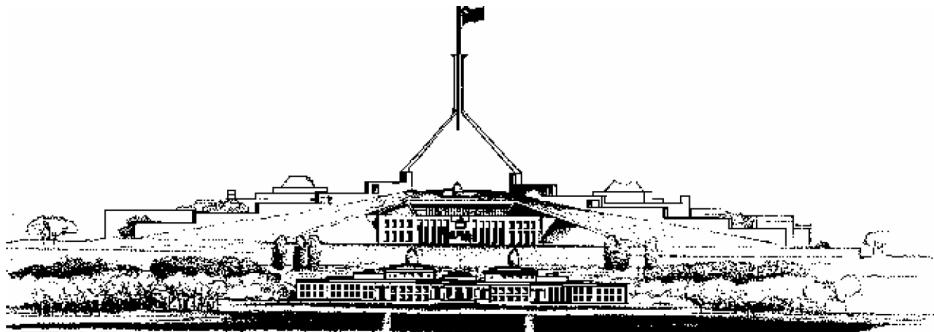




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives

Official Hansard

No. 43, 1957
Tuesday, 22 October 1957

TWENTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT
SECOND SESSION—SECOND PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

TWENTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION : SECOND PERIOD.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

His Excellency Field Marshal Sir William Joseph Slim, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, upon whom has been conferred the Decoration of the Military Cross, Knight of the Venerable Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia, from 8th May, 1953.

SIXTH MENZIES GOVERNMENT.

(ASSUMED OFFICE 12TH JANUARY, 1956.)

(PORTFOLIOS AS FROM 24TH OCTOBER, 1956.)

Prime Minister	The Right Honorable Robert Gordon Menzies, C.H., Q.C.
Treasurer	The Right Honorable Sir Arthur William Fadden, K.C.M.G.
Minister for Labour and National Service	The Right Honorable Harold Edward Holt.
Minister for Trade	The Right Honorable John McEwen.
Minister for External Affairs; and Minister in Charge Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization	The Right Honorable Richard Gardiner Casey, C.H., D.S.O., M.C.
Minister for Defence	The Honorable Sir Philip Albert Martin McBride, K.C.M.G.
Vice-President of the Executive Council ; and Attorney-General		Senator the Honorable Neil O'Sullivan.
Minister for National Development	Senator the Honorable William Henry Spooner, M.M.
Minister for Immigration	The Honorable Athol Gordon Townley.
Minister for Territories	The Honorable Paul Meernaa Caedwalla Hasluck.
Minister for Supply; and Minister for Defence Production	The Honorable Howard Beale, Q.C.
Minister for Primary Industry	The Honorable William McMahon.

(The above Ministers constitute the Cabinet.)

Minister for Repatriation	Senator the Honorable Walter Jackson Cooper, M.B.E.
Minister for Shipping and Transport; and Minister for Civil Aviation	Senator the Honorable Shane Dunne Paltridge.
Minister for Health	The Honorable Donald Alastair Cameron, O.B.E.
Minister for the Army	The Honorable John Oscar Cramer.
Postmaster-General; and Minister for the Navy	The Honorable Charles William Davidson, O.B.E.
Minister for Air	The Honorable Frederick Meares Osborne, D.S.C.
Minister for the Interior; and Minister for Works	The Honorable Allen Fairhall.
Minister for Social Services	The Honorable Hugh Stevenson Robertson.
Minister for Customs and Excise	Senator the Honorable Norman Henry Denham Henty.

(For previous holders of portfolios see Vol. H. of R. 9.)

THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TWENTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION : SECOND PERIOD.

Speaker—The Honorable John McLeay, M.M.

Leader of the House—The Right Honorable Harold Edward Holt.

Chairman of Committees—Charles Frederick Adermann.

Temporary Chairmen of Committees—George James Bowden, M.C., Joseph James Clark, Charles William Jackson Falkinder, D.S.O., D.F.C., Gordon Freeth, William Robert Lawrence, Philip Ernest Lucock, Hon. Norman John Oswald Makin, Edward William Peters, Thomas Frank Timson, M.B.E., and Charles Harry Webb.

Leader of the Opposition—The Right Honorable Herbert Vere Evatt, Q.C., LL.D., D.Litt.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—The Honorable Arthur Augustus Calwell.

Leader of the Australian Country Party—The Right Honorable Sir Arthur William Fadden, K.C.M.G.

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

Adermann, Charles Frederick	Fisher (Q.)
Allan, Archibald Ian	Gwydir (N.S.W.)
Anderson, Charles Groves Wright, V.C., M.C.	Hume (N.S.W.)
(?) Anthony, Hon. Hubert Lawrence	Richmond (N.S.W.)
(?) Anthony, John Douglas	Richmond (N.S.W.)
Aston, William John	Phillip (N.S.W.)
Barnard, Lance Herbert	Bass (T.)
Bate, Henry Jefferson	Macarthur (N.S.W.)
Beale, Hon. Howard, Q.C.	Parramatta (N.S.W.)
Beazley, Kim Edward	Fremantle (W.A.)
Bird, Alan Charles	Batman (V.)
Bland, Francis Armand	Warringah (N.S.W.)
Bostock, William Dowling, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E.	Indi (V.)
Bowden, George James, M.C.	Gippsland (V.)
Brand, William Alfred	Wide Bay (Q.)
Brimblecombe, Wilfred John	Maranoa (Q.)
Bruce, Hon. Henry Adam	Leichhardt (Q.)
Bryant, Gordon Munro	Wills (V.)
Buchanan, Alexander Andrew	McMillan (V.)
(?) Bury, Leslie Harry Ernest	Wentworth (N.S.W.)
Cairns, James Ford	Yarra (V.)
Calwell, Hon. Arthur Augustus	Melbourne (V.)
(?) Cameron, Hon. Archie Galbraith	Barker (S.A.)
Cameron, Clyde Robert	Hindmarsh (S.A.)
Cameron, Hon. Donald Alastair, O.B.E.	Oxley (Q.)
Casey, Rt. Hon. Richard Gardiner, C.H., D.S.O., M.C.	La Trobe (V.)
Chambers, Hon. Cyril	Adelaide (S.A.)
Chaney, Frederick Charles, A.F.C.	Perth (W.A.)
Clarey, Hon. Percy James	Bendigo (V.)
Clark, Joseph James	Darling (N.S.W.)
Cleaver, Richard	Swan (W.A.)
Cope, James Francis	Watson (N.S.W.)
Costa, Dominic Eric	Banks (N.S.W.)
Coutts, Wilfred Charles	Griffith (Q.)
Cramer, Hon. John Oscar	Bennelong (N.S.W.)
Crean, Frank	Melbourne Ports (V.)
Curtin, Daniel James	Kingsford-Smith (N.S.W.)
Daly, Frederick Michael	Grayndler (N.S.W.)
Davidson, Hon. Charles William, O.B.E.	Dawson (Q.)
(?) Davies, William	Cunningham (N.S.W.)
Davis, Francis John	Deakin (V.)
Dean, Roger Levinge	Robertson (N.S.W.)
Downer, Alexander Russell	Angas (S.A.)
Drummond, Hon. David Henry	New England (N.S.W.)
Drury, Edward Nigel	Ryan (Q.)
Duthie, Gilbert William Arthur	Wilmet (T.)
Edmonds, William Frederick	Herbert (Q.)
Erwin, George Dudley	Ballaarat (V.)
Evatt, Rt. Hon. Herbert Vere, Q.C., LL.D., D.Litt.	Barton (N.S.W.)
Fadden, Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur William, K.C.M.G.	McPherson (Q.)
Failes, Laurence John	Lawson (N.S.W.)
Fairbairn, David Eric, D.F.C.	Farrer (N.S.W.)
Fairhall, Hon. Allen	Paterson (N.S.W.)
Falkinder, Charles William Jackson, D.S.O., D.F.C.	Franklin (T.)
(?) Forbes, Alexander James, M.C.	Barker (S.A.)
Fox, Edmund Maxwell Cameron	Henty (V.)
Fraser, Allan Duncan	Eden-Monaro (N.S.W.)
Fraser, James Reay	(A.C.T.)

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

v

Fraser, John Malcolm	Wannon (V.)
Freeth, Gordon	Forrest (W.A.)
Galvin, Patrick	Kingston (S.A.)
Graham, Bruce William	St. George (N.S.W.)
Griffiths, Charles Edward	Shortland (N.S.W.)
Hamilton, Leonard William	Canning (W.A.)
Harrison, Eli James	Blaxland (N.S.W.)
(¹)Harrison, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric John, K.C.V.O.	Wentworth (N.S.W.)
Hasluck, Hon. Paul Meernaa Caedwalla	Curtin (W.A.)
Haworth, Hon. William Crawford	Isaacs (V.)
Haylen, Leslie Clement	Parkes (N.S.W.)
Holt, Rt. Hon. Harold Edward	Higgins (V.)
Holt, Hon. Robert Wilfred	Darebin (V.)
Howse, John Brooke	Calare (N.S.W.)
Howson, Peter	Fawkner (V.)
Hulme, Alan Shallcross	Petrie (Q.)
Jack, William Mathers	North Sydney (N.S.W.)
James, Rowland	Hunter (N.S.W.)
Johnson, Hon. Herbert Victor	Kalgoorlie (W.A.)
Johnson, Leslie Royston	Hughes (N.S.W.)
Joske, Percy Ernest, Q.C.	Balacalava (V.)
(¹)Kearney, Victor Dennis	Cunningham (N.S.W.)
Kent Hughes, Hon. Sir Wilfrid Selwyn, K.B.E., M.V.O., M.C., E.D.	Chisholm (V.)
Killen, Denis James	Moreton (Q.)
Lawrence, William Robert	Wimmera (V.)
Lawson, Hon. George	Brisbane (Q.)
Leslie, Hugh Alan	Moore (W.A.)
Lindsay, Robert William Ludovic	Flinders (V.)
Luchetti, Anthony Sylvester	Macquarie (N.S.W.)
Luck, Aubrey William George	Braddon (T.)
Lucock, Philip Ernest	Lyne (N.S.W.)
Mackinnon, Ewen Daniel	Corangamite (V.)
Makin, Hon. Norman John Oswald	Bonython (S.A.)
McBride, Hon. Sir Philip Albert Martin, K.C.M.G.	Wakefield (S.A.)
McColm, Malcolm Llewellyn	Bowman (Q.)
McEwen, Rt. Hon. John	Murray (V.)
McIvor, Hector James	Gellibrand (V.)
McLeay, Hon. John, M.M.	Boothby (S.A.)
McMahon, Hon. William	Lowe (N.S.W.)
Menzies, Rt. Hon. Robert Gordon, C.H., Q.C.	Koooyong (V.)
Minogue, Daniel	West Sydney (N.S.W.)
Morgan, Charles Albert Aaron	Reid (N.S.W.)
Nelson, John Norman	(N.T.)
O'Connor, William Paul	Dalley (N.S.W.)
Opperman, Hubert Ferdinand, O.B.E.	Corio (V.)
Osborne, Hon. Frederick Meares, D.S.C.	Evans (N.S.W.)
Page, Rt. Hon. Sir Earle Christmas Grafton, G.C.M.G., C.H.	Cowper (N.S.W.)
Pearce, Henry George	Capricornia (Q.)
Peters, Edward William	Scullin (V.)
Pollard, Hon. Reginald Thomas	Lalor (V.)
Riordan, Hon. William James Frederick	Kennedy (Q.)
Roberton, Hon. Hugh Stevenson	Riverina (N.S.W.)
Russell, Edgar Hughes Deg	Grey (S.A.)
Snedden, Billy Mackie	Bruce (V.)
Stewart, Francis Eugene	Lang (N.S.W.)
Stokes, Philip William Clifford, E.D.	Maribyrnong (V.)
Swartz, Reginald William Colin, M.B.E., E.D.	Darling Downs (Q.)
Thompson, Albert Victor	Port Adelaide (S.A.)
Timson, Thomas Frank, M.B.E.	Higinbotham (V.)
Townley, Hon. Athol Gordon	Denison (T.)
Turnbull, Winton George	Mallee (V.)
Turner, Henry Basil	Bradfield (N.S.W.)
Ward, Hon. Edward John	East Sydney (N.S.W.)
Watkins, David Oliver	Newcastle (N.S.W.)
Webb, Charles Harry	Stirling (W.A.)
Wentworth, William Charles	Mackellar (N.S.W.)
Wheeler, Roy Crawford	Mitchell (N.S.W.)
Whitlam, Edward Gough	Werriwa (N.S.W.)
Wight, Bruce McDonald	Lilley (Q.)
Wilson, Keith Cameron	Sturt (S.A.)

(¹) Death reported, 21st February, 1956.
 (¹) Elected, 13th October, 1956.
 (¹) Resigned, 17th October, 1956.
 (¹) Death reported, 27th August, 1957.

(¹) Elected 11th April, 1956.

(¹) Elected, 14th September, 1957.

(¹) Death reported, 29th August,

(¹) Elected, 8th December,

1956.

THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION.

JOINT.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY.—Senator McCallum (Chairman), Senator Nicholls (resigned, 8th October, 1957), Senator Poke (appointed, 16th October, 1957), Senator Ryan, Senator Vincent, Senator Wood, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Coutts, Mr. J. R. Fraser, and Mr. Howse.

CONSTITUTION REVIEW.—Senator O'Sullivan (Chairman), the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives, Senator Kennelly, Senator McKenna, Senator Wright, Mr. Calwell, Mr. Downer, Mr. Drummond, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Joske, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Whitlam.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes (Chairman), Senator Cole, Senator Gorton, Senator Maher, Senator Pearson, Senator Robertson, Senator Vincent, Senator Wordsworth, Mr. Chaney, Mr. Downer, Mr. Drummond, Mr. Failes, Mr. Joske, Mr. Lucock, Mr. Mackinnon, Mr. Timson, Mr. Turner, Mr. Wentworth, Mr. Wheeler, and Mr. Wight.

HOUSE.—The President (Chairman), Senator Amour, Senator Marriott, Senator O'Flaherty, Senator Ryan, Senator Wade, Senator Wordsworth, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Failes, Mr. J. R. Fraser, Mr. Hulme, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Opperman, and Mr. Webb.

LIBRARY.—Mr. Speaker (Chairman), the President, Senator Arnold, Senator Kendall, Senator McCallum, Senator Robertson, Senator Sheehan, Senator Tangney, Mr. Bryant, Mr. Downer, Mr. Drummond, Mr. R. W. Holt, Mr. O'Connor, and Mr. Wentworth.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS BROADCASTING.—The President (Chairman), Senator Arnold, Senator Marriott, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Costa, Mr. Falkinder, Mr. Allan Fraser, Mr. Opperman, and Mr. Turnbull.

PRINTING.—Senator Benn, Senator Buttfield, Senator Hannaford, Senator Robertson, Senator Scott, Senator Tangney, Senator Toohey, Mr. Dean, Mr. Drury, Mr. Freeth, Mr. E. James Harrison, Mr. Leslie, Mr. McIvor, and Mr. Stewart.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.—Mr. Bland (Chairman), Senator Benn, Senator Seward, Senator Wedgwood, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Cope, Mr. Davis, Mr. Hulme, Mr. Leslie, and Mr. Thompson.

PUBLIC WORKS.—Mr. Lawrence (Chairman), Senator Anderson, Senator Maher, Senator O'Byrne, Mr. Bird, Mr. Bowden, Mr. Dean, Mr. O'Connor, and Mr. Watkins.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

PRIVILEGES.—Mr. Clark, Mr. Allan Fraser, Mr. Freeth, Mr. Galvin, Mr. Joske, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Swartz, and Mr. Turnbull.

STANDING ORDERS.—Mr. Speaker (Chairman), the Prime Minister, the Chairman of Committees, the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Clark, Mr. Costa, Mr. E. James Harrison, Mr. Joske, Mr. Makin, and Sir Earle Page.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS.

SENATE.

Clerk.—R. H. C. Loof.

Clerk-Assistant.—J. R. Odgers.

Second Clerk-Assistant.—R. E. Bullock.

Usher of the Black Rod.—K. O. Bradshaw.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Clerk.—A. A. Tregear.

Clerk-Assistant.—A. G. Turner.

Second Clerk-Assistant.—N. J. Parkes.

Third Clerk-Assistant.—J. A. Pettifer.

Serjeant-at-Arms.—G. S. Reid.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING STAFF.

Principal Parliamentary Reporter.—L. D. O'Donnell.

Second Reporter.—W. E. Dale.

Third Reporter.—A. K. Healy.

LIBRARY.

Librarian.—H. L. White.

Assistant Librarian.—L. C. Key.

JOINT HOUSE.

Secretary.—W. I. Emerton.

THE ACTS OF THE SESSION.

(SECOND SESSION : SECOND PERIOD.)

ACTS INTERPRETATION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 69 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Acts Interpretation Act* 1901–1950.

AGED PERSONS HOMES ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 47 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Aged Persons Homes Act* 1954.

AIR FORCE (CANTEENS) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 88 OF 1957)—

An Act relating to the Air Force (Canteens) Regulations.

AIR NAVIGATION (CHARGES) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 87 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Air Navigation (Charges) Act* 1952.

APPROPRIATION ACT 1957–58 (ACT NO. 51 OF 1957)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund sums for the service of the year ending the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and fifty-eight, and to appropriate the Supplies granted by the Parliament for that year.

APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND SERVICES) ACT 1957–58 (ACT NO. 52 OF 1957)—

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 fifty-eight, for the purposes of Additions, New Works and other Services involving Capital Expenditure and to appropriate the Supplies granted by the Parliament for that year.

AUSTRALIAN WOOL TESTING AUTHORITY ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 38 OF 1957)—

An Act to provide for the Establishment of an Australian Wool Testing Authority.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND (REQUEST AND CONSENT) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 102 OF 1957)—

An Act to request, and consent to, the Enactment by the Parliament of the United Kingdom of an Act enabling the Queen to place Christmas Island under the Authority of the Commonwealth.

CIVIL AVIATION AGREEMENT ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 86 OF 1957)—

An Act relating to a proposed Agreement between the Commonwealth, the Australian National Airlines Commission and certain Companies in connexion with Airline Services, and to amend the *Civil Aviation Agreement Act* 1952.

COAL INDUSTRY ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 61 OF 1957)—

An Act relating to the Coal Industry Tribunal.

COMMONWEALTH AID ROADS (SPECIAL ASSISTANCE) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 83 OF 1957)—

An Act to grant further Financial Assistance to the States in connexion with Roads, and for other purposes.

COMMONWEALTH GRANTS COMMISSION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 43 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Grants Commission Act* 1933–1951, and for purposes connected with the amendment.

COMMONWEALTH POLICE ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 85 OF 1957)—

An Act to establish a Commonwealth Police Force.

CUSTOMS TARIFF 1957 (ACT NO. 53 OF 1957)—

An Act relating to Duties of Customs.

CUSTOMS TARIFF (No. 2) 1957 (ACT NO. 54 OF 1957)—

An Act relating to Duties of Customs.

CUSTOMS TARIFF (No. 3) 1957 (ACT NO. 81 OF 1957)—

An Act relating to Duties of Customs.

CUSTOMS TARIFF (No. 4) 1957 (ACT NO. 84 OF 1957)—

An Act relating to Duties of Customs.

CUSTOMS TARIFF (INDUSTRIES PRESERVATION) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 91 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Customs Tariff (Industries Preservation) Act* 1921–1956.

CUSTOMS TARIFF (NEW ZEALAND PREFERENCE) 1957 (ACT NO. 55 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Customs Tariff (New Zealand Preference)* 1933–1954.

CUSTOMS TARIFF (NEW ZEALAND PREFERENCE) (No. 2) 1957 (ACT NO. 63 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Customs Tariff (New Zealand Preference)* 1933–1954, as amended by the *Customs Tariff (New Zealand Preference)* 1957.

CUSTOMS TARIFF (PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA PREFERENCE) 1957 (ACT NO. 64 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Customs Tariff (Papua and New Guinea Preference)* 1936–1956.

CUSTOMS TARIFF VALIDATION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 99 OF 1957)—

An Act to provide for the Validation of Collections of Duties of Customs under Customs Tariff Proposals.

DEFENCE FORCES RETIREMENT BENEFITS ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 95 OF 1957)—

An Act to amend the *Defence Forces Retirement Benefits Act* 1948–1956.

- DIESEL FUEL TAXATION (ADMINISTRATION) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 98 OF 1957)—
An Act relating to Taxation imposed on certain Diesel Fuel.
- DIESEL FUEL TAX ACT (NO. 1) 1957 (ACT NO. 96 OF 1957)—
An Act to Impose a Tax on certain Diesel Fuel Sold or otherwise Disposed of.
- DIESEL FUEL TAX ACT (NO. 2) 1957 (ACT NO. 97 OF 1957)—
An Act to Impose a Tax on certain Diesel Fuel used in Road Vehicles on Public Roads.
- ESTATE DUTY ASSESSMENT ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 60 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Estate Duty Assessment Act* 1914–1956.
- EXCISE TARIFF 1957 (ACT NO. 82 OF 1957)—
An Act relating to Duties of Excise.
- EXCISE TARIFF VALIDATION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 100 OF 1957)—
An Act to provide for the Validation of Collections of Duties of Excise under Excise Tariff Proposals.
- FLAX FIBRE BOUNTY ACT (NO. 2) 1957 (ACT NO. 101 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Flax Fibre Bounty Act* 1954, as amended by the *Flax Fibre Bounty Act* 1957.
- GENEVA CONVENTIONS ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 103 OF 1957)—
An Act to enable effect to be given to certain Conventions done at Geneva on the twelfth day of August, One thousand nine hundred and forty-nine, and for related purposes.
- GIFT DUTY ASSESSMENT ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 57 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Gift Duty Assessment Act* 1941–1953.
- GOLD-MINING INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 48 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Gold-Mining Industry Assistance Act* 1954–1956.
- INCOME TAX AND SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRIBUTION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 62 OF 1957)—
An Act to impose upon Incomes a Tax by the name of Income Tax and Social Services Contribution.
- INCOME TAX AND SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRIBUTION ASSESSMENT ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 65 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the Law relating to Income Tax.
- LOAN (HOUSING) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 66 OF 1957)—
An Act to authorize the Raising and Expending of Moneys for the purposes of Housing.
- LOAN (WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 67 OF 1957)—
An Act to approve the Borrowing of Moneys for a Defence Purpose, namely Financial Assistance to the States in connexion with War Service Land Settlement, and to authorize the expending of those Moneys.
- NATIONAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 42 OF 1957)—
An Act to establish a Commission for the Development of the City of Canberra as the National Capital of the Commonwealth, and for related purposes.
- NATIONAL HEALTH ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 92 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *National Health Act* 1953–1956.
- NATIVE MEMBERS OF THE FORCES BENEFITS ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 89 OF 1957)—
An Act to make special provision for the granting of Pensions and other Benefits to certain Natives who served in the Defence Force during the War and their Dependants, and for purposes connected therewith.
- NATIONAL SERVICE ACT (NO. 2) 1957 (ACT NO. 40 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend section forty-six of the *National Service Act* 1951–1953, as amended by the *National Service Act* 1957, and for purposes connected therewith.
- PAY-ROLL TAX ASSESSMENT ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 68 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act* 1941–1954.
- PETROLEUM SEARCH SUBSIDY ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 90 OF 1957)—
An Act to Encourage the Search for Petroleum in Australia by Subsidizing Stratigraphic Drilling.
- REPATRIATION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 44 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Repatriation Act* 1920–1956, and for other purposes.
- SALARIES (STATUTORY OFFICES) ADJUSTMENT ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 39 OF 1957)—
An Act to increase the Salaries payable to the Holders of certain Statutory Offices, and for purposes connected therewith.
- SALES TAX ACT (NO. 1) 1957 (ACT NO. 72 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act* (No. 1) 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX ACT (NO. 2) 1957 (ACT NO. 73 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act* (No. 2) 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX ACT (NO. 3) 1957 (ACT NO. 74 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act* (No. 3) 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX ACT (NO. 4) 1957 (ACT NO. 75 OF 1957)—
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act* (No. 4) 1930–1956.

- SALES TAX ACT (No. 5) 1957 (ACT NO. 76 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act (No. 5)* 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX ACT (No. 6) 1957 (ACT NO. 77 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act (No. 6)* 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX ACT (No. 7) 1957 (ACT NO. 78 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act (No. 7)* 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX ACT (No. 8) 1957 (ACT NO. 79 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act (No. 8)* 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX ACT (No. 9) 1957 (ACT NO. 80 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act (No. 9)* 1930–1956.
- SALES TAX (EXEMPTIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 71 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Act* 1935–1956.
- SEAMEN'S WAR PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 45 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Seamen's War Pensions and Allowances Act* 1940–1955.
- SOCIAL SERVICES ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 46 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Social Services Act* 1947–1956.
- STATES GRANTS ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 59 OF 1957)—**
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the States of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania.
- STATES GRANTS (SPECIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 58 OF 1957)—**
An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund sums for the purpose of Financial Assistance to the States.
- STEVEDORING INDUSTRY ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 93 OF 1957)—**
An Act relating to the Stevedoring Industry.
- SUPERANNUATION ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 94 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Superannuation Act* 1922–1956, and for other purposes.
- SUPPLY ACT (No. 2) 1957–58 (ACT NO. 49 OF 1957)—**
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 fifty-eight.
- SUPPLY (WORKS AND SERVICES) ACT (No. 2) 1957–58 (ACT NO. 50 OF 1957)—**
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 fifty-eight, for the purposes of Additions, New Works and other Services involving Capital Expenditure.
- WESTERN AUSTRALIA GRANT (WATER SUPPLY) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 56 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Western Australia Grant (Water Supply) Act* 1948–1955.
- WINE GRAPES CHARGES ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 41 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Wine Grapes Charges Act* 1929–1954.
- WOOL REALIZATION (DISTRIBUTION OF PROFITS) ACT 1957 (ACT NO. 70 OF 1957)—**
An Act to amend the *Wool Realization (Distribution of Profits) Act* 1948–1955, and for other purposes.

BILLS OF THE SESSION.

The following bills were passed by the House of Representatives and negatived at the first reading stage in the Senate:—Reserve Bank Bill 1957, Commonwealth Banks Bill 1957, Banking Bill 1957, Banking (Transitional Provisions) Bill 1957, Audit Bill 1957, Commonwealth Employees' Furlough Bill 1957, Crimes Bill 1957, Gold-Mining Industry Assistance Bill (No. 2) 1957, Income Tax and Social Services Contribution Assessment Bill (No. 2) 1957, National Debt Sinking Fund Bill 1957, Northern Territory (Lessees' Loans Guarantee) Bill 1957, Officers' Rights Declaration Bill 1957, Re-Establishment and Employment Bill 1957 and Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Bill (No. 2) 1957.

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TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1957

CHAMBER

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Tuesday, 22nd October, 1957.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. John McLeay) took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ATOMIC WEAPONS.

Petition.

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON presented a petition from certain electors of the State of South Australia praying that the Government take action for the total banning of the H-bomb and nuclear weapons of warfare.

Petition received and read.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

Dr. EVATT.—I desire to ask the Prime Minister some questions arising out of his speech on international affairs yesterday to the Federal Council of the Liberal party. First, does that speech, which contained certain positive proposals of great interest, represent the policy of the Government? Secondly, have instructions of any kind been given to the Australian representatives at the United Nations to act in accordance with those positive proposals and the other matters contained in the Prime Minister's statement?

Mr. MENZIES.—The answer to both of those questions is, "Yes".

WOOL.

Mr. HOWSE.—My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industry. Are the Minister and his departmental officers keeping a close watch on the present wool sales? If so, will he say whether there is a marked downward trend in prices? If not, what is the latest movement in prices? Has the Minister any information concerning the prospect of wool prices increasing? If he has not, will he seek such information?

Mr. McMAHON.—I am glad to be able to inform the House that the downward trend in wool prices over the last few weeks has now been reversed, and that there is good reason for thinking that any one who purchases wool at the present price will be getting it cheaply. I am drawn to that conclusion for these reasons: First, there was a rise in the price of wool at yesterday's Brisbane sales—compared with the

closing price at the Sydney sales; secondly, the price has risen in the United Kingdom; and, finally, there is always the prospect of the principal consuming countries, including the United States of America, stepping up their purchases. If these hopes are realized we can be confident that wool prices will show at least an upward tendency. Demand is strong and, I repeat, those who purchase wool at current prices will be getting it cheaply.

EGGS.

Mr. CLAREY.—Can the Minister for Primary Industry give details of the quantity of eggs exported since the commencement of the financial year? Can he also say what the prospects are for future egg exports? Are export sales being made at satisfactory prices?

Mr. McMAHON.—I know the honorable member's great and continuing interest in this problem. I am glad to be able to inform him that the active marketing policy and programme of the Australian Egg Board has been significantly successful in that it has found overseas markets to replace much of that lost because the United Kingdom market became over-supplied. Though I do not wish to exaggerate, I think it is correct to say that, as a result of the marketing drive by the board, good export outlets have been found. I cannot tell the honorable gentleman the price that is obtained overseas, but I will get details of both the price and the extent of sales. I should like to mention—because I think that it is well worth while stating—that, despite the forecasts of calamity for the egg industry, production is significantly higher in New South Wales and Victoria. If present trends continue, sales in New South Wales are expected to increase by about 5 per cent., that is, by 2,000,000 dozen eggs during the year. Demand in Victoria is up by about 4 per cent. This illustrates that dry conditions are not too severe, and the forecasts of calamity for the industry made a month or two ago have not, up to the present, been borne out.

CRIMINAL CHARGE AGAINST NATIONAL OF PAKISTAN.

Mr. OPPERMANN.—Has the attention of the Minister for Immigration been drawn to the case of a national of Pakistan who has

been convicted of a criminal charge in the Victorian courts? Critics in the press, including the Leader of the Opposition, have said that the Department of Immigration should prevent him from leaving Australia until he has been tried in the criminal court. Can the Minister say whether the case is one for determination by his department and, if not, who is the appropriate authority?

Mr. TOWNLEY.—I understand that the offence in question was committed in Geelong, so I can well understand the honorable member's concern, but I should like to state categorically that the case does not come under the control of the department. Indeed, the department had no knowledge of it until towards the end of last week, when a journalist rang and asked what was going on. That was the first intimation of it that we received. The Department of Immigration can, in certain circumstances, prevent a man from staying in this country, but this was not such a case. This is a case of a national of Pakistan, who has been here as a visitor on a permit, leaving the country, presumably of his own free will. The appropriate authority, as the Attorney-General of Victoria has stated to-day, is the Crown Law Department in Victoria. The matter has nothing whatever to do with the Department of Immigration, and the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is one of the department's critics does not alter that fact.

STANDARDIZATION OF RAIL GAUGES.

Mr. RUSSELL.—I ask the Prime Minister a question without notice. In doing so I feel confident that the right honorable gentleman is perfectly aware that, in the opinion of people in a position to know, South Australia will suffer probably the worst season in its experience since the drought of 1914. I ask the right honorable gentleman, in view of the unemployment which the drought will most assuredly create, whether he will take into consideration the immediate need to standardize the rail gauge between Port Pirie and Broken Hill, and between Port Pirie and Adelaide, thus providing through this national project a means of absorbing labour and preventing unemployment.

Mr. MENZIES.—The Government has already announced that it proposes to make

a very large contribution—in fact, initially, the whole contribution—for the standardization of the gauge between Wodonga and Melbourne. That is the decision which the Government has made at present. Other proposals will be looked at on their merits in due course.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA TREATY ORGANIZATION.

Mr. STOKES.—I ask a question of the Minister for Defence in his capacity as acting Minister for External Affairs. Has the honorable gentleman's attention been drawn to a statement made yesterday in Hobart by Sir Douglas Copland, criticizing the South-East Asia Treaty Organization and advocating a foreign policy based on Colombo plan lines? If so, will the Minister be good enough to comment?

Sir PHILIP McBRIDE.—I did not see Professor Copland's statement. My only comment is that all the matters upon which he touched in his statement have already been considered by the Government, and its policy regarding them is quite clear.

CRIMINAL CHARGE AGAINST NATIONAL OF PAKISTAN.

Mr. WARD.—My question to the Prime Minister is supplementary to a question asked of the Minister for Immigration a few minutes ago. I desire to know whether the Government considers that it has any responsibility to protect Australian citizens against criminal offences perpetrated by foreign nationals while temporarily residing in this country by Commonwealth permission. If so, what action does the Government propose to take to ensure that a national of Pakistan, who was released on bail on a charge of indecently assaulting an eight-year-old Australian girl, remains in this country to answer the charge against him? If the Government proposes to act, will the Prime Minister see that it does so immediately, as the "Strathaird", the vessel upon which the accused hopes to escape from Australia, is due to sail from Adelaide at 11 p.m. to-night and from Fremantle at 4 p.m. on Saturday next? Finally, will the Prime Minister institute inquiries to ascertain whether any person in authority in this country has in any way assisted in the move to expedite the departure from Australia of the person accused of this criminal offence against an Australian youngster?

Mr. MENZIES.—Most of the question put by the honorable member for East Sydney is completely irrelevant, because it is now a matter of public notoriety—it has been made the subject of a statement by the Attorney-General of Victoria—that this accused man was charged with a serious offence. He was out on bail, but then the Attorney-General of Victoria, who alone has jurisdiction over the criminal code of that State, on the advice of his Solicitor-General, entered a nolle and thereupon terminated the prosecution. I know of no obligation on the part of the Commonwealth to detain in Australia a man in respect of whom a charge has been levelled and a nolle has been entered by the appropriate officer of the Crown. That disposed of that matter. The Commonwealth will certainly not substitute some view of its own for the informed view of the people responsible for the enforcement of the law in the State of Victoria.

RIFLE CLUBS.

Mr. CLEAVER.—I preface my question to the Minister for the Army by expressing my concern about certain information given a few days ago on a television programme titled "This I believe". A claim was made that the valuable work of the rifle clubs of Australia would be affected disastrously at an early date due, first, to a substantial increase in the cost of .303 ammunition supplied to rifle clubs by the Department of the Army; and secondly, to the distribution of some fifteen years' reserve of .303 ammunition because of the anticipated introduction of the new FN rifle. Would the Minister advise the House if there is any truth in these contentions?

Mr. CRAMER.—Unfortunately I did not see the television programme to which the honorable member has referred. The question of the rifle club movement, about which I gave information to the House a week or two ago, is at present under consideration, and I have had conferences already with the federal president of the rifle club associations. The annual meeting of the associations is to take place in Victoria on 9th November when this matter will be discussed, and after that I will hold further conferences with them.

With regard to the second question, I am glad of the opportunity to dispel the false impression which appears to be current

throughout the community, particularly among rifle clubs themselves, that there is available an abundance of ammunition of the older type suitable for rifle clubs. This television programme apparently bears out that rumour because, as the honorable member has said, Mr. Baume stated that there is fifteen years' supply. That is entirely false. Whilst we have ample ammunition to meet any mobilization that may be required in this country, and for other purposes, all of the ammunition is of current manufacture and there is no reserve of the kind mentioned by Mr. Baume. I know at the present moment certain demolition is taking place, particularly in Sydney, of certain old ammunition, and I think that, perhaps, gave rise to the rumour. That old ammunition is American, which is dangerous to use and must be destroyed in situ. I can assure the House there is no ammunition other than that of current manufacture, and that is at present being used by the rifle clubs throughout Australia.

DIESEL FUEL TAX.

Mr. GEORGE LAWSON.—I ask the Minister representing the Minister for Customs and Excise: Is it a fact that diesel fuel users in essential industries, who believe that they should be exempt from the payment of the 1s. diesel fuel tax, are unable to make the necessary application for exemption for the reason that application must be made on a specially prescribed form which the department has not yet drafted, let alone printed? Will the Minister have the matter investigated with a view to enabling applicants' claims to be dealt with without delay?

Mr. OSBORNE.—I am not aware that some prescribed form is not yet available. I shall certainly refer the matter to my colleague, the Minister for Customs and Excise, who, I am sure, will attend to it.

JAPANESE WIFE OF AUSTRALIAN EX-SERVICEMAN.

Mr. TIMSON.—My question is directed to the Minister for Immigration. It is claimed by a Victorian ex-serviceman that he is being victimized by the Department of Immigration, which has refused him permission to bring his Japanese wife to Australia. As a number of Australian ex-servicemen have been granted such permission,

will the Minister state why permission has been refused in this case, which I am sure the Minister will recognize?

Mr. TOWNLEY.—This is a peculiar case. It involves, not the wife of an Australian serviceman, but two so-called "wives". The details concerning the first "wife" are of such an unsavoury character that I would not like to give them in the House while we are on the air, but if the honorable member will come to my office I shall be only too pleased to let him see the file. We do not know very much about the second "wife", but that is really irrelevant, because there are two prerequisites to an ex-serviceman being allowed to bring a Japanese wife to Australia. The first is that he must be of good character, and the second is that he must be able to maintain his Japanese wife according to Australian standards. This ex-serviceman does not meet either of those requirements. He has committed all sorts of offences in Australia and Japan, including stealing, forgery, arson, unlawfully assuming control of motor vehicles, breaking and entering and house breaking. So the honorable member will probably understand why the department has not granted his application.

TOWNSVILLE-MOUNT ISA RAILWAY.

Mr. RIORDAN.—On the eve of the Treasurer's departure for the United States of America, I asked him whether he would take the opportunity, while in that country, to inquire whether the experts who had investigated the reconstruction of the railway from Townsville to Mount Isa had furnished their reports, and, if they had done so, whether he would also inquire whether finance for this project would be made available by the World Bank or by private financial interests. I now ask the right honorable gentleman: Did he make any such inquiries? Have the reports been presented? Did he make any representations with a view to securing the finance necessary to have this urgent work put in hand forthwith? If so, what was the result of his efforts to secure finance?

Sir ARTHUR FADDEN.—The mission that was brought to Australia by the joint effort of the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government will make its report to the Queensland Government. When that report has been received, the matter will be considered in all its aspects.

TELEPHONE SERVICES.

Mr. FOX.—Will the Postmaster-General say whether existing regulations enable the telephone branch to alter the telephone service of a subscriber of fifteen years' standing from an individual service to a duplex service without the subscriber's written consent? If the department has this power, will the Minister say whether a subscriber has any choice in the selection of the joint user of the service?

Mr. DAVIDSON.—It is correct that the department has the right to alter an individual service to a duplex service, in order to provide a second service. That right was conferred on the department by a regulation issued in 1950. I can assure the honorable member, however, that the right is exercised as sparingly as possible—when the alteration of an individual service to a duplex service is absolutely essential to meet a demand of high priority.

MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA.

Mr. R. W. HOLT.—I ask the Prime Minister, first, whether his recently announced new foreign policy to provide economic aid without military strings to Middle East countries that are in need of it will apply also to South-East Asia. Secondly, has he or any one on his behalf had prior discussions with and received the approval of the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, and the British Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan, for this new policy?

Mr. MENZIES.—The honorable member has been good enough to refer to a new policy. I did not consult either the Prime Minister of Great Britain or the Secretary of State for the United States of America before making a pronouncement which I thought was of some helpfulness and significance. This country is well entitled to put forward its independent views, and from time to time it does so.

POLIOMYELITIS.

Mr. ASTON.—My question is directed to the Minister for Immigration, who at present is representing the Minister for Health, and relates to the Government's scheme for free vaccination against poliomyelitis. As this scheme is highly successful and is accepted as being a most effective method of prevention, will the Minister

inform the House of the reasons for the delay in making available supplies of the Salk vaccine? Can the delay be attributed to lack of finance? What reserves are held against a stoppage of production in the future?

Mr. TOWNLEY.—There has been a slight delay in the safety tests of the Salk vaccine. I think the Minister for Health made a statement to that effect last week. What actually happened was that in the controls of the safety tests some of the materials used in the culture became contaminated, and therefore the tests could not be carried out satisfactorily. Plenty of Salk vaccine is held, and as soon as the safety tests are completed the vaccine will be released. It is hoped to have it available about the middle or towards the end of next week. I am sure the honorable member will agree that we must have the strictest safety measures in the control of this vaccine and all others.

COMMONWEALTH PROPERTY.

Mr. BARNARD.—I ask the Treasurer whether he informed the various Ministers at the conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, held at Canberra in June, 1956, that, as a result of a deputation consisting of the lord mayors of the capital cities who had previously met him and the Prime Minister, consideration was then being given to the appointment of a committee consisting of representatives from the councils of the capital cities and other municipalities, the Department of the Treasury, and the Department of the Interior, to consider the requests of local governing bodies for the payment of rates on buildings owned by the Commonwealth. I further ask him whether he informed the Premiers at the conference that a member of the House of Representatives had proposed a motion dealing with the matter but that he had been persuaded not to proceed further until the result of the investigation was available from the constituted committee. The conference to which I refer took place almost eighteen months ago. I therefore ask the right honorable gentleman whether the proposed committee has been constituted; if it has, whether it has proceeded to secure the evidence referred to by him; and, finally, when the findings are to be made available to the Premiers and the Commonwealth Parliament.

Sir ARTHUR FADDEN.—In reply to the series of questions that have been raised by the honorable member, I think I can short-circuit the whole matter by pointing out that we did confer with the Premiers as the representatives of the respective States, but that the States would not play in the appointment of the suggested committee.

DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. KILLEN.—I address a question without notice to the Prime Minister. I refer to a request that has been made by the Premier of Queensland to the Commonwealth Government for drought relief assistance, and ask the right honorable gentleman whether, in view of the critical conditions now obtaining in Queensland and the rather casual bookkeeping methods adopted by the former administration, it can be assumed that the Queensland Premier's request will meet with the Prime Minister's usual sympathy and be acted upon with his usual celerity.

Mr. MENZIES.—As far as I am concerned, this communication was received yesterday. I have had no opportunity since then of discussing it with the Treasurer.

LITHGOW SMALL ARMS FACTORY.

Mr. LUCHETTI.—Is the Minister for Defence Production in a position to say that action will be taken to re-engage the physically handicapped young worker who was dismissed from the Commonwealth Small Arms Factory at Lithgow last Friday? If the Minister is unable to give such an assurance, can it be assumed that the Government will proceed with the policy of sacking physically handicapped workmen? How many physically handicapped employees are to be dismissed from the Lithgow factory? From whom are the physically handicapped expected to obtain employment if the Australian Government refuses to accept this humanitarian responsibility? Are these unfortunate people to be abandoned without employment or pension?

Mr. BEALE.—The honorable gentleman has asked several questions so I must content myself with answering him rather generally. In the first place, the honorable member is not entitled to assume that the management at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory intends to sack a great many

physically handicapped men. There is a case, of which the honorable member has spoken to me, involving a young, unapprenticed man, aged, I think, nineteen years, who is mentally defective and who also is a polio victim. He had been engaged by the factory as a matter of sympathy a couple of years ago and had been tried in several jobs. The management reached the conclusion that he was quite incapable of doing any job available at the factory. The management consulted the industrial officer of the department who went to Lithgow and examined the matter and confirmed the view of the management that there really was no justification for maintaining this young man in employment at the factory. So he was told that his services would be dispensed with. Unless it is assumed that, because this is a government establishment, it must maintain unfortunate persons of that sort on its pay-roll, the time must come when something must be done about a case such as this. I deeply regret the necessity, and since the honorable gentleman has raised the matter, I shall have it examined again. But, I am very loth, in cases of this sort, to interfere with the discretion of the management which on this occasion, as I have said, took action after careful consideration of the facts. I have a note which says this:

There is no question of terminating the services of disabled persons who are efficiently discharging a substantial portion of the duties of the positions in which they are employed.

There are one or two other cases in which it would be quite grotesque to suggest that the Government should be called upon to maintain the employees indefinitely. But as I have said, I will have this case examined again in order to see whether there are any circumstances in which employment could be maintained. However, I tell the honorable gentleman that I believe that the matter has been carefully examined already.

HOMES FOR THE AGED.

Mr. FAIRBAIRN.—In addressing a question to the Minister for Social Services, I refer to a move by certain branches of the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia to purchase a hospital so as to convert it into an old diggers' home. If the Commonwealth contributes on a £2-for-£1 basis to this purchase under the Aged Persons

Homes Act, will it insist that the home be thrown open to all aged persons, or could the league limit applicants to returned ex-servicemen?

Mr. ROBERTON.—Every application under the Aged Persons Homes Act is measured against the letter, spirit and intention of the act. It is desired to provide accommodation on the highest possible scale for aged people. If the organization to which the honorable member refers makes an application to the Department of Social Services, that department will be very pleased to examine the application and will grant a subsidy to the organization, subject to the usual qualifications, without imposing any condition other than that the building to be constructed must be made available for the accommodation of aged persons.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

Mr. CURTIN.—In view of the Prime Minister's published statements on the latest Middle East crisis and its effect upon Australia, will the right honorable gentleman give to this House and to the Australian people an assurance that he will take immediate steps to have all our naval vessels surveyed, overhauled and reconditioned, so that they will be ready for immediate action in the event of hostilities? Is the Prime Minister aware of the bad condition of the naval boom ships which were specially built for the purpose of laying booms across the entrances to the harbours and rivers around our island continent?

Mr. MENZIES.—The Government has no reason to be dissatisfied with the work being done in the Navy, or with the state of readiness of that service for whatever may befall.

DUNTROON ROADS.

Mr. WHITLAM.—Can the Minister for the Army say whether there is any foundation for the belief that the name of a street at Duntroon, which honorable members pass on the way from the airport, will shortly be changed from Legge-road to Menzies Bypass, Beale Bottleneck or Dowling's Detour?

Mr. CRAMER.—I understand that the purpose of questions is to enable honorable members to elicit certain information from

Ministers who are in charge of departments. This question is obviously facetiously asked and does not deserve an answer.

MIDDLE EAST.

Mr. CAIRNS.—Is the Prime Minister aware that the Opposition approves of the similarity between the newly adopted policy of the Government in relation to the Middle East and the long-standing policy of the Opposition in this matter, as stated, for example, by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech on the Suez Canal crisis last year, in which he enumerated five of the points now accepted by the Prime Minister?

Mr. MENZIES.—I regard this as a very bold claim, and I must confess that I am astonished to hear it made.

SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ABORIGINES.

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON.—My question, which is addressed to the Minister for Social Services, relates to the payment of unemployment and sickness benefits to aborigines and part-aborigines living on mission stations throughout Australia. Does the Department of Social Services consider that it is honour-bound or obliged by law to pay to full-blooded aborigines living on mission stations unemployment and sickness benefits in cases where such aborigines are obliged to pay income tax? I refer to those who work as, say, shearers, and who go back to the mission stations to live when they are not so employed. Secondly, does the department consider itself obliged by law to pay to persons who are not full-blooded aborigines, and in whom the aboriginal blood does not predominate, the same unemployment and sickness benefits as are payable to other members of the community?

Mr. ROBERTON.—The Social Services Act provides that unemployment and sickness benefits may be paid to an Australian aborigine, no matter what proportion of aboriginal blood he has, if, by reason of character, standard of intelligence and social development he is considered a suitable person to receive payment, subject to the usual conditions. In order to qualify for unemployment benefit, he must have been in employment, have lost his employment and have registered for employment, and he must be able and willing to accept

employment. In order to be eligible for sickness benefit, he must have lost his employment because of sickness, and his sickness benefit will then continue during the period of his inability to work at his normal avocation.

THE PARLIAMENT.

Double Dissolution in 1951.

Mr. KILLEEN.—I preface a question to the Leader of the House by saying that, during the life of this Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition and his followers have made a number of requests for the tabling of documents relating to the double dissolution of the Parliament in 1951. The Minister will recall, also, that, at the end of the last session, a move for a debate on the documents was made by the Leader of the Opposition. I now ask the Leader of the House whether the Leader of the Opposition has approached him for a debate on the double dissolution documents before the House rises at the end of this sessional period.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—No such request has been made to me. There have been other occasions in the proceedings of this sessional period when members wishing to speak upon the particular matter raised by the honorable member would have been able to do so, and the possibilities are by no means exhausted yet.

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION STUDIOS, PERTH.

Mr. WEBB.—I preface a question to the Postmaster-General by directing his attention to a statement made in the House on Wednesday last by the Minister for Works, who, in reply to representations that I had made about the new Australian Broadcasting Commission studios in Perth, said that the question of when the new building would be constructed was a matter for the Postmaster-General, because the Postmaster-General's Department was responsible for its construction. Is the Postmaster-General able to say when the new building will be commenced, and whether it will be completed by December, 1960, so that the site at present occupied may be vacated by the commission in accordance with an agreement made between the Commonwealth and the Perth City Council, which requires the site for the construction of a new town hall?

Mr. DAVIDSON.—This is a matter with which I have already dealt at question time in replies to questions asked at least by the honorable member for Perth, and the position is still as I stated it in those replies. It is correct that my colleague, the Minister for Works, on Wednesday last, referred to the fact that the Department of Works is engaged in the preparation of plans and specifications for the construction of the new building in Perth for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. I had stated previously that preparatory work was being undertaken to enable the actual work of construction to proceed as soon as finance was made available for it. I had stated, also, that provision for the actual construction work has not been made in this year's Estimates. All the preliminary work, which takes a considerable time to complete, will be completed by the Department of Works in time for the construction to proceed next financial year if finance is provided for it. Of course, I cannot forecast the date of completion, since the date of commencement has not been determined. But I can assure the honorable member that all possible efforts are being made by both the Postmaster-General's Department and the A.B.C. to ensure that buildings are ready in Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, and Brisbane, in time for the proposed extension of television services to those four cities.

COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION.

Mr. J. R. FRASER.—I ask the Minister acting for the Minister in charge of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization: Has any brochure or publication dealing with the work of the Wildlife Survey Section of the C.S.I.R.O., at Canberra, been prepared? If so, does it give the title of the section in its correct connotation? Is it a common sight for untutored farmers in the Gungahlin district to see two officers of the section driving about the paddocks in a Land Rover, pausing to observe the habits of magpies or rabbits, and dictating their observations to a typist who travels in the rear of the vehicle? Will the Minister cause details of the results of this most valuable

and important research to be published for the benefit of the puzzled practical farmers in the district?

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—The honorable member has painted a very attractive picture of a day in the countryside adjacent to the National Capital. I have no personal knowledge of such activities. However, I will make suitable inquiries, and if I find that there is any information that would satisfy the honorable member's curiosity, I will see that it is given to him.

ESTIMATES 1957-58.

In Committee of Supply: Consideration resumed from 17th October (vide page 1547).

Mr. Harold Holt.—I suggest to the committee that the proposed votes for the Department of Labour and National Service, the Department of National Development, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and the Australian Atomic Energy Commission be considered together. I think that would be a convenient arrangement.

Mr. Ward.—I am not so sure that the Leader of the House (Mr. Harold Holt) has suggested the proper way to deal with these Estimates. I have noticed in earlier discussions that when proposed votes for departments have been grouped there has been no continuity in the debate. One honorable member has talked on a subject and he has been followed by another honorable member who has referred to a completely unrelated subject. If we are to have proper continuity of debate, we should discuss the proposed vote for each department separately. I am of the opinion that the Government ought to reconsider this matter and give the committee the opportunity of discussing the estimates for each department separately.

Mr. Harold Holt.—If I may, I should like to comment on that suggestion. In my capacity as Leader of the House I have thought this matter over, and I am sure that my opposite number, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Calwell), will have been thinking it over, too. I confess that I am by no means entirely satisfied with our present procedure in connexion with the consideration of the Estimates. There is some point in the suggestion of the

honorable member for East Sydney. However, with the limited time available to the committee, my proposal seems to be about the most practicable way of dealing with the matter.

In the past, we have experimented with the guillotine procedure. There were complaints about that; indeed, the same complaint as that voiced by the honorable member for East Sydney to-day can be directed with equal force, perhaps with added force, against the guillotine procedure because it sometimes happened that the allotted time proved to be more than was desired by the committee and time which could usefully have been devoted to a discussion of the Estimates of other departments was exhausted.

I feel that the matter should be left for consideration before the Estimates for next year come before the committee. As we are so far advanced with the consideration of the Estimates for this year, and in view of the fact that we are faced now with the problem of having these Estimates passed by the committee and available to another place so that consideration of supply may be concluded by 30th October, I feel that this matter is best left until we are preparing for a discussion of next year's Estimates. It is for that reason that I have worked out a programme which, I think, will spread the debating time as reasonably as the needs and convenience of honorable members require, and, accordingly, I have recommended this grouping.

Department of Labour and National Service.

Proposed Vote, £2,147,000.

Department of National Development.

Proposed Vote, £1,348,000.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization.

Proposed Vote, £5,474,000.

Australian Atomic Energy Commission.

Proposed Vote, £1,411,000.

(Ordered to be considered together.)

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON (Hindmarsh) [3.20].—The Opposition is greatly concerned at a development that has taken place recently in the industrial movement of Australia and at a form of corruption that is now rampant in connexion with court-controlled union ballots. We feel that this matter calls for the serious attention of the Parliament and in particular the serious

attention of the Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt) in order that decent relationships between employers and employees, and especially between one set of employees and another may be maintained. We suggest that the activities of certain trade unionists ought to be thoroughly examined. I refer mainly to the dissension that has broken out amongst the members of the Painters and Decorators Union of New South Wales where, as a result of the operation of the compulsory trade union ballot legislation, one section of the union, working in conjunction with the Master Painters Association of New South Wales, is attempting to force upon the union the acceptance of a court-controlled ballot.

We have absolute and positive proof that the body which still calls itself the industrial group inside the Painters Union—fortunately these people have long since been disowned by the Australian Labour party—has been discovered to have been working in close collaboration with the Master Painters Association of New South Wales. So great has been this collaboration that the Master Painters Association is now having roneoed petitions calling for a court-controlled ballot. The petitions which are being distributed by the industrial groupers inside the Painters and Decorators Union of New South Wales have been compared with letters received by the Painters Union from the Master Painters Association, and it is the opinion of experts that there is not a shadow of doubt that the stencil for these petitions which are being distributed by the groupers inside the Painters Union calling for a court-controlled ballot was cut on the same typewriter as that which typed the official correspondence that has passed between the Master Painters Association of New South Wales and the union to which I am referring.

Mr. Freeth.—You are not suggesting the ballot itself is corrupt, are you?

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON.—No. The ballot has not yet been held. I am saying that as a result of collaboration between the Master Painters Association and the groupers within the Painters and Decorators Union great dissension has broken out inside that union.

Mr. Freeth.—You do not like their operations against the Communists?

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON.—The decent unionists inside the Painters and Decorators Union resent this collaboration between the bosses and those members of the union who go in the guise of groupers and have the cheek to call themselves unionists. Apart from the fact that this collaboration between the bosses and the groupers inside the Painters and Decorators Union has revealed in stark form the true aims of the grouper organization, we feel that it does represent a breach of the law relating to court ballots.

I can never believe that it was the intention of even this Government that the legislation dealing with court-controlled ballots should envisage the possibility of bosses collaborating—"conspiring" is a better word—with sections of a trade union for the purpose of interfering with the conduct of a union's internal affairs. Generally speaking, the conduct of court-controlled ballots leaves much to be desired, and it is no wonder that decent labour men, decent unionists everywhere in Australia, are now resenting any attempt to foist upon their unions the court-controlled ballots that have become the order of the day since this Government altered the legislation relating to this particular activity inside unions.

There is one regular feature of court-controlled ballots to which I direct attention. The groupers have the names of members who are believed to be trusted supporters of their group in the respective districts throughout Australia and these people make it a practice to call personally at the homes of individual unionists, collect from those unionists the ballot papers, which they themselves say they are not interested in, take the ballot papers away, record the votes and send the ballot papers back to the returning officer.

Mr. Curtin.—They are being paid by the boss.

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON.—These people who do the door-knocking for the industrial groups are being paid by the employers for the time that is occupied by them in calling from house to house, collecting ballot papers and putting in crook votes on behalf of the persons who are entitled to vote but lack the desire to do so.

Mr. Harold Holt.—Has the honorable member any evidence of that?

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON.—There is ample evidence. The Minister will recall an occasion more than three years ago when I directed attention in this Parliament to an accusation in the Communist "Tribune" against the Victorian returning officer, Mr. Nance. The "Tribune" accused Mr. Nance of having worked in conspiracy with the industrial group supporters inside the Australian Railways Union. I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) then whether he would be prepared to investigate the claim that had been made by the "Tribune" and whether, if the claim was found to be untrue, the strongest action possible would be taken against the publishers of the "Tribune". I suggested that, if it were found to be true, the same action should be taken against those who were guilty of the charge. What did the Prime Minister say on that occasion? The right honorable gentleman has always claimed to be an opponent of communism. This is the man who has always led us to believe that he would welcome an opportunity of prosecuting Communists whenever he had the chance, the man who so lamented his lack of power to deal with the Communists that he brought in a referendum to give the Government more powers. On that occasion, the right honorable gentleman had an excellent opportunity to use powers that undoubtedly already existed to deal with the false accusations made by the Communist party if, indeed, they were false. He replied that the Communist party and the "Tribune" were not worthy of powder and shot. Those were the words used by the Prime Minister on that occasion. It was an evasive answer if he honestly believed that the charges contained in the "Tribune" were false.

Mr. Mackinnon.—Telling a lie is not a charge.

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON.—Telling a lie is a charge. If I told a lie and insinuated that another person had done something dishonest, that would be a charge of a serious nature. A charge can be true or untrue. It is bad enough if it is true, but it is worse if it is untrue. On that basis, I asked the Prime Minister to investigate the charges that have been made in the "Tribune" against Mr. Nance in relation

to the industrial groups. The right honorable gentleman gave the evasive answer that those who made the charge were not worthy of powder and shot.

I remind the Minister of another case which the Opposition sought to bring to the notice of this Parliament. We have not yet received a satisfactory reply. I refer to a complaint that was made by the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Evatt) two or three years ago in connexion with a ballot of members of the Clerks Union conducted by Mr. Martin in New South Wales. On that occasion, the Leader of the Opposition pointed out to the Government that he had ample evidence to show that the ballot-papers that had been sent out by the officer conducting the court-controlled ballots were despatched on the same day as was propaganda in support of grouper candidates. What is more important and significant is the fact that the addresses on the envelopes containing the official ballot-papers from the returning officer conducting the court-controlled ballot were printed on the same addressograph that was used by the groupers in sending out their propaganda supporting their candidate.

There is no shadow of doubt that there was collusion between the officer who conducted the court-controlled ballot of the Clerks Union in that case and the grouper candidates. It would not have been possible otherwise for the groupers' propaganda to be placed in envelopes that had been printed by the same addressograph as that used by the electoral officer in sending out the ballot-papers. All the material went out in the same mail. What is more significant still is the fact that several wrong addresses were given and some surnames were spelt wrongly. Whenever a wrong name or address was shown on an envelope containing the groupers' propaganda, by some strange freak of fate the same error was repeated on the envelopes distributed by the officer controlling the court ballot.

Mr. Cope.—It was claimed to be a coincidence.

Mr. CLYDE CAMERON.—Yes, just a coincidence! The Opposition has gone into this matter. The industrial committee of the Federal Parliamentary Labour party, of which I am secretary, has examined the matter most thoroughly. We have the

authority of the Australian Labour party to say that we are satisfied that there is a conspiracy in the case of the painters' union between the bosses in the painting industry of New South Wales and the industrial groupers in that State to take control of the union away from the officers who have control of it now.

It may be said that the controllers of the union at present are Communists. I do not know whether they are or not, and I do not think it is fair for this Parliament, the bosses or anybody else to dictate to the employees of any industry whom they shall employ as union officials. If the Water-side Workers Federation decides that Jim Healy is a better union secretary than Gus Alford or some other grouper, that is the business of the rank and file members of the federation and theirs only. They employ their union secretary and they have the right to say whether they will employ a Communist if they think he is better able to serve them, just as we have the right to employ a doctor if he is a Communist if I or an honorable member opposite were dying. There is not a shadow of a doubt that if any member of this Parliament were dying and two doctors were available, one a grouper who did not know his job and the other a Communist who knew his job, we would take the Communist doctor to save our hides.

If we want to carry to its logical conclusion this nonsense about not employing Communists in any capacity, will any honorable member say that he has never bought a tin of sardines from a Communist store-keeper; that he has never employed a Communist plumber or allowed a Communist garbage contractor to pick up his garbage, or a Communist worker to do any work for him? Let the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Anderson) rise and say, if he can truthfully do so, that he has never sold any of his wool to Communists so that they might prepare for the war that he is always predicting.

The Opposition wants to know from the Government what it intends to do to ensure that the secret ballot legislation is implemented in the way in which the Parliament intended it to be implemented when the legislation was introduced. The Opposition wants the Minister for Labour and National Service to state categorically whether the

Government believes that it is the proper function of the employers in any industry to conspire with any section of a trade union covering the industry concerned in order to take control of the union in the interests of the boss. We say no more than that at this stage, but await with much interest the comments members of the Government may make in connexion with this important matter.

Mr. CLEAVER (Swan) [3.34].—I wish to refer to the proposed vote for the Department of National Development, and, in particular, to an item in Division No. 127 under the heading "Resources and developmental projects". This is related specifically to the Kimberley Research Station and Ord River gauging. The Commonwealth Government's contribution to the cost of that research station and the Ord River experiments is £25,000. This is a splendid example of Commonwealth-State partnership in a developmental project in the north-west of Western Australia. Not very long ago I advocated in this House that a north-west commission, sponsored and financed by both the Commonwealth and State Governments, would be the most effective method by which this sparsely populated area of the north-west could be opened up economically. For this reason, we should examine this project critically and make an honest assessment of whether this partnership scheme justifies a general expansion. In view of the comments that have been made in recent years and the claims that have emanated from Western Australia and from representatives of Western Australia in this House, indicating that the experiments on the Ord River call for much greater interest from the Commonwealth, I shall give some background information regarding the Kimberley Agricultural Research Station.

The Kimberley Agricultural Research Station is located on the flood plains of the Ord River about 70 miles south-east of the port of Wyndham. It has been operated jointly by the Commonwealth and State Governments since May, 1946. The Commonwealth meets half the capital and operational costs through the Department of National Development, and provides technical personnel for the research station through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. The opera-

tions of the station are directed by a policy committee comprising one representative of the C.S.I.R.O., one representative of the Department of National Development and two representatives of the Western Australian authorities. The station was established to determine the suitability of the Ord flood plains for irrigated crops and pastures, and that remains its basic function to-day. However, both the river flood soils and the lighter soils nearby are typical of soils adjacent to a number of rivers in the north-west and north of Australia. As the Kimberley station is the only agricultural research station of its type in northern Australia, the results obtained from its experiments are of value to many parts of the north, both within and beyond the State boundary.

The C.S.I.R.O. and the Western Australian Department of Agriculture have co-operated in conducting experiments with a wide range of crops and pastures, the cultivation of which might serve as the basis of an agricultural settlement. I have mentioned my advocacy of the development of the north-west, particularly of Western Australia, by the constitution of a commission. I do not think that the answer to the problems of the north-west is, generally, the provision of additional moneys by the Commonwealth or some other source, but I believe that the State Government, in close co-operation with the Commonwealth, should foster experiments for a period of, say, ten to fifteen years, through the agency of a commission similar in its organization to the Snowy Mountains Authority. This would result in the north-west, with its potential, being opened up to the advantage, not only of Western Australia, but indeed of Australia generally.

I return to the results achieved at the Ord River station. Although final conclusions about the productive capacity of the area have not yet emerged, experiments to date have shown that sugar-cane produces excellently in the region. Yields of both cane, and sugar per ton of cane, compare favorably with yields from crops under irrigation in Queensland. Other experiments have also taken place and excellent results have been obtained in the production of rice and cotton. Although important problems remain to be solved, there is distinct hope of success with rice and cotton. Other experimental work is proceeding with

cash crops, including sorghum and safflower, and with fodder crops and irrigated pastures. The Kimberley Agricultural Research Station has already rendered considerable assistance to agricultural work, not only in the north-west of Western Australia but also in the adjacent Northern Territory, which we know is developing well. The station has provided rice seed for projects in the Northern Territory and is serving as the quarantine station for rice seed brought into Australia from overseas.

Following a decision by Cabinet in 1956, and a subsequent approach to the Premier of Western Australia, the two governments agreed to carry on this research station for a further five years at a joint cost of not more than £50,000 a year. This is supported by the vote of £25,000 in the estimates to which I have referred. It seems to me that £50,000 a year is an inadequate sum to further the Ord River experiments. Provided the programme is sound—the results I have mentioned show that it is—and if more extensive promotion is necessary, it is in the interests not only of the State but also of the Commonwealth to approve an increased vote by the Commonwealth at the earliest possible time, conditionally upon the Western Australian Government matching the Commonwealth payment.

Just as this research station is providing the convincing results to which I have referred, I hope that other partnership schemes will be approved and undertaken by the Department of National Development. In passing, I refer to the need for a deep sea port at Derby on the north-west coast, which is essential for the general development of the north-west of Western Australia. The establishment of such a port has been advocated generally by many Western Australian representatives, both in the State Parliament and in the Commonwealth Parliament, from time to time. I commend what is being done in the splendid partnership between the Commonwealth and the State in the Kimberley Agricultural Research Station, but I point out the desperate need for the development of a sparsely populated area where there is evidence of a very great potential for future years. I hope that the Department of National Development and all members of the Parliament will recognize

that what we put into the sparsely populated and more difficult areas will be a contribution towards the eventual development of the country, and will enable us to absorb a bigger population in the years to come.

Mr. CLAREY (Bendigo) [3.44].—I am glad that the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Clyde Cameron) has raised the question of court-controlled ballots during the discussion of the estimates for the Department of Labour and National Service. We may well ask ourselves whether the legislation in respect of trade union ballots is operating properly and is accomplishing what the Government believed that it would accomplish when it was passed. I wish to make clear at the outset that when the amending legislation was introduced to provide for court-controlled ballots, I opposed it for a number of reasons, all of which I believed at that time to be sound, and which I still believe to be sound. The honorable member for Hindmarsh has now raised certain questions that make it necessary for the whole of the court-controlled ballot procedure to be investigated, and for us to ask ourselves whether the legislation is, in fact, doing what it was intended to do.

When this legislation first came before the Parliament, one of the grounds on which I opposed it was that the court-controlled ballot would, I believed, be used by the Communist sections of trade unions for the express purpose of bringing about, whenever they possibly could, bankruptcy in the trade unions that they did not control. I admit frankly, however, that when I considered the question at that time, it did not occur to me that it would be possible, as the honorable member for Hindmarsh has now suggested, for groups of employers to combine with groups within trade unions to influence the result of ballots in the interests of the employers. I cannot say the extent to which that has occurred in respect of the Operative Painters and Decorators Union of Australia, but the complaint has been made in this chamber that the employers in the painting industry are co-operating with what are known as "groupers" in the trade union movement in order to bring about a certain result. Like the honorable member for Hindmarsh,

I cannot say, of my own personal knowledge, whether the painters union in New South Wales is under Communist control.

Mr. Cope.—It definitely is not.

Mr. CLAREY.—I can say, however, that when a suggestion is made that employers are co-operating with certain sections of a trade union to influence a ballot, that is a serious matter and one that needs to be properly investigated.

I know that, in the past, employers have endeavoured to influence the organization of trade unions. In 1946, when I was Minister for Labour in Victoria, I had a problem of that kind placed in my lap by the secretary of my department. A union, known as the Warehouse Employees Union, had been formed and was seeking representation on a wages board which had been established in that State, and I was approached by the Shop Assistants Union with the request that the Warehouse Employees Union should not be given representation on the wages board. As a consequence of statements made, I had the whole position investigated. The investigation showed, on the basis of correspondence which had been issued by the organization itself, that the employers had subsidized this union to the extent of £1,000, the idea being to prevent the shop assistants from having representation on the wages board and to give representation to persons who belonged to an organization sponsored by the employers. As a result of that information, I rejected the application which had been forwarded by this organization and appointed to the wages board persons who were members of the Shop Assistants Union and who, I knew, would, in their capacity as trade union representatives, properly represent the interests of the employees.

The Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act provides for the registration of organizations as "employees' organizations" and as "employers' organizations". The whole spirit of the industrial legislation, whether of the Commonwealth or of the States, is to enable employees, through their organizations, properly to protect their interests. Therefore, it is essential that in regard to all matters affecting a registered organization, whether it be the organization as a whole or only a branch or portion of it, the actions of those who represent the interests

of the employees should be above suspicion. In no circumstances should opposing interests—in this instance, the interests of the employers—be permitted to influence the affairs of an organization of employees.

The honorable member for Hindmarsh has stated, with obvious sincerity, that he believes that, in connexion with the Operative Painters and Decorators Union in New South Wales, efforts are being made by employers to influence a ballot. That indicates a very grave state of affairs from the stand-point of organized trade unionism. Fortunately, in this country we have been singularly free from what are known as "company" trade unions. I know of at least one instance in Australia in which, after a strike, a "company" union was formed and operated on the same lines as such unions operate in the United States of America. As a result of legislation passed in the United States by the Roosevelt Administration, employees were given the right of free organization, and also the right to determine by ballot the organization to represent them in regard to their industrial interests. That legislation has operated to the advantage of the American workers.

Having regard to what has been said about the painters union in New South Wales, we must ask ourselves whether the legislation provides for the best way to conduct trade union ballots. I want to emphasize that the trade unions themselves are most insistent that ballots conducted for the election of their officers shall be clean, and conducted on proper lines. In my own organization, as a result of malpractice that we discovered many years ago in respect of one of our branches, we altered our rules so that that kind of thing could not occur again. In that instance, the malpractice did not concern persons associated actively in canvassing for the ballot, but involved corruption on the part of the returning officers and scrutineers. The result was that we altered our State rules considerably, so that never again would there be a possibility of such a thing happening.

Although statements are made from time to time about corruption and malpractice in regard to trade union ballots, in many cases such statements are made by people whose candidature has not appealed to the rank and file of the trade union movement. I believe that the legislation passed by the Chifley Government in 1949 gave

the greatest degree of protection to the trade union movement, while at the same time permitting trade unions to control their own affairs. I am of the opinion that any organization that is registered under the Commonwealth act or, for that matter, under a State act, should have the right to control its affairs in the way that it deems most desirable. The legislation introduced by the Chifley Government in 1949, after consultations with the Australian Council of Trade Unions, provided that where, in connexion with a ballot, it could be shown that there was malpractice, corruption, or something else wrong with it, the matter could go to the court for investigation. One of the great difficulties in connexion with court-controlled ballots is that the ballot-papers are sent out by post to the members of the union, who are requested to record their vote and return the ballot-paper, in a business envelope, to the returning officer.

Whether honorable members like it or not, that system does not prevent the canvassing referred to by the honorable member for Hindmarsh or the handing over of ballot-papers, unmarked, to disinterested people by interested groups in connexion with any trade union election. As a consequence, instead of the members expressing themselves, it is a pressure group, on one side or the other, that records the votes. The result is the government of trade unions of a certain type. I have found, myself, that the most satisfactory method of conducting a ballot in the trade union movement is to hold the general meeting in a metropolitan area, with all members having the right to be present at the meeting, secure a ballot-paper from the returning officer, record their votes, and if they want to go away they can do so. Adequate provision is made also for postal voting for those who cannot attend, provided that they so apply in writing. Then there is some check, similar to that made in connexion with Federal and State elections, to see whether the ballot-paper returned has been forwarded by the person to whom it was sent. By that means, impersonation is eliminated altogether and you prevent, by means of canvassing either on the job or at the home of the worker, ballot-papers from getting into the hands of persons who are exercising a vote which they are often not entitled to exercise; or if they are, they

are doing it in respect of quite a number of people instead of themselves only.

This sort of thing does take place and the legislation does not prevent it. Neither does it prevent unauthorized persons from being able to vote. I suggest to the Minister that, as a consequence of what has been said in this debate, we should consider the whole question of whether the objects which were to be achieved as a consequence of passing legislation during the last few years have been achieved. But above all things we must see that there is no co-operation between a group in a union and employers in an industry for the express purpose of trying to influence union ballots. The task of the trade union is to protect the interests of its members, to see that their rights are upheld and their standard of living and conditions of employment improved. It was never intended that a trade union should become an adjunct of employers or that the trade union's activities should be carried on in such a manner as to benefit or be of assistance to the employer. For those reasons I feel that an exceedingly strong case has been made by the honorable member for Hindmarsh. An investigation should be made into the painters' union and the whole question of court ballots should be the subject of review so that a more democratic, sound, clean and pliable method of conducting trade union elections may be brought into operation.

Mr. ANDERSON (Hume) [3.59].—When one compares the remarks of the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Clarey) with those of the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Clyde Cameron) one has to make a differentiation because the former, I think, has the respect of most honorable members of this committee. When the honorable member for Bendigo was speaking just now about the control of trade unions he said it was the task of trade unions to exercise their own control. But in a situation in which workers are forced into trade unions, as a minority, because although they do not wish to join a union they are obliged to do so in order to obtain employment, I say that the Government has a responsibility to those workers. I do not want honorable members to gain the impression that I do not believe in trade unions. I do; we must have them. But I am opposed

to forced trade unionism. I do not believe in force in any form whatever in a democracy.

The honorable member for Bendigo said that it was not right that the trade unions should be controlled by wrong electoral practices in trade union ballots. He suggested, for example, that the members of the industrial groups were taking undemocratic action. Here are people interested in unionism, but because they have a slightly different philosophy from that of the trade union officials, the latter wish to deny them the ordinary electoral practices that they are entitled to use. It is quite easy to see that the attitude of the official is, "As long as everybody agrees with me I am all for it, but the moment some one else has a different point of view I must correct him". In the eyes of the honorable member for Hindmarsh the philosophy of the industrial groups is not good unionism. You force a man to join a union, then because he disagrees with you, or wishes to support a different official, you say that he is not a good trade unionist. I do not think that is going to get us anywhere.

Mr. Curtin.—You sell your wool to the Communists.

Mr. ANDERSON.—The honorable member for Kingsford-Smith (Mr. Curtin) says that I sell my wool to the Communists. I do not force anybody to buy my wool. The honorable member for Hindmarsh wishes to force everybody to join a trade union. That is a different thing. To carry the argument a little further, I think it is the duty of the Government to see that nobody is forced to give funds to any political party. If a worker is forced to join a Communist-dominated trade union he is then actually forced to subscribe money to the Communist party. That is a point which I regard as a very serious charge against this Government. Here we have people who are forced to subscribe funds to the Communist party. A curious idea seems to have got into the head of the honorable member for Hindmarsh that all honorable members on this side of the chamber hate the Communists. I am not the slightest concerned whether a man is Communist or not. I do not care two hoots. He is entitled to his freedom of thought, and I would be the last person in the world to suppress that freedom. In Australia, unlike China or

Russia, a man is entitled to be as much a Communist as he likes, but he is not entitled to use our democratic processes for subversion. That is where the trade union movement falls down badly. Their representatives in the Opposition here think that all honorable members on this side are against Communists. They are not. Any man can do what he likes, so far as I am concerned. Under our democratic freedom he can propound his ideas or convictions by persuasion, but he must not make use of the trade union movement for his own ends. I think the honorable member for Bendigo will recognize that to be our point of view. I repeat that any man can be as communistic as he likes, but he must not use, evilly, and for the purposes of subversion, our democratic institutions to destroy our way of life. If he can spread Communist ideas by persuasion, I have no grouch.

I think that the Department of Labour must consider the question of workers being forced to join a union. Under the Declaration of Human Rights a person has the right of free association. In the United States of America that right has been recognized to an increasing degree. The Taft-Hartley law governs labour-management relations, and States have the right to contribute supplementary legislation. I think that already eleven States have introduced legislation that allows the "right to work" to all classes of tradesmen if they desire to be employed in a closed shop. I do not like to see in Australia the Declaration of Human Rights being destroyed—and it is being destroyed. Thousands of trade unionists vote for me, and it is my duty to see that they get a fair deal. There are 40,000 electors in the Division of Hume, of whom at least 20,000 are trade unionists, some of whom vote for me. I represent them as much as I represent graziers, shopkeepers and railway workers.

When the New South Wales Government introduced compulsory unionism, the result was disastrous. It must be clear to those who believe in trade unionism that there is a limit beyond which unionists will not go. The protagonists of compulsory unionism claim that it was introduced in order to defeat the Communists. Others say that its purpose was to increase the funds of the Labour party. Compulsory unionism has been disastrous to the Labour movement. Those who speak so glibly about

the matter that one would imagine that the whole security of trade unionism is in their hands, had to recognize that the introduction of compulsory unionism in New South Wales was ill-advised. I like to see true trade unionism in, which people get together and sacrifice some economic freedom in order to benefit their own class. I think it is important that there should be strong trade unionism in this country, because we cannot work without it. I do not think that there can be any logical support for compulsory trade unionism. It is called by various names, such as preference for unionists, but the effect is exactly the same. As long as this position exists, it is the duty of a government to intervene and introduce court-controlled ballots.

The honorable member for Hindmarsh said that the Master Painters Association of New South Wales was associated with a group in the Painters Union. Why does he not produce proof? It should be quite easy to do so, if his allegation is correct. He then made the curious statement that the ballot-papers were sent out to the members from exactly the same addressograph as that used to send out propaganda for industrial groups. Here is a case that is easy to prove.

Mr. Ward.—Why does not the Government give them the opportunity to prove it?

Mr. ANDERSON.—Why do not the trade unions use the ordinary democratic processes? Does the honorable member think, if the matter were brought before the Arbitration Court, that no action would be taken? No! He will not take the normal course. He makes wild charges, supported by his Communist friends, that the same letter addressograph was used by industrial groupers and the Registrar controlling court ballots. The curious thing is that the wrong addresses were given. The Arbitration Court has a perfect case, if the allegations are true, to deal with mischief in court-controlled ballots, yet in this national Parliament the honorable member makes wild charges and outrageous statements for which there are no grounds at all. If he has a case, let him submit it to the arbitration court.

I should like now to refer to a point that was raised by the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Clarey). He said that the trade unions demand the right to control

their own affairs. I agree with the contention, provided men are not forced to join the trade unions. The honorable member also said that there are those who indulge in malpractices. I gather that he disapproves of certain actions by members of industrial groups. But the industrial groupers themselves must be trade unionists in order to live. It is a case in which a man has to obey in order to eat rather than work in order to eat. Do honorable members think that this is right? A lot of the things which we do not like and which are coming into our life, such as cartels and monopolies, are the direct result of restrictions as well as policies of the trade union movement that are directed towards destroying our way of life.

Mr. CAIRNS (Yarra) [4.10].—The value to be attached to the speech of the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Anderson) may be gauged from his concluding statement. We could conclude from his statement that if there had been no trade unions with strength and restrictive practices there would be no large capitalist corporations. The development of the industrial giants in our economy is, according to the views of the honorable member for Hume, solely the result of the behaviour of trade unionists. Although this is a great compliment to the significance of trade unions, the position happens to be just the other way round. I suggest that if the honorable member for Hume will study the history of the trade union movement—and I recommend Sidney and Beatrice Webb on the subject—he will find ample evidence that the development of trade unions is a result of concentrated power in the employers.

Before proceeding to another matter, I should like to make some reference to the subject of the control of trade unions that has been discussed this afternoon. I think that in coming to a decision about the control of trade unions we should compare the position of the employer group on the one side and the workers as a group upon the other. Now, for better or for worse in British and Australian history, we have had the development of two fairly distinct sides—the trade unions and the employers. We have had also two fairly distinct political parties, one that has always generally gone under the name of the Australian Labour party, and the other which has gone under many different names and represents

the employers. This division has been a British tradition, and in recent times in Australia—

Mr. Harold Holt.—That is utter rubbish. The whigs and tories represent the employers no more than the Labour party does.

Mr. CAIRNS.—Apparently I have touched the Minister on a raw spot. I understand he once wrote an essay on socialism and I am quite sure it was not historical; but if he will listen to a view other than his own—that is beyond the capacity of the honorable member for Petrie (Mr. Hulme)—he may learn a little about the subject. I think he will find that the division of parties and industry is as I have stated. In recent times, with the encouragement of the Government, we have seen introduced into Australia an influence which is calculated to break down the traditional British division of political representation. It is centred partly on immigration from non-British countries and partly on the development of a separate political party on other than an economic basis. Before this influence proceeds very far, the Government should consider some of the consequences in European countries through the breaking down of the more simplified British system of political representation by two main parties. We have a broad division of the trade unions into two types, contesting and conflicting with one another, and we have two or three political parties purporting to represent the workers. This, I suggest, in the history of Europe has frustrated the political desires and aims of the people and has produced a situation in Germany and in France in particular which has contributed considerably—I do not say it alone has done so—to the development of totalitarian doctrines and to the turning of the people to totalitarian methods—a new form of the Nazi system—where the vital decisions were made by groups of the kind which this Government is now deliberately encouraging to develop in Australia.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Adermann).—Order! The honorable member should now get back to the proposed votes.

Mr. CAIRNS.—I have developed the logical sequence of the things that have been discussed. Let us have a look at the degree to which the trade unions are already controlled in relation to the degree to which

the large industrial corporations are controlled. I suggest that control in this country to-day is a little one-sided. The trade unions are subject to the secret ballot legislation and the Arbitration Court, and penal provisions may be applied to them, whereas the greater part of the controls which had been imposed on private industry were removed by this Government. The Government must consider a situation wherein the controls are as one-sided as they are in this field at the present time. The actions of the Government in this respect show that the kind of trade union that it requires is what the late Mr. Chifley called a "tame cat" trade union. That is the kind of trade union that this Government and the present Minister for Labour and National Service are anxious to see in Australia. The honorable member for Bendigo made the point that if there develops in our trade unions a system under which there is a great degree of co-operation between groups in the trade unions and employers—nobody can deny that that co-operation exists at the present time—

Mr. Anderson.—Where is the proof?

Mr. CAIRNS.—Look at the facts. To use an expression that was used by my predecessor in this Parliament, if you have something that looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and has feathers like a duck, you can be pretty sure that it is a duck. When we look at the situation in the trade unions to-day, we find plenty of evidence to support the contention that there is co-operation of this kind.

The question of forced membership of trade unions has been raised. There are two aspects of this matter. Membership might be forced as a result of parliamentary legislation. I do not think that any member of the Australian Labour party supports that kind of thing. Then there is the method of the closed shop. I suggest that honorable members look at this matter, just for a moment, from the point of view of a member of a trade union which has spent a great deal of money and devoted a great deal of effort to secure, through the arbitration system, awards which benefit its members, and who knows that other people in the industry are receiving those benefits without having contributed in any way to winning them. That is a situation which is bound to encourage members of trade

unions to support any system which will make such people pay their fair share of the costs involved in securing awards. The matter must be looked at from the point of view of the trade unions.

When we are talking about compulsion, insofar as it exists in the trade unions, we must look at the pattern of industry. We should not forget that over 50 per cent. of the workers in this country are employed in about 3 per cent. of the factories. They are the large factories. We should not forget that in that part of the industrial structure there is a system of force and that individuals are not able to depart very much from the price policies or the commodity policies laid down at the centre. Do not think for a moment that it is possible for the trade unionists of this country to protect their rights and maintain their position without using some of the methods that are used against them by the other side. This is not a drawing-room affair. It is a pretty difficult situation in which a great deal of force and a great deal of strength are used as a matter of course. Some people who have not had experience of this kind of thing, who have lived in a much more refined atmosphere and who have been brought up in families that have always had a good deal more than the average, talk about the perfect conditions of equality and freedom that they would like to see in the industrial world, but those conditions are not to be found. The people who have been brought up in working class environments, who have experienced unemployment and who know how hard it is to maintain wage levels and working conditions are not likely to be deceived by the kind of talk that comes from the professional liberals, who have no attachment, or very little, to the theory and very little knowledge of the practice.

I turn now to the operation of the Commonwealth Employment Service of the Department of Labour and National Service. As the Minister knows, in recent times I have been concerned with some investigation of this service. To begin with, I should like to say that the members of the service in the areas of which I have some knowledge are trying their very best to do a first-class job and, very largely, they are succeeding. But I have discovered that there is considerable frustration on their part. I think evidence is already

accumulating that this service is the Cinderella of the Government services. This is not surprising, because it reflects what one might call the assumptions of the Government in relation to employment. The maintenance of a high level of employment is a first priority job in a country like Australia, and it will remain so, whatever government is in power. But unemployment has not been important to this Government. The number of unemployed people has not been high, as compared with previous decades, when conditions were different. Consequently, the Government has not given the kind of attention that we have a right to expect to the problem of unemployment. It has tended to look to private enterprise—which it really represents—to solve the problem, but I suggest that the problem is becoming more acute.

First, let us consider the total of unemployment. The officially recognized figure is about 50,000, but, looking at the statistics of wage and salary earners in employment, I think that considerably more than 50,000 people must be unemployed at present. The figures provided by the Commonwealth Statistician show that 84,000 additional people came into employment in 1954-55. That is about the number that one would expect. Having regard to the number of persons leaving school and taking up employment, and the number of employable people in the immigrant intake, one would expect the figure to be at least 80,000, and probably more. One would expect the employment figure to rise by at least 80,000 in each year, but in 1955-56 it rose by only 45,000, and last year by only 5,000. What happened to at least 35,000 people in the year before last, and at least 75,000 people last year? Have children stopped leaving school? Have we a large number of immigrants who are so well off as not to need employment in this country? I suggest that the level of unemployment in Australia is much higher than the official figure of 50,000 suggests.

The Commonwealth Employment Service cannot do the job that it should do in allocating labour where it is most required, in order to produce the most efficient results. The location of the offices of the Commonwealth Employment Service, as I see it, is based upon the old military provisions, the old military districts. It is a

geographical distribution which is more calculated to meet military requirements, probably of the first world war or even of the Boer War rather than of the second world war, than to meet the technical requirements of an employment service. There are 32 offices in Victoria—fifteen in the country, ten in the inner city area and seven in the outer city areas. Such information as I have been able to obtain shows that the industrial structure of the city is quite out of line with the geographical distribution of Commonwealth Employment Service offices. I think that the Government should consider this matter to see whether any improvement can be made by changing the locations of offices. It is only too obvious from the evidence that is available in relation to the distribution of vacancies and the distribution of people who are available for work that there is a great unbalance between the two categories, and that they should be brought more into alignment. In addition, the offices of the Commonwealth Employment Service, situated as they are and with the kind of methods that they use, cannot be made aware of the technical changes that are taking place in industry so that those changes can be anticipated.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. DEAN (Robertson) [4.25].—I listened with interest to the remarks made earlier this afternoon by the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Clyde Cameron) and the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Clarey). When one studies closely the camouflaged views they expressed one realizes that what they had to say was an attack on this Government's legislation providing for the holding of secret ballots for the election of trade union officials. For example, the honorable member for Bendigo, quite rightly in his own view, said, in effect, that a group of trade unionists should not get together with another organization to bring about some control in trade union affairs. Without wishing to needle the honorable member, I should like to direct his attention to the unity tickets that have been run in various States from time to time. When one refers to unity tickets one refers to an agreement reached between certain members of the Australian Labour party and certain members of the Communist party. I mention

that only because to my mind it is an illustration of one of the things about which the honorable member for Bendigo was complaining.

The other thing I wish to say to the honorable gentlemen I have mentioned is that during the entire course of their remarks they completely ignored, first of all, the representations that were made to many members of this House advocating the introduction of secret ballots legislation. The honorable member for Bendigo knows, and I think the honorable member for Hindmarsh will realize, that about one-third of my electorate consists of industrial areas, and that if it were not for the fact that a great number of trade unionists in these areas voted for me I would not be here. I can say with complete knowledge and sincerity that there was a great degree of interest in, and many requests for, the introduction of secret ballot legislation. I can also say that once the legislation was introduced that interest continued, and we received the thanks of a large number of trade unionists.

I was very interested to hear the honorable member for Hindmarsh say, in reply to an interjection, that he was referring to "good" trade unionists. It turned out that the good trade unionist, in his view, was the trade unionist who supported only the Australian Labour party; but the trade unionist who supported some other group, whether he be a grouper—whatever the honorable gentleman may describe as a grouper—or a supporter of the Liberal party, was not a good trade unionist. I do not believe that the political views of a person have anything to do with whether he is a good member of the industrial organization to which he belongs. The two things are entirely apart. So I say that the honorable member for Hindmarsh was completely at fault in his definition of a good trade unionist.

I also wish to make some remarks about Division No. 228 of the Estimates, which deals with the Department of National Development, with special relation to its responsibilities, on our behalf, to the Joint Coal Board. From time to time questions have been asked in this chamber about the possibility of enlarging our overseas markets for coal, especially New South Wales coal. I know, from investigations that I have

made, that the various employers' associations and federations have been interested in this question and that employees' associations have also interested themselves in it. It is not something new. It has been going on for a number of years.

One matter that has been discussed in this chamber concerns the way in which we originally lost our export market for coal. There would be no advantage in retracing that matter, but I wish to point out that for a number of years approaches have been made to the New South Wales Government for extra port facilities at Newcastle, which is the main port from which coal is exported. The New South Wales Government has been loath to commit itself in any way in the matter. Either it cannot do what is wanted or does not want to do it. On one occasion the then Minister for Transport in New South Wales gave the excuse that the New South Wales Government could not enlarge port facilities at Newcastle for handling coal because of the curtailment of loan funds. Once again, I say that there is no profit in re-traversing that line of argument, because it has been traversed often enough, and proof has been given that while the present Liberal-Australian Country party Government has been in office in the Commonwealth far more loan money has been made available to the States, including New South Wales, than was made available during any previous similar period. So we find that, in exasperation, an association of employers made approaches to the New South Wales Government and offered to undertake the task of making extra facilities available in the port of Newcastle to enable more coal to be exported. It is interesting to note that this New South Wales Government, which professes to be socialist and which desires to nationalize so many industries, has been willing and grateful to accept the offer made to it by private enterprise. I mention that because I wish to make a plea to the Minister for National Development (Senator Spooner) and the officers of the Department of National Development to investigate this proposal, in line with our responsibilities as a Federal Government, in order to see whether there is any way in which we can help, through the Joint Coal Board, to get the extra plant working in quicker time. I understand that the present estimate is that it will take some two years before we will have any advantage from the installation of this new plant.

Having said that, I wish to say to you, sir, that I have approached the Minister for National Development on this matter and he has been good enough to give me a reply. It is far too long to read in full to honorable members, but I should like to give a brief summary, using the notes provided by the Minister. Among other things, the Minister states that the shipping of coal at Newcastle constitutes a complex problem, and that various basic difficulties associated with it need to be recognized when we are considering the action of the proprietors in discontinuing to take further orders for coal. I think it is very sad to have a situation in which we have to refuse overseas markets for any product, especially considering the terms of the proposal for an urgent discussion of the coal industry put to this House recently by the honorable member for Hunter (Mr. James). It definitely should be pointed out that the refusal by the proprietors to take overseas orders stems from inactivity and lack of planning on the part of the New South Wales Government. I am rather interested to know whether the present right honorable member for Barton (Dr. Evatt)—or should I describe him as the "right honorable member elect for Hunter"—had in mind some of these matters that I have mentioned when he said that the electorate of Hunter presented some special problems and challenges.

The Minister for National Development pointed out that coal orders from overseas are based on strict specifications and on competitive pricing, and frequently involve deliveries at a date, or dates, arranged well ahead. Consequently, shipping charters have to be arranged well ahead, and these involve an anticipation that coal of the specified quality will be produced and will be available when a vessel is loading at berth. I think all of us in this place are well aware of the various contingencies in the coal-mining industry which make it most difficult to plan along the lines I have mentioned. It therefore becomes a matter of great necessity that we should have facilities and equipment available to do the job that needs to be done. Truck equipment should be made available by the New South Wales railways so that there will no longer be any need to trans-ship coal from larger vehicles into smaller trucks so that they can be handled by the trains at present there. This improvement would enable speedier and

more effective handling than at present, and one result would be that we would be able to take more advantage of the markets available to us in the countries to our near north.

Mr. WARD (East Sydney) [4.34].—Government supporters seem to be absolutely incapable of discussing any question without introducing the bogey of communism. The trade union movement has very good reason to be dissatisfied with the present arrangement for court-controlled ballots, and those reasons are not the reasons stated by Government supporters. The honorable member for Robertson (Mr. Dean) talked about unity tickets. What unity tickets have to do with the question raised by the Opposition is beyond my comprehension. But if we wanted to deal with unity tickets we could refer to the fact that the honorable member for Robertson owes his position in this House to a unity ticket that he had with the Communists who, by the extension of their preferences to the honorable member, made his occupancy of his present position possible. He became known in Australian politics as the "red Dean". He would not even have represented the people of Robertson in this Parliament but for the fact that he received a proportion of the Communist vote. Therefore, this matter, which he has raised, has rebounded against himself.

I am opposed to what is known as the unity ticket because, as a member of the Australian Labour party, I should like to see all trade union officials in that organization. However, if unionists on a job have co-operated with other sections, it can at least be said that they are all workers and have something in common. It is entirely different from combination and co-operation on the part of the employers.

The honorable member for Forrest (Mr. Freeth) implied that the Operative Painters Union, to which the honorable member for Hindmarsh referred in connexion with a complaint about controlled ballots, was Communist-controlled. The secretary of the New South Wales branch of the Operative Painters Union happens to be a Mr. Joe Anderson, a member of the State executive and a prominent and active member of the Australian Labour party. However, we have come to accept such tactics as the normal behaviour of Government supporters. They attempt to smear

any one holding an important position who happens to disagree with their views by saying that he is in some way associated with the Communist party.

Let us look now at the question raised by the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Anderson). The honorable member asked: "Have the unions evidence that some of these ballots are dishonestly conducted?" In answer to that, let me say at once that it is not necessary to produce evidence, because the existence of this kind of thing has been admitted by the Government. I remind the honorable member for Hume—if he has indeed forgotten—that a court-controlled ballot was taken in the New South Wales branch of the Boilermakers Society of Australia. After the votes had been counted and the poll declared, a mail bag with some hundreds of uncounted ballot-papers was discovered at the Haymarket Post Office—the address given by the returning officer. It was not until then that the question of missing ballot-papers was raised at all.

It is quite true, as some honorable members have said, that trade unionists, if given the opportunity, could prove that the ballot-papers, the envelopes containing them, and the how-to-vote cards sent out by the grouper section of the trade union came from the same office, and were printed on the same machine. As a matter of fact, in many instances the how-to-vote cards arrived in the same mail as the ballot-papers. The members of what are known as the industrial groups were able to secure accurate lists of the people entitled to vote. They were able to conduct a door-to-door canvass as a result of co-operation between those conducting the court-controlled ballot and a section of the trade unionists. There is no doubt in the world that it suits the employers to build up a system of "tame cat" unions, which depend for their existence largely upon the beneficence of the employers, and do not work in the interests of the employees.

The honorable member for Hume objected to what he called contributions to political funds. He mentioned Communist party funds particularly, because he thought that that would best suit his argument. If he had been frank he would also have objected to trade unionists contributing to the funds of the Australian Labour

party—the party against which he was really directing his criticism. But why should not trade unionists contribute to the funds of the Australian Labour party? Any one would imagine that the trade union movement and the political Labour movement were separate organizations. The political Labour party was born in the trade union movement. It is simply a matter of having an industrial section and a political section of the one movement. They have the same objectives. They are fighting to improve the lot of the ordinary Australian worker. The trade unionist contributes in order to support the officials of his union and the running of the union office. Why should he not also contribute to the political organization which represents his interests in the Parliament?

Let me turn now to the court-controlled ballot which was conducted in the Operative Painters Union. The honorable member for Forrest and others do not seem to think that there is anything wrong in a minority section of a trade union joining the employers in order to obtain a court-controlled ballot. This Government's legislation fosters a system under which minority control of trade unions is possible. I was pleased to hear the remarks of the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Clarey) on this subject. One would think that the only ballots whose propriety was ever questioned were those of the trade unions. Inquiry will show that they are conducted far more honestly and fairly than are ballots conducted in any other section of the community. If the Government wants to look at some crook ballots it should have court-controlled ballots in respect of company directorates, or the other company elections which are held from time to time. Why does it not look at the ballots in the various lodge organizations to which these people belong? Why is not a court-controlled ballot held in those organizations also? Why are trade unions selected for special treatment? The legislation provides a penalty for any one who attempts, by intimidation, to influence the result of a ballot, or compel or oblige people to sign a petition for a ballot. I believe that the master painters of New South Wales have infringed the act. The Government has an obligation to see that the complaint of the Operative Painters Union is examined.

The honorable member for Hindmarsh referred to the fact that I had had an opportunity to compare the typewritten heading on one of these petitions with typewritten correspondence that I had received from the master painters. One does not have to be an expert to see that the same typewriter was used in both cases. Obviously, these petitions were prepared in the office of the master painters organization. If the Government supports this kind of thing its aim must be to undermine and weaken the authority of trade unions. The honorable member for Hume asked that evidence be produced. The Operative Painters Union has dozens of sworn declarations from members who were approached by foremen who were employed by the master painters. Very often the men were approached by the master painters themselves. Many of them unfortunately, in a weak moment—doubtless afraid of jeopardizing their employment—agreed to sign. They have since realized their mistake and have made sworn declarations to that effect.

Mr. Clyde Cameron.—Do you say that there are sworn declarations to support that?

Mr. WARD.—Yes. The union has a considerable number of sworn declarations to support these allegations. Let me say a word or two further about compulsion. The honorable member for Hume does not object to compulsory marketing schemes; he is quite in favour of them. If any member of his organization wants to break away from some decision of the organization, he is prepared to use any means whatever to gain compliance with the general viewpoint that he supports. The honorable member is a wealthy grazier. When the shearers were striking to maintain their industrial conditions, and some of the graziers were making a more reasonable approach to the problem and were employing their shearers on what was known as the old rate, the honorable member for Hume was combining with another section of graziers in an endeavour to force compliance with the decision of the main body of the organization. There is not one Government supporter in this House who does not commence a speech on a subject such as this by saying, "Of course, I am in favour of trade unionism". He then proceeds to attack the trade union movement and those who are fighting to improve industrial conditions. The honorable member for

Hume spoke of the right of a man to refuse to join a union. The more who refuse to join, the happier is the honorable member. That is the way he demonstrates his support for trade unionism. If the honorable member thought that his organization was strong enough to refuse employment to shearers who were members of the Australian Workers Union, he would not employ any of them. Honorable members do not have to cast their minds back very far to remember the day when shearers, who were found to be members of the Australian Workers Union, were sometimes fired upon when they came on to the property of the union-hating grazier whose employment they were to enter.

The Chifley legislation was good legislation. It provided that where any section of a trade union or individual member could produce evidence to show that there had been malpractices in a ballot, an approach could then be made to the registrar, and if the registrar was satisfied that there was evidence to support the allegation, the matter went to the court for determination. The court could order a court-controlled ballot. But in the present legislation all that is necessary is to get into a union, organize a dissident group, and get a number of signatures. Despite the fact that there is no evidence of malpractice, the union can be forced to go to the enormous expense of a court-controlled ballot which it would have been much better able to conduct itself.

The Opposition is asking the Government to investigate all these allegations, to examine how this legislation has operated, and to give the trade unions, which have an abundance of evidence, the opportunity to bring that evidence forward in order to prove their case that court-controlled ballots are not beyond question, but that in the conduct of them many practices have been introduced that should be condemned by every reasonable member of the Australian community.

MR. HOWSON (Fawkner) [4.48].—Honorable members opposite have concentrated to-day on the question of court-controlled ballots for trade union elections. The honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Clarey) dealt with this matter at great length, but his main argument seems to stand on the fact that such a large proportion of trade unionists can be coerced or intimidated or swayed in one way or another. Surely, the

most important thing is that the people who control trade union matters should spend more time educating their members in their duties and encouraging them to take a greater interest in their own affairs, thus enabling them to make up their own minds and resist coercion from the various groups referred to.

I suggest to the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Cairns) that a definition of a good trade unionist is one who takes an intelligent interest in the affairs of his union, and is able to make up his own mind how he should vote in any particular election. If the unions had taken that line in the past, there would be no need for the legislation brought down by the Chifley Government, or for that brought down by this Government. More important than all the matters raised by the Opposition to-day is the fact that the secret ballot legislation was introduced in its amended form by this Government, which was later returned to power by the vote of an overwhelming proportion of the electors, who thus endorsed that legislation. I should like to turn from the rather narrow path that the discussion has taken so far to the wider aspects of the work of the Department of Labour and National Service during the past year. I particularly would like to refer to the report of the President of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, which was presented to this House only a few days ago. Reading the report of the work of the commission during its first year of operation, all honorable members must be struck by the magnificent work that has been done by the commission since the new legislation was passed just over a year ago. I believe that reference should be made again and again to the tremendous reduction of time lost through strikes during this last twelve months. The figures presented to the House show that in the eight months from January to August, 1956, more than 893,000 man-days were lost by strike action; but in the first eight months of this year—January to August, 1957—only 372,000 man-days were lost, the lowest figure since the dark days of the war in 1942. Surely, the Government is entitled to congratulation, and surely the work of the commission is significant when considered in relation to the figures for days lost through strikes. The department, this year, must be congratulated for the work it has done through its various agencies.

I should like also to refer to the success of the new machinery that has been in operation. The number of applications to the commission this year was 697; yet, only eight cases went to appeal, and of those only four had any real substance. Over 208 matters submitted to the court were settled amicably, and without recourse to the full body of the commission.

The country has seen a notable streamlining of conciliation procedure, a great improvement in the way in which the two sides of industry can be brought together, and in which the true processes of conciliation work in a most effective manner. I think it must be of significance that, during this year, the conciliators have been able to get on with their job of conciliation. Each conciliator has been able to concentrate on a particular group of industries, and has therefore become completely au fait with its problems. He has become acquainted with the people with whom he has to deal on both sides of the potential dispute, and has been able to bring them together and solve their problems without recourse to the arbitration procedure.

Mr. Curtin.—We heard that one before you were born.

Mr. HOWSON.—It is a good thing you should hear it again. Honorable members may see from the report the way in which the president of the commission has been able to keep an overall watch on industrial matters, direct the attention of conciliators to a particular point at which trouble is likely to arise and see that their efforts are directed to that point to deal with the dispute before it actually comes out into the open and before tempers are frayed and conciliation becomes no longer effective. Furthermore, one notes the way in which all members of the commission have been able to meet and keep each other in touch with the trends that are taking place in industrial matters generally. Finally, the presidential members of the commission have been able to concentrate on major questions, such as the basic wage and hours of work, and leave the details to the conciliators. We can therefore see how the commission has led to a streamlining of the conciliation procedure. Its sphere of operations has been increased; the handling of applications for increases in award wages in each industry has been so much more

rapid than it was in the past; and generally the conciliation procedure has shown a tremendous improvement in the last twelve months. For that the Minister and the department must be congratulated.

Turning to another part of the work of the Department of Labour and National Service, there is the way in which the stevedoring legislation enacted just over a year ago has been shown to be of increasing benefit to everybody concerned with shipping and the handling of goods on the wharfs. From January to August, 1956, 445,000 man-hours were lost by strike action whereas in the first eight months of this year, January to August, 1957, the figure was only 42,000, less than one-tenth of the figure for the corresponding period of the preceding year. As a result, the turn-round of ships has been considerably improved and to-day in Australian ports the turn-round of ships is as rapid as in many of the major ports of the western world. Many other improvements have been effected as a result of the work of the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority under the new legislation.

The press and radio pick-up system has been introduced at fifteen additional ports in the Commonwealth and, as is readily agreed, is working to the benefit of all concerned. The system of transfers from one job to another has been working much more effectively. Amenities for waterside workers have been increased in many ports, particularly the port of Melbourne where new buildings have been erected. The authority concerned must be congratulated on the work it has done in this regard during the last twelve months. These facts show that the work of the A.S.I.A. during this period has helped everybody working in the industry and, over and above that, has significantly increased the efficiency of the industry.

A facet of this matter is the improvement that has been effected at north Queensland ports in the bulk loading of sugar. The success of the installation of bulk loading equipment at Mackay is evidenced by the fact that instead of a ship taking eleven days to turn round that operation is now completed in only one and a half days. I feel, therefore, that other firms engaged in coastal shipping should be encouraged to investigate new forms of bulk carrying of various cargoes, such as wheat

from Victorian ports to Tasmania, and to design ships for special purposes. If this improvement in the turn round of shipping can be sustained, the resulting reduction in costs should lead to greater improvements and to a resurgence of the coastal shipping trade which has deteriorated to such an extent over the last five years. This would be of tremendous benefit to everybody concerned in transport.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lawrence).—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. WHITLAM (Werriwa) [5.3].—The speech we have just heard from the honorable member for Fawkner (Mr. Howson) well illustrates the limitations of Liberal thinking on industry and productivity. The attitude of honorable members opposite is too often that you must have docile and hard working human beings, and granted that docility and that industry everything in the community is satisfactory. However, they completely overlook that in the modern age, particularly with the approach of automation, it is more and more necessary that machines should carry out the tedious and onerous jobs which human beings have hitherto been required to perform, and furthermore, that those machines should be in ample supply and of safe working. Nobody underrates the disruption which is caused to the community, as much under this Government as under all its predecessors, by industrial disputes. The year in which the fewest industrial disputes occurred in this century was in the only full year the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) was Minister for Labour and National Service; and that was 1942. The real relevance of the statistics is shown by comparing the number of industrial disputes and days lost from them with the number of industrial accidents and days lost from them. The Ministry of Labour Advisory Council, appointed by the present Minister, reported within the last twelve months that at least four to five times as much time was lost in industry by reason of industrial accidents as from industrial disputes. Commenting on this report, the Tariff Board, in its last report, said—

This is all the more serious a matter because most of the accidents could have been avoided. The Tariff Board also considered a paper recording the results of research undertaken by Mr. N. A. Gibbs, the organizer of the

Manufacturing Grocers Employees Federation of Victoria, into the question of time lost on account of accidents in industry. Mr. Gibbs arrived at the conclusion that in the year 1953-54 a total of 27,000 man-years—not man-days—were lost in Australia as a result of accidents in industry. It is straining at a gnat to devote all one's attention in this debate to industrial disputes and to devote no time whatever to industrial accidents, which lose for this country five times as much time and five times as much wealth as do industrial disputes. If we eliminated industrial accidents, or even halved them, we would do much more for the wealth and productivity of Australia and much more to provide leisure and amenities for the productive element of the community, as well as for those who are receiving their education and those in retirement, than we would by eliminating industrial disputes.

Much time has been devoted to the question of court-controlled ballots or, as they are somewhat erroneously called, secret ballots. The legislation providing for these ballots was introduced by the present Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt) after the 1951 general elections, if my memory serves me correctly. The Government had no endorsement of its action at any time. If one looks through the Commonwealth Statistician's figures, one finds that just as many hours were lost through industrial disputes in the years before that legislation as in the years after it. The proportion remained the same. It is only the stubbornness of the Minister which prevents the Government from altering or amending the legislation. It is quite plain that by merely passing legislation providing for court-controlled ballots, misnamed secret ballots, the Government will not eliminate industrial disputes or dispose of Communist officials in unions. In fact, in recent years the unions which have had most Communist officials—for instance, the Waterside Workers Federation, the Seamen's Union of Australia and the miners federation—have conducted secret ballots themselves and there has never been any suggestion that those Communist officials are elected by any skulduggery, improper means or irregularity, to use the term in the Chifley Government's 1949 legislation.

If the Government wants to assist in this respect, I suggest that it provide facilities,

at the public expense, for regular annual or triennial elections at polling places so that the unions, if they were so minded, could have their officials elected in the same way as members of this Parliament are elected and as every member of a lower house of a State parliament is elected—that is, by a secret ballot in the proper sense. Whoever would think of substituting for the method of election to this Parliament, the method which is used in these court-controlled ballots? Who would think of permitting a minority to decide the procedure for an election, or of having an election entirely conducted by postal ballot, which is notoriously the most inefficient and suspect form of ballot?

I turn now to port facilities, a subject dealt with by the honorable member for Robertson (Mr. Dean) and also touched on by the honorable member for Fawkner (Mr. Howson). One gets heartily sick and tired, to use the phrase of the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) concerning St. Mary's, at this passing of the buck to the State governments on every matter concerning port facilities. It is not as though this Parliament were without power in that respect. The first placitum of section 51 of the Constitution provides that this Parliament can legislate with respect to trade and commerce with other countries, and among the States. Section 98 extends that power to navigation and shipping. It is pretty obvious that if this Parliament were so minded it could grant financial assistance for ports directly, or through the States under section 96 of the Constitution. This Parliament could itself administer the ports of Australia which are concerned with interstate or international shipping, especially the port of Newcastle and other large ports which handle cargoes peculiarly suitable for sea transport, such as coal and bulk cargoes. This Parliament could provide that instead of having 25 different authorities controlling the ports of Australia, there would be some co-ordination of navigational standards, depths of harbours, size of wharfs, electricity and water supplies, and loading facilities. We know that every interstate ship and every international ship which comes into Australian ports has to have a variety of equipment to match the variety of port facilities. As has been pointed out again and again, the cost of transport is the most ruinous cost which this country has to face

and the most unnecessarily high. This buck-passing is utterly unworthy of us all.

Let us look at what we can do. As the honorable member for Fawkner referred to the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority, let me point out that in the legislation passed last year which set up that body and which abolished the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board, the possibility of the Government making money available for the rehabilitation of wharfs was excluded. The only modernizing work which has been done on many wharfs in Australia since World War I. is that paid for by the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board, but the new authority, the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority, has been deprived of that power under the legislation introduced by the Minister for Labour and National Service last year.

Mr. Howson.—It is time the honorable member had a look at the port of Melbourne.

Mr. WHITLAM.—I have seen the port of Melbourne. I wish a lot of other ports were as well equipped. The pity of it is that ships which use the port of Melbourne have also to use other ports in Australia; they cannot spend the whole of their time in Melbourne. The facilities in other ports are quite different from those in the port of Melbourne. I am pleading for some co-ordination in regard to our international and interstate ports, and I am saying that, under the Constitution, the Government has the necessary power.

In the brief time left to me I wish to refer to the scandalous position revealed in an answer which the Minister gave to a question I placed on the notice-paper. The answer, which was given by the Minister last Wednesday, concerned a hostel in my electorate conducted by Commonwealth Hostels Limited. Five years ago, at the time when the Government cut back the immigration programme so drastically—turned off the tap so sharply—there were in course of construction two large camps, at Heathcote-road and at East Hills. When the immigration programme was cut, the work on the camps was left three-quarters finished. It appears from the Minister's reply that after five years these huts, which were on the way to completion, are to be demolished. We learnt the other night from the honorable member for Forrest (Mr. Freeth)—who speaks with considerable

authority and with the imprimatur of the Minister for Immigration (Mr. Townley) in these matters, because he is chairman of the Immigration Advisory Council—that there are in the United Kingdom 40,000 people waiting to come to Australia but that many of them cannot come because of a lack of accommodation. We are familiar with the fact that all those hostels which were set in train by the honorable member for Melbourne (Mr. Calwell) during his term as Minister for Immigration—the ones at Bankstown, Wollongong, Bathurst, Lithgow and Parkes, to mention those in New South Wales—have been closed.

The Heathcote-road and East Hills hostels are the first cases where demolition is proposed. They consist of Nissen huts, which are built somewhat on the aircraft principle and look like long fuselages. The Minister, in his reply to me, said that 53 huts which were being demolished were only 10 per cent. complete. I think that is a gross understatement, because, in every case, the concrete floors are complete, in every case the ribs of the building are complete, in every case the iron sheathing is complete, and the doors and windows are there, although I must confess that in the last five years a lot of the steel and windows and some of the linings have been smashed or souvenired for canoes and so on. In many cases, the partitions are in position.

I have been led to believe by officials of the organization, to whom the Minister gave me access last Friday when I last looked at this camp, that the estimate of 10 per cent. derives from the fact that a lot of ancillary services would have to be provided. But that certainly does not cover the position of some two dozen of the huts at the East Hills hostel which are situated right between two rows which were completed and the dining and other communal facilities which have to supply the whole camp. The concrete paths, the steam pipes, the electrical conduits, all the water facilities and so on pass these very huts. It is bad enough that all these years these huts which, on the basis of the Minister's reply to me would accommodate over 100 families, have been allowed to remain incomplete and to deteriorate in this fashion; but they are now being put in the hands of the Department of the Interior for disposal.

The Government's fine protestations that it wants migrants, but that it is deterred from having them only by the lack of accommodation are completely belied when, having marked time for so long and having itself failed to provide the facilities to accommodate those migrants, it is now depriving itself of any future opportunity of accommodating them. As soon as it is able to find a buyer, the possibility of accommodating another 106 families will be done away with. That comes on top of the fact that last year the accommodation in these huts was so drastically reduced that each hut, on becoming vacant, was made to accommodate four families instead of two. If these 53 huts, which are now being disposed of, had been completed to provide accommodation at this reduced standard, they would have accommodated 212 British families.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT (Higgins—Minister for Labour and National Service) [5.18].—Most of the discussion that has proceeded so far during the debate on the group of estimates under consideration has been directed to the operation of the Government's legislation for the holding of ballots conducted under the auspices of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Therefore, I wish to spend a little time in dealing with the remarks that have come principally from the Opposition on that matter. But before doing so, I should like to get into proper perspective the position as we on this side of the chamber see it in our relations with the trade union movement and, indeed, with all other sections of the community.

I do not know whether you, Mr. Chairman, were occupying the chair when the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Cairns) attempted to prove that the historical progress of politics in English-speaking countries was characterized by a division between political parties representative of employer interests and political parties representative of the interests of trade unions. This Government has never at any time sought to be representative of sectional interests; it has been a national government, speaking for all sections of the community. At one time or another

it has incurred the criticism of special sections in the community, and that criticism has not been confined to trade unionists or those who speak for them. I can remember when we were criticized by the graziers because of the special tax that we imposed when the price of wool rose. I can recall when, more recently, people engaged in commerce were critical of our action in imposing import restrictions. Still more recently, we have come under the criticism of manufacturers for entering into the Japanese Trade Agreement. They are all examples of the criticism that a government which attempts to legislate for, and administer the affairs of, the Commonwealth fairly for all sections of the community encounters from time to time. They certainly destroy any charge that might be levelled against us that we are the spokesmen of what might broadly be termed the employer elements in the community and that we are in some way hostile to the interests of Australian trade unionists.

Having regard to the nature of the debate in which we are engaged, I do not propose, nor do I think it would be proper, to pursue that matter at length, not that it could not usefully be pursued at length. I point out, however, that the Australian electorate is overwhelmingly a trade union electorate. Some two-thirds of the total votes that are cast at an Australian general election are cast by members of trade unions and persons who are dependent upon them. The hard fact, which is so unpalatable to honorable gentlemen opposite, is that at election after election since 1949 not all, but a substantial proportion of the trade unionists of Australia have recorded votes in favour of this Government.

One reason why we have attracted the support of moderate thinking, responsibly minded trade unionists is that we have pursued policies that have been in their interests, but which have been opposed by honorable members opposite on the ground that they would not prove to be in the interests of the trade unionist. But the facts have demonstrated otherwise. I could give a whole host of examples to prove my statement, but I shall not attempt to do so in the limited time that is available during this debate. Suffice it to say that the very example that has been stressed in this debate, namely, the court-controlled

ballot, quite significantly has directed support to this Government from the ranks of Australian trade unionists.

Why did this Government introduce secret ballot legislation? It did so because it was a notorious fact that in this country Communists were spreading their influence through Australian trade unions by means of rigged ballot processes and intimidatory tactics, and by frustrating a democratic expression of will on the part of the rank and file unionist. Having faced up to that situation, the Government introduced secret ballot legislation. What did that legislation do? It gave an opportunity to men and women who were members of trade unions to record a democratic vote, to have a secret ballot which left them clear of intimidatory tactics and which was conducted under the official auspices of the Arbitration Court. That legislation was introduced in 1951, and we have had a significantly long period in which to assess its worth.

Perhaps the best proof of its value and effectiveness is the extent to which it has been so freely used by trade unions. I have not up-to-date figures, but I have before me some details which I furnished to the honorable member for Phillip (Mr. Aston) in the form of a reply to a question that was asked by him at the end of April, 1956. At that time, the honorable member asked me to let him know how many applications for secret ballots had been made pursuant to the passing of that legislation, how many had been granted, the various unions that had been involved, the use that was made of the Chifley legislation to which the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) made such approving reference earlier, and the use that had been made of our legislation as applied to irregularities where they could be shown to have occurred. I think the committee will find those facts to be of interest. Of course, since then, another six months have elapsed. So, because of the additional use that has been made of the legislation since that time, the figures would be greater. As at April, 1956, 131 applications had been made for official union ballots to be conducted under our legislation of 1951. Of those, 102 applications had been granted and 29 had been refused.

I believe that the following information will illustrate that the use of the legislation has not been confined to any particular

group of unions or section of the industrial community. The unions which, at that point, had made these applications were—

Federated Ironworkers Association of Australia
 Australian Railways Union
 Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners of Australia
 Federated Clerks Union of Australia
 Federated Marine Stewards and Pantrymen's Association of Australia
 Amalgamated Postal Workers Union of Australia
 Merchant Service Guild of Australasia
 Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees Federation of Australia
 Transport Workers Union of Australia
 Australian Workers Union
 Australian Builders' Labourers Federation
 Amalgamated Engineering Union
 Blacksmiths Society of Australasia
 Australian Foremen Stevedores Association
 Hospital Employees Federation of Australia
 Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union of Australia.
 Australasian Society of Engineers
 Musicians Union of Australia
 Federated Storemen and Packers Union of Australia.

I am sure the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Clarey), who predicted such dire consequences from our legislation, will be interested to see at the end of that list the name of the union of which he has been an honoured president.

Mr. Ward.—In how many cases were irregularities proved?

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—I shall come to that. This bears on the issue raised by the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Clyde Cameron). It has been claimed in this debate that certain statutory declarations are available to establish facts which have been alleged. But the legislation makes adequate provision for the correction of any irregularities. There is the provision which existed under the Chifley amendment of 1949. There is also the provision contained in our 1951 amendments.

It is quite interesting to note that, since 1949, there have been 32 applications to

deal with alleged irregularities in the conduct of ballots. Of those applications, 16 were made before our legislation came into force, that is under the Chifley amendment; and 16 have been made since. That was the position at 30th April. In 12 cases, the application was refused. In one case, it was found that there was no jurisdiction. Of the remaining 19 applications, irregularities were found to have occurred in 11. Five applications were dismissed and three were withdrawn.

At least those figures demonstrate that use has been made of the provisions and that, in cases in which the facts could be established, relief was available under the legislation. I am not aware of any official complaint having come from the union concerned in relation to the matters raised by the honorable member for Hindmarsh. I think that they were raised, in the first instance, by the honorable member for East Sydney last week. As is my practice when matters affecting the department are raised in debate or on the adjournment discussion, I had some inquiries made into the allegation and I have some information on it, although by no means have I obtained what I would regard as a complete picture. But one thing which seems to be of interest and of relevance is that the Master Painters Association of New South Wales is substantially different from employer organizations as normally understood. I am informed—I do no more than pass on the information, in good faith, as it reached me—that the Master Painters Association includes a considerable number of painters who are themselves members of the operative union; that there are people who have the title of master painter who either work on their own account or accept contract work and some of them employ other painters but are still members of the union. I do not know what proportion of members of the Master Painters Association would be in that position. To anybody who knows the way in which painters go about their business, this information appears to have a basis of reality. I am told that, because of the close link between the union and the association, it has not been unusual to find that a certain amount of the work for union purposes is carried out by the Master Painters Association.

Mr. Ward.—That has not happened in recent times.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—It has happened with the knowledge and apparent approval of the union. The honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) says that it has not happened in recent times.

Mr. Ward.—I have no evidence that it has ever happened.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—I am only giving the facts as they reached me.

On the subject of intimidation, the information that my department has been able to secure so far would indicate that no intimidatory practices have been carried out by officials of either the union or the Master Painters Association in seeking signatures for the petition that has been mentioned. But there have been reports that some members of the union have used intimidatory tactics in order to get people not to sign the petition. In the result, as far as I can ascertain, the required number of signatures was not received and the petition was not lodged or, at any rate, has not so far been lodged with the Commonwealth Industrial Registrar.

However, I have a statement that the Industrial Registrar of New South Wales is conducting a ballot at the request of union officials for an election to positions within the New South Wales branch of the union. That is all the information that I can give to the committee on the matter at this stage. If honorable gentlemen opposite can give me more information, for example, the statutory declarations to which reference has been made, I shall carry the matter as far as I can properly carry it within my department. But I repeat that, within the legislation itself, there is provision for dealing with irregularities if the justification exists.

Other matters have been mentioned in the course of the discussion. I think it was the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Cairns) who referred to the Commonwealth Employment Service. I felt that he spoke in approving terms of the work of the service and I welcome that indication of support. But he went on to say that the service was something of a Cinderella in the Commonwealth administration. I can assure him that it is not. My colleagues and I value the service. It is a most valuable element in the planning of economic policy by the Government. I believe that

we have in that service a body of conscientious officers who, to the best of their ability, place people who come to them looking for employment. If opportunity permitted, I could show honorable members that, increasingly, the public is coming to the Commonwealth Employment Service and obtaining ready placement through it. I can make the facts available to honorable members if they are desired. I am not making that statement in reference to any increase in unemployment which has been manifest over recent months. But the whole history of the service has shown a greater awareness by the public of its value. It has shown a greater readiness both by employers and those seeking employment to take advantage of the service that it provides.

The honorable member for Werriwa (Mr. Whitlam) referred to industrial accidents and the progress of automation. He mentioned the work of the Ministry of Labour Advisory Council. Indeed, it is not without relevance that the basis for his remarks was material provided by the Ministry of Labour Advisory Council. This means that we now have machinery working inside this country which is giving us a much clearer and more accurate picture of these important industrial trends than we have ever been able to obtain previously. In that organization are top representatives of management and of the trade union movement. We are able to discuss, in an atmosphere of frankness and mutual trust, the various problems as they arise. When honorable members study the information that has been disseminated by the council on the subjects of automation, industrial accidents and other matters, they will share my view, I believe, that this council is one of the most valuable developments in the economic, industrial and social history of Australia.

Mr. Ward.—But it has carried out research only. The Government has done nothing to correct the faults.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—That is not correct. With regard to industrial accidents, for instance, I can assure the honorable member that a great deal of work is currently being done, not only by the Department of Labour and National Service under the general guidance of this council, but also with the various State Departments

of Labour. We have reconstituted the advisory councils of the various Departments of Labour, both Commonwealth and State, and I hope that during the coming year we will be able to launch an effective campaign for accident prevention, which will result in considerably improved standards in this country. A great deal has already been done by individual concerns, and some of the most up-to-date and efficiently conducted enterprises—some of the largest enterprises in Australia—have brought about a really dramatic reduction in accident incidence within their own plants.

Mr. Ward.—Have you some illustrations?

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—It is the lesson of what they have been able to do that we hope to be able to apply on a very much wider scale.

Mr. Ward.—Give us an illustration.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—General Motors-Holden's Limited is a case in point. There are a number of others. I could give the committee, I think, quite an interesting picture of what has been done, and if honorable members would like a statement from me on the matter I shall look for an opportunity to give it to them. I can assure the committee that in industries such as General Motors-Holden's Limited, the Ford Motor Company of Australia Proprietary Limited, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited and almost any major undertaking in which a determined attempt has been made to reduce accident incidence, there has been a very remarkable reduction. Indeed, it was on the basis of this evidence that a statement was put out by the Ministry of Labour Advisory Council that although we could say, conservatively, that four to five times the number of working days were being lost through industrial accidents than through industrial disputes, a great deal of the loss through industrial accidents was avoidable. We are now working towards reducing the incidence of industrial accidents, and we welcome the support and assistance that we are getting in this task from the top representatives in Australia of management organizations and of trade unions.

Mr. Crean.—Will the Minister explain the increase to £20,000 in the vote for the Ministry of Labour Advisory Council, which was only £2,000 last year?

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—Yes. That increase is attributable to the projected productivity campaign, which has the support of both management and trade unions. The increased allocation is almost entirely represented by the provision that we are making for this productivity campaign to be conducted throughout Australia.

Mr. Whitlam.—Why are you disposing of the hostels?

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—We have more hostel accommodation than we want now.

Mr. LUCHETTI (Macquarie) [5.40].—I propose to address my remarks to the estimates for the Department of Labour and National Service, the Department of National Development and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. I agree with the general criticism offered by the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) earlier to-day regarding the grouping of items, but I believe that we can have a fruitful discussion on the votes for these three organizations. Each of them has some connexion with national development, and one must feel dispirited and dismayed at the failure of the Department of National Development to face up to its responsibilities and bring forward a plan of development which will give some hope to the people of Australia.

In looking through the vote for the Department of National Development we find no indication of any projected development of a major water scheme or atomic energy plant. There is no ray of hope that a scheme similar to the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme will be embarked upon by this Government, nor is there any room for optimism with regard to Australia's future and the employment of our people. This is to be deplored. One would expect that a department with such great responsibilities would give a constant lead to the Australian people, and that it would try to improve the existing situation, in which we find many immigrants and native Australians searching for work. The Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt) addressed himself to certain aspects of this debate, and expressed satisfaction with the employment situation. Whatever satisfaction the Minister may derive from the position, it is not a position that should create optimism in any honorable member of this Parliament. I

am painfully concerned with the fact that the number of unemployed in my district continues to increase, and no airy promise made by the Minister, either to-day or in the past, can in any way allay my fears regarding the problems facing the people of the electorate of Macquarie. I am aware of the fact that many thousands of people from my district have been obliged to leave that district in search of work. They have not hesitated to go where jobs can be found. Nevertheless, in Lithgow some 450 to 500 persons are registered at the present time as unemployed. The problem in Katoomba is very similar, and throughout the whole area a most unhappy state of affairs exists. It is one that should cause this Government to take action.

I am particularly perturbed at the problems facing the mining industry. The honorable member for Werriwa referred to automation and its effect on the lives of people of this country and especially of those engaged in this industry. Although the mining industry has not been completely given over to automation, nevertheless, by introducing new means of production it has been able to obviate the necessity to engage great numbers of workmen. Productivity has, therefore, increased, and the number of persons engaged in the industry has decreased. In the western coal-fields the number has fallen from 1,700 to 700. In the northern field the reduction has been even more dramatic, and this kind of reduction is taking place throughout the industry. When one asks what is to be done with these people who are thrown out of work as a result, the Government offers no answer. One would think that the activities of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization would be directed towards developing synthetic oil industries in the various coal-fields. In Victoria, gas is being produced from coal by the Lurgi process, and oil is being produced from very inferior coal. If these things can be done in Victoria, it should be possible to produce oil and gas from the rich coals waiting to be exploited in New South Wales, and also in Queensland and elsewhere.

The Commonwealth Government has a responsibility in this matter. It was left to the Labour government, in 1944, under the terms of the Coal Production (War-time)

Act, to appoint a Commonwealth Coal Commissioner to organize the industry and ensure that it would provide the coal essential to defence and the development of the nation. I think that the purposes of the Joint Coal Board should be clarified. The Government ought to say whether it intends to persist with the present functioning of the Joint Coal Board, or whether it considers that the board has served its purpose and that there is no further use for it. If the Government thinks that the board has served its purpose, it should immediately tell the board, the Parliament, and the people, so that we shall know what to expect. We shall then know that we are to go back to the law of the jungle, under which the industry may organize itself as best it can, with cut-throat competition and the threat of cartels and monopolies playing a major part, to the detriment of the Australian people. If that is to happen, the picture should be put before the people. Therefore, I consider that it is necessary for the Government to make a definite statement of its intentions.

What better authority is there than the Joint Coal Board to establish industries for the purpose of producing oil, coke, and gas from coal in the coal-mining areas? The board, through its various agencies, could do the job splendidly. It is amazing that it has not been given the opportunity before. Instead, its powers are being whittled away, its wings are being clipped, and its activities are being discontinued in mines that once flourished under its control, but are now being put up for auction. The Minister for National Development (Senator Spooner) has said that mines should not be kept by the board if they are unprofitable. However, some Joint Coal Board mines are to be sold because they are profitable. Such is the inconsistency of the present Administration!

The Government and its supporters point to the evils of nationalization, socialization, and control by either Commonwealth or State governments, and we witness the sorry spectacle of the closing of the Steelworks colliery, in the Lithgow district. That colliery, which formerly employed 214 men, has been obliged to close down, and sell its plant and equipment, because it cannot make profits. Its story is as sorry as is that of many other coal mines. The colliery was

owned by Australian Iron and Steel Limited, which was absorbed by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, to which great organization it became an adjunct. Although B.H.P. has profited greatly from the operation of the Steelworks colliery, when it felt that the time was ripe to discontinue the colliery's operations, it showed no concern for the faithful servants who had worked there for a great many years. It gave only a few weeks' notice of its decision to close the colliery, and then began to dismantle the machinery at the pit top. Those parts of the machinery that could be readily removed were taken away, and those parts that could not be easily salvaged were broken up and thrown down a shaft. In addition, valuable machinery underground was allowed to remain there.

What can one think of these captains of industry who ask the Parliament to allow them to run their industry free and unfettered? They are nothing better than industrial boggies and national delinquents. These saboteurs of Australian industry ask the Parliament and the people to entrust the future of the country to them, but they have no regard for the national welfare. The history of the coal industry is marked by the closure of collieries such as the Oakey Park mine, at Lithgow, from which coal of the best quality was once taken. To-day, it is possible to get that coal only by means of headings and tunnels driven into the old workings by the State coal-mine, at Lithgow.

Surely these facts constitute a case for the continuance of the Joint Coal Board's activities! The need for it to continue functioning should be made clear to the Parliament and the people as speedily as possible, and an assurance that the board will continue in operation should be given, so that those engaged in the coal-mining industry will know where they stand, and how to plan for the future. This industry has been an unhappy one. It is a Cinderella industry which, in times like the present, is apparently to be abandoned. Although the coal industry is vital to the country in times of adversity, this Government has failed to accept its responsibility to preserve it, and has neglected the lessons of the past. It has refused to take the industry into its confidence, and to develop it in peace-time

as it ought to do. I suggest that there is a heavy responsibility on the Government to improve the position of this industry.

I now turn to another matter of great importance, which concerns the Department of Labour and National Service. This afternoon, I asked a question about the dismissal of a physically handicapped employee from an establishment at Lithgow. I do not want to canvass the answer given to my question, but I do want to point out that industry has a responsibility to provide employment for physically handicapped persons. The problem of employing physically handicapped workers in industry was investigated during World War II. If my memory serves me right, the honorable member for East Sydney was the responsible Minister at the time. It was agreed that the Commonwealth Government should accept responsibility for employing 70 per cent. of physically handicapped persons, and that private enterprise should employ 30 per cent. of them. Are we now to prove ourselves soulless enough to betray mankind by abandoning physically handicapped workers merely for the sake of glorifying automation and efficiency? Are we to throw physically handicapped people out of employment merely because they are not especially physically fit? Many of them are unable to receive the pension because they are not so severely handicapped physically as to reach the degree of incapacity required by the Minister for Social Services (Mr. Robertson)—that is from 80 per cent. to 85 per cent. incapacitated. Because of this, they are unable to obtain the pension, although they obviously cannot find employment unless they are given some special consideration. They should not be cast aside, and it is scandalous and shocking to think that they should be so treated in Australia at the present time.

I am not discussing a specific case at the moment, but I do plead, as I have done in the past, for those who are visually handicapped. Surely the Commonwealth Government has a responsibility to assure both the visually handicapped and the physically handicapped citizens of this country of a decent livelihood. They should not be sacrificed to a sadistic and inhuman obsession with greater efficiency, as if that were the only thing that mattered in this world. A

place must be found for every person who can give any measure of service to the community, and I can think of nothing more inhuman than to deny employment to such people. I can only hope that the Government will take my plea to heart, and will do something for these unfortunate people. I hope that it will act according to the principle expressed in the words of the sage who said that one who endeavours to go through life without causing any tears, will leave the world better for having lived in it. That is a challenge to the Government, and to the captains of industry, to provide work for those who are handicapped physically or visually, and who are not 100 per cent. competent. It is wrong to decry such unfortunate people, and to say that, because they are handicapped, they have no place in industry.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Adermann).—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. ERWIN (Ballarat) [5.55].—I should like to make a few comments on the subject of national development. Down through the years we have heard the hollow ring of a word. That word is "decentralization". In Victoria, the growth of the City of Melbourne has developed completely out of proportion to that of the rest of the State. The present population of Victoria is almost 2,750,000, and of this number 1,750,000 live in the metropolitan area.

In our remembrance of the many great men of the past, we are apt to forget the many, who left Australia a legacy of problems. It is obvious that many, including those in authority, do not yet recognize these problems as problems or dangers to Australia's future. Why industry, administration and commerce should all have been conglomerated, I do not know. Australia, growing rapidly as it is, has many problems. It would not be practicable for any person, no matter how well informed, to attempt to set down all of them or to point the way to their answers.

Now that we have large cities with populations quite out of proportion to our total population, we are, to use a colloquial term, stuck with them, but if the nation is alert to their actual and potential danger, then their development can be slowed, and

a better distribution of population and all the essentials of a modern society can be achieved. Under our present Commonwealth Constitution, there is little that we in this Parliament can do apart from warning the States that unless some steps are taken soon on a national level the large expenditure caused by the rapid expansion of our capital cities will have a drastic effect over the whole of our national economy.

The port of Portland, in the south-west portion of Victoria, when properly developed, can do much towards the uniform development of not only that portion of the State but also a great portion of the south-east of South Australia.

Mr. Malcolm Fraser.—Hear, hear!

Mr. ERWIN.—Here I should like to congratulate the honorable member upon his efforts in seeking to further the development of that port. Portland is the only deep sea port between the capital cities of Victoria and South Australia. It is ideally situated geographically, being only one hour's steaming time from the main overseas shipping lanes, and the natural inlet and outlet for the two States. Portland is the natural outlet for the rich primary producing areas of the vast inland which has some of the finest agricultural and pastoral lands in our Commonwealth. Within a radius of 100 miles from the wharf area lies the vital south-eastern corner of South Australia. To the north is the rich Wimmera wheat belt, whilst to the east are some of the country's richest dairying and finest wool-growing pastures.

If Portland had been developed immediately after the war, the earning capacity on that area would have been more than trebled to-day. At present, wool is being hauled along the highways from as far as Mount Gambier in the west to markets in Geelong and Melbourne, and superphosphate is being carried on the return journey.

Portland's natural harbour of deep water is to be enclosed by 1959, and this port, if equipped with modern cargo handling machinery and storage facilities, is the obvious economic gateway to the south-east of South Australia and the western part of Victoria, because freight savings alone

would amount to 15s. a ton on superphosphate within the economic area. A shipment of 5,000 tons of general merchandise would save producers and consumers the sum of £50,000.

Shipowners, too, are anxious to use the port because of nearness to the main overseas shipping lanes and this, with the quick turnaround of vessels, would mean a vital saving to them. There is room for tremendous expansion throughout this rich area of land—expansion that would shape a new future for both town and district and assist materially the economic structure of the Commonwealth.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the States to get together with the Commonwealth on this problem of decentralization.

Motion (by Mr. Harold Holt) agreed to—

That the question be now put.

Proposed votes agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 8 p.m.

Mr. Harold Holt.—I suggest for the consideration and convenience of the committee that the proposed votes for the defence services—that is, Department of Defence, Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, Department of Air, Department of Supply, Department of Defence Production and Other Services—be considered together.

Mr. Luchetti.—I suggest that adequate time should be allowed for the discussion of these important votes.

Mr. Harold Holt.—For the information of the committee, I wish to make it clear that, in order that the Senate might have these Estimates and so that they shall have been considered by both Houses of the Parliament by 30th October, it will be necessary for us to complete consideration of the Estimates by 6 p.m. on Thursday of this week. The time available for this group of proposed votes, according to the programme that I have in front of me, should permit discussion on them up to 6 p.m., to-morrow. I think that that programme will give a reasonable opportunity for debate.

The CHAIRMAN.—If it is the wish of the committee, the votes to which the Minister has referred will be considered together.

Department of Defence.

Proposed Vote, £960,000.

Department of the Navy.

Proposed Vote, £43,791,000.

Department of the Army.

Proposed Vote, £57,389,000.

Department of Air.

Proposed Vote, £58,021,000.

Department of Supply.

Proposed Vote, £15,318,000.

Department of Defence Production.

Proposed Vote, £12,372,000.

Other Services.

Proposed Vote, £2,149,000.

(Ordered to be considered together.)

Sir PHILIP McBRIDE (Wakefield—Minister for Defence) [8.2].—On 4th April last, the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) presented to the House an overall review of Australian defence policy and of the defence forces. This was the result of a thorough review by Cabinet of the risks of war and the nature of hostilities should war unfortunately occur, the strategic basis of Australian defence policy, and the composition and equipment of the Australian defence forces. Cabinet's review had been preceded by a comprehensive examination of these matters by the Defence Committee and the departments concerned. More recently, on 19th September, the Prime Minister outlined to the House some recent developments and, in general terms, the progress which had been made in carrying out the more important features of the Government's policy.

I do not think it necessary to elaborate on those matters here. I propose, rather, to refer briefly to the total proposed defence vote and the basis on which it has been determined, and then to outline the more important features of the defence programme which has been formulated by departments concerned, and approved by the Government, to give practical effect to the policy as outlined by the Prime Minister. I shall also make some reference to what has been achieved from defence expenditure from 1950-51 to date. What I have to say will provide a background to the consideration of the detailed estimates of expenditure for the defence group of departments now before the committee.

It has been alleged in some quarters that the defence vote is determined by the

Government in an arbitrary manner. Nothing could be further from the truth. Since the amount of the vote determines the size of the defence effort, and hence our state of preparedness, the Government gives the most careful and comprehensive consideration to the vote that can, and should be, provided. It will, of course, be obvious that our defence effort must be kept within the limits of our economic capacity. No country can afford complete insurance, or provide for everything at once; the problem is one of selection and balance to ensure that the best possible results are achieved from the resources which can be provided.

In practice, the objectives of defence policy are achieved through a succession of defence programmes, each usually extending over a period of three years, to ensure proper planning and authorization of expenditure, and to achieve continuity in those projects which extend over a period of years, such as naval shipbuilding, aircraft production, and major works. These programmes are based on the detailed proposals of the services and associated departments, and are looked at by the Defence Committee from the point of view of priorities and balance before submission to the Government for approval.

The size of the programme, the extent to which its objectives can be achieved in each year, and the related annual vote are determined by the Government in the light of several considerations which are constantly under review. The first is the international outlook which determines the degree of preparedness necessary, including the strength and composition of the forces. Another factor is the state of the national economy and its capacity to sustain the defence vote, while, at the same time, maintaining economic stability which, in itself, is basic to a sound defence structure. Again, in this young and rapidly developing country, the amount which can be allotted to defence must also be related to the requirements of national development, including immigration, which is, in reality, a contribution to long-term defence in the shape of greater resources and man-power.

Thus, the amount that can be devoted to defence is decided each year by the Government at Budget time in the light of all these factors, and having regard also to the essential needs of other sectors of the

economy. Last financial year, the Government provided £190,000,000. This was a realistic estimate as was evidenced by the actual expenditure for the year of £188,500,000. The vote is being maintained at the level of £190,000,000 in the current financial year to meet the first year of a new three-year programme.

I have circulated for the information of honorable members, and of the public, some statistics on defence, covering the period from 1950-51. They show, in some detail, how the defence vote, over the years, has been spent, and the size of the forces which have been built up, equipped and maintained. Later, I shall make particular reference to certain items. The preposterous charge has been made that we have little or nothing to show for the expenditure of £1,200,000,000 on defence since 1950-51.

Mr. Calwell.—There is nothing to show for it.

Sir PHILIP McBRIDE.—Perhaps I cannot persuade the honorable member to appreciate what I am saying, but I hope that he will listen. If there were any substance in that charge at all, not only this Government, but also its senior professional advisers—men who have served successive governments in peace and war—would stand utterly condemned. Unlike the many self-styled defence experts who flourish to-day, these men not only carry heavy responsibilities for the efficiency and state of readiness of the defence forces, but they are in possession of all available information, much of it of a secret nature, bearing on our defence problems.

The charge can speedily be refuted. As will be seen from the statistics I have circulated, we have built up and maintained, since 1950-51, far larger and better-equipped regular and reserve forces than ever before in peace. These forces have stood ready to defend Australia and its vital interests. They constitute the real insurance we obtain from our annual defence premiums. The direct cost of maintaining these forces, including pay and other maintenance items, has absorbed over £745,000,000, or 62 per cent. of the total defence expenditure of £1,200,000,000 since 1950-51. Another £232,000,000, or 19 per cent. of the total expenditure, has been expended on ships, aircraft, weapons and other equipment.

We should do well to remember the gallant part played by our regular forces in Korea, at a cost of some 1,400 casualties, and that, since 1950, they have continued to play an important part in combating Communist terrorists in Malaya, not without cost in lives. I should like to pay a sincere tribute to the officers and men of our regular forces, and to let them know that the Government, and I am sure the country, is aware of the important role they perform, and is grateful to them.

I should also like to refer to the important part played in our defence structure by the men of the citizen and reserve forces, whose role it is to support and reinforce the regular forces in an emergency. Our thanks are due particularly to the volunteer officers and non-commissioned officers, upon whose ability, enthusiasm and public-spirited efforts, the efficiency of the citizen and reserve forces must largely depend.

I now propose to outline briefly the more important features of the current defence programme in relation to the estimates of expenditure of the services and associated departments now before the committee. The programme gives effect to the decisions on defence policy announced by the Prime Minister. To meet the needs of the strategic situation, the emphasis will be on mobile, well-equipped regular forces. At the same time a sound basic defence organization, including adequate reserve forces, will be maintained to permit rapid expansion in an emergency. Related to these objectives are the modifications recently effected in the national service training scheme and the measures taken for the re-organization of the Army with priority to the building up of the brigade group of the Regular Army field force. Mobility will be greatly increased by the procurement of twelve modern transport aircraft, which are all expected to be delivered by the end of next year.

The primary tasks of the Navy in war are to ensure the security and control of Australia's sea communications, to carry out convoy work and to co-operate with our allies in general operations in accordance with strategic plans. Since the most probable form of naval attack is submarines, the Government's naval policy has placed emphasis on the provision of fast anti-submarine vessels which, in conjunction with

the fleet air arm, will provide a balanced modern and effective Navy. This objective is progressing very well and this year we will have in commission two aircraft carriers, one Daring class ship, three destroyers, six frigates, four ocean minesweepers and various other smaller vessels and craft. Of the two aircraft carriers, H.M.A.S. "Melbourne", one of the most modern of its type, will be maintained in a fully operational state.

Mr. Curtin.—You have no aircraft for it!

Sir PHILIP McBRIDE.—If the honorable member will listen, he will learn that we have aircraft for these vessels. H.M.A.S. "Sydney" will be used for limited flying training in addition to its general training role. Modern Sea Venom jet fighters and Gannet turbo-prop anti-submarine aircraft have been obtained for the Fleet Air Arm and Sea Furies are held for attack purposes. A further 12 Gannets on order will be delivered during the current year. Altogether some 215 aircraft have been delivered to the Fleet Air Arm since June, 1950.

The Daring class ship in commission, H.M.A.S. "Voyager", was completed this year. All the destroyers and minesweepers to be in commission have been modernized in recent years. Three of the six frigates in commission have recently been converted from Q class destroyers to modern fast anti-submarine frigates and a fourth will be completed in December this year. In addition, the construction of two more Daring class ships is being accelerated; they are now estimated to be completed by the end of 1958 and mid-1959 respectively. Work on the construction of four new type anti-submarine frigates is also being accelerated.

This programme is being carried out in Australian shipyards, and further construction is planned comprising four general purpose vessels, a tank cleaning vessel, two aviation fuel lighters, and landing craft in accordance with Army requirements. A fast fleet tanker to provide floating support for the R.A.N. has been built in the United Kingdom and is at present operating on lease to the Admiralty. The total expenditure since June, 1950, on all naval construction, conversion and modernization has

been £48,600,000 and a further £6,000,000 is being provided in the current financial year.

Supporting the fleet in commission is a reserve fleet of destroyers, frigates, and other vessels which are being maintained in accordance with a carefully planned programme of priorities. There are also the shore establishments which include headquarters, a naval air station, training establishments, dockyards, oil fuel installations, store depots, workshops, armament depots, victualling stores and other technical and miscellaneous establishments essential for efficient operations and training. In order to keep down overheads, shore establishments are to be streamlined and the activities of training establishments co-ordinated and where possible amalgamated.

The estimated average strength of permanent naval forces during the current year is 11,300 in addition to reserves. From June, 1950, to the end of last financial year, the total expenditure on the Navy has been £288,000,000. The estimate for the current financial year is £43,800,000.

The changes in Army structure and organization which the Government approved early this year have now been carried out. In the Australian Regular Army the building up of the Mobile Brigade Group to operational strength of approximately 4,100 personnel has been virtually completed, and its collective training is in hand. This force will be equipped with the most modern weapons available, with special emphasis on the needs of tropical warfare. It will be additional to the infantry battalion group of approximately 1,350 personnel at present serving in Malaya as part of Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. These forces, together with the Pacific Islands Regiment, comprise a regular army field force of some 6,000 personnel.

It is estimated that the average total strength of the regular forces as a whole in 1957-58 will be of the order of 21,000. This strength includes, in addition to the field force, staffs for Citizen Military Force cadres, national service training, and cadets; also for training establishments, head-quarters command, administrative

and overseas establishments, and various maintenance and supporting units, all of which are essential to meet the needs of both the regular and citizen forces.

In the Citizen Military Forces, the estimated average strength for 1957-58 is approximately 70,000, including 14,600 voluntary enlistments. With the reduced national service intakes recently announced, which are now in operation, this strength will gradually be reduced to 50,700, including 13,200 voluntary enlistments. This is an acceptable level for peace-time training and efficiency. It is worth mentioning here that up to the present, the national service training scheme has added nearly 200,000 partly trained men to our active and reserve strengths. To meet mobilization plans, the Citizen Military Forces are being re-organized. Three infantry divisions and supporting units will be retained.

The provision of modern equipment for the Army remains a high priority objective of the Government's defence preparations. From June, 1950, to the end of last financial year, an amount of £103,000,000 has been spent on Army equipment of all kinds, including 120 centurion tanks, 300 other armoured fighting vehicles, 5,100 transport and other vehicles, 6,700 wireless sets, 1,500 guns, rocket launchers, and mortars, 360 items of heavy earth-moving and major engineering equipment, hundreds of thousands of artillery shells and cartridges, and many millions of rounds of small arms ammunition.

The current programme provides for the procurement of equipment compatible with, or standard with, that of the United States forces. The new FN rifle and the 105-mm. howitzers are important items in this programme. In the current financial year we are providing £12,800,000 for army equipment generally, comprising £5,500,000 for maintenance equipment and stores, and £7,300,000 for new capital equipment. The Army's most urgently needed works are for permanent accommodation for married and single members of the Regular Army. The new barracks at Puckapunyal are under construction, and major new projects planned for authorization this year

include the completion of the jungle training centre at Canungra. The total expenditure on the Army since June, 1950 has been £420,000,000. The vote for the current financial year is £57,400,000.

The Government's policy of mobility is well exemplified in the Air Force. There is an operational force of one bomber and two fighter squadrons, with a mobile support force of a bomber squadron, two transport squadrons, a fighter reconnaissance squadron, an air observation post flight and an airfield construction squadron. In addition, there is an operational reserve comprising a bomber and fighter squadron, and a home defence force of four fighter squadrons, two maritime reconnaissance squadrons and an airfield construction squadron. These forces will be readily capable of taking part in cold or limited war, or in larger scale operations. The assignment of Royal Australian Air Force squadrons for duty in Malaya will constitute a further effective contribution in meeting cold war tasks in South-East Asia.

The estimated average strength of the R.A.A.F. during the current financial year is approximately 15,000 personnel. The R.A.A.F. equipment policy aims at facilitating operations with elements of the United States Air Force, as well as the Royal Air Force. A modern Air Force requires a tremendous range of costly and complex equipment. Since 1950, a total of over 450 aircraft has been delivered, including Neptunes and Meteors from overseas, and Vampires, Winjeels, Sabres and Canberras from Australian factories.

A total of £10,500,000 is being provided this year for aircraft purchases and production. This includes provision towards the production of a further 21 Avon-Sabres, additional to the existing order for 91 which is now nearing completion, and an installation towards the most of the twelve Lockheed C130A transport aircraft being obtained from the United States at a cost of £16,400,000, to which I have already referred. The present production order of 48 Canberra bombers is expected to be completed this year. Progress is also being made with the production of a further 68 Vampire trainer aircraft. At the same time, modifications are being incorporated into Sabre, Canberra and other aircraft to improve performance.

The current aircraft equipment of the R.A.A.F. is capable of effective offensive and defensive roles against enemy aircraft and enemy targets against which they could be required to operate during the next few years. As I have already said, the re-equipping of the transport element with C130A aircraft will also be a major factor in providing mobility for the Australian armed forces. For the present, conventional weapons are planned for R.A.A.F. aircraft, but the latest developments in air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons will be incorporated as they become available. Important new developments are the introduction of the first surface-to-air guided weapons unit and the establishment of additional control and reporting units for which equipment is to be provided under the current programme. The total provision made in 1957-58 for all equipment, both maintenance and capital, other than aircraft, is £15,800,000.

Other equipment ordered for the R.A.A.F. over the last few years includes more than 1,100 vehicles, 400 items of heavy earth-moving equipment, aircraft armament and other weapons and equipment, training and reserve requirements of bombs and ammunition, and a great variety of radar equipments. These equipments are of growing complexity and of great importance for R.A.A.F. operational efficiency and safety. Among the important items which have been procured are ground control approach equipment, high power and mobile search radars and ultra-high frequency and multiplex signal equipment.

The introduction of modern types of aircraft has necessitated an extensive airfield development programme, including the lengthening and strengthening of pavements. Since 1950, major works of this type have been carried out at a number of Air Force stations throughout the Commonwealth. An amount of £1,800,000 is provided for further airfield works in the current financial year. Since June, 1950, up to the end of the last financial year, a total amount of £334,000,000 has been spent on the Air Force. The vote for the current financial year is £58,000,000.

There is one further aspect relating to the services which I wish to mention. I announced recently that the Government had decided to set up a committee to make

a full review of the rates of pay and allowances and other provisions of the services pay code, and to recommend any adjustments considered to be reasonable and practicable. The committee is also to review the defence forces retirements benefits scheme. The availability of man-power of sufficient quality and in adequate numbers is the life-blood of the services. Pay and allowances, retirement provisions, and conditions of service generally have to take into account the increasing complexity of service equipment, and the need to attract and retain man-power for the preservation of national security. The special circumstances of, and the conditions of working in, the services have to be taken into consideration, in addition to the pay and conditions in comparable occupations in the community as a whole. In all, it adds up to a complex problem which has not been reviewed in full since 1947.

The committee has been convened and has commenced work. The chairman is Sir John Allison, a distinguished businessman who is chairman of the Board of Business Administration in the Department of Defence. The committee includes representatives of the Departments of Defence, Treasury and the three services, and the Department of Labour and National Service. It will be supplemented by the Commonwealth Actuary and the president of the Commonwealth Superannuation Board for the review of the Defence Forces retirement benefits scheme.

The defence vote must also provide for the facilities necessary for the production or procurement of the material requirements of the services. The Government has paid careful attention to the need for maintaining balance in the development of the services and the capacity to provide their material needs. Through the Joint War Production Committee, and by consultation between the services and the Departments of Defence Production and Supply, the requirements of the services in peace and for mobilization are continuously being related to the capacities of government factories and industry.

Since 1951, an amount of £39,000,000 has been devoted to expansion of production capacity and the replacement and modernization of existing facilities. In this financial year, a further £8,500,000

will be directed towards these objectives, including the completion of the St. Mary's filling factory and capacity for the production of the FN rifle and associated ammunition. In the field of aircraft production, I have already referred to the production of aircraft for the R.A.A.F. Production has also continued with the Jindivik radio-controlled target aircraft, of which some 120 have now been manufactured. Developmental work on other projects is in hand, or is planned.

The major item in defence research and development remains the joint United Kingdom-Australia long-range weapons project. An extensive series of weapons trials has been carried out and some of these weapons are now coming into operational service. Facilities are now being provided for the testing of much longer range weapons. The total expenditure by Australia on this project to 30th June, 1957, is £63,000,000, including £52,000,000 since June, 1950. The amount being provided this year is £9,500,000.

In addition to the joint United Kingdom-Australian activities, work will continue on a number of Australian-initiated defence research projects, including work on guided weapons, electronics and aeronautics. Australian support for atomic weapons tests carried out by the United Kingdom at Maralinga, in South Australia, will be maintained. Australian defence scientific resources have been increased, since 1950, by the establishment of additional research laboratory units. The amount provided this financial year for research and development, other than the joint long-range weapons project, is £1,700,000.

The estimates include £119,000 for the civil defence school. Civil defence is the responsibility of the Department of the Interior, and the Defence Department advises on the military aspect. The scale of civil defence preparations is related to the probable threat, which is reviewed regularly by the Government's defence advisers on the basis of current intelligence assessments of enemy capabilities and intentions.

The demands of defence expenditure on the Budget have not been light, but if we are to expect aid from our friends and allies in any threat to this country, we must be prepared to do our part, within the limits

of our resources, in providing for our own defence and in meeting our obligations under mutual security arrangements to which we are party. Defence expenditure, being extremely costly and unproductive in the economic sense, must be judged by the degree of security which is provided. Since we cannot insure against every risk, it is important that the maximum security should be obtained from the expenditure of the vote that can be provided. In this concept, the Government can claim full value for the money spent in terms of an efficient service organization, including fighting forces and command, training, and maintenance elements capable of rapid expansion in time of war, and of playing an effective part in cold war operations. The outstanding record of our forces in the Korean war is proof of this. The current re-balancing of the forces, with emphasis on hard-hitting mobile forces, highly trained and equipped, and readily available, is in line with the modern trend, and will provide an even greater degree of defence preparedness within the limits of the vote which our economy can sustain.

Mr. CREAN (Melbourne Ports) [8.34].—On behalf of the Opposition, I move—

That the amount of the vote "Department of Defence, £960,000", be reduced by £1.

This amendment is moved to censure the Government in respect of its defence policy which it has pursued for a considerable number of years and is pursuing this year. It will be remembered that last year, in the middle of the debate on the Department of Defence estimate, the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) announced a top-to-bottom review of Australia's defence. That was followed, on 4th April, by a statement, since printed as a ministerial White Paper; and a month ago, on Thursday, 19th September, the Prime Minister presented what was called a further defence statement.

Although one can appreciate the information that has been circulated to the committee to-night by the Minister for Defence (Sir Philip McBride), and also further information which will subsequently be given by the Minister for the Army (Mr. Cramer), I think the voluminous information which has been supplied indicates the need, if this committee is to consider intelligently the expenditure of £190,000,000 on defence—nearly 1s. for every £1 of every-

body's income in Australia—for this kind of statement to be presented well in advance of the debate on the defence estimate. There is no reason why the Government could not follow the practice of the United Kingdom Government and present, with the White Paper on national income, also a White Paper on national defence containing the kind of information that is before the committee to-night. Without that, there cannot be a proper appraisal of the defence needs of this country.

The task of the Opposition to-night is to criticize the Government's policy on the ground of efficiency in the terms of the needs of 1957-58 and also to inquire whether value is being given to the Australian community for this vast expenditure which has aggregated more than £1,200,000,000 since the life of this Government began. They are colossal figures by any standard. I take as my starting point for an appraisal of this defence policy, what was said by the Prime Minister on 4th April. This paragraph appears at page 5 of the White Paper—

We have for some time been greatly disturbed by the fact that an undue proportion of our annual expenditure has been laid out upon the maintenance of existing forces, the bulk of whom are only partially trained, while too small a proportion of our expenditure has been available for equipment. We have, quite frankly, disturbing deficiencies on the equipment side.

That statement seems to indicate that there should have been a complete recasting of the proportions of our defence expenditure this year. I ask honorable members to peruse the table which has been circulated by the Minister this evening dealing with defence expenditure in major categories from 1950-51 to 1957-58. I draw attention to the figures for "total maintenance". In 1955-56 this item involved an expenditure of £134,257,000, in 1956-57 an expenditure of £136,230,000, and this year, despite the suggestion of a re-orientation of expenditure, the sum of £136,599,000. One would have thought there would have been less expenditure in this direction and more on the other categories, such as capital expenditure which, after all comprises the sort of things that are supposed to frighten Australia's enemies wherever they may be. But capital expenditure for 1955-56 was £56,459,000; in 1956-57 it was £51,053,000 and this year it is estimated at £51,230,000. In other words,

there has not been the re-organization in these defence estimates for 1957-58 of the kind that was foreshadowed by the Prime Minister on 4th April and earlier when he said there would be a top to bottom review of defence expenditure in Australia.

Again, if honorable members will look at the diagrams that are appended to the statement entitled "Defence Statistics", circulated by the Minister for Defence, they will find that there is very little difference between the expenditures by the so-called major categories in 1956-57 and those projected for 1957-58. In 1956-57, 39.3 per cent. of defence expenditure by major categories was accounted for by salaries, pay and allowances, and 19.7 per cent. by general expenses and maintenance services, making a total of 59 per cent. Of the estimates for 1957-58, 37.5 per cent. is represented by salaries, pay and allowances, and 20.2 per cent. by general expenses and maintenance services, a total of nearly 58 per cent. They are the day-to-day expenses before there is any change whatever in types of aircraft, types of armaments, or the facilities that are devoted to the Navy.

As I have said before, the prime job of this committee is to criticize both past expenditure and estimated future expenditure. I find difficulty in reconciling some of the figures contained in the statement, "Defence Statistics", with those contained in the Estimates, with which this committee is primarily concerned. I ask honorable members to turn to that part of the Estimates in which the establishment, as it were, of the Australian Regular Army is set out. The establishment for the Army in 1956-57 was 26,000 personnel. Even though we have been told of fundamental changes, the establishment for 1957-58 is still shown as 26,000 personnel.

The position becomes even more astonishing when one subjects the figures to a little closer examination. It will be seen that in 1957-58 there is to be one brigadier less than in 1956-57, one colonel less, eleven fewer lieutenant-colonels, 204 fewer majors, captains, lieutenants and second lieutenants, 220 fewer warrant officers, 60 fewer staff sergeants, 243 fewer sergeants, 812 fewer corporals—a total of 1,552. But there are to be exactly 1,552 more lance-corporals, privates, gunners, sappers, drivers, &c. Does that mean—of course, I know that

it does not quite mean this—that one brigadier is to be relegated to the mean rank of lance-corporal, or is this further evidence of the kind of shuffling and camouflage that is being indulged in by this Government? I suggest, for the benefit of the Australian people, that it is time this bamboozle curtain that has been a part of the defence policy of this country was torn away and more honestly shown, instead of the Government simply saying that it has so many aircraft, without indicating the type of aircraft or its purpose or anything else.

I should like now to direct the attention of honorable members to the rather curious figures that are shown against Division No. 204—Buildings and Works—under the heading, "Department of Defence Production". According to those figures, the vote for 1956-57 was £14,000,000, and the actual expenditure in that year was neither more nor less than that same round figure of £14,000,000. I do not believe that that kind of thing can take place, unless one reconciles it with the state of affairs revealed in the last report of the Auditor-General that was tabled recently. The Auditor-General stated in paragraph 114, at page 72—

DEPARTMENT OF AIR.

Progress payments of approximately £6,000,000 have been made—

That is, by the Department of Air—

to the Department of Defence Production against orders placed for the supply of aircraft and engine spares. Deliveries of these stores have not been reconciled or identified with the payments made. This matter has been taken up with the Department.

It would appear that, having been rapped over the knuckles by the Public Accounts Committee recently for creating trust accounts and giving the impression to the Australian people that they were being devoted to certain strategic and other purposes—nothing whatever was done about them and they were silently closed down with the Budget this year—a new device is being resorted to whereby the aircraft that will be needed to-morrow are charged to the Department of Defence Production to-day. Is this how it has made up its figure to £14,000,000? I submit that the committee is entitled to an explanation in this connexion. The amount is far too large to be left without explanation to this committee and to the people of Australia.

Year after year the same sort of thing has gone on. Even to-night an undertone was evident in the Minister's speech. After dealing with each category he said, in effect, "We have spent so many millions on the Army, so many millions on the Navy, and so many millions—or hundreds of millions—has been spent over the last seven years on the defence of this country". I submit that it is not sufficient for the Minister, in the circumstances in which we are placed, merely to refer to expenditure in round figures when so many millions of pounds are involved.

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Evatt), when replying to the further statement by the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies), pointed out that in view of the kind of warfare that is now being talked about, the best thing for the Government to do is to say that its policy is to prevent war, but if we are going to defend this country, the defences should be intelligent and realistic, having regard to the circumstances of the times in which we live. It would seem that there still is too much concentration in this country on sheer man-power and too little on machinery and the latest devices that are available. When a comparison is made with military expenditure in the United States of America, it is seen that that country expends more on its air force than on its navy and army. In fact, the expenditure on the American air force is more than the expenditure on the other two services combined. That is vastly different from the position in Australia, where we spend 23 per cent. of our defence allocations on the Navy, 30 per cent. on the Army, 30 per cent. on the Air Force and 17 per cent. otherwise.

Of course, this is a technical matter. We were told by the Prime Minister the other night that the Government relies in technical matters on the advice of the Chiefs of Staff. But sometimes it is better if a little bit of this technical information that is lurking in the background is made available to the Australian public. It should be brought to the foreground, because in the unhappy event of war the greatest number of casualties are likely to be in civilian spheres rather than in military spheres. Modern war is not only a front-line affair. I know that members of the Government have been critical about the allocation for civil defence, and doubtless

there will be further discussion on that subject. Surely there is a need for the Government to give greater information to this Parliament and to the people of Australia on where it is going with regard to its defence policy. We have had three statements from the Prime Minister, and whilst they may read well as English composition, they do not read very well as defence statements.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. OSBORNE (Evans—Minister for Air) [8.49].—I listened with great interest, as I usually do, to the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Crean). He has, at least, conceded that there are many facets to this question of defence, many problems to solve, and some limitation to the capacity of this country to provide all that is needed. Everything that the Minister for Defence (Sir Philip McBride) has said to-night emphasizes the immense problems of defence that we face and the limited resources that we can afford to apply to solve them. That is particularly true of the service for which I am politically responsible, the Royal Australian Air Force, because it is generally conceded that in the field of technical developments for the defence services of the free world, the air forces are taking a more prominent place. They have immense technical problems, the solving of which involves immense expenditure.

I should have preferred to intervene in this debate at a later hour to-night, when more members had had the opportunity to express their opinions, but the time-table of the work of the committee is such that if I do not take part in this debate now, I shall not be able to do so before consideration of these estimates has been concluded.

The problem of defence in these days is the problem of paying, in terms of technical services, qualified personnel and finance, the enormous bills that must be met if any nation is to provide itself with the sort of defence that it considers to be adequate. That applies with particular force to the Air Force. The melancholy fact is that no nation in the world can afford the sort of defence which it feels is necessary to-day. It is impracticable for any nation on either side of the iron curtain to equip itself as fully as it would like, and as fully

as its technicians advise, for the defensive tasks that would arise if the worst circumstance in the relations of the nations of the world should occur. So, a nation has to do the best it can with its available resources of money, technical personnel and industrial capacity. It follows from that that whatever a nation does is open to criticism. This is an age when, in matters of defence, criticism is easy and decision is extremely difficult.

I should like to review, if I may, for the benefit of the committee, the general developments in the Royal Australian Air Force in the post-war years. The first problem at the end of the war was the creation of a post-war Air Force. I and my predecessors in this office would be the first to concede that the work of the Air Force is not done in the Parliament. It is done by the Air Board, by the technical advisers to the Air Board and by the gallant people who man the squadrons which we put into the air. But, on the political level, in terms of the office I now occupy, the task to which I have referred was performed by that former member of the Parliament whose passing we mourned last week. The task of supervising the transition from a wartime Air Force to a post-war Air Force fell to the late Sir Thomas White.

The next task was the re-organization of the commands of the Air Force. That, as the committee will recall, was done—again I am speaking only in political terms—in the time of my predecessor who is now the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. McMahon). The whole system of commands in the Air Force was altered in the years in which he held this office. Commands were arranged on a functional basis, no longer on a regional basis.

The next task—again I am speaking in political terms—fell to my predecessor who is now the Minister for Immigration (Mr. Townley). It was the re-equipment of the Air Force. That task has been completed, notwithstanding the criticism which is offered of the aircraft with which our front-line squadrons are now equipped. I remind the committee that in these days criticism is easy but decision and accomplishment are difficult, particularly in matters of defence.

Mr. Cairns.—You have said that already.

Mr. OSBORNE.—It will bear saying several times. I hope that the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Cairns), who is so free with irresponsible criticism, will note that this is a field in which it is quite easy to criticize, because with limited means and a large field to cover, defence is always a matter of compromise. The defence of any country in the world to-day is a matter of compromise. I do not want to take up the time of the committee answering interjections from the honorable member for Yarra.

The task of the Air Force, as I see it to-day, is to achieve the maximum capacity to use the new equipment which has been provided for it. One criticism that we hear from members of the Opposition from time to time is that we should have squadrons of the Air Force based here or there. My answer is that that sort of criticism is completely ill-informed. What we ought to have is an air force capable of being deployed at short notice at any point at which it is required within our strategic sphere. The task of the Air Force to-day is to achieve such a degree of mobility that it can be deployed at any place at which it is needed within the area which we recognize to be our responsibility.

The Air Force has problems of personnel. This is a time of full employment, of attractive posts in industry and commerce, but, on the whole, the Air Force is fairly well manned. We face the problem of making the service attractive to individuals, in a community in which economic expansion is the rule. One of the difficulties of making a service career attractive is that service personnel, by the nature of their callings, must be prepared to pack up and move somewhere else at short notice. Such moves inevitably involve problems for them and their families. That is one of the difficulties inherent in service life, and one of our obligations is to overcome it as well as we are able to do so. One of the functions of the Air Staff at present is to try to minimize these difficulties. I have referred to the operational necessity for the Air Force to become mobile in the fullest sense of that term. I have also said that to the degree that the Air Force becomes mobile, it should be possible for it to have some stability of

home base arrangements. It is one of the hopes of the Air Staff at the present time to increase that possibility.

I do not want to take up the time of the committee unduly, but I want to make two other points. The Royal Australian Air Force has gone through a steady progress of reorganization and re-equipment. It is, at the present time, at a state of efficiency which is, I believe, very high and creditable. It does not follow from that that anybody with responsibility for the Air Force should be content to rest on existing laurels. We have a task before us of using our resources to the fullest possible extent, so that they can be deployed at the shortest possible notice at any point where the needs of Australian defence may require them to go. At the same time, associated with that we have the problem of personnel arrangements for families which, I believe, can and will be met. High in the consideration of that problem is the fact that the housing problem for services personnel has a reasonable chance of being solved within a very few years through the operation of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, which was negotiated last year by this Government. It is a matter which may very well cheer service personnel, because the family problems associated with a service career are quite considerable, and if the housing difficulty can be completely solved, those personnel problems will be reduced accordingly. It is a reasonable expectation that within a couple of years there will be no more acute housing problems for service personnel. Those are points of considerable value and of considerable advantage.

Mr. Freeth.—I desire to make a personal explanation, Mr. Chairman. I have been grossly misrepresented by the honorable member for Werriwa (Mr. Whitlam), and I wish to clear the matter up and place on record the way in which I have been misrepresented. To-day, in the House, the honorable member for Werriwa said that I had—

Mr. J. R. Fraser.—A point of order, Mr. Chairman. Can the committee discuss something that happened in the House?

Mr. Freeth.—I am sorry, I should have said “in the committee”. The honorable member for Werriwa said, Sir, that I had said last Thursday that 40,000 intending British immigrants could not come to Aus-

tralia because of lack of accommodation. I have carefully checked what I did say in the House. I did not refer to lack of accommodation. Now, Sir, the honorable member for Werriwa is getting rather a name for rather careless attention to the truth.

The CHAIRMAN.—Did I understand the honorable member to say that the statement was made last Thursday?

Mr. Freeth.—I made a statement last Thursday which the honorable member for Werriwa misquoted to-day, and this is the first opportunity I have had of raising the matter. I have carefully checked the record of the speech of the honorable member for Werriwa and my own speech.

The CHAIRMAN.—You have been misrepresented to-day?

Mr. Freeth.—Yes, to-day, Sir, in the committee. The honorable member for Werriwa said, quite categorically, that I had stated that 40,000 British immigration applicants could not come to this country because of lack of accommodation. I said no such thing. I referred to the fact that there were many people wishing to emigrate to Australia for whom no suitable employment could be found in this country.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I am afraid I cannot allow the honorable gentleman to proceed. A personal explanation should be made at the conclusion of the speech in which the honorable member has been misrepresented.

Mr. Freeth.—This was my first chance.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The personal explanation should have been made at the conclusion of the speech in which the statement complained of was made or during a debate when the same question was under discussion. The question before the Chair during the debate in which the statement by the honorable member for Werriwa is said to have been made was resolved just before the suspension of the sitting for dinner, and we are now debating an entirely different question. I must, therefore, rule that the honorable member for Forrest may not make a personal explanation now. I say that, in the case of any member's character being defamed, I think the House, or the committee as the case may be, would take a more lenient attitude, and would allow the personal explanation to be made.

Mr. Webb interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The honorable member will obey the Chair or I shall deal with him. I am not going to be interrupted when I am giving a ruling. I must rule that the personal explanation should have been made when the question being debated at the time was still before us.

Mr. Harold Holt.—Speaking to the point of order, Mr. Chairman, and on your ruling, if I may, I wish to say that it has been the practice of this House and its committee to give leave, when the House or the committee saw fit, to an honorable member who sought an opportunity to make a personal explanation. It may be that, as a matter of right, the position is as you have said; but it is still open, I suggest, to the committee to grant leave to an honorable member to make a personal explanation when the honorable member feels that he has been misrepresented in the debate.

Mr. Makin.—On a point of order, Mr. Chairman——

The CHAIRMAN.—Is it on the same point of order?

Mr. Makin.—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member may proceed.

Mr. Makin.—I suggest that the Standing Orders have been correctly interpreted by you, Mr. Chairman, and that they do not permit of the indulgence that the Minister for Labour and National Service suggests at this juncture. Furthermore, it would be quite against precedent for that course to be now introduced into the proceedings. Therefore, Sir, I hope you will not depart from the ruling that you have given, because I think that it is strictly in accord with the correct procedure.

Mr. Freeth.—On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I take it that the committee may, at any time give an honorable member leave to make a statement. We are the masters of the business of this House, and I would not be greatly surprised to learn that honorable members opposite do not want to have a misrepresentation cleared up. They want to sustain an injustice.

Mr. Whitlam.—I desire to make a personal explanation, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I will not accept a further personal explanation while

I am dealing with the point of order. I must sustain my ruling. I feel that we could go on indefinitely with personal explanations. In the first instance, I thought the honorable member for Forrest was dealing with a misrepresentation made last Thursday. Well, obviously this is getting beyond a reasonable time. However the honorable member has sought to make a personal explanation regarding an alleged misrepresentation that occurred when a question entirely different from that which we are now debating was under discussion. I think we must sustain a balanced reasoning as to when a personal explanation should be made. I know that the House has always been tolerant, so I am going to leave it to the committee. My ruling must stand, but if the committee agrees to let the honorable member proceed I shall allow him to do so.

Mr. Freeth.—I ask for leave to make a statement.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! Is the committee agreeable?

Opposition members.—No!

Mr. Whitlam.—Mr. Chairman, the honorable member for Forrest said that in remarks that I made this afternoon——

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! If these remarks were made when another question was under debate I must apply the same ruling, so the honorable member for Werriwa is out of order.

Mr. Downer.—I raise a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Would you be good enough to indicate to the committee when the honorable member for Forrest may make his personal explanation, because it is quite apparent that he is suffering from some sense of injustice?

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The Standing Orders are open for the use of honorable members. It is not for the Chair to tell any member when he may use the Standing Orders.

Mr. R. W. HOLT (Darebin) [9.10].—I second the amendment moved by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Crean). The statement of the Minister for Air (Mr. Osborne) is but further evidence of the complete confusion on the Government side of the chamber—from the top right down to the bottom—in this matter of defence. It is well known that the Prime Minister (Mr.

Menzies) has a complete inferiority complex concerning defence. It is only natural, therefore, that he should pick a team of mediocre and lesser men to administer the service departments. That is borne out by the statement of the Minister for Air, and by the way in which it was made. We have seen the Minister for the Army (Mr. Cramer) in action before. Last year, I asked him if he knew who prepared the estimates for his department. Apparently he still believes that they are prepared in his department. In fact they are not. I am now in a position to enlighten him on that point. The Minister for Defence (Sir Philip McBride) is in the same category. A happier, more amiable person of less consequence we have yet to see holding the defence portfolio in this country.

A further proof of the mediocrity of this team of Ministers is provided when one seeks a decision. The Minister for Air said that it was hard to make a decision. Of course, it is hard when one has a mass of committees on defence! We need only look at the large number in the Department of the Army alone. The Prime Minister has to seek advice from such people on defence matters. Of course, the Prime Minister thinks that he is covering himself against every contingency by having committees composed of bureaucrats and "top brass". To mention a few, there are the Defence Committee, the Defence Preparations Committee, the Joint War Preparations Committee and the Cabinet special committee on defence and the business adviser's committee. The Prime Minister has all sorts of committees so that he can avoid having to make responsible decisions.

This was the main difficulty in the St. Mary's matter. The chiefs of staff did not make any decision in regard to that, nor were they given the opportunity to do so. Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney Rowell was certainly not given the opportunity of saying whether he wanted the old St. Mary's site or the new one, or where it was going. He was given no choice. I say that of my own knowledge, having every justifiable ground for believing it to be true. When one considers this host of committees and the effete and inefficient Ministers with which the Prime Minister entrusts the service portfolios, one can understand the difficulty in the which the Minister for Air finds himself—as he himself confesses—

when he is required to make a decision. The whole of our defence structure is designed to frustrate any attempt by the Opposition, or any other responsible element in the nation, to sheet home responsibility for the waste of £1,280,000,000 on defence since the Government assumed office.

The Prime Minister has made so many defence statements since 1955 that we have had almost a change-daily defence policy. At least the Australian Labour party, when it was in office before 1950, had a five year defence plan. The services knew their commitments for a particular year well in advance. In 1950 the incoming Government made the panic statement that war would come within three years. Another £50,000,000 was made available to the services. The Army's share of this was £19,000,000—quite insufficient to buy the stores required to place it on a mobilization basis. In fact, most of the money was spent in buying razor blades, and other supplies, from Australian retail stores. Suitable equipment and materials simply were not obtained. The same was true of the other services. The money was wasted on expendable stores. Indeed, at the request of the secretaries—and no doubt at the direction of the Ministers also—a heresy hunt was conducted in the service departments to make sure that the money available would be spent by the end of the financial year. A report which was submitted to the Army along those lines in 1955 reveals the hand-to-mouth existence led by service chiefs.

This gross waste of public finance and man-power has extended beyond the service departments to the field of procurement and supply. In respect of the Department of Supply, in particular, we have received the same evasion and equivocation that we have had from the Prime Minister. The statement that that right honorable gentleman made concerning defence bore no relation to truth whatsoever. Indeed, it might well have been described as amoral.

Recently, I asked the Prime Minister whether nuclear bombs would be made available to the much vaunted brigade group, with which the Minister for the Army is playing around. Incidentally, we do not know whether the force is to be concentrated for training, or is to be dispersed and trained in various parts of the

country. Of course, the expense of training in that dispersed fashion will be increased fourfold. We know very little about the administrative set-up in the new group, although an army is only as strong as its administrative element. The Minister avoids any mention of the arrangements that have been made for the employment of the brigade group by speaking of the need for secrecy.

Recently, I asked the Prime Minister a question concerning the storage and maintenance of atomic and hydrogen bombs—in either American or British custody—in Australia. The answer given was that the Minister for Defence had confirmed the fact that no discussions of the kind had taken place. However, in the "Christian Science Monitor" of 20th August, 1957, the following appeared under the heading "Sandys' Airs Plan to Send A-Bombers to Far East".

We are building quite a stockpile of atomic weapons and are now in a position to start building hydrogen megaton weapons", Mr. Sandys declared.

"We are not saying where those are going, and when atomic weapons are brought here nothing will be said about that either".

Mr. Sandys was referring to a conversation that had been held in Canberra. Why would Mr. Sandys say that if there had been no discussion on the matter? Obviously the Prime Minister has decided to say nothing about it, and his denial represented gross distortion and reckless handling of the truth—for even a Liberal Prime Minister.

The next matter to which I refer applies to the Prime Minister's henchman, the Minister for Supply (Mr. Beale). I think that in the Minister for Supply the Prime Minister has a real contender for his title. He should pay close attention to him because the Minister's technique in giving false assurances and in making reckless statements without regard for the truth is very similar to his own. Last year the Minister blandly referred to the possibility of a "clean" hydrogen bomb, created by the fusion of hydrogen isotopes into helium which would produce a non-radio active fall-out. We are now in a position to learn the truth. Dr. Ralph Lapp and other more eminent scientists have said that there is no such thing as a clean bomb. In fact, testimony before the Holifield committee revealed that

the clean bomb story was allegedly created by the Teller group, purely and simply for the purpose of discrediting the disarmament talks taking place in Britain. Apparently, it looked as if Stassen would agree to a cessation of nuclear bomb tests and this Mr. Dulles—as inefficient as ever—did not want to happen. So he went over to the United Kingdom and threw a packet proposal, which he knew would be completely unacceptable. The "Christian Science Monitor" of 24th July last completely exposed the fiction of the clean bomb. Honorable members will recall that the Minister for Supply tried so hard last year to convince us regarding the clean bomb. The same thing applied to the Minister's assurances with regard to radiation from atom bomb tests in Australia. The Minister has completely misrepresented the case. In this House on the 7th May last the Minister said that "on the best scientific evidence and advice we have" there is a wide margin of safety between those radiation limits the population can bear and those caused by testing weapons. We now find that that statement is untrue, and that the weight of scientific opinion is that there is no such "threshold". Sir Macfarlane Burnet, as reported on 22nd August last, appears to subscribe to the view that there is a threshold. By that statement I mean that there is a certain degree of radiation to which the population can be submitted without harmful effects. Beyond that the radiation becomes dangerous. We now find that there is no limit and that all atomic radiations are dangerous. Even radiation from ordinary x-rays is dangerous. Therefore, according to members of the Government, we must have a look at the effects of x-ray radiation, and chop down on them.

Professor Marcus Oliphant certainly does not believe there is a threshold. Willard Libby, who is head of the Atomic Energy Commission of America, certainly has a vested political interest in decrying the threat of radiation. Professor Linus Pauling and his 2,000 fellow scientists do not believe that there is a threshold. Dr. Ernest Pollard has stated unequivocally that there is no threshold and that all explosions to date will cause up to 50,000 deaths a year.

The Council of Atomic Scientists in 1957 in England set up a committee to study

radiation hazards. That committee came to the conclusion that experiments carried out to date support the theory that there is no threshold and that all nuclear explosions, no matter where they are, what they are, and however they are carried out, are dangerous to society as a whole. On this basis the committee estimated that the present fall-out would result in 50,000 deaths each year from cancer, leukaemia and associated causes. At the same time, if the assumption is correct that there is no threshold, it may well be that the extent of damage is even greater, according to the report of the Council of Atomic Scientists in England.

The Prime Minister, who has surrounded himself with a number of service Ministers who know less than the precious little he knows himself, has deliberately clouded the issue for the people. By deliberately avoiding giving correct answers to questions and by misrepresenting the position, he is trying to run away from the wrath of the people against the defence policy. Similar criticisms apply to the Minister for Supply, who, without any compunction whatever, has from time to time deliberately misrepresented the facts to this House and has misled the people about fall-out and hazard from radiation.

Mr. FAILES (Lawson) [9.24].—It is a natural instinct of all living things to prepare for self defence. Men and nations aim to develop that instinct and to prepare their defence within the limits of their economic potentials. To a country such as Australia, with its long coastline, its relatively small population, and its comparatively limited economic potential, the problem becomes a very great one indeed.

As the Minister for Air (Mr. Osborne) said not long ago, defence of a country in this age assumes tremendous proportions, proportions which, no matter how hard you try and no matter what you do, really become so great that they are frightening. Australia also faces the difficulty in this modern age of not being able to declare what the form of a future war might take. That, itself, poses a problem, and no matter how we devote our energies to this problem of defence, there is always the possibility that we might be off on the wrong track.

But there are some fundamentals that we can follow. On previous occasions I

have stressed that one of the things we can do is make the most of our peace-time opportunities, which can be diverted to the benefit of our defence effort in times of war. I have always urged that we should encourage commercial undertakings which have defence potential, commercial undertakings which can be built up in peace-time for the benefit of the nation and whose efforts may be diverted in war-time to serve equally in the defence sphere.

Then there are the voluntary organizations, such as the aero clubs, the rifle clubs, and amateur radio clubs. These organizations do very valuable work in peace-time. They train their members in many of the arts which may be used in war-time. They do so on a voluntary basis and with a community effort which is to be admired. I need not mention the value of the amateur radio clubs during times of floods and bush fires—the help they can give, and how they can rally round when the call really comes. The same applies to aero clubs. They are training men, particularly in these days when national service trainees are not receiving that training. The aero clubs are filling a very valuable need in that regard.

I should like to specifically refer to rifle clubs. I do not think I have missed an opportunity in a Budget debate to say something about the rifle club movement, a movement which has earned its place in the scheme of things. I am pleased that over the years succeeding Ministers have been sympathetic towards the rifle clubs and that the vote for them has been increased from £71,600 last year to £77,000 this year.

The rifle club is a community movement, made up of men of character, men who have a strong loyalty to Crown and country, men who have either taken the oath of allegiance or made the affirmation. These clubs are composed of a cross-section of the community. They contain all types, young and old. That is a very good thing in itself, because it means that the youngsters coming into these movements are helped and encouraged by the older men.

Although the sum of £77,000 has been provided for rifle clubs this year, it should not be thought that these clubs do not contribute something themselves. They contribute a tremendous amount. I will not go into the details, but the capital outlay

on rifles, barrels, sights, and sundries has been computed as £1,424,750. That figure is provided by Mr. Ball, of Brisbane, and I have no reason to doubt its accuracy. That is a lot of money for one organization to provide out of its own pocket. The cost of these rifles is put down at £3 each. That is the price charged by the Army, not necessarily for unserviceable rifles, but for worn rifles. And so the cost of rifles, barrels, shooting fees and membership, a lot of which is devoted towards maintenance and upkeep of ranges, runs into an amount of £160,000 per annum. In addition, approximately £61,000 is expended yearly in attending prize meetings, which are all part of the game of efficiency in the rifle club movement. I will not go into all the details of expenditure which a rifleman incurs as a member of a club, but I can say no man receives more from the rifle club movement than he puts into it. As we know, when the last war broke out those rifles which had been purchased for £3, which had been fitted with new barrels and had been put into first-class shooting order, were all called in. Unfortunately, they were not used, but they were available for the snipers and those people who might have made good use of them.

For many years there has been a school of thought among the services establishments, the Navy, Army and the Air Force, which does not view sympathetically the voluntary peace-time organizations or give them, to my mind, the support to which they are entitled. There was a school of thought in the Army that rifle clubs had no military value. I suggest that that statement is not only false but also ridiculous. It will not stand up to clear, thorough, informed and unbiased examination. On the contrary, I would say that a soldier who cannot shoot is of no military value, and that is the thing which should be taken into consideration. One of the outstanding lessons of military history is that only by superior skill with weapons can the lack of quantity of armaments be countered. At close range particularly, that applies to the rifle. If there is a lack of competence on one side, then proficiency on the other will certainly win out. It is purely negative to suggest that rifle clubs have no military value. If the Government is seeking to build up its defences in the most economical way and if it looks to the voluntary

organizations to help it, then it should take some positive action on behalf of those organizations and not condemn them. Rifle clubs are maintaining a marksmanship which is not given the consideration it deserves by the Army. There is far too much of a tendency on the part of the Army to march men up to the range and order them to fire by numbers. There is too much parade ground and military display, which is a hopeless way to train men in marksmanship. Individual instruction is required, but it is admitted that there are not enough instructors to give that individual instruction.

During the last war we were sadly lacking in individual training of men not only in the Army but also in the Air Force. Men went into action before they knew how to load a rifle, let alone fire one.

Mr. Jeff Bate.—They could not close their left eye.

Mr. FAILES.—I do not know about that, but, to start with, they could not get the bullets into the magazine. A great number of Australian citizens has been taught shooting in rifle clubs, and they include ex-servicemen who are still continuing their training in the rifle club movement. During World War II, the enlistment of rifle club members was high but they were never given the opportunity of participating as a unit. Many of them became snipers, or instructors at musketry schools, and we are proud to know that four active members of Australian rifle clubs won the Victoria Cross. A great number of them became non-commissioned officers and officers, and several commanded battalions. The number who were taught to shoot cannot be computed.

At the present time national service trainees are receiving some instruction but they will complete their rifle training with the clubs to which they belong. Under the new system of national service training, trainees in a great number of country towns and districts will not be called up, and they will have the opportunity of learning musketry only through the rifle clubs. The suggestion was made that the rifleman uses telescopic sights and wind gauges and that sort of thing. That is why I say these suggestions are ridiculous. He does not use the telescopic sight. It is said he is slow in shooting, but the actual time he is

allowed in competition matches is 45 seconds. When it comes to rapid fire he can hold his own with any one.

Apart from these facts, I shall quote people who are qualified to pass judgment in respect of the rifle club movement. On the occasion of the opening of the Chance and Hunt Rifle Club Range at Oldsbury, Worcestershire, in 1952, this statement was made by the then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Slim—

I cannot stress too much the vital job yours and similar rifle clubs are doing throughout the country. Enthusiasm and improved standard of shooting which these rifle clubs promote have a very definite effect on the standard of marksmanship in the Army. I have found that in units, which have a high reputation for shooting, one can always trace some connexion with civilian rifle clubs.

Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery said at Bisley in 1948—

I appeal to the young men in the community to take an interest in the Rifle Club movement. People are saying without any support, however, that the day of the rifle is finished, and that the next war will be fought by merely pushing buttons. This is totally untrue and man is still the first weapon of war, whilst the first weapon of man is the rifle, then the tommy gun and so on. Believe me, the rifle will always be a big factor in winning or, in its absence, of losing battles. I therefore command this rifle shooting and the use of the rifle to everybody.

General Eisenhower has said—

If he can become a really capable rifleman, so much the better. The one weapon that every man—soldier, sailor or airman—should be able to use effectively, is the rifle.

He went on to say—

If you are bringing this kind of training or knowledge to the men who will one day become either officers or enlisted men in any of the armed forces, you are doing them, and our country, a service of inestimable value.

I should like to quote, now, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Cramer), who, in presenting prizes at the Queen's Prize Shoot, at Anzac Range, Sydney, on 11th October, said—

The Australian people can be proud of the Rifle Club movement. I believe it is true to say that it is the oldest and most honoured movement that we have in Australia. Its genesis goes back to the days when Imperial Forces arrived in Australia and when rifle companies were first formed for the defence of this country in the year 1870. It has continued on since then and its for every Australian to know the magnificent contribution which riflemen made in the first World War and again in the second World War. The Rifle Club Movement in Australia is just something you

can't wipe out and I hope it goes on and continues to be able to serve and give enjoyment to many men throughout this country. Its a big movement, a widespread movement, and makes contact with the public in every part of Australia—in the highways and byways as well as in the big cities. I am very glad and honoured indeed to be associated with it because it comes under assistance from my department. I am honoured to be here to-day and able personally to shake the hand of every prize winner. I do want to say to all of you, and particularly if I may to those who are Rifle Club members, that there is no intention at all of the Federal Government doing anything to disturb the Rifle Club Movement. There may be some adjustments that we will have to make, but I really think that when that decision is made every fair-minded man and woman, and riflemen themselves, who I believe are very fair-minded people, should not be so disappointed as some of them think they might be.

I hope that means that the Government has no intention of doing anything to disturb the rifle club movement. The Minister has made statements in the House recently to the effect that he is considering certain matters in connexion with the movement. If the rifle club movement means anything at all to the defence of Australia, leave it alone.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. BEALE (Parramatta—Minister for Supply and Minister for Defence Production) [9.39].—I only intervene in this debate at this stage for one particular purpose. A moment ago, the honorable member for Darebin (Mr. R. W. Holt) referred to the Legge episode and, as I understood him, he raised the question as to why the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) did not seek the opinion of Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney Rowell. Then I understood him to go on and use words to the effect that to his personal knowledge — the honorable member's personal knowledge, as I understood him to say—Sir Sydney Rowell was not consulted as to the new St. Mary's project. If I have misunderstood the honorable gentleman, perhaps he will correct me, but that was as I heard his words. Because they seemed to me to be so surprising, I took the liberty of telephoning Sir Sydney Rowell, who is a friend of mine, and he has said to me, and asked me to convey to the committee, that he has had no contact with the honorable member for Darebin (Mr. R. W. Holt) since the honorable member was a Minister in the Victorian Government, and, therefore, has

not discussed this matter with him, nor indeed with anybody else. He also says that on the question of St. Mary's he associates himself entirely with Sir Roy Dowling's letter, particularly as to the desirability of the new factory.

I regret that it has been necessary to bring the name of a gallant soldier into a debate in this chamber, but I have done it only because his name was mentioned by the honorable gentleman opposite. Having done so, I would suggest that before the honorable member mentions names like this again, he should take a great deal of care with his facts.

Mr. R. W. Holt.—I desire to make a personal explanation. For the information of the Minister, let me say that what I said was that to the best of my knowledge and personal belief Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney Rowell was not given an opportunity of choosing between the old and the new St. Mary's.

Mr. Beale.—You know now that you were wrong.

Mr. R. W. Holt.—No, I do not. You did not answer that; you answered something altogether different.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The honorable member must not debate the matter again.

Mr. BIRD (Batman) [9.43].—I intend to devote my remarks to Government aircraft factories and to say something about the Government's complete inability to make up its mind about the future of the Australian aircraft industry. It is about time that the Government lifted the clouds of ambiguity which have surrounded its attitude to this important industry and announced, in firm and decisive terms, its intentions for the future of the industry. The most outstanding factor in connexion with this problem is the Government's indecision and vacillation. It just does not know where it stands. It has one policy one day, it turns a somersault the next day, and the following day it goes off at a tangent. In order to restore confidence in the Australian aircraft industry, it is time that the Government made a positive declaration of its long-term plans.

Two years ago, because of the Government's complete inability to make up its mind, the industry suffered a grievous blow.

Large numbers of skilled workers were retrenched from the big aircraft factories throughout the Commonwealth, and other skilled personnel left their employment because of the uncertainty of the future. They were not prepared to stay in a job when they did not know whether they would be employed for another three months or another three years. They preferred to find employment where the prospects were more alluring. Because of the Government's strange attitude two years ago, the industry was denuded of men who had devoted a lifetime to acquiring the skills and the arts so necessary to the production of aircraft. The aircraft industry is a peculiar industry. It is an offshoot of the engineering industry, the sheet metal industry, the electrical industry and a number of others. Specialized training is required before skilled tradesmen are adept in dealing with the problems associated with the building of aircraft.

The industry remained in the doldrums for almost eighteen months or two years, but early this year the present Minister for Defence Production (Mr. Beale) announced that a decision had been made to build a supersonic fighter in Australia, with a performance equivalent to that of the American Starfighter. He went on to say—

In making this decision the Government is reaffirming its belief that an Australian aircraft manufacturing industry is necessary to maintain the efficiency of the Royal Australian Air Force, and to enhance Australia's value as an ally.

Of course, this proclamation was made with a fanfare of trumpets and received widespread publicity. It was hailed with delight by all those who had some interest in the future of Australia's aircraft industry. May I say that I think Australia's future is bound up with the future of its aircraft industry?

Then the Government deviated from its policy because, like a bolt from the blue, there came the announcement that the Starfighter would not be used by the Royal Australian Air Force because it was too specialized for the type of work our fighter aircraft must be prepared to do. I am not prepared to quarrel with that decision. I do not know whether the Starfighter is too specialized or not. I am not sufficiently versed in the technicalities of aircraft to know what type of aircraft would be required for certain projects in air strategy. But the Government, in order to allay the

growing suspicion in the minds of those connected with the industry that it had no policy and did not want to make up its mind, should have announced an alternative policy.

I ask the appropriate Minister: Is it the intention of the Government still to manufacture in Australia whatever aircraft it decides are needed for the air force in the future, or will it acquire those aircraft from overseas? I ask those questions on behalf of the thousands of people engaged in the industry. They want to know how long they can depend upon employment in the Australian aircraft industry.

The Government, apparently, is marking time, because it has placed an order with the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation for 21 additional Sabre jet fighters. In reply to a question asked recently, the Minister said that work on this order would last until 1960. The Government's own aircraft factories have proved in the past that they can do a job as efficiently as any other aircraft factories in this country. I want to know what the Government's intentions are in relation to its own aircraft factories. They have the specialized personnel who can produce an aircraft which is the equivalent of any aircraft produced anywhere else in the world. We know that the Jindivik, which was designed and developed by Australian technical staff in the Government's aircraft factory at Port Melbourne, is for all practical purposes the best aircraft of its kind. It is so good that orders for it have been placed by Sweden.

Here is a factory that has proved conclusively in the past that it has both the designers and the skilled personnel necessary to produce very fine aircraft, but the Government apparently has no policy in relation to it. Recently the honorable member for Wills (Mr. Bryant) asked the Minister for Defence Production some questions about the future of the Government aircraft factory at Fishermen's Bend. In reply to those questions, the Minister said—

Planning against orders in hand at the factory provides for employment at approximately the current level until mid 1958 and at a reducing scale into 1958-59.

In other words, the employees, on the admission of the Minister, can expect the sack at any time because the Government has no plan for the future of this very valuable

factory, which is so necessary to our defence. Surely the Government should know what it intends to do in regard to this all-important matter. The way the Government has handled the matter indicates that it has no firm policy.

I submit that both the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation and the government aircraft factories must be given some guarantee of a settled future if they are to produce the best results, because men will not remain in the industry when their services are at a premium for outside projects. As everyone knows, there is a lack of skilled personnel throughout Australia, and private enterprise is making fantastic offers to obtain men who can play a very important part in the development of the many phases of Australian industry. The Government should make every effort to hold the men it has. In the present circumstances, the men realize that, because of the Government's policy of vacillation and, on the Government's own admission, because they can expect retrenchment about the middle of next year, the industry has no future for them. The aircraft production industry, with its numerous ramifications, is a costly business, and it cannot be run successfully on hopes that alternately rise and fall in accordance with the Government's change of policy from week to week and from month to month. The future of the industry depends upon regular orders. Those who are in charge of production, whether it be in the private or the government sector, must know what is ahead of them for the next five or ten years. They should be able to predict the future and to organize accordingly. To get the most efficient results, the process of production must be planned with a knowledge of future requirements. Those in charge of the industry must know where they are going, but no honorable member opposite can convince me that the Government knows where it is going either in relation to the government aircraft factories or the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. The Government has given the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation an order to keep it quiet for a couple of years, but the men at the corporation are very dissatisfied with the Government's somersaulting policy. The labour force in this industry is suffering from a sense of frustration and dislocation.

Skilled men have been dispensed with over the last couple of years, but when the Government or the corporation is faced with the necessity to make up normal wastage in the industry the skilled men whose services have been dispensed with do not return. Men who are unskilled from the viewpoint of their specialized knowledge of the aircraft production industry are brought and have to be trained. It takes at least twelve months for a man who is skilled in any trade to acquire the specialized knowledge that is needed for aircraft production. There is a wastage of man-power on the one hand, and on the other hand unfruitful production during that period of twelve months. Even though a tradesman is energetic and is willing to learn, he is more or less unproductive for a number of months while he is acquiring a knowledge of the industry. This is an expensive and unsatisfactory process, and, to avoid waste, it is time that the Government decided what it intends to do. It is necessary that there should be no more upsets of that kind, because in Australia the production of aircraft is not great and obviously costs are higher than in countries where the rate of production is very high.

We must face the incontrovertible fact that the Australian aircraft production industry cannot live unless it is reinforced by the emphatic knowledge that the Government will not let it fade out. Up to the present, the Government's activities certainly have not engendered confidence in either the private or the public sector of the industry. The few orders that the Government has given to the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation in the last couple of months have not dispelled the chill feeling of doubt that is once again permeating all sections of the industry. What is needed is a long-term plan to place the industry on a firm basis. Surely, after a couple of years of procrastination, the Government should know where it is going.

Earlier in the year, the Government announced that it intended to build Australian Starfighters, but following the visit to America of the Minister for Defence it reversed that policy. Surely it should have decided that, meanwhile, it intended to build some other kind of aircraft. The Government cannot even make up its mind about what it intends to do in relation to equipping the Air Force for the future.

The attitude of the Government in recent months has led to misgivings about the future of the industry. I hope that the Minister for Defence Production will take advantage of the opportunity that is afforded during this debate to state clearly what the Government intends to do in regard to this all-important matter.

The Government, in addition to letting the industry know what it intends to do about the manufacture of military aircraft, should give close and detailed consideration to the proposal that it should build aircraft for civilian use. Recent developments in the commercial aviation sphere indicate that well-defined aviation organizations will strongly compete for future business and that the small aircraft companies will be squeezed out of business. It seems that two aircraft companies will be looking to the future, and the manufacture of civil aircraft could make the local aircraft production industry strong and self-reliant. The Government should be prepared even to subsidize the manufacture of civil aircraft, because to do so would stabilize the industry and would give it the confidence that it sadly lacks at the moment.

The industry must not be allowed to languish. It must be placed on a stabilized basis to allow for expansion in time of national or international crisis. Surely all honorable members remember that during the first couple of years of World War II. we had to rely upon other countries for our supplies of aircraft. After the Australian aircraft production industry got under way, it proved conclusively that it could deliver the goods. The Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation has produced the Wirraway, Boomerang and Mustang fighters, and is now making very satisfactorily Sabre jet fighters. This efficient industrial enterprise has proved its capacity to measure up to requirements.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Timson).—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. GRAHAM (St. George) [9.58].—I should like to support the proposed defence estimates and to oppose the amendment that has been moved on behalf of the Opposition. Before proceeding with my speech, I wish to make one or two observations upon the speeches of the honorable members

for Batman (Mr. Bird), Darebin (Mr. R. W. Holt) and Melbourne Ports (Mr. Crean). I feel that it is time that some one told the honorable member for Batman that it is extremely difficult for any government to evolve a long-term plan to stabilize the Australian aircraft production industry. I suggest that, if the honorable gentleman were to confer with his colleague on the front bench, he would learn that to do so would be beyond even the best powers of the Opposition.

The fact of the matter is that our requirements of aircraft will vary from 1957 to 1960 and on to 1965, and it is more than reasonable to assume that what is demanded of the Australian aircraft production industry in six or seven years' time will be completely different from what has been demanded of it in the past. Bearing in mind the costing problem, I believe that it would be extremely difficult for any government to evolve a plan, without immense subsidies, to provide Australian airlines with civil aircraft produced in Australia. In other words, I point out to the honorable gentleman, not only that his suggestion is lacking in good sense, but also that, if he were to analyse it, he would find that the people in the industry know that it is, if I may use a colloquial phrase, just not on.

Now I wish to say something very briefly about the comments of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports and the honorable member for Darebin. The honorable member for Darebin treated us, at the beginning of his speech, with an attack on the Minister for Defence (Sir Philip McBride) and the service Ministers which was of a sneering nature and designed to breed the belief that these people were incompetent and unfitted for the job that confronted them. I say to the honorable member for Darebin that that is utter nonsense. These four gentlemen have made a contribution to Australian defence in the last six or seven years which is unparalleled in peace-time in Australia, and which is beyond anything that has ever been done by honorable gentlemen of the Opposition. In 1937 and 1938 Opposition members screamed for peace and, with fear in their voices, made comment after comment in this Parliament which were tantamount to an attack on the security of Australia. One may read, again and again, in "Hansard"

their statements in pre-war years that nothing should be provided for the defence of Australia.

The honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Crean) treated the committee to a long and dreary dissertation about where moneys had gone and what sort of value had been forthcoming—almost immediately after he had listened to a speech by the Minister for Defence who had set out, in a reasoned manner, all that had been done. Consciously and deliberately, the honorable member for Melbourne Ports stated that nothing had been said about how defence moneys had been spent. This of course is the Communist technique, the Nazi technique of distorting the facts and misleading the people.

Having said that I support the defence estimates and oppose the amendment, I would like to make some comment relative to the facts. The departments of Defence, the Navy, the Army, Air, Supply, and Defence Production, all play their part in contributing through their various agencies to the final advice on Australia's defence which is put before the Cabinet. The three Service departments provide the personnel for the intelligence and planning committees which do the fundamental thinking on the assessment of the threat to Australia. When I say that, I refer to the hard work of assembling and analysing the detailed information that comes from overseas.

The work of the departments to which I have referred is aimed at providing Australia with a defence programme appropriate to those circumstances in which the country finds itself, or is likely to find itself, within a particular period of time which, this year, was nominated by the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) and the Minister for Defence as the three years from 1957 to 1960. There is a regular process of review so that, in the event of some sudden deterioration in international affairs the channels are open for the Cabinet to send for its defence advisers, and to call for an up to the minute review of the circumstances that confront Australia. I have made clear my views upon the adequacy of our defence programme. It is still my considered opinion that Australia could and should make a greater contribution to the collective security defence system known to us as the South East Asia Treaty Organization which has been abused and opposed by honorable

gentlemen opposite who want to do anything rather than contribute to a form of defence which will ultimately confront Soviet Russia with something that will make it think twice before it proceeds in its pursuit of world domination. Anything at all that is designed to embarrass the Western Democracies and foster the Communist theme will always receive a sympathetic hearing by some one on the Opposition benches.

It is my view that, within the financial limits for which it is, itself, responsible, the Commonwealth Government has carried out a more praiseworthy defence programme than has ever been carried out before by any other Australian government in time of peace. I believe that the significance of Australia's future of an increased Australian effort in Seato is a subject into which the Government should maintain continual research.

I want to turn to another aspect of this matter which is important and which will answer some of the criticisms that have been delivered by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports. He is as familiar with this problem as any one else in this Parliament. He knows quite well that the costs of the defence programme have risen enormously in recent years and constitute a heavy economic burden which everybody admits has been accepted by our potential enemy and which, I feel, we should admit must be faced by us if survival is to be achieved. Service pay and allowances have more than doubled in the last six years; the cost of procurement of maintenance equipment and stores has almost trebled in the last six years; expenditure on repair and maintenance of equipment in all services has more than doubled in the last six years; and expenditure on maintenance of buildings and works has also more than doubled.

The honorable member for Melbourne Ports, although an accountant and familiar with these facts, presented a distorted, half-truthful story. He did not attempt to relate the economic facts to the figures that were presented to the committee by the Minister for Defence. Therefore, I say that it is time we were done with this chicanery and devoted ourselves to the real problem of Australia's security. This problem warrants the full attention of this committee. Moving right into the enemy's camp, let us ask, "What has the Government done since

it came to office?" First, it undertook Australia's participation in the conflict in Korea. I ask the committee to consider whether, having regard to the speeches that were made by honorable members opposite in this place from 1947 to 1949, it can be said that, had Labour still been in government, immediate action to meet the position in Korea would have been forthcoming? I doubt it. Our airmen and sailors were among the first to be there, fighting the Communists when they invaded South Korea, and our Army followed in due course.

The Government has provided forces to participate in any action called for, if necessary, under the Anzus, Anzam and Seato treaties. It has modernized Australia's defence against the submarine threat to its commercial sea-ways. Indeed, in 1957, this country is infinitely better equipped than it was in 1948 or 1949 when the Labour Government was flung from office. I am prepared to admit that more could be done but, in all fairness, there should be a recognition of what has been done by the Government. It is my duty to put these matters clearly before this committee.

The Government has greatly improved the capacity of the Royal Australian Air Force to achieve mobility. It has made arrangements, when it reasonably could do so, to procure modern transport aircraft which will completely alter the approach within Australia to this problem of mobility. It is not to be thought that Australia, thousands of miles away from any possible seat of operations, could easily go to the United States of America to procure this type of equipment when many other fronts were yearning for and demanding it. Is it not reasonable to assume that honorable gentlemen opposite would make themselves familiar with the fundamentals of defence appreciation? It is apparent that they have done no homework at all. The Government has re-organized the Army to achieve greater mobility with a striking force for immediate use.

In the last few minutes at my disposal I would like to refer to the threat which was mentioned in particular terms by the Minister for Defence. I shall put my own point of view and my own interpretation. It is apparent that the possibility of nuclear attack is considered to be nil. It might be reasonable to face some of the arguments on this matter. If an atomic attack is

launched anywhere on earth it is apparently considered by the Government's advisers that this would lead to global war and that global war would result in the destruction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a substantial degree of destruction within the United States of America, and the almost complete obliteration of the United Kingdom. This being so, can it be reasonably argued that a country as far away as Australia would be the object of an attack that would lead to such a position? It is the view of the advisers, apparently, if the Government's policy is consistent with their advice, that that is not the case. I say, then, that the use of atomic weapons on major cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, and, I trust, Canberra, would lead to a global war. For that reason, those attacks will not take place.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at present, on significant fronts, is winning the cold war. In 1956, we engaged in conflict regarding the Suez Canal, and we lost. It is with feelings of dismay and bitterness that I admit that to be the case. I well recall speeches made at that time by honorable members on this side of the chamber, whose loyalty to the British Crown is beyond all question, but I recall nothing from Opposition supporters relating to our great international allies and their misinterpretation of the steps that were taken. Since that time, however, Syria has come within the sphere of influence of the U.S.S.R., without one single atomic weapon being used. It is significant that the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Evatt) claims that this is the kind of development that should be referred to the United Nations Organization. If that is the case, then, no doubt, as it was his theme in relation to Hungary, so it will be his theme in relation to Malaya, Thailand and other places when they are threatened—all of which adds up to advantage for the enemy and disadvantage for us. Never have I known the Leader of the Opposition to make one single statement in this place on the subject of international affairs which resulted in advantage for us and disadvantage for the enemy.

We depend, in a fundamental sense, on the integrity of the collective security defence systems, Nato and Seato, and I say to honorable gentlemen opposite, who, from time to time have disparaged the honest efforts that have been made, and whose

socialist tendencies have developed a colour decidedly different from blue and more like pink, that we need people of high moral fibre on our side, not people who are naturally sympathetic to our foes. If our children are to have an opportunity to grow up in this community, and to enjoy the heritage that should be theirs, it will be no thanks to Opposition supporters, who have been making quasi-socialist, pacifist speeches from time to time that are designed to do nothing but reduce our capacity to stand up and fight.

Mr. BRYANT (Wills) [10.12].—The honorable member for St. George (Mr. Graham) has found a red dragon, but he does not slay it; he rides on it and feeds it. The speech that he has just delivered did not reach anything like the not very high standard that he has shown in other contributions that he has made to debates in this chamber. In the first place, his history is wrong. Who established the Fleet Air Arm and the Regular Army? Who established the citizen forces after the war? Who laid the basis of our defence system before World War I.? All these things were done by the Labour governments of those days. It is time that honorable members opposite got their history straight, surrendered their rather archaic and McCarthyite tendencies, and tried to make constructive contributions to our debates.

If it comes to a question of home work in the field of defence, there are honorable members on this side of the Parliament who have done their bit of field work. As to Government supporters participating in the Korean war, I know of none of them having returned from the battlefields of Korea. You did not participate in that war; you sent other people to heap glory upon your heads and to provide the proud heritage of which you spoke.

Mr. Graham.—That is a contemptible thing to say!

Mr. BRYANT.—There are many aspects of this subject to which one would like to address oneself in this debate, and much criticism that one would wish to level at the Government's policy. It is disappointing that, with such a phalanx of defence Ministers in the Government, none of them is here to listen to contributions, even from honorable members opposite.

The national service system has been a complete failure and has not returned anything for the £100,000,000 or so that has been spent on it. The Government has given us no answer to the allegations made concerning the St. Mary's project. As the honorable member for Darebin (Mr. R. W. Holt) pointed out to-night, there has been no answer to the suggestion that the Chiefs of Staff and the people who made the recommendations were given no alternative but to accept the proposition that a new factory had to be built. It was either the new factory or none at all. The honorable member for Darebin has told me that I may say that if an independent inquiry is made into this matter he is prepared to divulge the source of his information. We have been given no answer whatsoever. All we have seen and heard is a smoke-screen laid down by the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) and clouds of oratory from honorable members opposite. We have had no answer to the charges made in the Auditor-General's report of extravagance and waste. We have been given no good reason why it was necessary for the new St. Mary's factory to be developed, or why the old one could not have been satisfactorily used. An examination of answers to questions regarding leaseholds of premises in the old factory area shows that no great expense would have been involved in taking over those leases. We have been rather surprised to find that this Government, which had no hesitation in sacking hundreds who were employed in the aircraft industry before Christmas last year, has suddenly become so conscious of its duty to the thousands of employees of the firms located at the old St. Mary's site. We agree with that attitude, but it is by no means in line with the Government's policy over the last seven or eight years. For this reason, we are inclined to doubt the Government's sincerity in this matter, about which the people of Australia should receive satisfactory information, because, after all, they are the people who have provided the £25,000,000 or so that the project will cost.

We want further information, too, about the removal of the Royal Australian Naval College to Jervis Bay. That will, no doubt, cost us the best part of £1,000,000. If one studies the answers given to questions in this House last year by the Minister for the Navy (Mr. Davidson), one finds that

there is not one single naval training need that can be served at Jervis Bay which is not already being served at Crib Point in Victoria. This move of the naval college is a wilful waste of money, quite apart from the damage that will be done to the 50-odd families who will be moved out of their homes.

The Government's changing of its defence policy in fundamental respects has strangled the development of the defence services and wasted great amounts of public money. The decision to re-equip and re-arm with 105-mm. guns is inexplicable. Even the decision to provide Centurion tanks, good as they are, does not answer Australia's needs. If one reads the Auditor-General's report, one finds that the shifting of defence staff is seriously hampering the Army in its efforts to maintain control of stores.

In 1950 or 1951, the Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt), in explaining the new national service system, promised that voluntary recruitment for the Citizen Military Forces would be encouraged, but we have now seen the collapse of this system in the citizen army. History shows that the defence forces of this country have been based on the citizen army. Frederick Martin Stern, in a book entitled "The Citizen Army", said—

The British dominion that has had the most extensive experience and the greatest military success with the citizen-army system is Australia. Its experience is of particular interest to the U.S.; for though the military requirements of Australia differ from those of the U.S., there are some points of similarity which do not exist in the case of Switzerland.

Australia, like the U.S., covers a very large territory; it is not exposed to an assault by land; it had to fight, in both world wars, on battle-fields far away from its shores; and it has, even in peacetime, military responsibilities over a large geographical area outside its borders.

This Government has done irreparable damage to the citizen army. One has only to look at the statistics showing the numbers of national service trainees who volunteered for further service to realize that this is so. In December, 1953, 15.6 per cent. of those who had undergone national service training volunteered to soldier on. In 1954, the percentage was 12.4. In December, 1955, it was 8.3, and in 1956 it was 6.4. The Government has killed the voluntary spirit that could have provided 50,000 volunteers for the Citizen Military

Forces. That is indefensible, and it has killed the heritage that the honorable member for St. George spoke about.

I agree with the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Bird) about the smashing of the aircraft industry, and I deplore the statement by the honorable member for St. George that we cannot make aircraft.

Mr. Graham.—Nonsense!

Mr. BRYANT.—We have decided to buy the round dozen transport aircraft at a price of £16,000,000. What will they be able to do? They can carry only 13 tons each. They will make no contribution to the mobility of the Army. Qantas Empire Airways Limited alone owns fourteen super-Constellations, which have been designed so that they can be used to carry cargo. Australia's own civil fleet can do everything that these new Lockheeds will do, and that amount of £16,000,000 could have been put to many other useful purposes. The Government has no franchise whatever to spend that money in this fashion, and if it made an intelligent appreciation of the needs of the services, it could have found plenty of other things to do with that money.

Those are the various heads of criticism on which one may concentrate, but I wish now to address myself to the remarks of the Prime Minister, who said—

We announced that we proposed to adopt the U.S. 105 mm. field artillery equipment, which has trajectory characteristics most appropriate to wooded and hilly country because it combines the virtues of the howitzer and the 25-pounder.

This is again an archaic outlook. Modern military thinking in Europe favours spreading the infantry divisions over at least 30,000 yards, or the better part of 17 to 20 miles. That is at least twice as far as used to be the case. Therefore, a completely new problem in the field of artillery arises. It was rather odd that, when I asked the Minister for the Army (Mr. Cramer) how many artillery weapons we had, he would not tell me. I regret, therefore, I am unable to say precisely how many 25-pounder guns we have. By contrast, the Minister for Defence (Sir Philip McBride) did not mind telling us this evening that we have 1,500 guns, rockets, and so on. When it suits their own purposes in debate, Ministers will tell us these things, but they will not tell Opposition members who ask for the information.

To return to the 105-millimetre guns, their range is about 2,000 yards less than that of the 25-pounders, which fire a shell weighing 25 lb., 5 lb. less than that of the 105-millimetre weapons. What is the trend in Europe? The British Army is largely equipped with 5.5-inch self-propelled guns, which have a maximum range of 24,000 yards. That is reasonable enough. The Minister for Defence told us that we are to have three infantry divisions. In these days, infantry divisions are entitled to expect the artillery to be able to concentrate on every part of their front. The 25-pounder guns cannot do so now, and the coverage will be even less with the 105-millimetre howitzers.

The Government is prepared to say at any time that it is trying to do something, but it would do much better to make a rational examination of the whole situation. The cost of re-equipping with the 105-millimetre weapons will be at least £1,000,000, apart altogether from the cost of the hundreds of thousands of shells for them that the Minister told us are to be provided. There is also the cost of the shell-filling equipment that has probably been obtained and installed at St. Mary's. The Government should take full stock of the situation, instead of changing its attitude towards defence continually, and altering its policy every year. It should stabilize its approach to defence problems, and ensure that, for a change, we get full value for our money in each of these fields.

I should like to mention now the 120 Centurion tanks that the Minister said we own. There is no doubt that they are the Rolls-Royce of tanks, but they are not the kind of equipment that will make it easier to mobilize the Army. Each of these tanks weighs 50 tons, which is a little more than can be readily moved on the Australian railway system. Their fuel capacity is 120 gallons, which will allow them only 30 miles of travel across country. It would take 14,400 gallons of petrol just to move the 120 of them for 30 miles. Why has there been no investigation of the use of diesel engines in tanks? I understand that the Russians use diesel engines in their tanks, and that they can travel twice the distance on the same amount of fuel. Why have we not made investigations in order to ascertain whether we can develop tanks

that are really suitable for Australian conditions? We are to have 120 Centurion tanks, which will probably be sufficient for only about three regiments. The Centurion tank is not suitable for service in Australia. It is too sophisticated for us, and its maintenance costs will be much too high. Honorable members who are interested in these matters ought to try to find out exactly what is involved in maintaining these tanks in the field under Australian conditions.

For the reasons that I have stated, the Government, by this time, should have re-examined its policy on armoured weapons. We need a lighter tank with a lower ground pressure. It should be highly mobile, and capable of economic operation and maintenance in the field far from bases. I am certain that these considerations have never been examined at any time by the Government in the formulation of its defence policy.

The facts indicate that, on all the major points of policy that I have mentioned, the Government's position is indefensible. I support the observation made by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Crean) that the Government has achieved very little for its expenditure of approximately £1,200,000,000 on defence. The Prime Minister announced in this House that a brigade group of some 4,000 men was to be formed. Six months later, the Minister for Defence was able to say that the men had been posted to their unit. It is ridiculous that it should have taken six months to group a brigade of 4,000 men after some £700,000,000 had been spent on man-power over a period of seven or eight years. We say that this is indefensible.

I should like to remind the committee of the staffing position outlined in the Auditor-General's report. There is no denying the fact that many members of the Australian Regular Army at least are very dissatisfied with the conditions under which they are asked to serve. Those men are loyal to their country and, I believe, on the whole give a high standard of service. They deserve every consideration in return for that service. One of the worst aspects of the matter is the constant shifting of staff personnel from one place to another. This inflicts considerable hardship on servicemen with families. No matter what

housing is provided, this sort of thing creates difficult problems, and disrupts domestic life. It creates problems for both the Army and serving personnel. It creates housing difficulties throughout the country, and does a great disservice to the nation, and to the forces, by weakening morale and undermining the esprit de corps on which the efficiency of Army units so much depends. At page 70 of his report, in a reference to the Department of the Army, the Auditor-General stated—

Continued efforts by the Department have resulted in improvement but, due mainly to the inexperience of staff and their inadequate training and frequent movement, a desirable standard of accounting efficiency has not yet been attained. So it is with every aspect of high defence policy. In 1950, the Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt) said, referring to the Labour government—

Our main quarrel with what that administration did is that it was not enough and appeared to rely much too heavily upon the scientists, a few specialists and small permanent service cadres.

Shades of Sputnik! The policy adopted by this Government has not been effective, and it should reconsider its extravagant spending on Lockheed C130 aircraft, and the re-equipment of the Army. It should reconsider, also, the general personnel structure of all the services. It is time that the Government and its supporters came down from the ivory tower of the archaic attitude that it has developed, and applied themselves to the problems of defence in a businesslike manner, with due regard for proper military principles.

Mr. FORBES (Barker) [10.27].—I have not sufficient time to answer all the extraordinary statements that were made by the honorable member for Wills (Mr. Bryant), who set himself up as an authority on detailed technical matters in opposition to the considered views of the Government's technical advisers. At the same time, the honorable member tried to thrust upon the technical advisers responsibility for political questions that should be the responsibility of this Parliament. I would rather be advised on detailed technical military matters by the Government's defence advisers than by the honorable member. He and other Opposition members have said that the national service training scheme has killed the Citizen Military Forces. That is plain nonsense. My experience, and the experience of any one else who has

served in the C.M.F., is that national service training made the citizen forces. If the honorable member had had experience of the situation that existed before this Government introduced national service training, he would think differently. Before the introduction of the national service training scheme, units with an establishment of, say, 800 men were forced to make do with a strength of 100. If the honorable member had had experience of these things, he would realize the frustrations and the inefficiency that result from an attempt to maintain the citizen forces on a purely voluntary basis.

When I last discussed defence in this chamber, I stated that I did not quarrel with the objectives towards which our defence efforts were being directed. However, I did quarrel with the size of our efforts. My opinion was that Australia, which is a wealthy country, measured by world standards, and which is dependent for its defence on the assistance of powerful friends, should put forward a defence effort that would convince our friends, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that we were ready to play our part in whatever might befall. I still subscribe to those views, and, therefore, it is not necessary for me to air them further to-night. I should like to make it clear, however, that this is where my criticism of the Government's defence policy ends. I certainly do not subscribe to the facile, slick and ill-informed debunking of defence policy which, unfortunately, has become more frequent at a time when the elements involved in framing a defence policy are becoming increasingly complex. Indeed, may it not be that one element of those of which I have spoken is fairly closely related to the other, that as the complexities involved in the defence situation become so great that they are difficult to understand, there is a tendency to lash out at the unknown, to attempt to claw down the whole structure on the grounds that it cannot be understood? This is an understandable reaction, and I admit it. It has manifested itself in the past in such things as the burning of witches, the smashing of machinery and in countless other directions. It is, as I said, understandable, but it is hardly to be condoned.

My quarrel with honorable members of the Labour party is that they deliberately set out to capitalize, for party political

advantages, on a natural reaction against things that are difficult to understand. Instead of assuming responsibility for guiding public opinion in relation to complexities of the defence situation, they have done everything in their power to distort it. In so doing, they have done a great deal of harm to the security of this country.

I have asked myself whether I have been harsh in this judgment, but to me there is no other way of explaining the attitude of honorable members opposite on every occasion when defence has been brought up in this chamber during the life of this Government. Consider for a moment what those attitudes have been. Consider the charge deliberately made by the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Evatt), and mouthed by his fellows, and by some honorable members opposite who are not his fellows. I refer to the charge that the enormous sum of money expended on defence since this Government came to office has been wasted, that it has gone down the drain and that as a result our capacity to defend ourselves is now no greater than it was in 1949. That is what has been said, and said deliberately. You will remember, Mr. Chairman, that this charge is made despite a knowledge of what is contained in the Estimates under review, despite what the Minister for Defence (Sir Philip McBride) said earlier this evening, despite a knowledge of the record of this Government in defence since 1949.

Do honorable members opposite not know that this country has a highly-trained regular brigade group, adequately equipped and ready at a moment's notice to assume our responsibilities in relation to the South-East Asia Treaty Organization and the United Nations organization, and that we will shortly have a fleet of modern transport aircraft to convey them? On that point, may I ask the honorable member for Wills (Mr. Bryant): Whoever heard of any system of transport aircraft that can convey, as he suggested, the whole of the armed services of a country in one lift? Have honorable members opposite not heard that we have trained over 100,000 young men under the national service training scheme; that we have nearly three divisions actively engaged in the C.M.F.; that our country is defended by the most modern aircraft available, with our troops supported

by an adequate bomber force; that we have made a massive contribution to the development of atomic and guided weapons through our participation at Woomera and in the long-range weapons establishment?

Perhaps honorable members opposite do not remember that virtually all this, and much else besides, has been achieved since 1949. Perhaps they do not remember that when this Government came into office the regular army was a skeleton, that it hardly existed, that the C.M.F. hardly existed, that the Navy and Air Force were virtually useless and that our capacity to manufacture aircraft, weapons and munitions had been progressively run down or given away. I hasten to add that I do not say this in criticism, but rather as a measure of what has been achieved since this Government came into office.

The next point I wish to make has been mentioned before this evening, but it will bear reiteration. I wonder whether Opposition members have forgotten the honorable part played by this country in Malaya and Korea. Where do they think the money came from for those operations? Do they regard such expenditures, which are just as much a part of our defence expenditure as anything else, as money wasted?

I want to refer, too, to the charge made by honorable members opposite—it was repeated by the honorable member for Darebin, to-night—that our defence policy is constantly being revised, that plans which are laid down by the Government do not proceed to an orderly conclusion without interruption or revision. This has been at the root, if not always openly stated, of most of the Opposition's attacks on the Government. Do honorable members opposite really imagine that a defence policy can be framed in a vacuum, and that our defence policy is independent of technological change, of advances in weapons and armaments? Can we sit down and do nothing because we suspect that in a few years' time what we are doing will be out of date? Conversely, can it reasonably be suggested that when it does become apparent that technological change warrants re-adjustment we should ignore it for the sake of consistency? Any government that would do that would be failing in its duty, and the Opposition knows it.

Again, we cannot frame a defence policy independently of the world situation. Whether we like it or not, the world power situation is constantly changing. As a small nation, we have little hope of influencing it, but we must conform to it in our defence policy. Any one who is looking in our defence policy for detailed consistency, for that logical neatness and tidiness which are relevant to most other policies, is doomed to continuous disappointment and frustration. In a time of incredible technological advance, and in a dangerous world of swiftly changing power relationships, this must be so in the nature of the case. I am sure that honorable members opposite know these things as well as I do. The only point at which they differ from me is that they have chosen deliberately to ignore these realities for the sake of party political advantage.

All I can say—and I say it with all the sincerity at my command—is that, in the difficult and dangerous situation I have described, thank God we have a man of the calibre of the Minister for Defence holding that office. Just imagine the situation we would be in if a person with the volatile nature and stated views of the Leader of the Opposition or, indeed, anybody on the opposite side of the chamber had been Minister for Defence during this critical period. Instead, fortunately, we have had the steadfastness, the detachment, integrity, business ability and capacity for keeping his bearings in difficult circumstances which are so characteristic of the Minister. As a result, and despite the complexities of the situation—the most difficult that any Minister for Defence in Australia has had to face—we are better defended than we have ever been in our history.

Mr. CAIRNS (Yarra) [10.42].—The speech that has just been made by the honorable member for Barker (Mr. Forbes) was, he assured us, made with deep sincerity. I envy the degree of self-righteousness that allows a man to have a belief that everything he says is based on objective fact and everything that his opponents say is merely said for political advantage. It is a degree of self-righteousness which must be supremely comforting, but I believe that the honorable member's sincerity failed even to seep through to supporters of the Government when the honorable member defended

the Minister for Defence (Sir Philip McBride) in such magnificent terms, because their amusement was more obvious than the honorable member might have realized.

The position that the honorable member has taken up is, briefly, that the defences of Australia are so complex and so difficult that only the experts know what to do. It is quite useless, in his opinion, for the honorable member for Wills (Mr. Bryant), for instance, to express an opinion. It is quite impossible for the average citizen to do so. I do not look at this matter in this way. I should like to turn for a moment to the record of the Government in connexion with the St. Mary's filling factory. If we look at some of the facts in relation to that matter, not only honorable members on the Opposition side in their simplicity and bias, but also members of the public, have been unable to reach a very satisfactory conclusion about what happened.

We find nothing in the Estimates about what has been spent at St. Mary's this year or last year. The amount is merely lumped in with other estimates, probably those of the Department of Supply and possibly much of it is in Division No. 185. There is no specific information, however, about this year's share of the £23,000,000 or £28,000,000—whichever figure might be chosen—to allow honorable members to examine what has happened in relation to the enormous expenditure at St. Mary's.

I want to give the background of this project, just to discover the manner in which this Government has been making decisions about defence expenditure. Apparently the decision to build this filling plant was based primarily on a statement that was made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) in 1951 that Australia did not have a day longer than three years to prepare for war. That was the basis of the Government's defence policy for the next three years. If that was the situation, a filling factory was required, and apparently there was a Cabinet decision early in 1952 to that effect.

But when the Prime Minister, on 1st October last, was endeavouring to meet a statement that had been made by Major-General Legge to the effect that no technical advisor of the Government had supported this decision to build a new filling factory, the Prime Minister could not

produce any advice that had been given by a technical advisor. The right honorable gentleman turned only to the records of the Joint War Production Committee. He gave this as his answer to Major-General Legge on 1st October when he referred to the minutes of a meeting of the Joint War Production Committee—

In that minute, that committee "noted that the difficulties in respect of both the St. Mary's proposition and the alternative Salisbury proposition are so formidable that the most desirable course is to build a new factory . . .".

But there was one addition to that statement, and it was the strongest support that the Prime Minister could summon on 1st October. That was an important qualification that the Prime Minister made later in his speech. The right honorable gentleman said then that the matter was referred to the Department of Defence Production and the Department of Works to determine whether a new factory could be built in time. What was the time to which the Prime Minister referred? It was the period of three years from 1951 which, according to the right honorable gentleman, was all we had in which to prepare for war. Those departments were asked whether the work could be done in the time, and the answer they gave was that it could not be done. Therefore, it follows that, despite the difficulties in the way of repossessing the old plant, there was no alternative. That was the position towards the end of 1952 or, perhaps, a little earlier.

What happened then? We find that a decision by the Department of National Development was against the repossessing of the old plant. I am given to understand that the only Government advisor at that point who entered into the Cabinet discussions with an argument against repossessing the old plant was the Minister for National Development from another place, who approached the Cabinet with a proposition to retain the old St. Mary's plant on the grounds of industrial development. That was a proposition which even the Department of National Development itself, I understand, gave no hope of success. Did the Government make a decision upon this matter for the reasons that have been stated or is it possible that there were other reasons?

The honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) mentioned the other night—and there has been no attempt on the part of the Government to deal with this suggestion—that of the 84 firms that had space in the old St. Mary's factory, one of them was A. E. Goodwin Limited, which was paying £10,510 a year rent out of a total of £41,000. This was the most significant unit in the old St. Mary's factory. Now we find that the chairman of directors of A. E. Goodwin Limited is Mr. B. O. Smith, who was, at the time, a partner in a firm of which the Minister for National Development is also a partner.

Mr. Harold Holt.—Is the honorable member for Yarra trying to get dirty, too? The Minister for National Development answered that charge in the Senate.

Mr. CAIRNS.—You can answer it here if you wish. Did it have any effect on the situation? The people of Australia want to know something about this matter. Nothing should prevent them from knowing because it is one of the relevant factors to the decision that was reached over the St. Mary's project. That was part of the background. At any rate the decision was made by the Government itself. The Prime Minister at one stage pointed out clearly that this was not a decision for the Government's technical advisors, but a decision for the Government itself, and the Government itself made the decision which meant that the construction of the new plant at St. Mary's would follow.

What is the explanation of the delay? The right honorable gentleman had stated that there would be war within three years. What is his explanation for the delay of three years in reaching a decision whether the Government would repossess the old factory or build a new one? The period stated by the Prime Minister had ended. The year 1954 had come to an end. The war in Korea and the war in Indo-China had finished, but the fateful decision to build a filling plant had not been made. What is the explanation for the delay? Is this the kind of thing on which one must be an expert before a decision can be made? Is this the kind of thing on which a member of this committee cannot reach a conclusion? Is this the kind of thing on which citizens, interested in the expenditure of £28,000,000, cannot reach a decision. Of course, it is

not! Obviously, this period of three years was taken up in a most inefficient and improper handling of the question.

At the end of the period of three years, when the world situation has changed, when there is no longer a war in Korea or in Indo-China, and when men such as Sir Winston Churchill have already spoken about the change in the international situation, a decision to construct a new filling plant at St. Mary's is made. That decision involved the expenditure of £23,000,000. When the kind of emergency that prevailed during the period when no filling plant was provided no longer existed and the situation was far less urgent, the Government decided that the urgent need for a filling plant was such that it was not possible to use the Commonwealth Department of Works or the usual contractors' machinery in Australia, but that an overseas company had to be obtained and extremely unusual methods of financing, upon which the Auditor-General has commented, had to be adopted. Although the great three years' period had passed, the urgency was such that those methods had to be used. So, the cost of erecting this plant rose from £23,000,000 to £26,000,000, and it will be finally at least £28,000,000. That is the kind of decision that the people of this country are entitled to examine, but that is the kind of decision, I suggest, that they cannot examine.

In order to have the plant constructed, the Government went to architects who have, perhaps, won fame in every field but the construction of a munitions plant. The contract was given to them. I am given to understand, on information which I believe to be reliable, that the way in which this firm went about the job was to design, first, the building and then to place the plant inside that building, whereas the correct method with a technical job of this type is to place the plant on the drawing board and then put the building over it. The incorrect procedures adopted by Stephenson and Turner, I understand, involved far greater expenditure than otherwise would have been necessary.

Then another problem arose. Plant that had been built at St. Mary's having taken the best site, nothing but an atrocious site was left, and that is where the new £23,000,000 plant was constructed. What a wonderful alternative! What a sign of

efficiency that is! The contract for the construction of the plant was given to Utah Australia Limited. Utah Australia Limited should not be thought of as a great firm which itself possesses the machinery to carry out these contracts. Both in Australia and in the United States, this company has been noted more for success in lobbying than for success in carrying out contracts such as this. Both here and overseas its method is to sub-let contracts, as it did to Concrete Constructions Proprietary Limited in this instance, rather than to do the work itself. That meant added expense. It meant that every piece of work had to pass through two or three hands before it was completed. Is it any wonder that the Auditor-General has come to the conclusion that I have mentioned? Is it any wonder that Major-General Legge said—

There has been gross and inexcusable waste of public money at St. Mary's—

Mr. Hulme.—He has denied it!

Mr. CAIRNS.—He has not denied it. He went on—

not, as the Prime Minister seems to imply, on the advice of the Chiefs of Staff, but in fact contrary to the recommendations made.

Nothing has been said to refute those words of Major-General Legge. All the Prime Minister has said is that, after the decision to construct a new plant at St. Mary's was made, he had a verbal recommendation from the Chiefs of Staff supporting that decision. They endorsed something that the Government had done without their backing, as Major-General Legge said. If the Prime Minister was so satisfied about the oral advice, why did he not mention it on 1st October when he was answering Major-General Legge? Why did he leave it to 3rd October when, in answer to a question, he said that the decision was taken on the oral advice of the Chiefs of Staff. That very question had been raised on 1st October, but the Prime Minister had not even referred to it. All the letters from Admiral Dowling show that, after the decision was made, the Chiefs of Staff supported it. What alternative did they have but to support it?

I want to refer now to a matter which brings the construction of plants such as St. Mary's and other matters into context, because underlying it is an assertion of

policy which is fundamental. In the past, the Prime Minister has been content to make an assertion of policy which assumed that war was imminent and so on. However, at the Liberal party conference held in Sydney at the week-end, the Prime Minister made a dramatic change of policy. He now assumes something else. This arises from the letter that Khrushchev has written to the socialist parties of the world. The Prime Minister said—

This letter may give rise to re-thinking on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Adermann).—Order! The honorable gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT (Higgins—Minister for Labour and National Service) [10.57].—I rise for one purpose only and I shall not detain the committee. The member for Yarra (Mr. Cairns)—

Dr. Evatt.—The honorable member.

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—In the circumstances, it is hardly necessary to use that title; the facts will establish whether he is. The honorable member for Yarra might leave it to the committee to determine whether he can justify the continued use of that title. He has sought to repeat a smear on the Minister for National Development (Senator Spooner). That smear was first given expression in this chamber by the member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward). I should think that the honorable gentleman has committed an even greater offence than the member for East Sydney, for the member for East Sydney at least made the allegation without having had the advantage of the full explanation which was subsequently given by the Minister. If the honorable gentleman has any right to claim that title and is aware that the explanation was given by my colleague, then he has merely aggravated the offence by repeating the charge here to-night.

My colleague pointed out that A. E. Goodwin Limited had entered into a tenancy occupancy at St. Mary's under a written arrangement which was made with the then Labour government. He added that the area occupied by A. E. Goodwin Limited had never at any time been in contemplation for repossession.

Mr. Cairns.—How could a department reposess the area but leave a quarter of it?

Mr. HAROLD HOLT.—I am repeating what was said by my colleague. The facts speak for themselves and can be ascertained. The area occupied by A. E. Goodwin Limited was at no time the subject of a departmental recommendation that it be repossessed for the purposes of a filling factory, if one was to be used on the former site. The Minister has made it clear that at no stage was any such proposal placed before him for consideration and that at no stage did any conflict arise between his duties as a Minister of the Crown and his private interests. That statement was made by my colleague at the first opportunity he had to make it. Having learned of the statement made by the honorable member for East Sydney, he made that explanation in another place. It was not challenged by any honorable senator, and I suggest that it would not be challenged here by any honorable member entitled, in all sincerity, to that term.

Dr. EVATT (Barton—Leader of the Opposition) [11.1].—I do not wish to detain the committee for more than a few minutes. Without any examination of the facts or of the case presented by the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Cairns), who spoke just now, we had the Leader of the House (Mr. Harold Holt) again coming in to try to silence criticism and to act in a way which was intimidatory, but he completely failed to refute the substance of the argument that had been put forward. It seems to me that, taking the argument point by point—

Mr. Harold Holt.—Are you repeating this charge?

Dr. EVATT.—I am repeating the whole argument of the honorable member from this side.

Mr. Harold Holt.—I was not dealing with that argument.

Dr. EVATT.—I will not have words put into my mouth.

Mr. Harold Holt.—Do not put words into my mouth, either.

Dr. EVATT.—Well, do not ask me questions. I will deal with you, if you do. I say that the Minister tried to stop criticism by the honorable member for Yarra, who simply said that there really never was a decision of the Chiefs of Staff as to the old factory at St. Mary's.

Mr. Harold Holt.—I dealt with one point—a personal attack.

Dr. EVATT.—It was not a personal attack at all. It was simply an inference drawn from the facts that had been put before the Parliament. I shall repeat them, notwithstanding interruptions.

I am satisfied, from the many statements of the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies), that the fact is that the Chiefs of Staff did not act as the advisers before the decision was made—that is to say, they had no choice. The Government decided that the old filling factory was not to be used, for industrial reasons. Is not that clear? The Prime Minister said so. Therefore, although it was supposed to be a period of imminent danger to the country, the choice was to keep the industries going, notwithstanding the danger to the country.

Mr. Harold Holt.—This is a smoke-screen!

Dr. EVATT.—The documents have never been produced. No document has been produced, although a few have been read. The Government had power under the agreements, which the Chifley Government authorized, to take over these buildings at St. Mary's, if the requirements of defence justified it. Did they justify it? The Prime Minister said that the situation was so dangerous that war might come in three years. That was not the time when this decision was made at all. No! The interests of industry and of persons concerned in industry prevailed over the alleged danger to the country. There is no doubt about that. That is the whole case of the Prime Minister. He said, "We are not going to cause unemployment". I say that if the needs of Australia demanded it, or if the needs of defence demanded action in the interests of the country, it did not matter tuppence whether it caused unemployment or not. But there was no real concern for the security of the country in regard to St. Mary's.

The Chiefs of Staff, considering the matter after the event, giving it a priority, were told, in effect—"You cannot have the old factory at St. Mary's. That is precluded. The decision has been made by the Government. Do you want a factory at all?" "Yes", they said, "of course we do. We want a factory." Therefore,

it was said, " You must have the new factory ". There was no choice for them; it was not a matter of choosing the old as against the new. The time element shows that this decision to prefer the claims of industry, or industrial corporations, prevailed over the alleged needs of the country at that time.

The truth is, Mr. Chairman—this is the essence of the matter, and this speech fits in with all the analyses that have been made when this matter has come before the House in its various forms—that you will never get the full facts about St. Mary's. I believe that the facts are as summarized broadly by the honorable member, and I think I also have summarized them correctly. I believe that to be so, at any rate. I say that you will never get the truth until there is an inquiry, with all the documents produced, so that everybody can see the course of events. If the Government is right on all these points, I challenge it once again to have an inquiry. Why not have one? What is the objection to an inquiry? The Prime Minister comes out with one set of statements one day and another set the next day. They are not satisfactory. I think he must know himself that they are not satisfactory and do not give an ordered course of events. Therefore, this St. Mary's affair cannot be allowed to rest until there is an inquiry.

I believe that the truth of the matter is that it was not necessary to have the new building. Had it been possible to have the old factory at St. Mary's used for the purposes for which it would have been proper to use it, if the situation internationally was what the Prime Minister described it to be—war within a certain period—it was the duty of any government to do that. The agreements contemplated that it might be done. If the defence interests of the nation required it, you could not say, " No " to the demand. If that is so, does not it show that that opportunity was allowed to slip? When the decision was made later, the situation was not tense at all.

The matter can be explained very simply. Honorable members must face the fact that the Chiefs of Staff had no choice. They did not prefer a new factory to the old factory. When it came to them, the use of the old factory was out of the question. Therefore, they were put in the position of

having this enormous extra expense in connexion with the new factory, because if they did not have the new factory they would not have one at all in that location.

That is my analysis of the matter, after listening to the debate and reading all the speeches. The honorable member for Yarra is entitled to credit. Why is he to be discredited by the Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt)? Everything he has said has been supported by reasons. There was no personal attack on any particular person.

Mr. Harold Holt.—Of course there was!

Dr. EVATT.—No. At a time when, according to the Prime Minister, the country was in serious danger of war within a few years, the decision taken was to set aside any possibility of using the old factory. The Government said that it was to be preserved for industry, which, of course, meant that later on, when the matter had to be faced again, without the immediate danger, the decision was—and had to be—to build the new factory, because the old factory was foreclosed; it was to be used in the way that has been described. There is nothing in that to cause a yell or a shout. Is it the truth, or is it not? Have an inquiry and see what the truth is.

Mr. Cairns.—On a point of order—

Mr. STOKES (Maribyrnong) [11.8].—
Mr. Chairman—

Dr. Evatt.—Mr. Chairman, the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Cairns) has risen on a point of order, I do not know for what purpose.

Mr. Cairns.—My point of order is that I be permitted to take my second period of fifteen minutes.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! No point of order is involved.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.9 p.m.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

The following answers to questions were circulated:

Architectural Fees.

Mr. Daly asked the Treasurer, upon notice—

Will he give particulars of (a) all fees paid to Stephenson and Turner since the Government

assumed office in 1949 and (b) the fees paid for the erection of the thoracic unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney?

Sir Arthur Fadden.—The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows:—

(a)—

Project.	Fees paid. £
St. Mary's Munition Factory ..	1,083,750
Atom Energy Reactor Project ..	142,000
Arbitration Court, Melbourne ..	22,937
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization Laboratory, Prospect ..	10,222

(b) The State hospital authorities arranged the erection of this unit.

Civil Defence.

Mr. Forbes asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice—

Is he able to state what proportion of the total Defence vote is currently being spent on Civil Defence in—(a) The United States of America, (b) the United Kingdom, (c) Canada, (d) Australia?

Sir Philip McBride.—The amount provided for Civil Defence in Australia this year is £119,000, or .06 per cent. of the total defence vote. In the other countries referred to in the question, civil defence expenditure is met from civil votes, and is therefore not part of total expenditure from the defence vote. However, estimated expenditure for civil defence in these countries in 1957-58 is equivalent to the following percentages of total estimated defence expenditure:—United States of America, .2 per cent.; United Kingdom, .5 per cent.; Canada, .4 per cent.

Japanese Wives and Children of Australian Servicemen.

Mr. Ward asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice—

1. Has any attempt ever been made by Commonwealth authorities to ascertain the number in Japan of (a) illegitimate children of Japanese mothers and Australian fathers formerly members of the Occupation or Korean Forces and (b) deserted Japanese wives and children of Australian ex-service personnel?

2. If so, what was the nature of such inquiry and what was the result?

3. Has the Government ever concerned itself with the economic circumstances and the material needs of these people?

4. If so, what are the details of the assistance rendered, and what was the financial cost to the Commonwealth?

Sir Philip McBride.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Yes.

2. Enquiries were made of the Australian Embassy, Tokyo, and of the Australian Services. The result of the inquiries is as follows:—

(a) The statement that there were more than 1,000 illegitimate children of Japanese mothers and Australian ex-servicemen evoked a denial by an official of the Japanese welfare ministry, who stated, "We know of only 104 children of Australian servicemen and Japanese mothers".

(b) The Australian Army representative in Kure was informed by the Japanese Liaison Officer in September, 1957, that the number of mixed-blood children registered at the Japanese Social Relief Centre, Kure, in October, 1956, was about 40, but could have since increased.

(c) A list of mixed-blood children at school in Kure prepared by the Japanese authorities in September, 1957, contains 44 names. The list covers all such children and is not a list of those known to have Australian fathers.

(d) The number of deserted Japanese wives of Australian ex-service personnel is not known.

3. The Government is naturally interested in this social problem, which is common to all countries whose forces have carried out occupation duties. It is pointed out, however, that illegitimate children living in Japan whose fathers are alleged to have been Australian service personnel, and deserted wives of Australian service personnel, formerly in Japan retaining their Japanese nationality, are not within the jurisdiction of the Australian Government. The Government has examined reports that many of these women and children are living in poor circumstances. Whilst conditions of livelihood do of course vary, the Government is satisfied that the reports have been somewhat exaggerated. So far as welfare, relief and education are concerned, the Japanese authorities do not discriminate against such persons, and are doing what they can for them.

4. No direct financial assistance has been given by the Commonwealth Government to persons alleged to be deserted wives or illegitimate children of former Australian service personnel.

Atomic Energy.

Mr. Swartz asked the Minister representing the Minister for National Development, upon notice—

1. Have recent arrangements been made for the purchase of a supply of heavy water by the Australian Atomic Energy Commission?

2. Will this heavy water be used for research purposes in the commission's research centres?

Mr. Beale.—The Minister for National Development has furnished the following replies:—

1. Yes; the Australian Atomic Energy Commission has signed a contract for the purchase of 11 short tons of heavy water from the United States Atomic Energy Commission.

2. Yes; the heavy water will be used as a moderator and a coolant in the HIFAR reactor at Lucas Heights. The reactor will be used for research into nuclear power systems, for isotope production and to assist medical, agricultural and industrial research in Australia.

Desalination of Sea Water.

Mr. Swartz asked the Minister acting for the Minister in charge of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, upon notice—

1. Is any further information available regarding the experiments being conducted into the use of sea water for irrigation purposes?

2. Are small plants being produced in the United Kingdom for the conversion of brackish and salty water into water suitable for domestic and farm use?

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

1. No further information is available about methods for production of salt-free water suitable for irrigation purposes from sea water. The co-operative investigation of the desalting of water by electrodialysis, which is being carried out in Holland by the T.N.O. (the Dutch equivalent of C.S.I.R.O.) and which is supported financially by Australia, the United Kingdom and several other countries, is continuing. This programme is expected to be completed about April, 1958. It is not anticipated that any spectacular development will result from this research, but prototype commercial equipment is being developed and subjected to service tests. The cost of water produced by electrodialysis equipment is considerably greater than the maximum figure likely to be acceptable for irrigation.

2. Relatively small water desalting plants are being offered in the United Kingdom by William Boby and Company Limited following closely along the lines of the T.N.O. design. The smallest of the plants for which prices are available is one for treatment of 1,000 gallons per hour and the cost is £8,000 to £10,000 in English currency excluding the cost of equipment for supply of electric power. Smaller plants would not cost proportionately less. In those areas of Australia where electric power from mains supply is not available, electrical generating plant would be required in addition to the water purification unit. Running costs excluding labour for the plant are claimed to approximate from 10s. to 25s. Australian currency per 1,000 gallons depending on the cost of electric power.

Diesel Fuel Tax.

Mr. Allan Fraser asked the Minister representing the Minister for Customs and Excise, upon notice—

1. As users of diesel oil, for purposes other than road transport, are to receive a refund of the tax of 1s. a gallon, will he arrange for exemption of payment of the tax to be granted to local government bodies?

2. In considering this request will he take into account that all local government bodies carry out construction and maintenance of roads only and are not engaged in road transport, and that, as payment of the tax, with subsequent refund, would involve local government bodies in additional and needless clerical work, it would be better to grant a general exemption to these bodies?

Mr. Osborne.—The Minister for Customs and Excise has now furnished the following answer to the honorable member's questions:—

Arrangements are now being made whereby large users, who satisfy the Minister for Customs and Excise that they require diesel fuel for use otherwise than in propelling road vehicles on public roads, will be issued with a certificate which will enable them to obtain supplies exempt from tax. Dependent on the quantities used the way will be open therefore for local government bodies to apply for certificates so that diesel oil may be purchased tax free.

Mail Services.

Mr. Griffiths asked the Postmaster-General, upon notice—

1. Is the Tea Gardens-Myall Lakes Mail Service in New South Wales run under contract?
2. Are tenders called for each year?
3. On what date do the tenders close?
4. What is the annual cost to revenue?
5. Is the service provided by road or by water?

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

1. Designation of service referred to is Tea Gardens-Tamboy locality. Service performed under porterage agreement conditions.
- 2 and 3. Tenders are not called each year as agreement terminable on expiration of three months' notice by either department or porter.
4. Cost of service is £364 per annum for three times weekly delivery.
5. Service is performed by launch.