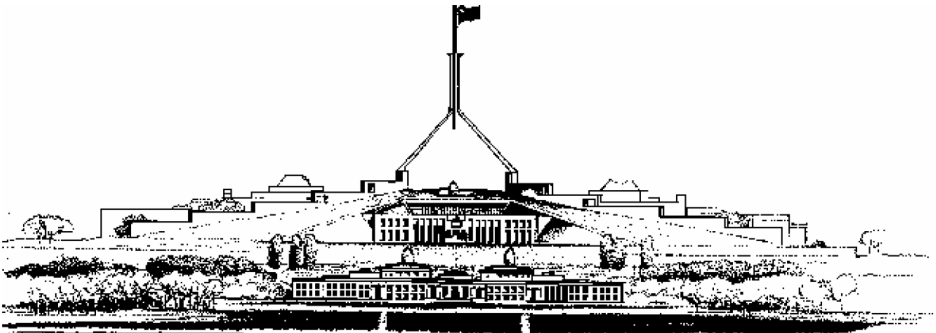




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



Senate Official Hansard

No. 20, 1924
Wednesday, 14 May 1924

NINTH PARLIAMENT
SECOND SESSION—SECOND PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

His Excellency the Right Honorable HENRY WILLIAM, BARON FORSTER, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

BRUCE-PAGE GOVERNMENT.

(From 9th February, 1923.)

Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs...	The Right Honorable Stanley Melbourne Bruce, P.C., M.C.
Treasurer	The Honorable Earle Christmas Grafton Page.
Minister for Home and Territories	Senator the Right Honorable George Foster Pearce, P.C.
Attorney-General	The Honorable Sir Littleton Ernest Groom, K.C. M.G., K.C.
Postmaster-General	The Honorable William Gerrard Gibson.
Minister for Trade and Customs and Minister for Health	The Honorable Sir Austin Chapman, K.C.M.G. <i>succeeded by</i> The Honorable Herbert Edward Pratten (13th June, 1924).
Minister for Works and Railways	The Honorable Percy Gerald Stewart. <i>succeeded by</i> The Honorable William Caldwell Hill (26th September 1924).
Minister for Defence	The Honorable Eric Kendall Bowden.
Vice-President of the Executive Council...	The Honorable Llewelyn Atkinson.
Honorary Minister	Senator the Honorable Reginald Victor Wilson.
Honorary Minister	Senator the Honorable Thomas William Crawford.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE.

NINTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

(From 1st July, 1923.)

President—Senator the Honorable Thomas Givens.

Deputy President and Chairman of Committees—^aSenator John Newland, C.B.E.

² Bakhap, Thomas Jerome Kingston	...	...	Tasmania.
⁶ Barker, Stephen	...	...	Victoria.
Barnes, John	...	...	Victoria.
¹ Benny, Benjamin	...	...	South Australia.
Cox, Charles Frederick, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.	...	...	New South Wales.
Crawford, Hon. Thomas William	...	...	Queensland.
Drake-Brockman, Edmund Alfred, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.	...	...	Western Australia.
Duncan, Walter Leslie	...	...	New South Wales.
Elliott, Harold Edward, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., D.C.M.	...	...	Victoria.
Findley, Edward	...	...	Victoria.
Foll, Hattil Spencer	...	...	Queensland.
Foster, George Matthew	...	...	Tasmania.
Gardiner, Albert	...	...	New South Wales.
Givens, Hon. Thomas	...	...	Queensland
Glasgow, Sir Thomas William, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.	...	...	Queensland.
Graham, Charles Montague	...	...	Western Australia.
Grant, John	...	...	New South Wales.
³ Greene, Walter Massy	...	...	New South Wales.
Guthrie, James Francis	...	...	Victoria.
⁷ Hannan, Joseph Francis	...	...	Victoria.
⁴ Hayes, John Blyth, C.M.G.	...	...	Tasmania.
Hays, Hon. Herbert	...	...	Tasmania.
Hoare, Albert Alfred	...	...	South Australia.
¹ Kingsmill, Walter	...	...	Western Australia.
Lynch, Patrick Joseph	...	...	Western Australia.
¹ McDougall, Allan	...	...	New South Wales.
McHugh, Charles Stephen	...	...	South Australia.
⁵ Millen, Hon. Edward Davis	...	...	New South Wales.
Millen, John Dunlop	...	...	Tasmania.
Needham, Edward	...	...	Western Australia.
Newland, John, C.B.E.	...	...	South Australia.
Ogden, James Ernest	...	...	Tasmania.
O'Loughlin, Hon. James Vincent, V.D.	...	...	South Australia.
¹ Payne, Herbert James Mockford	...	...	Tasmania.
Pearce, Right Hon. George Foster, P.C.	...	...	Western Australia.
Reid, Matthew	...	...	Queensland.
Russell, Edward John	...	...	Victoria.
Thompson, William George	...	...	Queensland.
Wilson, Hon. Reginald Victor	...	...	South Australia.

1. Temporary Chairman of Committees. 2. Death reported 21st August, 1923. 3. Chosen by State Parliament, 7th October, 1923. Sworn, 26th March, 1924. 4. Chosen by State Parliament, 12th September, 1923. Sworn, 26th March, 1924. 5. Death reported, 26th March, 1924. 6. Death reported, 25th June, 1924. 7. Chosen by State Parliament, 22nd July, 1924. 8. Appointed Deputy President, 25th July, 1924.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

NINTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

Speaker—The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C.

Chairman of Committees—The Honorable Frederick William Bamford.

Anstey, Frank	Bourke. (V.)
Atkinson, Hon. Llewelyn	Wilmot. (T.)
Bamford, Hon. Frederick William	Herbert. (Qr)
¹ Bayley, James Garfield	Oxley. (Q.)
Blakeley, Arthur	Darling. (N.S.W.)
Bowden Hon. Eric Kendall	Parramatta. (N.S.W.)
Brennan, Frank	Batman. (V.)
Bruce, Right Hon. Stanley Melbourne, P.C., M.C.	Flinders. (V.)
Cameron, Donald Charles, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Brisbane. (Q.)
Cameron, Malcolm Duncan	Barker. (S.A.)
Chapman, Hon. Sir Austin, K.C.M.G.	Eden-Monaro. (N.S.W.)
Charlton, Matthew	Hunter. (N.S.W.)
Coleman, Percy Edmund	Reid. (N.S.W.)
¹ Cook, Robert	Indi. (V.)
Corser, Edward Bernard Cresset	Wide Bay. (Q.)
Cunningham, Lucien Lawrence	Gwydir. (N.S.W.)
Duncan-Hughes, John Grant, M.V.O., M.C.	Boothby. (S.A.)
Fenton, James Edward	Maribyrnong. (V.)
Forde, Francis Michael	Capricornia. (Q.)
Foster, Hon. Richard Witty	Wakefield. (S.A.)
Francis, Frederick Henry	Henty. (V.)
Francis, Josiah	Moreton. (Q.)
Gabb, Joel Moses	Angas. (S.A.)
Gardner, Sydney Lane	Robertson. (N.S.W.)
Gibson, Hon. William Gerrand	Corangamite. (V.)
Green, Albert Ernest	Kalgoorlie. (V.A.)
Green, Roland Frederick Herbert	Richmond. (N.S.W.)
Gregory, Hon. Henry	Swan. (W.A.)
Groom, Hon. Sir Littleton Ernest, K.C.M.G., K.C.	Darling Downs. (Q.)
Hill, William Caldwell	Echuca. (V.)
¹ Howse, Sir Neville Reginald, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.M.G.	Calare. (N.S.W.)
Hughes, Right Hon. William Morris, P.C., K.C.	North Sydney. (N.S.W.)
Hunter, James Aitchison Johnston	Maranoa. (Q.)
Hurry, Geoffry, D.S.O., V.D.	Bendigo. (V.)
Jackson, David Sydney	Bass. (T.)
Johnson, Hon. Sir Elliot, K.C.M.G.	Lang. (N.S.W.)
Killen, William Wilson	Riverina. (N.S.W.)
Lacey, Andrew William	Grey. (S.A.)
Lambert, William Henry	West Sydney. (N.S.W.)
Latham, John Greig, C.M.G., K.C.	Kooyong. (V.)
Lazzarini, Hubert Peter	Werriwa. (N.S.W.)
Lister, John Henry	Corio. (V.)
Mackay, George Hugh	Lilley. (Q.)
Mahony, William George	Dalley. (N.S.W.)
¹ Makin, Norman John Oswald	Hindmarsh. (S.A.)
Maloney, William Robert Nuttally	Melbourne. (V.)
Mann, Edward Alexander	Perth. (V.A.)
Manning, Arthur Gibson	Macquarie. (N.S.W.)
Marks, Walter Moffitt	Wentworth. (N.S.W.)
Marr, Charles William Clanan, D.S.O., M.C.	Parkes. (N.S.W.)
Mathews, James	Melbourne Ports. (V.)
Maxwell, George Arnot	Fawkner. (V.)
McDonald, Hon. Charles	Kennedy. (Q.)
McDonald, Frederick Albert	Barton. (N.S.W.)
McGrath, David Charles	Ballaarat. (V.)
McNeill, John	Wannon. (V.)
Moloney, Parker John	Hume. (N.S.W.)
Nelson, Harold George	Northern Territory.
O'Keefe, Hon. David John	Denison. (T.)
Page, Hon. Earle Christmas Grafton	Cowper. (N.S.W.)

NINTH PARLIAMENT—*continued.*

Paterson, Thomas	...	...	...	Gippsland. (V.)
Pratten, Hon. Herbert Edward	...	...	...	Martin. (N.S.W.)
Prowse, John Henry	...	...	...	Forrest. (W.A.)
Riley, Edward	...	...	...	South Sydney. (N.S.W.)
Riley, Edward Charles	...	...	...	Cook. (N.S.W.)
Ryrie, Hon. Sir Granville de Laune, K.C.M.G., C.B., V.D.	...	...	...	Warringah. (N.S.W.)
Scullin, James Henry	...	...	...	Yarra. (V.)
Seabrook, Alfred Charles	...	...	...	Franklin. (T.)
Stewart, Hon. Percy Gerald	...	...	...	Wimmera. (V.)
Thompson, Victor Charles	...	...	...	New England. (N.S.W.)
Watkins, Hon. David	...	...	...	Newcastle. (N.S.W.)
Watson, William	...	...	...	Fremantle. (W.A.)
Watt, Right Hon. William Alexander, P.C.	...	...	...	Balaclava. (V.)
West, John Edward	...	...	...	East Sydney. (N.S.W.)
Whitsitt, Joshua Thomas Hoskins	...	...	...	Darwin. (T.)
Yates, George Edwin	...	...	...	Adelaide. (S.A.)

1. Temporary Chairman of Committees.

COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION.

(SECOND PERIOD.)

SENATE.

DISPUTED RETURNS AND QUALIFICATIONS.—Senator Glasgow, Senator Greene, Senator Guthrie, Senator McDougall, Senator Needham, Senator O'Loughlin, and Senator Payne.

STANDING ORDERS.—The President, the Chairman of Committees, Senator Drake-Brockman, Senator Duncan, Senator Findley, Senator Foll, Senator Gardiner, Senator H. Hays, and Senator O'Loughlin.

LIBRARY.—The President, Senator Gardiner, Senator Sir Thomas Glasgow, Senator Graham, Senator Kingsmill, Senator J. D. Millen, and Senator Ogden.

LIEUTENANT PAINE SELECT COMMITTEE.—Senator Cox, Senator Elliott, Senator Foll, Senator Gardiner, Senator Grant, Senator Greene, and Senator McDougall.—Report presented 11th September, 1924.

J. T. DUNK SELECT COMMITTEE.—Senator Gardiner, Senator Graham, Senator J. B. Hayes, Senator H. Hays, Senator McDougall, Senator Reid, and Senator Thompson.

HOUSE.—The President, the Chairman of Committees, Senator Cox, Senator Drake-Brockman, Senator Guthrie, Senator Hoare, and Senator McDougall.

PRINTING.—Senator Findley, Senator Foster, Senator Grant, Senator McHugh, Senator Payne, Senator Russell, and Senator Thompson.

PUBLIC WORKS (STANDING).—Senator Barnes, Senator Lynch, and Senator Reid

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (JOINT).—¹Senator Benny, ²Senator Elliott, Senator Foll, Senator Kingsmill, and Senator Needham.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

LIBRARY.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Anstey, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Duncan-Hughes, Mr. Hughes, Sir Elliot Johnson, Mr. Latham, Mr. Maxwell, Mr. C. McDonald, and ²Mr. Pratten.

STANDING ORDERS.—Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Charlton, Sir Elliot Johnson, Mr. C. McDonald, and Dr. Earle Page.

HOUSE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Fenton, Mr. Foster, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Marr, Mr. Prowse, and Mr. Watkins.

PRINTING.—Mr. Corser, Mr. Fenton, Mr. R. Green, Mr. Lister, Mr. E. Riley, Mr. Scullin, and Mr. Thompson.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (JOINT).—Mr. Bayley, Mr. Fenton, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Makin, Mr. Marks, Mr. Paterson, and Mr. West.

PUBLIC WORKS (STANDING).—Mr. Blakeley, Mr. Cook, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Mackay, and Mr. Mathews.

1. Discharged from attendance, 20th August, 1924.

2. Discharged from attendance, 10th October, 1924.

3. Discharged from attendance, 4th July, 1924.

ACTS OF THE SESSION.

(SECOND PERIOD.)

APPROPRIATION ACT 1924-25 (No. 35 of 1924)—

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 twenty-five and to appropriate the Supplies granted by the Parliament for such year.

APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) 1924-25 ACT. (ACT No. 13 of 1924)—

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 twenty-five for the purposes of Additions, New Works, Buildings, &c., and to appropriate such sum.

AUDIT ACT (No. 34 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Audit Act* 1901-1920.

BANKRUPTCY ACT (No. 37 of 1924)—

An Act relating to Bankruptcy.

BOY SCOUTS ASSOCIATION ACT (No. 31 of 1924)—

An Act to afford protection to the Boy Scouts' Association.

CANNED FRUIT BOUNTY ACT (No. 2 of 1924)—

An Act to provide for the Payment of Bounties on the Production and Export of Canned Fruit.

CATTLE EXPORT BOUNTY ACT (No. 14 of 1924)—

An Act to provide for the payment of a Bounty on the Export of Live Cattle.

COMMONWEALTH BANK ACT (No. 15 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Bank Act* 1911-1920 and for other purposes.

COMMONWEALTH ELECTORAL ACT (No. 10 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Electoral Act* 1918-1922 for the purpose of making provision for Compulsory Voting.

COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC SERVICE ACT (No. 46 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Public Service Act* 1922.

CUSTOMS TARIFF ACT (No. 1 of 1924)—

An Act relating to Duties of Customs.

DAIRY PRODUCE EXPORT CHARGES ACT (No. 39 of 1924)—

An Act to impose Charges upon the Export of Dairy Produce.

DAIRY PRODUCE EXPORT CONTROL ACT (No. 38 of 1924)—

An Act relating to the Export of Dairy Produce.

DEFENCE EQUIPMENT ACT (No. 18 of 1924)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of Two million five hundred thousand pounds for Naval Construction and for a Reserve for Defence.

DRIED FRUIT ADVANCES ACT (No. 20 of 1924)—

An Act to provide for the Payment of Advances to Growers of Dried Fruits.

DRIED FRUITS EXPORT CHARGES ACT (No. 41 of 1924)—

An Act to impose Charges upon the Export of Dried Fruits.

DRIED FRUITS EXPORT CONTROL ACT (No. 40 of 1924)—

An Act relating to the Export of Dried Fruits.

ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 52 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Entertainments Tax Assessment Act* 1916.

EXCISE TARIFF ACT (No. 28 of 1924)—

An Act relating to Duties of Excise.

EXPORT GUARANTEE ACT (No. 42 of 1924)—

An Act to provide for Guarantees of Advances made upon the Export of Produce and for other purposes.

GRAFTON TO SOUTH BRISBANE RAILWAY ACT (No. 54 of 1924)—

An Act to approve and provide for the carrying out of an Agreement entered into between the Commonwealth of Australia and the States of New South Wales and Queensland respecting the Construction of a Railway of Standard Gauge between Kyogle and South Brisbane and the Re-grading and Re-laying of the Railway between Grafton and Kyogle and to authorize the Raising and Expending of Moneys for the purposes of the Agreement.

HOP POOL AGREEMENT ACT (No. 9 of 1924)—

An Act to authorize the Execution by the Commonwealth of an Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Tasmanian Hop Growers' Pool Limited and for other purposes.

IMMIGRATION ACT (No. 47 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Immigration Act* 1901–1920.

INCOME TAX ACT (No. 50 of 1924)—

An Act to impose Taxes upon Incomes.

INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 51 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act* 1922–1923.

INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT (LIVE STOCK) ACT (No. 33 of 1924)—

An Act relating to the Valuation of Live Stock for the purposes of Assessments of Income Tax.

INCOME TAX COLLECTION ACT (No. 36 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Income Tax Collection Act* 1923.

INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS APPROPRIATION ACT (No. 43 of 1924)—

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

LAND TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 32 of 1924)—

An Act to amend Section Five of the *Land Tax Assessment Act* 1910–1923.

LOAN ACT (No. 1) (No. 3 of 1924)—

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

LOAN ACT (No. 2) (No. 16 of 1924)—

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

LOAN ACT (No. 3) (No. 44 of 1924)—

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

MAIN ROADS DEVELOPMENT ACT (No. 5 of 1924)—

An Act relating to Main Roads Development.

MEAT INDUSTRY ENCOURAGEMENT ACT (No. 55 of 1924)—

An Act to encourage and improve the Meat Industry of Australia.

NATIONAL DEBT SINKING FUND ACT (No. 6 of 1924)—

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

NEW ZEALAND RE-EXPORTS ACT (No. 21 of 1924)—

An Act relating to the Value for Duty of Goods not the produce or manufacture of New Zealand, which are imported into Australia from New Zealand.

OIL AGREEMENT ACT (No. 7 of 1924)—

An Act to approve the further Agreement made between His Majesty's Government of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company Limited.

PAPUA ACT (No. 25 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Papua Act* 1905–1920.

POST AND TELEGRAPH RATES ACT (No. 12 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Post and Telegraph Rates Act* 1902–1923.

QUARANTINE ACT (No. 30 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Quarantine Act* 1908–1920.

SEA CARRIAGE OF GOODS ACT (No. 22 of 1924)—

An Act relating to the Sea Carriage of Goods.

SEAT OF GOVERNMENT (ADMINISTRATION) ACT (No. 8 of 1924)—

An Act to make further provision for the Government of the Territory for the Seat of Government.

SERVICE AND EXECUTION OF PROCESS ACT (No. 26 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Service and Execution of Process Act 1901-1922*.

STATES LOAN ACT (No. 17 of 1924)—

An Act to authorize the raising of Moneys to be loaned to the States and for other purposes.

STATISTICAL BUREAU (TASMANIA) ACT (No. 48 of 1924)—

An Act to approve an Agreement made between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Tasmania

SUPERANNUATION ACT (No. 45 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Superannuation Act 1922*.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT 1921-22 (No. 56 of 1924)—

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

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT 1922-23 (No. 58 of 1924)—

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

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT 1923-24 (No. 60 of 1924)—

An Act to grant and apply a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ended the thirtieth day of June One thousand nine hundred and twenty-four.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) ACT 1921-22 (No. 57 of 1924)—

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

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) ACT 1922-23 (No. 59 of 1924)—

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

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) ACT 1923-24 (No. 61 of 1924)—

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

SUPPLY ACT (No. 1) 1924-25 (No. 4 of 1924)—

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 twenty-five.

SUPPLY ACT (No. 2) 1924-25 (No. 19 of 1924)—

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 twenty-five.

TARIFF BOARD ACT (No. 29 of 1924)—

An Act to amend the *Tariff Board Act 1921-1923*.

TASMANIA GRANT ACT (No. 27 of 1924)—

An Act to grant and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum for the purposes of Financial Assistance to the State of Tasmania.

WAR PENSIONS APPROPRIATION ACT (No. 11 of 1924)—

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

WAR-TIME PROFITS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 53 of 1924)—

An Act relating to certain Assessments of War-time Profits.

WINE EXPORT BOUNTY ACT (No. 23 of 1924)—

An Act to provide for the Payment of Bounty on the Export of Fortified Wine.

WIRELESS AGREEMENT ACT (No. 24 of 1924)—

An Act to approve the Agreement made between His Majesty's Government of the Commonwealth of Australia and Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Limited.

ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM AGREEMENT ACT (No. 49 of 1924)—

An Act to approve an Agreement made between the Commonwealth of Australia and William Colin MacKenzie and for other purposes.

BILLS OF THE SESSION.

(SECOND PERIOD.)

ALIENS REGISTRATION ACT REPEAL BILL.

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS' REPATRIATION BILL.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MUSEUM TRUST FUND BILL.

DEFENCE BILL.

LANDS ACQUISITION BILL.

LESSEE TAX BILL (No. 1) (withdrawn).

LESSEE TAX BILL (No. 2) (Second Reading negatived in Senate).

MAINTENANCE ORDERS (FACILITIES FOR ENFORCEMENT) BILL (withdrawn).

NATIONALITY BILL.

NAURU ISLAND AGREEMENT BILL.

NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BILL (withdrawn).

NAVAL DEFENCE BILL.

NAVIGATION BILL.

NEW GUINEA BILL (withdrawn).

*NORTHERN TERRITORY ADMINISTRATION BILL.

NORTHERN TERRITORY CROWN LANDS BILL (withdrawn).

NORTHERN TERRITORY REPRESENTATION BILL.

PAPUA BILL (withdrawn).

*PATENTS BILL.

POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL.

*PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

*SEA CARRIAGE OF GOODS BILL (Senate).

SEA CARRIAGE OF GOODS BILL (House of Representatives) (withdrawn).

SEAMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL.

*SEAT OF GOVERNMENT RAILWAY BILL.

* Leave to bring in granted ; but Bill not presented.

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Senate.

Wednesday, 14 May, 1924.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Conciliation and Arbitration Act—Rule of Court—Statutory Rules 1924, No. 66.

Defence Act—Regulations amended—Statutory Rules 1924, No. 68.

Lands Acquisition Act—Land acquired for Postal purposes at Garden Vale East, Victoria.

Northern Territory—Ordinance No. 10 of 1924—Aboriginals.

Public Service Act—Regulations amended—Statutory Rules 1924, No. 52.

SUPERANNUATION ACT.

MILITARY STAFF-SERGEANT'S PENSION.

Senator GARDINER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that a staff-sergeant who has been retired from the Defence Department has been granted a retiring allowance of 5s. 8½d. per week?

2. Is it a fact that the Department made a claim for the payment of over £30, and received such amount from the officer in question?

3. Is it a fact that the amount was paid on the understanding that the officer in question when retired would receive an allowance of £130 per annum?

4. Have similar cases arisen in the carrying out of the Act?

5. If the present Act does not permit the payment of the amounts contracted for, is it the intention of the Government to introduce an amending Bill to deal with same?

6. If so, when will the measure be introduced?

Senator PEARCE.—The Treasurer has supplied the following answers:—

1. Yes.
2. Yes, under the first proviso of section 12 (2) of the Act.
3. No. A pension of £130 per annum would have been payable had the staff-sergeant attained 65 years on retirement, or had been retired on the ground of infirmity. He retired at 60, the maximum age in his case.
4. Yes.
5. The pension being paid is that contracted for under section 29 (b) of the Act.
6. See answer to No. 5.

For the information of the honorable senator, it is explained that the staff-sergeant was 59 years of age when he commenced to contribute, and he retired when he attained 60 years, which was the maximum age of retirement in his case. He contributed twelve months' payments for five units of pension, viz., £130 per annum. The full pension of £130 per annum would have been payable had he attained the age of 65 years, or been retired owing to infirmity. The pension being paid is fixed by section 29 b of the Superannuation Act, which provides that where the age for retirement is fixed by law at an earlier age than 65 years, the pension shall be the actuarial equivalent of the contributions made or to be made by the contributor, and of the share of pension payable by the Commonwealth. The total amount of contributions paid by the staff-sergeant—including the amount of £30 16s. 9d. referred to in question 2—was £36 10s. 2d. The actuarial equivalent of that amount, together with the share of pension by the Commonwealth, is a pension of £14 18s. 9d. per annum—5s. 8½d. per week.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

Motion (by Senator PEARCE) agreed to—

That leave of absence for two months be granted to Senator Wilson, on account of urgent public business.

NORTHERN TERRITORY REPRESENTATION BILL.

Bill read a third time.

CANNED FRUIT BOUNTY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 9th May (*vide* page 540), on motion by Senator CRAWFORD—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [3.6].—This is one of the measures that have come before us in consequence of the iniquitous Tariff imposed four years ago by the then National Government. No Protectionist could, by the widest stretch of imagination, regard as protective a Customs Tariff through which the Government collect annually £36,000,000. I am beginning to alter my attitude upon the question of bounties. Whenever I have had the opportunity I have tried to make it clear that no permanent benefit could come to the people of Australia by subsidizing any one section of the community. On the other side of this Chamber is a party which declares that it will not approve any Government enterprise likely to come into competition with private business. To be logical, it should not go out of its way to have bounties paid to people engaged in private business. There is a fixed principle underlying this Bill, and I am wondering how long the people of the Commonwealth will continue ladling out a little benefit here, and a smaller benefit somewhere else, while securing no permanent advantage to the country. From the Bill itself it would appear that the Government are more anxious to assist the canners than the fruit-growers. There was a time in this Senate when in my lone-handed struggle for the principle of individual liberty, I was assured of a leader, if not a supporter, in the person of Senator Drake-Brockman, but that honorable senator has now become the Government Whip, and "just for a handful of silver" has left me. His voice is no longer heard in the struggle for individual liberty.

Senator NEEDHAM.—He has left your party?

Senator GARDINER.—I was never sure whether he or I was the follower, but in those days many an effort was put up here that would have benefited the community. Those days have passed with the honorable senator's assumption of the serious responsibility of the Government Whipship. I congratulate him upon taking that position, but I regret his defection on an occasion such as this, when it is a question of how much longer the people are to suffer the evil of inflated prices. Surely the lesson of

what is happening in the world outside must come home to honorable senators. Why are Governments tottering? Is it not due to inflated prices and the high cost of living? The so-called remedies are, in reality, mere shams, because, when they are put to the test, it is found that the people are in a worse position than they have ever been before. Four years ago a Protective Tariff was introduced with the object of encouraging local industries so as to give employment to our own people. Nothing more disastrous could have happened to Australia. I am sorry I have not the figures showing the total number of persons unemployed in different years; those I shall quote refer only to members of unions. Taking the Statistician's official figures, we find that for two years prior to the introduction of the Tariff—the years immediately following the war, when one would have expected more unemployment than at any other time—the number of union members out of work was less than in later years. We find that in 1918 the number was 16,919, and in 1919, 16,637. The Tariff was introduced in March, 1920, and the number of unemployed members of unions officially recorded during that year was 27,463; in 1921 it was 35,250; and in 1922, 33,570. For the first quarter of 1923 the number was 27,112, and it is reasonable to assume that the figures for the remaining quarters of that year would not influence the position to any extent. The Government, by their legislation, have inflated prices, and have placed upon the shoulders of the workers Customs taxation to the extent of £36,000,000 per annum, for which they do not receive anything in return. As each small industry commences operations, benefits are extended in a piecemeal fashion. Those who have the ear of the Government can get little Bills such as this passed for their own benefit. But what is the price we are paying? Have the Government time to consider what they are doing? The canners of certain fruits are to obtain benefits, but while the present system of marketing obtains the fruit-growers are not likely to receive any advantage. The honorable member for Angas (Mr. Gabb) quoted a letter from the market gardeners and others, in which they pointed out that the price of grapes in one

district in South Australia was £2 7s. 6d. per ton, which is slightly over ½d. per lb., and that in other districts the figure was considerably lower. I am quite aware that the grape industry is not going to benefit by the passing of this Bill. I ask the Government whether, instead of this piecemeal legislation under which some small industry is selected for special consideration, they will submit a more comprehensive scheme. Under this proposal the canners will get some benefit, and I place the canners in the same position as those engaged in sugar refining. That we tax the people at an exorbitant rate for the benefit of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company is proved by the fact that its shares which originally cost £20 are now quoted at over £40. This Parliament is increasing the value of the shares by the high taxation imposed upon the rest of the community. We should contrast the sugar industry with the canning industry. What benefit is it to the fruit-growers if they are paid a bounty of 1d. per lb. on their product, and they are charged an additional 1d. per lb. on the sugar they use? The Government might very well consider a comprehensive scheme, and let the Senate know how far they intend going in the matter of bounties. Are not other sections entitled to some compensation for the work they are doing?

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—The honorable senator wishes us to adopt the policy of his party.

Senator GARDINER.—The interjection leads me to believe that there is still hope for that champion of freedom, who had so much to say against high tariffs in the last Parliament.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—I still hold similar views.

Senator GARDINER.—Why not frame our legislation in such a way that it will assist the whole community, instead of conferring benefits upon certain favored individuals or companies? Why cannot we have a comprehensive measure of bounties for every one.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—That is the honorable member's policy.

Senator GARDINER.—We did make provision in our early days for the payment of a bounty for every youngster who came into the world, and although other Governments have been in office since it

was first granted by Parliament, the Act under which it is paid has never been repealed. In dealing with this question, we should consider the figures in relation to fresh fruit sold in the markets of the world, in competition with produce from other countries. In 1917-18, 4,648,900 lbs. of fresh fruit, valued at £46,481, was exported. For the following years the figures were—1920-21, 51,686,200 lbs., valued at £535,525; 1921-22, 97,343,800 lbs., valued at £973,726. It will be seen from the figures that the exports nearly doubled in one year. In the overseas markets, where we have to compete with the produce of other parts of the world, the Australian fruit-growers can hold their own in the matter of fresh fruit.

Senator NEWLAND.—The fruit mentioned in the Bill is not included in that export trade. This deals with canned fruit.

Senator GARDINER.—I realize that. I am trying to make the position clear.

Senator NEWLAND.—The figures quoted by the honorable senator refer to apples, oranges, &c.

Senator GARDINER.—Yes, fresh fruit. The latest figures show that there has been a great advance in our exports, notwithstanding competition with other fruit-producing countries.

Senator CRAWFORD.—That fruit is sold overseas, when there is practically no other fruit on the market.

Senator GARDINER.—I have no doubt that the Minister can give many excellent reasons why this bounty has been paid. We are so admirably situated with regard to our seasons, and our seasons are so mild, that we have advantages which other countries do not possess. As far as I can see, those advantages have been impaired by intervention on the part of the Government. Our secondary industries were assisted by means of the Tariff, which has pretty well crushed out of existence the whole of our primary industries.

Senator CRAWFORD.—Mention one that has been crushed out of existence.

Senator GARDINER.—Mining, agriculture, fruit-growing, everything that the Tariff could injure, it has injured.

Senator Sir THOMAS GLASGOW.—The honorable senator does not see eye to eye in this matter with all those who are sitting with him.

Senator GARDINER.—Not now, but a year or two later I shall. However much honorable senators opposite and their friends endeavour to lead the electors to believe that members of the Labour party are bound by a cast-iron platform, the fact is that there never has existed a parliamentary party in which individual liberty was so great as it is in the Labour party, and in which individual expressions of opinion were received in such a tolerant spirit by other members of the party. If it were not so, I should not be the Leader of that party in the Senate, for the simple reason that I frequently, on a Bill of this character, make statements quite contrary to the views of other members of the party. Their view does not affect me, and mine has no bearing upon what they may say. I happen to be a representative of a State which contributes more than half the money that it is proposed by this Bill to give away. I am generally to be found raising my voice against that which tends to increase the cost of living and make heavier the burden of taxation. If ever there was a Government which was charged with the responsibility of reducing the taxation borne by the community, it is this Government, yet there is not a sitting at which something is not proposed which has the effect of making the burden harder for the commercial man. It is not expedient for the Government to make it harder for the workers. If they do it will have the effect of forcing the workers in their hundreds of thousands into the extreme section of the Labour movement, and this Government will go down as other Governments are going down throughout the world.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—If the honorable senator will convert his own party, I will promise him support from honorable senators on this side.

Senator GARDINER.—If we could convert the people outside and induce them to give us a majority in Parliament it would not be necessary to worry about honorable senators opposite. This is another measure to enrich one or two persons; it is really a canning bonus. The canners are to be given more money for canning the fruit than the grower is to get for growing it. When it is a matter of the orchardist desiring to fence his land, the Government will not allow him to buy

wire netting at a reasonable cost. They say to him, "No, you have to assist the Newcastle industry." They impose a dumping duty and prevent the wire netting from coming into Australia at less than an exorbitant rate.

Senator BENNY.—That duty provides extra employment for Australian labour.

Senator GARDINER.—It does, but it is such a roundabout way of doing it. I want honorable senators to realize that it does not pay. We once had an idea of benefiting Australian labour by encouraging the master class to invest money in industry. Victoria has continued to do that for fifty years. The Commonwealth provided a Tariff under which goods could be manufactured at a rate cheaper than that at which they could be otherwise bought. That policy has been carried out for 23 years, yet no benefit has accrued from it. There is no question about its giving employment, but what is the cost? Look at the figures relating to those engaged in primary industries. Take the census of 1901—the year in which we federated—1911, and 1921. That period of 21 years has witnessed the most useful inventions for rendering easy the carrying on of agricultural and orchard pursuits. There has been a great development in the production of fertilizers, the improvement of means of transport, the provision of cold storage, and everything calculated to improve the lot of the agriculturist and the orchardist, in common with others engaged in primary production. In addition, during these years every State has expended hundreds of thousands of pounds in settlement of people upon the land. What has been the result? The Statistician's figures disclose that primary producers increased by 65,000 persons, while those engaged in secondary production doubled their numbers—an increase of nearly 400,000. What kind of development is it which advances the secondary at the expense of the primary industries? We have been making advances in agricultural settlement, fruit-growing, the production of butter, means of transport, and the preservation of fruits and dairy produce until they reach the markets of the world, yet our primary industries are at a standstill. I had my attention drawn to these figures by an opponent writing

against me in the press. I got the most astonishing results when I turned up the figures, and saw what was happening. I found that, compared with twenty years ago, although Australia has now nearly double the population it then had, the people are eating a less quantity of potatoes.

Senator CRAWFORD.—They are eating some other foodstuffs in place of potatoes.

Senator GARDINER.—I am very pleased to learn that they are. The construction I put upon the figures was that prices had become so inflated that the potatoes do not now reach the tables of the workers.

Senator GREENE.—In past years they were so poor that they could not buy anything but potatoes.

Senator GARDINER.—There are hundreds of thousands of persons in Australia who would provide a market if the fruit could be brought to them at a price profitable to the growers, and suitable to the consumers. In another two years the Labour party will be returned to power. It will then do some of the things I am advocating now. One of the things it will do is to bring the price of the produce of this country within the purchasing power of the people, or increase the wages of the workers so that they can purchase the fruit that is grown here. In Sydney it is scarcely possible to buy good fruit. The Government is moving one step at a time, and is always going in the wrong direction. We may side-step as much as we wish the real facts that have to be considered to-day, but if I am any judge of the drift of public opinion, I venture to say that, unless we stop and think, the world-wide unrest will manifest itself in Australia in a manner for which this country is unprepared. Here we have another Bill that will increase taxation and the cost of living, and make it more difficult than it is at present for people of small means to purchase the necessities of life.

Senator BENNY. — Has the honorable senator brought these facts under the notice of his own party? It is opposed to him on his present argument.

Senator GARDINER.—At my time of life it is all that I can do to keep up with my own party, let alone get ahead of it. I am as confident, to-day,

as I was 30 years ago, that my party is travelling rapidly in the right direction. Labour men have long ago come to the unanimous opinion that if a thing is to be done well in the interests of the community, it should be done by the Government. It is wrong to encourage small private companies by means of grants of public money. I believe that the iron bounty meant £200,000 to Hoskins Limited. Last year beef was dearer in Australia than ever before, and yet the Government paid growers a bounty to send it out of the country.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The State cattle stations in Queensland are not paying.

Senator GARDINER.—Why should they pay? Cattle stations are run on the old out-of-date methods, and as soon as they become poor the Government can be approached, and a bounty obtained.

Senator CRAWFORD.—Every State enterprise in Queensland has proved a failure under a Labour Government.

Senator GARDINER.—As to that, we should take the verdict of the people of that State at the last election, after eight years of Labour rule.

Senator CRAWFORD. — A majority of the people voted against the existing Government, as has been the case at every State election there.

Senator GARDINER.—That is altogether too thin an argument. The statement is not in accordance with the figures that I have, and they are official.

Senator BENNY.—But Labour has only two representatives for Queensland in the Federal Parliament.

Senator GARDINER.—I put that down to the extraordinary ability of the Nationalist candidates at the last election. Since the Labour Government of Queensland has faced the electors on four occasions, and the people of that State, who are the best judges in the matter, have each time returned it to power with an increased majority, it is no use saying that Labour administration there has been a failure. In the markets of the world we notice that Queensland credit stands higher than that of any other State.

Senator BENNY.—I thought they were unable to get a loan.

Senator GARDINER.—I was afraid the money lenders were going to boycott them, but they had not the courage to put into effect what some of them had it in their hearts to do. The sugar com-

pany's shares may double in value, but still the Government has to protect that concern in its profit-making career. Now we are told that this is "only a little Bill." We are familiar with that excuse. To-morrow, another measure will be brought down, and it also will be styled a little Bill. In Western Australia, recently, I met a man interested in the gold-fields, and I learned that it is felt that a Government bounty is desirable to assist in the production of gold there. I stated in Western Australia that I regarded myself as the leading opponent of bounties, but that if every other industry was to be given such assistance the gold-mining industry should not be left without help; we should not crush one enterprise to benefit another. We shall no doubt have a request from Western Australia that the gold-mining companies be subsidized to enable them to employ workmen on the fields. This left-handed business of doling out public money to help private enterprise will have to come to a stop some day. Why not put an end to it altogether? What has been the result of this foolish policy during all the years it has been practised? Let us write "failure" across it and begin again. That is what this Government and its supporters should be advocating to-day. Representing, as I do, more primary producers than any other honorable senator, except my New South Wales colleagues, I claim that high Tariffs do not afford true protection. The system of giving bounties must either be all-embracing or it must cease. Why should one industry from its hard-earned proceeds have to find money to keep an ill-managed business going? I notice that the fruit-growers will receive very little advantage from the proposed bounty. It is only to be paid where 1d. per lb. or a trifle more, and in some cases less than 1d., is paid to the growers of the fruit. It is useless to talk about guaranteeing the fruit-grower 1d. per lb., for it costs him that much to gather the fruit, let alone produce it. I oppose the Bill because it will involve wasteful extravagance which the Government seems bent on allowing. The party opposite was returned to office to reduce taxation and lower the cost of living, but it persistently acts in such a way as to make it more difficult than it now is for the people of

Australia to live. I suppose we shall soon have the potato-growers coming along for a bounty. The growers in Tasmania sell potatoes there for £6 or £7 a ton, and when they are shipped to Sydney the dealers charge up to £20, and last year charged as much as £30 a ton for them.

Senator PAYNE.—At that time they were paying £22 in Tasmania for potatoes.

Senator GARDINER.—I am glad to hear that there is some money going into that State. I thought that the potato-growers there were facing ruin, and that the majority of the Nationalists in Tasmania were keeping the Labour Government in power as the only possible solution of their troubles. I shall one day visit that State to see its marvellous people, who, although possessing the richest spot—a land where droughts are unknown—in the Commonwealth, are yet incapable of successfully governing it.

Senator PAYNE.—What does the honorable senator know about Tasmania if he has not been there?

Senator GARDINER.—I have not been to Heaven, yet I have a pretty good idea of what it will be like when I get there. The Bill is to operate for only one year. What is the use of that? It must be either good, bad, or indifferent, and if any benefit is to be derived from it, surely its extension would give greater security to the growers and canners.

Senator BENNY.—The British Army Bill is an annual measure. It is renewed from year to year.

Senator GARDINER.—That is to enable the people to keep a close grip on the military. The introduction of this legislation every two or three months will do little towards encouraging industries. We are suffering more than enough from spasmodic efforts to benefit the community.

Senator BENNY.—If it is a bad Bill, it will be better to have it for one year instead of for all time.

Senator GARDINER.—I am glad that the honorable senator admits that it is a bad Bill, or that if it is a bad Bill it will be better to have it for only one year. Even if it is a good Bill, I presume he admits that another one will be necessary next year. If it is a good Bill, surely it should apply for more than one season, so as to encourage the fruit producer

and the canner to make adequate provision for the future disposal of fruit. The Government apparently shares Senator Benny's idea that it is a bad Bill and should operate for one year only. I think one year is more than enough. The Minister (Senator Crawford) said that the amount involved was about £140,000. That is not a large sum, but we commenced by giving the beef exporters £120,000. The total bounties, paid up to the 16th April, 1924, amounted to £4,096,963, which included £22,802 for canned fruit. I understand that this bounty has already been paid.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The greater part of it has been paid.

Senator GARDINER.—That being so, I have probably been wasting my time in discussing the Bill, since we must indemnify the Government and prevent them from acting illegally. We have not yet adopted the Greek method of dealing with politicians who act contrary to the country's interests. The total amount paid by the canned fruit pools to the fruit-growers for 1921-22-23, was £336,952, and to the canners, £943,211. The canners received nearly three times as much as the growers. Under the pool the loss to the Commonwealth was approximately £492,000. I can see on that side of the Senate at least a dozen champions of the policy of refusing to interfere in any way by Government competition with private enterprise. Holding those views, they should refuse to grant to this Government money to pay to private enterprise when it has failed to run its business successfully. When there is a loss it is paid by the hard-working, toiling masses of the community who receive no consideration whatever from the Government. The police and the military are the only forces used by the Government for the worker's benefit.

Senator CRAWFORD.—This Government has used neither the police nor the military forces against the workers.

Senator GARDINER.—Probably I was carried away by my strong feelings against a Government that represents the people who do. I warn this Government that, unless it immediately reduces taxation throughout this country, and seriously grapples with the burning questions of inflated prices and high cost of living—unless it refrains from legislation of this kind, which takes money from the worker and gives it to the canning and

other companies—it will not, in future, receive the votes of the people of this country. I have tried to point out the dangerous path the Government are treading. They are quite satisfied to pass this Bill, providing, as it does, that the canners shall receive the greater portion of the bounty, the growers the smaller portion, and that the people shall pay all of it.

Senator NEWLAND (South Australia) [3.38].—I have listened with interest to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. They are always interesting, although, at times, not strictly accurate. On this occasion, the honorable gentleman has excelled himself in making statements that will not bear a very close analysis. Senator Gardiner has not for the first time accused the Government and the members of this side of the Senate of committing all the political, social, and industrial crimes possible. It is, of course, his privilege, and, I suppose, his duty to accuse this side of imposing hardships, cruelties, and brutalities upon the working class. We are so accustomed to such outbursts on his part that they fall lightly upon our ears. We take as much notice of them as they deserve.

Senator GARDINER.—There was an outbreak in South Australia a week or two ago that did not fall lightly on the honorable senator's ears.

Senator NEWLAND.—The outbreak did not disturb or surprise me in the slightest degree. I do not consider that the assistance the honorable senator gave the Labour party on that occasion contributed in any way to that outbreak.

Senator McHUGH.—Senator Gardiner's assistance was invaluable.

Senator NEWLAND.—It affected the ultimate decision very little. I refer the Senate to the figures quoted by Senator Gardiner concerning the increased export of fruit. I tried by interjection to explain that those figures concerned fruit which did not come within the scope of this Bill. The fruit provided for in this measure—apricots, peaches, pears, &c.—is not to any extent exported in its natural state. Soft fruits will not stand export, and are not sent overseas in any quantities. Therefore the figures quoted by Senator Gardiner refer to the hardier fruits that will stand shipment overseas, and I am glad to see that there

has been such a considerable increase in the export of Australian fresh fruits. I agree entirely with Senator Gardiner that the Bill should operate over a longer period than one year. It is the duty of the Government to render whatever assistance it can to those industries which are not yet on a sound footing. The persons engaged in canning fruit have had to contend with a great deal of difficulty, and the growers of the fruit specified in the Bill have had a very bad time. Therefore legislation of this character should not be piecemeal. A general scheme should be framed to assist growers of fruit of all descriptions. Last week we passed a Bill to give some measure of relief to growers of certain kinds of grapes. This week we are asked to provide assistance to another section of primary producers who have been very hard pressed. But this legislation does not go far enough. Certain safeguards are provided in the Bill to insure that, to some extent, the benefit given to the canners shall be shared by the fruit-growers. Government inspectors will see that the canners purchase certain quantities of fruits at a certain price. That arrangement is all very well, so far as it goes, but the Government should go further and take steps to provide facilities for getting the canned fruit overseas, or, at least, to the ports of shipment. I shall not dwell upon the disastrous results of the fruit pools of the last few years, but now the Government simply propose to pay the bounty to the canner, and allow him to send his fruit overseas in the best way he can. I think they should help him to get his product to the point at which it is finally disposed of. There are many co-operative canneries, just as there are co-operative distilleries, run by the growers. But these people have very little money to spare; they cannot carry over from one year to another. They must market their crops, and secure a return at the earliest possible moment, and therefore they should come under the special protection of the Government. Any benefit likely to accrue to the growers through the payment of this bounty will come to them through the operations of these co-operative concerns. No doubt some of the proprietary canneries will benefit, but the co-operative canneries should be

encouraged in every conceivable way, because whatever profits they derive from the payment of this bounty will be passed on by them in the shape of dividends or bonuses to the shareholders who supply the fruit. There are other methods by which the Government could aid in the disposal of canned fruits. It is a well-known fact that many canners do not put up their fruit in a very attractive form. In many instances the cases will not stand the rough handling to which they may be subjected on railways or on the steamers carrying them overseas. Therefore, I hope the Government will insist on their inspectors seeing that suitable cases are provided for any fruit that is ready for shipment. More of our fruit should be put up in glass containers. Fruit from other parts of the world is sent into the market in beautifully got-up glass containers, which enable the purchaser to see at once what he is buying; but we continue the almost pre-historic method of putting all our fruit in tins, which we very often disfigure with the most horrible and atrocious labels that the brain of man can conceive. Our fruit is thus discounted in the markets of the world when in competition with that which is sent to market in a more attractive form. The Bill is primarily intended to be of assistance to the growers, notwithstanding the statement of Senator Gardiner that the bounty will go into the pockets of the canners. I want to point out that the canners are put to considerable expense. They have to provide the tins, the labels, and the labour of putting up the fruit, and also the cases in which it is sent to market. Therefore, they are also entitled to some recompense.

Senator GARDINER.—Is it suggested that some one who gets no benefit should pay the cost?

Senator NEWLAND.—I do not know that every one does not benefit to some extent. At present there is nothing to compel a canner to purchase the fruit grown in his district, whereas the Bill provides that he must purchase a certain portion of it.

Senator H. HAYS.—Only if he gets the bounty.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The canner must operate to the full capacity of his cannery.

Senator NEWLAND.—That is so, and that is one reason why the bounty will go back to the grower.

Senator McHUGH.—Does the honorable senator suggest that the price to the consumer should be fixed?

Senator NEWLAND.—I do not see how that could be done. The price to the consumer in Australia will largely be governed by the prices paid under the Bill. Now for the first time we see in plain figures what will be received by the canners and the growers.

Senator McHUGH.—The consumer will pay the price fixed by the canner.

Senator NEWLAND.—After the fruit leaves the canner many people handle it before it reaches the consumer. The whole of the ramifications of our retail system come into play. A fortnight ago, during my trip through the Renmark and Berri districts, I was at the homes of two fruit-growers, who had each of them cut down 250 five-year old apricot trees in full bearing. The reason they gave me was that the State Government had failed to carry out their promise to erect a cannery in the district where these men, most of whom were returned soldiers, had taken up land. The men found that when their apricot trees came into bearing there was no market for their fruit, and so at a tremendous loss to themselves and the country they cut down the trees and planted vines. In their desire to assist the growers the Commonwealth Government should erect canneries wherever there are sufficient trees planted. If a cannery is only in operation for a couple of months during a year, it enables all the fruit grown to be used. The growers certainly get the benefit, but the country also derives benefit from the money coming into Australia through sales overseas.

Senator GARDINER.—Would not we increase the quantity of fruit consumed if we gave the consumers a bounty of 6d. a tin?

Senator NEWLAND.—I have no doubt we should. We should still further increase the quantity consumed if we made the amount 1s. a tin. We could go on in that way as much as we pleased, but I do not know whether the honorable senator has thought of where the money with which to pay the bounty would come from. It puzzles me.

Senator GARDINER.—It puzzles me how we are to get the money provided for in this Bill.

Senator NEWLAND.—This is not an unreasonable payment, such as that which the honorable senator has suggested, and it will do a considerable amount of good to a very deserving section of the community. A canner will provide statements showing how much fruit he has purchased, how much he has canned, and how much he has available for export.

Senator THOMPSON.—Will he also show how much he has paid in wages?

Senator NEWLAND.—I do not think that is provided for.

Senator THOMPSON.—It should be.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The wages are prescribed by Arbitration awards or Wages Boards' decisions, Federal or State.

Senator THOMPSON.—I am not referring to the amount each man receives, but to the total amount paid, because those who are drawing wages will get the biggest cut out of the bounty.

Senator NEWLAND.—Good luck to them if they do! The wage-earners will be drawn mostly from small growers. This disposes at once of the argument that Senator Gardiner worked out so elaborately this afternoon. A canner will be under the control of the Customs Department, just as the distilleries are, and if he secures payment of the bounty improperly, steps can be taken to recover the money from him. The Government seem to have taken every reasonable precaution to ensure that the money goes into the hands of the person whom it is intended to benefit. We hope that this Bill will add considerably to the export trade of Australia. If there is one thing more than another that we need to do it is to increase our exports, because of the growing credit against us in the Old Country. From a national point of view, if not from that of the effect on the grower or canner for the time being, that aspect is worthy of consideration. I believe this Bill, so far as it goes, will be the means of assisting to some extent a certain section of our primary producers, but I would like the Government to take into consideration an extension of their activities, either through the Institute of Science and Industry or through the Customs Department, in an endeavour to solve the problems of the primary producers, one of the most important of which is the getting of their produce to

the markets of the world at a cheaper rate than at present prevails. If the Government will devote attention to that phase of the question, I am sure the predictions of the Leader of the Opposition will never be realized. It would be an advantage to those engaged in primary industries, and of great benefit to Australia generally, which, after all, is the main consideration, to see that everything possible is done to increase the trade, industry, and prosperity of the country. If we do that the people of Australia will return the Government for a further period, instead of relegating it to obscurity, as has been suggested by Senator Gardiner.

Senator FINDLEY (Victoria) [4.8].—This measure is to enable the Government to foot one of the many bills which they have incurred during the short time they have occupied the Treasury bench. It appears that whenever they are in any difficulty, the wiseacres in the Cabinet do one of two things. They either agree to pay a bounty, or appoint a Board. A previous Administration was known as a Government which carried on the affairs of the Commonwealth by regulation. The present Administration appears to go one better. It appoints a Board for any and every thing, and provides bounties for various people when in difficulties. Whenever the Government feels that appointments should be found for its particular friends and supporters, a Board is appointed. In the Senate we are becoming accustomed to a certain procedure on the part of the present Government. When the price of meat here was abnormally high, and, in a neighbouring State, there was a surplus of cattle which could not be sold, the Government said, "We will see you out of your difficulty, and we will make the whole of the people pay." In order to raise the price of meat still higher they paid the meat producers bounties totalling £150,000. One of the reasons advanced was that the people in Victoria would not eat chilled Queensland beef.

Senator CRAWFORD.—Is that not a fact?

Senator FINDLEY.—I wish the Honorary Minister would not keep on emphasizing a statement which is inaccurate. It is incorrect to say that the people of this or any other State will not eat chilled Queensland beef, because as a

matter of fact they have consumed and are now, consuming it.

Senator PEARCE.—Not if they know it.

Senator FINDLEY.—Why should they not? They do not feel disposed to consume chilled beef when they have to pay for it the price charged for fresh meat, and I do not blame them.

Senator Sir THOMAS GLASGOW.—Why were cattle brought in from New Zealand on the hoof?

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—The Bill relates to the payment of bounties on canned fruit, and has nothing to do with cattle. I have allowed the honorable senator considerable latitude, even to the extent of permitting him to emphasize the point which he can only make by way of illustration.

Senator FINDLEY.—I ask these gentlemen, who are fairly well circumstanced financially, if it is fair to keep on requiring the general community, especially the poorer section, to dip their hands into their pockets to assist certain men, some of whom have done exceptionally well over a long period of years. The Honorary Minister in introducing the Bill said that it was not practicable to delay the payment of the bounty until Parliament met. It is a most dangerous precedent for a Government to say that they will shoulder the responsibility of paying out money to a certain section of primary producers, and having done so, to come to Parliament and say, "We have paid this money, and nothing can be undone, no matter what you may think." Why was this done? It is said that the orchardists were in difficulties. How is it proposed to get the orchardist out of his trouble. This Government has expended some thousands of pounds in order to attract settlers from overseas, who are told that Australia is a land of golden opportunities; where millions of acres are available for settlement. It does not matter in what sphere of activity prospective settlers may desire to engage—pastoral, agricultural, or fruit-growing—they are informed by agents, or through agencies acting for the Government, that the opportunities are here. Some of them come to Australia and become orchardists. High prices are paid for land, and when the fruit is marketable, they are informed there is no market at home or abroad for their produce. What a paradoxical

position for a Government to be placed in. The Government told these people to come here because there was a glorious future before them.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Not in fruit-growing.

Senator FINDLEY.—Pastoralists, agriculturists, and orchardists, have been told that there is room for all.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Fruit-growing is already seriously overdone.

Senator FINDLEY.—A Government supporter admits that fruit-growing is seriously overdone, and it is not the first time he has made that statement, here and elsewhere. I ask Senator Guthrie, as a supporter of the Government, to tell the Government that asks people to put their hands in their pockets to start fruit-growing, that the industry is already overdone.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—Senator Guthrie is a member of the Senate; and not merely a Government supporter.

Senator FINDLEY.—He supports every Government measure. The Honorary Minister said that in three years a loss of £618,000 had been incurred in connexion with Fruit Pools, chiefly due to the high cost of processing, and, secondly, to the slump in the British market. Is that statement absolutely correct, and, if so, in what way has the cost been decreased since the period he referred to?

Senator CRAWFORD.—The cost of tin plate is not one-third of what it was.

Senator FINDLEY.—There was necessity for assistance then, because, according to the Minister's statement, the cost of processing was abnormally high.

Senator CRAWFORD.—It was high.

Senator FINDLEY.—Now it is only one-third of what it formerly was.

Senator CRAWFORD.—That is only a part of the cost; wages have not decreased.

Senator FINDLEY.—How are wages likely to come down when the cost of living is soaring day after day.

Senator CRAWFORD.—How is the cost of living to be reduced when wages are high?

Senator FINDLEY.—That argument is as old as the Flood! If a reduction in wages means an improvement in the conditions of the people, then in those countries where the lowest wages are paid

the people should be the most prosperous; but, as a matter of fact, the position is the reverse. The second reason for this loss was, we are told, the slump in the British market.

Senator CRAWFORD. — In the world's markets.

Senator FINDLEY. — There has been a slump, and until the credit of Europe is restored the position in the British market will not alter. Europe's prosperity will naturally be reflected in Australia. Why is there a slump in the British market to-day?

Senator PEARCE. — There is no slump in the fruit market there to-day.

Senator FINDLEY. — There is a temporary revival of the market for dried fruits in Great Britain, because hundreds of thousands of people are attending the British Empire Exhibition.

Senator PEARCE. — Australian canned fruit was not known on the English market.

Senator FINDLEY. — That is a strange statement to make. I thought that Australian fresh and canned fruit had been well known on the British market for years.

Senator PEARCE. — In 1919 I endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to obtain a tin of Australian fruit in the part of London in which I lived.

Senator FINDLEY. — I am not keen on seeing Australian fruit canned, I would rather purchase fresh fruit.

Senator NEWLAND. — It is not possible to export only fresh fruit. Some of it must be canned.

Senator FINDLEY. — There are some fruits that will not keep any length of time and the best way in which to deal with them is to can them, but lots of fruits are canned at a time when, I think, a better market could be found for them if they were sold as fresh fruits. Senator Gardiner stated that it was difficult to procure good fruit to-day. I confirm that statement. I have gone to places in this city and asked to be supplied with the best fruit available. I have taken that fruit home and have been greatly disappointed with its quality. The retailers make the fruit look very inviting to the eye. Apples are one of the finest fruits grown. It is not unusual for one who purchases apples to discover, when slicing them, that they are mealy and worthless. It has been said the reason

is that certain people secure control of the apple trade and send the best apples abroad, placing the inferior variety into cold storage and selling them as best quality apples when they judge that the time is opportune. If it is a good thing to can our best fruits and send the best quality overseas, it should also be good policy to supply first quality fruit to the Australian consumers, especially when those consumers have to "foot the bill" when any bounty is given. The Minister (Senator Crawford) has said that a special shipment of fruit has been sent to the British Empire Exhibition. That, no doubt, has been done for advertising purposes.

Senator GUTHRIE. — Sour apples were sold at Wembley at 6d. apiece.

Senator FINDLEY. — That was the fault of the people who were entrusted with the responsibility of seeing that the matter was handled on proper lines. It does not matter what is the attitude of the Labour party on this Bill, it may as well be passed because the money has been expended. This proposal, however, opens up the very serious question of whether it is the policy of the Government to give a bonus to any section of the community that makes a demand for assistance. This is one way of getting over a temporary difficulty, but it is not the proper way to solve the problem that confronts this Government and that will confront future Governments. It is not a good policy to say "Although the growers and canners have stated that it is impossible to dispose of the stocks on hand, we will show them that it can be done." How was it done in this case? By reducing the price of the fruit and spending a considerable sum of money in advertising. Anything can be disposed of if the price fixed is almost below the cost of production. The probability is that that is what the Government has done.

Senator NEWLAND. — It admits that that is so.

Senator FINDLEY. — It is now asking the taxpayers to put their hands in their pockets to make up the deficiency. The Government says that at the present time the demand for Australian canned fruits cannot be met. Is that because there is at present such a great population in London, or is it because the Government has so organized the business that the future in regard to oversea markets is

assured? If oversea markets are assured and we cannot meet the demand, why the necessity for a bounty?

Senator CRAWFORD.—That is the position to-day, but it was not so six months ago, when this arrangement was made.

Senator FINDLEY.—Then the Government made itself responsible for the bounty without knowing what the future had in store for the fruit industry. Having given a bounty, it discovered there was really no necessity for it. The Minister has admitted that the matter was bungled by a previous Administration. The position has been made more difficult by the actions of this Government. If it is the policy of this Government to subsidize all industries that are on a non-profitable basis, I do not know where it will land itself or what will be the result to the community in the matter of taxation.

Senator CRAWFORD.—Is the honorable senator opposed to this measure?

Senator FINDLEY.—I am opposed to this Bill and to similar measures for the reasons that I have advanced. The Government is asking the community, in effect, to subsidize any section that finds itself in a temporary difficulty. I belong to a party which represents a considerable section of the community. That section finds it very difficult to get either canned or fresh fruit at a reasonable price. The orchardist, on the other hand, cannot find a profitable market for his fruit. Where does the difference go? The Government's way out of the difficulty is to give a bounty to the man who cannot get a satisfactory market for his commodities. That is a method of placating the grower for the time being, it is true, but it is not a permanent solution of the difficulty that confronts the Government. The difficulty must be got over by bridging the gulf that divides the producer from the consumer. If consideration is to be given to the orchardist because he is up against it to-day, where does the general community come in? It is becoming tired of being asked to "foot the bill" every time any section is in a difficulty. It wants the fruit, and the orchardist wants to supply that fruit, yet the Government is not able to suggest a way which will be satisfactory to both. At present the Government is more or less disunited, one section pulling against the other.

Senator NEWLAND.—Something like the Labour party.

Senator FINDLEY.—The Nationalist party has a programme and a policy distinct and separate from the section that calls itself the Country party. The Country party, although numerically weak, exercises a powerful influence in both Chambers and in the Cabinet. That has been evidenced by the legislation that has been introduced from time to time.

Senator NEEDHAM.—This Bill is one evidence of it.

Senator FINDLEY.—Furthermore, the so-called Country party section makes no secret of what it has done and what it proposes to do. The general body of the people want to do the fair thing by the man on the land. We say that that fair and proper thing has not been done, and is not being done, by the giving of bounties, but that a most unfair thing has been done to the general community in asking it to dip its hand in its pocket at a time when it finds it extremely difficult to purchase either fresh or canned fruit at a reasonable price.

Senator McDOUGALL (New South Wales) [4.31].—I had no intention of speaking to the motion for the second reading of this Bill, but some of the remarks from the other side compel me to say a few words in reply. Senator Gardiner has been told that his opinions on this subject are not in agreement with those of other members of his party. His opinions are not in agreement with mine. He belongs to a section that believes in allowing the entry of foreign goods into Australia. I belong to a section which claims that those goods should not be allowed to come in for any consideration. Proof is thus afforded that members of the Labour party can hold diverse opinions, and yet stand together in opposition to a Bill. I oppose this Bill because I do not believe in the giving of bounties. I contend that assistance should be rendered to a languishing industry by a co-operative system among capitalists. Some persons will say, "Where is the money to come from?" It can easily be found. 1923 was a boom year for various companies, and their profits were increased to an enormous extent throughout Australia. They have money to burn; they do not know what to do with it. The

profits have been calculated by the Registrar, not upon the money actually put into the concern, but, in addition, upon all the watered capital. Despite that fact, the increase is shown to be over 20 per cent. compared with 1922. When these companies can put money into huge buildings, when the "poor, unfortunate" beef barons can pay 14,000 guineas for a horse of which the economic benefit to the community is not fourteen pence, they can co-operate to assist a languishing industry in time of need.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Does the honorable senator say that thoroughbred horses are no good to Australia? Where would our troops have been but for them?

Senator McDOUGALL.—I referred to the economic national value of a race-horse. It has no economic value. Racing has no economic value. What does economic value mean? It means something that will increase, not decrease, the wealth of a nation. We need to have a system of co-operation among companies, so that they can help one another in a time of trouble. Senator Newland stated that Australia should increase its exports. What I am more anxious about is that we should discourage some of the present imports. Many stores are now stocked with goods of German origin. The people should be encouraged to consume the products of Australia, and use the goods manufactured here. When in Tasmania recently I noticed that apples were at such a prohibitive price that the working man there could not afford to have them on his table. One could buy Queensland fruit more cheaply than the local article. The Government must realize that it is necessary to deal with fundamental principles, and adopt a more drastic remedy than the bounty system. In my opinion, the best method would be to increase the industrial life of the country. Nations that have depended for expansion upon their agricultural life alone have made very slow progress. The countries that have gone ahead are those that have been industrially vigorous. There should be more smoking chimneys in Australia than there are at present. In some country towns the people employed in the woollen mills should be made shareholders. I have been informed that, in one town alone,

there are 800 shareholders of modest means. Naturally, they would assist in giving publicity to the product of the mill, and assuming that each represented a family of four it is easy to see that the local demand for the article produced would be of considerable help in making the industry payable. If the people generally were encouraged to patronize Australian products instead of those of other countries, there would be no need for such palliatives as bounties. I intend to quote some figures from *The Australian Investment Digest* to show that the public companies in the Commonwealth have sufficient reserve funds at present to float a co-operative company of employers to enable them to assist one another, instead of calling upon the Government to help them. The average profits earned during the first quarter of 1923 (January-March) were 15.83 per cent. greater than the corresponding quarter of 1922. For the second quarter (April-June) the average profits were 16.23 per cent. greater than the profits for the second quarter of 1922. For the third quarter (July-September) the average profits jumped to 22.83 per cent. more than for the corresponding quarter of the previous year. And for the last quarter (October-December) the profits were 23.05 per cent. greater than for the last quarter of 1922. The average profit in every quarter of 1923 showed a considerable advance on the average profit of the preceding quarter. During the last quarter of the year some of the individual group increases in profit were of a substantial nature when compared with the last quarter of 1922. For instance, the wholesale softgoods group showed an increase in profits of 211.14 per cent.; the retail stores group went up to 107.03 per cent.; the rubber and copra plantations group advanced 195.35 per cent.; the farmers' co-operative (so-called) group showed an increase of 104.05 per cent., and the miscellaneous group went up 115.10 per cent. Other groups were more modest. Manufacturing foodstuffs showed an increase of 52.88 per cent., hotels and restaurants 75.94 per cent., and amusement houses 81.90 per cent. Scores of others showed lesser increases, though almost without exception well above the 1922 figures. Of course the capitalistic companies did not pay all the excess profit to the shareholders in the

form of dividends; that would have exposed their tactics. The companies declare that the workmen have had an increase and the cost of living has decreased, but as a matter of fact the cost of living has gone up without a corresponding increase in the wages of the workmen, and therefore the purchasing power of wages has waned. The companies carefully covered up a big portion of the "loot" by transferring the profits to reserves, and as the profits increased each quarter during 1923, there was a greater amount stowed away in reserves. During the first quarter of 1923 (January-March) 77.99 per cent. of the profits were paid out in dividends to shareholders and 22.01 per cent. placed into reserves. During the second quarter (April-June) 74.75 per cent. was paid out in dividends and 25.25 per cent. went to reserves. During the third quarter (July-September) 73.25 per cent. was paid away in dividends and 26.75 per cent. added to reserves. During the last quarter (October-December) 70.45 per cent. was paid away in dividends and 29.55 per cent. added to the reserves. A brief consideration of these figures will give some idea of what real profiteering is. Whereas in the first quarter of 1923 it took 87.99 per cent. of the profits to pay the regular dividends, it needed but 70.45 per cent. of the profits to pay the usual dividend in the last quarter. The net profits increased so much during the year that a lesser percentage was necessary during the last quarter to satisfy the demands of the shareholders. The amount paid into reserves during the last quarter of 1923 (29.55 per cent. of the total profits) was equal to 5s. 10d. in every £1. At this rate of progress the share capital of the capitalists would double in less than $3\frac{1}{4}$ years, which, in turn, means when the reserves are collected in watered stock, that their dividends, though nominally the same, would actually increase 100 per cent. Yet on every possible occasion these companies run to the Government in order to extract money from the pockets of the unfortunate masses. There is no attempt on the part of the Government to reduce taxation. One cannot patronize the picture-show without having to pay a tax on his ticket. The Commonwealth taxes the prizes in "Tattersall's" sweeps, which are condemned by the same authority, since a letter addressed to "Tat-

tersall's" is not accepted by the Postal Department.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—Does the honorable senator intend to connect his remarks with the Bill?

Senator McDOUGALL.—I am afraid I have digressed. If employers adopted the co-operative system to which I have referred there would be no necessity for any industry to ask for a bounty. One of the companies that is making most money out of the industrial life of Australia is the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and as sugar is necessary for canning the Bill will mean increased profit to that company at the taxpayers' expense. The company's profit last year amounted to 20 per cent. on the capital invested. It occupies the highest place in the list, excepting breweries. Scores of other companies have made a profit higher than what would be a fair return on the capital invested. Not content with a profit of 25 or even 50 per cent. some concerns by transfers to reserves and the watering of stock have obtained a return of as much as 100 per cent. on the capital invested. These profits are due to increased exploitation of the working masses.

Senator CRAWFORD.—What profit has been shown by the Leeton cannery, in New South Wales?

Senator McDOUGALL.—The Leeton cannery is a huge success.

Senator GUTHRIE.—It is a huge failure.

Senator McDOUGALL.—It is a huge success, since it has provided profitable employment for a number of workers who would otherwise have been cast upon the labour market. I do not believe in creating industries for the sole purpose of giving employment. An established industry that is not a national asset should not be pampered simply to provide employment. But, if employment can be provided to keep the unfortunate worker in a fair state of living, we shall not need to return to what has been referred to as the "good old days," when a man rose at daylight and turned in at dark; had one suit of clothes, and, for that reason, never entered church on Sundays. I call those the bad old days. I have seen a wonderful improvement in the living conditions of the workers. Many years ago a champion of economic values visited Australia. When lecturing

to unionists at the Trades Hall, he said, "When I came here to-night I expected to see working men, but I see men who are as well clothed as I am." Some one interjected, "Why the hell shouldn't they be?" The social standard of the people has been raised by legislation, and I am proud to say that I have taken some little hand in the work of improvement. I have endeavoured to expound my views throughout Australia, on the same platform, and on the same old box, and I shall continue to do so, no matter what differences occur inside the Labour movement. Our small squabbles are of great concern to our opponents, but honorable senators must not forget that we unitedly fight for the freedom and liberty of the people. We are against the taxpayers providing bounties for companies that are already making huge profits. We should reduce, and not increase, taxation. I shall not oppose the Bill, as portion of the bounty has already been paid. The Government's action, although not very statesmanlike, must be endorsed.

Senator GUTHRIE (Victoria) [4.57].—The handling of the fruit industry of Australia, from first to last, has been one big blunder. The loss to the Commonwealth on the Fruit Pools was over £600,000. This is extraordinary, and I wonder that the people have not risen in protest.

Senator PEARCE.—It is a loss to the Treasury, but not to the people of Australia.

Senator GUTHRIE.—It certainly is a loss to the Treasury. The State Governments and their officials, for many years, entreated the people to grow more fruit, with the result that the production of fruit, more particularly soft fruits, has been seriously overdone. The industry is in such a parlous condition as to warrant it asking for Government assistance. The canned fruit industry is now being spoon-fed with a bounty. I should oppose the Bill, were it not that the various State Governments have encouraged men to settle on the land to grow fruit, and have misled them as to their possible returns. As they are in a more or less hopeless position, it is now necessary to give them a bounty. Fruit-growing is very hard work. The grower works long hours, with, on the average, a poor re-

turn for his labour. He has all sorts of pests with which to combat, and his work continues practically day and night. Yet fruit is too dear for the consumer. It should be on everybody's breakfast table in abundance, and well within reach of the masses. The growers in Australia produce fruit of all classes, second to none in the world. Yet soft fruits are very dear, and something is seriously wrong. No doubt the high prices are due to the cost of distribution and the high rents charged for city shops by landlords.

Senator CRAWFORD.—A good deal of fruit is sold from barrows in the city.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Some of the best and cheapest fruit is sold from the barrows. For 1s. a person can buy only one-tenth of the quantity of fruit that the grower produces for the same money. There is a big leakage somewhere. I have long urged that soft fruit-growing in this country is overdone. This was confirmed the other day at the Benalla Conference, yet 1,500,000 fruit trees in Victoria are coming into bearing for the first time this year. Taking one case of fruit per tree, this means that a market will have to be found for an additional 1,500,000 cases of fruit from little Victoria alone. A market cannot be found in Australia, as, even at moderate prices, we have more fruit than the people can consume. I shall support the Bill, as it benefits the poor unfortunate man on the land. Years ago we had a splendid market for Australian canned fruits, but it was killed through faulty packing and labelling and the goods not being up to sample. Honorable senators talk about finding markets for Australian produce. It is not necessary to look for a market for our wool, simply because it is well classed, and is of a better quality than that of any other nation, so that people of other countries come here to buy it. What applies to wool, can also apply to fruits. I have with me a letter from a gentleman who is entrusted with the purchase of the whole of the tinned fruits for the Indian Army. He writes from India under date 31st January, 1923, as follows:—

As regards the question of finding markets for Australian goods in India, I unhesitatingly say that there is a wonderful opening here if it is only tackled in the right way. As Major

Currie has probably informed you, I am in direct touch, and have had considerable experience in the markets of India. I buy the whole of the tinned goods as supplied to the Army in India.

Right here I must emphasize the point that, until Australian manufacturers realize that the present get-up of their packings, the slipshod way in which they pack, and as regards tinned fruit the total disregard in grading, &c., it will be impossible for them to attempt to compete in the Indian market with their American competitors, notwithstanding the fact that they can land and afford to sell their stuff at an average price of 20 per cent. below the cheapest American article.

As an instance, during the past three years, I have personally been responsible for the purchase of well over 2,000 tons of Australian tinned fruits. This was bought subject to it being passed, after arrival in India, as being up to a certain standard. More than 50 per cent. of this tinned fruit was turned down because of faulty tinning, fruit being unripe, and, as being generally very inferior.

I hope that the Government will take precautions to see that these mistakes are not repeated. They were supposed to have inspectors whose duty it was to pass the fruit as fit for export. This sort of thing does the Australian fruit-growing industry incalculable harm. The letter goes on to say—

As an Australian, I have done my utmost to push Australian goods in India, and I can assure you that it has almost broken my heart to see the way they are throwing business away by their present-day methods of doing business. What the Australian must realize is that when he comes to India he has to compete with powerful American concerns, which are wide awake in every detail of their business. American representatives are to be found from time to time all over India pushing business in every possible way, whereas the Australian manufacturer is content to place an agent at either Bombay or Calcutta, simply to collect indents from small Indian merchants in the local bazaars, making no attempt to exploit the large markets up-country. None of them carry any appreciable ready stocks. In fact, people anxious to try Australian goods have got to go and find them. These statements may sound exaggerated, but I think I can safely claim to have had more experience than any one else in these particular lines in India. Summing up my observations, I would suggest that the Australian manufacturers must put up their goods in a more attractive manner, more up-to-date methods of tinning must be adopted, that the goods they put on the market must be a good quality, and no trouble spared to see that the quality is kept up. As regards tinned fruit, the fruit must be properly graded, and unripe fruit must not be included. When this has been done the manufacturers should get in touch with reliable agents in India, and should be prepared to spend a reasonable amount of money in getting their goods securely placed on the market. It is essential that ready stocks be available in India. The

present procedure is that the agent gets indents from bazaar merchants, and sends them down to Australia to be complied with. All he wants is his commission on the order, not caring the least bit how the stuff arrives, or is handled after arrival. Any further information required by you I would be only too pleased to give.

That letter came direct to me from the gentleman who is entrusted with the buying of the whole of the tinned fruits for the Indian Army. He bought 2,000 tons. It shows how the market we had in India for Australian tinned fruits has been absolutely destroyed, and is further evidence of the gross carelessness and incompetency of some of the Australian packers and exporters. Some one is seriously to blame. Government inspectors must be to blame for passing that sort of stuff and allowing it to go upon the markets of the world. It is a disgrace to the good fruit our hard-working fruit-growers produce. I have received information from London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Birmingham confirming this gentleman's remarks as regards the unequal quality of some Australian tinned fruits.

Senator CRAWFORD.—At what date was that letter despatched?

Senator GUTHRIE.—In January, of 1923.

Senator GREENE.—I think it refers to the period before regulations were brought in for the grading of the fruit.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I understood that there were, at all events, Government inspectors in Victoria.

Senator GREENE.—Yes; but their certificate was simply that the fruit was wholesome, and fit for consumption.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I know that it was possible to buy in Birmingham, Edinburgh, or London, a tin labelled "Australian peaches," and as often as not find that it contained tomatoes.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The Government have not had complaints about the packs of the last two seasons.

Senator GUTHRIE.—The Government may not have had complaints, but I have any amount of complaints about the fruit being unequal in size and quality and wrongly labelled.

Senator GREENE.—I think those complaints refer to the period of which I have spoken.

Senator GUTHRIE.—The position was very bad.

Senator GREENE.—It was bad.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I hope that it has improved. I am pointing out these things so that we may be alert to see that the reputation of Australia as a producer of good fruits is safeguarded in future. Our fruit is good, but we want it to be properly preserved, canned, labelled, and marketed. We do not want to see it shoved away on a back shelf. In Europe, wherever one goes, ten to one it is Californian tinned fruits one is offered by merchants and shopkeepers. It is with the greatest difficulty that one can buy Australian canned fruit. The shopkeepers of the Old Country always try to foist Californian goods on a prospective buyer. At the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, Australia has a most remarkable opportunity of pushing Australian goods and demonstrating to the representatives of the people of the world assembled at Wembley how good Australian fruits are. No country can produce foodstuffs to beat Australia, whether it is meat, butter, canned fruits, fresh fruits, or dried fruits. The foodstuffs produced in Australia are as good as, if not better than, what are produced in any other country. But, although we have this wonderful opportunity of advertising and pushing our wares and of increasing the consumption of our fruits, which we are over-producing and cannot sell unless we find new markets for them or encourage a greater local consumption, every newspaper has recorded the fact that, at Wembley, Australian cooking apples were recently sold as eating apples, and the poor unfortunate purchasers were charged 6d. each for them, whereas possibly the grower here did not get 1d. for them. Those who were charged 6d. apiece for sour apples will say, "We have tried Australian apples; they are no good." I was not satisfied with the answer given by the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs the other day when, in reply to my question upon this matter, he said that he did not think the newspaper remarks were warranted—or words to that effect. These remarks would not have been cabled out by every Australian newspaper representative in London if there had not been some truth in them. Some people must have complained that the apples they bought were sour and dear. We know that they are far too

dear; they should be sold very cheaply at the Exhibition. If we give away our best apples, it would be the best advertisement we could have. Some one is profiteering when he is buying apples from the producer at less than 1d. each and charging the English consumer 6d. for them. I hope the Government will look carefully into this complaint, and that some one will be punished. It is not a matter to be glossed over. If a man in private business made such blunders, he would be "sacked." If our exhibits at the Wembley Exhibition are not carefully handled, we shall lose a golden opportunity to open up fresh markets and a further outlet for the magnificent primary products of the hard-working producers of Australia.

Senator PAYNE (Tasmania) [5.14].—This Bill has a very important principle underlying it which requires close consideration, and I am glad that there has been such a wide discussion upon the merits of the bounty system. I realize that, so far as this year is concerned, we must accept the proposal contained in the measure. The fruit crop this year is so large that, without the aid of the Government, or the community generally, the fruit-growers will find themselves seriously handicapped through not being able to dispose of their surplus products, and many of them will have to discontinue operations. It seems to me that the time has arrived when this Parliament should consider the advisability or otherwise of discontinuing the payment of bounties. The bounty system which has operated during the last year or two—I am not referring to the earlier bounties as applied to butter and other products—has made some producers dissatisfied. In this, the latest instance, while one section of the soft-fruit producers will receive a bounty, another section of them, putting up the same commodity in its original form, will be excluded from the benefit proposed to be given. Some time ago I took part in a deputation to the Minister for Trade and Customs asking him to extend the benefits of the bounty upon soft fruits to co-operative growers and processors who are dehydrating apricots. The reply given to the deputation was very unsatisfactory. The object of giving the bounty is that our surplus apricots, peaches, pears and such like fruit which cannot be consumed in a fresh con-

dition may be canned and placed on the market at a reasonable margin of profit to the producer, and so that there may be none of the crop wasted. If we can produce a sound, wholesome food from our surplus production by any other means, there is no reason for excluding from the provisions of this Bounty Bill any persons who treat this fruit by a process, other than canning. There are two dehydrating companies operating in Tasmania. They have gone to considerable expense in putting up a very fine plant capable of producing an article which is not of second quality to dehydrated apricots produced in any other part of the world. They have met a need in the community, because they have put on the market a sound, wholesome apricot at a time when fresh fruit cannot be procured. If that is so why should they not participate in the benefits that other growers of the same product are to receive under this Bill? Nothing can be done, of course, in regard to last season's crop, but if this system of giving bounties is to be continued for another year, I hope the Minister will take into consideration the representations of the apricot growers and processors. Some of the remarks made during this discussion have been rather extraordinary. One honorable senator has deliberately said that certain huge companies are making enormous profits, implying as it were that canning companies are among the number. He even suggested that this was so because their profits last year had in many cases increased by 22 and 23 per cent. over those of the previous year.

Senator McDougall.—They had increased by as much as 29 per cent.

Senator PAYNE.—The honorable senator is arguing that such profits should put these companies out of court altogether. As a matter of fact if their profits had increased last year by 100 per cent. over those of the previous year, it might not mean a difference of more than from 2½ to 5 per cent. Yet the honorable senator baldly quoted these figures as if he meant to convey to some minds the idea that during last year these companies earned an extra 29 per cent. In the year before last some of the concerns referred to by the honorable senator were not able to pay an ordinary dividend to their shareholders, and although in the following year their profits were certainly much more satisfactory,

they were not sufficient to enable a dividend of more than from 5 to 7½ per cent. to be paid. Therefore the figures quoted by the honorable senator can carry no weight.

Senator McDougall.—I quoted them from the Government Statistician's returns.

Senator PAYNE.—If the honorable senator had analyzed them he would never have made the statement he made to-day. The honorable senator said that with the profits derived the companies constructed enormous buildings and purchased race-horses. These, he said, are of no economic value to Australia. Does the honorable senator suggest that a huge structure is of no economic value? What of the thousands of men, whose cause he is supposed to champion, who are engaged in building such structures?

Senator McDougall.—They should be building factories.

Senator PAYNE.—The honorable senator seems to think that a building is of little use to the community unless it has a smoke stack; but let me assure him that we are not entirely dependent upon factories. If such were the case, we should be in a most unfortunate position. We depend to a greater degree upon primary production.

Senator McDougall.—Primary industries are very slow in building up a nation.

Senator PAYNE.—Our primary industries are responsible for the satisfactory position in which Australia is to-day. I am as keen as is any other man that our secondary industries should develop, but the conditions in Australia will have to alter materially before we can find markets overseas for the goods we hope to produce in the near future.

Senator NEEDHAM.—What does the honorable senator want?

Senator PAYNE.—I want the secondary industries to be conducted upon a reasonable basis.

Senator NEEDHAM.—What is that?

Senator PAYNE.—Under such conditions that every man will give of his best to his employer. The output should be as large as possible.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Is not every workman assisting to do that now?

Senator PAYNE.—Unfortunately such is not the case, and that is mainly the cause of the high cost of living.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Where is it not being done?

Senator DRAKE-BROOKMAN.—In every factory in Australia.

Senator McDUGALL.—I suppose the honorable senator will again refer to bricklayers.

Senator PAYNE.—Bricklayers, for instance, are laying only from 300 to 350 bricks per day, and not because they cannot handle more.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Where?

Senator PAYNE.—That is the general experience.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Why not give a specific case instead of generalizing?

Senator PAYNE.—This question affects the whole of Australia, and one can speak only in general terms.

Senator NEEDHAM.—The honorable senator is libelling Australian workmen.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—Order!

Senator NEEDHAM.—He is libelling our workmen.

Senator PAYNE.—I am charged with libelling Australian workmen.

The PRESIDENT.—I ask the honorable senator to resume his seat. When I called for order, Senator Needham continued to interject, although he knows that a call to order must be obeyed.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Quite right.

The PRESIDENT.—The honorable senator has been persistent in his interjections. It was not until the discussion had degenerated into a dialogue between Senator Needham and the honorable senator addressing the Chair that I intervened. I must insist upon Senator Needham refraining from arguing with the Chair.

Senator NEEDHAM.—I am not arguing with the Chair, but with Senator Payne.

Senator PAYNE.—I have no desire to enter into a dialogue, and I was endeavouring, as I always do when speaking in the Senate, to address the Chair. I have been accused of libelling Australian workmen, but no one has a greater respect than I have for the true worker.

Senator NEEDHAM.—The honorable senator does not show it by his remarks.

Senator PAYNE.—What I have stated is a fact, and if the honorable senator cares to go about with his eyes closed, I cannot help it.

Senator NEEDHAM.—We have not been given the facts.

Senator PAYNE.—I have had personal experience in Melbourne within the last few months.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Then let the honorable senator's experiences be recorded in *Hansard*.

Senator PAYNE.—It has appalled me during the last few years to know that there are good grounds for the complaint mentioned in the communication which Senator Guthrie has quoted. Unfortunately, there are a few people who do a great deal of damage to the industry in which they are engaged by placing produce of an inferior quality upon the market in order to secure a larger profit than would otherwise be derived. A short time ago I read an article in a Sydney newspaper, in which a commercial agent living in Java bitterly complained of the difficulty he experienced in obtaining Australian goods up to standard. He pointed out to the merchant to whom he wrote, that it would be exceedingly difficult to maintain the trade unless greater care was taken in the execution of the orders placed by the merchants in Java, and that there was a possibility of losing the trade altogether. I trust that those engaged in primary production will see that their products are of the highest standard. I have no doubt that if the inspectors do their work thoroughly, further losses will not be sustained in consequence of careless grading and packing. Senator Newland suggested that we might make our preserved fruit more attractive by enclosing it in transparent glass containers, but much as I would like that to be done, I am afraid that the cost would be prohibitive. Glass containers can be obtained in other countries with which we have to compete for much less than in Australia.

Senator GRAHAM.—Cannot we manufacture them here?

Senator PAYNE.—Not at the price at which they can be made in other countries. I trust that with the development of the glass manufacturing industry in Australia, the day is not far distant when we shall be able to use glass containers, which are more attractive than the ordinary tin cans.

Senator GRANT (New South Wales) [5.28].—The idea of paying bounties to those engaged in the fruit or any other

industry does not appeal to me at all. During the debate we have been informed that some of the industries affected have experienced substantial losses, and that those of various Fruit Pools during the last three years have amounted to £618,000. After the money has been expended the Government are seeking to indemnify themselves against what may be termed a further loss of £140,000. Senator Guthrie, in discussing the question from the stand-point of increasing the consumption of fruit in Australia, barely touched upon a point that should be followed up by the Government before they expend money to assist the canning industry. I do not know anything of the companies concerned, but presumably they are not companies which are in any way impoverished. I do not know who waited upon the Government and succeeded in inducing them to hand out this money before Parliament was consulted, but it was not fair. The Government should be severely censured for working behind the backs of the people.

Senator CRAWFORD.—It was all done publicly.

Senator GRANT.—If the Government were to direct their energies towards the marketing of fruit in the Commonwealth, they would be rendering a greater service to the people than by handing over large sums of money to canners. When one wishes to purchase fruit in the shops, or elsewhere, it is found that the price is quite beyond the average purchaser. It should be the first objective of the Government to see that the people obtain a plentiful supply of good fruit at a reasonable price. Despite the fact that millions of trees are coming into bearing this year, we find that in the city, in country townships, and even at Mildura, it is almost impossible to purchase good fruit at a fair price. It should be the concern of the Government not only to see that high grade fruit is exported, but that supplies are made available locally at a more reasonable rate. The extraordinarily high rents that must be paid for shops in the city is one reason why fruiterers are unable to retail the products of the orchardist at a price within the purchasing power of the ordinary individual. While exorbitant rents continue to be charged, fruit, in common with other commodities, must necessarily be sold at

a high price. The Government should deal with this question by making shop sites cheaper.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The Commonwealth Government?

Senator GRANT.—Yes. Instead of doing that they are collecting money at the Customs House, and by other means, and handing it out to companies engaged in the preserving and canning of fruit. It is unreasonable to pay such a large sum by way of bounty on fruit exported to Great Britain when local consumers are unable to secure a sufficient quantity of good fruit at a reasonable price. That is the position to-day. The Government's proper course would have been, instead of expending this money behind the back of Parliament to provide the Australian people with good fruit at a reasonable price.

Senator CRAWFORD (Queensland—Honorary Minister) [5.35].—The Leader of the Opposition (Senator Gardiner) dealt somewhat extensively with the general principle of assisting Australian industries either by way of a Customs duty or the granting of a bonus. He said, in effect, that as a result of the policy adopted by the Government, of assisting Australian industries in such a way, practically little progress had been made either in agriculture or in manufactures. His statements on that matter were very wide of the mark, because during the last twenty years very considerable and satisfactory progress has been made in both our primary and secondary industries. The honorable senator chose for comparison the years 1901, 1911, and 1921. In 1901 in the whole Commonwealth 8,812,463 acres were under crop, while in 1920-21 the area was 15,069,858 acres, an increase of 6,257,395 acres. It is quite true that the number of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits did not increase in the same ratio as the area under crop. Any one possessing a knowledge of primary industries knows that as a result of improved implements the same number of men is not now required to work a similar area as was necessary twenty years ago, but that a very large number indeed find employment mostly in our cities in the manufacture of new and up-to-date implements. It is interesting, also, to note the manner in which the in-

creased yield of some products has kept pace with the increased area under crop. I have selected wheat to illustrate that point, and have taken the yield in the years mentioned by Senator Gardiner. In 1901 the yield of wheat was 48,000,000 bushels, in 1910-11 the quantity was 95,000,000 bushels, and in 1920-21 it was 145,000,000 bushels. Those figures prove that under the policy of Protection our agricultural industries have not languished. The honorable senator referred to the mining industry, which, he said, is in a very bad way because of the policy of Protection. I do not think anybody will deny that one of the reasons why there are not now so many persons engaged in gold mining and in the mining of other precious metals is that some of our richest known mines have been worked out—their closing down has been due to the fact that their ore bodies have either become exhausted or have become much poorer than those originally worked. I should like to quote a few figures to show what has taken place in the coal-mining industry. In 1901 the total output of coal was 6,880,651 tons. The Commonwealth *Year-Book*, I regret to say, does not give the output for 1911, but for 1920 it was 12,968,285 tons—nearly double what it was twenty years previously. With regard to secondary industries, which Senator Gardiner said were in as parlous a state as our primary industries, it is interesting to note that in 1901, in New South Wales, 66,135 persons were employed in factories. In 1911 that number had increased to 108,000, and in 1921 there were 145,000 employees. In Victoria the number of factory employees in 1901 was 66,529. In 1911 the number had increased to 111,000, and in 1921 it had reached 140,000. For the whole of the Commonwealth the figures are—

1901—197,000.

1911—311,000.

1921—386,000.

I think those figures sufficiently answer Senator Gardiner's remarks in relation to the general effect of our policy of Protection.

Senator McDougall.—We should have three times that number of factory hands. If we had we would be better off.

Senator Crawford.—I quite agree with the honorable senator. At the be-

ginning of the last fruit season the canneries were not prepared to operate, except in a very limited way, without some assistance from the Government. The assistance given by the bounty, first of all on all fruit that was canned, and, secondly, an additional bounty on all exported fruit, had the result that the whole of the canneries worked up to their full capacity, and, as a consequence, 27,000 tons of fruit were processed, most of which would otherwise have gone to waste. The growers have received for that fruit £230,000. The distribution of such a sum as that benefits, not only the growers, but the whole community, particularly the men and women employed in picking and packing the fruit in the orchards and in processing it in the factories. Their wages have been fixed by either the State or the Federal Arbitration Court. Under the awards, girls employed at piece-work rates have earned as much as from £7 to £8 per week. Something has been said regarding what might be done in the way of establishing co-operative canneries. It may interest honorable senators to know that the co-operative and Government canneries processed very nearly half the fruit upon which the bounty has been paid. Criticism has been levelled against the quality of the fruit exported from the Commonwealth. The whole of the fruit dealt with during the past two seasons was processed under the supervision of Commonwealth inspectors, and, so far, no complaint has been made regarding its quality. Indeed, it has been said that the grading, the packing, and the labelling are now quite equal, if not superior to, the best Californian. Our canned fruit is bringing as high a price in the oversea markets as is the Californian fruit. When the first Pool was established, the position of the canned fruit trade was very bad indeed. I know that four years ago canned fruit could be purchased in California at 2s. per dozen 30-oz. tins, and it was absolutely necessary, in the interests of the fruit industry in Australia, that the Government should render some assistance in the marketing of the fruits, otherwise practically the whole of those engaged in the industry would have been ruined. I do not think anybody will contend that this important industry is not worth what it has cost the people of Australia to maintain. The position is considerably better to-

day than it has been for some years, and it is hoped that after this season the industry will prosper without such assistance as it has been found necessary to give it during the last four years.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—

1. The Comptroller-General may appoint such persons as he thinks fit to be inspectors for this Act.

Senator McDUGALL (New South Wales) [5.51].—I move—

That the words "he thinks fit," sub-clause 1, be left out with a view to insert in lieu thereof the words "have passed the prescribed examination."

We have heard some damning statements about people—thieves and robbers, I call them—who have exported inferior fruit, with the result that Australia's foreign market has been seriously affected. Every inspector should be required to pass an examination to prove his fitness for the work.

Senator CRAWFORD (Queensland—Honorary Minister) [5.53].—I can assure honorable senators that the men who have been appointed as inspectors are experts. All the complaints that have been heard arose before the appointment of Commonwealth Inspectors, and no complaint has been made since the canning has been done under their supervision.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 (Appropriation).

Senator NEEDHAM (Western Australia) [5.54].—This clause stipulates that the bounty shall be payable "provided that where fruit is packed in tins containing a quantity other than that specified in the first and second schedules the rate of bounty shall be such as the Minister, by notice in the *Gazette*, determines." In the first schedule there is a reference to tins each containing 30 oz. net. I presume that the bounty has been paid on tins containing that weight.

Senator CRAWFORD.—If the weight were larger or smaller, the bounty would be increased or decreased in proportion.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Can the Minister explain why, during the period that the bounty has been payable, the net weight has been reduced to 24 oz.?

Senator CRAWFORD.—The bounty in such instances was reduced proportionately.

Senator NEEDHAM.—According to the weight of the contents of the tin?

Senator CRAWFORD.—Yes.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Was the Minister aware that the weight of the contents had been reduced?

Senator CRAWFORD.—Yes.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 6 (To whom bounty payable).

Senator GRANT (New South Wales) [5.55].—Seeing that the Bill will be operative for only four months longer, is it the present intention of the Government to ask for an extension of the provision?

Senator CRAWFORD.—No. The whole of the fruit will have been processed by September next.

Senator GRANT.—Do the Government intend to ask that the measure shall apply to the fruit to be grown next year?

Senator CRAWFORD.—No. Only to fruit canned up to the 30th September next. That is provided for in clause 4.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [5.56].—Will the Minister accept a friendly suggestion from the Opposition? If he desires to increase the consumption of fruit, why not offer a bounty to the local consumer, and make an empty fruit tin legal tender for 3d. or 6d. instead of sending our good fruit out of Australia. We should then be inducing the people to consume the product of their own country. Before long I am afraid that the best of our fruit will not be marketed in Australia. A visitor from Tasmania recently told me that only a very poor class of apple was obtainable in Hobart, although Tasmania is essentially an apple-growing State.

Senator CRAWFORD.—I am afraid the honorable senator's suggestion is too grotesque.

Senator GARDINER.—I am surprised at the Minister characterizing it as grotesque when it would benefit the community generally.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8—

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, where the canner satisfies the Minister that compliance with the conditions

specified in sub-sections (1) and (2) of this section was not in the circumstances practicable, the Minister may direct—

(b) that the canner be relieved of his liability to repay the whole or any portion of the bounty, as the case may be.

(5) Any person required in pursuance of this section to repay any bounty paid to him who has not, within fourteen days of the date of the notice under sub-section (3) of this section, obtained a direction by the Minister under the last preceding sub-section and who fails to repay the bounty shall be guilty of an offence.

Penalty: £100 or imprisonment for six months.

Senator NEEDHAM (Western Australia) [6.0].—I wish to make sure that the bounty is paid only on fruit actually canned.

Senator CRAWFORD.—It is not paid on fruit that is not canned.

Senator NEEDHAM.—I believe that it is. To remove all doubt, I move—

That in sub-clause (4), paragraph (b), the words "the whole or any" be left out with a view to add at the end of the paragraph the words "on the quantity canned."

Senator CRAWFORD (Queensland—Honorary Minister) [6.3].—Clause 5 sets out clearly that the bounty is to be paid only on fruit actually canned. The effect of the clause now before the Committee is that, if a canner does not process all the fruit received by him and passed by an inspector as fit for processing, he shall be liable to forfeit the bounty on the fruit that he does can.

Senator NEEDHAM.—Is not the bounty paid before the fruit is canned?

Senator CRAWFORD.—No.

Senator NEEDHAM.—The clause suggests it.

Senator CRAWFORD.—That is not so. Clause 5 sets out the conditions under which the bounty is payable. Clause 8 imposes upon the canner the obligation to treat all fruit that has been purchased and passed by an inspector.

Senator NEEDHAM (Western Australia) [6.6].—Those are the very words to which I take exception—that bounty is to be paid on all fruit offered. We want to ensure that the fruit is absolutely canned before the bounty is paid. That this is a loop-hole in the clause has been admitted by the Attorney-General in another place. There is a danger of the bounty being paid on fruit that is about to be canned. For that

reason, I propose the amendment that the bounty be paid only when the fruit is canned.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The clause provides that if the canner does not comply with these provisions he shall forfeit his right to any bounty paid on fruit already canned.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [6.7].—I have not quite grasped how the bounty has to be paid. We are really passing a Bill for a payment that has already been made, irrespective of whether it was paid at the wrong stage. Very little of the fruit specified will ripen between now and September. I am not worrying about the exact wording of the clause, because the canning to which it refers has already taken place, and possibly the bounty has already been paid. The Bill is necessary to ensure that the Government have acted according to the law. It is really a measure validating an illegal expenditure by the Government.

Amendment negatived.

Senator McDougall (New South Wales) [6.8].—I move—

That the word "or," in the last line of the clause, be left out, with a view to insert in lieu thereof the word "and".

If this amendment be agreed to the penalty will be £100 "and" six months' imprisonment. I do not wish to interfere unnecessarily with the Bill, but the penalty should be heavy to prevent a man from committing an offence. No person, if he can defraud the Government of £10,000 or £20,000, fears a penalty of £100. The penalty as provided does not fit the crime.

Senator CRAWFORD (Queensland—Honorary Minister) [6.9].—I cannot accept the amendment. In addition to the stated penalty, any bounty which has been illegally obtained has to be repaid. Any further punishment for such offence would be vindictive.

Senator McDougall (New South Wales) [6.10].—I reiterate that the penalty should fit the crime, and should be sufficient to prevent attempts to defraud the Government. Any person obtaining a large sum of money by illegal means can easily pay a fine of £100, but if the penalty is imprisonment, he will think twice before he commits the offence.

Senator HOARE (South Australia) [6.12].—I support the amendment moved by Senator McDougall. If a person is able to defraud the Government of £1,000 a fine of £100 will not influence him one iota.

Senator BENNY.—Why not trust our Judges?

Senator HOARE.—The statement read by Senator Guthrie proves to this Senate that even some Government inspectors apparently need supervision. The prospect of imprisonment is a better deterrent than a fine of £100, or even £1,000.

Senator BENNY.—The honorable senator would appoint an inspector to inspect the inspectors.

Senator HOARE.—Yes; and probably we would then have honest inspectors. A lot of palm oil must have been used to allow fruit in bad condition to leave Australia. In the interests of Australia the persons responsible should be liable to imprisonment.

Senator BENNY (South Australia) [6.13].—The Government have acted rightly in erring on the side of mercy. Unfortunately, honorable senators opposite, like the Soviet Government of Russia, believe that a man guilty of the slightest offence should have his head cut off. The Government have provided in the clause a fair alternative, leaving it to the discretion of a Judge whether a man should be fined £100 or imprisoned for six months. It would be a dastardly thing to inflict both penalties. Why not send the offender to gaol for life, or cut off his head? Is that what the honorable senator wants?

Senator HOARE.—We wish to prevent the fruit industry of Australia from being ruined by unscrupulous vagabonds.

Senator BENNY.—We have not yet reached a state of Sovietism. We should trust our Judges, who are an absolute credit to the British Empire.

Senator GRANT.—Does the honorable senator remember the result of Mr. Ryan's appeal to the Privy Council?

Senator BENNY.—I know of cases where Judges have upset the decisions of other Judges. Mr. Justice Higgins said that a Judge in making an award was not bound to adhere to his own decision in a previous case. The Government have provided a fair and merciful penalty, but honorable senators oppo-

site wish to make it vindictive. I hope the Government will stick to the clause as it stands.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [6.16].—The remarks of Senator Benny lead me to think that a severe penalty is necessary. The Government are benefiting the fruit-growers and canners at the expense of the public. The penalty for the offence with which the clause deals should be severe; in fact, the fine should be greater than the amount illegally obtained. Senator Benny attempts to defend his friends, and like a good lawyer, having nothing to say in their defence, he attacks this side of the Senate and accuses the Opposition of wanting to use the arbitrary power of Soviet Russia. I have yet to learn that the actions of the Soviet have exceeded the atrocities committed under Czardom.

Senator BENNY.—The honorable senator has not read the history of the Soviet of Russia.

Senator GARDINER.—Senator Benny makes rash statements that are unsupported by fact. It is difficult to catch persons who defraud the Government, and therefore the fine to be a deterrent should be severe.

Senator CRAWFORD.—An offender has also to repay the bounty.

Senator BENNY.—He not only has to repay it, but is liable to six months' imprisonment.

Senator GARDINER.—He repays only when he is caught defrauding the Government. The penalty to be effective should be more than six months' imprisonment. The commercial morality of our people does not quite reach that high standard that we wish them to attain.

Senator BENNY.—It is the highest standard in the world.

Senator GARDINER.—It is all very well to shut one's eyes to what is happening. There are people in this community who think that the Government are easygoing, and if they can make money out of them, they will do so. Senator McDougall's proposal that the penalty should be £100 and six months' imprisonment is exceedingly moderate. This money is to be given to certain people, but if they are not satisfied with what they get, and seek to get more by fraudulent means, surely no penalty is too severe to inflict on them. A cash penalty is not calculated to restrict persons from acting in this fraudulent way.

Senator BENNY.—Does the honorable senator want the Senate to fix the penalty, or does he propose to leave it to the Judge to do so?

Senator GARDINER. — I want to allow the Judge to impose the penalty; but at the same time I want that penalty to be commensurate with the offence. If the clause is not amended, all that the guilty person will have to do is to say, "I hand back what I have got illegally, and you can fine me £100."

Senator BENNY.—If a man gets anything illegally the Judge may sentence him to six months' imprisonment. Such a punishment would disgrace him for all time.

Senator GARDINER.—I am speaking of the treatment of fraudulent traders.

Senator CRAWFORD.—Fraud is dealt with in a subsequent clause, under which the period of imprisonment may be twelve months. The clause now under consideration deals with the non-repayment of the bounty.

Senator GRANT.—Secured under false pretences?

Senator CRAWFORD.—Secured irregularly, but not by fraud.

Senator GARDINER.—When honorable senators opposite make comparisons with what is happening in Soviet Russia, they need to be reminded that under the old régime more atrocities were perpetrated on the people of Russia than are now reported under the new order.

Senator GRANT (New South Wales) [6.24].—The respect I had for the decisions of Australian Judges has been greatly shaken by the fact that the Privy Council has upset six or seven decisions of Queensland Courts.

Senator REID.—The honorable senator is exaggerating.

Senator GRANT.—I know that what I am saying may be distasteful to honorable senators. Senator McDougall does not propose that the period of imprisonment must necessarily be six months. It may be not more than one week.

Senator BENNY.—The amendment says, "and imprisonment for six months."

Senator GRANT.—Under the Acts Interpretation Act, where a penalty is fixed at £100, it does not mean that the Judge must impose a fine of £100—that is the maximum; and, similarly, where the imprisonment is fixed at six months, the sentence may be for a

shorter period. That matter has frequently been discussed in this Chamber, and I am surprised that Senator Benny should not realize that he is in error. The amendment will not affect any person who acts honestly. Dishonest people, who get money by false pretences, should certainly be prevented from doing so, or be punished for having done so to the extent recommended by Senator McDougall.

Senator FINDLEY (Victoria) [6.28].—The discussion will not serve any useful purpose. Earlier in the day I regretted the fact that the Government had already paid away the bounty, and that Parliament was just called upon in an informal way to say, "It has been done, and there the matter ends." No amendment will have any effect, because the money has already been paid away.

Senator O'LOUGHLIN.—It is only an indemnity Bill.

Senator FINDLEY.—It is, and therefore I ask what purpose an amendment will serve? However, the discussion has served to indicate the principle that the Government have established. They are apparently powerless to do anything to a person who does not comply with the requirements of the Bill. What provision is there against the wrong-doer if the money has already been paid?

Senator CRAWFORD.—The offence remains.

Senator FINDLEY.—Now that the horse is gone the stable door is to be locked. Will the Minister say that this Bill can be made retrospective; that, although the bounty has been paid to certain persons, the provisions of this Bill will apply to them?

Senator CRAWFORD.—Clause 8 will certainly apply.

Senator FINDLEY.—Then the Bill is retrospective. If we have power to impose fines on those who have not carried out certain obligations in respect to the bounty, will the Minister say that Parliament has the power to call on them to pay back what they have received if this Bill is not approved by Parliament?

Senator CRAWFORD.—No offence such as is provided for here has yet arisen. No one has yet been called upon to repay any of the bounty.

Senator FINDLEY.—But the Government did not have the power, and they have not the power yet, to deal with these people. They have already paid away

the money, although the Bill has not yet been passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 8 p.m.

Senator FINDLEY.—This clause should receive serious consideration by the Committee as £120,000 of the taxpayers' money has been, or is to be, paid by way of a bounty to canners in different parts of Australia, who in turn have to guarantee in a measure that the growers of fruit will be paid a certain sum for their produce. It would be interesting to know what amount, so far, has been paid to the canners and what sum the grower of fruit for canning purposes has received. I have heard that the canners have already received the major portion of the bounty, although the fruit-growers are the people about whom we should be most concerned. Anterior to and during the war those engaged in the canning industry in Australia made enormous profits, and in order to amass greater wealth they put forward a proposition a short time before the bounty was considered which really amounted to sabotage. In other words, fruit trees were to be destroyed so that the price of canned fruit would be maintained. The Government are cognisant of that fact, and that the methods in respect of payment of the bounty are faulty. Quite a number of inspectors or supervisors appointed by the Government are available to see that this scheme is carried out, and it would be interesting to know what amount is expended in the payment of salaries to such officers. What are the duties of the inspectors? Have they merely to exercise direct supervision over the fruit taken to the canneries, or are they also empowered to weigh the fruit? We should also know if the weight is ascertained after the fruit has been canned. I, in common with other honorable senators, am anxious to know what protection the taxpayers are receiving from the Government in connexion with this scheme. I do not suggest that the departmental officers are not carrying out their work efficiently. Those engaged in the canning business are not in it for the good of their health, but because it is a payable proposition. As some have suggested that fruit trees should be destroyed, they might still be disposed to carry out their original intention to ensure higher prices being charged to the community, thereby giving them increased profits. Any one

who endeavours to defeat the object of the Bill should receive scant consideration from the Government; but there may, of course, be a few minor offences for which a nominal penalty would be sufficient. The Government, apparently, anticipate that some may not be disposed to do the fair thing by the community, and have provided that the maximum penalty shall be £100 or six months' imprisonment. Any one who sets out to defraud the community should be imprisoned; a fine would mean little or nothing to some men. A couple of cases came before a presiding police magistrate in one of which a man was charged with stealing goods to the value of 9d. It was his first offence, and he was imprisoned for three months without the option of a fine. In the other case, which was heard shortly afterwards, a man engaged in business in a big way was charged with stealing goods to the value of £30, and he was fined £20. When power is to be given to those who preside in the Courts to inflict a fine or to order imprisonment there is the possibility of unconscious bias being shown. I am anxious to see the community protected, and I suggest that the provision for a fine of £100 be struck out, and imprisonment for six months provided for.

Senator McDUGALL (New South Wales) [8.10].—Senator Benny suggested that I should move to make the penalty £500, and that is more like the amount which a man who is dishonest should be compelled to pay. The clause provides that persons guilty of this offence shall be liable to a fine of £100 or imprisonment for six months, but, I think, without being in any way vindictive, that those who defraud the people should be imprisoned for the period stated, without having the option of paying the fine.

Senator CRAWFORD.—This clause does not deal with fraudulent practices.

Senator McDUGALL.—Clause 8 distinctly sets out the penalty for this offence. As we have been informed on numerous occasions, penalties are governed by a section in the Acts Interpretation Act, which provides that the penalty shown is the maximum. A person guilty of this offence deserves more than a fine, because it would pay him to defraud the community of large sums of money.

Senator CRAWFORD.—He has to repay the amount illegally obtained.

Senator McDOUGALL.—I know that. I am prepared to leave the matter in the hands of a Judge, but am still of the opinion that those guilty of serious offences should be imprisoned without the option of a fine.

Senator BENNY (South Australia) [8.14].—If Senator McDougall wishes to still further increase the penalty why does he not move to make the fine £10,000, and provide that a guilty person shall be hanged by the neck until he is dead? He appears to think that every one who violates this miserable little clause should be hanged. If that is the honorable senator's opinion, why does he not bring forward such a proposition.

Senator GARDINER.—Why does not the honorable senator submit it?

Senator BENNY.—I am satisfied with the Government's proposal.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [8.15].—Our proposal is a moderate one for dealing with persons who commit fraud. Senator Benny seems to think that we desire something outrageous. Nothing of the kind will be asked for by honorable senators on this side. Senator Findley, most moderately, has asked the Minister some very pertinent questions regarding the amount of bounty paid to the canning section of the industry, and the amount paid to the fruit-growers. He desires to be informed whether it is a fact that a greater amount has been paid in bounty to the canners than the fruit-growers have received for the whole of their fruit. Our proposal is so fair, so just and moderate, that only those who want to shelter their supporters and friends will oppose it. We have no desire to shelter wrong-doers. I realize that we on this side have advanced a considerable distance ahead of the views held by Senator Benny. We have no bloodthirsty ideas. The party to which that honorable senator belongs has always been the champion of that kind of thing. We have never advocated the imposition of heavy penalties, but on occasions like this, when the people's money is being used to subsidize a section of the community, we want to see that it is protected. To provide such a paltry penalty is almost an encouragement to wrong-doers.

Senator CRAWFORD (Queensland—Honorary Minister) [8.19].—The amount of bounty that has been paid up to the present time is between £40,000 and

£50,000. We do not know exactly what the growers have already received, but when the whole of the fruit has been paid for—and some of it has not yet been delivered—they will have received, at the prices stated in the Bill, approximately £230,000. This penalty is to be imposed upon any person, company, or government which refuses to repay bounty that has become forfeited, owing to a breach of the provisions of this clause. There is no reference to fraud in this clause; another clause deals with that matter. The proposed amendment, if agreed to, might create a very difficult position. Supposing it is held that one of the State canneries has committed a breach of these provisions, and it is called upon to refund a certain amount of bounty, if it refuses to do so, how are you going to imprison it? The same thing would apply to a co-operative company. A fine could be imposed against a government or a company, but one could not very well imprison either. Each would be liable to pay back any amount of bounty that became forfeited. On refusal, it would become liable to a penalty of £100, or a period of imprisonment not exceeding six months, and the amount of bounty could be recovered in any court of law. It is left to the discretion of the court to impose the penalty which, in its discretion, it considers will meet the case.

Senator FINDLEY (Victoria) [8.22].—Under the clause there is alternatively a fine or imprisonment. Why should any differentiation be made between evil-doers? That is the position which the Honorary Minister (Senator Crawford) says will arise. When the Honorary Minister again replies, I want him to tell me the quantity of fruit that has so far been taken to canneries, and whether that fruit has been weighed.

Senator CRAWFORD.—I gave the Senate that information in my second-reading speech.

Senator FINDLEY.—Was it weighed by the supervisors?

Senator CRAWFORD.—No, I did not say the supervisors weighed it. The canners weigh it.

Senator FINDLEY.—I want to know who weighs the fruit before it is canned. Is it then weighed? Is it weighed after it has been canned, and, if so, by whom? Do the quantities taken in correspond with those taken out?

Senator McDUGALL (New South Wales) [8.25].—The Minister (Senator Crawford) made the most foolish statement I have heard from a responsible Minister when he said that one could not imprison a company or a government. I refer him to the case in which the manager of a company is undergoing a term of imprisonment at present for having defrauded the Commonwealth.

Senator CRAWFORD.—This clause does not deal with fraud.

Senator McDUGALL.—No; but it deals with offences against the law.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The honorable senator is magnifying the offence.

Senator McDUGALL.—I want to make the penalty fit the offence. The clause does not do that. I want to leave it to the Judges to decide whether there should be a long or a short term of imprisonment, and whether the penalty should be a heavy or a light one. The manager or secretary of a company, or whoever is liable for a breach of the law, can be imprisoned, so there would be no difficulty in carrying out such a provision.

Question—That the word proposed to be left out be left out (Senator McDUGALL's amendment)—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	14
Majority	...	...	4

AYES.

Barnes, J.	McHugh, C. S.
Findley, E.	Needham, E.
Gardiner, A.	O'Loughlin, J. V.
Graham, C. M.	
Hoare, A. A.	
McDougall, A.	

Teller:

Grant, J.

NOES.

Benny, B.	Newland, J.
Crawford, T. W.	Payne, H. J. M.
Duncan, W. L.	Pearce, G. F.
Glasgow, Sir Thomas	Reid, M.
Hayes, J. B.	Thompson, W. G.
Hays, H.	
Kingsmill, W.	
Millen, J. D.	

Teller:

Drake-Brockman, E. A.

PAIR.

Barker, S.	[Foll, H. S.]
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Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 12 agreed to.

Clause 13 (Offences against Act).

Senator McDUGALL (New South Wales) [8.33].—The fine of £100, imposed under this clause, is similar to that provided under a previous clause, but the alternative penalty here is twelve months' imprisonment, whereas, in the former case, it is only six months. Why should there be such a difference in the prison penalty, while the fine section is the same?

Senator CRAWFORD.—Because there is a difference in the offence.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 14 and 15 agreed to.

First Schedule.

Senator THOMPSON.—I should like to know why pineapples are placed at the bottom of the list.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The sums that the Government proposes to pay in bounty were submitted to all those interested, and no exception was taken to the amount of the bounty on pineapples.

Schedule agreed to.

Second and third schedules agreed to.

Preamble and title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

STEAMSHIPS FOR LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE:
COST OF CONSTRUCTION—AUSTRALIAN
NAVY: PUNISHMENT FOR OFFENCES:
RETIRING AGE—POSTAL LETTER-BOX
REGULATION.

Motion (by Senator PEARCE) proposed—

That the Senate do now adjourn.

Senator KINGSMILL (Western Australia) [8.40].—A few days ago I asked for some particulars regarding certain steamers being built for service on the coast of Australia in looking after the lighthouses and buoys. I wished to be informed of the dimensions of the steamers, their dead weight, and registered tonnage, their speed, coal capacity, and price. I received an answer which astounded me, and I could only think that a mistake was made. These vessels are to be of 750 tons dead weight, and the cost is said to be £116,562 each. That represents a building cost of £155 8s. 3d. per ton, although the current rate of

ship-building in England is between £9 and £10 per ton. I know the class of steamer that is required, and I am acquainted with practically every inch of the Western Australian coast, which covers some 3,000 odd miles. The steamer with which this particular work was done on the Western Australian coast for about 30 years cost originally about £9,000. It did its work efficiently and with dispatch, and with every comfort to those engaged in that duty. If the price mentioned is the correct one, it is an enormity.

Senator DUNCAN.—Where are the vessels being built?

Senator KINGSMILL.—At Cockatoo Island, by the Commonwealth Shipping Board. It is not a matter of protection; it is a policy of madness. If the contract has been let at the figure mentioned we are throwing at least from £150,000 to £180,000 into the sea. I have no wish to embarrass the Government, and I am still more reluctant to embarrass Australia. We have a great and rich country, but there never was a country so rich and great that it could withstand such a procedure as this. I should like to hear some explanation of the position before I take the first opportunity, on a future occasion—as I intend to do, if the price given is accurate—of moving further in the matter.

Senator McDUGALL (New South Wales) [8.42].—I ask the Minister representing the Minister for Defence if his attention has been drawn to articles published in a certain newspaper with respect to the class of punishment meted out to the men and boys in the Australian Navy. For a very slight offence, severe punishment is inflicted. The cells at Garden Island, in which the men are imprisoned, are so unhealthy that members of the Naval Force, who are unfortunate enough to be confined in them, often contract severe colds. It is said that penalties that have for many years been regarded in the British Navy as obsolete are imposed on Australians. I am not sure that there is any truth in the newspaper statements to which I am referring, but as one who desires to see an Australian Navy built up

by Australians I hope that such a state of affairs will not be tolerated.

Senator PEARCE.—To what newspaper is the honorable senator alluding?

Senator McDUGALL.—The Sydney Labour daily. We often wonder why Australian lads are loth to join the Navy. If the conditions are as they are alleged to be, the disinclination of our youths to become naval men is largely justified. The service is not specially attractive to a young man who desires to marry and bring up a family in decent comfort when he knows that he will be compulsorily retired when 40 years of age. Exchange men are sometimes brought out from Great Britain, and put in the places of Australians, although the former are less efficient. I have in mind the case of a man who very shortly will reach the age of 40 years, and will then be compelled to retire. He looks 30 years, and is as good as many men of 20 years of age. These disabilities prevent our youth from joining the Australian Navy. Men of the British Navy are continually being transferred to Australia, thus causing among our young men a lack of interest that tends to destroy the efficiency of our navy as an Australian unit. These anomalies should be rectified. The old drastic punishments are not required in the Australian Navy any more than they are in the mercantile marine. I ask the Minister to make inquiries into this matter.

Senator GRANT (New South Wales) [8.47].—Is the Minister representing the Postmaster-General aware that a good deal of opposition is being shown to a recent postal regulation insisting on residents equipping their homes with letter boxes? What is behind this regulation? Is it to secure the dismissal of a number of letter-carriers, and still further increase the ranks of the unemployed?

Senator CRAWFORD (Queensland—Honorary Minister) [8.48].—The object of the regulation requiring residents to fix letter-boxes on their gates is to expedite the delivery of mails, and to better protect their correspondence. Referring to Senator Kingsmill's remarks about the cost of vessels that are proposed to be built in Australia for the lighthouse service, I am not prepared to answer them at this stage, as I had no notice of his intention to bring the matter forward. I cannot help expressing a doubt as to

vessels of this class being built for £10 a ton in England. However, I shall bring the honorable senator's remarks under the notice of the Minister for Trade and Customs.

Senator DUNCAN.—Has the Minister any doubt about the price quoted for these particular vessels?

Senator CRAWFORD.—No; the price quoted, in my reply to Senator Kingsmill's question yesterday, is correct.

Senator DUNCAN.—That will not satisfy me.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [8.49].—Respecting the letter-box regulation which was mentioned by Senator Grant, I think that the Department is making a great mistake in imposing the new restriction, and, therefore, should seriously re-consider the position. Under a recent regulation, a letter-carrier will take letters to the eighth floor of a business house in the city of Sydney, but will not deliver them at a private citizen's door which is more than 12 feet from the footpath. This point is worthy of consideration. Is the Postal Department being run in its own interests, or in those of the people who pay for it? The regulation will be of no advantage to the letter carriers, but its object may be to dispense with the services of a section of them. Who will benefit by the regulation? Thousands of people, who have to erect letter-boxes, rarely receive letters. Most persons, unlike members of Parliament, who are inundated with letters, do not carry on correspondence, and yet, if their front door is more than 12 feet from the footpath, they are to be compelled to provide letter-boxes on the front fence. The Postal Department, to effect economy, is inconveniencing thousands of people. The public, who pay for the postal service, are entitled to some consideration. The Postmaster-General would be well advised, even at this late hour, to re-consider the whole position. The regulation is not justified, and the people are demanding its withdrawal. The regulation is to have effect on the 1st July.

Senator NEWLAND.—It should have come in on the 1st April.

Senator GARDINER.—That would have been a most excellent date for its introduction. The old system of delivering letters should not be abolished

merely to increase the profits of the Postal Department. I have never complained of mismanagement of the Post Office, because I have had some remarkable experiences of its efficiency. On the question of cost, it would be far better to appoint additional letter carriers than to make the community suffer to the extent of 3s. or 4s. for each letter-box provided. It might result in a saving to the Department, but not to the community. We should extend more consideration to the people, who have to pay dearly for this departmental economy.

Senator HOARE (South Australia) [8.53].—Does the regulation compel a person to fasten the letter-box to the front gate? A friend of mine has informed me that he had a letter-box fastened a few feet inside the gate and he received a notice from the Postmaster-General stating that the letter-box must be fixed on the gate.

Senator CRAWFORD.—It must be fixed either on the front gate or on the fence.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [8.54].—I shall bring under the notice of the Minister for Defence (Mr. Bowden) Senator McDougall's complaint concerning the infliction of obsolete punishments on men in the Australian Navy, and I shall be much surprised if it is substantiated. There are many officers in the Australian Navy, especially the younger generation of naval officers, who are not in favour of obsolete punishments. As a matter of fact, those punishments were abolished in the British Navy as a result of the enlightened opinions held by the younger generation of officers. The British Navy is run by the Admiralty, which consists of naval officers. I shall ask the Minister to make inquiries. Regarding the retirement of members of the Navy at 40 years of age, I suggest to Senator McDougall that there is another side to the picture. There is no service that so fits a man to succeed in any walk of life as does the Navy. It turns out a handy man. It is a fighting service, and therefore aged men cannot be retained. If I were a member of the Navy I should certainly choose to be turned out at 40 rather than at 50 years of age, because I would then have a better chance of adapting myself to civil life. However, I shall bring the honorable senator's remarks under the notice of the Minister

for Defence. Regarding the remarks of Senators Gardiner and Hoare—although the Acting Postmaster-General has already replied—I should like to point out that I am one of the so-called victims of this regulation. But I frankly confess that I am not suffering as a result. Senator Hoare has been wrongly informed, as the regulation does not provide that the box must be fixed to the gate. If it does, I am offending, as my box is fixed to the front fence. Under the old system a letter carrier knocked at the door or rang the bell, and waited until the resident answered. Under the new system, he puts the letters in the box and blows a whistle, and the person concerned walks from his door to the fence to get his mail. Contrast those conditions with those of Central Australia. I have in mind a deputation that waited upon me at Newcastle Waters, where a man helping to develop that country informed me that he received his mail once in six months, and had to ride 30 miles each way to obtain it. He only asked that he should get a delivery once in three months. If there were any money to spare I should give that man a mail service once in three months rather than spend it in saving city people the trouble of walking from their front door to the front fence.

Senator DUNCAN.—A letter carrier told me that this regulation should have been enforced years ago.

Senator PEARCE.—Senator Gardiner contrasted the position of a man with a box on his front fence with that of a business firm on the eighth floor of a building. In those huge buildings there would probably be five or six firms on one floor, and if the letter carrier did not deliver to each floor it would necessitate a row of boxes on the ground floor extending, perhaps, along the whole frontage of the street. The probability is that a letter carrier would deposit more letters on one floor of a huge building than he would deliver in a street in a residential suburb. We should have some sense of proportion. I really believe that the hardship is very much exaggerated. The Acting Postmaster-General (Senator Crawford) has made a note of the complaints, however, and will give them consideration.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Senate adjourned at 8.58 p.m.