Mr Watson

- These appointments will not come under that authority.

Sir George Turner

- The persons appointed will, come under the provisions of the Public Service Bill.

Mr Watson

- But not in regard to appointment.

Sir George Turner

- No.

Mr KNOX

- I understand the Prime Minister to say that he is not too far committed to these appointments, and I therefore ask him to promise that none of them shall be ratified until the authority created by the Public Service Board shall say that they are desirable appointments. Of course, the recommendation of the Prime Minister and of the other Ministerial heads of departments will have the strongest weight with that authority.

Mr Barton

- If it will shorten the debate in any way, I will promise to leave these matters to be decided by the Public Service Commissioner when appointed, and I shall also ask him to read this debate.

Mr KNOX

- Nothing could be more satisfactory than that promise.

Mr Barton

- I would point out, however, that I cannot take any such action as will allow the Bill to operate in a certain

direction; because it is provided in the Bill that all new appointments to the clerical staff of the public service shall begin at the salary of £40 a year.

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Mr KNOX

- I am sure that the Prime Minister desires to deal seriously with this question, because it affects a very large number of public servants in a very serious way. Our desire is to support the Government in the appointments which they have made, and I am prepared to accept the assurance of the Ministry that all these appointments are necessary. Honorable members are quite unaware at the present time what work has to be done by the various departments ; but I understood the Prime Minister to say that it was his intention to make these appointments only provisional, leaving, it to the authority to be created under the Public Service Bill to determine what appointments shall be permanent. That arrangement, I think, would be satisfactory to the majority of honorable members, and if it is made, I. shall have nothing more to say. I wish only to say that I desire to give a loyal support to the Government on this question. The Prime Minister has said that he requires this assistance, and so far as my vote goes he will receive it. I believe that unusual demands are made on the Prime Minister at the present time. He has special departments to organize, and very difficult work to carry through. The work will be inefficiently done unless the Prime Minister and the various Ministers in charge of other departments receive necessary assistance. I do not think economy is to be secured by cutting down necessary assistance, or by paying salaries such as will not attract the best and brainiest men, who are most necessary in this important point in the history of the Commonwealth.

Mr BARTON

- I wish to make a certain point clear. It would be an impossibility to leave all appointments to the Public Service Board. There must in the meantime be a public service for the Commonwealth, and gentlemen who have relinquished their positions in private professions or in the public service of the States must not be subjected to the suggested strain upon them. I spoke unthinkingly when I gave such an assurance, but after talking the matter over with the Treasurer, I must ask the indulgence of the House in regard to it. It would never do to say that these appointments must necessarily be made by the Public Service Board, under an Act which will provide, in regard to certain appointments, that they may begin with £40 a year. We could not have drawn men from a public service of a State, or from other positions, unless, in regard to the terms of employment, they could rely on the honour of this Commonwealth. Where I found, in such a case, that it was necessary for the honour of the Commonwealth that an appointment should be treated in a certain way, I did not hesitate to make the appointment in that way. I must, of course, take the responsibility of any appointments I have made.

Mr. KNOX

(Kooyong).- No one in this House will desire less than that honorable treatment should be meted out to every one who has been transferred from any other position to the service of this Commonwealth. If the Prime Minister or any of his Ministers have committed themselves to any of these gentlemen, I hope that the arrangements which have been made with them will be honorably respected. I am perfectly satisfied that the Prime Minister and the Cabinet will see that engagements honorably made are sustained.

Mr McDONALD

-Before the Prime Minister last rose, I was going to say that the right honorable and learned gentleman had previously made such an extraordinary statement - namely that the whole of his appointments were subject to review - that it was necessary to get a further statement from him. The Prime Minister now reverses his former assurance. I leave the whole matter in the hands of the committee.

Mr SALMON

- I deeply regret to hear from the Prime Minister that the Government have been committed in the way he has explained. I was not previously under that impression, and it was my intention to vote against this first item, because I held, I think rightly, that if we were to have a public service authority - call it board or commissioners or what you please - the appointments should be made by that authority, which should use every means in its power to obtain knowledge regarding the duties to be performed. I thought that body should fix the salaries and designate the officers.

Mr Higgins

- That is, fix the offices and fix the officers.

Mr SALMON

- Both. But I find it would be impossible. We are committed.

Mr Harper

- The circumstances committed us.

Sir George Turner

- How could we get a public service otherwise?

Mr Barton

- It is not our fault. We had to ask men to leave other engagements and come to us, and we had to make them suitable offers or we should not have got them.

Mr SALMON

- The Prime Minister should have filled each of these appointments temporarily. He should have made every officer who came into the service of the Commonwealth understand that he was to be only temporarily appointed, and that the whole matter would be subject to review by Parliament.

Sir George Turner

- We should not have got the men who are wanted for the positions by doing that.

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Mr SALMON

- If the Treasurer believes that, let me tell him that, in my opinion, the Government could have got just as good men if no permanent appointments had been made. I know many able men who would have been glad to have the salary and position attached to the offices under this Government, and who were perfectly competent to carry out the duties. I refer to men who have been trained in the work that will have to be done : for gentlemen occupying these positions must have some knowledge. A mistake has been made owing to the precipitancy of the Ministers responsible for these particular appointments. It was not necessary to snap up these officers in order to avail ourselves of their services. I believe that better men are available at the present moment. But under the circumstances I do not feel disposed to express what would virtually be a want of confidence in the Government. I regret it exceedingly, and think that I have been placed in a false position by the Government.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I should not attempt to add to this debate were it not that I am placed in a peculiar position by having a very long and intimate knowledge of the gentleman whose name has been brought into the debate. It seems to me that strictly speaking we should deal only with the advisability of appointing a secretary for this department, irrespective of any particular person ; but a great many honorable members have thought fit to bring into the question the personality of the man who is known to be contemplated as the officer to fill the position. I have heard many remarks made concerning him, obviously by people who are not acquainted with him. If some officer from the civil service of one or other of the States is not to be appointed to this position, and if some outside man is to be brought in, I have no hesitation in saying that, having been acquainted for twenty years with Mr. Atlee Hunt, he is a man of very remarkable ability. So far from having been retrenched out of or dismissed from the public service of New South Wales, he used the public service - which he was perfectly entitled to do, and as many in this House have done - as a first step to a very honorable career. He was not satisfied to live for the whole of his life as a public servant of the country, but used the service as a stepping-stone to the bar. I believe that at one time he hoped that he might even rise to a seat on the bench. He studied for years after leaving the service, at great deprivation to himself, acting as a coach to men working for the bar or going through a University career. He went to the bar of New South Wales, and did remarkably well there. I have no hesitation in saying that in taking this position in the Federal Public Service he is giving up considerable opportunities and a good outside professional income.

Mr Barton

- That is what some honorable members cannot understand.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I have not only known Mr. Atlee Hunt casually, but professionally. He was acting with me in a very large arbitration case in New South Wales, lasting two and a half years. Acting as his senior at the bar, I had more than ordinary opportunities of discovering his abilities, and I have no hesitation in applying the word able to him - an adjective which I reserve for very rare occasions. He is a man of great intellectual

capacity, wide reading, considerable logical ability, has a remarkable grasp of mind for his age, and, as I have said, he is thoroughly worthy of the position which he has been selected to fill. I say so much, Mr. Chairman, because there are a few honorable members who cannot have been thoroughly satisfied with the statements made as to this gentleman's ability. I speak from personal knowledge ; and although I think the personality of these gentlemen should not be brought into the debate at this stage, I can say that the Commonwealth Public Service will be fortunate in getting Mr. Atlee Hunt in a position that commands no greater salary than £500 a year.

Mr ISAACS

- I have no reason whatever to doubt the statement of my honorable and learned friend, the member for Parkes, as to the capacity of the gentleman who has been appointed to the office under discussion. But I think his re-remarks are utterly irrelevant.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Because the question was brought in irrelevantly.

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Mr ISAACS

- The position of a number of honorable members sitting near me is, that we understood from the Prime Minister that this committee in passing the Estimates to-night, was not doing anything to confirm any of the positions which had been made - that we were doing nothing to compromise Parliament or the country in regard to expressing unreservedly our ideas at any future time regarding any of the positions that have been filled. But evidently we are not in a position to express any opinion at the present time. All we can do is follow the Government, with every confidence, tentatively. That is what I thought we were doing on a recent vote, when in response to a question put to him as to whether any claim could fairly be made by these officers to retain their positions in consequence of a vote of this committee, I understood the right honorable and learned gentleman to say that he would be no party to supporting any such claim. I gave my vote upon that assurance, and I know that a number of honorable members around me did the same. But now we are told that a bargain has been made, and that the honour of the Commonwealth may be at stake if these gentlemen are not retained in their positions, come what may. If a bargain has been made, and if the honour of the Commonwealth has been pledged, it must be kept ; but I feel very much embarrassed if that is so, because by that means we are deprived of what is our right and our duty.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Attorney-General said that no such appointments had been made. .

Sir Georgie Turner

- I said yesterday that we intended to make all these appointments permanent, the Address in Reply having been carried.

Mr ISAACS

- I am speaking of the assurance that I asked for to-night and have obtained.

Sir George Turner

- The Prime Minister made that statement under a misunderstanding, as he has said.

Mr ISAACS

- Whether the Address in Reply was carried or not, this House was not in a position to express any opinion, even inferentially, as to these appointments ; therefore no expression of opinion could be fairly drawn from the affirmation of confidence in the Government. If these undertakings were given by the Government they were given by a Government that had not the support of any Parliament at all. Whatever was done ought to have been done in the most provisional manner. If the appointments have been made, no doubt that action has been taken with the best intentions, and with the sole desire of advancing the interests of the Commonwealth ; but, at the same time, I feel that an error has been made, and I am embarrassed. However, I hope that a free hand may yet be given to the House, as we were assured would be the case. If not I regret it, and I believe we should not be led further into that position than the necessities of the case demand.

Mr. HIGGINS

(Northern Melbourne). I feel very much in the same position as the honorable and learned member for Indi. I got the assurance from the Prime Minister that there was no contract, and would be no contract, which would bind us in the least to treat the offices or the officers as permanent ; because they are two

distinct things. I- was strongly inclined to give the Government absolute credit in this matter, and since they felt the appointment to be essential, to let them have it and treat it as provisional, leaving experience to show whether or not the office ought to be permanent. We do not know what the conditions- are to be. We do not know what the department will require, and I object to the creation of a permanent office until the proper authority, the board or commissioners, have gone into the question and seen what officers are required. I voted on the previous occasion in favour of the Government in regard to the matter ; but I shall be bound to vote in favour of not having this appointment made if the question be pressed to a division, though I should like to help the Government to have the services of this gentleman, of whose capabilities no one has any doubt, and to help them to have a gentleman handy to give any help they want. I object to the creation of permanent offices at the inception of the Commonwealth, until we find by some experience what officers will be required. This is not so much a question of the officer as a question of the office. It is not so much a question of this particular office, which I think will be permanent, as a question of other offices which are very much in the same position. For instance, I am not sure that the office of secretary to the Vice-President of the Council will be permanent. I must say we have- been put into a very false position, because before tea we were told distinctly one thing, and after tea we have been told distinctly the contrary.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- There apparently has been some misapprehension with regard to this matter. But when the Government made- these appointments, they were practically forced to do so. They had to make the appointments at once, or at any rate they had to make some appointments at once. Surely we cannot be told that the Prime Minister, to obtain his principal officers, should have hunted round the State departments and borrowed officers temporarily. He had to make appointments, which, practically, if the officers showed ability and fitness for the positions, would be permanent appointments. That was what was done, and if we look at the number of these appointments

Mr A McLEAN

-McLean. - Was that done in the case of the new office created in connexion with the Government representative in the Legislative Council ?

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- There were very few appointments made outside the public service. There were only three or four of any importance ; two in the Prime Minister's department- the gentleman who has been referred to as secretary to the Prime Minister, and the gentleman who is to be secretary to the department.

Mr A McLEAN

- I refer to the secretary to the Vice-President of the Executive Council.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- He has been appointed from outside the service, because he possesses abilities from a legal point of view.

Mr A McLEAN

-Is the appointment permanent?

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- No permanent appointments are yet made. What we say is that these gentlemen having been appointed temporarily to the posts, and they having shown sufficient ability to fill them properly, we feel bound to take the responsibility as a Government of making the appointments permanent. What I want to point out is that there will be no real difficulty about the matter, because the subject is properly provided for in the Public Service Bill, which we will, have an opportunity of dealing with in a few days.

Mr Higgins

- As to the appointments?

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- As to these very particular matters. The Governor in Council will make the appointments. It may be that the gentlemen, are absolutely incompetent to fill the positions, and if so the commissioner will have a perfect right to remove them.

Mr Isaacs

- Have the appointments already been actually made ?

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- No, they have not. We would not make any permanent appointment until we had the confidence of the House, until after the Address in Reply had been agreed to. But these gentlemen might be found to be excess officers, and that seems to be the difficulty some honorable members see. Honorable members say that while the appointments may be necessary now because of the press of work, they may not be necessary in three or four years. That is dealt with in the Public Service Bill itself. It is provided in clause 8 :-

If in the opinion of the commissioner the services of any officers in excess in any department are not likely to be required in any other department, the Governor-General may call upon such officers to retire from the public service ; and every such officer so called upon to retire shall retire accordingly.

Surely that is sufficient protection. The provision is that if officers are in excess in any department they may be transferred to some other department where their services can be utilized, and where they are required ; but if it be found they are in excess in their department, power is also reserved by the Bill- and no doubt the power will be given by the House - to the Government of the day, to call on them to retire. As these gentlemen are not appointed with any pension rights, they may be called upon to retire without compensation. Surely this meets the difficulty "felt by the honorable member for Northern Melbourne and the honorable member for Indi. These honorable members feel that these . officers may possibly in a few months or a few years be found to be excess officers ; but if they are found to be so, there is ample power in the Bill to remove them.

Mr. THOMSON

(North Sydney).While I have no desire to embarrass the Government in this matter, I must say

that the explanation of the Treasurer does not meet my difficulty. I opposed the Fegan appointment upon the one ground amongst others that for such a position the State departments should have been drawn on for a suitable man before any attempt was made to fill the appointment from outside sources. Had that been done, the difficulty, which is placing the Ministry in an awkward position now as to the permanence of the appointments, might have been overcome. It is absurd to say the State Governments would not have been perfectly ready to give the chance of promotion to any suitable officer in their service - to allow their services to be used for a given period until the Commonwealth Parliament confirmed the appointment, and to undertake to replace him in his office if the Government did not see fit to give the confirmation.

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Mr Watson

- It only meant half-a dozen men or so.

Mr. THOMSON.It

would have been a small matter for all the State Governments. This is only another evidence of the justice of what has been advocated on behalf of the public services of the States - namely, not that the selection should have been made from those services, but that the Commonwealth Government should have gone there if competent officers were there to be had. But presuming, as we must presume, that such competent officers are available in those services - I do not mean the heads of State departments, but officers who, owing to circumstances, have not reached the heads - if the suggestion had been acted upon the difficulty would have been overcome. I do not say that the difficulties connected with the appointment are at all what they were in the Fegan case ; but this objection was one I raised to the appointment, and I must follow my objection by my vote on this occasion. I would point out to the Ministry what an amiable and considerate Opposition they have. This amendment, if it be anything at all, is a motion of censure, and, if it be carried, must be accepted as such by the Government.

Sir William Lyne

- Hear, hear.

Mr THOMSON

- The honorable gentleman is right, because this is not a motion for the reduction of the remuneration of the office. It has been expressly declared by the honorable member for Bland, who moved the amendment, that it is a reflection on the appointment made by the Ministry ; and if the amendment be carried no Government could continue to hold office in the face of such a reflection. Strange to say, the

amendment has come from a supporter of the Government, and I only say again that the Ministry have reason to thank the Opposition for their consideration.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am somewhat puzzled as to what attitude to take in respect tot this matter. A few moments ago we had a statement from the Prime Minister that these appointments were to be subjected to review by the Public Service Board when appointed. Within five minutes the right honorable gentleman found that he had to explain to, I think, the member for Kennedy that he had made a mistake, and that the Government were distinctly pledged, and the honour of the Commonwealth was distinctly pledged, to maintain in their position many of those officers on the ground that they had in some instances relinquished positions either in other States or in their various businesses. Subsequently to that we have the Treasurer getting up again and taking up the position which was first taken by the Prime Minister, but changed in a moment - the position that the appointments are only temporary, and subject to the review of the Public Service Board when appointed.

Sir George Turner

- I did not say so. I said we were going to make the appointments permanent, and then the Public Service Board hereafter, if those appointed were found to be excess officers at any time, would have a right to remove them as they would other excess officers.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Precisely ; I followed very closely both the Prime Minister and the Treasurer. But if the honour of the Commonwealth is involved in these appointments, are we to consider that if the appointments are found to be unnecessary in a few years time, it will be a mere matter of having to find other positions in some other branch of the Commonwealth service for those gentlemen ? If that be so we immediately revive the\_ question of the necessity of economy in our federal appointments. What we on this side of the House - or some of us, at any rate - would like to know from the Treasurer is the exact attitude the Government intend to take in regard to these appointments. AVe would like the Prime- Minister or the Treasurer to say at once whether the Government intend to stick to those gentlemen whom they have appointed and who have left other positions to take those federal appointments.

Sir George Turner

- AVe intend to appoint them permanently.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- We may take it that the Government absolutely intend to appoint those gentlemen, and stand by the choice ?

Sir George Turner

- Those officers will come under the provisions of the Public Service Bill when it is passed, and will take the risk of being excess officers.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- But in the event of it being found in a year or two's time that some of the officers are not further required - as pointed out by the member for Northern Melbourne - in the particular department, will not the honour of the Commonwealth be equally at stake, if other similar positions or other reasonable positions are not found for them in the service of the Commonwealth ?

Sir George Turner

- No ; because we' shall have made them permanent appointments, and the officers will come under the Public Service Act, whatever it may be.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Then we are to absolutely understand that these appointments are to be made subject to the Public Service Act and subject to review?

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Sir George Turner

- Certainly.'

Mr V L SOLOMON

- So that the necessity, not for the appointment, but for the continuance of the appointment, will all come under the review of the Public Service Board.

Sir George Turner



- There is no doubt about that.

Sir WILLIAM

MCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I must say that any honorable member - at least I may speak for myself - who has listened to this debate cannot help feeling that an entirely new issue has been sprung on us during the last hour. In the first place, the honorable member who has moved what is practically a vote of censure - for that is what it amounts to - intended to do it, because he considered that the appointment to this position should be made out of the public services of Australia, and not given to a gentleman who, while he was in the public service at one time, has not been so for several years. Since then a certain number of gentlemen, principally from the other side, have laid down the principle that the Government gave in some way or other a distinct pledge that no appointment would be made by them of a permanent character. I did understand in all fairness - because, after all, I think we are here to deal fairly with every public question, no matter on what side of the House we may be - that when certain appointments were bruited abroad some months ago, it was said, and very properly said, that until the Government had become constitutionally a Government or Ministry by a vote of confidence in this House, they were not justified in making any permanent appointment. That has been absolutely adhered to. The only thing I regret to-night is the uncertain voice of the Government. They have practically pledged themselves to these gentlemen, and there is no use shilly-shallying over it by any subterfuge regarding the question whether the commissioner, under a Bill which may or may not be passed, will interfere with these appointments. These appointments are made, and I must say, although it may appear to be against the interests of my own side, dealing particularly with this question, that I do not see how the Government of the Commonwealth could have been carried on without certain permanent appointments being made. Furthermore, on the very principle that we have laid down that these gentlemen should be taken, if possible, from the public services of the States, I ask how could we take them from the public services of the States unless they had first resigned their positions in those services

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An Honorable Member. - Borrow them.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I can quite understand their being borrowed during the first few months, and until this Ministry had a proper mandate after a vote of this House. But I must say that this is a new phase of the question, and I do not intend for one moment to be led away by it. The question that was really before this House, and which was raised by the motion of the honorable member for Bland, was simply that this gentleman did not belong to any branch of the public service of Australia when the appointment was made. Now I would like to deal entirely with the principle involved. I have previously said that I believed that the Prime Minister in making the appointment should first have exhausted the public services of the States, and then if he could not get a suitable man in those services, he was perfectly free to go outside of them.

Mr Watson

- - Was that done in this case 1

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- In all fairness to the Government and with a view to laying down the principles of the future, because in these preliminary debates I take it that we have to study the principles which will guide us in the future, I ask who is going to say that the Prime Minister could not have found a better man or a more suitable one in the public service than this individual !

Mr Watson

- He admitted that he never tried.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I do not think that.

Mr Watson

- He said that from amongst those whose capacity he knew he appointed the man with most capacity.

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- It comes to this after all : that if we are to have an Executive Government - and we must have an Executive Government - then we must trust that Executive Government. We lay down these general rules for the Prime Minister, but we must trust to his unfettered judgment with regard to the carrying of them

out. At the same time, if we find that he has been recreant to that policy, that an absolutely incapable or dishonest person, or a person whose antecedents . unfit him for the position, has been appointed, if we find that we have any flagrant charge against any individual, upon which we can lay a charge against the Government, I should be the first to take up that position in this House. But -although there may be something reprehensible in this appointment, although we feel that it might have been better and safer for the Prime Minister to take some one from the Public Service, I fail to see, taking -the abilities of this man, and the circumstances surrounding his case, into consideration, that we can make out any indictment sufficient to justify us in absolutely passing a vote of censure upon that appointment. In the position I occupy, acting as I do for a gentleman who I am sorry is not in his place, I say that, although I see a certain movement on the other side of the House, I do not think it would be right for me to sink my principles and my feelings in order to snatch a victory.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No one objects to the honorable member for Wentworth sinking his feelings upon this occasion, and nobody who knows him expects' that he would do otherwise. But I hope that he will not object to some of us expressing our 'feelings upon a matter of this kind. I may say at once that I share the opinion of the honorable member for Bland, who moved this amendment. I do so for several reasons. I think that this House has never had presented a greater spectacle of a divided Ministry, or a Ministry which does not seem to know its own mind, than has been exhibited to-night in this Chamber. We were told the other evening by th Attorney-General that no appointments had been made to -the public service. We were told by the Prime Minister this evening that the Ministry was going to submit these appointments for the review of the Public Service Commissioner when appointed.. Within ten minutes the right honorable and learned gentleman, the leader of the Government, was again upon his feet saying that he had made a mistake, that the Government were going to make these appointments, and were bound to stick to them. How are we to know definitely the opinions df the Ministry on any subject if that is the way they are going to talk? I venture to say that the Government ought to have felt more sure of their ground than to talk in the way they did. Either the appointments are good or they are not. If they are good, why do not the Ministry say definitely that they made those appointments and would stick to them ? That would be the manly and straightforward course to take. It was left, however, for some one to be told last night that the Government were not -going to make these appointments definitely, and then gradually and tortuously we have been informed that the Government were committed to these gentlemen and -would make the appointments permanent. Regarding the appointment of Mr. Hunt, I place that in exactly the same category as Mr. Fegan's appointment. If Mr. Fegan's appointment was a political one, and as such received the strong reprobation of the whole continent, equally so is the appointment of Mr Atlee Hunt a political one. We in ' New 'South Wale know well the reason for Mr. Hunt's appointment. It is of no use beating about the bush. We know that what led the Prime Minister to turn instinctively to Mr. Hunt was that Mr. Hunt had been in relations of confidence with that gentleman in connexion with the getting through of the Commonwealth Bill in the State of New South Wales. Mr. Hunt was the secretary of the federal organization, and naturally the Prime Minister would look to a gentleman of that kind as being suitable in the first place to be his private secretary, and as being qualified and eligible to move up into the higher position now allocated to him. In regard to some of the other appointments, it seems strange that all the gentlemen who have received those appointments should have stood in the same category in relation to the federal committee in Sydney and to the Commonwealth Bill. Some honorable members on this side of the House, notably the honorable and learned member for Parkes, have been upon terms of intimacy with this gentleman. No doubt that honorable member was impressed with his ability, but it is of no use trying to .make the committee believe that Mr. Hunt is the only man fitted for the position which he now occupies. The Prime Minister knows very well that he could have put his hands on a dozen men in the public service -of New South Wales who would have eagerly sought and just as eagerly accepted such an appointment if the opportunity had been offered them. We were told by the honorable member for Laanecoorie that the same remark exactly applies to the Victorian service, and indeed to the-public services of the whole continent. These nien have a right to complain against the action of the Government in that they have given away the choice appointments - for they will prove to be the plums of the public service - without consulting or considering them in the matter at all. To-day 1 was reading a report of last night's

proceedings, and I saw a little sentence which the Prime Minister let drop, relating to the public service. It was anything, it seemed to me, but of a complimentary character. The right honorable and learned gentleman went out of his way to mention that many public servants had tried to kill the Commonwealth Bill. It struck me as a peculiar utterance to come from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, in connexion with a discussion such as is now taking place. I shall vote with the honorable member who moved this amendment for two reasons. In the first place, I think this appointment should have been filled from the public services of the continent. I have nothing against Mr. Hunt personally. I know very little of him, and what little I do know is to his credit. But I do say that in the difficulties in which the Government found themselves they should have instinctively turned to the various State services to find these temporary officers, knowing that it would be an anomaly to appoint officers temporarily, and then discharge them the moment the Commonwealth was properly inaugurated. To 'hear the Prime Minister stating that these appointments will come within the purview of the Public Service ' Commissioner when appointed is a mere trifling with the question. If these officers are to be bandied about in that way it will not be fair to them. If they received these appointments at the hands of the Government, the Government will not be men if they allow the Public Service Commissioner to turn them adrift at his own sweet will. Either the appointments are right, or they are not. If the appointments are right, the Government should stick to them, believing them to have been made in perfect good faith. But in the first place I say that every means should have been exhausted to secure suitable men from the public services of the States. In the next place I shall vote against this appointment because I believe it to be a purely political one, equally a political appointment with that of Mr. Fegan.

Mr GLYNN

- I will follow the -course suggested by the honorable member for Wentworth. I think that the conditions were somewhat exceptional during the last six months. There was no transferred department taken over by the Prime Minister. I find that under the Constitution, as we all know already, the appointment of officers was left in the hands - until Parliament declared to the contrary - of the Ministry for the time being. What is the Prime Minister to do t Acting under the provisions of the Constitution Act, he created the department of External Affairs. There was no permanent secretary to transfer, because there was no department of External Affairs to transfer, so that the right honorable member had to appoint some one to take up the duties which would otherwise have been performed by a permanent secretary. He, therefore, appointed a secretary, and we are now asked to say that, in doing so, he acted wrongly. I should like to know what any other honorable member would have done under the circumstances 1 This is . not a new office ; it is an office to which there is no analogy in any of the State departments.

Mr Higgins

- Then why make the office permanent 1

Mr GLYNN

- The appointment will be temporary, until we pass the Public Service Bill. When the Bill has become an Act, this officer can enter the public service of the Commonwealth only by being appointed by the Public Service Commissioner. He must be brought in, not upon examination, but as a special officer, appointed under exceptional circumstances, under the provision of clause 27.

Mr Piesse

- He will be included in the schedule to the Bill.

Mr GLYNN

- I do not think so. I think that he will come in under the provisions of clause 27, a clause which is intended to allow of persons of special accomplishments being taken into the public service without examination, for the performance of special services.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- He .will enter the -public service as an officer appointed by the Governor in -Council. He will be a transferred officer, as provided for by the Bill, and will come into the public service of the Commonwealth subject to the provisions of the Bill.

Mr GLYNN

- I think that it is more likely that he will come into the public service under the provisions of clause 27.

Sir George Turner

- - He will enter the public service under the terms of the appointment which the Government will make.  
Mr GLYNN

- But,, until the Public Service Bill is passed, the appointment will be a temporary one. What we are doing to-night is to ratify these appointments until the end of the month, and the Ministry ought to continue them as temporary appointments until the Public Service Bill is passed, when this gentlemen can be appointed a special officer, taken into the public service without examination, and without consideration of age, under special circumstances and because of special qualifications, and a report will have to be presented by the Commissioner stating that there is no officer already in the service with qualifications equal to his who ought to be appointed in his place.

Mr. BATCHELOR

(South Australia).I do not want to give a silent vote upon this question. Although I am favorably disposed to the Ministry, and am anxious to assist them in every way I can, because I have confidence in their honesty of purpose in this matter, and -I believe that they have been anxious to appoint such persons as will best carry on the services of the Commonwealth, I feel called' upon to vote against them on this occasion. I feel strongly on this matter, because it is only a short time since the "question of appointing Mr. Fegan

as secretary 'to the Minister of Home Affairs was raised. The appointment was a precisely similar appointment to this.

Mr Watson

- Except that Mr. Fegan had had more experience than Mr. Hunt.

Mr BATCHELOR

- I do not know anything of Mr. Fegan's experience, but, in the opinion of the Minister of Home Affairs, and of the Prime Minister, it must have been' a proper appointment or it would not have been made. But there was such' a howl of indignation throughout the whole of Australia that Mr. Fegan was practically hounded out of the position, and forced to withdraw. It was contended on all hands that no person should be appointed to the head of a department of the Commonwealth Government unless he was a member of th public service of one of the States. It was also said that Mr. Fegan had been a coal miner, and therefore could not have had the experience which was necessary for the control of the work of the department. The objection raised to the appointment of Mr. Fegan was raised on the score of "his antecedents, and to-night one speaker referred to the possibility of some one being appointed whose antecedents unfitted him for the position.

Mr O'Malley

- What has a man's ancestry to do with his qualifications for a position ?

Mr BATCHELOR

- That is what I should like to know. I have used the term "antecedents" in the sense of previous occupation. The position I have described is the position taken up by the whole of the press of Australia.

Sir William McMillan

- That was not the objection taken to Mr. Fegan's appointment. His appointment was objected to on the score that he was an active politician at the time it was proposed.

Mr BATCHELOR

- That was one of the grounds of objection ; but, as has been pointed out to-night, the appointment of Mr. Hunt is also a political appointment.

Mr Thomas

- He has been appointed as a reward for political services.

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Mr BATCHELOR

- The appointment is a political one, although the services rendered were services in the cause of federation. Certainly nothing has been said to lead the House to believe that the gentleman who has been appointed is the only person who possessed the special qualifications necessary for the organisation and control of a new and important department of State. But, presumably because the antecedents in this case are - of the right character, we are asked to allow this appointment to pass unchallenged. I am certain, however, that it will be regarded by the bulk of the people of Australia as in many respects analogous to the proposed appointment of Mr. Fegan, and that' they will believe that Mr. Fegan was

rejected because it was considered that his antecedents unfitted him for the position. If the Ministry had consented to allow this appointment to come under the review of the tribunal to be appointed by the Public Service Bill for the administration and control of the public service, I should have been satisfied. I do not want to embarrass the Government, but I do not want to be placed in the position of justifying to some extent the practical desertion of Mr. Fegan by acquiescing in the appointment of another gentleman under similar circumstances.

Mr O'Malley

- But the gentleman appointed in this case had nothing to do with the action of the Ministry 'in regard to Mr. Fegan.

Mr BATCHELOR

- I have no knowledge of Mr. Hunt, and I am quite prepared to believe everything the Prime Minister has said of him. From what I have heard, I am convinced that he is a most estimable gentleman, and qualified for the position which he holds ; but the circumstances are such that I feel that I cannot vote 'with the Government and thus justify their appointment.

Mr SAWERS

- I feel that I cannot give a silent vote on this question, though I shall not trouble the committee with many remarks. It is manifest that the carrying of the amendment would amount to the passing of a vote of censure upon the Government, and that Ministers, would resign office to-morrow. I am a friend of the Administration, although my allegiance is being put to a strain, because I do not agree with their actions in this matter, and I cannot compliment them upon the contradictory statements which have been made to-night. But I recognise that we are not to punish our friends for slight mistakes. A man may quarrel with his wife, but he does not turn her out of doors. When I first heard that Mr. Hunt had been appointed to this high office, I felt extremely surprised and very much annoyed, because I thought that if there was one principle more than another by which the Federal Government should stand, it was the principle of promoting officers of the State services to positions in the Commonwealth service, instead of appointing outsiders. The main objection which I had to the proposed appointment of Mr. Fegan was, not that he was incapable, not that he had been a miner, but that he was not connected with the public service of the State. As I have said, I cannot congratulate the Government upon the many and contradictory statements which have been made to-night. It would have been better if they had said-" We have appointed these men, and we intend to stick to them." If they had said that, they would have found their friends rally round them. I think, however, that we may congratulate the Ministry upon the absence of the leader of the Opposition, because if he had been here he would have taken full advantage of the opportunity which this appointment would have afforded him. Mr. Hunt, too, is very fortunate in having friends on the opposition side of the chamber as well as on the Government side. I have no word to say against Mr. Hunt, and I accept the statement of the honorable and learned member for Parkes that he is most capable, and highly worthy of the position which he holds. My objection to his appointment - and I think it is an objection which honorable members generally take - is on the ground that he was not promoted from the public service of a State. But, though I think my friends have made a mistake, I am not such a pumpkin as to vote against them on a motion such as this.

Mr CONROY

- Do I understand that this amendment is to be construed as a motion of censure against the Government, or is it to be regarded merely as a motion for the reduction of this particular Salary?

Sir George Turner

- It is certainly a motion of censure. The reduction is being moved upon the ground that the appointment made by the Government is an improper appointment, and it cannot be regarded as anything else than a motion of censure.

Mr Barton

- The last thing I would do would be to make a threat ; but I hope that I understand my position.

Sir George Turner

- I have not said anything as to how the Ministry regard the amendment, lest it should be said that we were making a threat.

Mr Watson

- I am moving for the reduction by way of showing my disapproval of the appointment.

Sir George Turner

- Yes - disapproval of an executive act of the Government.

Mr CONROY

- I want to know if disapproval is being shown with the action of the Government, because they have appointed Mr. Hunt, or because in appointing him they went outside the public service of the States.

Sir George Turner

- Because we have gone outside the public service of the States.

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Mr CONROY

- In that case I would draw the attention of honorable members to the fact that there are three other appointments which have been made by the Government to which the same objection applies. Instead of there being one appointment there are no less than four. If these things come up as isolated facts, it is very difficult indeed to challenge an Executive; but if the committee regard the matter as a whole, and say that these four appointments which have been made from outside the ' public service do not meet with our approval, inasmuch as the public services of the States have not been searched, we shall be taking a proper course.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I regret that there has been so much discussion of a very personal- character. For my own part I can see nothing to which exception can be taken in the fact that some of the gentlemen who have been appointed did active service in the cause of federation. But I quite agree with those honorable members who look to the public service as it exists as the first field from which appointments should be made. I feel that as strongly as any one can do ; and ' my vote will be largely influenced by an explanation which I hope will be made by the Prime Minister in answer to a simple question. There has been some contradiction as to whether Mr. Atlee Hunt has or has not been appointed. Under the Public Service Bill now before the House it is possible for Ministers to make temporary appointments. Under clause 26, these appointments are open to revision, and under clause 27 they are open to confirmation, in the event of its being certified that no equally efficient officer can be found from inside the service. The Treasurer has said that these appointments will be open to review by the commission or board, and may be made permanent appointments.

Sir George Turner

- If there is a permanent appointment, and the objection is that the officer is an excess officer, he can undoubtedly be removed.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- That would not apply if he were an efficient officer.

Sir GEORGE Turner

- The objection taken is that this appointment might be necessary at the present time, but should not be made permanent, because in two or three years time the officers would not be necessary.

That being so, I say they should be removed as excess officers. We take the responsibility of making the appointments now.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The Treasurer does not say that the position will not be permanently required. The probability is that it will be more and more required every day as time goes on.

Sir George Turner

- We believe the office to be necessary or we should not have created it.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- That means that the shelving of the officer which the Treasurer talks about will never take place. If the Prime Minister will revert to the position he 'took up originally, and say that this appointment is a temporary one, that will settle all difficulties.

Mr BARTON

- I have always said that the appointments so far are temporary appointments. I repeat that, as it is necessary to make matters clear. All these appointments have been made as temporary appointments, although they have been made, so far as I had anything to do with them, with the assurance that I should endeavour to make them permanent appointments when the opportunity arose. I said, however, that I

could not undertake to do that until this Government had passed through the stage when its constitutional position could be challenged by the Opposition. I said that when we had passed through that stage I thought it would be the duty of the Government to make the appointments permanent. Now, a position has arisen in which I made a certain statement. That was, that I would submit these appointments, to the Public Service Commissioner. I told honorable members a few minutes ago that I made that statement inadvertently, and without having regard to the proper position of the matter. Having asked these gentlemen to take posts which involved in many cases their relinquishing their means of livelihood, I cannot consent to put them in a position in which they might be subject to the act of the Public Service Commissioner, who would be entitled to say that no one should be in the public service unless he entered at £10 a year. It is impossible for a self-respecting Government to take that course. It is impossible for a self-respecting Parliament not to maintain a Government in a position such as we have\* adopted.

Sir Edward Braddon

- That only applies, to the clerical staff.

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Mr BARTON

- I am speaking of the clerical staff. But there is something more to be considered than that. I have before now asserted that there is no legal obligation upon this Parliament when the next Estimates come up to prevent honorable members from taking their own course with regard to any appointments. That is what I intended to refer to when I spoke of the obligation as a moral obligation. I am only asking this committee to follow the Ministry in respect of their constitutional responsibility to Parliament and to the continent of Australia. We were left in this position : that we must have some kind of a public service, and we could not have an efficient one even for the intervening time - which has been a serious and important time, largely absorbing the labours and abilities of those in the service of the Government - if we said to the gentlemen whom we employed - " You will take these as temporary appointments, and we do not think that Parliament will sustain us in what we do." We could not say such a thing as that. Every honorable member will see that. But does not the course some honorable members recommend place us in that position ? We have had to look for men whom we considered properly competent to do the work. We selected those men - rightly or wrongly. If we selected them wrongly, a vote of this House can tell us so ; and that is a vote of censure. There is no way of escaping from that conclusion, and I am the last of all Ministers to endeavor to escape from it. I fully recognise the seriousness' of the position ; I fully recognise the effect of what the honorable member for Bland has done, and I take the responsibility personally for what I have done. As Prime Minister, I am responsible for every appointment made, whether I actually had anything to do with it or not. But I say more than that - that in making appointments such as I have made, albeit they were temporary, I had to give the assurance, before I could come to terms with those gentlemen whom I considered fit to fill the positions, that in my opinion those appointments would be confirmed by Parliament. If I had not said that, what honorable and self-respecting man would have taken service under us ? I would ask any honorable member what honorable and self-respecting man would have taken a position in the Commonwealth service unless I had said that I believed that Parliament would follow the lead of the Government in making the appointments permanent? They have been made as temporary appointments. It does not matter to the Government - speaking with all respect - whether Parliament approves of the action they have taken or not. So far as the moral obligation of Ministers goes, they are bound to follow out what follows from the moral obligation; they are bound, when the Public Service Bill becomes law, to apply that measure to the existing public service. The Government have carried out their obligations as far as they can carry them out, but they are bound to submit these officers, as existing officers in the public service, to the consequences of the Public Service Act. It may involve a regrading of their positions, which regrading, whenever it occurs, will be final, unless the Government is prepared to take the responsibility of refusing to accept the recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner, and chooses to lay the papers on the table, and to ask for the judgment of the House, which, if given against them, will sustain the Public Service Commissioner in his position. That far I am content to go ; but as a constitutional Minister I will not leave these people in a precarious tenure of their offices, after the relinquishment of their other employments. I cannot see that that would be honorable to the country ; and I say that the public opinion of this country will sustain me in every word I am now stating. I will not submit - not because of any disrespect towards this House, but because I

respect the citizens of Australia too much - to be told that a Government is not to have this little bit of authority, which carries with it consequent responsibility, in an intervening period, during the trials and troubles of which we have successfully steered the Commonwealth to some purpose. Therefore, I ask that this committee will not refuse to ratify what we have done. I shall know what to do if the committee does refuse. In respect to the officers under discussion, it is the duty of the Government to appoint them to their offices, and to make them permanent as far as the Executive can do so, leaving them after that to the operation of the Public Service Act, under which their classification and their duties can be properly assigned to them. If they are found to be excess officers, after a time of course they can be dealt with as such. They will then be removed from the public service. If, on the other hand, they are found not to be competent, they can be dealt with by being placed in other positions. But they are entitled to the impartial judgment of the Public Service Commissioner, and when that judgment has been passed, the Government also is entitled to take a certain course. The Government must submit to the judgment of this House, which judgment I will cheerfully accept. Under these circumstances, I believe honorable members will see that we are taking the only honorable and upright course, which is the one I am resolved to adopt.

Mr.F. E. McLEAN (Lang).- I regret that the right honorable and learned gentleman at the head of the Government has placed the House in a position in which there must be a definite vote taken on the amendment moved by the honorable member for Bland. I had some hope that, on mature consideration, the right honorable and learned gentleman would have seen that it was the right of the committee to decide that these appointments should come under the review of the Public Service Board. I believe that the Prime Minister has shown commendable loyalty to those whom he has appointed in announcing his willingness to stand by them and by the consequences of his action. I thoroughly appreciate the spirit of loyalty he has shown in that respect. But I submit that there is an obligation to the committee as well as an obligation of loyalty to those whom the -right honorable and learned gentleman has appointed to these positions. We are laying the foundation of a great Commonwealth, and - trying to avoid a great many of the mistakes which have been made in the past. At the very foundation of the Commonwealth the committee has been asked to adopt a public service measure for the express purpose of preventing the evils of political patronage from creeping into these appointments. I admit that it was necessary for the appointments to be made, but we were persistently told in the public press that they were only provisional appointments. Not provisional in the sense in which the right honorable and learned gentleman has now defined that term ; we were not told that they were provisional only until the Government had survived the Address in Reply. We were further told in the press that the Government .would deal with such appointments by means of the Public Service Board.

Mr Barton

- Will the honorable men allow me to say that on all occasions, or on nearly every occasion on which I referred to this matter before public audiences, I said the appointments were temporary appointments until the meeting of Parliament.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I will accept that statement, but I understood the right honorable gentleman to say that the appointments were subject to the approval of Parliament, which I took to be gained by voting for the salaries on the Estimates.

Mr Barton

- That is not what I said. If I went any further, by saying until the meeting of Parliament, it was until Parliament had had an opportunity of judging of the constitutional position of the Government.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I certainly have not understood those inspired paragraphs appearing in the press from time to time to mean anything of the kind.

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Mr Barton

- If the honorable member would take my speeches, and not the inspired paragraphs of mendacious persons, he would be in a safer position.

Mr.F. E. McLEAN.- I do not think those "inspired paragraphs " have emanated from mendacious persons, but whether they have or not, I want to lay down very clearly the position that the right honorable gentleman could have conserved all the best interests of the Government, of Parliament, and of the



Commonwealth, by having those appointments made provisionally, until such time as the Public Service Board was constituted, and enabled to review them. It is nonsense to tell the committee that gentlemen of ability and character could not be obtained to take those appointments provisionally. I have no personal objection whatever - and I say so straight away, though I differ from a great many on my own side of the House in this respect - to the gentleman whose salary is attacked. I have a very high opinion of Mr. Atlee Hunt, and I do not for a moment lay down the extreme principle that these appointments should be made from the existing public services of the States. I do not go so far, but I say that when we propose to place the whole administration of the public service under a non-political commissioner, we have no right to give the prize offices into the hands of Ministers, however much we may trust and respect them - we have no right to give them the first appointments and the most lucrative and most responsible positions to distribute before the Public Service Board is called into existence. 'The affairs of the Commonwealth could have been provisionally conducted either by officers borrowed from the States or by gentlemen provisionally appointed. I have no doubt that even the gentleman who occupies this office would have been very glad to add one more to his splendid services to the cause of federation by filling it provisionally until such time as a proper appointment could be made by the Public Service Board. I take up the position that we have no right as a Commonwealth at this stage to depart from the great principle that these appointments should be non-political, and we have no right to take away from the board or commission it is proposed to appoint under the Public Service Bill their most sacred and responsible functions. These appointments could even now, at the eleventh hour, be made provisional appointments, subject to ratification by the Public Service Board. From the very fact that these gentlemen were willing to take positions on the understanding that they were provisional, until the Ministry had survived their first parliamentary ordeal, is it not probable that they would have taken the positions on the understanding that they were subject to ratification by a board to be appointed by Parliament?

Mr Barton

- The question is, what was the understanding ?

Mr F E McLEAN

- We have been led by the right honorable gentleman to understand that they took their appointments provisionally with pledges that the Government would stand by them - that they were only temporary appointments until Parliament had met and the Ministry had been placed constitutionally in office. If they took their provisional appointments on that understanding, is it unreasonable to suppose they would have taken a somewhat longer provisional appointment until the Public Service Board had been constituted, and its powers exercised? I think the right honorable gentleman is forcing many of us into the position of voting on this amendment when we would sooner not. I do not want to vote on the amendment because, as I have said before, I have a very high opinion of the gentleman whose merits have been so freely discussed. I do not think the Committee ought to be called , on to discuss the merits of these gentlemen. We are creating a Public Service Board to save the Government and Parliament the invidious task of deciding on the merits of the men who hold public offices. But we are forced into the position that we must vote on the amendment moved by the honorable member for Bland, and I will vote with the honorable member unless the Government is prepared to regard these appointments as provisional until the Public Service Board is constituted.

Mr.HARPER (Mernda.) - Unfortunately for the position of the honorable member who has just sat down, he has overlooked the fact that the exercise by the Government of their functions in 'this matter has been expressly conferred on them by the Constitution Act. Section 67 of the Constitution Act provides - Until the Parliament otherwise provides, the appointment and removal of all other officers of the Executive Government of the Commonwealth shall be vested in the Governor-General in Council, unless the appointment is delegated by the Governor-General in Council or by law of the Commonwealth to some other authority.

Mr Higgins

- - That does not affect the position.

Mr F E McLEAN

- We do not deny the constitutional right of the Government to do it .

Mr HARPER

- The section surely confers on the Government the right to make those appointments.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Undoubtedly.

Mr HARPER

- I understood the honorable member to say the Government had no right to make such appointments.

Mr F E McLEAN

- As a matter of public policy.

Mr HARPER

- There is nothing in the Constitution Act about their not being appointed until their appointments were dealt with by a Bill. There is a provision that until these appointments are provided for by a Bill, the Government is to have the responsibility of making them, and the Government has exercised that responsibility.

Mr Higgins

- Provisionally.

Mr HARPER

- The honorable member for Northern Melbourne thinks the Government ought to have made the appointments provisionally, but according to the Act, the Government are clearly within their rights in having made them.

Sir Malcolm Mceacharn

- The Government have made this appointment provisionally.

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Mr HARPER

- As I understand the Premier, the appointment was made until such time as the Government received a vote of confidence from the House. The Treasurer has told us the Government propose to ' make the appointment permanent, and to bring it under the terms of the Public Service Bill if that measure be passed. It seems to me that until those who have objected to the appointment have some grounds showing that the Government have made a corrupt and improper appointment, we must accord to the Government our confidence in their exercise of the function that the Constitution Act vests in them. We have talked for several hours, and have not arrived at any light on the subject. All sorts of confused ideas have been put forward, but, after all, unless we can show clearly that the Government have acted improperly, we ought to give them our support.

Mr. CONROY

(Werriwa).- I understand a declaration has been made by the Premier to the effect that he regards this as a vote of censure. I have been absent from the chamber for about 25 minutes, and did not know the state of affairs, but in the meantime I thought it was merely a question as to the reduction of the salary of a particular office, and looking at this strictly as a salary for an office, I should have given my support to the Government. But the moment the Government ask us to support them because they made the appointment outside of the civil services of the various States, it becomes an entirely different matter. On looking through the list I find that no fewer than four of the appointments are altogether from outside the civil services. That is to say, the civil services of the various States have never been examined or looked into in order to obtain suitable men for the appointment. Seeing that, I have no alternative but to say that the conduct of the Government in making four appointments of the sort is entirely wrong ; and I must therefore record my vote against them.

Question that the item - Secretary at £800 per annum from the 1st May, 1901 i - £134, be reduced by £4 - put.

The Committee divided.

18

AYES

42

NOES

Majority 24

AYES

NOES

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. McCAY

(Corinella). - I wish to have my mind made quite clear upon the point I mentioned previously. Do I understand that these private secretaries will be ordinary members of the public service ? Will they be on the same footing as other members of the service

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I quite, recognise the right of the Government, as the Executive of Parliament, to make appointments if they choose, and to do as they did just now- take the responsibility of their actions. I merely wish to understand whether these private secretaries will be on a different footing from other members of the public service

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Mr BARTON

- If the House wishes to make this gentleman a permanent member of the public service I do not see how he can complain. It is a better position than I had designed for him.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- If I am in order, I should like this item to be altered by changing the designation from "private secretary" to "Ministerial secretary."

Sir George Turner

- Strike the word " private " out. That will be the simpler plan.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- There is, no doubt whatever that such an office as the one under discussion is required, and the salary proposed for it is not too great. We certainly would not get a competent man for anything less. While I think there might possibly be some objection to this particular office .in other departments, there certainly can be none in the Prime

Minister's Department. The reasons which the right honorable and learned gentleman at the head of the Government gave were very cogent, but the same reasons will not apply to the other departments. It is no use "urging that there is a necessity for private secretaries on account of the confidential relations which exist between the Minister and that official, because such confidential relations have existed in the past between State Ministers and their Under-Secretaries, and these relations have terminated on the retirement of the Minister from office, and have been commenced de novo with a new Minister. I can see no reason therefore why we should not have a permanent officer of the civil service as secretary to the Prime Minister. The officer would be secretary to successive Prime Ministers, who would thereby benefit by the experience which the official had gained in the public service. My objection to this item will entirely vanish if we change the designation of the officer in question, so as to get rid of the personal element. We had better make the office a permanent one. Such an officer would be of great value to the succeeding Prime Ministers, and the salary provided I think is quite small. In fact the salaries payable to these high officers of the public service have rather surprised me. Ministers have been very moderate in the amounts allocated to the various offices. I move -

That the word "private " be omitted.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. SALMON

(Laanecoorie). - I desire to enter my protest against the amount which it is intended should be paid to the officer holding this position. I will not detain the House by again recounting the reasons why I do this. With regard to the qualifications of the gentleman who is likely to hold this office I will say nothing, except that in the State of Victoria there is a private secretary whom I know well, and who occupies the position of a fifth class clerk in the Public Service.

Mr Mauger

- He is shamefully underpaid for the work he does.

Mr SALMON

- I do not . think the honorable member for Melbourne Ports whilst he was a member of the State Parliament, would have suggested that his salary though inadequate should have been increased by more than 100 per cent. He knows very .well that he would have called down upon himself the censure of the whole of the Public Service, and would have had very small chance of being returned to Parliament.

Sir George Turner

- What does the Secretary to the Premier of Victoria get ?

Mr SALMON

- I am not quite sure. The gentleman I am referring to gets an annual salary of £200, and a gratuity of £35 a year for acting as private secretary. For his £200 a year he does the departmental work, and for the £35 he performs all the work incidental to the private secretaryship of one of the largest departments in the State of Victoria. Regarding his qualifications I may say that he has been a member of the public service for something like twelve years, he is a graduate of the Melbourne University, a Bachelor of Arts, and a Bachelor of Laws. He has done splendid service in consolidating our land laws, he is an expert shorthand writer, and also uses the typewriter to perfection.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is sweating.

Mr SALMON

- I quite agree that it is . sweating. This gentleman has been sweated. But I will not agree that the services which he renders to the Minister for whom he acts as private secretary are worth anything like £450 per annum. . In fact these services are put down at £35 per annum. There is another matter to which I desire to direct attention. We are told that these secretaries will be brought under the Public Service Act. But how will they be brought under that Act 1 By being exempted, I presume, from some of its provisions. Will there not be a provision made that they shall preserve the rights they now enjoy before the Public Service Act has become law - rights with regard to their positions and salaries t

Sir George Turner

- The Bill provides for every public servant. They will be ordinary public servants.

Mr SALMON

- My impression is that the gentlemen appointed now will be in a totally different position from those appointed subsequent to the passing of the Public Service Act.

Sir George Turner

- Those, who enter the service after the passing of the Act will have to undergo certain examinations. As far as the tenure of their offices is concerned they will be on the same footing.

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Mr SALMON

- And with regard to the classification 1 Who will classify them t

Mr McCay

- They will be classified under the Act. .

Sir George Turner

- In the same way as any other public servant will be classified.

Mr SALMON

- Then I believe that the honorable member has attained all that he desires to attain. I was under the impression that there was no provision in the Bill whereby any officer appointed before the measure comes into force would be subject to classification.

Sir George Turner

- Yes ; every officer appointed by the Government will be subject to the provisions of the Bill.

Mr SALMON

- Having received that information, I shall not detain the committee longer. I have nothing further to say in regard to the office of private secretary to the Prime Minister ; but, later on, in cases where I believe that the qualifications are not of so high a character, I shall endeavour to have a reduction made.

Vote agreed to.

Mr Conroy

Honorable Members. - Too late.

The CHAIRMAN

- I put the question to the committee, and honorable members gave me their voices in the affirmative. did not hear any honorable member address the Chair.

Mr Conroy

- I stood up.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable gentleman has on several occasions contented himself with standing up and catching my eye, but the practice to which I have been accustomed for many years in the Parliament of the State from which I come, and which I believe prevails in other Parliaments, is that when honorable members rise in their places they must address the Chairman by name.

Miscellaneous

Proposed vote, £10,171.

Mr MCDONALD

- I wish to ask the Treasurer if he can give us some explanation as to how the amount of £10,000 which is set down to meet the expenses in connexion with the opening of Parliament was expended 1 I think that it was a very large sum to spend upon a one day's show, and, from what little I saw of the opening, I do not think the country received anything like value for the money. I should like to have an explanation of how it was spent.

Honorable Members. - It is gone now.

Mr MCDONALD

- At any rate, as a matter of courtesy, the Minister should reply when he is asked a question.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- My practice is to wait and hear all that honorable members have to say.

Mr MCDONALD

- The vote was about to be carried on the voices, but the Minister did not rise.

Sir GEORGE

TURNER (Balaclava Treasurer). - It has not been my practice to rise after each honorable member has spoken, and thus have to make half a dozen speeches ; I prefer to reply to the whole discussion in one speech. No doubt £10,000 is a considerable sum, but we all know that the occasion was an exceptional one, and that the Commonwealth Ministers were bound to let the visitors see that they were prepared to entertain their guests in a proper manner. There may have been some few hitches, but hitches are almost unavoidable in such a large entertainment. I venture to say, however, that the opening ceremony and the concert in the evening reflected credit on those who had control of the arrangements.

Mr McMillan

- The amount set down here is an estimate1?

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Yes ; because the accounts have not all come in yet. So far as I know, the actual amount expended' will prove to be between £8,000 and £9,000 ; but it is impossible to estimate it exactly until all the accounts have come in. I believe that the officers who had charge of the arrangements have endeavoured to keep down the expenditure as much as possible. Not only were there the entertainments on the opening day to pay for ; the expenses of a number of persons who were here as guests of the Commonwealth are responsible for a considerable portion of the amount.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- How much of the- £10,000 was spent upon caterers 1

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- About one half of it.

Mr CONROY

- Who is the: Minister who really had charge of affairs at the opening ceremony, and selected "tha officers who were appointed to look after the arrangements 1

Sir George Turner

- The Prime Minister had charge of the arrangements.

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Mr CONROY

- And, of course, with his conservative tendencies, be naturally put all the labour men and their wives, as I noticed, right away at the back.

Mr McCay

- That statement is unworthy of any member of this House.

Mr CONROY

- I am bound to say that lie went a little further, because the same discourtesy was shown to Mrs. Reid.  
Mr Kingston

- That is a scandalous thing to say.

Mr CONROY

- It is perfectly true. I had to look after the matter myself. It was not until I had gone to some of the men in charge, and had spoken very strongly indeed about the conduct of Ministers in that way-

Sir William Lyne

- Does the honorable member mean to say that the Prime Minister did these things 1

Mr CONROY

- I mean to say that if the same judgment as was shown in making the appointments in connexion with those proceedings has been shown in connexion with the appointments to the Federal Public Service, it will be a bad thing for the Commonwealth. There is not a single member who does not know this. As federal members if we were there for anything at all, we were there to take our places properly. It was our ceremony, but it was not so regarded. It was regarded as a ceremony in which one, or two, or half a dozen Ministers might exercise their favour by putting their friends in different positions from those occupied by Members of Parliament.

Mr O'Malley

- It was the Commonwealth funeral.

Mr CONROY

- And the concert in the evening was a sort of wake. I desire to draw the attention of Ministers to this matter, because I think that some explanation should be forthcoming. I know that I had to go about in a way that was very unpleasant indeed. ' When the Minister for Trade and Customs says that it was not true, he is not conversant with the whole of the facts.

Mr HUME COOK

- Did the honorable member expect the Ministers to act as head waiters 1

Mr CONROY

- I expected the Ministry to appoint men who would take care that things were properly done. If the officers whom they are appointing now pay as little care and attention to their duties, it will be a very bad thing for every one. I consider that it was the duty of the Prime Minister, as he was there, to exercise some supervision. I desire to draw attention to the fact that in the expenditure of this large sum of money more care might have been exercised in the management of the proceedings. I know that I saw a good many men placed right at the back, though it was true that this generally happened to new men, who were supposed not to be acquainted with what was due to them. I noticed, however, that 40 or 50 personal friends or acquaintances of the Prime Minister and other Ministers had their places, 'while the wives of members were away at the back.

Mr McCay

- I rise to a point of order. The honorable member is referring to the Prime Minister, in his absence, as having abused his position in order to bestow favours upon his friends. I think that it is disgraceful.

Mr CONROY

- It is disgraceful that these things should have occurred. That is what is disgraceful - not the reference to them.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member is referring to the Prime Minister as being responsible for the action of certain functionaries who were called upon to do certain things in connexion with the opening of Parliament, with which the item now before the committee is concerned. I cannot rule that the honorable member is out of order for doing so. Whether he should make these remarks or not is purely a matter of taste.

Mr CONROY

- I only desired to call attention to the matter, and there was no other way of doing so. When I tried to do it quietly, the Minister for Trade and Customs told me--and it was a strictly unparliamentary thing to say - that it was not true. Such language may be allowed in this Chamber, but it could not be used outside.

The CHAIRMAN

- Do .1 understand the honorable member to charge the Minister for Trade and Customs with having stated something that is not true ?

Mr CONROY

- That is what I understood him to say. He said that it was scandalously untrue.

Mr Kingston

- What I said was that the suggestion that the Prime Minister had abused his position to show discourtesy to a relative of the leader of the Opposition was a scandal ; and so it is.

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Mr CONROY

- I am glad to hear the Minister for Trade and Customs say that it was a scandal that such a thing should have occurred. It did take place.

Mr Kingston

- That is not a fact.

Mr CONROY

- Some of the Ministers well know that it took place. It was my first experience of parliamentary life ; but I knew enough of the ordinary courtesies of life to take care that attention should be drawn to it. Of course there were many expenses in connexion with a ceremony "like that which could not be avoided. "We are told that the actual expenditure may prove to be less than the amount we are being asked to vote, and of course we are glad to hear that the sum set down is not likely to be exceeded. I would not have taken any action in stinting the Government in regard to the expenditure on that occasion; and I rose simply to object to the manner in which the proceedings were conducted, and to the want of care bestowed upon them by the Prime Minister.

Mr. G.

B. EDWARDS (South Sydney).I am very sorry that this recrimination has taken place. After all said and done, if anything of the kind to which reference has been made did occur, it must have been through an oversight. I can only say that "it seemed to me that the ceremony was as-well managed as an affair of that magnitude could have been managed. It was a noble occasion, and it was nobly celebrated. If it happened that some lady of eminence was neglected, I am sure that it must have been through an oversight. It seemed to my personal friends and to myself that- the greatest care was taken to arrange that everybody should have his proper position. I do not think we can begrudge the expenditure in connection with the -celebration of the inauguration of the Commonwealth.

Mr PIESSE

- I should not have taken part in this discussion except to remove an impression in the mind of an honorable member who has spoken. He seemed to think that some slight had been placed upon certain honorable members sitting in the corners of the chamber in regard to the places allotted to them at the opening of the Federal Parliament.

Mr CONROY

- All honorable members were affected.

Mr PIESSE

- If there was any slight, it applied to honorable members all round the Chamber. But I do not think there was any intention to slight any honorable member. I look upon it as a matter in which the magnitude of the arrangements prevented what might otherwise have been done for the convenience of honorable members. I do not wish it to be thought for a moment that there was any slight put upon a particular class of members, whether they are called labour members or otherwise.

Vote agreed to. attorney-general.

Proposed vote, £518, agreed to. minister op home affairs.

Administrative.

Proposed vote, £22,917.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I see in the details of this vote a sum of £600 for " travelling expenses, allowances, stationery, books, printing, and incidental expenses." I do not intend to say much at this stage, but I think it will be a great pity if in the conduct of our finances large sums of an incidental character are allowed to be lumped together with practically no explanation. Many honorable members have repeated time after time that the salaries allotted to Ministers are not particularly high for the onerous duties that have to be performed by them. But it would be far better to pay Ministers more and have a definite' sum set down at the end of the

year, than to have a large amount put down for incidental expenses. . This item may be taken as an indication of large expenditure connected with the inauguration of the Commonwealth, but on other occasions it might include sundries for travelling expenses, incidentals, and other matters encumbering our accounts and giving no information with regard to the items of expenditure. While there are some ' sums that cannot be altogether scheduled, I trust that where details can be given they will be given in the public accounts.

Sir George Turner

- It is very hard to do it at first. These items are arrived at mostly by guesswork.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I look upon the present position as altogether abnormal. That is why I have refrained, whilst acting for the leader of the Opposition, from any nagging opposition to the Government in their first Supply Bill. I consider that we must give them a large amount of latitude on account of the exceptional and abnormal circumstances surrounding the initiation of the Commonwealth. But I think now, as I have always held in my public career, that we should criticise votes which deal with the incidentals of a Minister's office.

Mr SALMON

- I see that there is an item in this vote for a " shorthand writer and clerk at £200 per annum." I presume that he will do a great deal of work which otherwise would be done by the private secretary to the Minister. We have not yet heard what the duties of these officers are to be. I do not know whether it is necessary that the private secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs should have a legal training.. The sum of £40 per annum is to be paid to the Minister's private secretary.

Sir William Lyne

- He is not a legal officer.

Sir George Turner

- There will, of course, be an under-secretary for the department.

Mr McDonald

- You cannot expect a man getting £400 a year to work himself, surely. He must have some one to assist him.

Mr SALMON

- I do not think there can possibly be an excuse for the appointment of this private secretary. I recognise that it is necessary for the Minister to have an amanuensis, but there is no need to appoint a private Secretary at £400 a year.

Sir William Lyne

- He is in the public service now, and his salary is £300 a year.

Mr SALMON

- I am asking for information, and am getting it in dribblets. I understand that the gentleman is in the public service of one ' of the States. At what salary?

Minister for Home Affairs

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

. - This gentleman has been in the Public Service of New South Wales. He has practically been private secretary to three or four different Ministers. His salary is £299, and his name is Mr. Bingle. He has been my private secretary, as Prime Minister of New South Wales, and has been sixteen years in the civil service of that State.

Mr McDonald

- Why is he leaving it? Sir WILLIAM LYNE. - Because' he is quite good enough to be with me. I am surprised at exception being taken to a case of this kind. Mr. Bingle was first correspondence clerk and record clerk. He afterwards did special administrative work, and was private secretary to Mr. Copeland, and Mr. Carruthers, at the Lands Offices. He has, more recently, been my private secretary, while I was Prime Minister of New South Wales.

Sir William McMillan

- Is it all public work that he does?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Yes. He has the highest testimonials. I may say in addition to that, that through the cast iron public



service system of New South Wales this officer has not been paid as he should have been. In consequence of the exceptional circumstances under which he was employed, and the impossibility of getting him graded higher by the Public Service Board, although I desired his salary to be about £100 a year more, his salary during the last 18 months has been augmented by bonuses. This was the only way in which he could be paid, though still inadequately, for the work he did. I have no undersecretary in my department. I have had to do a great amount of work since I left the Premier's, office in New South Wales. But for this officer I should have been placed in a very awkward position. The honorable member who has raised this question cannot possibly object to an officer who stands in so good a position, and who has such experience behind him.

Mr. SALMON

(Laanecoorie). - It seems to me that this officer is far too good for the position. His abilities are being wasted, and- will be further wasted when a permanent head of the Home Department has been appointed. There will be a private secretary, and a shorthand writer and clerk, in ' addition to a permanent head, at perhaps £800 a year. I beg to move -

That the item " Private secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs at £400 per annum " be reduced by the amount of £100.

Sir George Turner

- The Home Department is a large one, which has control over the electoral rolls and so on.

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Mr SALMON

- We must remember that we must start the business of the Commonwealth economically in the first place, and in the second place we should not set a bad example to' the States. It is to our interest that the several States should exercise economy, because their 'financial stability will affect the Commonwealth very much indeed. As a Victorian, I have been somewhat struck by the enormous value placed upon the services of private secretaries in New South Wales. We have : been accustomed in this State to pay much less salaries to private secretaries. The private secretary to the Premier receives only £485 per annum.

Mr GLYNN

- I shall support this vote, because to some extent we must rely upon the Minister. But if there is to be any under-secretary for this department, I do not see why the principal permanent officer should not be called the Secretary, and this officer the assistant or under-secretary.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I' think it would be better to call the officer the secretary instead of private secretary. If the honorable member for Laanecoorie will for the present withdraw his amendment, I will move one to that effect.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (by Sir George Turner) agreed to -

That the word "private" before the word " secretary " be omitted.

Amendment (by Mr. Solomon) proposed -

That the item "private secretary to Minister for Home Affairs at £400 per annum " be reduced by £100.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I trust that the honorable member for Laanecoorie will not press his amendment, It seems to me to be quite inconsistent that, having voted two larger salaries than this, we should attempt to cut down the salary of the Private Secretary to the Minister for the Home Department.

Mr Salmon

- - It is not the man, but the salary attached to his office that I object to.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Why should this officer be considered not as worthy of his salary as two other highly paid officers of other departments whose salaries have not been attacked ? This is an officer who has worked his way up in the service in a very arduous manner. Any honorable member who has any acquaintance with him will know that he is worth .£400 a year. He is an exceedingly capable and tactful man, and has been found so judicial in his mind and temperament that many Ministers in succession have been glad to avail themselves of his services. Therefore, he is in an entirely different category from others whose salaries have been allowed to pass unchallenged, and we should be acting very churlishly and inconsistently if we

made any reduction here.

Mr MAUGER

- I hope my honorable friend, the member for Laanecoorie, will withdraw his amendment. I have consistently opposed the reduction of fair and equitable salaries from the beginning. I give place to no man in my desire to pay good salaries, consistent with due economy. To pick out an item like this is, in my judgment, not only unfair, but exceedingly unreasonable.

Mr MCDONALD

- If the honorable member for Laanecoorie had moved that the whole amount of the salary be struck out, I would vote with him. But since he is willing that we should have this Secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs to dance attendance on the Minister, I do not see why he should not be paid the amount set down on the Estimates.

Mr Salmon

- There are only three Ministers who have private secretaries, and they all come from New South Wales.

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Mr MCDONALD

- Before long they will all have them. The only thing I am surprised at is that those gentlemen who are getting £400 a year have not a large staff of clerks around them by this time. I suppose, however, that that will come later on, and we may confidently expect that within the next few months they will have large staffs to assist them in their heavy duties. We have been told that the gentleman under discussion has been treated very badly in New South Wales, so badly that it was necessary to do something for him. I do not think the Commonwealth should be regarded as a sort of benevolent asylum, and I certainly object to make it one at the present time. New South Wales should have dealt out justice to this particular officer, instead of the honorable member for Parramatta bringing him here under his wing, for us to do it. Seeing the department is determined to have an under-secretary, I am not going to vote for the reduction of this particular person's salary. Another feature of the discussion is, that while private secretaries were under discussion, and they all happened to be professional men and lawyers, we found honorable and learned members, getting up and using all their influence to back their particular men as just the men for the positions. But now, when it is an unfortunate gentleman who does not happen to belong to the profession, we do not hear a solitary word of recommendation from those legal members, although some of them have been in Parliament where he has acted for Ministers for -a large number of years. Under the circumstances I will vote against the proposed amendment.

Amendment negatived. ; Sir EDWARD BRADDON (Tasmania). - I would like to ask the Treasurer whether he will give honorable members some opportunity of expressing their opinion as to whether Ministers should draw their members' allowance in addition to their salary.

The right honorable gentleman said yesterday that he wished to get the opinion of honorable members on the subject, and I would be glad to know whether he will afford the necessary opportunity.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- It was suggested by the acting leader of the

Opposition that the proper course would be for some member who disapproves of Ministers carrying out what is clearly the wording of the Constitution, to give notice of motion that Ministers should not draw the members' allowance of £400 a year in addition to their salary. If any honorable member desires to give that notice, the Government will give it precedence in Government time to have it discussed.

Mr A McLEAN

- Would that not be a most ungracious course for a supporter of the Government to take ? I strongly disapprove of it.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- It is a question entirely for the House.

Vote agreed to.

The following votes were agreed to : - Electoral, £20,000 ; Miscellaneous, £98. treasurer.

Proposed vote, £18,496.

Mr. SALMON

(Laanecoorie). - I notice there is an omission in the items, and would like to know if I can move that there be inserted, "Secretary to the Minister at £400 per annum."

Mr. MCDONALD

(Kennedy). - I congratulate the Treasurer on this portion of his Estimates, seeing that the usual private secretary is not provided for.

Sir WILLIAM

MCMILLAN (Wentworth). - Is the £10,000 put down as advance to Treasurer, the amount which the Treasurer intends to take as a rule, or is that amount only for the present ?

Sir George Turner

- It is only for the present. The usual vote will be about £100,000.

Mr WATSON

- I desire to direct the attention of the Treasurer to the rate of wages paid in the Government Printing-office. In connexion with the publication of Hansard a number of temporary hands have been put on, and they are being paid for night work at the rate of one shilling per thousand ens. This is not only an absolutely unfair rate, but is below that paid in the neighbouring State of New South Wales at any rate.

Mr Mauger

- The finding of the Wages Board has not been published yet.

Mr WATSON

- But the Wages Board does not deal with the Government Printingoffice.

Mr Mauger

- Then we ought to insist that the Act should apply to the Government Printing-office.

Mr WATSON

- I am inclined to that idea, but in the meantime I would like the Treasurer to look into the matter. I do not want to delay the committee by giving details, but shall be very glad to supply these later on. I would like the Treasurer, while dealing in a fairly liberal fashion with officers appointed under these Estimates, to see that those who do the mechanical work get something like fair treatment. The amount set down to the Government Printer is certainly not large, but I presume it applies only to the 30th June.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- That is all. If the honorable member will kindly let me have any information I will look into the matter and discuss it with him and with the Government Printer.

Mr. MAUGER

(Melbourne Ports).- I would like the Treasurer to go still further, and, as soon as the Wages Board publish their finding, to apply to the Government Printing office what it is proposed to apply to every printing establishment in Victoria. It is only fair and just to the men working for the Commonwealth that this should be carried out.

Mr. MCDONALD

(Kennedy). - The chairman has put this vote in one sum ; but I understood that all votes were to be put in divisions.

Honorable Members. - Let us get home.

Mr MCDONALD

- If this vote is to be carried as a whole, the other votes should be carried as a whole also. The method may suit the Government, but it will not suit us. "

The CHAIRMAN

- The reason for submitting the previous votes in divisions was that they covered several pages, but in this instance the divisions are all on one page, and every item is subject to discussion, just the same as though the vote were put in divisions.

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Mr MCDONALD

-If you give that as a ruling, I shall move that your ruling be disagreed to. You set down the procedure yourself in the early part of the discussion, and now you desire to change. The Estimates will be got through just as quickly by putting them in divisions, and it is just as well for us to follow that particular course.

The CHAIRMAN

- I have not the slightest objection.

Vote, put in divisions, and agreed to. ' minister for trade and customs.

Proposed vote, £31,523.

Mr O'MALLEY

- This being the Estimate of expenditure under the heading of Trade and Customs, and my old chief, Mr. C. C. Kingston, being the head of that department, would it not be possible to put in a secretary for him ?

Mr PIESSE

- Under the title in the first column we see "Expenditure solely for the maintenance or continuance as at the time of transfer of departments transferred to the Commonwealth." In the event of new appointments in these departments, how would the charge be made 1 Would it be made to the particular State in which an appointment occurs, or would that be a new appointment charged pro rata among the people of the Commonwealth ? I understand that officers so taken over continue their salaries, and that the salaries would be chargeable under the terms of the Constitution to the State in the bookkeeping period, as salaries paid in the State for the maintenance of the department as at the time of transfer. But if a new appointment be made - 1 do not know whether there is any case of the kind on the Estimates - in that State in connexion with the particular department, would it be so treated, or would it be divided as a new expenditure amongst all the population of the Commonwealth.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The question that my honorable and learned friend has raised is a most difficult one to determine. I have been trying to think what would be a fair way of dealing with the subject, but up to the present time I have not been able to come to a decision. When introducing the Estimates for the next financial year, I will be able to give a full explanation of what may be done. It might be possible, and I have an idea it would be fair, just to take the actual expenditure at the time of the transfer, and say that anything extra on that should be considered as new expenditure. Another way is to try and pick out the various items of expenditure, but that would be difficult. I am giving the matter very careful consideration. I have had to deal with one or two matters not relating to salaries or anything like that, and when making the financial statement next, year I shall be able to lay before the House for ratification a scheme dealing with this matter in a fair and equitable manner. .

Sir WILLIAM

MCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I do not want any particular answer just now, but I would like to ask the Minister of Trade and Customs whether his attention has been drawn to the question of what is net Customs revenue. By statisticians, net Customs revenue is generally looked on as the revenue after deducting everything.

Mr Kingston

- Refunds and drawbacks.

Sir William Mcmillan

- it is a question which may affect . the right honorable gentleman's finances in dealing with the distribution of the surplus, whether net revenue ought not to be revenue after deducting the £300,000 or £400,000 expenditure for the Customs department. I only draw the .right honorable gentleman's attention to this matter.

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

. - I take it that the net revenue, as applied to Customs duty, means the gross revenue, less refunds and drawbacks. As\* to the question of the deduction of expenditure, the Constitution Act makes provision for the expenditure which is incurred in connexion with each particular State, on the basis referred to.

Sir William McMillan

- That is not quite my point.

Mr CONROY

- I suppose it would be impossible to get from the Treasurer the moneys drawn.

Sir George Turner

- I have them all, and could give them, but it would be very wearying.

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Mr CONROY

- I am glad to see that there is an item here of £123 for expenses in connexion with the Federal Patents Conference in Melbourne. I shall be pleased to know whether the results of that gathering will tend to

hasten the day when we shall have uniform patent laws throughout the Commonwealth?

Mr. KINGSTON

(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - Of course, the idea with reference to this Patents Conference and other conferences is that the Ministry shall be guided by official reports in the preparation of legislation, which will be introduced as soon as possible.

Vote agreed to. miscellaneous.

Proposed vote, £123.

Mr. RONALD

(Southern Melbourne). I have been informed that there is a discrepancy between the salaries paid to the Custom-house officers in New South Wales and those paid to officers in Victoria, and I would like to know if it is the intention of the executive of this department to level up or level down in regard to these salaries? The Victorian men are naturally anxious that they should be raised to the New South Wales standard.

Mr Thomas

- That is not a fact, is it?

Mr RONALD

- It is a fact that these officers desire uniformity, and I would like the assurance of the Minister controlling this department that the salaries will be made uniform. I have been consistently fighting against high salaries, but now that we have got to the irreducible minimum, I think we might start to level up.

Mr. KINGSTON

(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - The matter is one of very considerable difficulty, affecting as it does not only this department, but other departments which have been taken over from the different States. There are patent obstacles in the way of levelling down, and it may be well supposed that no Ministry would care to undertake anything of that sort. At the same time there are difficulties in the way of levelling up. Honorable members now see both sides of the question to which the Government intend to direct attention, so that they may come to a conclusion as early as they possibly can.

Mr. GLYNN

(South Australia). - I would ask the Minister for Trade and Customs if he has any objection to giving us an idea as to what the Government propose to do on the day of the introduction of the Tariff? Do they intend to collect at once, and if so, what will be the effect as regards the collection between the States? I know that nothing amounting to a disclosure of the Tariff can be thought of. But if we follow the custom adopted in England, the moment the Tariff is declared the collection will take place. No harm can be done by telling the people of Australia what custom the Ministry intend to pursue upon the introduction of the Tariff. There will be no knowledge conveyed that would not have been conveyed to the people of Australia prior to federation.

The CHAIRMAN

- Will the honorable member permit me to point out that the item before the committee is "Expenses in connexion with the Federal Patents Office in Melbourne, £123." The honorable member cannot discuss the Tariff upon that item.

Mr GLYNN

- Is it not under the heading "Minister for Trade and Customs"?

The CHAIRMAN

- Yes, but the sum of £123 only is before the committee. The amount of £31,400 has been already voted..

Mr GLYNN

- I merely desire to ask if the Minister for Trade and Customs, will put the people of Australia in exactly the same position as they would have occupied prior to federation. They would have known prior to federation what custom was to be pursued on the declaration of the duties. By telling us that, there will be no disclosure which would not have been made had federation not taken place, but at present we do not know what procedure will be followed on the introduction of the Tariff. Is the collection to take place at once, and is that act going to be interpreted by the Ministry as the imposition of duties? If it is, it follows by consequence that intercolonial free-trade will be regarded by the Ministry- at all events, if not by the State Treasurers, as having started from the moment of the imposition of these duties. .

Mr Crouch

- Does the honorable and learned member not think that the less the trading community know of what is to be done the less likely they are to depart from the normal conditions of business ?

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Mr GLYNN

- I am not so sure of that. Had federation not taken place they would have known. It would be a convenience to the people of the States to know exactly what course the Government intend to pursue. This information will not involve the slightest disclosure as to the character of the Tariff. I will not press the matter very much, but I ask the Minister what is the policy of the Government in this connexion, if they have any policy ?

Mr KINGSTON

(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - I should be very glad to give the information, but for the fact that we recognise that this question is one of so delicate and grave a nature that it does not seem to be desirable to discuss it at this moment and in this way. Under the circumstances, I am sure that the honorable member will see that the suggestion which he has thrown out was the right one, and that is the one upon which we propose to act.

Vote agreed to. minister for defence.

Proposed vote, £163,825.

Mr. WATSON

(Bland.)- Some figures on the face of this estimate appear to me to be deserving of explanation, as they certainly look peculiar at the present time. I see set down for the State of New South Wales - I presume up till- the end of the half year - a sum of £26,000, while the expenditure in the State of Victoria is set down at £55,000, or more than double that amount.

Sir George Turner

- The expenditure in Victoria is at a heavier rate, in addition to which this amount was occasioned chiefly by the large influx of members to new rifle clubs. There are over 20,000 members of these clubs, and this expenditure has been incurred in the purchase of ammunition and new rifles. It is paid by the State of Victoria.

Mr WATSON

- Then why are we voting it?

Mr Barton

- We must vote our Estimates; but this expenditure is provided for in the Constitution Act.

Sir George Turner

- If the honorable member will allow me I shall be pleased to explain. Under the Constitution Act we had a right to pay out of Orders in Council up till a month after the assembling of the Federal Parliament. All expenditure for transferred departments is charged against the States, so that this large expenditure is charged against and is paid by the State of Victoria. The other expenditure is shown in a separate column. The other expenditure is distributed over the Commonwealth according to population, but this particular item is paid by the State of Victoria.

Mr WATSON

- How long will that continue ?

Sir George Turner

- For a period of five years - during the bookkeeping period. Mr.WATSON. - I had overlooked the bookkeeping aspect of the question. Before sitting down I would like the right honorable gentleman who has control of this department to give the House some idea of the policy that is going to prevail in respect of defence. Before we pass any vote of this description we ought to know generally the lines which it is proposed to follow in regard to the expenditure. In this connexion we might well be told the plan upon which the defences are to be based. I should like an intimation as to whether the Minister for Defence intends to establish - as was suggested by a question asked by an honorable member a few days ago - a local ammunition factory and a small arms factory under the control and owned by the Commonwealth Government. I think that two or three items of that sort require some explanation by the Minister.

Minister for Defence

Sir JOHN FORREST

- The policy of the Government in regard to defence will be regulated by the Bill which we propose to

introduce in a very few days. That Bill is being carefully prepared, and I hope that in a very few days it will be laid upon the table of the House. . In regard to a local ammunition factory, I may observe that there is already such a factory in existence near Flemington.

Mr Watson

- That is of no value.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- It is under an agreement with the Victorian Government, which, of course, the Commonwealth Government have had to take over. The agreement with the company does not expire for thirteen years, I believe. I do not think there is anything to regret in regard to that, because it is a very good institution. It is a very good thing for Australia that we have a factory here for the manufacture of ammunition.

Mr Watson

- It would be much better to spend money upon a factory of our own.

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- I do not think there would be any difficulty about that, if it were considered advisable. These people are generally open to do business upon terms. However, that matter is under consideration. At the present time nothing definite has been done in regard to it. There is no doubt that the supply of ammunition is one of the most important in connexion with defence, and for my own part I should be very glad to see Australia in a position to make its own ammunition. That, however, is a big order at the present time, and one to which we will have to give careful consideration. But certainly that is the goal to which I would like our efforts to be directed.

Mr Thomas

- Would the right honorable gentleman tell the House what has been done in connexion with the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I am not prepared to do that at the present time, but as soon as I am I shall only be too glad to communicate the . information.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I think that this would be a convenient time for the Minister for Defence to give us some information about the arrangement between this ammunition factory and the Victorian Government, which the Commonwealth Government have to take over. It is rather interesting to find that an agreement which has thirteen years to run is to be transferred to the Commonwealth Government.

Sir John Forrest

- I do not think that the arrangement is a bad one.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I think that the Treasurer should tell us what the arrangement is.

Sir George Turner

- I do not recollect its terms just now.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- How much does it render us liable for by way of subsidy ?

Sir George Turner

- We pay for the ammunition that We buy, and we are bound to take, I think, 2,000,000 rounds a year.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- And how much more does this ammunition cost than it could be bought for in England ?

Sir George Turner

-i cannot say.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Will the "Minister for Defence give us that information?

Sir John Forrest

- I shall be glad to lay it on the table.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- We heard a great deal about bounties during the time that the acceptance of the Federal Constitution was being advocated, and I was one of those who said that the Commonwealth would not have to

shoulder any large obligations in regard to bounties. This arrangement did not become public then.

Sir George Turner

- It is a very old arrangement.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Well, we have not heard of it. I shall be glad if the Minister of Defence or the Treasurer will let us know the nature of the arrangement.

Sir John Forrest

- I shall be glad to lay a copy of the arrangement upon the table. I do not think it a disadvantageous one.

Mr. MAUGER

(Melbourne Ports). Might I draw the attention of the Minister of Defence to the fact that we have an Australian squadron which is very rarely seen in Hobson's Bay. I think our children should have a chance of seeing the vessels that we pay for.

Mr Thomas

- Does not the squadron come round here at Cup time ?

Mr. THOMSON (North Sydney).- I should like to ask the Minister of Defence a question in connexion with the rifle clubs. The Minister has stated that the £55,000 of Victorian expenditure, which we are asked to vote, is to be spent largely in giving encouragement to rifle clubs.

Mr Watson

- And a very good thing, too.

Mr THOMSON

- I am of the opinion that these clubs are a very important arm of our defence forces, and that to give encouragement to them will greatly improve our defences. But the concessions and consideration now given are unequal in the different States, and I would ask the Minister if it is his intention to take into consideration at an early date the advisability of equalizing the concessions which are given in regard to railway fares, the amount of ammunition provided, the price of ammunition, and soon? Of course, if the rifle clubs are to be encouraged, the encouragement should be upon the same footing in each of the States.

Sir John Forrest

- That is the opinion which I hold myself. I think that now that we have federation the same rules should apply in regard to rifle clubs, the purchase of ammunition, and other matters, in all the States.

Mr. CONROY

(Werriwa). - I should like to draw the attention of the committee to the seriousness of this proposal to intrust this large sum of money to the Minister for Defence.

Sir George Turner

- The Treasurer will undertake to prevent misappropriation.

Mr CONROY

- Then I shall not detain honorable members in regard to the matter to-night.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I wish to ask the Minister for Defence if he will grant the same facilities to the volunteer companies which have been established on the gold-fields as are granted to the volunteer companies in Perth and in other parts of Western Australia ? I ask this question because some eighteen months ago volunteer companies were formed on the gold-fields of Western Australia, but I do not think they have yet received their uniforms ; and there has been a good deal of grumbling because their military enthusiasm and ardour has been damped by the want of that encouragement to which both the volunteers themselves and the public consider that they are entitled. I do not know if the Minister is aware that the whole of the circumstances connected with the organization of these companies, and I therefore draw his attention to the matter with a view to having them put upon the same basis as other volunteer companies in Western Australia.

Mr. WATSON

(Bland).- I think that we might have had from the Minister for Defence some indication as to who is likely to be appointed to command the military forces of the Commonwealth.

Mr Thomas

- And what salary will be paid to him?



Mr WATSON

- Yes. I do not know what the intentions of the Government are, but the matter is one which requires careful handling, because it seems to me that most of the Australians who went to the Transvaal were able to teach the English officers there the game, and it is a reasonable proposition that there is no great need for importing a red-tape officer to look after our defence forces.

Mr McDonald

- But we must have show and plenty of braid.

Mr WATSON

- In any case the Minister might assure the committee that no appointment will be so far concluded as to fix the rate of salary to be paid until this House has had an opportunity to express an opinion upon the subject.

Mr Tudor

- It will be another temporary appointment.

Mr WATSON

- I am not sure that these appointments will all be temporary. I think that the committee are entitled to some information upon this point, if information is available. In my opinion honorable members might be allowed to express their views as to the amount of salary to be paid. If the Ministry commit the Commonwealth to the payment of a certain salary, by offering the appointment to an officer at that salary, I suppose we shall have to pay the money and look pleasant ; but I think that we might ask the Ministry to "consult the House on an important matter of that kind.

Sir JOHN

FORREST (Swan- Minister for Defence.) - I am not in a position to make- any statement in regard to the appointment of an officer to command the Commonwealth forces, except that if an officer is appointed the Government will have to arrange with him as to what salary he should receive, and will have to take the responsibility for any arrangement that is come to. The appointment will probably be for five years, because we consider that a reasonable period.

Mr McDonald

- Could not the Ministry fix the salary before offering the position to any one ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- This is all a matter of negotiation, and cannot be done in a minute.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Is there any truth in the paragraph that the Government are going to offer a salary of £1,500 a year ?

Mr Barton

- There is no truth in any paragraph that states any amount as the salary to be offered.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- The Government will have to fix the salary, make the appointment, and take the responsibility for its action.

Mr Thomas

- Could not the Ministry ask the House to agree to the proposed salary, and then make the appointment ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- We shall do the best we can for the country, and I do not think that honorable members will be dissatisfied. In reply to what the honorable member for Kalgoorlie has said in reference to the volunteer corps there, I regret that there has been some delay in equipping the corps, and providing them with uniforms, and no doubt the same complaint could be made by similar bodies in other places. This is due to the want of funds. No funds were available in connexion with the appropriations of the various States. If money had been available in Western Australia it would have been expended ; but there was no money available, and the Commonwealth Government could not expend Commonwealth money before getting our Estimates passed. If the Treasurer is as liberal in regard to the defence force as I desire that he shall be, we shall be able to carry out our promises, and I shall not forget the volunteers at Kalgoorlie, where the volunteer movement has been taken up with so much spirit, and which is a place which I desire to encourage in every way.

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Mr KENNEDY

- Did I understand -the Minister for Defence to say that the House will have an opportunity to discuss the whole position of our defence forces when the Bill dealing with defence matters is before us ?

Sir John Forrest

- Yes.

Mr KENNEDY

- If that is so, I shall not detain honorable members now. There are many important matters connected with defence, more particularly those relating to volunteers, to which I should like to draw attention, and in regard to which I think there is a general desire that we should have uniformity throughout the Commonwealth .

Sir John Forrest

- There will be a good opportunity to refer to these matters on the second reading of the Bill.

Mr KENNEDY

- Then I shall not refer to them now.

Mr. MCDONALD

(Kennedy). - Do I understand the Minister to say that before the commanding officer of the forces is appointed, his appointment will be laid before Parliament for approval ?

Sir John Forrest

- No ; that cannot be done.

Mr Thomas

- Why not?

Sir John Forrest

- I do not think it would be desirable.

Mr Barton

- If we do wrong, honorable members can turn us out; and the sooner the better.

Mr Thomas

- That is an unfair position to place us in.

Mr McCay

- Matters of legislation are for honorable members to consider, while matters of administration rest with the Ministry.

Mr MCDONALD

- The Minister might select for the position some military man over whom he had a great deal of influence, and, as he has already threatened to break up the Constitution if we do not give him a railway, he might be tempted to use him in that direction.

Vote agreed to.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL

Proposed vote, £237,700.

Mr TUDOR

- I should like to draw the attention of the Postmaster-General to the fact that in December last an Act was passed by the "Victorian Parliament, one of whose sections provides that -

From the commencement of this Act every officer of the..... Post and Telegraph departments shall be entitled to receive a salary equal to the highest salary then payable to an officer of corresponding position in any Australian colony - provided that that salary does not exceed £156 per annum. There are about 650 persons in the Post and Telegraph department of this State who are entitled to the benefits of that Act, but they have not yet received them. The matter has been referred to, but we have been told that the Public Service Board are considering the ' question. Some men are working for £75, others for £90, and others for £132, when, they are entitled to get £156. It is a peculiar thing to me that under the same Act one officer has received an increase of £200 and another an increase of £54r making his salary £300. Under the same Act when certain officers in the Postal department have received an increase,, the men in the lower paid branches have not. I want to know why it has not been, given. Then there are other workers in the Post-office and Telegraph department. Temporary porters are employed there at less, than the minimum that is given to the permanent hands. I think when temporary men are employed they should receive at least the minimum. These men are working for 5s. a day. They have been compelled to work for it . for the last three months. They have not . received a half-holiday, like the permanent men. They

asked for it during the visit of the Duke of Cornwall and York, but it was not granted. I think they are entitled to the half-holiday just as well as the permanent men. In the case of the temporary telegraph porters the maximum is £84. According to a section of the Act No. 1721 they are entitled to the same salary as is paid in any other State. In New South Wales the salary is considerably higher. I ask the Minister - to urge this matter on the attention of the Public Service Board, in the interests of the lower paid men in this department, and to find out exactly why they cannot receive - the increase they were entitled to by law before they were transferred.

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Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I wish to draw the attention of the Minister - to the fact that there is a difference in the position of the letter sorters. I understand, that in some of the States the letter sorters, are classed as clerks. In New South Wales, they are classed as unskilled labourers, and there is a feeling there that the matter should be brought before the attention of the Postal department, and that they should receive some favorable consideration. Again, in New South Wales a promise was made to the officers in the hot districts. Owing to the severity of the climate in the outlying districts, the officers were promised that they would receive certain allowances, but I believe they have not been paid. I would like to know from the Minister what consideration is to be given to the officers in the hot climates, and if the Federal Government have made any arrangements with the State Governments by which any allowances promised to officers in the outlying hot districts and any emoluments to which they are entitled will be paid.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I think there can be no doubt that any promise made by any of the State Governments to the officers in the departments before they were transferred will be faithfully carried out by the Commonwealth. I have no knowledge of the matters to which the honorable member for Gwydir has referred, but I shall ask my honorable colleague to have everything thoroughly inquired into, and see that whatever promises were made, are carried out. With regard to the matters in Victoria, I am a little more familiar with the situation, as I think I had something to do with Act No. 1721 when it was going through. I can understand why the officers have got their increases, and the men have not. The officers' increases were simple under the reclassification scheme of the Reclassification Board, and there was no difficulty. It was simply a question of fixing the men in certain positions, and the rates of pay were fixed by the report. So far as the men are concerned it is more difficult, because they are entitled to get, up to £156, the maximum rate of pay in any Australian State for a corresponding class of work. It does not follow that a man who is getting £78 is going to get up to £156. He will get whatever the corresponding rate of pay in any other State is if it is higher than he is getting. The object of the Act was to put the men in as good a position as their fellow workers doing the same class of work in any of the States.

Mr Tudor

- They get £250 in Queensland for it.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Some may. I saw the details and tried to work them together, but I found it was a very hard job to make them work in and ascertain what was really the corresponding class of work. I do not know how the matter stands, but I quite agree with my honorable friend that these lower paid men should get the extra remuneration they are entitled to receive at the earliest possible moment because, no doubt they require it much more than those who are getting higher salaries. Under these circumstances, I shall urge on my honorable colleague to expedite the settlement of the question as quickly as he possibly can.

Mr Cruickshank

- What about letter sorters?

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I shall have that matter inquired into. I do not understand how they are classed as unskilled labourers. It seems a curious thing to me.

Mr Tudor

- And the temporary porters.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The whole matter will be inquired into.

Mr. D.

THOMSON (North Sydney). It is hardly correct to say that the letter sorters in New South Wales are classed as unskilled labourers. They are put in the general division. At the same time I quite agree that when many of them are employed in the clerical work of the department to some considerable extent, they will have some reason to claim to be classified as they are in Queensland as belonging to the clerical division.

Proposed vote agreed to.

Resolution reported and agreed to.

Sir GEORGE

TURNER (Balaclava Treasurer). - I am anxious to get this Bill sent away so that it will get to another place and be dealt with in time, because I am absolutely blocked ; I cannot go on paying. In addition to that I have to send warrants which I cannot sign until the Bill becomes law. For instance, to Western Australia and other far off places I have to send warrants, and then they have to be signed by the Governors, which takes some little time. I am anxious that all should be paid as quickly as possible, and that the States especially on the 30th June should be able to get their balance back to the very hour. So far, I have been able to pay the States their balance on the very day it was due, and it is more important that it should be paid on the 30th June than at any other period of the year. Under those circumstances, I trust that the House will help me to get the Bill through. With that object I move -

That the standing orders be suspended in order to enable all steps to be taken to pass a Supply Bill through all its stages without delay.

Question resolved in the affirmative.-

In Committee of Way and Means.

Resolved

- That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the period ending the 30th June, 1901, the sum of £491,882- be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Resolution reported and agreed to.

Bill, founded on resolutions of Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, brought in and read a first and second time.

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Preamble.- Most Gracious Sovereign -

We Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled towards making good the supply which we have cheerfully granted to Your Majesty in this Session of Parliament have resolved to grant unto Your Majesty the sum hereinafter mentioned and do therefore most humbly beseech Your Majesty that it may be enacted : And he it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia in Parliament assembled as follows:-

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Some difficulty arose the other night as to what the form of the enacting part of our Bill should be, and various suggestions were made. the Attorney-General, after considering the question, has come to the conclusion that the proper form will be -

And be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia as follows : -

Therefore I move -

That the words " in Parliament assembled," line 1 3, be omitted.

Mr McCay

- What about the words " in Parliament assembled " in- the earlier- part of the preamble ?

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- That is- all right.

Mr GLYNN

- I would, ask the Treasurer whether he could not recast the first portion of the preamble. It is a very long prefatory statement, and really it is not required.

Sir George Turner

- It is the well known free gift preamble.

Mr GLYNN

-I do not think it fits in with our Constitution. There is not the slightest power in the King to enact under our Constitution. He is part of the Parliament, but he-is not in himself an exacting part. "We should not keep up the fiction which is still kept up in England, and in some of the States, of making His Majesty the enactor, and the Houses of Parliament the parties who beseech that the enactment should be passed as a consideration for supply. It does not fit in with our Constitution, and it is not necessary, and to some extent it is, or ought to be, obsolete as a form of expression. This probably will be the first Act which will be put on our statute-book. I ask whether it would not be quite safe- to put in a few prefatory words? I really think the proper thing to do would be to state that it is enacted by the Parliament of the Commonwealth. Why should we put in the King as distinct from the Senate, or as distinct from the House of Representatives?' The Constitution itself declares that the King, the Senate and the House of Representatives constitute the Parliament of the Commonwealth, and it is the Parliament of the Commonwealth that enacts.

Sir George Turner

- That form would : not always be appropriate.

Mr GLYNN

- With the exception of the provisions of a Bill introduced after a dead-lock between the two Houses, or after a referendum to the people, it would be appropriate ; and in those cases you could state the conditions under which the enactment took place.

Mr McCay

- These words would not be suitable then.

Mr GLYNN

- Neither form would be suitable ; but it would be better at the commencement to adopt words appropriate to our democratic sentiments and conditions as embodied in the Constitution itself.

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Mr BARTON

- The ordinary parliamentary understanding is that the House which has the power of originating supply uses some form such as this which' we have adopted.It is not absolutely necessary that it should 'be in the precatory- form, as the honorable member has pointed' out- though it is a time-honoured form. But the words "and do therefore most humbly beseech your Majesty " may be left out. I have no objection to that. Notwithstanding that the King is an enacting-part of the Parliament, the House of Commons, for the preservation of its own independence, has always endeavoured to preserve the understanding that what is voted by it is a free gift to the Crown. Not that it rises out of any action of the Crown, but constitutionally it is the unsought support of -the Crown- by the Commons. That is the reason for the form that is used here. It may be an inadequate reason, but it enables it to be made known that this is the free gift of the Commons to the Crown. I do not think it would be a wise thing to depart from that;" To leave out the words I have already cited might, however, satisfy the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn.

Mr Glynn

- Certainly. I did not intend my remarks to apply to the first portion, for the very reason given by the Prime Minister.

Amendment (by Mr. Barton) agreed to -

That the words "and do therefore most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted and " be omitted ; and that the word " therefore " be substituted.

Amendment (by Sir GEORGE Turner) agreed to -

That the words ' ' In Parliament assembled " be omitted.

Bill reported with amendments ; report adopted.

Bill read the third time;

Mr SPEAKER

- Under the standing -orders which have been adopted no other motion is necessary.

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00:10:00

House adjourned at 12.10 a.m. (Thursday).