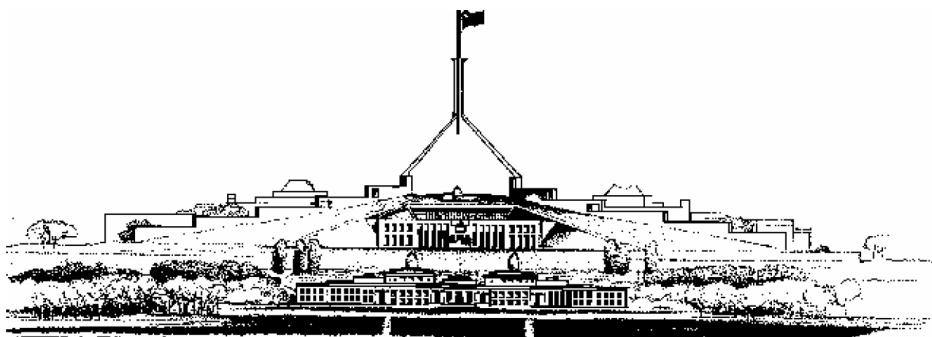




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives

Official Hansard

No. 11, 1945
Wednesday, 14 March 1945

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT
THIRD SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION: FIRST PERIOD.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

His Royal Highness Henry William Frederick Albert, Duke of Gloucester, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, Knight of the Most Illustrious Order of Saint Patrick, Great Master and First or Principal Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, General in the Army, Air Chief Marshal in the Royal Air Force, one of His Majesty's Personal Aides-de-Camp, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia from the 30th January, 1945.

SECOND CURTIN GOVERNMENT.

(SWORN IN ON THE 21ST SEPTEMBER, 1943.)

(CABINET AS FROM THE 2ND FEBRUARY, 1945.)

(¹)Prime Minister and Minister for Defence	The Right Honorable John Curtin. (Mr. Chifley Acting Prime Minister from the 30th April, 1945, to the 2nd July, 1945, during illness of Mr. Curtin and absence abroad of Mr. Forde; Mr. Forde Acting Prime Minister from the 2nd July, 1945, during illness of Mr. Curtin and until his death on the 5th July, 1945; Mr. Beasley Acting Minister for Defence from the 30th April, 1945, during illness of Mr. Curtin and until his death on the 5th July, 1945.)
(¹)Minister for the Army	The Right Honorable Francis Michael Forde. (Senator Fraser acting from the 12th March, 1945, to the 2nd July, 1945, during absence abroad of Mr. Forde.)
(¹)Treasurer	The Right Honorable Joseph Benedict Chifley.
(¹)Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs	The Right Honorable Herbert Vere Evatt, LL.D., D.Litt., K.C. (Mr. Beasley Acting Attorney-General from the 12th March, 1945, to the 23rd July, 1945; Mr. Curtin Acting Minister for External Affairs from the 12th March, 1945, to the 7th May, 1945; and Mr. Makin Acting Minister for External Affairs from the 8th May, 1945, to the 23rd July, 1945, during absence abroad of Dr. Evatt.)
(¹)Vice-President of the Executive Council	The Honorable John Albert Beasley.
(¹)Minister for the Navy, Minister for Munitions and Minister for Aircraft Production	The Honorable Norman John Oswald Makin. (Senator Cameron acting from the 5th March to the 18th April, 1945, during illness of Mr. Makin.)
Minister for Trade and Customs	Senator the Honorable Richard Valentine Keane.
Minister for Labour and National Service	The Honorable Edward James Holloway.
(¹)Minister for Air and Minister for Civil Aviation	The Honorable Arthur Samuel Drakeford.
Minister for Commerce and Agriculture	The Honorable William James Scully.
Minister for Supply and Shipping	Senator the Honorable William Patrick Ashley.
(¹)Minister for Post-war Reconstruction and Minister in charge of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (also Minister for War Organization of Industry to the 19th February, 1945)	The Honorable John Johnstone Dedman.
Minister for the Interior	Senator the Honorable Joseph Silver Collings.
Minister for Transport and Minister for External Territories	The Honorable Edward John Ward.
Minister for Health and Minister for Social Services	Senator the Honorable James Mackintosh Fraser.
Minister for Repatriation and Minister in charge of War Service Homes	The Honorable Charles William Frost.
Minister for Home Security and Minister for Works	The Honorable Hubert Peter Lazzarini.
Postmaster-General	Senator the Honorable Donald Cameron.
Minister for Information	The Honorable Arthur Augustus Calwell.

(¹) War Cabinet.

For designations of Ministers prior to the 2nd February, 1945, see Volume 179.

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT—*continued.*

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FORDE GOVERNMENT.

(SWORN IN ON THE 6TH JULY, 1945.)

(¹) Prime Minister and Minister for the Army ..	The Right Honorable Francis Michael Forde.
(¹) Treasurer ..	The Right Honorable Joseph Benedict Chifley.
(¹) Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs ..	The Right Honorable Herbert Vere Evatt, LL.D., D.Litt., K.C.
(¹) Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister for Defence ..	The Honorable John Albert Beasley.
(¹) Minister for the Navy, Minister for Munitions and Minister for Aircraft Production ..	The Honorable Norman John Oswald Makin.
Minister for Trade and Customs ..	Senator the Honorable Richard Valentine Keane.
Minister for Labour and National Service ..	The Honorable Edward James Holloway.
(¹) Minister for Air and Minister for Civil Aviation ..	The Honorable Arthur Samuel Drakeford.
Minister for Commerce and Agriculture ..	The Honorable William James Scully.
Minister for Supply and Shipping ..	Senator the Honorable William Patrick Ashlēy.
(¹) Minister for Post-war Reconstruction and Minister in charge of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research ..	The Honorable John Johnstone Dedman.
Minister for the Interior ..	Senator the Honorable Joseph Silver Collings.
Minister for Transport and Minister for External Territories ..	The Honorable Edward John Ward.
Minister for Health and Minister for Social Services ..	Senator the Honorable James Mackintosh Fraser.
Minister for Repatriation and Minister in charge of War Service Homes ..	The Honorable Charles William Frost.
Minister for Home Security and Minister for Works ..	The Honorable Hubert Peter Lazzarini.
Postmaster-General ..	Senator the Honorable Donald Cameron.
Minister for Information ..	The Honorable Arthur Augustus Calwell.

(¹) War Cabinet.

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT—*continued.*

CHIFLEY GOVERNMENT.

(SWORN IN ON THE 13TH JULY, 1945.)

(¹)Prime Minister and Treasurer	The Right Honorable Joseph Benedict Chifley.
(¹)Minister for the Army (and Deputy Prime Minister)	The Right Honorable Francis Michael Forde.
(¹)Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs	The Right Honorable Herbert Vere Evatt, LL.D. D.Litt., K.C. (Mr. Beasley Acting Attorney-General, and Mr. Makin Acting Minister for External Affairs, from the 13th July to the 23rd July, 1945, and from the 4th September, 1945, during absences abroad of Dr. Evatt.)
(¹)Minister for Defence	The Honorable John Albert Beasley.
(¹)Minister for the Navy, Minister for Munitions and Minister for Aircraft Production	The Honorable Norman John Oswald Makin.
(¹)Minister for Trade and Customs	Senator the Honorable Richard Valentine Keane.
Minister for Labour and National Service	The Honorable Edward James Holloway.
(¹)Minister for Air and Minister for Civil Aviation	The Honorable Arthur Samuel Drakeford.
Minister for Commerce and Agriculture	The Honorable William James Scully. (Mr. Forde acting from the 31st July to the 2nd October, 1945, during illness of Mr. Scully.)
Minister for Supply and Shipping	Senator the Honorable William Patrick Ashley.
(¹)Minister for Post-war Reconstruction and Minister in charge of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	The Honorable James Johnstone Dedman.
Vice-President of the Executive Council	Senator the Honorable Joseph Silver Collings.
Minister for Transport and Minister for External Territories	The Honorable Edward John Ward.
Minister for Health and Minister for Social Services	Senator the Honorable James Mackintosh Fraser, (Senator Keane acting from the 25th August, 1945, during absence abroad of Senator Fraser.)
Minister for Repatriation	The Honorable Charles William Frost.
Minister for Works and Housing and Minister for Home Security	The Honorable Herbert Peter Lazzarini.
Postmaster-General	Senator the Honorable Donald Cameron.
Minister for Immigration and Minister for Information	The Honorable Arthur Augustus Calwell.
Minister for the Interior and Minister assisting the Minister for Works and Housing	The Honorable Herbert Victor Johnson.

(*¹) War Cabinet.

AUSTRALIAN ADVISORY WAR COUNCIL.

Government Representatives	The Right Honorable J. Curtin (until his death on 5th July, 1945), the Right Honorable J. B. Chifley (from the 14th March, 1945), the Right Honorable F. M. Forde, the Right Honorable H. V. Evatt, LL.D., D.Litt., K.C., the Honorable J. A. Beasley, the Honorable N. J. O. Makin; the Honorable A. S. Drakeford, during absence abroad of Mr. Forde and Dr. Evatt; and from the 2nd May, 1945, to the 2nd July, 1945, the Honorable J. J. Dedman, during illness of Mr. Curtin and absence abroad of Mr. Forde.
Non-Government Representatives	The Right Honorable A. W. Fadden, the Right Honorable W. M. Hughes, C.H., K.C., the Right Honorable Sir Earle Page, G.C.M.G., C.H., the Honorable P. C. Spender, K.C., and the Honorable J. McEwen.

(The Council ceased to function on the 30th August, 1945.)

THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE.

(FROM THE 1ST JULY, 1944.)

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION: FIRST PERIOD.

President—Senator the Honorable Gordon Brown.

Chairman of Committees—Senator Benjamin Courtice.

Temporary Chairmen of Committees—Senators Stanley Kerin Amour, James Jarvist Arnold, William Edward Aylett, Walter Jackson Cooper, M.B.E., and the Honorable Herbert Hays.

Leader of the Opposition—Senator the Honorable George McLeay.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—Senator the Honorable John William Leckie.

Amour, Stanley Kerin†	New South Wales
Armstrong, John Ignatius†	New South Wales
Arnold, James Jarvist†	New South Wales
Ashley, Hon. William Patrick†	New South Wales
Aylett, William Edward†	Tasmania
Brand, Charles Henry, C.B., C.M.G., C.V.O., D.S.O.†	Victoria
Brown, Hon. Gordon†	Queensland
Cameron, Hon. Donald†	Victoria
Clothier, Robert Ernest‡	Western Australia
Collett, Hon. Herbert Brayley, C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.†	Western Australia
Collings, Hon. Joseph Silver†	Queensland
Cooper, Walter Jackson, M.B.E.†	Queensland
Courtice, Benjamin†	Queensland
Crawford, Hon. Thomas William†	Queensland
Finlay, Alexander†	South Australia
Foll, Hon. Hattie Spencer†	Queensland
Fraser, Hon. James Mackintosh†	Western Australia
Gibson, Hon. William Gerrard†	Victoria
Grant, Donald MacLennan†	New South Wales
Hayes, Hon. John Blyth, C.M.G.†	Tasmania
Hays, Hon. Herbert†	Tasmania
Keane, Hon. Richard Valentine†	Victoria
Lamp, Charles Adcock†	Tasmania
Large, William James†	New South Wales
Leckie, Hon. John William†	Victoria
MacDonald, Hon. Allan Nicoll†	Western Australia
McKenna, Nicholas Edward‡	Tasmania
McLachlan, James†	South Australia
McLeay, Hon. George†	South Australia
(*) Mattner, Edward William, M.C., D.C.M., M.M.†	South Australia
Nash, Richard Harry†	Western Australia
Nicholls, Theophilus Martin†	South Australia
O'Flaherty, Sidney Wainman†	South Australia
Sampson, Burford, D.S.O., V.D.†	Tasmania
Tangney, Dorothy Margaret†	Western Australia
(†) Uppill, Oliver†	South Australia

(*) Resigned, the 16th September, 1944.

(*) Elected to casual vacancy, the 10th October, 1944.

Dates of Retirement of Senators—† The 30th June, 1947. ‡ The 30th June, 1950.

ERRATUM.

Add to list of names of members of the Senate in Vols. 179 and 181:—

Sheehan, James Michael‡ Victoria

THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION: FIRST PERIOD.

Speaker—The Honorable John Solomon Rosevear.

Chairman of Committees—William James Frederick Riordan.

Temporary Chairmen of Committees—The Honorable Joseph Palmer Abbott, M.C., Herbert Claude Barnard, Joseph James Clark, the Honorable James Allan Guy, William Joseph Hutchinson, George William Martens, Daniel Mulcahy, George James Rankin, D.S.O., V.D., Rupert Sumner Ryan, C.M.G., D.S.O., and David Oliver Watkins.

Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—The Right Honorable Robert Gordon Menzies, K.C.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—The Honorable Eric John Harrison.

Leader of the Australian Country Party—The Right Honorable Arthur William Fadden.

Deputy Leader of the Australian Country Party—The Honorable John McEwen.

Abbott, Hon. Joseph Palmer, M.C.	New England (N.S.W.)
Adermann, Charles Frederick	Maranoa (Q.)
Anthony, Hon. Hubert Lawrence	Richmond (N.S.W.)
Barnard, Herbert Claude	Bass (T.)
Beasley, Hon. John Albert	West Sydney (N.S.W.)
(*) Beazley, Kim Edward	Fremantle (W.A.)
Blain, Adair Macalister	N.T.
Bowden, George James, M.C.	Gippsland (V.)
Breen, John Patrick	Calare (N.S.W.)
Brennan, Hon. Frank	Batman (V.)
Bryson, William George	Bourke (V.)
Burke, Thomas Patrick	Perth (W.A.)
Calwell, Hon. Arthur Augustus	Melbourne (V.)
Cameron, Hon. Archie Galbraith	Barker (S.A.)
Chambers, Cyril	Adelaide (S.A.)
(*) Chifley, Rt. Hon. Joseph Benedict	Macquarie (N.S.W.)
Clark, Joseph James	Darling (N.S.W.)
Coles, Arthur William	Henty (V.)
Conelan, William Patrick	Griffith (Q.)
Corser, Bernard Henry	Wide Bay (Q.)
(*) Curtin, Rt. Hon. John	Fremantle (W.A.)
Daly, Frederick Michael	Martin (N.S.W.)
Dedman, Hon. John Johnstone	Corio (V.)
Drakeford, Hon. Arthur Samuel	Maribyrnong (V.)
Evatt, Rt. Hon. Herbert Vere, LL.D., D.Litt., K.C.	Barton (N.S.W.)
Fadden, Rt. Hon. Arthur William	Darling Downs (Q.)
Falstein, Sydney Max	Watson (N.S.W.)
Forde, Rt. Hon. Francis Michael	Capricornia (Q.)
Francis, Hon. Josiah	Moreton (Q.)
Fraser, Allan Duncan	Eden-Monaro (N.S.W.)
Frost, Hon. Charles William	Franklin (T.)
Fuller, Arthur Neiberding	Hume (N.S.W.)
Gaha, Dr. John Francis	Denison (T.)
Guy, Hon. James Allan	Wilmot (T.)
Hadley, James William	Lilley (Q.)
Harrison, Hon. Eric John	Wentworth (N.S.W.)
Haylen, Leslie Clement	Parkes (N.S.W.)
Holloway, Hon. Edward James	Melbourne Ports (V.)
Holt, Hon. Harold Edward	Fawkner (V.)
Hughes, Rt. Hon. William Morris, C.H., K.C.	North Sydney (N.S.W.)
Hutchinson, William Joseph	Deakin (V.)
James, Rowland	Hunter (N.S.W.)
Johnson, Hon. Herbert Victor	Kalgoorlie (W.A.)
Langtry, Joseph Ignatius	Riverina (N.S.W.)
Lawson, Hon. George	Brisbane (Q.)
Lazzarini, Hon. Hubert Peter	Werriwa (N.S.W.)

(¹) Appointed to Privy Council, the 14th June, 1945.

(²) Died, the 5th July, 1945.

(³) Elected, the 18th August, 1945.

THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—*continued.*

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Lemmon, Nelson	Forrest (W.A.)
Lyons, Dame Enid Muriel, G.B.E.	Darwin (T.)
Makin, Hon. Norman John Oswald	Hindmarsh (S.A.)
Martens, George William	Herbert (Q.)
McDonald, Hon. Allan McKenzie	Corangamite (V.)
McEwen, Hon. John	Indi (V.)
McLeod, Donald	Wannon (V.)
Menzies, Rt. Hon. Robert Gordon, K.C.	Kooyong (V.)
Morgan, Charles Albert Aaron	Reid (N.S.W.)
Mountjoy, Donald Alfred	Swan (W.A.)
Mulcahy, Daniel	Lang (N.S.W.)
Page, Rt. Hon. Sir Earle Christmas Grafton, G.C.M.G., C.H.	Cowper (N.S.W.)
Pollard, Hon. Reginald Thomas	Ballaarat (V.)
Rankin, George James, D.S.O., V.D.	Bendigo (V.)
Riordan, William James Frederick	Kennedy (Q.)
Rosevear, Hon. John Solomon	Dalley (N.S.W.)
Russell, Edgar Hughes Deg	Grey (S.A.)
Ryan, Rupert Sumner, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Flinders (V.)
Soullin, Rt. Hon. James Henry	Yarra (V.)
Scully, Hon. William James	Gwydir (N.S.W.)
Sheehan, Thomas	Cook (N.S.W.)
Sheehy, Thomas Neil	Boothby (S.A.)
Smith, Albert Edward	Wakefield (S.A.)
Spender, Hon. Percy Claude, K.C.	Warringah (N.S.W.)
Stewart, Hon. Sir Frederick Harold	Parramatta (N.S.W.)
Ward, Hon. Edward John	East Sydney (N.S.W.)
Watkins, David Oliver	Newcastle (N.S.W.)
White, Hon. Thomas Walter, D.F.C., V.D.	Balaclava (V.)
Williams, Thomas Francois	Robertson (N.S.W.)
Wilson, Alex.	Wimmera (V.)

THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION.

JOINT.

BROADCASTING.—Senator Amour (Chairman), Senator Herbert Hays, Senator Nash, Mr. Bowden, Mr. Bryson, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Francis, Mr. Guy, and Mr. Watkins.

HOUSE.—The President (Chairman), Senator Amour, Senator Aylett, Senator Brand, Senator Cooper, Senator James McLachlan, Senator Nash, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Corser, Mr. Falstein, Mr. Francis, Mr. Holt, Mr. Mulcahy, and Mr. Watkins.

LIBRARY.—Mr. Speaker (Chairman), The President, Senator Armstrong, Senator Collett, Senator J. B. Hayes, Senator Lamp, Senator Sampson, Senator Tangney, Mr. Abbott, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Coles, Mr. Hutchinson, Dame Enid Lyons, and Mr. Williams.

PRINTING.—Mr. Conelan (Chairman), Senator Arnold, Senator Cooper, Senator Courtice, Senator Gibson, Senator J. B. Hayes, Senator MacDonald, Senator Tangney, Mr. Adermann, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Haylen, Mr. Martens, Mr. McDonald, and Mr. Ryan.

PUBLIC WORKS.—Mr. James (Chairman), Senator Aylett, Senator Brand, Senator Lamp, Mr. Conelan, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Mulcahy, Mr. Rankin, and Sir Frederick Stewart.

SOCIAL SECURITY.—Mr. Barnard (Chairman), Senator Cooper, Senator Foll, Senator Tangney, Mr. Daly, Mr. Haylen, and Mr. Ryan.

WAR EXPENDITURE.—Mr. McLeod (Chairman), Senator Large, Senator Sampson, Mr. Holt, Mr. Johnson, (discharged, the 26th July, 1945), Mr. Lawson, Mr. Rankin, and Mr. Russell (appointed, the 26th July, 1945).

SENATE.

DISPUTED RETURNS AND QUALIFICATIONS.—Senator Armstrong, Senator Clothier, Senator Collings, Senator Gibson, Senator Mattner, Senator O'Flaherty, and Senator Sampson.

REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES.—Senator Large (Chairman), Senator Aylett, Senator Cooper, Senator Herbert Hays, Senator MacDonald, Senator Nash, and Senator Tangney.

STANDING ORDERS.—The President (Chairman), the Chairman of Committees, Senator Cameron, Senator Crawford, Senator Herbert Hays, Senator Keane, Senator Lamp, Senator James McLachlan, and Senator Sheehan.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

PRIVILEGES.—Mr. Clark, Dr. Evatt, Mr. Forde, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Hutchinson, Mr. McEwen, and Mr. Pollard.

STANDING ORDERS.—Mr. Speaker (Chairman), the Prime Minister, the Chairman of Committees, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Beasley, Mr. Fadden, Mr. Makin, and Sir Earle Page.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS.

SENATE.

Clerk—J. E. Edwards.

Clerk-Assistant—R. H. C. Loof.

Usher of the Black Rod—W. I. Emerton.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Clerk—F. C. Green, M.C.

Clerk-Assistant—A. A. Tregear.

Second Clerk-Assistant—S. F. Chubb.

Sergeant-at-Arms—H. A. Dodd.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING STAFF.

Principal Reporter—G. H. Romans.

Second Reporter—A. P. Adams.

LIBRARY.

Librarian—K. Binns.

Assistant Librarian—H. L. White.

JOINT HOUSE.

Secretary—Until the 2nd August, 1945, A. A. Tregear; from the 2nd August, 1945, R. H. C. Loof.

THE ACTS OF THE SESSION.

APPROPRIATION ACT 1945-46 (No. 33 of 1945)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum for the service of the year ending the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and forty-six, and to appropriate the supplies granted by that year.

APPROPRIATION ACT (No. 2) 1944-45 (No. 8 of 1945)—

An Act to grant and apply an additional sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and forty-five, and to appropriate such sum.

APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) ACT 1945-46 (No. 34 of 1945)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum for the service of the year ending the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and forty-six, for the purposes of Additions, New Works, Buildings, &c., and to appropriate that sum.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL AIRLINES ACT 1945 (No. 31 of 1945)—

An Act to provide for the Establishment and Operation of National Airline Services by the Commonwealth, and for other purposes.

BANKING ACT 1945 (No. 14 of 1945)—

An Act to regulate Banking, to make provision for the Protection of the Currency and of the Public Credit of the Commonwealth, and for other purposes.

BANKRUPTCY ACT 1945 (No. 42 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Bankruptcy Act* 1924-1933.

CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS ACT 1945 (No. 32 of 1945)—

An Act to approve the Charter of the United Nations.

CHILD ENDOWMENT ACT 1945 (No. 10 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Child Endowment Act* 1941-1942.

COMMONWEALTH BANK ACT 1945 (No. 13 of 1945)—

An Act relating to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia, and for other purposes.

COMMONWEALTH ELECTORAL (WAR-TIME) ACT 1945 (No. 12 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Act* 1940-1944.

COMMONWEALTH INSCRIBED STOCK ACT 1945 (No. 26 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Inscribed Stock Act* 1911-1943.

COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1945 (No. 29 of 1945)—

An Act to provide for the appointment to or employment in the Commonwealth Service of certain State Employees, and for other purposes.

COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC SERVICE ACT (No. 2) 1945 (No. 43 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Public Service Act* 1922-1943, as amended by the *Commonwealth Public Service Act* 1945 and by the *Re-establishment and Employment Act* 1945, and for other purposes.

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT ACT 1945 (No. 44 of 1945)—

An Act to authorize the Execution by or on behalf of the Commonwealth of an Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States in relation to Housing, and for other purposes.

DARWIN LANDS ACQUISITION ACT 1945 (No. 24 of 1945)—

An Act to authorize the acquisition by the Commonwealth, for certain purposes, of land in the Northern Territory of Australia comprised in the Town of Darwin and its environs, and for other purposes.

DROUGHT RELIEF ACT 1945 (No. 17 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *States Grants (Drought Relief) Act* 1944, and for other purposes.

EDUCATION ACT 1945 (No. 55 of 1945)—

An Act to establish a Commonwealth Office of Education and a Universities Commission, to provide for the University Training of Discharged Members of the Forces, to provide for Financial Assistance to University Students, and for other purposes.

HIGH COMMISSIONER ACT 1945 (No. 54 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *High Commissioner Act* 1909-1940.

HOSPITAL BENEFITS ACT 1945 (No. 47 of 1945)—

An Act relating to Hospital Benefits, and for other purposes.

INCOME TAX ACT 1945 (No. 5 of 1945)—

An Act to impose a Tax upon Incomes.

INCOME TAX ACT (No. 2) 1945 (No. 38 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Income Tax Act* 1945.

THE ACTS OF THE SESSION—continued.

INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT 1945 (No. 4 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act* 1936–1944.

INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 2) 1945 (No. 37 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act* 1936–1944 as amended by the *Income Tax Assessment Act* 1945.

INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS APPROPRIATION ACT 1945 (No. 6 of 1945)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum for Invalid and Old-age Pensions.

INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS ACT 1945 (No. 7 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act* 1908–1944.

LIFE INSURANCE ACT 1945 (No. 28 of 1945)—

An Act relating to Life Insurance and other matters.

LOAN ACT 1945 (No. 19 of 1945)—

An Act to authorize the Raising and Expending of a certain Sum of Money.

LOAN (HOUSING) ACT 1945 (No. 45 of 1945)—

An Act to authorize the Raising of Moneys to be advanced to the States for the purposes of Housing.

MATRIMONIAL CAUSES ACT 1945 (No. 22 of 1945)—

An Act relating to Matrimonial Causes.

MOTOR VEHICLES MANUFACTURE LEGISLATION REPEAL ACT 1945 (No. 1 of 1945)—

An Act to repeal the *Motor Vehicle Engine Bounty Act* 1939 and *Motor Vehicles Agreement Act* 1940, and for other purposes.

NATIONAL DEBT SINKING FUND ACT 1945 (No. 27 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *National Debt Sinking Fund Act* 1923–1934.

NATIONAL WELFARE FUND ACT 1945 (No. 41 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *National Welfare Fund Act* 1943, and for other purposes.

PAPUA-NEW GUINEA PROVISIONAL ADMINISTRATION ACT 1945 (No. 20 of 1945)—

An Act to provide for the provisional administration of the Territory of Papua and that portion of the Territory of New Guinea no longer in enemy occupation.

PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS ACT 1945 (No. 35 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Pharmaceutical Benefits Act* 1944.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT AND EMPLOYMENT ACT 1945 (No. 11 of 1945)—

An Act to provide for the Re-establishment in Civil Life of Members of the Forces, for facilitating their Employment, and for other purposes.

SALES TAX (EXEMPTIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS) ACT 1945 (No. 36 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Act* 1935–1944.

SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY RESEARCH ACT 1945 (No. 25 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Science and Industry Research Act* 1920–1939.

SEAT OF GOVERNMENT SUPREME COURT ACT 1945 (No. 57 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Seat of Government Supreme Court Act* 1933–1935.

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRIBUTION ASSESSMENT ACT 1945 (No. 39 of 1945)—

An Act relating to the Imposition, Assessment and Collection of a Social Services Contribution.

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRIBUTION ACT 1945 (No. 40 of 1945)—

An Act to impose a Social Services Contribution.

SPECIAL ANNUITY ACT 1945 (No. 21 of 1945)—

An Act to provide for the payment of an Annuity to the Widow of the late the Right Honorable John Curtin.

STATES GRANTS ACT 1945 (No. 53 of 1945)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund sums for the purposes of Financial Assistance to the States of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania.

SUPERANNUATION ACT 1945 (No. 15 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Superannuation Act* 1922–1943.

SUPERANNUATION ACT (No. 2) 1945 (No. 30 of 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Superannuation Act* 1922–1943 as amended by the *Superannuation Act* 1945.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT 1943–44 (No. 58 of 1945)—

An Act to appropriate a further sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ended the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and forty-four.

THE ACTS OF THE SESSION—*continued.*

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SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) ACT 1943-44 (No. 59 or 1945)—

An Act to appropriate a further sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ended the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and forty-four, for the purpose of Additions, New Works, Buildings, &c.

SUPPLY ACT (No. 1) 1945-46 (No. 9 or 1945)—

An Act to grant and apply a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and forty-six.

TUBERCULOSIS ACT 1945 (No. 46 or 1945)—

An Act to provide Financial Assistance to the States for use in connexion with Tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

WAR CRIMES ACT 1945 (No. 48 or 1945)—

An Act to provide for the Trial and Punishment of War Criminals.

WAR GRATUITY ACT 1945 (No. 16 or 1945)—

An Act relating to the payment of War Gratuity to members of the Defence Force in respect of War Service.

WAR PENSIONS APPROPRIATION ACT 1945 (No. 18 or 1945)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum for War Pensions.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS ACT 1945 (No. 52 or 1945)—

An Act to authorize the Execution by or on behalf of the Commonwealth of Agreements between the Commonwealth and the States in relation to War Service Land Settlement.

WIDOWS' PENSIONS ACT 1945 (No. 56 or 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Widows' Pensions Act 1942-1944*, as amended by the *National Welfare Fund Act 1945*.

WINE OVERSEAS MARKETING ACT 1945 (No. 23 or 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Wine Overseas Marketing Act 1929-1936*.

WOOL (CONTRIBUTORY CHARGE) ACT 1945 (No. 51 or 1945)—

An Act to impose a Contributory Charge upon certain Wool produced in Australia.

WOOL (CONTRIBUTORY CHARGE) ASSESSMENT ACT 1945 (No. 50 or 1945)—

An Act relating to the Imposition, Assessment and Collection of a Contributory Charge upon certain Wool produced in Australia, and for other purposes.

WOOL REALIZATION ACT 1945 (No. 49 or 1945)—

An Act to approve an Agreement between the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand and the Union of South Africa in relation to the disposal of wool and to provide for the carrying out of the Agreement on the part of the Commonwealth of Australia, and for other purposes.

WOOL TAX ACT 1945 (No. 2 or 1945)—

An Act to amend the *Wool Tax Act 1936*.

WOOL USE PROMOTION ACT 1945 (No. 3 or 1945)—

An Act to make provision for Improving the Production and Increasing the Use of Wool.

[The only Bill remaining on the Notice Paper was the Nationality Bill 1945 which was initiated in the House of Representatives and reached the second reading stage.]

ERRATA.

- p. 95, col. 1, lines 33-34; *omit* "to the value of £3,000,000".
p. 195, col. 2, line 10, read "Katherine" instead of "Adelaide".
p. 876, col. 1, line 41, after "handicapped" add "by old history".
p. 978, col. 1, line 9, read "May" instead of "March".
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PARLIAMENT PROROGUED AND CONVENED.

SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION.

(*Gazette* No. 28, 1945.)

PROCLAMATION

Commonwealth of
Australia to wit.

HENRY
Governor-General.

By His Royal Highness the Governor-General
in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

WHEREAS by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia it is amongst other things enacted that the Governor-General may appoint such times for holding the Sessions of the Parliament as he thinks fit, and also from time to time, by Proclamation or otherwise, prorogue the Parliament:

Now therefore I, Henry William Frederick Albert, Duke of Gloucester, the Governor-General aforesaid, in exercise of the power conferred by the said Constitution, do by this my Proclamation prorogue the said Parliament until Wednesday, the twenty-first day of February, One thousand nine hundred and forty-five, or (in the event of circumstances, at present unforeseen, arising which render it expedient that the said Parliament should be summoned to assemble at a date earlier than the said Wednesday, the twenty-first day of February, One thousand nine hundred and forty-five) to such earlier date as is fixed by a Proclamation summoning the said Parliament to assemble and be holden for the despatch of business:

Furthermore I do appoint the said Wednesday, the twenty-first day of February, One thousand nine hundred and forty-five, or such earlier date (if any) as is fixed by Proclamation, as the day for the said Parliament to assemble and be holden for the despatch of business. And all Senators and Members of the House of Representatives are hereby required to give their attendance accordingly, in the building known as Parliament House, Canberra, at three o'clock p.m., on the said Wednesday, the twenty-first day of February, One thousand nine hundred and forty-five, or in the event of an earlier date being fixed by Proclamation, at three o'clock p.m. on the date so fixed.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth at Canberra,
this eighth day of February, in the year of Our Lord One Thousand
(L.S.) nine hundred and forty-five and in the ninth year of His Majesty's
reign.

By His Royal Highness's Command,

JOHN CURTIN

Prime Minister.

GOD SAVE THE KING!

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House of Representatives.

Wednesday, 14 March, 1945.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. S. Rosevear) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

DEATH OF GENERAL SIR HARRY CHAUVEL, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

Mr. CHIFLEY (Macquarie — Treasurer).—The news of the death of General Sir Harry Chauvel on Sunday, the 4th March, will have been received by all members of the Commonwealth Parliament with very great sorrow. Sir Harry was a distinguished soldier, and a great Australian. If his greatness has not been fully appreciated by our generation, posterity certainly will acclaim him one of our Empire's great men. Born at Tabulan, in northern New South Wales, on the 16th April, 1865, he obtained his early education at Toowoomba and Sydney Grammar Schools. Selecting a military career, he applied himself throughout his active soldiering days to mastering the profession of arms. That he was successful, is indicated by the history of his achievements.

When our defence force was in embryo, Harry Chauvel joined the New South Wales Cavalry in 1886, the Queen's Own Mounted Infantry in 1890, and the Permanent Forces in 1896. He fought through the South African War from 1899 to 1902 with the Queensland Mounted Infantry, and later as commander of a composite force of English, Canadian, South African and Australian horsemen known as "Chauvel's Mounted Infantry". For those services he was created a C.M.G., and was granted a brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1911, he became Adjutant-General of the Australian Military Forces, and was Australian representative on the Imperial General Staff at the War Office in 1914. On the outbreak of the first Great War he was given command of the First Light Horse Brigade in Egypt, and took it to Gallipoli, dismounted. There, again, Harry Chauvel demonstrated his capacity for leadership. During the most bitter fighting of that campaign, he commanded the centre section of the Anzac defences;

the command included his own brigade and the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade. In September, 1915, he commanded for a time the New Zealand and Australian Division, and later the First Australian Division, which formation he took back to Egypt. Throughout the Sinai campaign, Harry Chauvel led the Anzac Mounted Division, to which was attached the Imperial Camel Corps, and further distinguished himself in the battles at Romani, Magdhaba and Gasa. Following these battles, he was created a K.C.M.G., as an "immediate" decoration—a very rare distinction. His command—the Desert Column—was enlarged into the Desert Mounted Corps, and in August, 1917, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, being the first Australian soldier to reach that rank. From among all the cavalry generals of the British Empire, Sir Harry Chauvel was selected to lead the largest force of mounted troops the modern world had known. His generalship at the battles which followed, which brought about the destruction of the Turkish armies and culminated in the capture of Damascus and Aleppo, and the capitulation of the Turks, proclaimed to the world the genius of the man whose passing we now mourn. His awards during the 1914-18 war earned him the C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.B., G.C.M.G., Croix de Guerre (France), Order of the Nile—third and second class—and Mention in Despatches nine times.

Following the 1914-18 war, Sir Harry Chauvel became Inspector-General, and later Chief of the General Staff, of the Australian Military Forces, and was promoted to full General in 1929. During this time, and indeed for some years afterwards, his vision and influence did much to build up the nucleus of the Army of which we are so proud to-day. Retirement from the Army in 1930 was not the end of Sir Harry's life work. Right up to the time of his death, he held the appointment of Inspector-in-Chief of the Volunteer Defence Corps. In addition, he had actively engaged in pursuits of a philanthropic nature, with a view to advancing the well-being of ex-service-men, and promoting worthy objects in various spheres of community life. He pursued these activities until only a few months ago, when his

declining health, aggravated by an injury sustained while riding, prevented his continuance of them. The late general was accorded a State military funeral as a tribute to his outstanding public service.

In paying the respects of the House to the memory of this great Australian, whose deeds and service had earned the gratitude of our nation, and indeed, of the Empire, I am sure that every honorable member joins with me in extending the deepest sympathy to Lady Chauvel and her family. I move—

That this House expresses its deep regret at the death of General Sir Harry Chauvel, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., places on record its appreciation of his meritorious public service, and tenders its profound sympathy to his widow and family in their bereavement.

Mr. MENZIES (Kooyong—Leader of the Opposition).—My colleagues and I desire to be associated with the motion, and with the words that have fallen from the Treasurer (Mr. Chifley), who has summarized a military career that must be one of the most remarkable of the century. Indeed, it has been said, and said by those competent to judge, that, in the military sphere, Sir Harry Chauvel was one of the most remarkable cavalry leaders of all history. In addition, we recall Sir Harry Chauvel, the man, because, with all the capacity for decision, the force of character and the strength of mind that must have informed his military actions, he was in private life a man of the greatest simplicity, of the most exquisite courtesy, and of direct, honest and attractive character. Indeed, although they were not physically similar, I could not meet him without being reminded by his manner, and that which was inside him, of the late General Sir Brudenell White. This country is, indeed, fortunate to have produced out of the turmoil of war, on two or three occasions, such amazing servants of the people.

Mr. FADDEN (Darling Downs—Leader of the Australian Country party).—I rise to add my party's tribute to the sentiments already expressed. We are called upon this afternoon to pay respect to the memory of, I suppose, one of the greatest soldiers that Australia has ever produced.

In Queensland his name is almost a legend. I was privileged to know him intimately, and I feel his passing keenly. I add my humble quota of appreciation of the services which that great man has rendered to this young nation, and of the example which he has set to those who shall follow him. I join in the sentiments of sympathy to be conveyed to those left to mourn his loss.

Question resolved in the affirmative, honorable members standing in their places.

LIBERAL PARTY.

APPOINTMENT OF ORGANIZER.

Mr. CHAMBERS.—Is the Minister for Post-war Reconstruction aware that the New South Wales branch of the new Liberal party has appointed Mr. George A. Wilson as its State organizer at a salary of £2,000 a year? In view of the fact that this gentleman is not a returned soldier, will the Minister consider making provision in the preference-to-servicemen legislation that this position shall be declared vacant so that the Liberal party will have to give preference to servicemen when filling any positions which are created in its new organization?

Mr. DEDMAN.—Yes, I am aware that the appointment has been made, and had the position become vacant after the passing of certain legislation that is to be brought before the House, it would have been obligatory on the Liberal party to appoint an ex-serviceman. I cannot say whether the legislation, if passed, can be made retrospective, but I shall give the matter consideration.

PRICE OF MILK.

Mr. ABBOTT.—More than a fortnight ago, I asked the Prime Minister, on notice, to arrange for the holding of an independent inquiry into the cost to dairymen of producing milk in the Sydney and Newcastle zones, and I asked that the price recommended by the authority appointed for this purpose be accepted by the Prices Commission as the amount to be paid to dairymen. As this matter is urgent, I ask the Acting Leader of the House to see that the question shall be, if possible, answered to-morrow.

Mr. CHIFLEY.—I shall arrange for an answer to be given as soon as possible.

RAIL TRANSPORT.

ACCOMMODATION FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT—RESTRICTIONS ON INTERSTATE TRAVEL.

Mr. BRYSON.—When I was travelling from Melbourne to Canberra yesterday I was given a seat at Albury in an obsolete second-class railway carriage of the kind that is normally used for carrying passengers between intermediate stations. A bus capable of seating 36 passengers was provided to carry four members of Parliament from Yass to Canberra, and took two hours to make the journey of less than 40 miles. A private car was waiting for another member. I ask the Minister for Transport whether he can make immediate arrangements to provide a sleeping-car for the journey between Albury and Canberra. If not, will he arrange for some other suitable method of transport to replace the present one?

Mr. WARD.—More than one authority is involved in arranging transport to and from Canberra. The State railways, as the honorable member is aware, still remain under the direct administration of State authorities. The provision of a bus service between Yass and Canberra is the concern of the Minister for the Interior. As for the suggestion that sleeping cars be restored in order to suit the convenience of members of Parliament, I regret that I cannot favorably consider any proposal for discriminating in favour of members of Parliament as compared with the general public. The question of the restoration of sleeping cars is to be considered at the next meeting of the War Railway Committee, and it is hoped that arising out of its deliberations a decision to restore sleeping cars at an early date will be made.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Can the Minister for Transport say whether the War Railway Committee at its forthcoming conference will give consideration to the lifting of restrictions on interstate rail travel? If not, will he arrange to have this matter placed on the committee's agenda?

Mr. WARD.—That matter is included in the committee's agenda, and judging from the latest reports I am very hopeful that some of the restrictions will be lifted.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. HOLT.—Has the Acting Leader of the House any information to give to honorable members regarding press reports that the practice which has existed for many years in dealing with questions without notice is to be changed? Is it intended that the proposed change shall apply only to questions directed to the Prime Minister, and, if so, does the right honorable gentleman propose to nominate a deputy in this House to deal with matters concerning his own administration when put to him by private members? Can he say whether it is proposed to extend the new practice to Ministers other than the Prime Minister?

Mr. CHIFLEY.—As the result of what appears to be a growing practice of asking, without notice, questions which are not of urgent public importance—

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! The Chair at all times determines the importance and urgency of questions. I hope that the Treasurer is not reflecting on the Chair.

Mr. CHIFLEY.—I had no intention to reflect on the Chair, Mr. Speaker. I was merely expressing the Prime Minister's opinion that some questions, without notice, do not seem to him to be of urgent public importance, and that the number of such questions is increasing.

Mr. MENZIES.—Questions without notice are not more numerous than they were ten years ago.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! I cannot allow a debate on the subject.

Mr. CHIFLEY.—When Mr. Bruce was Prime Minister he referred to this matter in, I think, 1929. The Prime Minister proposes to give direct answers only to questions which are addressed to him by party leaders in the House, and then only if he is able to answer them with the information at his disposal.

Mr. HOLT.—Are questions by private members to be addressed to a deputy of the Prime Minister?

Mr. CHIFLEY.—Generally speaking, the Prime Minister's intention is to confine his answers to questions addressed

to him by the leaders of the parties in the House. As to questions addressed by private members to other Ministers, it is hoped that if they are of an urgent character and can be answered readily, Ministers will continue to reply to them. It is proposed to ask that long questions which obviously the Ministers to whom they are addressed cannot answer off hand shall be placed on the notice-paper.

Mr. MENZIES.—The Prime Minister is also Minister for Defence. Should a private member desire to ask a question touching the Department of Defence, to what Minister should he direct it?

Mr. HOLT.—The Prime Minister also will deputize for the Minister for the Army during the absence of the latter from Australia.

Mr. CHIFLEY.—That is a matter to which I have not given much thought, and I do not know the Prime Minister's views concerning it.

Mr. SPENDER.—I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is competent for any Minister to state as a matter of practice that he will not answer any questions in respect of a matter of public importance and urgency? Is it not for you to permit any private member to put any question on any matter of public urgency to a Minister? Can there be any preclusion of that right?

Mr. SPEAKER.—An honorable member has the choice of asking a question either orally or in writing, upon notice, in his own way, provided always that he keeps within the Standing Orders; and it then rests with the Minister of whom the question is asked to decide whether he will answer it orally, or require that notice of it be given. However, it is a well-established practice, for which there are many precedents, that a Minister need not answer any question, and it is totally disorderly for an honorable member to insist that he given an answer.

Later:

Mr. ABBOTT.—Standing Order 92 relates to the asking of questions respecting public business. In view of the

statement of the Acting Leader of the House, will you, Mr. Speaker, rule as to whether or not the Prime Minister, or any other Minister, has any power under the Standing Orders to refuse to accept a question that is put to him by an honorable member? If no such power exists, and such a refusal would constitute a breach of the Standing Orders and of the rights and privileges of honorable members, will you, as the custodian and guardian of those rights and privileges, submit to the Prime Minister a memorandum explaining their nature? Will you also ensure that there shall not be a breach of the rules and procedure of this honorable House?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Standing Order 92 provides—

After Notices have been given, Questions may be put to Ministers of the Crown relating to public affairs; and to other Members relating to any Bill, Motion, or other public matter connected with the business on the Notice Paper, of which such Members may have charge.

It will be noted that honorable members have the privilege of asking Ministers questions. The practice has been for a Minister either to answer a question orally or to require its submission in writing, in order that a written reply may be made. I have already informed the honorable member for Warringah that there is not the slightest doubt that although an honorable member is privileged to ask a Minister a question, the Minister is not bound to answer it forthwith.

Mr. ABBOTT.—But a Minister cannot prevent an honorable member from asking a question?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member is answering his own question. I am pointing out to him that nothing which the Prime Minister or any other Minister may do can prevent an honorable member from asking a question. At the same time, every Minister has the right either to answer or to decline to answer it and, should he decline, it would be disorderly were an honorable member to endeavour to insist upon an immediate answer.

DISCHARGED SERVICE PERSONNEL.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING—UNIVERSITY TRAINING ALLOWANCES.

Mr. DEDMAN.—Last Wednesday, the honorable member for Wentworth (Mr. Harrison) asked for certain information relating to the vocational training of discharged service personnel, and I undertook to furnish it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! Does the Minister desire to read an answer to a question?

Mr. DEDMAN.—Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have ruled that leave of the House must be obtained in such circumstances.

Mr. DEDMAN.—*by leave*.—The total number of ex-servicemen who have applied and have been accepted for full-time training of all types is 1,190. Two methods of training are provided for in the scheme—

(a) Training in technical schools until the trainee attains a standard of proficiency equal to an earning capacity of not less than 40 per cent. of the appropriate award minimum wage payable in the calling for which he is being trained, as assessed by appropriate Industrial Committees set up under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. This period will, in general, vary from three to twelve months, according to the calling, and the initial qualifications, aptitudes and progress of the trainee.

(b) Training in industrial establishments which are approved by the appropriate Industrial Committee representative of employers, employees and technical educational authorities as suitable establishments for basic training purposes until the trainee attains a proficiency of 40 per cent.

To a slight extent the commencement of training has been delayed while arrangements are being made for buildings to be transferred and the release from the services obtained of teachers selected for the job. The difficulties will

continue as long as the present manpower shortage exists, but every step is being taken to hasten the release of suitable instructors.

In each case, all training allowances, which vary from £3 5s. to £5 5s. a week, and benefits such as books and tools of trade are paid by the Commonwealth until not less than 40 per cent. proficiency is attained, when the trainee is placed in employment at full award rates by the placement authority, the Man Power Directorate, which works closely in co-operation with the Industrial Committees. The Commonwealth reimburses the employer the difference between the award rate and the periodical assessment value of the trainee's efficiency. During this period until the trainee reaches 100 per cent. proficiency, he is receiving further training on the job and gaining experience and speed.

Sir EARLE PAGE.—Has the Minister for Repatriation seen a report in this morning's press of a statement by Mr. Woodward, president of the Universities Services Club, headed "Low Pay for Service Students", in which he claims that many soldiers may have to abandon their rehabilitation training course at Australian universities because of the low living allowance paid to them by the Government—ranging from £2 a week for a student with no dependants to £5 5s. a week for a student with two or three dependants, less deductions for any money earned in spare time? If these are the facts, will the Minister ensure that servicemen shall be treated at least as well as students attending universities under the Universities Commission's scheme?

Mr. FROST.—I shall have inquiries made?

PARTY DESIGNATIONS.

Mr. CONELAN.—Is the Minister for Information aware that the Leader of the Queensland Peoples party and Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Chandler, said last night, "The Queensland Peoples party is prepared to co-operate with the Liberal party, but it is not prepared to commit suicide in order that the Liberal party might live"? In view of the announcement by the Leader of the Opposition that the name of his party

has been changed from the United Australia party to the Liberal party, can the Minister inform me what is the position of anti-Labour members representing Queensland constituencies?

Mr. CALWELL.—I am aware that Alderman Chandler made that statement last night, and I commend him for his perspicacity. In regard to the future of members of the Opposition who represent the anti-Labour seats in Queensland, they seem to me to be like Mahomet's coffin—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman seems to me to be out of order.

Mr. CALWELL.—Thinking I might be, I paused to receive your direction. All I want to say about the position of anti-Labour members from Queensland is that their suspense will not last very long, because they all will disappear at the next general elections.

HOUSING.

Mr. CONELAN.—I ask the Minister representing the Acting Minister for the Army whether, in view of the housing shortage in Queensland, he will take steps immediately to have private homes now occupied by Army base officers released immediately in order to relieve the position?

Mr. DEDMAN.—I shall refer the matter to the Acting Minister for the Army.

COMMONWEALTH GRANTS COMMISSION.

Mr. GUY.—I ask the Treasurer whether he has yet received a report from what is known as the caucus committee appointed some time ago to investigate a claim made by the Government of Tasmania for an additional grant, and to inquire into the methods adopted by the Commonwealth Grants Commission in calculating the grants to be made to the claimant States? If the report has been received, will he lay it upon the table of the House? If it has not been received, when does he anticipate it will be made available to honorable members?

Mr. CHIFLEY.—My knowledge of the matter is that the Government party appointed a committee of its members to look into certain complaints that were made regarding the calculation of

State grants. I did not know that the complaint referred to any one particular State.

Mr. GUY.—The whole committee visited Tasmania to investigate this matter.

Mr. CHIFLEY.—Probably, that was on account of the Tasmanian climate. My impression is that the committee is to report generally to the party with respect to the commission's method of calculating grants to all of the claimant States and not, in particular, to Tasmania. I have not received the report, and I am unable to say when I am likely to receive it.

TAXATION.

Mr. FADDEN.—Will the Treasurer announce to the House the tentative estimate which he has had prepared of the total and detailed expenditure from taxation receipts in 1947-48? In future, will the honorable gentleman ensure that figures of this kind, prepared at the expense of the Commonwealth, shall be made available publicly to taxpayers generally, instead of being reserved for members of the political party to which he belongs?

Mr. CHIFLEY.—I shall examine the question asked by the right honorable gentleman, and supply an answer later. At this juncture, I merely remark that I have always been prepared to give to any honorable member any information that he has sought from me.

Mr. FADDEN.—The Treasurer did not make available the Jensen report on the wool industry.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! The Jensen report is not the subject of the question.

Mr. CHIFLEY.—I said that I have always been prepared to give to any honorable member any information that he has sought from me. I did not mention reports. It is perfectly true that, as Treasurer, when addressing the Labour party on the Government's proposals at various times, I have placed tentative estimates before the meeting. Probably every Minister, regardless of the party to which he belonged, has followed that procedure from time to time. I do not make it a general practice to supply to the House any document or

statement that I make to the party; but if an honorable member wants some particular information, I shall make it available to him.

Mr. HUTCHINSON.—In last Saturday's press there appeared extracts from a financial statement, which apparently is being circulated to members of the Labour party, in which the Treasurer said that expenditure from taxation will reach £297,000,000 in 1947-48, and that actual tax collections last year amounted to only £269,000,000, or £28,000,000 less than will be required two years from now. In view of the widespread interest and concern which this statement has aroused, and having regard to the fact that high taxes are already seriously affecting production, and that the present high taxation returns are influenced largely by central bank credit expansion, does not that statement portend serious financial difficulties in 1947-48, and indicate that the whole social service structure of this country has no real or satisfactory foundation?

Mr. CHIFLEY.—So far as I can gather, there are always many difficulties associated with finance. That is true of all governments and also of a great number of people. However, I see no danger to the foundation on which the social services of this country are being built by the Government. Social services cannot be provided unless somebody pays for them. The honorable member's question is rather a lengthy one and if he puts it on the notice-paper, I shall answer it in greater detail.

MIGRATION.

Mr. WILSON.—I ask the Minister representing the Minister for the Interior to inform me whether the Government has formulated a policy covering the admittance to Australia of migrants who desire to settle in this country? At present, the door appears to have been closed to such persons, and although many desirable people from Great Britain and elsewhere desire to make their home in Australia, all their efforts to obtain permits to land have been abortive.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—I shall bring the honorable member's question to the notice of the Minister for the Interior, and ask him to supply an answer.

CIVIL AVIATION.

AIRCRAFT CRASH AT SPRING PLAINS— REPORT OF INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

Mr. McEWEN.—Will the Minister for Civil Aviation inform me whether the date has been fixed for the inquiry into the recent disaster at Spring Plains, in which a Stinson aircraft was involved? If so, what is the date?

Mr. DRAKEFORD.—The inquiry will commence on the 27th March. Some delay has been caused, because Captain Crowther, whom the Government intended to appoint to the inquiry as an assessor, is not available, and another assessor had to be found. Captain Crowther is engaged on urgent work in connexion with the Indian Ocean air route and therefore we cannot secure his services. However, we have obtained as an assessor Captain Jackson, who was the leading pilot in the service of W. R. Carpenter Airlines and has had wide experience.

Mr. FRANCIS.—Having regard to the nation-wide anxiety as to the future of civil aviation in Australia, will the Minister for Civil Aviation lay on the table of the House the report of the interdepartmental committee which, apparently, the Government used recently in arriving at certain decisions?

Mr. DRAKEFORD.—I have no knowledge of any nation-wide anxiety, but believe that the people are prepared to trust the Government to handle the situation properly. I decline to table the report of the interdepartmental committee.

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

Sir FREDERICK STEWART.—Will the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs inform me whether a decision has been reached regarding the application of the British Medical Association for a supply of newsprint for the purpose of enabling it to

circulate its comments on the Government's pharmaceutical benefits legislation?

Mr. BEASLEY.—When a similar question was asked recently, the Prime Minister gave a certain undertaking on the matter. By this time, a decision should have been reached, and I shall endeavour to ascertain from the Minister for Trade and Customs what has been done.

ALIEN DOCTORS.

Mr. DALY.—Will the Minister representing the Minister for Health state how many alien doctors were granted a licence to practise in New South Wales under the Commonwealth Emergency Medical Scheme, at the direction of the Medical Co-ordination Committee? What are the names of these doctors, and where are they practising at present?

Mr. HOLLOWAY.—I shall obtain the information sought by the honorable member.

F. VIGGERS LIMITED.

Mr. JAMES.—Is it a fact that the firm of F. Viggers Limited, which is producing 3,000 gallons of oil and petrol monthly from shale at Hamilton, near Newcastle, has been served with a notice of eviction to take effect on the 1st April? In view of the shortage of petrol, and in view of the fact that the Public Works Committee which has been inquiring into the production of oil from shale, has come to the conclusion that this project has great possibilities, will the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping state whether any action has been taken at the request of the committee to interview the Premier of New South Wales in order to prevent any eviction? If not, will the Government issue a regulation to safeguard the industry?

Mr. BEASLEY.—The honorable gentleman's question was lengthy, but it missed the main point. It did not indicate why the eviction was to be carried out, or who was responsible for serving the notice.

Mr. JAMES.—The City Council of Newcastle is responsible. It stated that the smell from the industry created a nuisance.

Mr. BEASLEY.—That opens a much wider field. It appears to be a matter affecting the by-laws of the Newcastle City Council. I am aware of the importance of extracting oil from shale, and I believe that all honorable members are aware of the enormous sums of money that the Commonwealth is expending on a development of that character at Glen Davis. I shall ask the Minister for Supply and Shipping to discuss the matter with the Premier of New South Wales, and to make representations to the City Council of Newcastle.

SHORTAGE OF NURSES.

Mr. CONELAN.—In view of the favorable war situation and the acute shortage of nursing sisters in Australian hospitals, will the Minister representing the Minister for the Army give favorable consideration to the release of nursing sisters from the Army in order to augment the staffs of civil hospitals?

Mr. DEDMAN.—I was under the impression that this matter had been dealt with by a committee representing the Department of the Army and the Departments of Health and Social Services. However, I shall refer the honorable member's representation to the Acting Minister for the Army, and ask him to consider it.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

EQUIPMENT.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—Has the Minister for Air had an opportunity to study the remarks of Air Vice-Marshal Jones at the meeting of the Air Force Association held in Adelaide, regarding lack of equipment for the Royal Australian Air Force? If so, will the honorable gentleman say whether or not the views expressed are a reflection of those held by the Government? Has he any comment to make in regard to them?

Mr. DRAKEFORD.—I have read in various newspapers a number of reports of the remarks of Air Vice-Marshal Jones, and each differs from the others. I have taken steps to verify their correctness or otherwise. When this has been determined, I shall study the matter further.

WHEAT INDUSTRY.

Mr. WILSON.—I ask the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture whether the proposed first advance of 4s. 3d. a bushel for wheat is to be regarded as inclusive or exclusive of the 1½d. a bushel agreed upon as an additional payment for labour. Secondly, as the indications in respect of future sales of wheat are that a price considerably in excess of 4s. 3d. a bushel will be realized, will the honorable gentleman consider a straight-out advance payment of 5s. a bushel for the next harvest?

Mr. SCULLY.—The 4s. 3d. a bushel is to be only the first advance. The direct payment is a matter for future consideration. The honorable member may rest assured that the pool will be wound up quickly. Perhaps the ultimate realization will exceed the price he has suggested.

TEXTILES AND CLOTHING.**CIVILIAN SUPPLIES—DOUBLE-WEFT CLOTH: EXPORT TO NEW ZEALAND.**

Mr. BERNARD CORSER.—Will the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping explain the reason for the severe shortage of textiles and clothing for civilian use, despite the fact that it has been found necessary to appoint a Manufacturers Advisory Committee to assist the War Disposals Commission in the clearing of surplus stocks of those goods?

Mr. BEASLEY.—Upon reflection, the honorable member will note that it is quite possible that stocks of textiles and clothing acquired for the use of the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force may be greater than the requirements. He will appreciate that the depletion of the stocks is governed by operational needs. This applies also to munitions. Surplus stock of that character would become useless if held too long.

Mr. BERNARD CORSER.—There is no evidence that they are defence stocks.

Mr. BEASLEY.—The object in constituting the War Disposals Commission was to clear surplus defence stocks; therefore, the honorable member may take it for granted that these come within that category. The position generally is

easing considerably, and the public will be satisfied when it realizes what progress is being made.

Mr. CONELAN.—Is the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping aware that textiles made in Australia, and exported to New Zealand, are being sold there as having been made in England? Will he take steps to see that those materials are branded "Made in Australia"?

Mr. BEASLEY.—I am surprised to hear that that is being done, because double weft cloth has been manufactured in Australia for the very purpose of supplying the New Zealand market. I do not attempt to hide that fact. It would have been the duty of any government to endeavour to secure that export trade, and double weft cloth was made for New Zealand when people in our own country were not being supplied with it. If the goods are being sold as having been made in England, I think that the suggestion that they should be branded "Made in Australia" is a wise one, and should be adopted.

SYDNEY GRAVING DOCK.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Will the Minister representing the Minister for the Interior say who is responsible for issuing invitations to attend the opening of the Sydney graving dock? Have invitations been issued to representatives of the employees? Have arrangements been made to prevent an occurrence similar to that in which Captain de Groot figured at the opening of the Sydney harbour bridge?

Mr. LAZZARINI.—I shall obtain the information.

POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. MARTENS.—I received to-day from Home Hill a telegram protesting against the refusal of the Postmaster-General's Department to take mail matter across a river in a boat, with the result that a letter posted at Home Hill for delivery at Ayr, 6 miles distant, had to go through Rockhampton and Winton, the total distance covered being between 1,400 and 1,500 miles. Will the Minister representing the

Postmaster-General give the reason for this departure from the usual practice in similar circumstances?

Mr. CALWELL.—I shall bring the complaint to the notice of the Postmaster-General, and shall ask him to give urgent and sympathetic consideration to it.

SEED OATS.

Mr. ADERMANN.—I ask the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture whether or not there are any seed oats in Western Australia. If there are, will the Government make transport available immediately, in order that the seed may be brought to the eastern States; or is the dairying industry to understand definitely that no seed is to be made available, and that the Government does not regard the growing of fodder for dairy cattle as of any consequence?

Mr. SCULLY.—It is a reflection on the Government to suggest that it does not desire the growing of feed for dairy stock; that is most essential. The information supplied by the Minister for Agriculture in Western Australia is that there is only a limited quantity of oats in that State. Everything possible is being done to have oats brought to the eastern States for all essential purposes; this seed has even been given priority over wheat. The honorable gentleman may rest assured that the Government has explored every avenue in its attempts to secure seed, the importance of which it recognizes fully.

PILLAGING.

Mr. ANTHONY.—Will the Minister for Supply and Shipping inform the House whether he has read a report from Lae by Brigadier Pascoe to the effect that, of 2,000 cases of beer consigned to troops in that area at Christmas time, over 400 cases were pillaged at Sydney? If not, will he scrutinize the report, and lay it on the table of the House? Has the Minister also received a report that Red Cross supplies of orange juice and other goods directed to troops in that area were similarly pillaged, as were also Red Cross hygiene supplies for nurses? What action does the Government propose to take to put an end to

these depredations on goods and comforts consigned to the troops in the fighting areas?

Mr. BEASLEY.—Nobody with any national pride or spirit could be other than disgusted at the pillaging that has occurred in some ports of Australia, and in other ports throughout the world, of goods destined for the fighting forces. I am sure that there is no difference of opinion between us on this matter, because no person could stoop to a more despicable action than that referred to; but, unfortunately, pillaging is rife. The Government originally set aside a sum of about £200,000 for the purpose of building up an organization on the waterfront to meet this problem, but unfortunately, the trouble is not confined to pillaging on the waterfront. The origin of the evil is far behind the waterfront. The Government believes that goods are pillaged long before they reach the ships' sides. I do not blame the wharf labourers alone for what has occurred. I hope that we shall soon be able to root out those responsible for the evil, and expose them to the world at large.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH. ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Debate resumed from the 9th March (*vide page 546*), on motion by Mr. FRASER—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Royal Highness the Governor-General's Speech be agreed to:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS:

We, the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our most Gracious Sovereign, to extend to Your Royal Highness a welcome to Australia, and to thank Your Royal Highness for the Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Mr. SMITH (Wakefield) [3.0].—I associate myself with the sentiments that have been expressed by honorable members regarding the appointment of His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester as Governor-General of the Commonwealth. I appreciate the fact that a Labour Government has shown in a practical way its loyalty to the British Throne by the appointment to that high office of a brother of His Majesty the King. This,

Mr. Speaker, gives the lie direct to those who have been loud in their criticism of the Labour party in saying that its members are not loyal subjects of the King. I feel sure that this appointment proves beyond doubt that we are, and always have been, as loyal as any other body, and perhaps more loyal than some. I, in common with other honorable members of the House, trust that the term of office of His Royal Highness will be a most pleasant one, and I feel sure that it will be. The Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) rightly said, at the parliamentary dinner tendered to the Governor-General, that it was a family gathering, meaning, I take it, that from now on we should regard His Royal Highness as one of ourselves. I am sure that he will feel as much at home with us as we shall be with him. I trust that his wish for world peace to be restored during his stay amongst us will be realized.

I express my pleasure at the fact that the Prime Minister has been able to take up his important duties again. I trust that his health will remain sufficiently robust to enable him to continue his excellent leadership of this country. I am sorry to hear that at present he is slightly indisposed, but I am pleased to know that he is not seriously ill. I hope the people realize the tremendous responsibility which he has had to shoulder during the trying years in which he has been in office. No doubt his onerous duties as Prime Minister have been the greatest contributing factor to the undermining of his health. I wonder sometimes, when hearing certain criticism of the Government, whether the people fully realize the true value of the work which the present Ministry has done during the greatest crisis in the world's history. The job is not yet finished, but, when listening to the remarks of some honorable members, one would imagine that the war was a secondary matter. They ask for the transfer of man-power, speak of a wastage of man-power, and allege that too many men are in the fighting forces. They say that many of those men could be employed more profitably in other directions. That, of course, would be a fact if we could direct the operations of the enemy.

When I was passing a fire brigade station a few days ago, I saw men standing around seemingly with nothing to do. But would any honorable member contend that the brigade should be disbanded because of that fact? Of course not. A similar position arises with regard to the fighting forces. The Prime Minister rightly pointed out that the disposition and use of Australia's fighting forces have been agreed to by the High Command. Surely that position could not be improved upon. Certainly we in this chamber, not knowing all of the facts, are not competent to pass judgment as to whether the best use is being made of those forces. Some honorable members have had the audacity to do so, but only for the purpose of furthering their own political ends. In that respect they are prepared to play the game of politics pretty low. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Menzies), speaking in this debate of the operations upon which the Australian forces were engaged in the Pacific Islands, said—

The rôle allotted to the Australian forces since the drive began is the secondary rôle of mopping up by-passed areas which, as I understand it, cannot be regarded any longer as of primary military moment.

The honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Ryan) is recorded in *Hansard* as having said—

I do not forget these things when I say that Australian troops have been relegated to the rôle of charwoman of the Pacific, mopping up the mess left behind as the front of battle moved forward.

Very properly, the members of our forces who have returned from the north have taken exception to statements of that kind. In the *Melbourne Herald* of the 8th of this month, the following appeared:—

Thirty walking wounded Army and Air Force men, who returned by flying boat from the islands, ridiculed recent public statements that Australian military operations were confined to mopping up.

"Nothing made us more mad than to get reports from home saying we have been relegated to mopping-up operations", said one of the soldiers. "I would like to organize a patrol of politicians who have been making these statements."

Such statements were made in this House for one reason only. I am certain that those who made them did not intend to reflect on our forces, but they were using

them for political ends. Unfortunately for them, their statements have rebounded to their own political disadvantage. When this was brought to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition, he said—

The point that we have made is that this appears to be a secondary role.

That qualification was not used when the original statement was made. It is only natural that our soldiers, who are doing such a wonderful job in the north, should take exception to remarks of the kind which I have quoted.

Members of the Opposition are very fond of recalling the result of the recent referendum for the enlargement of Commonwealth powers. The spate of propaganda released during the referendum campaign by those who objected to the Government's proposals appealed to the selfishness and fear of the people, who were war-weary, and had become tired of regulations. They were led to believe that if they voted against the referendum proposals, they could, and would, get rid of war-time controls almost immediately. As a matter of fact, war-time controls were imposed and kept in operation for the benefit of the people, and I am convinced that they will eventually realize that fact. Of course, mistakes were made, and it is probable that more will be made in the future. Perhaps officers did not always discharge their duties in a way to inspire confidence, but, for the most part, they have done a difficult job well. We have not had to go without any essential commodity. In the course of my travels, I have seen no one who was cold or hungry. Indeed, never have I, in all my experience, seen the people so prosperous, and my memory goes back over a good many years, during which time I have seen many ups and downs in Australia. When I read letters from people in England and Scotland, where they have to go without the most necessary things, while at the same time being subjected to the danger of bombing, I realize that we in this country should, in the words of the Prime Minister, go down on our knees and thank God that, in the main, we have been spared thus far. This is due, first, to the sacrifice of the Mother Country, and then to the timely assistance given to Australia

by the United States of America. I well remember that when the Prime Minister took action to obtain assistance from the United States of America, there was an outcry from a certain class of person in Australia that the Labour Government was disloyal, and that the Prime Minister was slighting the Mother Country. At that time, the Prime Minister knew perfectly well that Great Britain, which was undergoing a terrible ordeal in fighting the battle for world freedom, could not help us. Therefore, he appealed to the United States of America, which came to our aid. When our men came back from the Middle East, I watched company after company marching through the streets of Adelaide, and I remember the feeling of security which the spectacle gave to the public. As the Prime Minister said, Australia was saved by the help of Great Britain and of the United States of America, and by the sacrifice of our own gallant men, who placed their bodies between us and the enemy. We can never thank those men enough for what they did for us and for civilization. I have heard people use the phrase "equality of sacrifice". There can be no sacrifice equal to that made by men who give their lives. That is the supreme sacrifice.

Last week honorable members had the privilege of hearing the Minister for the Navy (Mr. Makin) give an account of what one unit of the "silent service" had done in this war. What a record of gallantry on the part of men who go down to the sea in ships! Their deeds and their names will live in history. Those men gave their all—their lives. In view of all the circumstances, it is clear that the regulations which have been promulgated, and the restrictions which the Government in its wisdom has seen fit to impose, have been for the preservation of the people of Australia and the good of the nation; and, accordingly, we should accept them uncomplainingly, and do all that we can to carry them out. In this connexion, the press could play a helpful part. The newspapers of this country could be a powerful factor in maintaining the morale of the people, but I fear that they have not been so helpful as they might have been. Take, for instance,

newspaper references to troubles in the coal-mining industry. Every day we read how much coal has been lost because of actions of the coal-miners, and the public gets the impression that these men are intent on sabotaging the war effort. One honorable member said in this House that coal-miners who would not work should be taken from the mines and put in the front line; in other words, that they should be shot. My experience as an employee and as an employer convinces me that that is not the way to get the best out of men. Coal-mining is not attractive work, and in the main, the coal-miners of this country have done well. Like other people, they are much more likely to give their best when they are encouraged and given credit for the services that they have rendered. At various times the Premier of South Australia has said that, unless more coal were provided, train services would have to be curtailed and restrictions imposed on the use of electric light and power, and from time to time the dwindling stocks of coal have been featured in the newspapers of that State. Nevertheless, train services have been maintained, and there have been no restrictions on the use of electricity for domestic purposes. The needs of the people have been met. Propaganda of that kind is not in the best interests of an all-in war effort.

I listened with interest to the speech of the right honorable member for Cowper (Sir Earle Page), in which he expressed his ideas concerning the need for water conservation. I agree with him that something of that kind should be done, but, for the most part, he referred to projects within the sphere of the States—works which, as he well knows, the Commonwealth Government has no power to undertake. To the uninitiated the proposals of the right honorable gentleman may sound all right, but those who know how he opposed the granting of further powers to the Commonwealth realize that his speech was merely so much "kite-flying". The right honorable gentleman also mentioned housing needs, but what did the Government of which he was a member, and other governments which he supported, do to supply the needs when

labour and material were available in abundance? Can he say how many houses were built under the Commonwealth housing scheme? Although many national works could have been undertaken in those years, nothing was done; previous governments preferred to give men the dole rather than opportunities to work.

The right honorable gentleman and other honorable members opposite advocate an active immigration policy; their slogan is, "Populate or perish". I agree that Australia needs a much larger population, but something more than the policy which has been followed in the past is necessary to that end. As I have passed through country towns and villages I have missed many once-thriving industries; they no longer exist, because those who control industry find it cheaper to concentrate their businesses in the metropolitan areas. "Big business" has crushed out competition, and the result is seen in deserted country towns and villages. In the past, many primary producers have not been able to pay their way. It has taken a war and a Labour government to give some stability to primary production. I am reminded of what the honorable member for Indi (Mr. McEwen) once said when he was a Minister in a former government—

Australia could not afford to guarantee more than 3s. 10d. a bushel f.o.b., which, on the basis of guaranteed production, is equal to approximately 3s. a bushel at sidings. He went on to say that a war expenditure of £70,000,000 would not permit it. To-day, war expenditure is at the rate of over £400,000,000 a year. The present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Menzies) visited Adelaide in September, 1939, when he was Prime Minister, and was reported in the *Adelaide Advertiser* as having said—

With £32,000,000 needed for defence, I cannot see how I am going to raise money for the wheat industry, either by loan or from revenue.

The present Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator McLeay, when Minister for Commerce, announced that he favoured the payment of 2s. 10½d. a bushel for bagged wheat. That represented approximately 2s. 6d. a bushel

at country sidings. On that occasion, Senator McLeay said—

I earnestly say that these financial proposals represent not only a fair, but a generous, approach to the problem by the Government.

On the same subject, the honorable member for Barker (Mr. Archie Cameron) said—

In my opinion, the price is too high. I confess frankly that I have not been enthusiastic about any wheat stabilization scheme.

To-day those men are telling the people of Australia that the present Government has let the primary producers down. By whom this broadcast statement was authorized, I cannot remember—

We cannot continue to provide large sums of public money to support the wheat-growers while they go on producing unsaleable grain. Such a procedure would be demoralizing and unsound.

The Leader of the Opposition, speaking at a meeting on one occasion, said words to the effect that farmers never paid a decent wage. That is not the farmer's fault. He is the creature of circumstance. Always at the mercy of financial interests, he has never controlled his own business. He had no control over the price of the goods he produced, and this city concentration has been a disadvantage to him and to the nation. If we are to develop this country and increase its population, we must have greater regard for human values than we have had. We must be prepared, with other nations, to practise the principles of the Atlantic Charter: Freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of speech and freedom of worship. Those ideals offer some hope to the human race, and if they are realized they will give this nation an incentive to expand, confident that its future is assured.

If the primary producers of this community are to succeed—we should make that possible for them as there is not a shadow of doubt that they are of the first importance to the country—the mortgage branch of the Commonwealth Bank must give advances at a much lower rate of interest than at present; alternatively, we must create a producers' bank. Of all the evils afflicting the primary producer, the mortgage is the

greatest, because its demands must be satisfied before he can satisfy the barest needs of himself and his dependants and because it forces him to work his soil without rest. While the farmer must, in order to meet heavy annual interest commitments, continue to deny his soil the rest that Nature ordains, we shall never be able effectively to grapple with the twin problems of maintaining soil fertility and preventing soil erosion. In this chamber last September, I showed that soil erosion is one of the most urgent problems which this country has to face, and I hope that the Commonwealth Soil Conservation Service, the proposed establishment of which has been announced by the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture (Mr. Scully), will be set up without delay in order that it may speedily take up its task, which, I consider, should also embrace water conservation and re-afforestation. More than ever before is the need evident for an authority to undertake those three tasks in the interests not only of ourselves but also of posterity. We live from our soils. Depleted soil vigour means depleted human vigour and unfertile soil an unfertile people. Destroy the soil and you destroy the nation. A nation with 60 per cent. of its population living in cities under artificial conditions of life, will not reproduce in sufficient numbers to maintain a natural life. Keep only sufficient on the land to feed the population in the cities and then denature the foodstuffs by refining and preservation, and the result must be national extinction. Rural areas are the only sure source of population increase. A natural affinity exists between man and the soil; remove him from contact with freshly grown foods and he becomes as stale as the food he consumes. Our need is to distribute our population over the more fertile areas of our land on smaller holdings. To that end the financial octopus that is strangling the life out of our nation must be grappled with. Because primary production is the life-stream of this nation, the Commonwealth Bank, through its mortgage department or a producers' bank, should purchase all banks and privately held mortgages on

land used for primary production, and interest should be reduced to a flat rate of 1½ per cent.

I make it quite clear to those who have written to me protesting against the Government's banking proposals that they have a perfect right to express their opinions on that or any other subject, but that they must give me the same right. Most of the protests I have received were prepared for those who signed them by the banks or other financial interests. I have no hesitation in saying that because, for the most part, the phrasing of the letters is identical. Those from the same district are written on the same class of paper and contained in similar envelopes. In contrast to the stereotyped protests sent to me, I received from a farmer constituent of mine, who is not obliged to go cap in hand to the bank for an overdraft, a letter from which the following is an extract:—

I am anxiously waiting for the bank legislation. I hope it will go through. I know for a fact that many who had petitions placed under their noses to sign, signed because being under the banks' thumb, they dare not refuse, otherwise they'd be asked to reduce their overdraft, so if I were in your place I would take the petitions for what they are worth.

[*Extension of time granted.*]

When I sought the suffrages of my constituents at the last general election I gave them a pledge that if I and the Labour party I supported were returned to office I should make it one of my first duties to advocate banking reform. I am well pleased that I now have the opportunity to address myself to this subject so soon after the Treasurer (Mr. Chifley) has introduced the measures embodying the Government's proposals for banking reform. I have not yet failed to honour any pledge which I have given, and, regardless of the consequences to myself personally, I have no intention of retracting the promise which I gave to my constituents in respect of this subject. Fortunately, I am not wholly dependent upon my parliamentary salary for a livelihood. However, the Government's proposals are in the best interests of the country. On this matter I agree entirely with the views expressed in the following letter, dated the 20th January last,

which I received from one of my constituents who is a returned soldier of the last war, and whose name I shall be pleased to supply to any who might doubt the authenticity of the communication:—

I am enclosing printed matter I received by post which I consider an insult to my intelligence and yours. It insults me in assuming that I am unable to express my own views on the question, and insults you in assuming that you would believe this printed matter, if signed by me, to represent my own considered opinion.

I am a returned soldier of 1914-18 War and have two sons in the services to-day (my only other son is sixteen years of age). I sincerely hope that the men who are fighting to-day, and those already discharged, will not have to face the difficulties which confronted many of us on our return to civil life and during the years which followed. It is a tragic policy which assures us that we cannot expect to be as prosperous when all are producing for use as when the majority of our men are engaged in destruction or producing the means of destruction.

I trust that never again will financial interests be able to bring about economic depression, while abundance of all the necessities of life exist alongside extreme poverty, simply through withholding the medium which enables a man to exchange his labour or produce for goods or services on an equitable basis.

Those are the views of people who have come through the mill. I am not a financier, and I do not claim to understand finance in the full sense of the word; but I know something about the operations of the present banking system, and as the result of that experience I am anxious that the Government's proposals shall be enacted as soon as possible. When the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Menzies) was addressing a meeting as part of the preliminaries in the formation of the new Liberal party he said in effect, according to press reports of his remarks, that the Labour caucus was composed of ignorant and irresponsible men. I am surprised that a cultured man like the right honorable gentleman should cast such aspersions on honorable members on this side of the House. As a member of the Government party I take strong exception to those remarks. They remind me of the speech made by the right honorable member for Cowper (Sir Earle Page) when he was Prime Minister—I think he held the office for one day—in which he attacked the present Leader of the Opposition, and the reply made by the Leader

of the Opposition on that occasion in which he likened the attack made upon him to a stream of mud. Judging from his recent attack upon members of the Government party to which I have just referred, it would appear that the Leader of the Opposition did not escape uncontaminated, because to-day he is indulging in tactics similar to those of which he accused the right honorable member for Cowper. In his unfair and unjust reference to honorable members on this side of the chamber he is himself casting mud. However, abuse is not argument; and, again, I express surprise that a man of the attainments of the right honorable gentleman should descend to such tactics. I am sure that they will react against him and the party he now leads. I repeat, that I am pledged to support the Government's banking proposals. In letters which I wrote recently to my constituents I pointed out that the propaganda being disseminated throughout the country to-day in the interests of the banks and other financial institutions is similar to that circulated throughout Australia when the Fisher Government brought down its proposals for the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank. One of my constituents, an ex-banker, replied that I was wrong in the views I expressed, but I have taken the opportunity to refresh my memory of the happenings at that time. I consulted the files of the Adelaide *Register* for 1911 which at that time was one of the leading newspapers in the Commonwealth. In the issue of that paper dated the 17th November of that year, when the Commonwealth Bank Bill was at the second-reading stage, I found the following leading article, which honorable members no doubt will perceive bears a close resemblance to the leading articles now being published in the *Melbourne Herald* and the *Sydney Sun*:

If a Commonwealth Bank is not required, it will be an expensive encumbrance fraught with possibilities of serious mischief to Australia. The proposal to create the bank unjustly conveys an implied reflection upon the business capacities of Australians, because it is undeniable that the banking facilities in existence are excellent in character and ample in scope. Obviously, if the savings of the people are to be diverted to federal purposes, the State Government will be gravely handicapped. Their difficulties in floating loans will

be increased, and consequently higher rates of interest will be demanded. The federal scheme may also lead to a material increase in the interest rates for accommodation on mortgages and other securities, and thus involve loss to the whole community.

I recall that, in 1920, interest rates on second mortgages were between 8 per cent. and 10 per cent. and on first mortgages, $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The extract continued—

From the standpoint of international law, a Commonwealth Bank is open to objection—by no means merely academic—on account of being indirectly a menace to peace. Regulations under the Hague Convention expressly enact that "private property cannot be confiscated". They safeguard the moneys of a private bank and enable its credit to endure, even through a military disaster; but clearly show that the resources of a State bank might be confiscated by a raiding expedition.

The article concluded—

If there is a genuine demand for the Commonwealth Bank—and there has been no sign of it—

The same objection is voiced to the banking proposals of the present Government—

. . . that demand proceeds from a section of the public who imagine that the institution will deal "generously" with them. Apparently, therefore, if the bank is to satisfy its most ardent advocates, it will precipitate a financial disaster, in which the fair name of the whole Commonwealth may be besmirched.

Those comments appeared in the *Register* in 1911. To-day, the *Register* is only a memory, but the Commonwealth Bank is a monument to the Fisher Government and the Commonwealth of Australia. I wholeheartedly commend the Government's banking proposals.

The views expressed by the Prime Minister on international affairs and agreements will have widespread support. If Australia is selfishly to devote itself solely to its own interests and disregard the rights of other countries, the prospect of preserving peace in the future will be remote indeed. I conclude with an extract from an article in the *Reader's Digest* of January, 1944, by Mr. William Hard, who was writing on the subject of American internationalism—

If this world means to have peace, it must first have economic well-being. I do not say that prosperity insures peace. I do say that poverty and depression are the biggest danger to peace.

Mr. Smith.

Those words admirably express my own views. One nation cannot enjoy economic security while other nations have a very low standard of living. If we put into practice the principles of the Atlantic Charter, the future of nations, including Australia, will be assured.

MR. LEMMON (Forrest) [4.50].—On behalf of the electors of Forrest, I desire to extend a welcome to His Royal Highness the Governor-General, the Duchess, and their family. When I listened to the Governor-General's Speech, the member sitting next to me remarked: "This is an historic occasion". After His Royal Highness had concluded his Speech, I commented: "This is an historic occasion for two reasons. The first is that His Royal Highness is the first member of the Royal Family to become Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. The second is that the Speech demonstrates that this Government has already, to a certain degree, given effect to the promises which it made to the members of the fighting forces and the civilian population". The Curtin Government is the only administration in the world which has already tackled the problem of rehabilitation while the nation is still at war. Therefore, I consider that the opening of the third session of the 17th Parliament will be historic.

The seventeenth paragraph of the Governor-General's Speech stated that—

Australia's role in allied strategy has called for a major effort in the feeding of the armies of liberation.

The next paragraph declared that Australia's annual expenditure on food for the services now exceeds £100,000,000. Because of the gigantic task that has been allotted to Australia, I take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the primary producers of this country. The proportion of enlistments from this section was higher than that from any other section of the community. When Australia was threatened with invasion by the Japanese, many sons of farmers enlisted in the services, and their fathers, who had ceased active farming two or three years before, again assumed the management of the properties. In doing so they have rendered excellent service.

Proof of that is to be found in the manner in which they have maintained production. I was gratified to learn that in June the Government will reconsider the present allocation of man-power; and I hope that a large percentage of men released from the services or from industry later this year will be diverted to rural industries.

Paragraph 19 of the Governor-General's Speech announced that Australia had been compelled to import grain, and members of the Country party have confidently asserted that the Scully wheat scheme was responsible for that situation. To disprove their statements, I take the only other period in the history of Australia that compared with the present time, namely, 1914. That year was the last occasion on which Australia was compelled to import grain. There was no shortage of man-power or superphosphate and no restrictions had been imposed on production. The explanation was that drought had ruined the crops. For exactly the same reason, the Commonwealth Government is obliged to import grain to-day.

MR. HOLT.—Why was the wheat acreage restricted in Western Australia?

MR. LEMMON.—When acreage restriction in Western Australia was first proposed, a representative of Western Australian wheat-growers came to Canberra. That representative was no other than Mr. Teasdale, of whom the honorable member for Barker (Mr. Archie Cameron) and the honorable member for Indi spoke as the most able wheat expert in Australia. Mr. Teasdale implored the Government to introduce a complete wheat-growing holiday in Western Australia. His view was that not a bushel of wheat should be grown in that State. However, the Western Australian wheat-growers regarded that recommendation as too drastic. The Minister for Commerce and Agriculture (Mr. Scully) listened to their plea, and restricted wheat-growing to one-third of the basic acreage. That is the reason why the one-third reduction in Western Australia was introduced.

MR. HOLT.—Does the honorable member not think that the differing rates have the effect of reducing production in the other States?

Mr. LEMMON.—Not at all. As I have said, this country is short of wheat to-day because of the reduced quantities of superphosphate available during the last three years and because of the drought. In some of the best wheat-producing lands in the Commonwealth—I am referring to certain wheat-growing areas in the eastern States—there has been a drought for two years. Last year, the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture said that farmers who had suffered because of the drought should endeavour to sow twice their former acreage.

I wish to refer now to the action of the honorable member for Indi in proclaiming to the country that there had been a "£10,000,000 wheat steal". The honorable member's propaganda methods in this regard are similar to those employed by Dr. Goebbels in Germany, namely, the use of half-truths and misstatements which, in effect, are the blackest of lies. I shall analyse briefly what he calls the wheat "steal". When he first made his allegations on the 14th September, 1944, he said—

A comparison of the estimated return from wheat which will be sold in Australia prior to 1945-46 harvest under the present policy, with the valuation of that wheat at present export value—for I am willing to accept 6s. 6d. as a fair value—will show that in the next eighteen months the wheat-growers will be the victims of a wheat "steal" of £10,000,000.

Two months later, the honorable member made another statement, in which he quoted remarks by Mr. Teasdale, whom he admits to be a wheat expert, and whom I know to be well informed not only on the wheat position in Australia, but also in regard to the wheat markets of the world. The honorable member, referring to Mr. Teasdale, said—

If the amount to be paid by the Government to the Wheat Board to bridge the gap between the concessional price for stock-feed and the average export realization be taken as the correct principle, then the Government will have to pay to the board approximately £6,850,000. If, on the other hand, the current realization of wheat sold in the free market east of Suez be taken as a basis, then the Government, to do justice to the grower, will need to pay in approximately £9,850,000 on account of the two pools 6 and 7.

In effect the honorable member said, "If the Government had taken the present realization for wheat that the board

sold two years ago" Using that argument I could say that five years ago I sold 2,000 bags of wheat to Louis Dreyfus and Company Limited for 2s. a bushel, and in the next year the price of wheat rose to 5s. a bushel, therefore Louis Dreyfus and Company Limited stole that extra 3s. a bushel from me. That, of course, is ridiculous, yet it is the basis of the argument advanced by the honorable member in support of the alleged "wheat steal". But let me examine this contention a little further. Bearing in mind that the honorable member had said on the 14th September that the wheat "steal" would take place in the ensuing eighteen months, it is interesting to note that two months later he said—

My estimate of £10,000,000 includes the succeeding No. 8 pool.

There he alleges that the wheat "steal" goes back two years to the Nos. 6 and 7 pools, and includes also the No. 8 pool. Then he changes his ground again, and says—

Thus it is shown quite clearly by one of the best informed and most experienced wheat experts in the country that on the item of stock feed sales alone the wheat-growers have been mulcted of at least £10,000,000.

First he quoted Mr. Teasdale's figure of £6,800,000, and then almost in the same breath he said that in his opinion the amount would be £10,000,000. The position is as the Government has stated, namely, that in regard to stock feed a subsidy will be paid to bring the return up to the realization price of the pool. That, of course, removes the whole basis of the honorable member's argument. However, he is still not satisfied. Although he finds that his argument is entirely wrong, he persists in talking about the alleged "steal", and he adopts another basis of argument. This time he has enlisted the support of Mr. Coles, the president of the Farmers and Settlers Association of New South Wales. Now, apparently, the "steal" is based on this argument which he addresses to the growers: "The Australian Government is only offering you 4s. 3d. a bushel, siding basis, for your wheat, whilst the Government of the United States of America is offering 9s. 6d. a bushel, the Canadian Government 5s. 9d.

a bushel, and the Government of Argentina 4s. 6d. a bushel". But let us examine those figures. In the first place, the American Government is not guaranteeing wheat-growers 9s. 6d. a bushel, but 8s. 5½d. a bushel on the basis of Australian currency. Although it is true that at a later date—probably some time this year—the price will go up to 9s. 6d., the American figures cannot be taken as parallel values. For instance, a haircut in the United States of America costs a dollar in Australian currency, and it would be just as logical for Australian barbers to say: "We are entitled to charge 6s. 6d. for a haircut, because that is the price ruling in America". Actually there cannot be any such comparison of basic values. If the United States of America is prepared to chase inflation I have no intention of assisting this country to do so. In regard to Canada the system of wheat deliveries is entirely different from that applying in Australia. The Canadian farmer has to store his own wheat. In Australia, the farmer strips his wheat, delivers it to the sidings and is paid for it. In Canada, a farmer who strips a crop averaging 18 bushels to the acre may be told to deliver one-sixth of the yield immediately. A month later he may be told to deliver a similar quantity. This instalment delivery may go on for nine or ten months, and during this time the quality of the wheat deteriorates. If it is not fair average quality when it is brought to scales, the dock is taken by the farmer. He has to pay the cost of storage and he loses the interest on the delayed realization for the period during which the wheat has been stored. Often he has to cart his wheat through snow. This system costs money to the farmer and requires extra man-power. The honorable member for Indi took no consideration of these facts when he made his comparisons. The last country he mentioned was Argentina. That country should provide a reasonable comparison with Australia, having regard to the proportion of its wheat that is exported and the relationship of wheat to the national economy. The honorable member said that the price in Argentina is 4s. 6d. a bushel on a siding basis. That is incorrect. Argentina has established a price of 4s. 6d. a bushel

delivered at ports. If we make a fair comparison, we find that Australia guarantees a price of 5s. 3d. a bushel at ports.

These are the supposed parallels which the honorable member for Indi has used in an endeavour to incite the farmers to march on Canberra. What is the motive behind all this propaganda? It is nothing more than an endeavour by the stooges of the merchants to smash organized marketing in this country. I appeal to my fellow farmers not to heed such utterances. They should stick to the policy which has been enunciated by their organizations ever since they were first formed. They should recall the story of the dog and the bone, and not drop the substance for the shadow. The International Wheat Agreement will ensure stability of prices, which will in turn provide security for the farmers and their families. By maintaining a system of organized marketing, the growers will retain a solid foundation for their industry. If they accept the policy of the so-called representatives of the farmers, who are actually doing the work of the private merchants, they will be forced to accept a fleeting price for their product and they will be at the mercy of the international wheat speculator.

His Royal Highness the Governor-General also referred to the task of rehabilitating members of the fighting forces. I was very pleased to hear this afternoon from the Minister for Supply and Shipping that Australia is already exporting double-weft cloth to New Zealand. The Government will be responsible for finding markets for many things which we are able to manufacture in Australia. I was also gratified to hear that the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture (Mr. Scully) proposed to introduce a bill dealing with wool, and that arrangements have been made by the British Ministry of Food to take 34,000 cases of apples from Western Australia for England this year, and that it will endeavour to increase that number to 72,000 cases. These facts indicate that the Government is already preparing plans for post-war reconstruction. I was also impressed

favorably when I heard the right honorable member for Cowper (Sir Earle Page) and the honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) ably expound the importance of water conservation and reticulation in Australia. Projects such as these and the standardization of railway gauges are national works which are the direct responsibility of this Parliament. I hope that, in order to handle these tasks, the Government will preserve the nucleus of the Civil Constructional Corps on the basis of voluntary enlistment in the years of peace. We can use its experience and the modern machinery which it possesses in carrying many of our post-war plans into effect. I hope also that the Government will give a high priority to the linking of the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean by a standard gauge railway passing through the national capital. I disagree with the attitude of the honorable member for Denison (Dr. Gaha) towards Canberra, because I consider that the Government should endeavour to do away with State parochialism and endeavour to develop a national outlook. One way in which it can help to do this is by establishing a standard gauge railway linking Canberra with all States.

The settlement of ex-servicemen on the land was also referred to by His Royal Highness the Governor-General. No undertaking has greater pitfalls than this. We must learn from the tragedies of the past in dealing with this problem. The complete loss to all governments in Australia involved by the land settlement schemes which followed the war of 1914-18 was £45,000,000, representing an average loss of £1,200 in respect of every soldier settler. I do not quibble at the expenditure of the money, but that loss must be an indication of the broken hopes of the men who returned from the war and tried to start life afresh on the land. I do not want to see a repetition of that tragic story as the result of allowing our boys to settle on over-capitalized holdings and eventually to find themselves in a condition of debt and despair. The Wheat and Wool Growers Union of Western Australia recently appointed a vigilance committee, which already is doing good work to prevent a recurrence of past mistakes. A soldier

who returned not long ago had between £600 and £700 with which he wanted to buy a block of land. He knew nothing about land, and he did not want assistance from the Government. He proposed to purchase an abandoned farm 16 miles from the rail-head, and the country was such that he could not possibly make a success of the enterprise. The committee induced him not to go on with it, knowing that if he did so he must lose his money, and break his heart too. When they approached a certain State officer who had recommended the property, he told us that it was no concern of ours; if the soldier had the money he could go ahead and buy the land. I hope that this Government will take action to prevent men from making mistakes of the kind that this soldier so nearly made. Men should be prevented from entering into commitments which can end only in bankruptcy, and in worry to themselves and their families.

Steps should be taken to arrange for the use of modern machinery to assist in farming operations. An organization should be set up to control modern plant that would be used to put farms into a state of production before soldier settlers took possession. Here is an example of what can be achieved by such means: With the use of government rollers, timber was rolled on a certain area for 10s. an acre, and the clearing up was done for another 5s. an acre, making a total of 15s. To have cut that timber with the axe would have cost 35s. an acre, and burning and clearing up would probably have cost another 15s. Similar economies can be achieved in the making of dams for the conservation of water. When I started farming, we used to make dams with a scoop and a team of horses, and it cost £75 to take out 1,000 yards. In later years tractors were used instead of teams, and thereby the cost was reduced to £45. To-day, by the use of a bulldozer, a similar dam can be excavated for £10. If suitable machinery be used under supervision there need not be any financial loss on soldier settlement.

I hope that once the men are placed upon the farms, local committees of experienced men will be set up to assist and advise them. In the past, the policy was

to appoint as advisers to soldier settlers men who had academic qualifications—perhaps they were bachelors of agriculture—but they lacked practical experience. Such men were deputed to advise the settler how to grow wheat or to run a dairy farm. The fact is that when a man leaves the university he knows nothing about farming—he has only got ready to begin learning. The man who knows something about farming is he who has been on the land for ten, fifteen, or twenty years. When I left the agricultural college, I thought I understood farming. Now, after I have been farming for seventeen years, I realize that I am only beginning to learn something about it. These committees of experienced men should tell the new settler what land ought to be cleared for cultivation, and what land should be left under timber, and they should advise the settler generally on his farming operations. In this way many of the problems which beset soldier settlers after the last war would never arise.

We have heard during this debate many references to the declining birthrate in Australia, and the need for a greater population. Some speakers have asserted that Australia could support a population of as many as 100,000,000. I believe that if there is a continuation of dust storms—which arise from wind erosion—and of water erosion, which is the washing away of the soil in our fertile valleys, and the silting up of our rivers we shall be fortunate if, 50 years hence, Australia can support a population of 10,000,000 people. It is possible that soil erosion, unless something be done to check it, will eventually convert much of the fertile wheat lands of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales into a sandy waste. Soil erosion is much more dangerous to the future of Australia than are the bombs falling on Berlin to the future of Germany. The destruction of a city represents no more than the waste of labour and of concrete and steel. The damage can be quickly repaired, but when we lose the top layer of soil from our countryside, we lose the work of nature over centuries. This top layer of fertile soil, which is being blown away in dust storms, consists of decomposed or oxidized rock, plus humus, which is

decayed animal and vegetable matter that has been acted on by bacteria. These minute organisms, which can be detected only by the microscope, are present in humus in enormous numbers, and it is they which maintain the balance and productivity of the soil. They create organic matter which distinguishes the top soil, which is productive, from the sub-soil, which is non-productive. If Australia goes on losing this top layer of soil, which is being blown out over the Pacific Ocean, and sometimes even gets as far as New Zealand, where it becomes a valuable top-dressing for pastures, there will be a gradual decline of productivity. Crops will yield less, pastures will become poor so that they will carry fewer stock, and the stock themselves will be of poorer quality. They will become less resistant to disease, and will have less food value. Erosion is tending all the time to destroy the balance which nature maintains in the soil. It removes chemical properties which are necessary in plant life, if those plants are to nourish healthy animals.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind honorable members that age-old Egyptian cities are to-day choked with sand as the result of soil erosion, because the people of ancient times, in their ignorance, robbed the soil instead of farming it, thus upsetting the balance of Nature. The Roman Empire made a desert of North Africa in the very same way. In recent years, we have the spectacle of the dust bowl of the United States of America, caused by the exploitation of the soil, not through ignorance, but under economic pressure. Are we in Australia to remain blind to these lessons? I think not.

We know the reasons for soil erosion. It is caused, in the main, by economic conditions which lead to the exploitation of the soil through over-cropping and over-stocking. A good deal is due to the instability of markets which force farmers to depart from sound principles of farming, and to follow unsound methods in order to get a higher return in the immediate future so as to meet their financial commitments. The remedy does not lie in giving lectures, or in exhibiting films, or in distributing pamphlets, or in radio broadcasts. It lies in practical demonstrations by officers of the Agricultural Departments, and in the

improvement of economic conditions in marginal farming areas so that men may be able to make farming pay while still following good farming practices. I hope that the Government will set up an authority under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research for the purpose of collating the researches carried out by the various State Departments of Agriculture.

[*Extension of time granted.*]

To sum up, I suggest that the compulsory wheat pool should be continued, with a guaranteed minimum price, in order to provide stability in the post-war period for primary producers. The Government should establish a Commonwealth Wheat Research Institute under the direction of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, for the purpose of improving the milling qualities of Australian wheat. It should maintain a nucleus of the Civil Constructional Corps as an organization on a voluntary basis to tackle the post-war job of land settlement, standardization of railway gauges, and water conservation and reticulation. We should use local knowledge for advising soldier settlers on methods of cultivation, and to advise them which areas should be left under timber because, if they were cleared, they would erode. We should set up a Commonwealth commission under the Department of Post-war Reconstruction to tackle soil erosion on a national basis. These practical suggestions will, I hope, be of assistance to the Government when it is preparing legislation to give effect to the policy outlined in the Speech of the Governor-General.

Mr. RIORDAN (Kennedy) [5.27].—I support the motion, and I join with other honorable members in welcoming to Australia their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, and the members of their family. I trust that their stay here will be enjoyable, and that when they leave they will carry away with them many happy memories.

The Governor-General, in his Speech, mentioned the drought which has caused such serious loss in many parts of the Commonwealth. The problem of drought is not a new one in Australia. It may be said to be a part of our heritage.

Every year some part of Australia is affected by drought. When the country is gripped by a severe drought, much is said and written about the need to take precautions to meet such a situation; but when the rains come, all proposals for grappling with the problem are put on one side and forgotten till drought recurs. Only last year, this Parliament voted money for the relief of drought-stricken areas, but the people in many parts of Australia which are subject to drought received no assistance from the Commonwealth or from the State governments. In time of drought hundreds of families are ruined by conditions over which they have no control, but those conditions might be controlled or mitigated by government action. This Parliament should deal with the matter as a national problem, or it could act in association with the State governments. It is my earnest wish that the National Parliament should deal with the problems of drought and soil erosion in a national way. The present Government has already improved the lot of a considerable section of the people, but I now appeal to it to give serious consideration to the need for investigation of all proposals advanced for the purpose of mitigating the effects of drought. During the last parliamentary sittings great duststorms, the like of which had never previously been experienced, occurred in certain parts of Australia. It was stated by the honorable member for Forrest (Mr. Lemmon) that those storms carried away the top soil of fertile farms in Victoria and New South Wales, much of which was blown into the ocean. The question has been asked whether there is a dust bowl in Australia. I am convinced that there is, and that it is centred in the Lake Eyre district in Central Australia. Sand from that area has been blown into Queensland and New South Wales, and even Victoria has been affected. In South Australia, many farmers have been forced to leave their homes because of the sand deposited by means of windstorms. The brown soil plains in the gibber country are interspersed at intervals of many chains, and, in some places, miles, with sand dunes from which the sand is moving in the direction of New South Wales and South Australia, and

even the pastoral areas of Queensland and Victoria are threatened. Those men who are courageous enough to work on the frontiers of Australia for the purpose of carrying on primary production are concerned about the approach of this sand from the Lake Eyre district.

The late Dr. Bradfield left valuable proposals for the improvement of the position. He achieved an international reputation, and has left many monuments in Australia, one of which is his scheme for the preservation of our heritage by mitigating the effects of drought and thus saving the people of this country many millions of pounds. If no action be taken to grapple with the problem of soil erosion, the present devastation will continue until the more fertile portions of the continent are affected. The time is long overdue for a complete investigation of Dr. Bradfield's proposals. They were not hurriedly prepared. He himself declared that for 30 years he had given thought to the problem, having ridden through most of the northern portion of Queensland on horseback, and walked over a great area of the country. He came to the conclusion that water which now runs to waste into the Pacific Ocean on the eastern side of the Great Dividing Range in far northern Queensland, should be diverted to the western portion of that State. That would make a greatly increased population possible in that part of Queensland, and lead to the preservation of the pastoral industry. *The Battle for the Inland*, written by F. R. V. Timbury, should be read by every honorable member. The scheme outlined by Dr. Bradfield appears as an appendix to that book. Timbury refers not only to the Bradfield scheme, but also to the proposals in Ion Idriess' book, *The Great Boomerang*, and urges that the Government should take action to implement those schemes. I hope that the Government will, as soon as possible, appoint a committee, if not a royal commission, of expert and practical men for the purpose of investigating the proposals of Bradfield and Idriess. Timbury's book is a valuable contribution to the literature dealing with the development of this continent.

Dr. Bradfield first proposed that the floodwaters of the Tully, Herbert, Burdekin and Clarke rivers, at about the 1,400-ft. level on the coastal side of the Great Dividing Range in north Queensland, should be diverted. To-day those waters rush away to the Pacific Ocean and no use is made of them. At present those rivers are in flood. The flood in the Clarke River is 50 feet high, and the people at Wyandotte Station have been forced to leave the homestead, because of the rapid rise of the river level. Rail and road traffic has been dislocated. Ten spans have been washed from one bridge. Dr. Bradfield suggested that these waters, taken at the 1,400 foot level, should be diverted by means of a tunnel to Western Queensland. They could thus be directed to the head waters of the Flinders River, which flows in a westerly direction, thus filling all the water courses and storage basins from Hughenden through Winton and Longreach, and down through Central Australia towards Lake Eyre. It was suggested that the tropical downpours experienced in far northern Queensland should be utilized, so that the conserved water could be used in some of the finest pastoral country in Queensland. One recalls the valuable work done by the Chaffey brothers along the river Murray. Ernestine Hill in her book *Water into Gold*, tells the story of their trials and tribulations and the success which they eventually achieved. By water conservation much can be done to improve the population-carrying capacity of Australia. I agree with the honorable member for Forrest that if no action be taken to preserve our heritage Australia may not in the near future be able to carry even its present population.

Dr. Bradfield further suggested the storage of the waters that fall in the MacDonnell and Musgrave Ranges in Glen Helen Gorge, Simpson's Gap, the Finke River and the Valley of the Palms, and their use for irrigation in Central Australia. He also proposed that dams should be built on the Cooper River at Kullymurra Gorge, Innamincka, in South Australia, backing up the water over an area of 100 miles by 40 miles beyond the Queensland border. Similar dams could be constructed on Strezlecki

Creek, below Innamincka, at Hunter's Gorge on the Diamantina, south-west of Winton, and on the Georgina near Marion Downs. In Western Australia, dams could be built on the Ashburton, Fortescue and other rivers. The honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) has told the House what has already been done in the north-west of Western Australia, and has already indicated how thousands of people could be settled on the land in that vulnerable area. An expert appointed by the Government of Western Australia has been carrying out experiments in the northern portion of that State. The honorable member gave an indication as to the carrying capacity of the Kimberleys, and the area which would be served by the Bradfield scheme. Dr. Bradfield thought that the water should be stored above ground. He contended that the terrific heat in that part of Australia would evaporate an enormous quantity of the stored water and that it would fall as rain.

Dr. Bradfield's conclusions have been supported by Mr. E. T. Quayle, an Australian scientist, who has investigated rainfall problems and has made a study of inland Australia. Dr. Griffith Taylor, of the Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology, in his *Atlas of Contour and Rainfall Map of Australia*, issued by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in 1918, also supports the contention of Mr. Quayle and Dr. Bradfield that the enormous evaporation from large bodies of water will inevitably precipitate rain and bring about a humidity from which dew would be precipitated to the benefit of vegetation. In western Queensland artesian water is used for stock purposes but great difficulty is experienced in drought periods, when there is insufficient rain to produce the herbage necessary to maintain flocks and herds. As was pointed out by Dr. Bradfield, much of the water which falls as rain seeps away and eventually reaches the artesian basins. Much of the water stored in the canals would be evaporated. This would produce humidity, and a reduction of the mean average temperature. Living conditions would then be much more tolerable than they are at the present time, particularly in the

Mr. Riordan.

summer months of the year. I quote Bradfield's summing-up, published in Timbury's work—

Thunderstorms would become more frequent when the inland air is better supplied with moisture, or, when winds blow over the sea, added moisture of the air from off the ocean would augment the inland moisture and make the precipitation of the rain more certain. In this way the water conserved will be used over and over again, and moisture in the arid inland will be augmented and maintained at such a level that the rainfall will slowly, at first, but steadily progress. Once Australia has irrigation schemes numerous and comprehensive enough to make an impression favorable to the country in the areas where such schemes are practicable, the amelioration will become marked. The converse is likewise true. Droughts are cumulative in their results, and as long as there are no projects completed that are of sufficient size to combat and master the drought conditions, they will prevail, and become emphasized year by year.

The present drought in the western district of New South Wales is regarded as the worst experienced since 1902. Apparently, this bears out Bradfield's contention that drought conditions become more emphasized year after year unless large projects are undertaken to mitigate their effects. I urge the Government to investigate these schemes, not cast them aside as an opium smoker's dream. Arguments have been advanced for and against the proposals. I shall not attempt to canvass any of them; that is a task for an expert. Too many newspaper correspondents condemn such projects out of hand. They pose as authorities upon matters on which they have not the necessary qualifications to express an opinion. Idriess is a well-known Australian author, digger, traveller and prospector, with a wide knowledge and experience of this continent. In *The Great Boomerang*, he suggests that the waters should be taken from the same area and turned into the same rivers as Bradfield mentioned, but at a much lower level. His view is, that in central Queensland the flood-waters of the Bellyando, Mackenzie and other rivers should be diverted into the Thompson and the Barcoo, which flow past Longreach, thus augmenting the supply of water to central Australia. He also suggests that the waters of the northern rivers which flow into the Gulf of Carpentaria should be diverted into the Diamantina and other rivers which flow in the direction of Lake Eyre. He

contends that this diversion would make it possible for all storage basins, including Lake Eyre and even beyond, to be filled, and that the resultant stream would find its way to within 65 miles of the coast of South Australia. I have heard it suggested that water should be pumped from New Guinea to central Australia. I am not qualified either to support or to oppose such a scheme. Bradfield proposed to divert 5,000,000,000 tons of water annually into western Queensland, and Idriess proposed the diversion of a further 5,000,000,000 tons. It has been argued that the building of a tunnel would present difficulties. There are tunnels in other parts of the world. The St. Gotthard tunnel is 9½ miles in length, and the Simplon tunnel has a length of 12½ miles. American engineers have tunneled under the Hudson River, and through the Rockies and the Andes. In Colorado, water has been diverted into the arid Montrose district, through a number of tunnels 6 miles in length. In India, the Solani aqueduct, 65 yards wide, carries the Ganges canal over the Solani River. In Russia, Moscow and other inland towns have become seaports by virtue of the construction of canals from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The Tennessee dam, constructed by the Tennessee Valley Authority, was financed wholly by the Government of the United States of America. In the Tennessee valley the water is backed up for 1,100 miles. The height of the highest dam is 800 feet, and that of the lowest is 300 feet, the drop of 500 feet being spread over 650 miles. The objects of the schemes propounded by Bradfield and Idriess were, to minimize the effects of drought by conserving rainfall, halt the extension of the dust bowl by preventing soil erosion, and above all assist the development of the inland portions of the continent. If an investigation of them led to a favorable report being made, no time should be lost in implementing them. We know full well that there are difficulties of man-power and supply. If these are insuperable at present, this should be one of the first post-war projects to be put in hand. I am confident that an investigation would establish the soundness and worth of the proposals.

The average Australian rainfall is about 18 inches; 32 per cent. of Australia has a rainfall of more than 20 inches, 32 per cent. an average of from 10 inches to 20 inches, and about 36 per cent. under 10 inches. If other countries can undertake such schemes, we should be prepared to do likewise. Diversion of waters as suggested by Bradfield and Idriess would make possible the irrigation of some of the best pastoral lands of Queensland, which will grow anything. I know the country thoroughly. It has open rolling downs, with black soil feet thick in some portions of it. In other parts, the soil is a sandy loam. I have been informed by one who ought to be able to speak authoritatively that the area through which this water would pass is much more fertile than the area served by the Tennessee valley dam. Yet we are hesitant, because the estimated cost of the project is about £30,000,000. Year in and year out, millions of pounds is lost as the result of drought, and millions of acres of land is blown to sea. If these schemes were implemented, those who are carrying on the pastoral industry would be able to plant and conserve fodder, and they would not feel the effects of drought as they do to-day, when it is not possible for them to secure the water that they need, or to be assured of rainfall which would enable fodder crops to be harvested. Agriculture could be developed in country which to-day is devoted wholly and solely to pastoral pursuits. We have seen what has happened at Griffith and Leeton, where the supply of water led to the springing up of new towns and the establishment of new industries. We mouth platitudes about the decentralization of population and industry after the war, but I know that development along those lines is part and parcel of the Government's post-war policy. The inland is crying out for development. Timbury, in his book, appeals to the people of Australia to realize that they are facing a calamity. If effect were given to the schemes proposed by these two great Australians, we should go a long way towards mitigating the effects of any impending calamity. Decentralization of population would follow. The drift

of population from western Queensland has been very marked for a long period. If water were diverted to the west, that portion of the continent would be revitalized, and population would return to it. We should also be able to sustain a policy of migration, and carry out works of vital national importance.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 8 p.m.

Mr. RIORDAN.—There is a great shortage of houses throughout the Commonwealth. I can speak feelingly on this subject because I myself have been a victim of that shortage. Much has been said and written on the subject, and I am aware that the demand on our timber stocks for defence purposes is so great that timber has to be imported. I know, too, that there is a great shortage of building trade workers, due to the fact that so many artisans are either in the fighting services or are engaged on high priority defence work. By the time that the present shortage of 300,000 houses is met, probably another 200,000 will be required. [*Extension of time granted.*] I realize that in time of war the paramount consideration must be the defence of the country, but in time of peace the first consideration should be the health and well-being of the community. Proper housing is essential to a healthy nation. I well recall a conversation which I had some years ago with Dr. Watson Brown, who was then practising at Longreach, in western Queensland. He told me that he had carried out an investigation of the health of the children in western Queensland, and in the course of our talk he pictured the conditions under which women in northern and western Queensland had to live and work in corrugated iron cottages. In the summer time, when the temperature is high, the cooking of a meal on a hot stove is not a pleasant job. The appalling housing conditions which exist in many of the outback parts of the Commonwealth should be remedied, and I am glad that the present Government proposes to tackle this problem in a national way by the introduction of a Commonwealth housing scheme. Some years ago the Bruce-Page Government won an election on its promise to provide houses for the people. It is true that legislation

was passed, but nothing was done to implement it. The present Government has not only promised to provide houses for those in need of them, but it has also appointed a Housing Commission to prepare a practicable housing scheme. Some members of that body visited north Queensland, but unfortunately they did not visit the western part of that State. In my opinion, housing conditions in western Queensland should be investigated, and I appeal to the Government to arrange for that to be done. In designing houses it is important that the district in which they are to be erected shall be considered. Many architects with a knowledge of climatic conditions in and around Brisbane may know nothing of the conditions which obtain at Cairns, 1,100 miles farther north. As Cairns is as far from Brisbane as is Melbourne, honorable members will realize how greatly the climatic conditions of Cairns and Melbourne must differ. Houses are being built at Cairns under the Commonwealth scheme, but, unfortunately, they are not suitable for tropical regions. The by-laws of the Cairns City Council provide for a mean height of 10 feet between floor and ceiling, but the houses which are being erected there by the commission have only 9-ft. walls. Most houses in the district have 12 feet between floor and ceiling. Some years ago the Queensland Government established a Workers Dwellings Department, and remarkably good work has been done by that body. Recently it has been re-organized with a view to undertaking an extended building programme. As a result of its activities the percentage of workers who own their own homes, or are buying homes, is greater in Queensland than in any other State. I congratulate the Government on the introduction of its housing scheme.

The Speech of His Royal Highness shows that the foresight and courage which have characterized the Government hitherto will be applied to the problems of the future. At the last elections the Government was given the greatest vote of confidence ever accorded to any government, and, when the next appeal is made to the electors, I am confident that an even more striking indication of their

confidence in the Government will be given. Everywhere that I go throughout the Commonwealth I hear people say that they intend to continue to support the Curtin Government. The workers desire the Government to carry on with its good work, and at the next elections the Government will be given another mandate.

Mr. ABBOTT.—Has the honorable member anything to say on the Government's banking proposals?

Mr. RIORDAN.—The Standing Orders do not permit me to anticipate the debate on a subject already on the notice-paper.

When the Menzies Government occupied the treasury bench we heard and also read a good deal in the press of the need for a "new order", but to-day very little is said about a "new order", although we hear howls about socialism. The emaciated socialist tiger has been dug up from the political cemetery. All the old party political claptrap is wheeled out again by the Opposition in an attempt to gull the people. I am confident that if the policy outlined in the Speech of His Royal Highness is put into operation the verdict of the people given at the last elections will be repeated and with greater emphasis when the next appeal to them is made.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON (Barker) [8.11].—The arrival of a Royal Governor-General in this country, is new to Australian political history. As one who descended from the Jacobites, I welcome the brother of the King. In due course, after His Royal Highness has carried out the duties assigned to him in a manner befitting a member of the present Royal Family, I suppose that the Commonwealth will have another Governor-General; and some of us look forward with interest to what will happen then. I shall not discuss that matter now, but honorable members opposite will know what I mean.

I desire to refer particularly to two matters, first, the position which confronts us in regard to external affairs, and, secondly, the control and use of the Australian Army. Since the war began there has been an extensive development of the external activities of the Commonwealth. We have sent Ministers and

High Commissioners to many countries to which we had not thought of sending representatives when war broke out five and a half years ago. That development has taken place without any debate in this Parliament. Very little attention has been paid by either House of the Parliament to an activity which, for good or ill, will affect the future of Australia for several generations. It stands second only in importance to certain aspects of the conduct of the present war. We have now gone so far along the road to victory that we can form some idea of what the state of the world will be after our enemies have been defeated. Two years ago we could not safely have done so. The future of the British Empire is our first concern. It has been proved—I hope to the satisfaction of every honorable member in this chamber—that the security of the Commonwealth, so far as we can foresee the future, lies in our membership of the British Empire or the British Commonwealth of Nations. Call it what you like. It is only a matter of names. I prefer the old name, "British Empire", under which I was brought up. Every development in the war or the realm of external affairs proves the absolute necessity for better understanding and very much closer co-operation between the British Dominions and the Motherland than has existed up to date. That co-operation has to be based on complete freedom and on a complete understanding of our own requirements and those of the other dominions. I believe that can be achieved. Last year the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) went to London and took part in certain imperial discussions—I hope, for the benefit of this country. We fully realize that under war-time conditions we cannot be told publicly so much about some things as we may desire to hear. The conditions that will prevail after this war will affect the British Empire vitally. At one time, we were all very proud to belong to an Empire on which the sun never sets. Its vast spread was considered to be a great safeguard. To-day it has other implications. The British Empire contains elements of great danger, unless the situation is properly handled. Means of communication and the speed of transport have

increased under war-time conditions; the inventive genius of man always finds scope in inventing means of destruction, at a greater rate and in a better way than in peace-time. That has been true of air transport in this war, as it was true in the war of 1914-18, and I think that it would prove to be true if the next generation were unfortunate enough to be involved in another war 20 or 30 years hence. The British Dominions are dispersed throughout the world. They must live dispersed lives, according to their individual conditions. The cardinal principle, which I want the House to realize, is that henceforth there must be no half-measures and that Great Britain and the Dominions must be in a condition whereby they can unite for defence against any possible combination of powers which may face them. When this war broke out, it is undeniable that that state of affairs did not exist. Many people, particularly on the other side of the House, absolutely scouted the idea of the necessity of any arrangement of that sort or the likelihood of war in our time. They proved to be quite wrong.

The next important point in the field of external relations is the position that will be occupied by two other great Powers after the war. The first is the United States of America. Before the war it exercised great control from the Arctic to the Antarctic through the two Americas; but after the war, as the result of bases which it has acquired, and, I believe, will acquire in consequence of the peace treaties when they are signed, it will have not only a north-south territorial area to look after, but also a great sea responsibility extending from the East Indies eastward through the Panama Canal to the West Indies. In other words, it will possess land and sea power over one-half of the globe. It will have great responsibilities in all areas in which it is concerned. The other change will be that which has taken place in the position of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as the result of the progress of the war. It alone of the three great Powers is determined to extend its territories in many directions, a striking contrast to the international attitude of ourselves and that of

the United States of America. No one questions that the English-speaking countries of the world are endeavouring to produce a state of affairs in which the small nations will have equal rights with the great nations, in which their peoples will be able to live in security, to own their lands, to trade, to develop industries, perhaps to migrate and to invest abroad under conditions which will be pre-eminently satisfactory to them. I refer particularly to some of the nations in Europe. But that is not the basis on which Russian foreign policy is founded. To-day on the eastern frontier we see a line of occupations and what will probably be annexures running through Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary and Rumania, and we do not know whether they will rest just there. So that cardinal fact must be borne in mind by all Australians if they are to have a clear grasp of what may emerge from the forthcoming peace conference. Too many of our people do not fully understand the external affairs problem. It is not merely a matter of relationship between us and some other country per medium of a Minister or a High Commissioner. It goes much deeper than that. It involves very much more than everyday affairs. There are problems of communications, transport, trade and commerce barriers, immigration laws, airlines, postal services and all that sort of thing, which are eminently bound up with the problem of external affairs. So as we endeavour to put into force a policy which impinges on the spheres of influences of any other nation in any of those respects we begin to trespass. Before long we shall require to give consideration to the result of the deliberations at the Dumbarton Oaks and the Bretton Woods conferences, the nature of which I am not able to ascertain. I have applied to the External Affairs Department, through the Minister, a couple of times for information. It has been promised, but I have not yet received it. Whether other honorable gentlemen are better informed, I do not know. That observation leads me to this. I want the Government sooner or later to face this question—Is its idea of post-war

problems to be based on the practice of open diplomacy or secret diplomacy? That is question No. 1.

Mr. POLLARD.—What would the honorable member advise?

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I am not giving my policy at the moment. No doubt, after the honorable member comes back from San Francisco, he will be only too anxious to give his advice.

Mr. CONELAN.—Do not be jealous.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I am not a bit jealous. We need to decide whether we shall adopt a system of open or secret diplomacy. The Commonwealth Parliament has not discussed that vital matter. That brings to a head the question whether we are to have private negotiation for trade treaties, and that sort of thing. They are intimately bound together. A fair proportion of the time we spend talking here should be regularly devoted to developments in the realm of external affairs, but that is not done. Such debate is squeezed out by the system under which we work. Time is taken up with questions. Ministers make most important pronouncements on foreign relations, move that the papers be printed, and never allow the subjects involved to be debated until the day on which Parliament adjourns. That is not a state of affairs under which there can be intelligent understanding of external affairs. I do not go so far as to say that our mentality is atrophied by the system, but, if more time is not devoted by this Parliament to the all-important problem of international affairs, it may easily become atrophied. We see important documents laid before us as last year we had laid before us the famous Australian-New Zealand Agreement, known as the "Anzac Pact". I will not go into the merits of that agreement, for I doubt whether it has any. It was signed in this chamber beneath kleig lights and before moving picture cameras. The Minister for Transport (Mr. Ward) took several minutes to read it through before he would sign it, but no time has ever been devoted by this House to its consideration. I raise that point specifically, because it is known that two senior Commonwealth Ministers have lately left for the other side of the world.

We know that they are going to an Imperial conference to be held somewhere. Afterwards they will go to a conference at San Francisco which will be attended by the representatives of certain nations. When those Ministers come back they must bring reports to Parliament. Are we to have a state of affairs in which those matters will not be discussed in this House. In days gone by that system did not prevail. One of the most important intra-Imperial documents ever signed was the Ottawa Agreement, but that was the subject of many days' debate before it became law as a schedule to an act of this Parliament.

The next thing to which I refer is the question of the negotiation or imposition of peace. I am not sure which word will be best suited to the event. None of us may be very well informed on that. Perhaps honorable gentlemen on the treasury bench will not be much better informed than we shall be. We read a lot in the press and hear discussions over the air about whether we should have a soft peace or a hard peace. I am not moved by either adjective. If we are to avoid a recurrence of what the world has suffered over the last five and a half years what is needed is that the peace shall be just and nothing else. That is the important thing. Therefore the part that we are to play in the negotiations or the part that we are to play after the terms have been decided by other powers is something to which this House should pay some attention, because we may very easily be caught up in events over which we have exercised no supervision, and to which we have given no thought. It will be too late for the Commonwealth Government to say after the event: "That is very unfortunate, but certain things have been done and we were not fully informed or did not fully inform Parliament". It stands to reason, in my view, that the very first thing in any peace terms which will be negotiated or imposed after the war is what is to be done about naval armament. My own view, perhaps not orthodox, but not without historical justification, is that in the present state of the world there is no necessity for the maintenance of naval armaments by more than two powers.

Those two powers are Great Britain and the United States of America. It would be in the interest of world peace if the naval policing of the world were entrusted to those two powers. We should not then have the set of circumstances which has faced the world for a long time under which there tends to grow up between great powers, or between small powers, a competition in the provision of naval armaments for defence, or offence, as the case may be. These two powers have proved through their record during this war that neither is out for territorial aggrandizement, or the conquest of any other country. Each is out to secure only its own, and to see that the inoffensive peoples of Europe and other countries in the world are left to live and develop in peace. Wherever the Navy at any time of the world's history has entered into defence operations it has had a very important bearing on the outcome of any war in which it has been able to engage. Holding those views, I believe that it is advisable that there should not be any competition in naval armament when the war is over.

The next point that comes up for consideration is what is known as the Atlantic Charter. In that respect I do not know where the Commonwealth of Australia stands to-day. There was a lot said about the Atlantic Charter from the treasury bench not so many months ago, but for the past few months there has been a very significant silence indeed. I should be very much intrigued to know whether all powers allied and associated with us at present have accepted the principles of the Atlantic Charter, and whether such powers have agreed to carry out its principles, particularly with respect to countries which some of them are overrunning to-day. No man can read the terms of peace to which Rumania or Finland has agreed, and to which it appears Poland, will be compelled to agree, without feeling in his heart that there has been a serious and violent violation of one of the most important terms of the Atlantic Charter. That is the freedom under which people are to decide their own form of government, and the allegiance they will offer to other governments. The Polish question has been referred to in this House. I recall the debate which

took place on external affairs in May, 1939, before the war broke out. On that occasion I told the House why I was opposed to the Polish guarantee. It was for the simple reason that we were going to sign a guarantee which we could never carry out; and that has been proved by events. Whatever may be our feelings with regard to the Polish question, the future of Poland will not be decided by what the English-speaking peoples of the world think to be right or just. The future of Poland is being decided elsewhere, just as the future of Rumania, Hungary and some other countries are being decided by the same people in the same place. One of the cardinal lessons of world history is this: a country like East Prussia cannot be taken and handed over to a foreign country. We cannot settle a problem of that kind by simply saying that we are going to give a part of Poland to Russia, and compensate Poland by handing over to it part of East Prussia. We know the story of the lost provinces in northern Italy; and we know what Alsace-Lorraine means between France and Germany. Is it to be the deliberate policy of one of the three great Allies in this war that it will create another problem, another festering cancer, on the Baltic of the type that must result under the conditions which we understand are to be imposed? It is with great regret that I refer to a matter like this, because I realize as well as any other honorable member that the fate of Poland, or any of the Balkan or Baltic States, is not going to be determined by anything we say here. It is not; but we are parties to certain international agreements. We did accept the Atlantic Charter; and some people will want to know exactly what we propose to do about it. It is a question which we cannot answer by shelving it. It will come up for solution in due course.

The next point is with respect to the part that Unrra is to play in the rehabilitation of the devastated countries. I do not think that a bill was ever introduced into this Parliament with more fanfare of trumpets and greater show than was the case in respect of that bill. It went through this House without a proper explanation. With the cast-iron majority

which the Government has, and which is as subservient as any majority possibly could be, it stands to reason that any measure the Government introduces, which receives not only the ministerial imprimatur but also the imprimatur of caucus, is bound to become the law of this country.

Mr. BURKE.—We shall hear to-morrow from honorable members opposite that a wild caucus dominates the Cabinet.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—Whenever I look at the Opposition benches I feel that I am looking at some of the members of the proposed advisory council of the Commonwealth Bank. The measure relating to Unrra had hardly become law when the Attorney-General (Dr. Evatt) who introduced it, and recommended it to this House in unqualified terms, went to Lapstone, in New South Wales, and made some of the most scathing comments about that organization that could have been made by any responsible Minister. The Attorney-General has disappeared to parts, perhaps, unknown, but the identity of which we may guess; but there has been no explanation from the right honorable gentleman as to why he went to Lapstone and gave such a thorough thrashing to his very favoured infant then only a few weeks old.

Mr. ABBOTT.—He wanted to draw attention from the Government.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I think that he was more inclined to focus attention on himself than to draw it from the Government. That is something which the Attorney-General at some future date, if his onerous duties of putting the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Russia and China in proper order will allow him to attend to matters like this, might very well use for the instruction and edification of this chamber.

One of the important terms of peace to which I referred in passing concerned East Prussia. There will be a lot of talk as to what we are to do with Germany, Italy and Japan. If there is to be any chance of security in the post-war world, one of the important things that must be undertaken is the national control of the armaments industry.

Mr. CONELAN.—Socialism.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—Honorable members opposite need not get excited. One practice which, no doubt, has been conducive towards the breeding of military disturbance in certain of the smaller countries has been the export of armaments from several of the bigger countries. My own personal view, which honorable gentlemen can take for what it is worth—and I am not endeavouring to speak for the party to which I belong—

Mr. SHEEHAN.—What party is that?

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I have been in five parties in eighteen years. In fact it is one of the points, perhaps, on which I should qualify to challenge the Prime Minister of Great Britain, because I doubt if he has been in so many parties. If I had my way, the export of arms from countries like Great Britain and the United States of America ought to be prohibited by the governments of those countries. This is a matter to which the Commonwealth Parliament also ought to devote some attention, because we have a right to put our case on the matter before an Imperial Conference. I believe that the strongest way of giving effect to the policy of Australia will be by holding more conferences between the Dominions and the Motherland, and thereat arriving at uniform policies before entering international conferences. We should go into international conferences as a united British Empire, determined on some line of policy. We should not go into such conferences as so many different British communities who have not agreed upon anything, but can only say that we agree to differ. A disunited British Empire after this war is over will be a menace to the peace and security of the world, just as I believe that a similar menace will be the right of any company, or government, to export arms outside the country in which they are manufactured.

The forthcoming conference at San Francisco may be looked upon as a kind of prologue to world peace. I do not know. I have my doubts as to when peace will actually be declared. After the fighting ceases, there might be a long period if not of anarchy, at any rate of great internal disturbance, in many of the countries which have been overrun,

and, of course, in the conquered countries with which we are at war to-day. That is inevitable. I also put it to honorable members that before we are through with the war, notwithstanding what the newspapers now say, the German Army might give a very different twist to the meaning of Fortress Europe from that which we have had up to date. The ground now being approached by the Allies on the Western Front lends itself to easy defence. Therefore, I am not satisfied that the war is going to end on, say, Friday week. The representatives of many governments are to meet in San Francisco, but so far as I am able to judge, there is no informed world opinion as to what they should do. So far as the representatives of this country are concerned—and I do not say this in a party political, or personal, sense—there is no informed opinion in the Commonwealth of Australia as to what ought to be done at the San Francisco conference or any other similar conference after this war is over or before it ends. The reason for that is chiefly because no debate has taken place in this Parliament on the matters to be discussed. So, as honorable members, we present to our constituents, and as a nation we present to the world, the spectacle of sending Ministers abroad without instructions being given to them by the Parliament that they represent. They may have received instructions from the Government, but events even during the lifetime of the Curtin Government have shown that when it came to a "show-down", something which Ministers wanted to do was not what their supporters wanted to do. I do not say that that will happen very often. Sometimes I wish to the Lord that it would happen, but it does not. But that possibility will be borne in mind by the representatives of other countries who will meet the representatives of the Commonwealth at San Francisco. A great variety of government representatives are going to San Francisco.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—The honorable member personifies the saying, "The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be".

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I wish that the Minister for Home Security would not talk in his sleep. At the San

Francisco conference, this Government will be represented by two senior Ministers. The Opposition also will send representatives to the conference. Personally, I am opposed to members of the Opposition in this Parliament attending the conference under the conditions that have been laid down for them. [*Extension of time granted.*] I believe in the rather outmoded idea that the Government is in office and should govern. It should take the responsibility for its administration. The Opposition should not take part in things which it cannot control or influence. The decision as to who should represent the country at such a conference should be made by the Government. The delegation should consist of government nominees, and should give effect to the policy of the Government, and nobody else. No honorable member who goes from this side of the House will be able to commit a future Parliament. He cannot say what will be done by a majority of members of the Liberal party when we occupy the treasury bench, as no doubt we shall after the next elections. In order to do so, we shall have to double our numbers, and that will mean an infusion of new blood and new ideas. Therefore, we face a future which perhaps is not easily predictable.

I pass now to the other important matter with which I desire to deal, namely, the position of the Australian Army. In view of remarks reported in the press recently, and attributed to the Chief of the Air Staff, I may have something to say later about the Royal Australian Air Force, but I shall reserve those comments until the Minister for Air (Mr. Drakeford) makes in this chamber the statement that to-day he promised to prepare. A good deal of confused thinking is evident in what has been said by Ministers. I have listened to nearly every speaker—I have seldom been out of the chamber—and I could be excused for thinking at one moment that the waging of the present campaign in the South-West Pacific Area is entirely the responsibility of General MacArthur, and a few minutes later, that the campaign is the sole responsibility of the Government.

Frankly, I do not know what is the set-up for the control of the Australian forces. I was rather interested to note that the honorable member for Warringah (Mr. Spender) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) could not agree upon what had been done at recent meetings of the Advisory War Council. So, if the great actors behind the scenes are unable to agree, then honorable members like myself may be permitted to question the whole foundation on which this structure of control or direction of the war rests.

Mr. CONELAN.—The honorable member knows why the Prime Minister and the honorable member for Warringah could not agree.

Mr. FADDEN.—It was explained that the honorable member for Warringah did not attend those meetings of the Advisory War Council because he was abroad at the time. That appeared to be a reasonable explanation of his statement that he did not know what had occurred.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—The point which I have emphasized repeatedly during this war is that wars are waged by governments, and that campaigns are conducted by commanders. No government, in my presence, can shelve its responsibility on to any soldier in uniform. The responsibility for saying what military campaign shall be conducted is that of War Cabinet, and of no other authority. The manner in which that campaign shall be executed is the responsibility of the Army, Navy or Air Force chief, whom Cabinet selects to conduct the operations. On some occasions there is a tendency in this chamber to criticize the Government and on others to criticize the Commander-in-Chief for what ought to be solely the responsibility of the Government. Precisely where the functions of one end and those of the other begin, or how they are interwoven, I do not know. The present command has been the subject of a good deal of criticism in more than one place. This criticism arose in public for the first time about twelve months ago. The ideal for which every honorable member would strive willingly is a condition of affairs under which the Parliament, the Government, the people, and the Army would have

complete confidence in the man entrusted with the command of the Army. Holding those views, I have to say, very definitely, that I do not believe that the Parliament, the people, or the Army has that confidence.

Mr. POLLARD.—The honorable member knows the reason why.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—And the honorable gentleman knows it as well as I do!

Mr. POLLARD.—There were a few "croakers" in the Opposition parties who were disappointed with their progress in the Army.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—That is not so.

Mr. CONELAN.—The honorable member himself got out of uniform.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I said that the Army could discharge me before it did so. I had many matters to which I could give attention.

Mr. POLLARD.—My remarks did not refer to the honorable member.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—No man who has seen the service that I have—not overseas in this war, but in the Commonwealth of Australia—and rubbed shoulders with members of the forces, could truthfully tell the Parliament that all is well with the Army.

Mr. BRYSON.—The Army is doing fairly well since the honorable member left it.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—The Army might do very much worse if the honorable member joined it. Public criticism, which comes from officers holding a rank as high as that of Lieutenant-General, has not been answered.

Mr. POLLARD.—Who is the Lieutenant-General?

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I do not desire to mention names.

Mr. POLLARD.—If this information is public, why not give the names?

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—The honorable member knows them as well as I do. He is about the least innocent member in this House. Criticism has been offered of campaigns, and of certain demotions and transfers—not one, but many—and they have never been satisfactorily answered. In my opinion, there should be a much closer connexion

between the Parliament of the Commonwealth and the Australian armed forces than there has been during this war. The attitude adopted by this Parliament is in striking contrast to that adopted by other Parliaments in the British Empire and the Congress of the United States of America.

Mr. POLLARD.—What the honorable member requires is political control of the Army, but not political control of banking institutions.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—Perhaps the honorable member for Ballarat would prefer it the other way, and we cannot reach a compromise on these questions. The Congress of the United States of America has taken up this matter, and some of its members have visited nearly every theatre in which major American forces have been engaged. But, with one or two exceptions, the Parliament of the Commonwealth has not been represented in any major theatres in which Australian forces have been engaged. No committee of this Parliament has ever entered the fighting zones.

Mr. WILSON.—Members of Parliament have been rigorously excluded from the fighting zones.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—That is correct. The policy of the present command of the Australian Army is to exclude members of Parliament from the forward areas. I have no doubt about that.

Mr. POLLARD.—Members of Parliament would only be a nuisance in the forward areas.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—Even nuisances have to be tolerated, the best example of that being the honorable member for Ballarat. Twelve months ago, the role of the Australian Army was criticized in this chamber. Many honorable members believed that Australian Imperial Force divisions were being repeatedly thrown into tropical campaigns, whilst militia forces were not being fully employed. At that time, there was a vital necessity to clear certain important areas in the South-West Pacific Area. That vital necessity no longer exists. Therefore, I believe that the proper role of the Australian Imperial Force is to be engaged in one of the main theatres of war, because with

great respect to ourselves and the part that we are playing in the South-West Pacific Area, that role is having no important or material bearing on the ultimate outcome of the conflict between the Allied forces and Japan. That conflict will be decided elsewhere. My firm belief is that the "pick" of the fighting forces, and as many of them as we can equip, supply, and control, should be used in a main theatre of war, wherever that may happen to be, for the elimination of the armed forces of the enemy. After the major decision, we can turn to what must be regarded by any man who looks at the facts fairly and squarely, as a theatre of war of only secondary importance. Those Japanese, whom our troops are at present fighting, are not able to evacuate those islands. They cannot move large numbers of men or supply them adequately. They cannot threaten the security of the Commonwealth of Australia, or jeopardize any effort that we like to make in the South-West Pacific Area, in the Philippines, or in Asia. Therefore, the present role allotted to large numbers of our troops is not directed to a speedy termination of the war with Japan. If they are not being directed to securing that important final decision which is necessary in order to allow us to tackle the "sideshows"—

Mr. WARD.—Does the honorable member consider himself to be an authority on military strategy?

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—I am not an authority on "the Brisbane line".

Mr. WARD.—I recall that the honorable member said that when Germany attacked the Soviet the Russian armies would last for about six weeks.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—If the Minister for Transport (Mr. Ward) can find that expression in any public statement that I made, I shall give him a dinner, and guarantee that there will be no poison in it.

Mr. WARD.—The honorable member made that statement in this chamber.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON.—Never at any time have I made that statement. In time of peace, I tried to warn this House of the dangers confronting us.

I told the story as I believed it would develop, but I never at any time suggested that what I said was gospel or oracle. I am not one of those who were born in Delphi, and I am not one of those who ought to be sent to Canossa. Some of my friends opposite ought to go there every day of their lives.

In my opinion, all is not well inside the Australian armed forces. I refer particularly to the Army. One of the pointers to that is the very high degree of absences without leave which have existed for some time. It is useless to try to conceal these matters. One of the things which annoys me, and I think that it is not fair to the forces concerned, is the everlasting publication in the newspapers of trials by court-martial. These are trials for military offences only, and in most cases have no bearing on a man's civil record. At one period, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) promised me in writing that the publication of courts-martial proceedings would cease, but that is one of the promises which has not been honoured. We cannot have a big force of men under military control with no effective occupation in front of them and at the same time preserve a high degree of discipline. It is utterly impossible. There is no place to which the old adage, "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do" applies more truly than in the Army. These men are well trained; they are in the pink of condition; but they have no military occupation in front of them. There is a tendency amongst many soldiers who in normal circumstances would not break loose to have a "fling", with the result that penalties pile up. Much more could be said about the condition of the Australian Army and will be said in the not distant future, unless certain very important changes are made. Before long servicemen will return from overseas, and when the censorship which is imposed to-day is lifted, permitting the publication of views held by senior officers, justice will again be on the throne. When those days come, no matter who may be hurt in the process, "the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain", and many things will appear somewhat different from what they do to-day.

MR. LANGTRY (Riverina) [9.2].—I join with other honorable members in extending to their Royal Highnesses a welcome to this country, and in expressing the hope that their stay with us will be a happy one.

The legislative programme outlined in the Speech of His Royal Highness the Governor-General is the most momentous in the history of this Parliament. The Speech forecast many reforms which are long overdue. The most important legislation which it foreshadows is that relating to finance, housing, and the nationalization of interstate airways which in future will be our most important mode of transport. I am very pleased to know that this Government proposes to introduce such legislation.

I am vitally interested in the future of the wheat industry, but, unfortunately, it has been the football of party politics for as long as I can remember. I compliment the honorable member for Forrest (Mr. Lemmon) upon his very able speech to-day. The honorable member gave a clear explanation in contradiction of certain statements that have been made by some honorable members opposite, even in my own electorate. I refer particularly to the comparison of the treatment of wheat-growers in Argentina and in this country. The honorable member for Forrest made it quite plain that the Australian wheat-growers are on a better footing than their colleagues in Argentina. Recently the honorable member for Indi (Mr. McEwen) visited southern New South Wales and tried to whip up enthusiasm among wheat-growers in his campaign against the Government.

The only reason why he came into my electorate was because he had been discredited by wheat-growers in Victoria, and together with his Country party friend, the Premier of Victoria, Mr. Dunstan, had been firmly asked to cease assuming the role of spokesman for the wheat industry. Both Mr. Dunstan and the honorable member for Indi have been repudiated by the wheat-growers, and have been told that those engaged in the industry object to their efforts to make it a political football to be kicked about by the members of the Australian Country party to

their great delight, but to the utter dismay of wheat-growers, and regardless of the effect upon them. The honorable member for Indi has no real interest in the welfare of wheat-growers. He is merely endeavouring to make political capital at their expense. Let me prove that by referring to the honorable member's record: In 1940 he was asked by the Australian Wheatgrowers Federation to sign a pledge to support an increase of the price of wheat at a time when advances were at the rate of 2s. 6d. a bushel. He refused. Recently he made reference to that incident, and, quoting his own words from a report which appeared in the *Shepparton Advertiser*, said: "I remember at an election I was sent a document by the wheat-growers. I did not sign it, and I will not sign it at the next election". That demonstrates clearly his interest in the wheat-growers' cause. It should be remembered that this industry has undergone a terrific transformation in the past few years. To prove that, I need only refer to prices guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government. For the current harvest the guarantees were 4s. 1½d. for the first 3,000 bushels, and 3s. as a first advance, for the remainder, both at country sidings. For the forthcoming harvest, the guaranteed first advance will be 4s. 3d. a bushel at country sidings, which is equivalent to a home-consumption price of 5s. 2d. at terminals. That is practically double the price paid by the Government in which the honorable member for Indi was a Minister. He may ignore that fact, but the wheat-growers remember it. I wish to stress that point particularly. When the war broke out the United Australia party occupied the treasury bench. Wheat in the No. 1 pool realized only 2s. 1d. a bushel to the Australian growers. Now, this Government is paying 4s. 3d. a bushel as a first advance; when the wheat is sold, it may bring the full realization price which may be 5s., 6s. or 7s. a bushel. The Curtin Administration has done a wonderful job in the circumstances. The wheat-growers have decided views on what the honorable member for Indi has been doing in his campaign against the Commonwealth Government. Recently,

Mr. Langtry.

the president of the Australian Wheat Growers Federation, Mr. T. W. Lillie, made a statement on that campaign. He said—

I believe it is fitting that I should place before wheat-growers some of the facts relevant to the political controversy which is being shaped around the industry by certain politicians.

Mr. RANKIN.—I rise to order. Is the honorable member for Riverina in order in reading his speech?

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. S. Rosevear).—I understand that the honorable member for Riverina (Mr. Langtry) is quoting a statement made by the president of the Australian Wheat Growers Federation. He is quite in order in so doing.

Mr. LANGTRY.—Mr. Lillie further said—

Firstly, I desire to express resentment at a recent statement by Mr. McEwen, M.H.R. He said, "Mr. Scully appears to have a most fertile imagination in working out cheap ways and means to buy off wheat-growers and quieten the demand that they should be paid in full what they are entitled to. I can only read into that statement that the wheat-growers' leaders have been the recipients of political bribes from a Minister who has prostituted his office. It is a dastardly utterance which reflects no credit on a former Minister of the Crown. Wheat-growers' leaders in all States conscientiously apply themselves to the task of improving the economic position of growers. All have given long and honorable service to the industry, and they resent bitterly such an unjust accusation.

The campaign which is being pursued by the honorable member for Indi has no sound basis. His object is to undermine the stability of the industry. In other words, he is endeavouring to restore to wheat merchants their pre-war domination of the industry. The same may be said of the efforts of the Premier of Victoria. I should like to quote Mr. Lillie further.

Mr. RANKIN.—Again I rise to order. Is the honorable member for Riverina entitled to read his speech?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have already ruled that the honorable member for Riverina is in order in quoting the remarks of Mr. Lillie.

Mr. LANGTRY.—Mr. Lillie said—

Mr. McEwen now desires to relate price for wheat for stock feed to the present high export values. This is in distinct contrast to his attitude as a Minister. When a Minister, he said Australia could not afford to guarantee

more than 3s. 10d. a bushel, f.o.b., which on the basis of guaranteed production is equal to approximately 3s. a bushel at sidings. War expenditure, he said, of £70,000,000 would not permit it. War expenditure to-day is over £400,000,000 a year. Then, he voted to pay half of any return over 3s. 10d. a bushel, f.o.b., for export wheat into an equalization fund, the growers to get the balance. Now he advocates an open purse.

The honorable member for Indi has said both inside and outside this chamber that there has been a £10,000,000 "steal" from the Australian wheat-growers. That statement definitely is not in accord with facts. The truth is that wheat-growers will not be robbed of one penny. The honorable member for Forrest has just explained to the House that when the pool is finalized for all wheat sold for export and home consumption, the farmer will receive the average price for all wheat sold. In my own electorate 80 per cent. of the growers who forwarded wheat to the pool and were paid 4s. a bushel for it, have bought at least some of it back at 3s. 6d. a bushel. The Government is prepared to provide the balance whether it is 6d., 8d., or 2s. a bushel. Therefore, the statements that have been made by honorable members opposite are far from the facts. I have no objection to members of the Opposition visiting my electorate, but when they do, I expect them to tell the truth. The honorable member for Indi should be an acrobat instead of a politician. He is adept at turning somersaults, sidestepping and dodging facts, activities which hurt him. The same may be said of almost every member of the Australian Country party. I have no argument with members of the Liberal party except that they stand for vested interests. It is ridiculous for members of the Australian Country party to say that the wheat-growers of Australia are not getting a fair deal. Apparently the honorable member for Indi has told that story so often that he is beginning to believe it himself. I am reminded of a man who came to me when I was carting wool near the River Murray, and said that he was hungry. I said, "Are you?" He replied, "Yes, if I had some fat I would fry some fish if I had some fish to fry". A similar argument is used by the honorable member for Indi. What was the position when this Government

assumed office and the honorable member for Gwydir (Mr. Scully) became Minister for Commerce? The problem then was over-production. Huge stocks of wheat were held in all States, and methods had to be devised to dispose of the surplus. These included the production of power alcohol. Some wheat stored in Western Australia was found to be weevil-infested. The position to-day after three bad seasons—one of them the worst in history—is vastly different owing to a severe drought. Even the Albury, Wagga, Temora and Cowra districts which were never expected to fail in times of most severe drought, are suffering badly. They have never previously failed in my experience, which includes the droughts of 1902, 1914 and 1919. They were always able to produce some fodder, but to-day, when we are faced with the responsibility of feeding more people than ever before, crops are practically valueless. The Minister for Commerce and Agriculture (Mr. Scully) has considered all aspects of the situation and has released some wheat in order to keep sheep and cattle alive. Men who are receiving wheat for starving stock are getting their own wheat back at a reduced rate, whilst good purchase prices are being paid for it by the Government. The Commonwealth has already paid about £2,000,000 for the wheat used for starving stock and a further payment of about £6,000,000 will be available soon. In spite of this, the honorable member for Indi (Mr. McEwen) said that the wheat-growers are not getting a fair deal and are being robbed of millions of pounds. If the honorable gentleman had said, "Vote for the Labour party at the next elections; it is your friend, we are your enemies", he would have told the truth. I have stated the facts of the case. I attended a meeting of farmers convened by the Farmers and Settlers Association to which he referred. The Minister for Commerce and Agriculture was invited to attend, but he could not do so, and the honorable member for Ballarat (Mr. Pollard) represented him. I was allowed ten minutes in which to speak, but, when I tried to explain the true position the chairman made me sit

down. He had been an Australian Country party candidate at the previous elections. The gun was loaded and the Government case was lost before we arrived at the meeting. The meeting was not representative of actual wheat-growers. It was organized by the Farmers and Settlers Association which, as everybody knows, has been for the last twenty years the mouthpiece of the Australian Country party. I myself resigned from membership of the association over twenty years ago because of its political tendencies. The honorable member for Ballarat was also prevented from stating the truth at the meeting because he tried to explain the position in his own way. I compliment the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture upon what he has done for the wheat industry. From the time when the Labour party assumed office, the contrast between what it has done for the primary producers and what its predecessors did for them has been very marked. Whether the man on the land grows wheat, wool, fat lambs or vegetables, he receives good guaranteed prices, which previous governments did not provide for him. I am sorry that the referendum proposals were rejected by the people, because as the law stands at present, prices for primary produce can be guaranteed for only six months after the end of the war. However, that is not the fault of this Government. I have always advocated guaranteed prices for all primary products and until guaranteed prices are paid, the primary producer will not have a fair chance of survival. He will be forced to put his products on the market when they are ready and he will be at the mercy of the exploiters, who are numerous. I shall now quote some extracts from a publication on primary production which should be of interest to the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Rankin)—

The Country party was associated with the then United Australia party for many years but they were more concerned about securing ministerial office than about fighting for the interests they were supposed to represent. Mr. Wilson, Independent Country party member in 1940 said that had members of the Federal Country party displayed the same vigour and aggressiveness on behalf of the wheat-growers that they displayed in achieving their personal ambitions, the farmers would be in a better position.

Mr. Langtry.

The *Wheatgrower* of Western Australia contained an article in which it said, "What traitors these Federal Country party representatives have proved themselves to the people they claim to represent." The article went on to say, "The numerous representatives to the United Australia party-Country party Federal Government proved the futility of making representatives to a party whose aims and objects were and are completely at variance with the aims of primary producers".

This is a further extract from the same publication—

It is estimated that as a result of assured markets and payable prices, returns to primary producers are now about £40,000,000 a year higher than before the war. At the same time, bank indebtedness of primary producers has been reduced by about £60,000,000 compared with pre-war figures.

Honorable members opposite overlook many of the things that this Government has done. It has subsidized the producers of necessary primary commodities. There are many of these, but they have not been mentioned by honorable gentlemen opposite. Here are some of the things that this Government is doing—

Wheat-growers, with other producers, receive the benefit of a Commonwealth subsidy on superphosphate. In December, 1941, assent was given to a bill introduced by the present Minister for Commerce and Agriculture providing for the appropriation of £850,000 to provide a subsidy on superphosphate of £1 5s. a ton. In March, 1943, the Primary Producers' Relief (Superphosphate) Act was passed. This appropriated the sum of £900,000 to enable the price to be pegged on the basis of £5 1s. a ton for 18 per cent. superphosphate. Last year the cost of the subsidy rose to £1,300,000 and the estimate for the present year is £2,750,000. The Government believes that it is of the utmost importance to assist growers to keep down the costs of production.

Action has also been taken to peg the price of cornsacks at 13s. 4d. a dozen, f.o.r. capital cities. The subsidy on cornsacks is costing the Commonwealth £1,000,000 a year, or approximately 5s. a dozen.

The Government will pay all transport costs for wheat shipped interstate during the drought. The transport of wheat interstate may cost about £2,000,000.

That is the true story.

The honorable member for Kennedy (Mr. Riordan) made a fine, well-considered speech on the subject of water conservation, and I compliment him upon his effort. There is no more important problem facing this Parliament than that of water conservation, because it involves the prevention of soil erosion. We have

ample evidence of what this nation has suffered for many years as the result of water shortages. We should concentrate on persuading State governments to make good use of money which should be provided by the Commonwealth for the purpose of water conservation. A great deal of interstate jealousy has occurred over the proposed diversion of the Snowy River waters. In New South Wales millions of cubic feet of water run away to the sea every week. Settlers in the Riverina and western New South Wales have been agitating for a long time to have the Snowy River waters diverted to the Murrumbidgee, and the New South Wales Government appointed a committee to investigate the matter. It recommended the diversion of that water for the purpose of irrigation. Since the committee made its report, a deputation has waited on the Premier of Victoria requesting that the water be used in a hydro-electric scheme for Victoria. It is difficult to say where that water will be used. If we cannot get water in the Riverina area from the Snowy River landowners in the dry areas will be severely handicapped. Only a few days ago we read in the newspapers that the Hume Weir had only 27 days' supply of water left. The Murray Valley covers a vast area and there should be sufficient water in the weir to last another two years, not 27 days. When the plans and specifications for the Hume Weir were first prepared, they provided for the removal of Tallangatta, a town of about 800 inhabitants, which would have cost the Government about £500,000 in compensation. However, that was not done and the weir now can hold about half of the quantity of water that could have been stored. That fact should be considered seriously with a view to increasing the storage capacity of the reservoir. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth has no control over this matter owing to the defeat of the referendum proposals, but every member of Parliament throughout Australia should interest himself in this vital problem of water conservation. Since 1902 the people have lost millions of pounds as the result of droughts. For instance, the rice-planting programme was restricted last year because there was not sufficient water in the Burrinjuck

dam. With present machinery and engineering methods, we could make many dams to retain the water that falls in the wet seasons, and we should never be short of water. Unless we have extensive irrigation schemes, Australia will be in a bad way for the next generation. Erosion is increasing and our annual rainfall is decreasing in every State. With water we could use scientific methods to bind the soil, encourage the growth of herbage, and thus prevent further erosion. I hope that honorable members will take serious note of what the honorable member for Kennedy said on this matter.

The subject of housing has been sadly neglected. That is not the fault of this Government, because our man-power resources have been used to the utmost in defending the nation. I compliment the Prime Minister on his firm attitude in prosecuting Australia's war effort. Had it not been for his foresight and his consistent advocacy of a policy of obtaining assistance from another country we might not be able to meet in this Parliament to-day. Primary producers have complained about petrol and motor vehicle tyre shortages, but this Government has done a good job in the interests of everybody. I support the honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser), who said that at the first opportunity the Government should make more petrol and tyres available to primary producers. The primary producers have been handicapped by force of circumstances over which the Government had no control, but now that the immediate danger to the country has passed, and with the improvement in the petrol and rubber supply position, the Government should, at the first opportunity, increase the ration to primary producers. Rationing of these commodities has been carried out on an unsatisfactory basis. I know of cases in my own electorate in which men living within 2 or 3 miles of a town have been receiving the same ration as men living 15 or 20 miles out. When one is 15 or 20 miles from a town, it is difficult to get a doctor in case of illness. The whole of the people of the Commonwealth have risen magnificently to the occasion. But there is a limit to human endurance. Primary producers have done their best to meet the force

of circumstances, but they cannot continue much longer, and our food problems are likely to become greater. I was pleased to hear the Prime Minister promise a review of the man-power position by next June. The primary industries are entitled to first consideration in regard to man-power, because our fighting men must be fed. [*Extension of time granted.*] I hope that the Government will consider the representations that I have made in regard to man-power, petrol and tyres. I realize, of course, that it is faced with the problem of meeting many needs with few men, and that nobody can be expected to do what is impossible. We are lucky to be living still in a free country.

I emphasize the paramount necessity of making provision for water conservation. I was in the House when the honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) quoted those striking verses which Henry Lawson wrote in the poem *The Storm That is to Come*. If Lawson were alive to-day, he could not write truer words than "The drought has yet to break". If it continues for another six months, the people of Australia will suffer more severely from the mistakes that have been made in the past. It is not yet too late for the situation to be saved. I have not seen many droughts break before June. Let us be guided by the past, and not repeat its mistakes in the future. Water is the only thing which will make this country what it ought to be. I cannot do better than repeat the lines written by Henry Lawson—

I have pictured long in the land I love
what the land I love might be,
Where the Darling rises from Queensland
rains and the floods rush out to the sea.
And is it our fate to wake too late to the
truth that we have been blind,
With a foreign foe at our harbour-gate and
a blazing drought behind?

Let us prepare for the next drought by having the water with which to combat it. Our people then will be properly fed and will live in contentment. Any government that tackles the matter of water conservation will have to its credit a standing monument.

Mr. MOUNTJOY (Swan) [9.34].—In the last five years, the major attention of the nation has been focused upon the winning of the present terrible war.

With our allies, we can now state with certainty that the war cannot be lost to us. The propaganda machine of the German Reich is feverishly seeking some means whereby it can split the unity of the Allied Nations and thereby cause them to lose the peace. Whilst I am prepared to agree that those who make a particular study of foreign affairs are inclined to look beyond the immediate problems at home, I, nevertheless, consider that this House could devote more attention to our relationships with other countries. Some criticism has been directed at the Government for not having provided more opportunity for the House to debate international politics. I regard this criticism as most unfair. The Minister for External Affairs (Dr. Evatt) has made many excellent statements on which this subject could have been debated had not the members of the Opposition deliberately wasted the time of the House on numerous occasions. Under the policy of the present Government, Australia's diplomatic status has made a greater advance in the last three and a half years than it made under all previous governments combined, and now this nation is able to speak with the authority and independence to which the feats of arms of our gallant soldiers entitle us. Australia is a Pacific power. The Government has established direct diplomatic relationships with China, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—which, together with the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, constitute the great powers.

Mention has been made in this debate of what is known as the Polish problem. This is the "pebble" on which Herr Goebbels hopes to split the unity of the Allied Nations. The Reich's propaganda chief, of course, has friends in all countries. The week-end newspapers of the 5th March gave the names and records of a few of Germany's friends in Great Britain, and one does not have to seek far to find the Australian counterparts of those gentlemen. Many honest-thinking citizens of this country consider that Poland is getting a raw deal. I am sure that if they knew a little of the history of the matter, they would not be carried away by this pro-Axis propaganda. David

Lloyd George, a Liberal, but distinct from our Australian Liberals, in a foreword to Coates's *The History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, said this—

When on that memorable day, 11th June, 1942, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, announced in the House of Commons the conclusion of a treaty of alliance with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I immediately commented: "As one who has laboured for over twenty years to establish a good understanding between Soviet Russia and this country, I felicitate the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary and the Government upon the accomplishment of this treaty. Had it been a fact some years ago many grave blunders in foreign policy would have been avoided. Not only that, this war could never have occurred". There was no exaggeration in these words; I meant every one of them. I might have added that the Covenant of the League would have become an established and irresistible factor in the affairs of nations; the era of disarmament would have begun in earnest, and the age of "peace on earth and goodwill amongst men" would have been well on the way.

Let us trace the history of this matter. After the Russian revolution of November, 1917, the newly formed Soviet State was attacked by fourteen different powers. Already weakened by the war with Germany, it was thus further seriously weakened. During the progress of this war of intervention, the war of 1914-18 ended and a new Polish State was established, the eastern frontier being agreed upon by the Allied Supreme Council in 1919. This frontier has since been known as the Curzon Line; it was named after the then British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, a hard-bitten tory and a bitter enemy of the young Soviet State. The Allied Supreme Council agreed that the country east of this line was ethnologically, geographically and historically a part of the Ukraine and Byelo-Russia. On the 16th April, 1919, Poland launched a wanton and an unprovoked attack on the weakened Soviet State, and by force of arms annexed western Byelo-Russia and western Ukraine. From 1922 to 1925, the Polish Constitution gave the hope that Poland would become a democratic State, but the Pilsudski *coup d'état* made Poland a Fascist State. The Pilsudski Fascist dictatorship embarked upon a policy of Polandization of the conquered territory. It made Polish the official language, withdrew religious

freedom by suppressing the Greek Orthodox Church in favour of the official church of Poland, and in general carried out a policy of suppression of those four great freedoms which have since been outlined in the Atlantic Charter. The population was decimated and hundreds of homes were burnt to the ground in a vain endeavour to repress the inhabitants of the annexed regions. The people of Galicia resisted this oppression almost to the day when they were liberated by the Red Army.

On the 4th September, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. The Polish Army, hopelessly out of date and consisting mainly of horse cavalry, was no match for the modern mechanized army of Germany. Despite the courage of its soldiers, Poland went down in defeat within a fortnight; and the Polish Government, which had rejected Soviet aid, fled the country. In these circumstances the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ordered the Red Army into eastern Poland on the 17th September, in order to protect from Nazi brutality its blood brothers the Byelo-Russians and the Ukrainians in eastern Poland, and to make secure the rich corn-fields and mineral deposits of the Ukraine. By its march into Poland, the Soviet Union saved from Nazi bestialities, for the time being, millions of Ukrainians, Byelo-Russians and Jews, increased the distance between Germany and the old Soviet frontier, and gained additional time in which to strengthen its defences against the attack which it knew must come. This action, of course, gave a new lease of life to all those propaganda agencies which had been busily lying about the Soviet Union from its earliest days. Mr. Lloyd George came out strongly against those who recklessly demanded stern action against the Soviet Union. I quote an extract from a letter sent to the Polish Ambassador in London on the 28th September, 1939—

It is a notorious fact that the Polish peasants are living in great poverty owing to the operation of the worst feudal system in Europe. That aristocracy has been practically in power for years. All the promises of concessions made from time to time to the peasants have been thwarted by its influence on recent Polish Governments. That is why the advancing Russian troops are being hailed by the peasants as deliverers.

The German invasion is designed to annex to the Reich provinces where the decided majority of the population is Polish by race, language and tradition. On the other hand, the Russian armies marched into territories which are not Polish, and which were forcibly annexed by Poland after the Great War, in spite of the fierce protests and the armed resistance of the inhabitants. The inhabitants of Polish Ukraine are of the same race and language as their neighbours in the Ukrainian Republic of the Soviet Union.

I felt it was a matter of primary importance to call attention at once to these salient considerations lest we commit ourselves rashly to war against Russia under the impression that her intervention was identical with that of Germany. The distinction between the two cases is increasingly acknowledged by British and French opinion. In these circumstances it would be an act of criminal folly to place the Russian advance in the same category as that of the Germans, although it would suit Herr Hitler's designs that we should do so. I am delighted that our Government have shown no indication of committing this country to such an attitude or enterprise.

The Soviet Union had thus blocked, for the time being, any further German advance. At 4 a.m. on the 22nd June, 1941, it was attacked by German forces. These events are fresh in the minds of everybody. There were some who predicted a swift Russian collapse. I believe that they were, and for that matter still are, disappointed that this event did not occur. The Red Army was forced to retreat many hundreds of miles, but it did not lose its fighting efficiency. Now, of course, the battle has been taken to German soil, Poland having been liberated on the way.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Menzies) was concerned lest the Lublin Provisional Government—a government on the spot—should not reflect the opinion of the majority of the Poles. By wishful thinking, he reasoned that perhaps the émigré Government in London might represent Polish opinion. It must be admitted that until a free election has been held there is room for doubt, however slender it might be. Had the right honorable gentleman taken the trouble to study the decisions of the Yalta Conference, he would have found that the question had been answered in advance. That conference laid it down that the Lublin Government must be so broadened by the inclusion of democratic elements at home

and abroad as to make it truly representative of all shades of Polish opinion; and further, that free elections must be held at the earliest possible moment. I think that I have said enough to show that fears as to Poland's future are without foundation. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 1st March, published a leading article in which the following comments occurred:—

To those critics who, like Sir William Beveridge, seem prone already to anticipate having to make a choice between "friends and principles", Mr. Churchill said, in effect, they could not hope to enjoy both the luxury of old prejudices and the benefits of a co-operative international society freed from the menace of war. To have faith in a world peace organization and no faith in Russia is an incongruity for which there can be no accommodation in the post-war world, where materially and psychologically every nation will have to be rebuilt afresh, and rebuilt as a member of an international order devoted to the outlawing of war. The ideal may prove to be beyond human reach, but at least if the world means to strive for it there can be no condoning of such suspicions as those which Mr. Churchill condemned.

It is this incompatibility of aims which has disfigured the activities of the Polish Government in London, and exposes the weak case of those who protest that the Yalta resolutions are a desertion of the principles of the Atlantic Charter and of Britain's pre-war pledge to Poland. Obviously the London Poles had no voice in the redrawing of the map of Poland, or in the debates on the establishment of the "Provisional Polish Government of National Unity", which the Allies have agreed shall be set up in place of both the London Government and the Lublin Committee. But on what ground is it maintained that there is no majority Polish view in favour of the Allies' arrangement; and how, save at the free elections to be held under the new Provisional Government, is the voice of Poland to be ascertained? In the political administration there is nothing settled which the prescribed vote of the Polish people themselves cannot change, and, if the London Poles did not participate with the Lublin Committee in the preliminary negotiations in Moscow, that is due solely to their obstinate refusal to do so. The necessity for some interim administration in the liberated country before the end of the war was clearly pointed out by Mr. Churchill: Russia, he said, as the instrument of Poland's liberation, had a right, while engaged in large-scale operations against the heart of Germany, to have her army communications assured in an orderly countryside.

As for the objection to the redrawing of Poland's eastern boundary, Mr. Churchill justly protested that the "Curzon line" is not a Russian imposition on Poland, but an ethnographical border proposed by the British Foreign Office in 1919. In 1939 it was made

quite clear by the British Government that its guarantee to Poland related to the meditated German aggression and was never intended to cover her eastern frontiers. The territorial compensation now proposed for Poland, especially on the Baltic, will make not only for a stronger State but also for one more easily protected by its sponsors. It was the exposure of the pre-war Poland to German aggression which made any guarantee of her independence so precarious. Only Russia's strong arm and goodwill can preserve Poland from any future German attack, and, in that responsibility, Russia is entitled to be assured of the best position for any such action compatible with ethnographical realities. The critics, Polish or other, of the Allies' plan cannot be brought to explain why an eastern frontier which was adjudged just in 1919 by experts who certainly had no prejudices in favour of Soviet Russia, should be considered any less so to-day.

That leading article more than answers the accusations of the Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Barker (Mr. Archie Cameron). He would be a bold man who would say that that journal is prejudiced in favour of the Soviet Union. Not even the Leader of the Opposition would make such a charge, especially in view of the large amount of space that that newspaper now gives to him for the purpose of spreading his anti-Australian theories.

A great deal of progressive legislation has been outlined in the Governor-General's Speech. That fact has been seized upon by members of the Opposition who now accuse the Government of distracting the minds of the people from the immediate tasks of war. The facts are, of course, that the plutocrats are tired of the war, and it is their propaganda that is disturbing the people's minds. The workers are not fools. It is as patent to them as to anybody else that the glittering promise of the "new order" made by scared reactionaries back in 1941, and early in 1942, is not to be honoured. If a "new order" is to be, it must be fought for. Any one who thinks that the people who now hold power and wealth will retreat from their position of privilege will be sadly mistaken. Vested interests have already commenced their offensive. Tens of thousands of pounds, which should be going into war loans, are now being spent on anti-working class propaganda. Newspaper space, leaflets and radio time are being used in an attempt to create

a feeling of distrust and doubt. The working people can quite easily see that, if they are to be in a position to meet this offensive on their wages and conditions when the war is over, they must build up wages and conditions now while they have the chance. The amount of industrial unrest is directly proportionate to the volume and intensity of the propaganda of the Opposition forces. The Labour party is not daunted by this flood of propaganda, nor are the people deceived by it. I have before me an unsolicited letter signed by twenty-five farmers in a small country town, which is one of many such letters that I have received. It states—

Dear Sir,

We, the undersigned, desire to assure you and the Government that we are not being influenced by press and bank propaganda against the pending legislation dealing with banking, and, for that matter, the taking over of the airways. We stand right behind the Government in any course it may be advisable to take.

It may be claimed that the banking system of Australia is the best ever; but we are of the opinion that many changes can be effected for the betterment of the people as a whole.

In reference to the wheat scheme, let it be known that we consider the Scully Quota Scheme was the salvation of the smaller growers. We trust we will not be landed back into the unenviable position which prevailed prior to the scheme coming into being.

I shall not read the names of the signatories, as I know that many of them are clients of private banks, and to read their names would leave them open to victimization by those "benevolent" institutions. It will be noted that they also support the Scully wheat scheme, and as the twisted reasoning of the honorable member for Indi (Mr. McEwen) has once again been exposed by my friend and colleague, the honorable member for Forrest (Mr. Lemmon), I shall not comment further, other than to warn the farmers that this campaign being waged by the honorable member for Indi, Mr. John Teasdale, and others is designed to smash the Australian Wheat Board and land the growers back into the tender hands of the wheat agents, once more to be mercilessly exploited. The events of the last five years have clearly shown that only a Labour Government has the courage and capacity to lead the nation in these difficult times. The

events of the future will show that only a Labour Government has the courage and foresight to meet the difficult periods ahead. Just as it planned to meet the war situation it now plans for peace.

The problem of Australia's need for increased population seems to be a hardy annual in this chamber. Undoubtedly, this country needs more people. That cannot be denied. Neither can it be denied that the best way to increase the population is to rely on the natural increase, but the solution is not so simple that we merely need a "grow more babies" campaign. If we are to have more people, either by natural increase or by immigration, work must be found for them. It is worse than useless to increase the population and have that increased number out of work, sleeping under bridges, or filling unemployment camps. We need more people to increase the wealth of our country and to develop our natural resources to a greater degree than at present. Numbers of people alone do not increase wealth. Only by people working can wealth be produced. The farmer on his land, the worker at the factory bench, the man or woman performing some socially necessary task, are the wealth producers. The gilded society damsel or the wealthy loafer in his club chair produce no more wealth than the poor unfortunate sheltering under a bridge, although, of course, one gets the lion's share of the wealth. Some one else produces, and the other, denied the right to work, has perfect freedom to starve.

It follows, then, that before population is increased work should be guaranteed. How is this work to be found? I suggest that that can be done in two ways. In the first place we should expand secondary industries. In this field Western Australia opens up almost untouched resources. In that State there are large deposits of almost every mineral known to man. The honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) has told us something about those resources, and about his personal observations in that part of Australia. Secondary industry could be expanded if we employed more people than at present in processing our own wool and making our own cloth. We were told to-day that

double-weft cloth is being made in Australia in order to capture the New Zealand market. If that work can be done in the eastern States it can also be done in Western Australia, because the Albany Woollen Mills are capable of competing with any other mills of the kind in the Commonwealth. The second way in which I suggest work could be found is by expanding primary production. During the present drought, Western Australia has once again proved the sheet-anchor of Australia in the supply of grain. That State occasionally experiences dry years, but a general drought is unknown there. It has never had a devastating drought such as that experienced in the eastern States. In the safest rainfall area in Australia—south-western Australia—18,000,000 acres of country, after providing for forests, awaits development. The climate in that area—as a white man's country—has no peer in all the world. Western Australia grows the best grapes in the Commonwealth, although that statement may be contested by honorable members from South Australia. If any honorable member will visit the Swan Valley with me, I shall show him that, although Western Australia does not make a great deal of wine, it produces the best. This has been proved many times by wines from the Houghton vineyards, at Middle Swan, which have defeated those of all-comers at the Melbourne Royal Show, including Seppelts, Penfolds, and other well-known makers. Those safe rainfall areas in Western Australia have tremendous potentialities; but, if closer land settlement is to be made a reality, large estates will have to be subdivided. Some of these estates have been developed, but others are covered with virgin bush. Another problem which must be faced is to find markets in which to sell our surplus products, and the more we develop the land the greater will be the surplus. Viewing this problem as a layman, it seems to me that our natural markets are to be found, not in Europe, but in East Asia. The people of Java, China, India, Burma and the Malay States, if they had a higher standard of living, could use more goods than Australia could ever produce. The Soviet Union could take a tremendous quantity of our wool.

The people of Australia have a very real interest in the standard of living of our near neighbours, and we should use what influence we have in world affairs to assist them to secure political independence.

I am firmly convinced that the basic cause of the declining birth-rate is economic, as is borne out by vital statistics—

	Birth-rate.
1928	21.27
1929	21.25
1930	19.86
1931	18.10
1932	16.86
1933	16.78
1934	16.39

Honorable members will note the gradual decline during the depression years. In 1934, the volume of employment increased a little, so that in 1935 the birth-rate rose to 16.55. In 1936, it rose still further to 17.13, in 1937 to 17.43, in 1938 to 17.46, and in 1939, the last year for which figures are available, it was 17.65. These figures definitely show that the birth-rate rises and falls according to the economic standard of the people. Of course, the answer given in advance to this contention by the right honorable member for North Sydney (Mr. Hughes) is that the more money people possess the fewer children they have. He points to the wealthy classes and says that they have very few children. He points to the working class and says that they have most children. That is perfectly true, but he fails to point out that history has always shown that a dying class has no faith in the future, being concerned only with the selfish pursuit of pleasure. The rich woman will not have children because they would interfere with her social engagements. In the main, such people look upon children as a nuisance. The working-class woman, on the other hand, likes and has children. In her case the limiting factors are economic—the fear of insecurity of employment, the thought that a son lovingly raised may be killed in a future war, and the fear that a son or daughter will not be able to find a job. The inability properly to feed, clothe and educate a family are powerful limiting factors.

The honorable member for Parkes (Mr. Haylen) is in my corner when he advocates marriage loans. I go further and say, let the fear of unemployment be abolished; let us ensure that every child born in Australia shall be properly fed, clothed, housed and educated, and its future guaranteed. We should provide free kindergartens and free the working-class mother from kitchen drudgery by giving her the benefit of such modern appliances as washing machines, electric cooking and refrigeration. We should get on with our building programme now in order to relieve the serious housing shortage. We recognize that the present Government has inherited from previous governments a housing problem, but much could be done immediately to relieve the present situation. One way would be to compel people to make available accommodation which they do not need. It is only necessary to go to any of the fashionable seaside resorts to see houses which are not being occupied. Huge mansions with a great number of rooms, that are inhabited by only two or three people, should be divided into flats. The owner could have one and the other flats should be let. Of course, it would still be necessary to build many houses and we should begin to do so immediately. The housing situation is desperate now—what will it be when the servicemen are demobilized? The position in Perth may not be as bad as in some of the other capital cities, but it is bad enough. I know one man who, with his wife and thirteen children, is living in a shack which no decent person should be required to live in, while just across the road is an empty military camp in which the buildings are being destroyed by vandals because there is no one to look after them. We should provide houses of which people can be proud at rents which they can afford to pay, or we should sell them at prices which they can afford to give. If we improve economic conditions as I have suggested, and provide proper housing and amenities for the people, the problem of the declining birth-rate will solve itself.

Debate (on motion by Mr. SHEEHAN) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.QUESTIONS—WHEAT INDUSTRY—
NORTHERN TERRITORY.

Motion (by Mr. CHIFLEY) proposed—
That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. HOLT (Fawkner) [10.7].—I propose to discuss a matter which I believe to be of great constitutional importance, namely, the announcement made through the press that the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) proposed to vary the customary method of dealing with questions asked without notice in this House. The intimation was that he himself would answer only such questions of urgency as were directed to him by party leaders. I regret that the Prime Minister himself is not present. I understand that he is ill, and I hope that he will have a speedy recovery. I regard this matter as of such importance that, even in the absence of the Prime Minister, Parliament cannot allow the announcement to pass without comment. This is a time when private members of Parliament must assert as powerfully as they can the rights which they possess, and the rights which, through them, the citizens of the Commonwealth have to air their grievances in Parliament. Question time in this House has acquired a good deal of significance, particularly in recent years. I recall a conversation which I had some time ago on this subject with Professor Kenneth Bailey, who has advised the Government on constitutional matters. In it he stressed the importance which question time has acquired in the proceedings of the National Parliament. When we are faced with the possibility of so grave a departure from custom as that announced by the Prime Minister, it calls for discussion, and for a defence by private members of the rights which they have hitherto enjoyed.

It is misleading to attach too much importance to the practice in other Parliaments. Each Parliament develops its own practices and traditions. In some of the State Parliaments of Australia it is the practice to devote more time to private members' business than is done in this Parliament. Therefore, private members of this Parliament must guard jealously their limited opportunities to

bring before Ministers and the Government matters which they feel should be ventilated. It has been said by Ministers and Government supporters that the time devoted to questions without notice, as well as the number of questions asked, has grown. That is true, but the growth can easily be explained. The increase of the number of questions arises from the fact that the business attended to by this Parliament has grown and that the number of matters which come to the notice of individual members has increased enormously in recent years, particularly during the war. Those of us who have had a decade or more of service in this Parliament will remember that a comparatively limited range of matters came before us for attention, say, ten years ago. We had the budget to discuss, and various matters relating to pensions, or the Postmaster-General's Department or the Defence Department came before us, but there was nothing like the mass of detail, or the complex questions that there are to-day. With that growth of the number of matters dealt with by the Parliament there has been an increase of the number of questions properly put to Ministers. I say properly put, because otherwise you, Mr. Speaker, would restrain the questioner. Had the Prime Minister said that his health was such that he could not give personal attention to these matters in the House, all of us would have sympathized with him and accepted the nomination by him of some deputy to deal with matters brought to his notice, but that is not the reason that is advanced. The justification for the proposed change is said to be that the number of questions has grown, and that too much time is devoted to them. I point out that the Prime Minister is more than the head of the Government, although in that capacity there are matters which should be brought to his notice, and to which satisfactory replies are desired. The Prime Minister is also the head of an important government department—the Prime Minister's Department—and, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Menzies) pointed out earlier to-day, he is also Minister for Defence, and in that capacity co-ordinates, through the Defence Department, matters of policy which arise in

other service departments. To him, therefore, we must look for decisions or announcements on matters of defence policy which affect all the services, as distinct from those which affect them individually. If the private members of this Parliament are to be denied opportunities normally available to them to place questions before the Prime Minister in his capacity as head of the Government, or as head of the Prime Minister's Department, or as Minister for Defence, a great cross-section of public administration in this country will be cut off from inquiry. As the result of security provisions, there has been a limitation of the range of matters on which members can obtain information. I mentioned earlier that the number of matters to be dealt with has grown tremendously. If we take the budget figures alone, and compare a pre-war budget of under £100,000,000 with a war-time budget providing for an expenditure of £700,000,000 a year, we get a side-light on the growth of matters dealt with by this Parliament. It has been said that we still have the opportunity to place questions on the notice-paper, but I submit that that is not a satisfactory alternative. Obviously, there are some matters which, because of the detailed nature of the questions or the necessity to obtain information before they can be answered, must be placed on the notice-paper. One very great merit in the practice of submitting questions publicly in the House is that such questions are heard by all members of the Government, as well as by supporters of the Government, and as such questions sometimes have ramifications which extend beyond one department, the questioner can be assured that his representations will receive immediate attention by all the Ministers involved. Those of us who have had experience as Ministers know that matters referred to in questions asked in this place, as distinct from those placed on the notice-paper make a greater impression on the mind of a Minister. In the main, the questions placed on the notice-paper relate to matters concerning which replies are prepared by departmental officers and brought to Ministers for confirmation and signature. There is so much of merit and value in the practice which has

developed in this place that it has become one of the features of the life of this Parliament. It has taken the place which private members' business takes in other Parliaments, and even if an hour each day be devoted to a consideration of these matters, it is time well spent in protecting the rights of individuals. Those rights call for greater attention to-day, when war-time pressure has caused the Executive to encroach more than ever on the freedom of individuals. As some justification for the attitude adopted by the Prime Minister in this matter, the Treasurer (Mr. Chifley) this afternoon quoted a precedent set by Mr. Bruce in 1929, when he was Prime Minister. Since then I have indulged in some research and I find that the facts are not quite as the Treasurer presented them to us. On the 22nd August, 1929, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce, indicated that he and his Ministers would answer only questions which dealt with matters of urgency. He said—

To save time, and in order that there may be full opportunity to obtain the information which honorable members require, the Government has decided to ask for notice of all questions except such as may be very urgent. This will ensure that more satisfactory replies can be given.

Later, he added—

As there is a full programme of legislation to be put through this session, the Government proposes not to answer questions without notice unless they have this element of urgency. Honorable members will notice that Mr. Bruce did not exclude himself from the responsibility of dealing with questions, nor did he confine that responsibility to questions put to him by party leaders. He indicated that it was a practice to be followed by all members of his Government. Of eight questions addressed to Ministers on the 23rd August, 1929, the then Prime Minister answered four. On the next sitting day, the 28th, he replied to five out of the ten questions addressed to Ministers, the 29th three out of three, and the 30th five out of seven. On the 4th September, the next sitting day, he replied to seven out of eleven, and on the 5th September seven out of nine. Even up to the issue of that edict by Mr. Bruce questions had not at any time reached our standard to-day, either in the number asked or the length of time

occupied. Despite the edict, he personally answered more than 50 per cent. of the questions in the first six sitting days after he had made the statement. So we cannot accept the practice adopted by Mr. Bruce as a precedent. Perhaps the Prime Minister, not being in the best of health, has allowed himself to be led into a decision which is at variance with the traditional respect that he has always shown to the traditions of Parliament and the rights and privileges of the members of this Parliament. If that is the case, I hope that even if he feels that he is not physically able to stand up to whatever effort is involved in answering questions, he will nominate a deputy who will have full authority to speak on his behalf as Prime Minister and as Minister for Defence. Unless we can be assured of that, I and other private members must insist, not only for ourselves, but also for the institution of which we are a part and the people outside, who look to us for free expression in protection of their rights, on opposing the practice now indicated and demand restoration of the privileges that we have enjoyed in the past.

Mr. ABBOTT (New England) [10.22].—I support the remarks of the honorable member for Fawkner (Mr. Holt) concerning the announcement by the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) to the press that he would reply only to questions asked by the party leaders. I cannot understand the attitude of the Government on this matter. Preservation of the liberties of the people was the very basis of the policy of the Labour party. Every member on this side of the chamber is most sympathetic towards the Prime Minister during his illness. We do not want to embarrass him at all. However, every honorable member realizes that the business of the country must go on and that, if his health is not so good as it should be, the rights of Parliament should not be abrogated. The Prime Minister should have a rest or, as the honorable member for Fawkner suggested, he should appoint some one to answer questions on his behalf. In the midst of a great war, when all sorts of rules and regulations are being made by the Government which never come before

Parliament until they are imposed on the public, it is absolutely essential that the rights of honorable members should be protected and that private members on either side should be able to question the Prime Minister and other Ministers about what is happening in the conduct of the war or the Government's policy, or to expose abuses which may be taking place. It is all very well to say that we have the opportunity to speak on the adjournment of the House, but that comes very late indeed.

Sir FREDERICK STEWART.—And there is not a big audience.

Mr. ABBOTT.—Yes, but that does not matter. The point is that at question time, when every one is present in the House, what is asked is flashed to almost every part of Australia. It is absolutely essential that that period of interrogation should not be in any way restricted. The only way in which to make a government with the majority which this Government possesses realize that it may have to do certain things or not do other things is to create a public opinion which will make it realize that, if it carries on in the way that it is carrying on, the public will turn away from it. That is the greatest protection that democracy has. It is the very negation of democracy for the Government to attempt to suppress the asking of questions.

Mr. CHIFLEY.—No one is suppressing the asking of questions.

Mr. ABBOTT.—Questions are being suppressed. If the Prime Minister, in contravention of the Standing Orders of this House, says that he will answer only questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Menzies) and the Leader of the Australian Country party (Mr. Fadden), as representing the Opposition, and that if private members ask questions he will ignore them, he is interfering with the rights and privileges of honorable members and preventing them from airing their grievances. Only last week I asked the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) a question about the recapture of Nauru and Ocean Islands, and, before the Minister for the Army could even answer, the Prime Minister, like a new

Henry V., jumped into the breach and replied himself. I do not know whether he was afraid that the Minister for the Army would give the wrong reply, but if the direction that the Prime Minister is not to be asked questions by private members is to be enforced, will he refrain from answering questions asked of other Ministers? I do not want to embarrass the Prime Minister in his illness. He needs a long rest to recuperate. But it is a shocking and woeful departure from an established practice if honorable members will not be answered by Ministers unless in the view of Ministers, the questions are urgent. That is wrong. Very often a question is asked and in the reply the public gets a view of what is actually happening. [Quorum formed.] It is wrong, indeed, for the Government, in contravention of the Standing Orders, to deny private members the right to ask questions. It is absurd to say that an honorable member is able to open up a question as effectively by putting it on the notice-paper as by asking it without notice. I support the honorable member for Fawkner in his advocacy of the rights of honorable members. They must be preserved. Honorable members must be allowed to ask questions as prescribed by the Standing Orders and should not be forced to submit to rafferty rules, announced through the press, without your consent, Mr. Speaker, or the consent of this House. I hope that the Treasurer (Mr. Chifley), who is now in charge of the House, will pay regard to the Standing Orders, and thus preserve the rights and privileges of honorable members in this democracy, and that no action will be taken to prevent them from letting the people of Australia know what is going on in this Parliament, because, in effect, that will be the result of the Prime Minister's decision.

MR. McEWEN (Indi) [10.33].—I request the Government to arrange for the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture (Mr. Scully) to make a clear-cut and authoritative announcement regarding the policy which it intends to follow with regard to payments into the Nos. 6 and 7 wheat pools in respect of wheat sold at concessional prices. I do not propose to argue the merits of the case, but merely

draw attention to a long series of conflicting announcements which have either been made by the Minister or attributed to him in reports of proceedings of various meetings which he has attended, or deputations he has received, as well as in statements issued from his office. It is well known, of course, that in the early stages of the controversy over concessional wheat prices the Minister declared that no injustice was being done to growers. He certainly said that no payment should be made to the pools in addition to the original 6d. a bushel subsidy announced by the Government, and provision for which has been made in two and, perhaps, three, budgets. However, as the controversy developed and the justice of the opposing case became so clear that it could no longer be defended by the Government, the Minister attended a meeting of the wheat and wool growers organization in New South Wales in July last. In this House on the 14th September, he quoted what he said at that meeting as follows:—

After full consideration, I announced that the price of stock feed would be increased so as to bring it up to the return from the pool concerned.

Thus he made it clear that the returns from the pool sales of wheat for human consumption, power alcohol distilleries, stock feed and breakfast food would be averaged, and, insofar as the concessional sales fell short of that average, the Government would make up the difference. Whether one agrees with that policy or not the Minister's statement was clear. It was accepted by some, but others made it the subject of a controversy. The fact that it was not generally accepted was made clear by a deputation representing the Farmers and Settlers Association which waited upon the Minister on the 17th September. His reply to that deputation which requested that the Government liberalize its attitude was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 18th September as follows:—

He had advised the Wheat Board, he said, that the Government would pay the difference between the average realization of Nos. 6 and 7 pools, and the concessional price on all wheat sold at concessional rates out of these pools.

That was confirmation of what he said in July, what he reiterated in this House

on the 14th September, and what he informed the deputation on the 17th September. On all of those occasions he did not fail to say that the growers, speaking through their organizations, were satisfied. However, the fact that the growers were not satisfied was exemplified by the deputation representing the Farmers and Settlers Association, and subsequently at a conference of delegates of the Australian Wheatgrowers Federation. Following the latter conference, Mr. Lillie and Mr. Stott, the president and secretary of the federation, issued a statement in which they said—

We wish to make perfectly clear that the result of the conference was satisfactory. Regarding the controversy over concessional prices for stock feed, &c., the Minister made it abundantly clear that concessional prices being received for sales of wheat for breakfast food, stock feed and power alcohol, would not be taken into the calculations to ascertain the final realizations of the pool.

The Government would make up the difference between the prices received for concessional sales and the price received by the Australian Wheat Board on export sales and the home-consumption price.

That reported reply by the Minister to the conference represented a more liberal attitude on the part of the Government. If the report given by those gentlemen was correct, it involved the Government providing an additional sum of some millions of pounds over and above what the Minister had previously indicated the Government was prepared to provide for this purpose. In order to ascertain the real position I asked the Minister in this House on the 16th November whether he could confirm the report attributed to Mr. Lillie and Mr. Stott, and, if so, whether he and the Government did not think it more fitting that announcements involving the expenditure of millions of pounds ought to be made by the Minister, and not by persons who attended a conference. The Minister, in his reply to me, contradicted the reply attributed to him by Mr. Lillie and Mr. Stott. The Minister also said—

The only assurance I gave to the deputation was the assurance that I gave to honorable members in replying to a debate on a motion for adjournment moved by the honorable member for Indi at our last meeting, when I said that average realizations of the pool would

Mr. McEwen.

be taken into consideration, and that I intended to make a submission to Cabinet seeking approval for an amount of money to be placed to the credit of the pool to bring these payments up to the realization figure.

According to that reply, the position had reverted to that outlined in the statement which the Minister made in July, which he confirmed in Parliament in September, and which he confirmed again in reply to a deputation from the Farmers and Settlers Association on the 17th September, repudiating the report of the president and secretary of the Wheat Growers Federation and getting back to his original formula. I can understand that; but the matter did not rest there. As I said before, I am not attempting to canvass the merits of this particular controversy. I am only trying to elicit at long last a statement of fact from the Minister.

The next authoritative announcement in this extraordinary series was made by the chairman of the Australian Wheat Board, Sir Clive McPherson, on the 23rd January last. He stated that the board had been informed by the Government that it had decided to eliminate wheat sold for stock feed from the calculation of compensation to the wheat-growers in the No. 6 and No. 7 pools. There again, that is one formula which can be applied to this particular problem. It is a formula that we can understand. Many people will agree with it, but unquestionably it involves the provision of some millions of pounds more than would be necessary had the formula which the Minister himself announced been applied.

Mr. SCULLY.—The formula which was announced has been consistently adhered to.

Mr. McEWEN.—It was not the formula that the Minister announced.

Mr. SCULLY.—It was, absolutely.

Mr. McEWEN.—Was it the formula which the Minister announced at Gunnedah in July?

Mr. SCULLY.—Yes, and it has never been departed from.

Mr. McEWEN.—Then will the Minister explain the circumstances in which he received a deputation from the Farmers and Settlers Association on the 17th September, protesting against the

application of a formula which would merely take into account the total average of the pool?

Mr. SCULLY.—Incorrect reports of the conversation which I had with that deputation were published in a section of the press. Mr. Nock and Mr. Cambridge were satisfied with my explanation. I repudiated some of those press statements.

Mr. McEWEN.—My purpose in raising the matter this evening was to elicit the policy of the Government. Am I correct in stating that the Minister has declared that the policy is that which was announced by the chairman of the Australian Wheat Board?

Mr. SCULLY.—Yes.

Mr. McEWEN.—The chairman stated that the board had been informed by the Government that it had decided to eliminate wheat sold for stock feed from the calculation of compensation to the wheat-growers having wheat in the No. 6 and No. 7 pools.

Mr. SCULLY.—That is my intention and that information has been given whenever it has been sought.

Mr. McEWEN.—Let me approach the matter from that stand-point. The formula is to eliminate wheat sold for stock feed so that we must strike an average by taking the wheat gristed for flour for human consumption in Australia, and wheat used by power alcohol distilleries, and breakfast food manufacturers, and for export. Unfortunately, the Minister has contradicted himself since then. I happened to look at a reply to a question, which I can only describe as having been surreptitiously lodged. The question had been addressed to the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture by the honorable member for Grey (Mr. Russell). The Minister indicated that he would reply to it later. On the 8th March last, a reply was given in a manner unprecedented during my eleven years' experience in this chamber. A typewritten answer was handed to the Clerk of the House. It was couched in argumentative terms, and in the form of a speech. If I had not secured the answer, as I was entitled to do, I would not now probably have been aware of this latest contradiction by the Minister. The honorable gentleman stated that last July,

he informed delegates that it was the intention of the Government to adjust the pool payments so that wheat sold for stock feed would be brought up to the average realizations of wheat sold for human consumption. Only two minutes ago the Minister declared that that was not the policy. He said that the intention is to bring the concessional price up to the average of wheat sold for human consumption, to power alcohol distilleries and breakfast food manufacturers, and for export. I desire to get at the truth.

Mr. SCULLY.—I tried to correct a misstatement which the honorable member has continually made, that the concessional sales would be taken into consideration in striking the average.

Mr. McEWEN.—I do not desire to take fine points about the Minister accusing me of making a mistake. I have read his reply to a motion which I submitted on the 14th September. His remarks appear in *Hansard*. After full consideration, he announced that the price of stock feed would be increased so as to bring it up to the return from the pools concerned. Those words are clear. Yet, when I quoted them as the foundation for making certain calculations, the Minister accused me of misrepresenting him. [*Extension of time granted.*] The Government is entitled to make its own decision on this matter, and no doubt will do so if it is not "pushed around" too much. But the wheat-growers, the public, and the taxpayers are entitled to an authoritative statement, not a series of contradictory statements by the Minister and the chairman of the Australian Wheat Board, culminating in the latest contradiction in the Minister's reply to a question asked by the honorable member for Grey. As I stated, that reply was handed to the Clerk of the House in a manner which was certainly not in conformity with procedure laid down in the Standing Orders. The statement commenced, "With the indulgence of the House". In the circumstances mentioned the indulgence of the House could not be obtained. What we desire to know, and this involves some millions of pounds to the Government and the wheat-growers, is: On what formula are the calculations to be based, to make an additional payment to the

No. 6 and No. 7 pools on account of the concessional wheat prices? I ask the Minister to make a clear statement.

Mr. SCULLY.—The position has been clearly stated repeatedly, and I am not prepared to make a further statement.

Mr. McEWEN.—I defy a genius to work out, from the series of statements made by the Minister, exactly what the position is.

Mr. ARCHIE CAMERON (Barker) [10.49].—At this hour I do not desire to provoke an argument on the refusal of the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) to answer questions which private members may address to him without notice, and my right to ask him questions. I shall defer that until the right honorable gentleman is here to answer my interrogations. I never like to shoot a hare until he is having a run for his money. When the Prime Minister comes into the chamber I shall have something to say to him.

According to my information, certain departmental committees are now determining the fate of the Northern Territory for a generation to come. It appears to me that every one has a finger in this pie, with the exception of the residents of that area. One of the most amazing documents that I have received came from the Minister for the Interior (Senator Collings) quite recently. In it, he said that he would not take any notice whatever of the Northern Territory Development League, which had been formed to handle affairs of interest to the people of that territory, but that if individual members cared to write to him in their private capacity he would consider anything that might be put up. That is a little too bad. There are certain very important features of development in the Northern Territory which will have to be undertaken in the near future. They concern the development of stock routes, the making of roads, the opening of ports, the question as to whether or not a railway line shall go through and, if so, in what direction, the conservation of water, the establishment of certain irrigation areas, the encouragement of mining, and quite a few other matters. The least which the people can expect from the Government is that those who are on the spot and have spent a good part of their lives on these jobs shall

have the opportunity of seeing the departmental heads who are supposed to produce the millennium in the territory, and shall at least be accorded the courtesy of being allowed to put their views before the people who are determining their future. They have no representation of their own. The only representative they have is a member of this House, and he is not able to speak for them at present. For the time being, I propose to put their case to the Government. If I am not able to see for myself some of the things which the Government proposes to do, and to indicate them to the people who matter, I shall have no recourse except to submit a substantive motion which will produce a debate on the future of the Northern Territory and what the Government proposes to do about it.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Defence Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1945, No. 29.

National Security Act—

National Security (General) Regulations—Orders—

Prohibited places.

Taking possession of land, &c. (36).

Use of land (6).

National Security (Industrial Property) Regulations—Orders—Inventions and designs (66).

National Security (Land Transport) Regulations—Order—Victoria (No. 12).

National Security (Meat Industry Control) Regulations—Orders—Meat (Controlled areas) (Nos. 3, 4).

National Security (Rationing) Regulations—Order—No. 75.

National Security (Vegetable Seeds) Regulations—Order—Control of sale of vegetable seeds.

Regulations—Statutory Rules 1945, Nos. 26, 30, 31, 32.

Navigation Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1945, No. 28.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

The following answers to questions were circulated:—

SANE DEMOCRACY LEAGUE.

Mr. MOUNTJOY asked the Attorney-General, upon notice—

- Has he seen the photostat of a letter which appeared in a Sydney newspaper recently indicating that Lieutenant-Colonel Powell had

successfully canvassed a donation from Commercial Steels Limited for the Sane Democracy League?

2. Is this the Lieutenant-Colonel Powell who held an executive post in military intelligence, and, if so, by whose authority did a military officer act as canvasser for a political organization?

3. Is it a fact that the Sane Democracy League is subsidized by big monopolies like the Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited for definite political purposes, such as attacking the Federal and State Labour Governments and the trade unions?

4. Is it a fact that the secretary of the Sane Democracy League, Mr. A. de R. Barclay, has had tens of thousands of pounds available for this political propaganda, which should be diverted to the war effort?

5. Does Mr. Barclay receive now, or has he received in the past, any subsidies from investigation or security organizations under the control of the Attorney-General or the Minister for the Army?

6. Will he ascertain whether the same Mr. A. de R. Barclay held an interest in what was known as a select house of assignation at 34 Crown-street, Sydney?

7. Will he carry out an investigation to discover whether a Mrs. Ryan, who was associated with Mr. A. de R. Barclay in this Crown-street business, later opened a similar business at King's Cross, and whether Mr. A. de R. Barclay has drawn any remuneration from this business?

8. Will he have a thorough investigation made of the whole ramifications of the Sane Democracy League, including its contacts with members of the military forces, its sources of subsidies, its constitution, and the methods of electing officers?

Dr. EVATT (through Mr. Beasley).—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. No.

2 to 8. The Attorney-General has no present information as to these matters, but the matters are being referred to the Department of the Army and the Security Service so that the information may be obtained.

MR. FRANK GOLDBERG.

Mr. ABBOTT asked the Attorney-General, upon notice—

1. Is it a fact, as stated, that Mr. Frank Goldberg has produced in the United States a letter of recommendation signed by the Attorney-General?

2. If so, is it customary for the Minister to give this type of letter to Australians travelling abroad?

3. Will he table a copy of the letter in the House?

Dr. EVATT (through Mr. Beasley).—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Following upon action taken by the Department of Information, Mr. Goldberg received from myself, as Minister for External Affairs, the courtesy of a letter of introduction identifying him and stating that facilities accorded him while abroad would be appreciated. Whether he produced this document in the United States is not known, but it is believed that the document was not used.

2. There is no custom in this respect, as each application is considered on its merits according to inquiries made and advice received by the Department of External Affairs from appropriate quarters, including any other department of State which may be concerned.

3. No copy of the letter is now available, but the letter of introduction given was framed in accordance with the advice received from the appropriate department—in this case, the Department of Information.

MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY: PRICES CONTROL.

Mr. DEDMAN.—On Friday, the 23rd February, 1945, the honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Francis) and the honorable member for Griffith (Mr. Conelan) raised certain questions relating to the Prices Commissioner's ruling regarding the film "Song of Bernadette" and a complaint of the Queensland Motion Picture Exhibitors Association relating thereto.

I have now received advice from the Minister for Trade and Customs (Senator Keane) on the subject. Ordinarily, the hire rate for films is determined by negotiation between the distributor and exhibitor, the determination being based generally on box-office receipts. Since it is not possible to forecast the popularity of a film, it is not possible to fix specific hire rates in advance. In the case of "Song of Bernadette", approval was given to a basis for negotiation and both distributors and exhibitors were advised of this arrangement, and that under the scheme no exhibitor was deprived of his right to apply to the Prices Commissioner for adjudication. These arrangements were in line with suggestions made by the Australian Exhibitors Advisory Committee, which embraces the Queensland Motion Picture Exhibitors Association. It is still open to any exhibitor who does not agree to terms suggested by the distributors to

submit full details to the Prices Commissioner in order to have the hire of the film specifically fixed.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY: MUNITIONS INSPECTORS.

Mr. DEDMAN.—On the 1st March, 1945, the Minister for Munitions (Mr. Makin) referred to the following questions by the honorable member for Balaclava (Mr. White):—

1. What are the names and ranks of commissioned officers in the Department of Army Inspection (munitions) and when were their present ranks gained?
2. How many of the above are classified "A.I.F." "A" class and have not yet seen active service?
3. How many officers who are "A" class are engaged in inspection work?
4. What qualifications have any recently promoted officers for the technical positions held by them?
5. How many fit civilians of military age are employed in the above department?
6. Are there no partly disabled or over-age officers and soldiers who could do the work of most of the present fit officers and civilians after a little experience?

The Minister for Munitions advised the honorable member that he had referred these questions to me for answer, and the following replies are now furnished:—

1. The names and ranks of these commissioned officers have been communicated direct to the honorable member.

2. Of the 23 Australian Imperial Force "A.I." class officers who have not seen active service eight are engaged on artillery proof and experimental duties, three are Radar scientists, two are controllers with special industrial qualifications.

3. Thirty-nine officers "A" class are engaged in inspection work, plus 36 who are over age. Of the 39, 19 are posted to the Artillery Proof and Experimental Ranges, where a high proportion of young and active officers is essential.

4. All officers have the requisite qualifications for the work they are required to perform.

5. One hundred and thirty-four of a total staff of 2,738. A proportion of young and active inspection staff is essential for special duties.

6. Inspection Division has experienced the utmost difficulty in obtaining personnel with the necessary qualifications from either within or without the Army. Consideration will be given to partly disabled or over-age applicants with the necessary trade and technical qualifications.

AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATION ABROAD.

Mr. BEASLEY on the 2nd March the honorable member for Fawkner (Mr. Holt) asked the Minister for External Affairs the following questions:—

1. What representatives, if any, of the Australian Government are there at the present time in each of the following countries: (a) France, (b) Belgium, (c) Holland, and (d) Italy?
 2. What organization, if any, is there operating in these countries to stimulate, and deal with inquiries regarding migration to Australia?
 3. Is it a fact that inquiries have been received by the Office of our High Commissioner in India from servicemen desirous of settling in Australia upon their discharge or retirement?
 4. What facilities exist for dealing with such inquiries?
 5. Is it a fact that the Government of South Africa maintains an organization in India to promote the migration to South Africa of such servicemen?
- The first question has already been answered by the Minister for External Affairs. The answers to the other questions are as follows:—
2. None at present.
 3. Yes.
 4. The High Commissioner's Office in Delhi issues information made available from Canberra from time to time. Inquiries are also dealt with by the Department of the Interior, Canberra.
 5. No information is available here.

PRISONERS OF WAR: QUESTIONNAIRES TO RELATIVES.

Mr. DEDMAN.—On the 7th March the honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Francis) referred to an article which had appeared in *Smith's Weekly* on the 3rd March, stating that questionnaires were still being sent to the relatives of prisoners-of-war, and asked whether it was a fact that I had stated some weeks ago that these questionnaires would not be issued and, further, whether I would now direct that the practice should be discontinued.

In reply I advise the honorable member that on the 27th January last a press statement was issued by me on this subject, stating that the questionnaire to relatives of prisoners-of-war should be completed in the interests of the soldier, and I then made it clear that the questionnaire was being forwarded by the department to non-dependent allottees

only of prisoners-of-war. It is now reiterated that the action that has been taken is entirely in the soldiers' interests, and not, as has been stated in this House and elsewhere, with a view to saving money at the expense of the soldier prisoner-of-war and his relatives. The Government is completely sympathetic both to the prisoners-of-war and their relatives, and has not the slightest wish to impose any hardship or effect any monetary saving at their expense.

However, in view of the experience gained both in the last war and the present war, when many cases occurred in which non-dependent allottees did not apply the allotment moneys received by them as the soldier had intended, it was considered advisable that in the case of prisoners-of-war who had been in the hands of the enemy for a lengthy period and were thus not in a position to ascertain in what manner the allotment that they had made to a non-dependant was being utilized, questionnaires should be despatched to non-dependent allottees. At the time the questionnaire was despatched it was accompanied by the following memorandum:—

The enclosed questionnaire is being forwarded for completion by all allottees of soldiers who are prisoners of war, and who are not in receipt of dependants allowance, and who, therefore, as far as the department is aware, are not dependent upon the soldiers concerned.

The soldier is unfortunately not in a position to satisfy himself that the allotment is being applied to any purpose for which he may have intended at the time of making the allotment. The circumstances may also have changed to such an extent that if the soldier were available to be consulted he might request cancellation or reduction of the allotment. It is therefore the desire of the department to protect the interests of the soldier in his absence.

The information that has been obtained as a result of the despatch of this questionnaire indicates to me that its despatch was justified. In the majority of cases, however, there has been no cause to make any change in the allotment; but where an allotment has been cancelled as a result of the information which has been disclosed, the amount of allotment so cancelled is being credited to the soldier and will be drawn by him on his return to Australia. It is thus in the soldiers' interest in such cases that the allotment

should have been cancelled and that the questionnaire should have been despatched. Exception has also been taken both in this House and elsewhere to the despatch of a similar form of questionnaire to the non-dependent allottees of members of the forces who are reported as "missing" as a result of active operations. The regulations provide that, in such cases, an allotment to a non-dependant will cease after a certain period from the date on which the soldier concerned is reported to be missing. When it is disclosed as a result of the replies to the questionnaire that hardship would arise by the suspension of the allotment, payment is continued at a rate commensurate with the circumstances. It is, therefore, in the interests of non-dependent allottees that the questionnaire received by them should be completed. If it is not completed the allotment will automatically cease after a certain period. Cases have occurred in which, as the result of answers to the questions, payment of dependants' allowance has been authorized in addition to the allotment. In the circumstances outlined above, it is not proposed to issue directions that the questionnaire to which exception has been taken should be discontinued. It should be appreciated by all concerned that the questionnaire is not despatched in any circumstances to allottees who are dependent on the member and are in receipt of dependants' allowance in addition to the allotment.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

Mr. SCULLY.—On the 8th March, the honorable member for Bass (Mr. Barnard) asked me a question, without notice, concerning the requirements of Tasmania in regard to superphosphate. I have now looked into the matter, and can inform the honorable member that it is known that all pastures in Australia normally requiring superphosphate are showing the effects of phosphate shortage. During the last two years, it has been possible to make some improvement in the condition of irrigated and dairying pastures by means of increased dressings of superphosphate, but the overall supply position has not yet improved sufficiently to permit special allocations for other

types of pastures. Allocations to individual States are based on a crop priority plan approved by the Australian Agricultural Council. The Tasmanian allocation of superphosphate for 1944-45 was made in accordance with this plan, and in common with the other States the requirements of pastures, other than for irrigated and dairying pastures, have had to be met out of what is known as the "other crops quota". The distribution of the "other crops quota" among specific non-priority crops, in any particular State, is a matter for determination by the State Department of Agriculture. Whilst the disabilities mentioned by the honorable member are fully and sympathetically appreciated, it is regretted that the position cannot be improved until the world supply of phosphate permits a larger allocation to Australia. The honorable member may rest assured that the Government is doing everything possible to press Australia's claims overseas for additional supplies. If these supplies are obtained, then the claims of Tasmania, in common with those of the other States, will have full consideration.

APPLES AND PEARS.

Mr. SCULLY.—On the 7th March, the honorable member for Darwin (Dame Enid Lyons) asked me a question, without notice, concerning fruit damaged by hail in the Mersey Valley. I have now looked into this matter and can inform the honorable member that I have approved of the adoption by the Apple and Pear Marketing Board of special grades to cover hail-damaged apples suitable for processing. The question of the payments to be made to growers on this class of fruit is under examination by the board and the rates of advances will be determined when full information is available.

PENICILLIN.

Mr. CHAMBERS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health, *upon notice*—

1. In view of the fact that penicillin is a very expensive drug and that the cost of sufficient supplies in a serious case of sepsis might easily cost £10, will the Government give earnest consideration to supply it free to maternity and public hospitals?

2. Is there any likelihood of a substantial reduction being made in the cost of penicillin at an early date?

Mr. HOLLOWAY.—The Minister for Health has supplied the following answers:—

1. The Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, at which penicillin is manufactured, is a Commonwealth Government establishment working on a strictly business basis. The Commonwealth Government cannot undertake to supply any of the manufactured products on a free basis to any institution. The maintenance of maternity and public hospitals is a function of State Governments, the Commonwealth Government having no responsibility in that field.

2. There is a probability that the cost of penicillin to the public will be reduced as soon as the appropriate stage in large scale manufacture is reached.

COAL-MINING INDUSTRY: GRANT TO MINERS.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping, *upon notice*—

Concerning the Commonwealth Government's proposal to grant an amount of between £1,500 and £2,000 to miners in the western district of New South Wales, in recognition of their having broken the previous production record—

1. Is it a fact their record was 1,701,851 tons, that in 1929, 2,258,206 tons were produced on the western coal-fields, and that the figure for 1930 was 1,847,576 tons?

2. Is it a fact that the increase in 1944 over previous war years was due, in the main, to the extension of open-cut methods in the district, and not because there had been less labour stoppages during the year?

3. Did the stoppage known as the Portland strike result in the loss of 30,000 tons of coal to the community?

4. Is it a fact that, in the opinion of the employers and many of the union officials, a grant of this nature will cause dissatisfaction on other fields?

Mr. BEASLEY.—The Minister for Supply and Shipping has supplied the following answers:—

The Commonwealth Coal Commissioner has recommended that employees in the western district should have recognition given to the fact that production in 1944 was a record for any year since the beginning of the war, but neither the amount involved nor the form of recognition has yet been settled. Answers to the specific questions asked by the honorable member, are as follows:—

1. Yes, but 3,191 men were employed in 1929, 2,908 men in 1930, and 2,048 men in 1944, so that the output per man employed was substantially better in the latest year.

2. The increase over previous war years is due to lower production losses resulting from stoppages, and also because of increased production from open-cut mines.

3. No.

4. No.

PUBLIC SERVICE: APPLICATION OF ARBITRATOR'S DETERMINATIONS.

Mr. RANKIN asked the Prime Minister, upon notice—

1. Under what specific authority, statutory or otherwise, did he issue a direction to the Public Service Board on the 16th May, 1942, that the provisions of determinations made by the Public Service Arbitrator should apply only to members of unions and returned soldiers?

2. Whence does the Public Service Board derive its authority to discriminate between unionists and non-unionists?

3. Is it a fact that Determination No. 6 of 1933, referring to travelling allowances states, "The rate shall be such as not to involve injustice to any group of officers", and "the rate shall be uniform for the Commonwealth"?

4. Are the portions of Determination No. 6 of 1933 quoted above still operative, and does he consider that differentiation by the Public Service Board in rates of travelling allowance to unionists and non-unionists in the same salary range is an infringement of the terms of such determination?

5. Under the circumstances, will he refer to the Attorney-General for his opinion the question of the legality of the direction given on the 16th May, 1942, and the actions of the Public Service Board in carrying out that direction?

Mr. CURTIN (through Mr. CHIFLEY).—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Determinations of the Public Service Arbitrator apply only to members of claimant organizations and the wording of the determinations is explicit in this regard. The Government, as a matter of policy, directed that the provisions of determinations should not be extended to non-members other than returned soldiers.

2. Public Service Regulation 74b, which provides—

"74b. Where, in any determination under the Arbitration (Public Service) Act 1920-1934, rates of pay or conditions of employment are prescribed in relation to any officer or class of officers, or employee or class of employees, those rates of pay or conditions of employment, or any of those rates or conditions, may be applied to any other officer or class of officers, or employee or class of employees, as the board determines."

3. In the reasons accompanying Determination No. 6 of 1933 the Arbitrator did use the words referred to and presumably it must be accepted that the rates he fixed were regarded by him as adequate. The "uniformity" referred to was the desirability of

having the same travelling allowance scales for members of the organizations whose claims the Arbitrator was determining, irrespective of the location in the Commonwealth of the officers affected.

4. The comments of the Arbitrator are still on record. There is no infringement by the Public Service Board of Determination No. 6 of 1933.

5. There is no necessity for this. For many years the Public Service Board has followed the direction of the government of the day in applying to or withholding from non-members the provisions of determinations which, as mentioned in 1, apply only to members of the claimant organization.

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

Mr. BEASLEY.—Earlier to-day, the honorable member for Parramatta (Sir Frederick Stewart) asked a question of me, as Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs, whether a decision had been reached regarding the application of the British Medical Association for a supply of newsprint for the purpose of enabling it to circulate its comments on the Government's pharmaceutical benefits legislation.

Following a question on this subject asked by the honorable member for Fawkner (Mr. Holt), the Prime Minister, in accordance with his promise, ascertained from the Department of Trade and Customs the facts concerning the matter which disclose that the secretary of the association was advised by telegram from Canberra on the 14th February, 1945, of the decision to release the necessary paper. It was also revealed that the association placed the order for printing on the 28th February and that the paper was delivered to the printer on the 2nd March. It would appear from the honorable member's question that the British Medical Association has neglected to keep the honorable member informed of the position.

TAXATION: QUESTIONNAIRES.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Treasurer, upon notice—

1. Is it a fact that the Commissioner of Taxation has a target list of percentages of gross and net profits expected to be earned by different businesses?

2. Is it a fact that if these businesses fail to make a taxation return showing such profit, a questionnaire is addressed to them asking for information concerning their personal expenditure, also a questionnaire asking for information concerning assets and liabilities?

3. Does this mean that every business failing to return profits determined by the Taxation Commissioner is subject to suspicion for income tax evasion?
4. If not, will he take steps to see that this practice is discontinued?
5. Does the Commissioner intend to prepare a personal dossier for each taxpayer; if so, for what purpose?

Mr. CHIFLEY.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1 and 2. In those cases where returns of taxpayers are not considered to be satisfactory it is necessary for the Taxation Department to issue queries to the taxpayer in order that his correct income for the year or years concerned may be checked and verified. This practice has been in existence ever since the inception of federal income tax and is an essential feature of the administration of the income tax law. One of the most practicable means of forming a reasonably sound judgment whether any taxpayer's returns are or are not satisfactory is to make a comparison of the items and particulars with the established standards of similar businesses and occupations. Apparently the returns of the taxpayers who have received the questionnaire to which the honorable member objects do not disclose a satisfactory comparative income. It does not follow, however, that the Taxation Department regards the taxpayer as having furnished an incorrect return or that the taxpayer is branded as dishonest. It is, however, necessary for the department to be satisfied that the return is correct and this often involves obtaining information in regard to the private expenditure of the taxpayer over the years concerned as well as statements of assets and liabilities.

3. No.
 4. No.
 5. No.
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