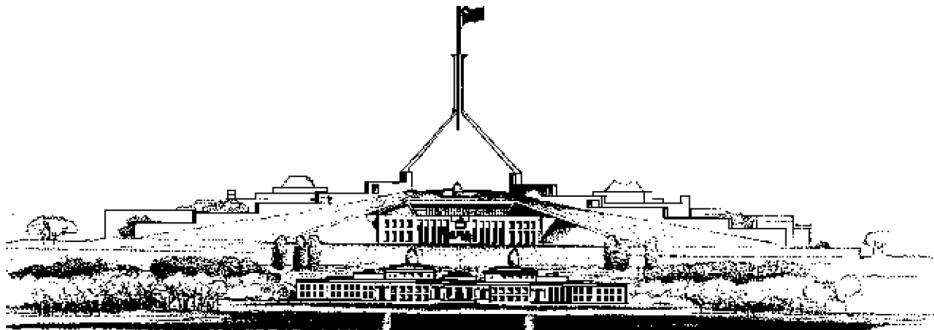




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives Official Hansard

No. 37, 1932
Wednesday, 14 September 1932

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—THIRD PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION: THIRD PERIOD.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

His Excellency the Right Honorable SIR ISAAC ALFRED ISAACS, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

LYONS GOVERNMENT.

(FROM 12TH APRIL to 13TH OCTOBER, 1932.)

Prime Minister and Treasurer ..	The Right Honorable Joseph Aloysius Lyons.
Attorney-General, Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Industry	The Honorable John Greig Latham, C.M.G., K.C. (Senator the Honorable Alexander John McLachlan, Acting Attorney-General and Minister for Industry—from 1st March to 17th August, 1932; the Right Honorable Stanley Melbourne Bruce, C.H., M.C., Acting Minister for External Affairs—from 1st March to 22nd June, 1932. The Right Honorable Joseph Aloysius Lyons—Acting Minister for External Affairs—from 23rd June to 25th July, 1932.)
Assistant Minister ..	The Right Honorable Stanley Melbourne Bruce, C.H., M.C.
Minister for Defence ..	Senator the Right Honorable Sir George Foster Pearce, K.C.V.O.
Postmaster-General ..	The Honorable James Edward Fenton.
Minister for Trade and Customs	The Honorable Henry Somer Gullett; (the Honorable John Arthur Perkins, Acting Minister—from 23rd June to 24th September, 1932.)
Vice-President of the Executive Council	Senator the Honorable Alexander John McLachlan.
Minister for the Interior ..	The Honorable Robert Archdale Parkhill.
Minister for Commerce ..	The Honorable Charles Allan Seymour Hawker (to 23rd September, 1932).
Minister for Health and Minister for Repatriation	The Honorable Charles William Clanan Marr, D.S.O., M.C., V.D.
Assistant Minister ..	Senator the Honorable Walter Massy Greene.
Assistant Minister ..	The Honorable Josiah Francis.
Assistant Minister ..	The Honorable John Arthur Perkins.

(For designations of Ministers prior to 12th April see preface to volume 133.)

(FROM 13TH OCTOBER, 1932.)

Prime Minister and Treasurer ..	The Right Honorable Joseph Aloysius Lyons.
Attorney-General, Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Industry	The Honorable John Greig Latham, C.M.G., K.C.
Minister with Portfolio ..	The Right Honorable Stanley Melbourne Bruce, C.H., M.C.
Minister for Defence ..	Senator the Right Honorable Sir George Foster Pearce, K.C.V.O.
Minister for Trade and Customs	The Honorable Henry Somer Gullett.
Postmaster-General ..	The Honorable Robert Archdale Parkhill.
Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister administering the Development Branch and the Commonwealth Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	Senator the Honorable Alexander John McLachlan.
Minister for Health and Minister for Repatriation	The Honorable Charles William Clanan Marr, D.S.O., M.C., V.D.
Minister for the Interior ..	The Honorable John Arthur Perkins.
Minister for Commerce ..	The Honorable Frederick Harold Stewart.
Assistant Minister (Treasury) ..	Senator the Honorable Walter Massy Greene.
Assistant Minister for Defence, and Minister administering War Service Homes	The Honorable Josiah Francis.
Assistant Minister ..	The Honorable James Allan Guy.

THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE.

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION : THIRD PERIOD.

President—Senator the Honorable P. J. Lynch.

Chairman of Committees—Senator the Honorable Herbert Hays.

Temporary Chairmen of Committees—Senators William Carroll, Micheal Rapheal O'Halloran, the Honorable Herbert James Mockford Payne, Matthew Reid and Burford Sampson.

Leader of the Opposition—Senator the Honorable John Barnes.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—Senator Micheal Rapheal O'Halloran.

Badman, Albert Oliver	South Australia
Barnes, Hon. John	Victoria
Brennan, Thomas Cornelius, K.C.	Victoria
Brown, Gordon	Queensland
Carroll, William	Western Australia
Colebatch, Hon. Sir Hal Pateshall, K.B., C.M.G.	Western Australia
Collings, Joseph Silver	Queensland
Cox, Charles Frederick, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.	New South Wales
Crawford, Hon. Thomas William	Queensland
Daly, Hon. John Joseph	South Australia
Dooley, Hon. John Braidwood	New South Wales
Duncan-Hughes, John Grant, M.V.O., M.C.	South Australia
Dunn, James Patrick Digger	New South Wales
Elliott, Robert Charles Dunlop	Victoria
Foll, Hattil Spencer	Queensland
Grant, Charles William	Tasmania
Greene, Hon. Walter Massy	New South Wales
Guthrie, James Francis	Victoria
Hardy, Charles	New South Wales
Hayes, John Blyth, C.M.G.	Tasmania
Hays, Hon. Herbert	Tasmania
Hoare, Albert Alfred	South Australia
Johnston, Edward Beirtram	Western Australia
Kingsmill, Walter	Western Australia
Lawson, Hon. Harry Sutherland Wightman	Victoria
Lynch, Hon. Patrick Joseph	Western Australia
MacDonald, John Valentine	Queensland
McLachlan, Hon. Alexander John	South Australia
Millen, John Dunlop	Tasmania
O'Halloran, Micheal Rapheal	South Australia
Payne, Hon. Herbert James Mockford	Tasmania
Pearce, Right Hon. Sir George Foster, K.C.V.O.	Western Australia
Plain, William	Victoria
Rae, Arthur	New South Wales
Reid, Matthew	Queensland
Sampson, Burford, D.S.O., V.D.	Tasmania

THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION: THIRD PERIOD.

Speaker—The Honorable George Hugh Mackay.

Chairman of Committees—George John Bell, C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.

Temporary Chairmen of Committees—Malcolm Duncan Cameron, James Allan Guy (to 13th October, 1932), George William Martens, John Henry Prowse, David Riordan, Victor Charles Thompson, Edward John Ward, and Thomas Walter White, D.F.C., V.D.

Leader of the Opposition—The Right Honorable James Henry Scullin.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—The Honorable Francis Michael Forde.

Leader of the Country Party—The Right Honorable Earle Christmas Grafton Page.

Deputy Leader of the Country Party—The Honorable Thomas Paterson.

Leader of the Australian Labour Party, New South Wales—The Honorable John Albert Beasley.

Abbott, Hon. Charles Lydiard Aubrey	Gwydir (N.S.W.)
Anstey, Hon. Frank	Bourke (V.)
Baker, Francis Matthew John	Oxley (Q.)
Beasley, Hon. John Albert	West Sydney (N.S.W.)
Bell, George John, C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.	Darwin (T.)
Blacklow, Archibald Clifford, D.S.O.	Franklin (T.)
Blakeley, Hon. Arthur	Darling (N.S.W.)
Bruce, Right Hon. Stanley Melbourne, C.H., M.C.	Flinders (V.)
Cameron, Malcolm Duncan	Barker (S.A.)
Casey, Richard Gardiner, D.S.O., M.C.	Corio (V.)
Collins, Thomas Joseph	Hume (N.S.W.)
Corsier, Bernard Henry	Wide Bay (Q.)
Dein, Adam Kemball	Lang (N.S.W.)
Dennis, Samuel	Batman (V.)
Fenton, Hon. James Edward	Maribyrnong (V.)
Forde, Hon. Francis Michael	Capricornia (Q.)
Francis, Hon. Josiah	Moreton (Q.)
Gabb, Joel Moses	Angas (S.A.)
Gander, Joseph Herbert	Reid (N.S.W.)
Gardner, Sydney Lane	Robertson (N.S.W.)
Gibson, Hon. William Gerrand	Corangamite (V.)
Green, Hon. Albert Ernest	Kalgoorlie (W.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.)
Gullott, Hon. Henry Somer	Henty (V.)
Guy, Hon. James Allan	Bass (T.)
Harrison, Eric Fairweather	Bendigo (V.)
Harrison, Eric John	Wentworth (N.S.W.)
Hawker, Hon. Charles Allan Seymour	Wakefield (S.A.)
Hill, Hon. William Caldwell	Echuca (V.)
Holloway, Hon. Edward James	Melbourne Ports (V.)
Holman, Hon. William Arthur, K.C.	Martin (N.S.W.)
Hughes, Right Hon. William Morris, K.C.	North Sydney (N.S.W.)
Hunter, James Aitchison Johnston	Maranoa (Q.)
Hutchin, Arthur William, D.S.O.	Denison (T.)
Hutchinson, William Joseph	Indi (V.)
James, Rowland	Hunter (N.S.W.)
Jennings, John Thomas	South Sydney (N.S.W.)
Lane, Albert	Barton (N.S.W.)
Latham, Hon. John Greig, C.M.G., K.C.	Kooyong (V.)
Lawson, George	Brisbane (Q.)
Lawson, John Norman	Macquarie (N.S.W.)
Lyons, Right Hon. Joseph Aloysius	Wilmot (T.)
Mackay, Hon. George Hugh	Lilley (Q.)
Makin, Norman John Oswald	Hindmarsh (S.A.)
Maloney, William	Melbourne (V.)
Marr, Hon. Charles William Clanan, D.S.O., M.C., V.D.	Parkes (N.S.W.)
Martens, George William	Herbert (Q.)
Maxwell, George Arnot, K.C.	Fawkner (V.)
McBride, Philip Albert Martin	Grey (S.A.)
McClelland, Hugh	Wimmera (V.)
McGrath, David Charles	Ballarat (V.)
McNicoll, Walter Ramsay, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.	Werriwa (N.S.W.)
Nairn, Walter Maxwell	Perth (W.A.)
Nelson, Harold George	Northern Territory

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT—*continued.*

Nock, Horace Keyworth	Riverina (N.S.W.)
Page, Right Hon. Earle Christmas Grafton	Cowper (N.S.W.)
Parkhill, Hon. Robert Archdale	Warringah (N.S.W.)
Paterson, Hon. Thomas	Gippsland (V.)
Perkins, Hon. John Arthur	Eden-Monaro (N.S.W.)
Price, John Lloyd	Boothby (S.A.)
Prowse, John Henry	Forrest (W.A.)
Riley, Edward Charles	Cook (N.S.W.)
Riordan, David	Kennedy (Q.)
Rosevear, John Solomon	Dalley (N.S.W.)
Scholfield, Thomas Hallett, M.C., M.M.	Wannon (V.)
Soullin, Right Hon. James Henry	Yarra (V.)
Stacey, Fred Hurtie	Adelaide (S.A.)
Stewart, Hon. Frederick Harold	Parramatta (N.S.W.)
Thompson, Victor Charles	New England (N.S.W.)
Thorby, Hon. Harold Victor Campbell	Calare (N.S.W.)
Ward, Edward John	East Sydney (N.S.W.)
Watkins, Hon. David	Newcastle (N.S.W.)
Watson, William	Fremantle (W.A.)
White, Thomas Walter, D.F.C., V.D.	Balaclava (V.)

THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION.

(THIRD PERIOD.)

JOINT.

HOUSE.—The President (Chairman), Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees in the House of Representatives, Senator Brennan, Senator Carroll, Senator Daly, Senator Dunn, Senator Foll, Senator Hoare (appointed 25th November, 1932), Senator O'Halloran (discharged 25th November, 1932), Mr. Gardner, Mr. Hunter, Mr. James, Mr. Martens, and Mr. Price.

LIBRARY.—Mr. Speaker (Chairman), the President, Senator Sir Hal Colebatch, Senator Collings (appointed 25th November, 1932), Senator Daly, Senator Dooley (discharged 25th November 1932), Senator Elliott, Senator Millen, Senator Sampson, Mr. Abbott, Mr. Hughes, Dr. Maloney, Mr. Nairn, Mr. Rosevear, and Mr. White.

PRINTING.—Senator Cox, Senator Hardy, Senator J. B. Hayes, Senator Hoare (discharged 25th November, 1932), Senator Lawson, Senator MacDonald (appointed 25th November, 1932), Senator Rae, Senator Reid, Mr. Gander, Mr. A. Green, Mr. E. F. Harrison, Mr. Jennings (appointed 24th November, 1932), Mr. McBride, Mr. McNicoll, Mr. Stewart (discharged 24th November, 1932), and Mr. Thompson.

SENATE.

DISPUTED RETURNS AND QUALIFICATIONS.—Senator Crawford, Senator Dooley, Senator Elliott, Senator Guthrie, Senator Hoare, Senator O'Halloran, and Senator Payne.

REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES COMMITTEE.—Senator Sir Hal Colebatch (Chairman), Senator Barnes (discharged 26th November, 1932), Senator Brennan, Senator Dooley, Senator Duncan-Hughes, Senator Elliott, Senator O'Halloran (appointed 25th November, 1932), and Senator Rae.

STANDING ORDERS.—The President (Chairman), the Chairman of Committees, Senator Brown (appointed 25th November, 1932), Senator Crawford, Senator Dooley (discharged 25th November, 1932), Senator E. B. Johnston, Senator Kingsmill, Senator McLachlan, Senator O'Halloran, and Senator Rae.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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

THE ACTS OF THE SESSION.

(THIRD PERIOD.)

APPROPRIATION ACT 1932-33 (No. 49 of 1932)—

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 thirty-three and to appropriate the Supplies granted by the Parliament for such year.

APPROPRIATION ACT (No. 2) 1932-33 (No. 62 of 1932)—

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

APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) ACT (No. 2) 1932-33 (No. 63 of 1932)—

An Act to grant and apply an additional sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and thirty-three for the purposes of Additions, New Works, Buildings, &c., and to appropriate such sum.

APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) ACT 1932-33 (No. 33 of 1932)—

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

BEACHES, FISHING GROUNDS AND SEA ROUTES PROTECTION ACT (No. 73 of 1932)—

An Act relating to the protection of Beaches, Sea Fishing Grounds and Routes used by Vessels engaged in Trade and Commerce with other countries and among the States.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE ACT (No. 61 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Bills of Exchange Act 1909-1912*.

COLONIAL LIGHT DUES APPROPRIATION ACT (No. 67 of 1932)—

An Act relating to Colonial Light Dues.

COLONIAL LIGHT DUES COLLECTION ACT (No. 66 of 1932)—

An Act to provide for the collection, on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of Colonial Light Dues (Bahamas and Leeward Islands).

COLONIAL LIGHT DUES (RATES) ACT (No. 66 of 1932)—

An Act to impose Colonial Light Dues.

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS ACT (No. 58 of 1932)—

An Act to suspend the operation of the *Committee of Public Accounts Act 1913-1920*.

COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC SERVICE ACT (No. 72 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Commonwealth Public Service Act 1922-1931*.

COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ACT (No. 52 of 1932)—

An Act to suspend the operation of the *Commonwealth Public Works Act 1913-1921*.

DEFENCE ACT (No. 50 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Defence Act 1903-1927*.

DESIGNS ACT (No. 53 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Designs Act 1906-1912*.

FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT (No. 35 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Financial Emergency Acts 1931*, and for other purposes.

FINANCIAL RELIEF ACT (No. 64 of 1932)—

An Act to reduce Taxation ; to remove anomalies in relation to Invalid and Old-age Pensions ; to provide Financial Relief for Wheat-growers and other Primary Producers ; and for other purposes.

HIGH COMMISSIONER ACT (No. 34 of 1932)—

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

INCOME TAX ACT (No. 75 of 1932)—

An Act to impose Taxes upon Incomes.

INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 76 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1922-1931*.

INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS APPROPRIATION ACT (No. 2) (No. 69 of 1932)—

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

JUDICIARY ACT (No. 60 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Judiciary Act 1903-1927*.

JURY EXEMPTION ACT (No. 59 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Jury Exemption Act 1905-1922*.

NAURU ISLAND AGREEMENT ACT (No. 54 of 1932)—

An Act to approve an Agreement made between His Majesty's Government in London, His Majesty's Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, and His Majesty's Government of the Dominion of New Zealand, in relation to the Island of Nauru.

NEW GUINEA ACT (No. 61 of 1932)

An Act to amend the *New Guinea Act 1920-1926*.

THE ACTS OF THE SESSION—*continued.*

PATENTS, TRADE MARKS AND DESIGNS ACT (No. 70 of 1932)—
An Act relating to Patents, Trade Marks and Designs.

SALES TAX ACT (No. 6) (No. 48 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Act (No. 6)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 1) (No. 39 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 1)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 2) (No. 40 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 2)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 3) (No. 41 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 3)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 4) (No. 42 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 4)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 5) (No. 43 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 5)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 6) (No. 44 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 6)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 7) (No. 45 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 7)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 8) (No. 46 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 8)* 1930–1931.

SALES TAX ASSESSMENT ACT (No. 9) (No. 47 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Sales Tax Assessment Act (No. 9)* 1930–1931.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA GRANT ACT (No. 36 of 1932)—

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

SUGAR AGREEMENT ACT (No. 74 of 1932)—

An Act to approve an agreement made between His Majesty's Government of the Commonwealth of Australia and His Majesty's Government of the State of Queensland and for other purposes.

SUPPLY ACT (No. 2) 1932–33 (No. 32 of 1932)—

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 thirty-three.

TASMANIA GRANT ACT (No. 38 of 1932)—

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.

UNITED KINGDOM AND AUSTRALIA TRADE AGREEMENT ACT (No. 57 of 1932)—

An Act to approve the provisions of an agreement made between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia and arising out of the Conference of Representatives of the Governments of the British Dominions held at Ottawa in July and August, One thousand nine hundred and thirty-two.

WAR SERVICE HOMES AGREEMENT ACT (No. 56 of 1932)—

An Act to approve an agreement made between His Majesty's Government of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Commissioners of the State Savings Bank of Victoria and for other purposes.

WAR SERVICE HOMES ACT (No. 2) (No. 68 of 1932)—

An Act to amend section twenty-nine of the *War Service Homes Act* 1918–1929, as amended by the *War Service Homes Act* 1932.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA GRANT ACT (No. 37 of 1932)—

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

WHEAT BOUNTY (CLAIMS) ACT (No. 71 of 1932)—

An Act relating to the making of claims under the *Wheat Bounty Act* 1931.

WIRE AND WIRE NETTING ACT (No. 55 of 1932)—

An Act to amend the *Wire and Wire Netting Act* 1927.

BILLS OF THE SESSION.

(THIRD PERIOD.)

COMMERCE (TRADE DESCRIPTIONS) BILL.

COMMONWEALTH CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC SERVICE BILL (No. 1).

CRIMES BILL (No. 2).

CUSTOMS BILL.

HIGH COURT PROCEDURE BILL.

SEAT OF GOVERNMENT (SUPREME COURT) BILL.

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Mr. LYONS.—There is no authority for the published statement. The immediate necessity before the Government is the conversion of the New South Wales loan which will mature on the 1st November, but the conversion of other overseas indebtedness is under the constant consideration of the Government. Only by putting our house in order and maintaining our credit abroad can we hope for any improvement in the rate of interest on the overseas debt. We must be ready to convert the balance of the debt when the opportunity offers.

INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS.

Mr. NAIRN.—The Government has intimated that the bill to amend the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act will provide for, among other things, making the property of a pensioner subject after his death to a charge for the pension drawn during his lifetime. I ask the Prime Minister whether this provision will be retrospective, and whether, when both husband and wife are pensioners, the enforcement of the charge will be suspended until after the death of the survivor?

Mr. LYONS.—I hope to introduce the amending bill at an early date, when full details will be given to the House. Meanwhile the points raised by the honorable member are receiving consideration.

UNEMPLOYMENT LOAN.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—In connexion with the loan for unemployment relief that was raised last year, was provision made for a sinking fund which would amortize the loan in a brief period similar to the provision attaching to the loan for the payment of the wheat bounty?

Mr. LYONS.—I shall get the information for the honorable member.

FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY.

CHARGE FOR ELECTRICITY.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Having regard to the reduction of the charges in New South Wales for both gas and electricity, will the Minister for the Interior ask the Government of that State to reduce the rate charged for electric current supplied to the Federal Capital Territory?

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—The suggestion will receive consideration.

House of Representatives.

Wednesday, 14 September, 1932.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. G. H. Mackay) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

CONVERSION OF OVERSEAS INDEBTEDNESS.

Mr. SCULLIN.—I ask the Prime Minister whether there is any authority for the cable message published in this morning's newspaper that the Government does not intend to convert at an early date Australian loans bearing interest at more than 5 per cent., other than the New South Wales loan of £13,000,000 which will fall due on the 1st November?

COMMUNISM.

Mr. LANE.—In view of the legal obstacles to dealing with communist organizations, will the Attorney-General consider the need for declaring all such bodies throughout Australia unlawful associations?

Mr. LATHAM.—There is no legal provision by which the Government or the Governor-General may declare an organization to be an unlawful association. The law does, however, provide for the prosecution of persons for certain activities in connexion with alleged unlawful associations, but evidence must be produced in accordance with the law to satisfy the court that such associations are unlawful. There is a further provision for application to the High Court for a declaration that a particular association is unlawful, and I shall consider the advisability of utilizing it.

PRICE OF SUGAR

Mr. BEASLEY.—I ask the Prime Minister whether the published report regarding an impending alteration of the Sugar Agreement is accurate?

Mr. LYONS.—At this stage I am unable to give details of the tentative agreement between the Government and various sections of the sugar industry as a result of the recent conference in Canberra. The representatives of the industry have agreed to the proposed reduction in the price of sugar, and the matter is now under the consideration of the Queensland Government.

Mr. FORDE.—The agreement was accepted under duress; the Commonwealth had pointed a gun at the sugar interests.

Mr. LYONS.—Only one section said that it accepted the agreement reluctantly. The others accepted it without protest.

DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. GREGORY.—I ask the Prime Minister whether the Government recognizes the menace to Australia constituted by the empty north, and the absolute futility of inducing settlement there under the conditions imposed by the high tariff, the Arbitration laws, and the Navigation Act? Does the Government intend to formulate a policy that will en-

courage the introduction of private capital and the peopling of that vast area?

Mr. LYONS.—The report submitted to Cabinet by the Minister for the Interior as a result of his observations on a recent tour of North Australia deals, *inter alia*, with land settlement, and will be considered by the Government at an early date.

WIRELESS BROADCASTING.

LISTENING LICENCES FOR BLIND PERSONS.

Mr. R. GREEN.—Several months ago I introduced to the Postmaster-General a deputation which asked that listening licences should be granted to blind persons free of charge. Since then several questions on the subject have been asked, and to each the Minister replied that the matter was under consideration. When will he announce a decision on this important matter?

Mr. FENTON.—I have again to tell the honorable member that the matter is still under consideration.

CITRUS FRUITS.

Mr. JOHN LAWSON.—Is the Acting Minister for Trade and Customs aware of the widespread distress amongst citrus growers as a result of the unprecedentedly low prices, frosts, and other adverse circumstances? As this year's crop is estimated to be ample for local requirements, will the Government consider the reimposition of the embargo on imported citrus fruits?

Mr. PERKINS.—This matter has already been brought to my notice. A deputation from the growers will interview me in Canberra this week, and its representations will receive due consideration.

MINISTERS' ATTITUDE TO TARIFF.

Mr. FORDE.—I draw the attention of the Prime Minister to the following paragraph, which appeared in this morning's *Sydney Daily Telegraph*:

FENTON AND THE TARIFF.

Although the Postmaster-General would not state definitely that he would vote against the tariff, he indicated to-day that he would not support it. "I am going to stick to my election pledges," said Mr. Fenton. "It is a rule of my party, and in the Labour party, that tariff matters are non-party."

Is this the first revolt on the part of Ministers against the disastrous tariff-slashing policy of the Government, and is it a fact that several Ministers have threatened to resign?

Mr. LYONS.—It is not a fact that several Ministers have threatened to resign; but it is a fact that the Postmaster-General will carry out the pledges that he gave at the elections.

Mr. FORDE.—Is the Postmaster-General correctly reported in to-day's press as having said that he will not support the Lyons Government tariff reductions, but will vote against them?

Mr. LATHAM.—That is not a question dealing with administration.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. G. H. Mackay).—Order! I cannot allow the question of the honorable member. He has been in Parliament long enough to know that Standing Order 92 provides that "questions may be put to Ministers of the Crown relating to public affairs."

Mr. FORDE.—I submit that my question relates to an urgent matter of public importance.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot allow the honorable gentleman to argue against my ruling.

AFFORESTATION.

FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY.

Mr. STACEY.—What area of land is under afforestation in the Federal Capital Territory, and what amount has been expended on this work to date?

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—As the honorable member was good enough to inform me that he proposed to ask this question, I am able to inform him that the area under afforestation is 5,500 acres, and that the cost up to date, including establishment and maintenance, is £60,266 17s. 3d.

TRADE WITH THE EAST.

Mr. JENNINGS.—In view of the increasing interest that is being taken in the trade with the East, and the many inquiries being made, will the Minister issue from his department to those interested information in pamphlet form as to the steps deemed necessary to develop that trade?

Mr. FRANCIS.—I shall be glad to bring the honorable member's request under the notice of the Minister for Markets, who is temporarily absent on official business.

BROADCASTING.

STATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA: RELAY STATION FOR NORTHERN TABLELANDS.

Mr. A. GREEN.—In view of the fact that the Prime Minister stated in his recent budget speech that a sum is being set aside for the erection of A class stations, will he take into consideration the claim of Western Australia, in which State it was previously arranged that a station should be erected; but, unfortunately, the contract for the machinery, which had already been let, was cancelled because of the depression?

Mr. FENTON.—I intimated on Friday last the exact work which had to be carried out in regard to the erection of regional broadcasting stations. All States were included, with the exception of South Australia, which has the most recent station. That station, incidentally, is one of the best. I understand that many residents of the far-flung electorate represented by the honorable member are receiving an admirable service, but he can rest assured that Western Australia will receive the consideration due to it.

Mr. R. GREEN.—Does the Government intend to erect a relay station in the Northern Tablelands during the current financial year?

Mr. FENTON.—If the honorable gentleman had read the replies that I gave to a long list of questions which he asked me last week, he would not have found it necessary to ask this question.

LEASING OF HOTELS.

FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY.

Mr. DEIN.—Will the Minister state whether, as the result of the calling of tenders, the hotels Ainslie and Wellington have been leased; if not, what use, if any, does the Government intend to make of them?

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—Some time ago, the Government called for tenders for the leasing of both these hotels. It received tenders in regard to

the Ainslie Hotel which were fairly satisfactory, but those relating to the Wellington Hotel were not quite so satisfactory. Some further details have yet to be considered in connexion with the lease of the Ainslie Hotel before a settlement can be effected. These details are under consideration, and it is expected that a decision will shortly be arrived at. No determination has yet been come to as to the future of the Hotel Wellington.

SHEET GLASS.

CLOSING DOWN OF FACTORY.

Mr. R. GREEN.—With reference to the statement of the Acting Minister for Trade and Customs that the Australian Window Glass Proprietary Limited intends to close down its factory for six weeks, in order to effect alterations to a tank, is it not the usual practice in the glass industry to close the works down temporarily because of the burning out of furnaces? Has the Minister any information to the effect that the company intends to close down its factory permanently?

Mr. PERKINS.—The statement that I made in this House last week was plain and deliberate. The company intends to close down its factory for six weeks. I understand that this particular factory has three furnaces. One has been unsatisfactory all the time, and neither of the other two has given the satisfaction that was anticipated. It should not be necessary to close down the factory, merely because of one furnace being out of order, and the intention is to close down the works for six weeks to enable the necessary reconstruction of the tank to be effected. I understand that during last week, one particular machine has given more satisfaction.

TELEPHONE AND POSTAL CHARGES.

Mr. WHITE.—In view of the reductions in wages and other expenditure in the Postal Department, is there any prospect of a reduction in telephone and postal charges taking place; or is the statement of the Director of Postal Services, which appeared in yesterday's *Herald*, that no reduction is likely, the policy of the Government?

Mr. FENTON.—At present we are not anticipating any reduction in telephone charges.

DEPORTATION OF COMMUNISTS.

Mr. MARTENS.—In yesterday's Sydney press appeared a statement to the effect that the Minister for the Interior had said, when addressing the Constitutional Club, that up to the end of last month 109 Communists had been deported. Last week, when I asked what number of men had been deported since the Government took office, I was informed that 80 had been deported. I wish to know, therefore, which is correct, the information contained in the report of the Sydney press, or that given to me in answer to a question?

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—The figures given in answer to the honorable member's question were correct at the time, and the figures given to the press last Monday were also correct. The reply to the honorable member's question related to the number deported, whilst the other figures were the total deportations ordered.

TASMANIAN POSTAL FACILITIES.

Mr. GUY.—The following paragraph appeared in the Launceston *Examiner* of the 12th September:—

That only mail to or from Hobart is carried via the West Coast road. Postal facilities with the north of the State, via the new road are denied. A letter posted at Launceston on a Sunday does not reach Queenstown until Wednesday evening, and the quickest reply is not delivered in Launceston until the following Monday.

Will the Minister ascertain why such postal facilities via the West Coast road are denied, and will he give consideration to the suggestion that the residents of the northern parts of Tasmania be permitted to enjoy such improved postal facilities?

Mr. FENTON.—I shall make inquiries, and furnish the honorable member with a reply at an early date.

COAL DISPUTE.

Mr. JAMES.—Is it not a fact that the primary cause of the threatened trouble in the coal industry throughout Australia is the interference of a State tribunal in Victoria which has given an award reducing the wages of the workers

a further 20 per cent. on top of the 12½ per cent. reduction that was made during the lockout in 1929 and 1930? Section 28 of the Industrial Peace Act reads—

No award or order of a special tribunal or local board shall be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed or called in question, or be subject to prohibition, mandamus, or injunction in any court on any account whatever.

In view of the fact that the coal-mining industry is governed by an award of the Coal Tribunal set up under this act, the provisions of which have been overridden by a State tribunal, does the Attorney-General intend to take appropriate action against the State Government? If not, will he endeavour to avoid the threatened dispute by calling a compulsory conference of the parties concerned as provided for in the act?

Mr. LATHAM.—As at present advised, I do not anticipate that there will be any general stoppage in the coal-mining industry of Australia. The award of the Victorian State tribunal was made, I understand, pursuant to the provisions of an act recently passed by the Victorian Parliament after the federal award applicable to Wonthaggi had been set aside by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. The act passed by the Victorian Parliament was supported by the honorable member for Wonthaggi in that Parliament. It has never been suggested, so far as I am aware, except by the honorable member for Hunter (Mr. James), that any award made under the Industrial Peace Act is in any way inconsistent with the Victorian award. If there ever were such an award it would almost certainly have expired, for no award has been made under the Industrial Peace Act since July, 1928. If there were such an award in force the matter would be one for decision by the appropriate tribunal, and not for a Minister of the Crown.

PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

Mr. GREGORY.—In view of the fact that section 6 of the Constitution provides that there "shall"—not "may"—be a session of Parliament once in each year. I should like to know what course the Prime Minister intends to take if the tariff schedules now before Parliament

have not been passed by both Houses of Parliament before the end of the year?

Mr. LYONS.—The desire of the Government is to end this session before the year closes. If that can be done, the difficulty contemplated by the honorable member will not arise. I sincerely hope that it will be possible for Parliament to complete all the business before it by the end of the year.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

Mr. GANDER.—Does the Prime Minister believe in the fixation and observance of the basic wage as laid down by the Federal Arbitration Court? If so, will he instruct the Attorney-General to intervene in the application now before the Federal Arbitration Court by the New South Wales Government for the setting aside of the federal basic wage of £3 13s. in the New South Wales railways and tramways, and the substitution of a wage of £3 10s.?

Mr. LYONS.—The policy of this Government is not to interfere in any way with the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

Mr. JAMES.—Seeing that it is the policy of the Government not to interfere with the Arbitration Court, will the Prime Minister operate the same policy in respect of the determinations of the Public Service Arbitrator and prevent the decisions of that gentleman being nullified by the action of honorable members of another place?

Mr. LYONS.—The honorable member is now referring to a matter which has been specifically placed within the power of this Parliament. In taking certain action respecting two determinations by the Public Service Arbitrator, Parliament was acting entirely within the law. While leaving the Commonwealth Arbitration Court entirely free of interference, the Government intends to act within the law in respect to the other tribunal mentioned.

THE "FIVE-YEAR PLAN."

Mr. ROSEVEAR.—Has the Acting Minister for Customs (Mr. Perkins) seen the film known as "The Five-Year Plan"? Does the honorable gentleman approve of the prohibition of the public exhibition of this film? If so, is he aware

that the film was exhibited in Great Britain for a considerable period and was favorably commented on by the press? Is he prepared to lift the ban, and follow the Government's professed policy of following Great Britain?

Mr. PERKINS.—I have seen the film referred to by the honorable member and am not prepared to alter the decision that has been given. There can be no question but that the film has been produced for the purpose of Soviet propaganda. In that circumstance, it is not in the best interests of this country that it should be shown here. All I can say about the statement that the film received favorable comment from the press of Great Britain, is that if it were shown here, a section of the Australian press would also comment favorably upon it.

Mr. ROSEVEAR.—Is the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs aware that a film was exhibited in Sydney recently depicting Herr Hitler, the leader of the Nazis in Germany, indulging in a violent attack on the reparations pact? Is it not a fact that this Government considers that pact to be a contribution towards world peace? Can the honorable gentleman therefore reconcile the action of his department in allowing a film destructive of world peace to be exhibited and a film of the peaceful development of Russia prohibited?

Mr. PERKINS.—I shall have inquiries made into the matter. I am confident that if the film were objectionable, my attention would have been drawn to it, as was the case with "The Five-Year Plan."

CITRUS INDUSTRY.

Mr. FORDE.—In view of the parlous condition of the citrus industry of Australia, will the Acting Minister for Customs make arrangements for the setting aside of a day for the discussion of the lifting of the embargo against the importation of citrus products into Australia?

Mr. PERKINS.—I have answered a similar question this afternoon. A deputation representative of the citrus growers will wait on me this week. The Government will be guided to a considerable extent in its future action in regard to this industry by the views put forward at the deputation.

SIR GRANVILLE RYRIE.

Mr. GANDER.—Has the attention of the Minister for the Interior (Mr. Parkhill) been directed to the press statement that Sir Granville Ryrie, who is just vacating the office of High Commissioner, is desirous of re-entering Australian politics? In view of that desire, will the honorable gentleman resign his seat, and allow Sir Granville again to represent Warringah?

Question not answered.

REDUCTION OF OVERSEAS INTEREST.

Dr. MALONEY asked the Treasurer, upon notice—

Does the Government intend to approach the British Government by cable and request a reduction of the interest on Australia's debt from 5 per cent. to 3 per cent., and also for assistance in the reduction of Australia's debt other than to the British Government, to a like amount of interest?

Mr. LYONS.—With regard to the war debt due to the British Government, no interest is being paid at present pending further consideration of the problem of international war debts. With regard to London debt due to the public, the only practicable way in which the matter can be approached is by the further improvement of Australia's credit so that we may secure reductions by exercising our optional rights of conversion over £96,000,000 of debt which now bears interest at rates from 5 per cent. to 6½ per cent., and by further conversions as opportunity arises.

FEDERAL CAPITAL. COST-OF-LIVING FIGURES.

Dr. MALONEY asked the Treasurer, upon notice—

1. With reference to cost-of-living index figures, is it a fact that the Federal Capital is not included in the six capitals that have decreased 0.5 per cent.?
2. What towns (30 in number) have decreased 0.4 per cent.?
3. What were the index figures for the Federal Capital for 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, and for the 1st July, 1932?
4. Is it a fact that Canberra figures are not included in the totals of the six capitals?
5. What percentage are Canberra figures as compared with those of the six capitals?
6. What are the average house rents in Canberra of houses owned by the Government that are included in the index figures?
7. Is it a fact that Canberra house rents, rates, electric light, firewood, and cost of foods are not included; if not, why not?

8. How many government services in Canberra, including bus fares, house rents, electric light and power meter rent, have been lowered to bring about a reduction of £8 a year in the cost of living?

9. How many electric light and power meters are in use in Canberra; how many are rented at 12s. per year each, and what is the cost of each meter?

Mr. LYONS.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Wherever "six capitals" are specified in retail price index numbers, the capitals of the six States are meant. The decrease of 0.5 per cent. mentioned refers to food prices only in July compared with June.

2. The 30 towns are those towns, five in each State, specified in the Quarterly Summary of Statistics which is supplied to every honorable member. The average fall in food prices for these towns in July was 0.4 per cent.

3. The index figures (a) for food and (b) for food and rent for Canberra are as follows:—

	(a)	(b)
	Food.	Food and rent.
1927 ..	1968 ..	2368
1928 ..	1970 ..	2329
1929 ..	2098 ..	2454
1930 ..	1922 ..	2343
1931 ..	1705 ..	1876
1932 (2nd Quarter)	1656 ..	1687

4. Yes.

5. For the 2nd quarter of 1932, the food-and-rent index was 18.9 per cent. above the weighted average of the six capitals, and the food index was 14.4 per cent. above.

6. 27s. Id. for 2nd quarter of 1932.

7. There is no difference in the treatment of Canberra and any other town in respect of the items included in the index numbers of retail prices.

8. The following government services in Canberra have been lowered:—House rents, land rents, boarding-house tariffs, and electricity energy. A reduction was made in rates, which took effect from the 1st January, 1931. The food-and-rent index for Canberra in the 2nd quarter of 1932 fell as follows:—

Since March, 1931 ..	26 per cent.
Since June, 1931 ..	10 per cent.

9. Number of lighting meters ..	1,855
Number of power meters ..	2,103

Total	3,958
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No meters are rented at 12s. each per annum. The rental charged for each meter is 6d. per month, or 6s. per annum. The costs of the various meters in use are as follow:—

Each.

£ s. d.

5 amp. single phase meter ..	1 12 3
10 amp. single phase meter ..	1 12 3
25 amp. single phase meter ..	1 17 6
50 amp. single phase meter ..	2 10 0

Meters above 50 amp. are used only in government buildings.

WIRELESS BROADCASTING.

ERECTION OF TASMANIAN STATIONS.

Mr. R. GREEN asked the Postmaster-General, upon notice—

1. Is it a fact that the Government intends to erect immediately two relay broadcasting stations in Tasmania?

2. What are the sites of the proposed stations?

3. In view of the comparative smallness of Tasmania, and the fact that there is an A class station at Hobart and a B class station at Launceston, has he satisfied himself that this work is more urgent than the establishment of broadcasting stations at some of the places on the mainland mentioned in Captain Eckersley's report?

4. Why erect two relay stations immediately in Tasmania to the exclusion of other parts of the Commonwealth?

5. Is it intended to construct the new stations to operate on long waves (as advocated by Captain Eckersley), or on medium waves?

Mr. FENTON.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. No; it is proposed to erect one regional station in Tasmania.

2. The site has not yet been fixed.

3 and 4. See reply to question 1. The fullest consideration is being given to all parts of the Commonwealth.

5. The question is being considered.

NEOPHONE TELEPHONE.

Mr. R. GREEN asked the Postmaster-General, upon notice—

1. Does he concede the accuracy of the statement published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 2nd instant, that the advent of the new "Neophone" telephone has immediately demonstrated to Australian users how much their telephone service is behind that of Britain and America?

2. Is it a fact, as stated by the President of the Electrical Association of New South Wales, that it is only necessary to whisper into the instrument, and the reception at the other end is well modulated, clear and distinct?

3. Will he reconsider the decision of his department to give only permissive right to telephone subscribers to install the "Neophone" (after purchasing it themselves) and to insist upon the department's right to take over all the instruments so installed at any later date at the department's valuation?

4. If at any future time it should be deemed necessary by the department to install a different type of instrument, will the department agree to a subscriber retaining possession of the "Neophone" after its disconnection, rather than surrendering it to the department?

5. Is it a fact that the President of the Electrical Association of New South Wales stated that there are several firms in Sydney capable of manufacturing the new telephone at a reasonable price, and that the only difficulty is in securing an order from the post office large enough to justify the initial installation of the necessary machinery?

6. Has his attention been drawn to the following statement of the President of the Electrical Association of New South Wales:—"It is unfortunate that there should be a large number of the old telephone receivers in stock, but if the post office had followed the usual commercial routine, the major portion of the capital cost of those instruments would have been written off within five years from their initial installation . . . it seems scarcely fair for the Post Office Department to put difficulties in the way of its introduction until the old instruments have all been re-installed"?

7. If so, what action does he propose taking in regard to the whole question?

Mr. FENTON.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. The "Neophone" is not available in the American telephone service. It is a development of the British Post Office and Messrs. Siemens Brothers. Its advent does not demonstrate that the Australian telephone service is behind that of other countries.

2. The statement could hardly be accepted as one of scientific accuracy, but the transmission qualities of the instrument are good and slightly better than the instruments which have hitherto been standard in telephone administrations. It will be recognized that the telephone instrument is not the only item affecting the transmission of clear speech. The satisfactory transmission of speech over very long distances in Australia compares most favorably with what has been accomplished elsewhere. This high quality of service is regularly being rendered on instruments which are not of the "Neophone" type.

3. The department's permission is of a tentative character, and may be withdrawn whenever that step appears to be desirable. The department may or may not wish to take over instruments which have been purchased privately. That question will be better left for negotiation and determination when the time arrives.

4. If the instrument is the property of the subscriber and is removed from the telephone service the department would have no wish to acquire it.

5. Such a statement has been noticed in the press.

6. Yes; but to write off the cost of a telephone in five years would impose a heavy burden on telephone subscribers, for it would cause an altogether unnecessary inflation of telephone tariffs. The department's attitude will be governed entirely by what it believes to be in the best interests of telephone sub-

scribers as a body, and the question of economics is obviously an important factor. The department has already shown that it does not wish to arrest progress, even in the direction of withholding permission for the installation of an instrument which, in certain circumstances, may be more conveniently used. Naturally, however, those who wish to acquire a more modern instrument must expect to contribute to the enhanced cost, for it would be unreasonable that the increased charges should be passed on to the very large number of users who will not find it essential to make such a change.

7. See reply to 6.

PUBLIC OFFICES.

HOURS OF BUSINESS.

Mr. GIBSON asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. At what hour do the public offices open at Canberra?

2. At what hour do they close?

3. How many hours are worked by the staffs of the departments per week?

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

1 and 2. The hours observed in Commonwealth departments and offices in Canberra are as follows:—8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.; 1.30 p.m. to 4.51 p.m., Monday to Friday inclusive. In the few cases where the five-day working week is not in operation, the hours observed are:—9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 4.45 p.m., Monday to Friday; 9 a.m. to 12 noon Saturday. Parliamentary departments are not included in the foregoing.

3. 36½ hours per week.

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE WAR.

Mr. HOLLOWAY asked the Assistant Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. What has been the total cost to date in connexion with the compilation of the history of Australia's part in the Great War?

2. Is it possible to estimate at this stage what the final cost will be?

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

1. The net cost of the National War Histories to the 31st July last, after allowing for receipts from sales, was £69,380 19s. 4d.

2. It is not possible at this stage to estimate with any degree of exactitude what the final cost will be, but the honorable member may be assured that every endeavour is being made by the Defence Department and the Official Historian to expedite the completion of the series and to minimize costs.

SURCHARGE AND PRIMAGE DUTIES—PROHIBITIONS.

Dr. MALONEY asked the Assistant Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice—

1. What is the number of articles upon which the previous Government imposed (a) a surcharge duty; (b) a primage duty; and (c) a prohibition?

2. Upon how many articles does there remain (a) a surcharge duty; (b) a primage duty; and (c) a prohibition?

Mr. PERKINS.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. (a) Fifty-eight classes of goods; (b) primage duty attaches to all goods other than those specifically exempted; (c) seventy-eight classes of goods.

2. (a) Nineteen classes of goods; (b) there are now 86 lines of goods exempted from primage duty. Of these, the present Government has exempted 56; (c) the prohibitions imposed for the purpose of assisting in the rectification of the adverse balance of trade have been entirely removed.

PRINTING OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

Mr. FENTON.—On the 8th September, the honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. A. Green) said—

Yesterday, I asked questions, upon notice, regarding the printing of postage stamps. The replies I received were incomplete. I asked to be informed of the difference in cost, by the computation usually made, between recess and surface printing, and the answer of the Postmaster-General was "The difference is as much as 400 per cent." Hitherto, great care has been taken in the engraving of stamps, and recently rather a slip-shod method of surface printing has been adopted. I desire to know the exact difference in cost per 1,000 between recess and surface printing?

I then promised to, if practicable, supply the information sought, and am now able to inform him that the relative costs for the recess and surface printing of stamps vary according to the quantities which may be needed. It will perhaps satisfy the honorable member however to know that the Harbour Bridge twopenny stamp cost 2s. 8.3d. per thousand for the recess issues, and 8.5d. per thousand for the letterpress issues. In view of the honorable member's expression of opinion that a rather slip-shod method of surface printing has recently been adopted, it may interest him to know that a leading philatelist commenting on the depart-

ment's most recent issue stated, "It is a very artistic and well-executed effort, and is a revelation of what can be done even by this process".

CENSUS.

Mr. LYONS.—On the 9th September, the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. R. Green) asked the following question, without notice:—

In connexion with the census to be taken next year, will questions be asked for the purposes of ascertaining the number of persons then living who served overseas with the Australian Imperial Force?

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

Provision has been made in the census schedule for this information to be ascertained.

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES OF MINISTERS.

Mr. LYONS.—On the 7th September, the honorable member for Angas (Mr. Gabb) asked me the following question, upon notice:—

What was the amount received by each Minister as travelling allowance during the financial year ended 30th June, 1932?

I am now in a position to furnish the following reply:—

The amounts received by members of the Scullin Government in respect of the period 1st July, 1931, to date of resignation, and by members of the present Government to the 30th June, 1932, were—

Scullin Government (resigned, 6th January, 1932).—Rt. Hon. J. H. Scullin, £60 13s. 4d.; Hon. E. G. Theodore, £108 8s. 5d.; Senator Hon. J. Barnes, £98 2s.; Hon. F. Brennan, £61 10s.; Hon. A. E. Green, £95 12s. 7d.; Hon. P. J. Moloney, £110 2s.; Hon. F. M. Forde, £95 12s. 3d.; Hon. A. Blakeley, £34 4s. 7d.; Hon. J. McNeill, £100 10s.; Hon. J. B. Chifley, £78 10s. 4d.; Senator Hon. J. B. Dooley, £123 0s. 10d.; Senator Hon. J. J. Daly, £94 4s. Id.; Hon. L. L. Cunningham, £96. Total, £1,156 10s. 5d.

Present Government (sworn in, 6th January, 1932).—Rt. Hon. J. A. Lyons, £166 0s. 8d.; Rt. Hon. S. M. Bruce, £31 1s. 9d.; Senator Rt. Hon. Sir George Pearce, £35 11s. 8d.; Hon. J. E. Fenton, £59 1s. 3d.; Hon. H. S. Gullett, £82 4s. 4d.; Senator Hon. A. J. McLachlan, £80 7s. 2d.; Hon. R. A. Parkhill, £40 5s. 7d.; Hon. C. A. S. Hawker, £31 17s. 8d.; Hon. C. W. C. Marr, £39 2s. 10d.; Senator Hon. W. Massy Greene, £46 0s. 1d.; Hon. J. Francis, £105 18s.; Hon. J. A. Perkins, £19 16s. 3d. Total, £737 19s. 3d.

**POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S
DEPARTMENT—
COMMONWEALTH BANK.**

PARTICULARS OF STAFFS.

Mr. LYONS.—On the 2nd September, the honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Jennings) asked the following question, *upon notice*:—

Will the Prime Minister obtain the following information:—

1. In regard to the Postmaster-General's Department—

- (a) Number of officers employed?
- (b) Average salary?
- (c) Number of officers in receipt of salaries of £500 and over, and total amount paid to such officers?
- (d) Number of officers in receipt of £1,000 and over, and total amount paid to such officers?

2. In regard to the Commonwealth Bank—

- (a) Number of officers employed?
- (b) Average salary?
- (c) Number of officers in receipt of salaries of £500 and over, and total amount paid to such officers?
- (d) Number of officers in receipt of salary of £1,000 and over, and total amount paid to such officers?

I am now able to furnish the following reply:—

1. The Public Service Board has furnished the following information:—

POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

- (a) Twenty-two thousand five hundred and fifteen.
- (b) £226 7s., exclusive of child endowment. £236 6s., inclusive of child endowment.
- (c) One hundred and sixty-four officers; amount, £101,127.
- (d) Three officers; amount, £5,343.

The salaries shown are those actually paid to officers after reduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Act. The number of officers shown in (a) includes approximately 4,572 females and minors.

2. The Commonwealth Bank has furnished the following information:—

- (a) Three thousand four hundred and ninety-three.
- (b) £209 3s.
- (c) and (d) The reply furnished by the Commonwealth Bank is as follows: "It is not considered desirable to give this detailed internal information."

PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Tariff Board—Reports and Recommendations—

Crude Oil Engines.

Residual Oils, Solar Oils and Crude Petroleum for use as Fuel.

Ordered to be printed.

Defence Act—Regulations amended—Statutory Rules 1932, No. 92.

Dried Fruits Export Control Act—Eighth Annual Report of the Dried Fruits Control Board, for year ended 30th June, 1932, together with a statement by the Minister regarding the operation of the Act.

Post and Telegraph Act—Regulations amended—Statutory Rules 1932, Nos. 86, 91.

HIGH COMMISSIONER BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. LYONS (Wilmot—Prime Minister and Treasurer) [3.32].—I move—

That the bill be now read a second time. This measure amends the High Commissioner Act 1909 by adding to it a section enabling a Commonwealth Minister, in certain circumstances, to exercise the powers and to perform the duties now vested in the High Commissioner. It is not the intention of the Government to fill at present the vacancy brought about by the retirement of Sir Granville Ryrie. The Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Bruce) arrived in London practically simultaneously with the ending of Sir Granville Ryrie's term of office, and it is intended that the right honorable gentleman shall remain in London for some time as Resident Minister. In that capacity he will carry out most important work concerning Australian finance. His first task will be to make arrangements for the conversion of the New South Wales loan which falls due in November. In addition he will perform the duties ordinarily carried out by the High Commissioner. Apart from the advantages expected from this arrangement, certain economies will be effected.

It is intended that the operation of the proposed new section shall be limited to two years. No term has been set to the appointment of Mr. Bruce as Resident Minister in London. The right honorable gentleman will remain in the English capital so long as is deemed necessary to keep him there to carry out the important tasks to which I have referred. If the arrangement is discontinued at any time during the next two years, the Government will probably appoint a High Commissioner. The provisions of this bill will apply only while the position

is held by a Commonwealth Minister. If experience should demonstrate that it would be wise to continue, after Mr. Bruce returns, to have a Commonwealth Minister resident in London—

Mr. MAKIN.—Perhaps the present Prime Minister himself.

Mr. LYONS.—The honorable gentleman may rest assured that there is no possibility of that happening. Should experience prove that the Commonwealth would benefit by having a Resident Minister in London to perform these duties it will be necessary, after two years, again to amend the High Commissioner Act.

Mr. BRUCE being now in London, and about to take up the duties of the office, it is necessary to pass the bill without delay. I hope that honorable members will realize the desirability of having in London at the present time a Minister knowing the political and financial circumstances of Australia, and able to carry out the important and delicate duties which have to be undertaken. It will be agreed that Mr. Bruce is at least as well qualified to perform the work of the High Commissioner's office as any gentleman who has preceded him as High Commissioner, and I am confident that the right honorable gentleman will render real service to Australia while representing the Commonwealth in London.

Mr. SCULLIN (Yarra) [3.39].—The bill is a much more important measure than it may at first appear, although it contains practically only one clause, adding a new section to the High Commissioner Act 1909. If it merely provided for a temporary arrangement under which a Minister visiting London on a special mission would be empowered to carry out the duties of High Commissioner, there could be no real objection to the measure, and in such circumstances I would not offer any. But it involves more than that. An announcement was made some time ago by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Government that, in effect, a new policy was to be adopted; that we were to be governed partly from London; that we were to have a Resident Minister in London; and that he would be the Right Honorable S. M. Bruce.

When this bill is passed, it will give the authority of this Parliament to the principle of appointing a Resident Minister abroad. That being so, one would have expected the head of the Government, when introducing this startling innovation so far as Australian politics are concerned, to put forward sound reasons to justify it. The Prime Minister said, in the first place, that there was some important work to be done in London by the Minister whom it is proposed to appoint. I believe that there is important work to be done in London. I take no objection to the presence in London of a Minister at the present time, and so long as important duties remain to be done, such as the conversion of loans, I approve of a Minister from Australia being present in London. But is it contemplated that this work will take two years, or even one year to accomplish? The conversion of our loans overseas to a lower rate of interest is urgent. The Prime Minister, when sitting in opposition, once declared publicly that, were he in power, his first act would be to go to London and arrange for the conversion of our overseas indebtedness at a lower rate of interest; then he would come back to Australia and arrange the conversion of the Australian debt. In my opinion, he was putting the cart before the horse, but, at any rate, so urgent did he believe the conversion of our overseas indebtedness to be, that he would have undertaken the task immediately. My government believed that the first duty was to convert the Australian debt so as to give a lead to overseas bondholders; then we could approach the overseas bondholders, telling them that we had put our own house in order, and asking them to meet us. A considerable time has elapsed since the Prime Minister assumed office, but nothing has been done to arrange for the conversion of our overseas indebtedness.

I do not propose to offer any criticism at this juncture which might hamper the activities of the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) while he is in London on a delicate mission. Indeed, anything I can do to help him I will gladly do, because it is essential to Australia that interest rates be reduced to something corresponding to the price

levels prevailing when the debts were contracted. That, however, does not justify a proposal for keeping a permanent or Resident Minister in London. There is no doubt that this appointment marks the beginning of a new policy. If this Government is in office when the period provided in the bill expires, the Prime Minister will be able to find the same excuses for keeping the Resident Minister in London for a further term than he has now put forward for his appointment. The presence of a Minister in London at the present time to consult with financial institutions, with the heads of the Government, and with subscribers to Australian loans, is very important, nor do I believe that this work could be done so effectively by an officer, however capable, as by a Minister. I maintain, however, that, once the negotiations have been completed, and the contacts established by a responsible Minister, the officer we now have in London as financial adviser could carry out the detailed work quite as capably as any Minister. I shall go further, and say that Mr. Collins, with the experience he had in the Treasury in Australia, and the further experience he has had in London, would probably be able to carry out the detailed negotiations even better than could the Minister.

What need is there to give power to the Resident Minister to administer Australia House? That institution is now being administered by Mr. Collins, who has really done the work for over a year. The High Commissioner is the representative of the nation, and if the nation can afford so costly a representative at the present time to maintain our prestige, well and good. In these times, however, I do not think that Australia can afford to maintain such a position, and it is my opinion that, when the present term expires we should do in the case of the High Commissionership what we have done in the case of the office of the Australian Commissioner-General in the United States of America.

Mr. WHITE.—The Trade Commissioner acted on his own initiative.

Mr. SCULLIN.—The honorable member for Balacalava does not know everything about these matters, although he thinks that he does. I offer no criticism

of our erstwhile representative in the United States of America. That gentleman knew the opinion of the Government, and he tendered his resignation to me in a proper public spirit. I accepted the resignation in the same spirit. The position in the United States of America became vacant by the resignation of the Commissioner-General, and we did not fill it, but we allowed the permanent secretary to carry on, with the result that nothing has been lost, and no interests have been injured. I say deliberately, and by virtue of the inside knowledge I possess, that Australia would be just as capably represented at Australia House for the next twelve months or two years if we allowed Mr. Collins to carry on, as it has been during the last two years. Honorable members have to determine whether there is any justification for our representation abroad on an elaborate scale, when we are forced at home to cut and slash our expenditure in order to meet our obligations.

The Prime Minister, when introducing this measure, made only one reference to costs. He said that a saving would be effected by adopting the new proposal, but he gave no details. I have seen press statements to the effect that Mr. Bruce will receive the same salary as would be paid to a High Commissioner. I do not know whether there was any authority for those statements.

Mr. LYONS.—They are correct.

Mr. SCULLIN.—That is the first intimation this House has had of the matter.

Mr. LATHAM.—The expenditure is provided for in the Estimates. Mr. Bruce will receive the salary he would have received had he remained here, and an allowance to make up his salary to what the High Commissioner has been receiving. There will be a saving, therefore, of the amount he would have received had he remained here.

Mr. SCULLIN.—I take it, then, that the amount of the saving will be deducted from the lump sum voted for ministerial salaries. However, we could save the whole of the High Commissioner's salary by not making an appointment, and, so far as the special mission is concerned, all we should have to do would be to continue paying his ministerial salary to Mr. Bruce, plus

the expenses he incurs while abroad. That would be considerably less than the extra amount which he is to be paid, which is equivalent to more than £2,000 per annum. We should keep that point in mind when we are told that a saving is to be made. The best way to effect a saving is to make no appointment at all, but to allow Mr. Collins to continue in charge at Australia House. That would not be a tremendous obligation to impose on Mr. Collius, who could be under the direction of Mr. Bruce while the right honorable member was in London, and could be instructed afterwards by the Cabinet. All Mr. Bruce would then be entitled to draw during his special mission would be his ministerial salary, plus an allowance for expenses. The Government proposes to provide for the right honorable member not only a ministerial salary, but over £2,000 a year for expenses while Resident Minister in London, and yet we are told that that will effect a saving. It will not be a saving. A saving could be made by not filling the position of High Commissioner, and Australia would not suffer to any appreciable degree. I make that assertion advisedly.

What is to be the position of the Resident Minister in London? Will he take instructions from the Cabinet? He will occupy a unique position if he does that. Will he act on his own initiative, or will he be part of the Cabinet, and keep in constant touch with Ministers in Australia by means of cablegrams and letters—a most unsatisfactory way of conducting administration.

Mr. E. J. HARRISON.—The right honorable member himself knows that.

Mr. SCULLIN.—So does the Prime Minister. I have no qualms of conscience about the cablegrams sent by me while absent from Australia; I, personally, was glad to read them when published, and to know that the public were thus apprised of my honest opinions. A Resident Minister in London could not maintain satisfactory communication with the Government in Australia for a lengthy period by means of telegrams, radiograms, or letters. Therefore, the Minister in London must act largely on his own responsibility.

Mr. WHITE.—That is why a Minister rather than an official, is required there.

Mr. SCULLIN.—A government can give definite instructions to an official at Australia House, but it will be impossible to give instructions to a Minister. If our representative were instructed, he would cease to be a Minister, and would become a mere official. My contention is that the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), having completed the special mission upon which he is visiting Great Britain, should return to Australia. The principles of democracy demand that the representatives of the people in this Parliament shall keep as closely as possible in touch with their electorates. To make the right honorable member a permanent Resident Minister in London would be to disfranchise his constituents.

Mr. WHITE.—His electorate will be well looked after in his absence.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Its needs were not properly attended to when he represented it before.

There is great reluctance on the part of the Government to state the real reason for sending the Minister abroad. It is said that there is special work for him to do; but that is not an adequate reason. Special work has had to be done at Ottawa, Lausanne, and Geneva. Is it seriously suggested that it is essential to have a Resident Minister in London because special work must be done there? What is the reason for sending a special Minister to London, and what will be the term of his residence there? He will be out of touch with not only Australia, but also his own constituents. Seeing that this bill authorizes the appointment of a Resident Minister in London, and places the imprimatur of Parliament upon such a procedure, the Opposition intends to oppose the measure. The Prime Minister, in endeavouring to find a special argument in support of this proposal, set out to eulogize the right honorable member who has gone abroad, and said that he was sure that he would represent Australia as well as any previous High Commissioner had done. We have not always been fortunate in the choice of our High Commissioners, and I hope that an improvement will be brought about in this instance. It seems

to me that the basis of the Prime Minister's argument is the exceptional experience and profound knowledge of the right honorable member for Flinders. I do not intend to indulge in personal criticism, particularly regarding a member who is absent. I read of the case for trade preference presented by him on behalf of Australia at Ottawa, and I thought that he made out a strong claim. I am very doubtful, however, regarding his judgment as to what should be conceded by Australia, and I am waiting with grave anxiety to know how his judgment has been exercised in relation to concessions. I was not particularly impressed by the right honorable member's judgment on the economic position generally, when he was leader of a government, because I recall the warnings given by members of my party and by myself with regard to our trade balance in 1926, 1927 and 1928. The Bruce-Page Government was then warned of the disaster likely to overtake this country if its policy continued. I recall the light and airy way in which those warnings were dismissed by the right honorable gentleman, who had not sufficient judgment to see what was likely to result from the action then taken.

I am opposed to any government of Australia from abroad, and I object to the appointment of a Resident Minister in London. I shall support the visit of a member of the Cabinet on any special and important mission, and I grant that there is important work to be done in London by the right honorable member on this occasion. I wish the right honorable gentleman every success in his mission, and I hope that the result will be a reduction of the rate of interest on our overseas loans; but, on the completion of his mission, he should return to Australia to represent his constituents in this Parliament.

Mr. LATHAM (Kooyong—Attorney-General) [3.58].—The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) has called attention to the obvious fact that this bill proposes a change, at least for the time being, in the character of Australia's representation in London, and has justly asked for reasons in support of that change. Those reasons were given by the Prime Minister in moving the

second reading, and I propose shortly to develop one or two of them. I dissent from the view of the Leader of the Opposition as to the possibility of Australia being represented in London by someone other than an official. I consider it most important to have efficient representation of Australia in London, representation of a character such that our representative may stand alongside, and, I hope, often above, the representatives of other countries. To have an official in a world centre such as London as the representative of a dominion or a foreign country is particularly unfortunate in many respects. It necessarily and inevitably results in the impression being conveyed that the country so represented is of second-rate importance, and unable to obtain any one of distinction to represent it abroad. The Australian representative in London has a tremendous field for useful activity, and is able to exercise a wide influence in promoting the well-being of our people. Discussions with people abroad may at the present time turn largely on finance. But there are other vitally important subjects. Australia's principal markets are in Great Britain, and it is important that we hold and extend them. The competition for them is intense at the present time, and the Commonwealth must be kept well before the minds of the British people in order that we may have the full advantage of not only the quality of our products, but also that sentimental interest in the dominions which is of great importance to Australia's exporting trade.

Mr. GREGORY.—We want a business man with commercial capacity rather than a politician.

Mr. LATHAM.—A representative whose ability and distinction appeal to the minds of the British people is worth a great deal more than a mere office man, however great may be his commercial knowledge. Of course, we must have a well-qualified commercial staff, but we particularly need a man whose eminence catches the public imagination, and who is able to make a contribution to the public life of not only the Commonwealth, but also the Mother Country itself. Great endeavours have been made to increase the consumption of dominion

products in Great Britain, and excellent work to that end has been done by the Empire Marketing Board. Australia must do everything possible to maintain its commercial reputation and prestige abroad, for I assure honorable members that prestige is a highly important element in both finance and trade.

This bill is not brought forward for the purpose of introducing a new general principle. From time to time the relative advantages of a High Commissioner or a Resident Minister to represent dominions in London have been discussed. I have never accepted it as a general principle that Australia would be most effectively represented by a Resident Minister. While that system would have advantages it would have also great disadvantages. It is true that Canada has on occasions been represented by a Resident Minister, but it is very much easier for him to keep in direct contact with his colleagues than it would be for an Australian Minister resident in London. Amongst the advantages of having a Resident Minister would be that he would have an authority abroad which no other appointee could have. He would be able to speak directly for his Government, and in all negotiations would achieve more in a shorter space of time than would any official. He would also be in closer contact with his Government. The element of authority which he would enjoy would play an important part in dealings with representatives of other countries. When it is known that the representative of a dominion has full authority to act for the Government of that country, much more can be achieved than when discussions with a High Commissioner or other official are known to be merely preliminary and provisional. On the other hand, a system of representation in London by a Resident Minister would possess distinct disadvantages. It could not be adopted as a general principle, because often it would be impossible for a Minister to be absent for a considerable length of time from this Parliament and from his constituency. Therefore, the innovation now proposed may be regarded as only an experiment to meet special circumstances. In the highly-important financial negotiations that must be conducted during the next

few months, it is of the utmost importance that the man who speaks on behalf of Australia shall be vested with the maximum of authority. Direct conversational dealing is worth many months of indirect negotiation through an official. The Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Bruce) possesses special qualifications for doing the work for which he has been appointed, and it would be very difficult for the Official Secretary, competent as he is, to achieve as much as the man with the status of a former Prime Minister and late Assistant-Treasurer of the Commonwealth. The loan conversions will involve mainly direct negotiation with individuals and institutions, and as a result of my own experience in London recently, I am convinced that the Minister will achieve much more than could any official, however competent. The passage of this bill is necessary to enable the right honorable member for Flinders to control the staff of Australia House. Its operation is limited to two years, and the Minister in London will exercise the functions mentioned in the bill only during the pleasure of the Governor-General. The object of that provision is to put it beyond doubt that any appointment under this legislation will not be even remotely binding on any subsequent administration.

Mr. GREGORY.—What is the salary of the High Commissioner?

Mr. LATHAM.—The salary is £3,000, plus an allowance of £2,000, both amounts being subject to a 25 per cent. reduction under the financial emergency legislation. While the right honorable member for Flinders is doing the work of the High Commissioner, he will receive these reduced amounts, and a saving equivalent to his ministerial salary will be effected. I ask the House to accept the bill, not as a measure introducing a new principle, but because it will enable us to have the benefit of the services of the right honorable member for Flinders in London in connexion with highly important financial transactions during the next few months. The Government does not intend to prolong this appointment beyond what the necessities of the case demand. In connexion with these matters, it is very often difficult to state publicly what the necessities of the case are, because financial transactions may depend upon personal

negotiations, sometimes intimate, and always private, which would be rendered abortive if publicity were given to them. I consider that the Commonwealth is fortunate in being able to obtain the services of the right honorable member for Flinders in London at this juncture, and for the special task which he has been asked to undertake.

Dr. EARLE PAGE (Cowper) [4.10].—I congratulate the Government upon the step it has taken. My only criticism of the bill is that it does not go far enough. I object to the limitation of the appointment to two years; that restriction could have been imposed later if the experiment proved unsatisfactory. I am disappointed also that there is no provision for negotiation with the States for the abolition of the office of Agent-General, so that Australia might be wholly represented by a Minister of this Parliament.

Mr. GABB.—Those positions are kept as political plums.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I welcome the policy contained in this bill because, while it continues, the position of High Commissioner will no longer be a political plum. I have no complaint to make of the gentlemen who have filled that office in the past. All had distinguished themselves in the public life of Australia, but none of them returned to this Parliament to enrich it with the increased knowledge which they must have gained by their residence and contacts abroad. In future, if the system of appointing a Resident Minister in London be continued, a member of this Parliament will discharge that duty, and he will be obliged to return here to give to Parliament and to his constituents an account of his stewardship. One reason why I have always advocated the appointment of a Resident Minister in London is the need for widening the circle of men in this Parliament who have definite and intimate knowledge of conditions and governing authorities on the other side of the world. If there is one matter in respect of which Australia compares unfavorably with some of the other dominions, it is the failure of its people to realize the international position they have attained since the Great War. The Commonwealth must have international contacts. The increasing extent and distribution of its trade make it essential

that this Parliament shall contain men with experience abroad. I have always hoped that the constant return to the Commonwealth Parliament of men who had served for a year or so as Resident Minister abroad would gradually build up from all parties—because as governments changed the ministerial representation abroad would change—committees of members qualified to advise governments in regard to external affairs, thus creating a definite interest in Imperial and foreign policy. A striking feature of the debates of this Parliament is the entire absence of comment on foreign relations; we seem to be absorbed in our internal politics.

Mr. BEASLEY.—We do not get a chance to discuss other matters.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—The character of the business-paper does not vary much with changes of government. One explanation is that there are not in this Parliament sufficient men who have had extensive experience abroad and made intimate contacts with governments and public men in other countries. Although I have always advocated the appointment of a Resident Minister in London, there was, in the past, one valid objection to it, namely, the difficulty of maintaining close contact between the Minister overseas and the Government here, but since the invention of wireless telephony that disadvantage has been removed. There is no reason why the Minister overseas should not, if necessary, be in daily personal contact with the Government of Australia that will remove the grave danger that there was previously, of the representative overseas committing his Government, without previous discussion with it, to an undesirable policy. Another reason why there should be a Resident Minister representing the Government of Australia in Great Britain, is that the status of the Governor-General has altered during the past few years. At present that office is held by an Australian who has not had the opportunity that previous Governor-Generals had of being in touch with the British Government or with His Majesty himself.

Dr. MALONEY.—An Australian is a better representative.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I am not now criticizing the action of the previous Government in appointing an Australian as the Governor-General, but that appointment has made it more necessary for us to have a direct representative of the Government of Australia in Great Britain, so as to keep us fully informed of the position overseas. I recognize the difficulty of obtaining the services of a man suitable for the position. A member of this House having a doubtful electorate could not afford to be absent from Australia during the last year of a Parliament, but that difficulty could be overcome to some extent by appointing to the position during the first year of Parliament a representative of the House of Representatives, and during the last two years of Parliament, a representative of the Senate. Thus, during a period of six years at least two members of this House, and four members of the Senate would hold the position of Resident Minister in London. I have no doubt that if a Minister were absent in Great Britain, and an election took place, some other honorable member would be prepared to handle his constituency for him. If that were done we should save considerable expense in connexion with the enforced visits of Ministers overseas.

Mr. GABE.—Could we prevent forced visits?

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Since the formation of the Loan Council and the handling of the conversion of loans by the council, there has practically been a cessation of the visits of State premiers and treasurers which used to take place so regularly in previous years. The fact that the Attorney-General was overseas recently enabled the Lausanne negotiations to be completed. During the two years that the previous Government was in office four Ministers went overseas. I do not cavil at that, because I have always maintained that it should be necessary for every member of this Parliament to be brought into contact with international and imperial affairs. I have never objected to the visits of Ministers overseas, because they are all for the good of Australia. Unfortunately our Ministers generally have little intimate contact with foreign affairs.

With regard to the position of High Commissioner, this gentleman is appointed for five years, and there is usually, during that period, a change of Government. When that takes place the High Commissioner, who is probably a political appointee, is no longer in close contact with the Government that he is supposed to represent, and that Government does not feel disposed to consult him to the extent that it would consult a member of its own Cabinet, if he were resident in London. I welcome the entrance into this Parliament of the honorable member for Corio (Mr. Casey), who has had considerable experience of imperial and foreign policy. Because of his knowledge, he is a valuable asset to this Parliament. If every year or second year, men with similar experience and qualifications were returned to this Parliament, we should be able to appoint a committee on imperial and foreign affairs with the object of framing a definite policy and laying down a national tradition in respect thereto. It is a mistake to limit this appointment to two years, and I regret that the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) has stated that when the present occupant of the position returns to Australia there will probably be an appointment for five years. In eighteen months' or two years' time, special circumstances may arise, which, being beyond the control of a High Commissioner, will warrant the sending overseas of a capable Minister. I join with the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General in saying that as the Ministers who become specially qualified for this particular mission return to Australia, the status of the position will become so important that it will become the custom for this Government to be represented in Great Britain by a Minister. I shall support the bill.

Mr. BEASLEY (West Sydney) [4.23].—I listened with interest to the speeches of the Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons) and the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham). They certainly made heavy weather in endeavouring to justify the action of the Government in making this new appointment. I also gathered from those speeches that we have not been informed of all the reasons for the appointment.

Mr. HOLLOWAY.—The honorable member could not expect that.

Mr. BEASLEY.—One could hardly expect to be informed of all the reasons for this appointment, but if we cannot obtain information from the Government we are entitled to draw our own conclusions, and to express them as the opportunity arises. The bill provides that the Resident Minister will exercise the powers of the High Commissioner. It is stated that it is necessary to make this appointment in order that the work previously performed by the High Commissioner may be carried out by the right honorable member for Flinders, and that there is no intention, at the moment, of filling the vacant position by appointing another High Commissioner. It is quite likely that the Government, for political reasons, does not, at present, wish to fill this vacancy. The Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) seems to have as much knowledge of this appointment as the Prime Minister himself. For instance, he suggested that a Resident Minister might be appointed, and that the office might be held alternately by members of this House and of the Senate. If that suggestion is to be given effect, I can forecast that probably after the lapse of twelve months the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) will return from London and Senator Sir George Pearce will take his place. Later, circumstances may arise to compel the Government to fill the position of High Commissioner in London.

Mr. LYONS.—The Government, if it wished, could do that to-morrow.

Mr. BEASLEY.—It is true that the Government has that power, but it may not be prudent to exercise it just now, in view of the political position. The Prime Minister has had a varied experience of political exigencies, and I have no doubt that he will have a wider experience as time goes on.

Mr. GABE.—Is that a threat or a promise?

Mr. BEASLEY.—I do not make threats, nor am I competent to make promises. In these times it is not possible for any honorable member to make predictions regarding the political future.

Mr. WHITE.—Is the honorable member referring to New South Wales?

Mr. BEASLEY.—If an opportunity presented itself at the present time, some big changes would take place in that State. It has been definitely stated by the Prime Minister that the Resident Minister will deal with the conversion of loans. I agree entirely with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) on this subject. Mr. Collins has previously undertaken this work, and I claim that he has been a competent and capable officer. I know from my own experience that during the régime of the Scullin Government, Mr. Collins did great work for this country. Therefore all this talk by members of the Government about the necessity to appoint as Resident Minister a man of high prestige and standing, is mere make-believe, the intention being to provide a suitable environment for the right honorable member for Flinders. The Attorney-General said that the appointee will not confine his activities to the work of conversion alone, and that he will be employed in a number of other spheres in which his services will be invaluable. The disposal of our primary products in foreign markets was mentioned. I understand that already we have in London trade representatives whose special duty it is to provide markets for our products. Mr. Devereux, when associated with the Development and Migration Commission, was transferred by the late Government to London in order to reduce the expense occasioned by the high salaries paid to men appointed on long-term contracts by the Bruce-Page Government. As Mr. Devereux is in London, doing work in connexion with the wool industry, there is no necessity for the Resident Minister to assist in that direction.

A gentleman from the Queensland Department of Agriculture (Mr. MacGregor) was also sent to London.

Mr. SCULLIN.—He is a very capable officer.

Mr. BEASLEY.—He must be, for the present Government made arrangements for him to be in Ottawa during the recent conference, to advise on certain aspects of the negotiations. All the circumstances go to show that there is no justification

whatever for adding to Australia's representation in Great Britain by having a Resident Minister there permanently. This is not the real reason for the making of this appointment.

The expense involved in this new departure was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin), who took steps to obtain additional information under this heading. I am not satisfied with the information furnished to him. Something has been said about the alleged saving as between the salary of a Minister and that of the High Commissioner; but the fact is that the expense has probably hardly commenced. I direct attention to one small point which may interest struggling farmers in the outback, unemployed workers in the cities, and other Australian people whose payments, because of our social welfare legislation, have been reduced. The first thing that we heard from this right honorable gentleman after his arrival in London was that the mansion in which he was to reside was not satisfactory to him and would have to be renovated. Apparently he did not like the pattern of the wallpaper on the bathroom or somewhere else, and it had to be torn down and replaced. I am under the impression that this palatial residence was renovated, or a considerable sum of money spent on it, only about three years ago. I should like to hear what honorable members opposite would say if some of our citizens who are on the basic wage were to complain that the homes provided under this wage scale were not decorated according to their tastes, and must therefore be renovated.

Mr. WHITE.—Surely the honorable member realizes that this is providing work.

Mr. BEASLEY.—With all due respect to the British workers, I want any money that we have to spend on work of this description to be spent here. Let the British workers get all they can, but not at the expense of the Australian workers. I shall not vote for the expenditure in Great Britain of any money made available to the Government by the Australian taxpayers. Under existing conditions we should spend our money here, to help our own people. The right honorable gentleman who has gone to London does not live the life of the ordinary Australian citizen.

He has been fortunate in life compared with many of us, and has not had to live under conditions which have been the lot of most of us. As a result, his tastes are very expensive.

I come now to a consideration of the qualifications of this gentleman for the position of Resident Minister in London. The Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons) has had a good deal to say on this aspect of the subject, and to any one who remembers the speeches he made on the same subject during the election campaign of 1929, his statements to-day are laughable. We know that in 1929 he declared on many public platforms, in his own State in particular, that the Prime Minister of that day (Mr. Bruce) was an utter failure, and was mainly responsible for the situation in which the country had been placed. As a member of the Labour party of that day, the present Prime Minister travelled north, south, east and west in Tasmania, exhorting the people to remove the then Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) from office.

Mr. LYONS.—And he did it successfully.

Mr. BEASLEY.—That is so. It was done with a vengeance. It cannot truly be said, therefore, that the Leader of this Government had much regard then for the qualifications of the gentleman who has now gone to London.

Mr. PATERSON.—He has learnt better since then.

Mr. BEASLEY.—I will not do the right honorable gentleman such an injustice as to say that. He is not a schoolboy in public affairs in Australia. He has had considerable experience, and I believe that in 1929 he earnestly and sincerely believed that the economic situation of this country had been brought about almost entirely through the maladministration of the Government which the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) was then leading. Nothing has happened since then to equip this right honorable gentleman with any special qualifications. We know that immediately after that election campaign he left this country for Great Britain. I do not wish to be unjust to the right honorable gentleman, but I am entitled to say that during one of the most critical periods in the history of Australia he did

not remain here to lend a helping hand in getting the country out of the difficulties into which he had allowed it to be placed. I suppose there will be a squeal from honorable members generally when I say that the right honorable gentleman left Australia for England immediately after the 1929 election campaign, in order to look after the interests abroad of Paterson, Laing and Bruce Limited. He did not serve this country in any respect whatever in those difficult days. Many newspapers, quite opposed to Labour sentiments and policies, published vigorous articles protesting against Mr. Bruce leaving this country so quickly after his defeat at the polls by the present member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Holloway), seeing that he was to a large extent responsible for its parlous economic condition at that time. He had been Prime Minister for about seven years, and his administration had been so unsatisfactory that the people rejected his leadership. He, on his part, was not prepared then to stand by. He left the country precipitately, and went to London to serve the interests of Paterson, Laing and Bruce Limited. It is to be hoped that he will, on the occasion of this visit, pay more attention to the affairs of Australia than to the affairs of that firm.

I do not regard this gentleman as being competent to express the views of the Australian people. I think I am correct in saying that during the last election campaign he did not utter a single word from the public platform in this country and played no part whatever in bringing about the change of government that occurred.

Mr. LYONS.—But he gained an extraordinary victory in his own electorate.

Mr. BEASLEY.—I have no doubt that many of the extraordinary victories gained at the last election will never be repeated. That statement is not a threat; it is a philosophical observation, the truth of which time will determine.

We have been told that the Resident Minister in London is to handle our conversion operations overseas. On Monday night I had the opportunity of hearing a speech on this subject by the last Agent-General for New South Wales, Mr. Willis. He told us that when he

first took steps to bring about the conversion of certain Australian securities, he found great difficulty in getting from the Westminster Bank the names of those with whom he had to deal. He went on to say, that like other Australians, he had heard that our securities were held in London by a large number of small holders. When he was able to get at the facts, he found that this was not so, but that the great bulk of our stocks were in the hands of a few individuals. However, he embarked upon a discussion of conversion prospects with the people concerned, and was making fairly satisfactory progress. He showed them that it was impossible for the people of this country to continue paying the exorbitant interest rates that were being demanded, and the people with whom he was dealing were coming to see that this was so. But one day, when his negotiations had reached a most promising point, the representative of the people with whom he was in contact, presented to him a statement by the Prime Minister of Australia to the effect that the Commonwealth would pay every penny she owed, notwithstanding the high interest rates; and that the Government was prepared to cut and slash wages, social services, and so on—as it has done and is still doing—in order that the people who held our securities should get every penny of interest. The gentleman then said something to this effect to him: “I may agree with everything you say to me about the capacity of the people of Australia to pay, the deplorable condition of the country, and the necessity for a reduction of interest rates, but how can you expect to get interest rates reduced when your Prime Minister makes statements of this kind?” The whole of the business then in hand was upset. The irresistible inference from Mr. Willis’ speech was that Australia’s external debt position could have been rectified long ago if the leaders of our various governments and those actively engaged in the political life of this country had had the courage to face the position. If the affairs of this country had not been in the hands of men addicted to such political hypocrisy in regard to the meeting of our obligations, we could have overcome at least some of our troubles.

I hold the view that the right honorable gentleman who has gone overseas to represent Australia has not an Australian outlook on our problems. He has not lived in an environment which lent itself to the assimilation of Australian sentiment. I do not regard his opinions as expressing in any sense whatever the view of the people of this country.

Mr. PATERSON.—The Australian outlook is not necessarily the right one.

Mr. BEASLEY.—An honorable gentleman from Scotland is now interjecting, but I refuse to argue with him on the Australian outlook. I was born and bred in this country, and so were my parents. I shall not enter into a controversy with my Scottish friend on this subject. The gentleman who has gone overseas is not competent to handle our affairs in an Australian way, and according to the view of the Australian people, and in these circumstances I shall take whatever steps I can to bring about the defeat of this measure.

Mr. FORDE (Capricornia) [4.42].—No justification has been advanced for the appointment of a Resident Minister in London and, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) has rightly said, the appointment should not have been made. We already had an able financial adviser in London. Those who have been in close association with the gentleman know very well that he has done his work most satisfactorily. He was specially selected from the Commonwealth Public Service as a man of outstanding qualifications in financial matters, and was sent to London to keep in touch with the Bank of England and other big financial interests there for the purpose of advising the Government from time to time, and he has done his work well. A time of depression, such as the present, when the Government is slashing at invalid and old-age pensions and at other public services, is inopportune for incurring new expenditure of this kind. It is true that it is carrying out its election promises to one person. It promised that it would find lucrative employment for the people, and it has emancipated the right honorable gentleman who has gone to London, for it has provided him with a position carrying a

salary of about £5,000 a year, less a percentage reduction. But what about the great mass of the people for whom it has done nothing? While the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) was out of public life, after the 1929 election, he spent at least half his time in London looking after the affairs of Paterson, Laing and Bruce Limited. His re-entry into public life was not well pleasing to a certain section of the Nationalist party, who realized that he had brought this country to the verge of bankruptcy. The right honorable gentleman was not a popular figure in our public life, but he has a dominating personality, and was not satisfied with a subordinate position in the Government. Therefore this position abroad, which is a sinecure, was found for him, and a salary was provided of approximately £5,000 a year less deductions.

Mr. LYONS.—The deductions amount to nearly £2,000 a year.

Mr. FORDE.—No doubt the right honorable member for Flinders has been put in this position until the Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) and certain other honorable gentlemen can bring about a reconstruction of the Government, in which event certain ex-members of this party who are now occupying seats on the ministerial bench will be jettisoned.

I was most interested in listening to the speech of the right honorable the Leader of the Country Party. I recall that when the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) was defeated in 1929, some Nationalist newspapers declared that that was a very good thing for Australia, but that it would have been even more beneficial if the right honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) had also been defeated, and both gentlemen had proceeded to London. I do not know whether it would be possible, at present, to make two appointments in London, but I am aware that that would meet with the approval of a large section of the people of Australia.

The right honorable member for Cowper seemed to have an intimate knowledge of the intention of the Government regarding the right honorable member for Flinders, and it did not surprise me to hear him acclaim the appointment

as a good one. Clause 4 of the High Commissioner Act sets out—

The High Commissioner shall—

- (a) act as representative and resident agent of the Commonwealth in the United Kingdom, and in that capacity exercise such powers and perform such duties as are conferred upon and assigned to him by the Governor-General;
- (b) carry out such instructions as he receives from the Minister respecting the commercial, financial, and general interests of the Commonwealth and the States in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

I should like to know from the Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons) whether this Resident Minister in London is to receive instructions from "the Minister". If so, what Minister? Will it be from the Prime Minister as head of the Government, or is the Right Honorable S. M. Bruce to be the dominating personality, dictating the policy of the Government from London? Many people, including the honorable member for Maribyrnong (Mr. Fenton), and even the Prime Minister himself, have said frequently that the right honorable member for Flinders is the man who dictated the policy of the Nationalist Government, and in 1929 those two gentlemen denounced him from every political platform from which they spoke. To a great extent, those denunciations won their return to Parliament. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that the right honorable gentleman should do everything to facilitate the banishment of the right honorable member for Flinders to London. Temporarily, at least, he will be out of the way. Clause 7 of the act reads—

A person appointed to be the High Commissioner shall not during his tenure of office be or act as director or agent of or hold any office in any company or syndicate whether incorporated or unincorporated or hold any other employment, or engage in any business, whether within or without the Commonwealth.

Will the Prime Minister explain whether that applies to the position of the Resident Minister in London? I waited in vain for the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) to give some cogent reason justifying this appointment. The honorable gentleman stated that, after Mr. Bruce returned, an appointment would be made for a period of five years. That indicates that a job is being created for a prominent mem-

Mr. Forde.

ber of the Nationalist party, whose colleagues desire to get rid of him for a while. Notwithstanding these times of distress, the Estimates reveal that this year there is to be a 100 per cent. increase in the cost of the upkeep of the official residence in London. Is it that the residence that was good enough for Sir Granville Ryrie is not good enough for the Right Honorable S. M. Bruce?

Mr. LYONS.—There is no such increase.

Mr. FORDE.—At page 33 of the Estimates it will be found that the estimated upkeep of the official residence in London for the year 1932-33 is £520 as against an expenditure of £243 in 1931-32.

Mr. LYONS.—The honorable member refers to portion only of the total allowance.

Mr. FORDE.—Section 5 of the High Commissioner Act is as follows:—

The High Commissioner, for the purpose of more economically and effectively advancing the material interests and welfare of every part of Australia, shall also, if the Governor-General so directs, perform for the States functions and duties similar to those hereinbefore described and similar to those now discharged by the Agents-General of the States.

Has the Prime Minister had a conference with the State Premiers regarding the abolition of the positions of State Agents-General with a view to eliminating this duplication? If so, the position of High Commissioner could be filled by an able representative of the Commonwealth who would perform the duties common to both offices. The Attorney-General declared that, as a general principle, it would not be advisable to have a Resident Minister in London, and futilely endeavoured to justify the action of the Government. I am of the opinion that the right honorable member for Flinders will still dominate the policy of the Government from London, particularly insofar as finance is concerned. With all due respect to the right honorable gentleman, I submit that he has the outlook of an Englishman rather than that of an Australian.

The Attorney-General also stated that there was much to be done to improve our markets. Is it intended that the right honorable member for Flinders shall play a leading part in seeking additional markets for Australian products, or is he

to confine himself to the duties of High Commissioner and to dictating the financial policy of the Commonwealth? I have yet to read a report from Sir Granville Ryrie, who was once a Minister in a Nationalist Government, indicating that he did anything to open up bigger and better markets for Australian primary producers. Already we have in London representatives of the Commonwealth Marketing Board and the Empire Marketing Board. Are they not performing their duties properly? Is it necessary to have this Resident Minister seeking bigger and better markets? I believe that to be merely another excuse to justify Mr. Bruce's appointment.

I am disappointed that the Prime Minister could not say how long the right honorable member for Flinders will occupy the position of Resident Minister in London. We know that the bill provides for an appointment of two years, and when the project was first mooted the Prime Minister said that the appointment would be for twelve months. It might be for six months or any other period. Surely the Government can be more precise.

A great deal has been said about the qualifications of Mr. Bruce for the position. Honorable members opposite have pointed to him as an outstanding figure who has done much for Australia. I remember listening to an eloquent speech by the right honorable member for Flinders when Prime Minister. It was delivered at Adelaide, and sought to justify the policy of his Government in borrowing £40,000,000 a year to develop Australia by the importation of goods from abroad; for the natural corollary of borrowing from abroad is increased importations. That policy had a particularly disastrous effect upon our secondary industries. Yet the gentleman responsible for it is being honoured by appointment to the important position of Resident Minister in London! It was claimed that Mr. Bruce would not receive the full salary paid to a High Commissioner; that his allowance as Honorary Minister would be deducted from that amount. I contend that if the right honorable gentleman can be spared from Australia for twelve months the position of Honorary Minister, which he occupies,

could be abolished, with a resultant saving to the country.

It has been claimed that, as Resident Minister in London, the right honorable member for Flinders will play a prominent part in the conversion of Australia's indebtedness. Surely that is a task for the Prime Minister—not for an Honorary Minister. During the last federal election campaign, the Prime Minister said that, if elected, one of his first jobs would be to proceed to London to convert the whole of Australia's indebtedness at a reduced rate of interest. The right honorable gentleman has not done so. Instead, he passes the task over to an Honorary Minister.

Not one sound argument has been advanced by honorable members opposite in defence of the appointment. Obviously, it is merely a subterfuge to find a position for the right honorable member for Flinders, who unexpectedly performed a political "comeback", and disconcerted his colleagues. I predict that in the next twelve months there will be considerable political intrigue with the object of removing certain honorable gentlemen from the treasury bench and placing the Government under different leadership.

Mr. CASEY (Corio) [4.57].—While listening to the right honorable the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) I found it difficult to think that he was not speaking "with his dialectic tongue in his dialectic cheek". If anybody knows the difficulty of effecting the conversion of huge sums of money on the London market, it is the right honorable gentleman, for he made tentative attempts to do that when he was last in London. The right honorable gentleman commenced by saying that he was not prepared to undermine the position of Mr. Bruce in London, and then immediately proceeded to do so. The right honorable gentleman and others who followed him questioned his judgment and claimed that Mr. Collins could perform the task ahead of him equally well. That is more than open to question. I appreciate Mr. Collins as a civil servant. I worked with him, and am his friend. But I do not consider, and I am confident that the right honorable the

Leader of the Opposition does not consider, that Mr. Collins could conduct even the preliminary negotiations for the conversion of our indebtedness in London. All with experience of such negotiations are aware that the more important the negotiations, the more does success depend upon the personality and standing of the individual conducting them. In spite of the splenetic invective of honorable members who should know better, I believe that they, and the people of Australia generally, recognize the peculiar qualities that fit the Right Honorable S. M. Bruce for the task. Mr. Collins could not even begin negotiations on equal terms with the Governor of the Bank of England, or with the British Treasury, but the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) will be able to do so.

It has been asked in certain quarters what is the right honorable member's mission in London. It is a simple one; the attempt to convert our loans from a high to a lower rate of interest. I know of no one with better qualifications for the task. The first business to be undertaken is the conversion of the New South Wales loan of £13,000,000 that falls due in November. If that conversion succeeds, the conversion of the bracketed loans falling due within the next few years will remain to be undertaken. Mr. Bruce's mission is to effect these conversions, so far as it is humanly possible to do so; and then he will return to this country. Details will, no doubt, be attended to by Mr. Collins. Nobody suggests, for example, that Mr. Bruce should remain to sign the new scrip to be issued.

I do not think that the House or the country will take much notice of the mean innuendoes of the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Beasley).

Mr. STEWART.—The *Labor Daily* will, perhaps.

Mr. CASEY.—The *Labor Daily*, perhaps, will publish his photograph and report his remarks in full, emphasizing his bitterer remarks in black type. The honorable member did not attack the Government's proposal on its merits. Everything he said could be accounted for by political spleen, and by the fact that he has had the unique experience in this Parliament of being singled out by the right honorable member for Flinders

for rebuke. The remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Forde) were likewise, in my opinion, animated solely by political motives. The implication was that Mr. Bruce was intimately concerned with the business affairs of Paterson, Laing and Bruce. That, I think, even the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows to be untrue. In the circumstances, the statement was mischievous and unfair. The measure has not been discussed by the Opposition on its merits; it has been made the opportunity for backbiting, and for what the House will recognize as a mean and dirty attack—

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. CASEY.—Then, I will say, as an unjust attack on a man who is not here to defend himself.

Mr. PATERSON (Gippsland) [5.3].—I do not think that I have ever listened to weaker opposition to any measure than the speeches on this occasion of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin), the Deputy Leader (Mr. Forde), and the leader of what has been called the Lang group (Mr. Beasley). Their argument, or lack of argument, shows how difficult it was for them to say something against the bill. The Leader of the Opposition began by saying that Mr. Collins, our financial adviser in London, had a more intimate knowledge of the details of our financial affairs than any Minister could have, and, therefore, could do better than any Minister in making arrangements for the future.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—That is not an exact repetition of what the Leader of the Opposition said.

Mr. PATERSON.—I do not profess to be able to repeat his statement word for word, but, at the time the right honorable member was speaking, I made a note to the effect that he said that Mr. Collins had a more intimate knowledge of the details than any Minister going from here could hope to have, and could do better. I submit that it is not a mere knowledge of the details—although I have a great respect for the knowledge of detail possessed by the right honorable member for Flinders—but a broad grasp of Australia's position that is required by a Minister going to represent Australia

overseas. Who would be the more powerful or more impressive advocate of Australia, of her resources, of her honorable record for prompt payment when so many countries have defaulted, of her capacity and determination to stand up to her obligation—Mr. Bruce, or some Commonwealth public servant, no matter how able he might be, or how great the respect in which we hold him? I do not believe, nor, I am sure, does Mr. Collins himself, that our financial adviser in London could do the work required at the present time so satisfactorily as could a man with the standing of Mr. Bruce. We have already read something, particularly in the financial press of England, of the good effect produced in financial circles by the advocacy of Australia's interests by the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) when he was recently in London. We have learned how he was able most effectively to dispose of certain ill-informed and groundless prejudices against Australia and her methods of finance. I believe that the right honorable member for Flinders will do this task as well as any man could. The Government could not make a better choice. He is a well-known figure, he has an international reputation, he has a personality which inspires confidence, and he has many valuable contacts, both in the business world and with financial institutions, which must be of incalculable value to Australia when we are seeking to convert large sums on the London market.

The additional advantage of ministerial authority which he will possess cannot be overlooked. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that Mr. Bruce's position in London would be virtually a sinecure. That, I think, is the best joke we have heard yet in connection with this proposal. The honorable member for West Sydney said that Mr. Bruce had not an Australian outlook, and this was repeated by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Well, I do not know that West Sydney has a monopoly of Australian outlook, and certainly, within the last nine months or so, the people of Australia have shown that they do not regard the West Sydney outlook as the Australian outlook. This is demonstrated by the present personnel of this House.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke of marketing arrangements overseas, and appears to think it absurd that Mr. Bruce should be expected to do anything to advance Australia's trade in Great Britain. His argument reminded me of the very narrow view held by some members of certain trade unions that one man must do only one thing; that, for instance, a plumber must never touch anything which could be done by a carpenter. Surely if a Minister goes to London it is not out of place for him to do anything and everything to advance Australia's prospects and trade. There is no need, even though his principal mission be in regard to finance, to exclude rigidly everything else. We know that in 1923 it was this same gentleman, the right honorable member for Flinders, who did a great deal for a number of our important exporting industries by obtaining certain preferences from the British Government. Although their extent was then limited, Australia obtained preference for dried fruits, wines, and sugar, three concessions which were extremely valuable to the people of Australia, and particularly to some of the constituents of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has been at such pains to belittle Mr. Bruce.

Some of the gibes of honorable members in respect of the emoluments of the High Commissioner are very paltry. The Prime Minister has shown that there will be an actual saving as the result of the new arrangement; but, even if there were not, when we consider the importance of the task which Mr. Bruce is to undertake, and the enormous benefits which will accrue to Australia if he is successful, we realize how petty are complaints about the salary of the Resident Minister in London. Consider, for instance, the first task which Mr. Bruce will undertake—the conversion of a loan of £13,000,000 for New South Wales, which is falling due in November. If it were possible for Australia, owing to the efforts of a man of the standing of Mr. Bruce, to secure terms only 2s. 6d. per cent. lower in the interest payable on the loan, it would mean a saving of £16,000 a year. I do not think it would be expecting too much, or exaggerating the possibilities of the

situation, to say that Mr. Bruce might be able to obtain that additional advantage when another man could not. Then there is a larger conversion which it might be advantageous to undertake later. We were told by the Prime Minister in his budget speech that, of the £474,000,000 which we owed in Great Britain apart from war debt, about £307,000,000 was borrowed at 5 per cent. and over. No less than £93,000,000 was at more than 5 per cent., and up to 6½ per cent. We were also reminded last week that we have current option conversion rights over £96,000,000 worth of our overseas debt, on which we pay 5 per cent. and up to 6½ per cent. interest. There is nothing to prevent us from negotiating with the overseas bond-holders at the present time, or at any time we think fit, because the first of the two maturity dates in connexion with these particular issues has already passed. If Mr. Bruce were able to obtain an advantage of 2s. 6d. per cent. less interest on £96,000,000 worth of debt, that alone would represent a saving of £120,000 a year to Australia.

The Government could not have made a better choice for this position, and I support the bill.

Mr. WHITE (Balaclava) [5.12].—It is hardly necessary to say anything in support of this bill, because the appointment of such a man as Mr. Bruce is obviously a good one. He has peculiar characteristics, he has travelled, he is educated, and he is, above all things, a gentleman, which one cannot say of some of the representatives of Australia who have been sent abroad in the past. I have risen chiefly because of the attacks made on Mr. Bruce by the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward), the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Beasley) and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Forde). The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) said that Mr. Bruce had carried Australia to disaster, and treated the warnings of various persons—himself included, I suppose—in an airy manner; and that, consequently, he was thrown from office in 1929. Honorable members know well that the main issue at that election was arbitration—the removal of a great

many petty industrial matters from the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to that of State tribunals. The Leader of the Opposition used all his oratory on that occasion to defeat the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), stating that there was no need to economize, no need to cut down the costs of industry by reforming the arbitration system. But what did the Leader of the Opposition and his supporters do after they had brought about the fall of Mr. Bruce and his Government? They found themselves up against financial and economic problems, and were compelled to bring in wage reduction bills, which cut the earnings of the workers very substantially. Yet they have the audacity now to charge Mr. Bruce with having neglected his duty, when they themselves were prepared to bribe the people by offering what they could not deliver. For six years, the right honorable member acquitted himself honorably as leader of the Bruce-Page Government, whose term of office was one of the most prosperous periods in Australia's history.

The right honorable gentleman has been attacked to-day because it happens that his interests are not entirely political; but I claim that one of the greatest curses in Australia to-day is the professional politician. Many honorable members on the other side of the House represent that class. They have the gift of the gab, and having acted as union secretaries, often through being indifferent tradesmen, they are regarded as suitable candidates for parliamentary honours. These men have to do as they are told; yet they pose in this Parliament as the representatives of a democratic movement. The man who has been criticized in this House to-day has shown his ability in other than political walks of life. In reply to the gibe that he does not know this country so well as some petty-minded Australians do, I point out that the fact that he went abroad for some of his education stands to his credit, rather than to his detriment. He spent several years in doing his part during a national crisis, while certain other honorable members seemed not to remember to do so. That, too, may be said to the credit of the right honorable member.

The honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Beasley) remarked that when the right honorable member was defeated in Flinders, he left Australia, and took no part in assisting to get this country out of its difficulties. I am in a position to state that he could then have had a safe seat in this Parliament, had he chosen to take it. I accidentally met him when he knew that the figures in his own electorate were against him. On that occasion, I had been a member of this House for only three or four weeks and had successfully faced a second election, but in view of the attack made upon Mr. Bruce by honorable members opposite, I make no apology for saying that I offered to resign if he cared to take my seat in Balacava.

Mr. GANDER.—Another dummy!

Mr. WHITE.—I know that the honorable member for Reid (Mr. Gander) is a seat-warmer for the ex-Premier of New South Wales, but, as I have pointed out, when I made that offer I had been a member for only a few weeks, and I realized that it was a tragedy for the services of a man of the calibre of Mr. Bruce to be lost to Australia. The right honorable gentleman said that he was going on a holiday, but he promised that when he returned from Great Britain, he would fight for his old seat, and win it back. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Holloway), who left the Flinders seat for a safer electorate, can tell us whether the right honorable member for Flinders carried out that promise. The honorable member for West Sydney remarked that Mr. Willis had complained that the United Australia party had "cruelled the pitch" for him, because it refused to be a party to repudiation of overseas interest payments, and that he could have secured lower interest rates overseas if the Lang policy had been adopted. The honorable member for West Sydney preferred an importation of the type of Mr. Willis to an honest and influential man like Mr. Bruce.

Mr. GANDER.—Does not the honorable member believe in importation?

Mr. WHITE.—We could well do with the exportation of some of the "reds" and their associates.

I regret that a most worthy member of this House has been unfairly criticized.

The international situation is most complex. Affairs in Germany have come to such a pass that there may be civil war in that country, and Russia is mysterious and menacing. Honorable members opposite address each other as comrades, and profess to believe in the brotherhood of man, but in the arena of domestic politics, they fight bitterly between themselves. Paradoxically, they favour a high tariff, which makes a country selfishly national, and is often the cause of international disputes. The party opposite is alive only to the petty, local interests of Australia, but we are fortunate in having, in Mr. Bruce, a man who sees affairs in their imperial and international aspects. I support the bill.

Mr. BLAKELEY (Darling) [5.21].—I oppose this measure. I do not say that my opposition to it would have disappeared if the Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons), the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham), and several of those supporting the bill had been more frank in explaining the supposed necessity for it. Its real object seems to be shrouded in mystery. Apparently, no good reason can be advanced for clothing the Resident Minister in London with the powers of the High Commissioner. As a matter of fact, under present conditions it is not necessary to have a High Commissioner in London at all. Mr. J. R. Collins has practically carried out the work of that officer for many years. Judging by the powers proposed to be given to the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), under this more or less spectacular measure, it would seem that the House has not been informed of the real reason for the bill.

I do not intend to make a personal attack on Mr. Bruce in his absence, but I am entitled, I think, to offer criticism of a political nature. The injurious effect on Australia of the administration of the Bruce-Page Government is still remembered, and, unfortunately, this country will for many years have to bear the burden which that Government imposed upon it. It had an un-Australian outlook, for it adopted a policy of borrowing and buying abroad. Our secondary industries and our finances were crippled during its régime. When, in 1929, it

ignominiously went out of office, it was generally regarded as a Ministry which had administered the finances of this country unwisely. During this debate, many encomiums have been heaped upon the right honorable member for Flinders. One can readily find a reason for that. When he comes back, in all probability he will be in a position to reward those who have defended him in his absence from the charges levelled against him as a public financier. One can appreciate the desire of certain honorable members to stand in well with a man who will probably occupy a high position in this country before the expiration of the twelve months for which he is to be appointed Resident Minister in London. His first duty, it seems to me, is to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the people of Australia, and that will be a difficult job. Much has been said to-day of his capacity as an administrator, but I claim that during his term of office as Prime Minister he showed blundering incapacity, and a total disregard for the welfare of Australian industries. There was lavish expenditure during his régime; public money was wasted, and from ten to fifteen years will be required to enable the Commonwealth to recover from the bankrupt condition in which he left it. This is the man who is held up to-day as the only person suitable for the special mission on which he has been sent to London. As a matter of fact, the job for which he is ostensibly going there, has already been done.

What I am afraid of is that the right honorable member, with his kindly regard for the overseas financiers and the bond-holders, will not strike such a bargain for Australia as could be obtained by a representative other than himself. In my opinion, he has neither the necessary capacity, nor the temperament required to enable him to carry out delicate financial negotiations. The right honorable member has not an Australian outlook. I speak as the result of about ten years' experience of him in the public life of this country, and that is also the conclusion which many thousands of people in Australia have reached regarding him. Owing to his mismanagement of the finances of the Commonwealth, I cannot accept him as the plenipotentiary

Mr. Blakeley.

of Australia. No doubt, the Government thinks that it is doing right in selecting the right honorable member for this work, but the Opposition is entitled to protest against his selection to carry out the conversion of Australia's overseas loans. If the main reason for the appointment of the right honorable gentleman to this high position is not his personal rehabilitation in the eyes of the Australian people, one wonders—and I regret that the Prime Minister was not more frank—for whom the right honorable gentleman is "seat-warming" in Flinders. Some talk has been indulged in about "seat-warming" this afternoon. Why did not the honorable member for Balaklava (Mr. White) enlighten the House on this matter? I have no doubt that the right honorable member for Flinders is very happy in his new position. All his business interests, or at least the greater part of them, lie in London, and they have caused him great concern in the last couple of years; in fact he had to hurry to London some time ago to take over a more or less staggering concern.

Mr. WHITE.—The honorable member promised not to be personal.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—My criticism is not personal; I am merely reminding honorable members of something which the right honorable member himself said in this House. It is common knowledge that the firm of Paterson, Laing and Bruce has suffered heavy losses during the last two years; in one year the loss was £80,000. No doubt the public duties of the right honorable member for Flinders will dovetail very happily with attention to his private interests abroad. Those who are for ever gibing at professional politicians will approve of the appointment of the right honorable gentleman as representative of Australia in London. Contemptuous reference is made to those men whose only source of livelihood is their parliamentary allowance. God help Australia if it should ever become dependent on men who subordinate their parliamentary duties to their private business interests.

Mr. E. J. HARRISON.—Union organizers would be much better!

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Insults are hurled at union secretaries. In what respect is, say, the manager of a shirt and

pyjama factory better qualified for public life than a union secretary? The Minister for the Interior (Mr. Parkhill) was one of the much abused political organizers, not a trade union organizer—God forbid!—but something much more respectable.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! I ask the honorable member to connect his remarks with the bill.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Australia could be represented in London as well by a union secretary as by the director of an importing firm, and with all due respect to high finance and big business, I believe the former would do the job more efficiently. There is no need to alter the law to enable the right honorable member for Flinders to be appointed to represent Australia in London, and there is certainly no justification for paying him more than his ministerial salary. He will control a capable staff in Australia House, and I have no doubt that after the preliminary negotiations are completed the detail work of loan conversion will be done by men who understand these matters much better than the right honorable member for Flinders.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—That is the ordinary course of business.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—The Leader of the Opposition said that the conversion negotiations would be conducted up to a certain point by the Minister now in London, but that the detail work could be done by Mr. Collins, who has a more intimate knowledge of public finance and loan operations than has the right honorable member for Flinders, or any other person who is not constantly in touch with the financiers of London. That contention was completely misrepresented, inadvertently I believe, by the honorable member for Gippsland (Mr. Paterson). The explanation of this measure by the Prime Minister was not frank; possibly he thought that the time was not opportune to take the House into his confidence. The Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) also showed a keen desire to withhold from the House the real reason for the step that is proposed. Other honorable members supporting the Government do not know the real reason, but accept the ostensible one in the hope that their encomiums of the right honorable member

for Flinders and their defence of his political reputation will be suitably recognized on his return.

Mr. GABB (Angas) [5.36].—The debate seems to have centred on the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), but I do not find in the bill any reference to him, although we know that he is to be appointed acting High Commissioner. I have arrived at the conclusion that it is immaterial whether one votes for or against the bill. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) has asserted that a vote for the second reading will be an endorsement of a new system. The Attorney-General, on the other hand, assured the House that the bill does not introduce any new general principle. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition is right, but governments will please themselves, as they have done in the past. The operation of the bill is limited to two years, but if a government desires to send some of its members abroad, it will find excuses for doing so. For a considerable time, at least one Commonwealth Minister of the Crown has been absent from Australia. The Scullin Ministry sent four Ministers abroad. To date, the present Government has sent three abroad, and I doubt that that will be the end of these trips. I regard many of them as merely political plums, and I am certain that if the present Government or any future Government wants to send other Ministers on trips at the public expense, it will do so, whether this bill be accepted or rejected. I support the measure for two reasons. The first is that it will enable a saving of £2,000 a year to be effected.

Mr. JAMES.—How does the honorable member arrive at that figure?

Mr. GABB.—According to the Prime Minister, the ministerial allowance of the Minister resident in London will be augmented by an amount sufficient to bring it up to the salary and allowances usually paid to the High Commissioner. I estimate that this will mean a saving of between £1,700 and £2,000. I am not convinced that the calibre of the representation in London will be improved. The High Commissioner has always been an ex-Minister of the Crown, and whether the occupant of the office be a Minister in harness or a Minister out of harness is

immaterial. My second reason for supporting the bill is that governments will find it less easy to send another Minister tripping to London when there is already one resident there. This will mean a further saving. I was interested and amused by the Attorney-General's emphasis of the need for efficient representation of Australia in London. Undoubtedly the need exists, but I could not help recalling some earlier appointments of High Commissioners and Agents-General. If rumour be correct, Sir Granville Ryrie was appointed High Commissioner because of his political services to his party, and to get him out of the way at a time when his vote was uncertain. Sir Henry Barwell was appointed Agent-General for South Australia purely for political reasons. Had he stood for the Senate, he might have prejudiced the chances of the Nationalist or Liberal candidates. Therefore, the salary of the Agent-General was increased, and Sir Henry Barwell was shipped to London. Happenings of this character make me feel that ability and efficiency are not the factors which govern these appointments abroad; the primary consideration is the interest of the political party in power. This debate is another illustration of how political parties throw dust in the eyes of the people, and continue their party wrangles regardless of what happens to the country.

Mr. JAMES (Hunter) [5.42].—I am opposed to the appointment of the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) to be Resident Minister in London. Some honorable members have lauded the special qualifications of the right honorable gentleman, but I claim that the Bruce-Page Administration was largely responsible for the present financial position of Australia. That Ministry introduced thousands of migrants from overseas.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! Some honorable members seem to be under the erroneous impression that they are participating in a debate on the budget. The bill before the House is for the purpose of vesting in the Minister without Portfolio, who is now in Great Britain, the powers given to the High Commissioner by the High Commissioner Act, which it amends. I ask the honorable

member for Hunter to confine his remarks to the subject-matter of the bill.

Mr. JAMES.—Unfortunately, I always seem to be the member reproved by the Chair for transgressing. Other honorable members have spoken of the special qualifications of the right honorable member for Flinders, and surely I am entitled to answer them. The Bruce-Page Ministry introduced approximately 160,000 migrants at a cost of £2,000,000.

Mr. HUTCHIN.—The migrants were introduced by the State Governments.

Mr. JAMES.—The Bruce-Page Ministry expended £2,000,000 on the steamship passages of assisted migrants. During the time that the right honorable member was Prime Minister £300,000 a year was expended on immigration. To-day the community generally has to maintain a considerable number of migrants who could not be absorbed in industry. They were brought here for a specific purpose.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot allow the honorable member to enlarge his argument on that subject. If he wishes to bring outside matters into the debate he must do so by way of illustration and by directly connecting them with the subject-matter of the bill.

Mr. JAMES.—I am pointing out that because of the stupid blunder of a former Prime Minister this country is in the throes of a financial depression. Immigrants were brought to Australia to swell the unemployed army in preparation for the grand attack of the moneyed interests on the workers of this country.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—Did not the Lang Government bring 1,500 miners into New South Wales?

Mr. JAMES.—The Bruce-Page Government brought into Australia about 20,000 Southern Europeans, people who could not even talk our language. The supporters of the Government have lauded the right honorable member for Flinders because of his particular qualifications for the position of Resident Minister in London. But I contend that this position has been created for the right honorable member because he cannot bear the indignity of the leadership of the present Prime Minister, and his present designation of Minister without portfolio. The supporters of the Government have eulogized the right honorable member as

a true Australian. He may be Australian born, but he certainly lacks an Australian outlook. He was not educated in this country, and he has spent much of his time out of it. During the war it was beneath his dignity to enlist in the Australian army; so he joined a British regiment.

Mr. McNICOLL.—To what regiment did the honorable member belong?

Mr. JAMES.—I fought in the industrial army on behalf of the workers and not of the wealthy interests. According to the honorable member for Balaclava (Mr. White), the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) has done much for the exporting industry of this country, but I contend that his work at the Ottawa Conference has done much for the importing interests. We are now assured that our policy of tariff protection for Australian industries is to be practically scrapped, and that our manufacturers will have to face the competition of cheap labour countries. Our secondary industries have been built up under a policy of protection so as to develop this country on national lines. We wish to be an independent nation, capable of manufacturing our own raw materials and of competing with the finished article overseas. As a result of the efforts of the right honorable member for Flinders at the Ottawa Conference we are to be the wood and water joeys for other countries. We are to provide the raw materials for overseas manufacturers, and our secondary industries must languish in consequence. It has been said that the right honorable member, while in London, will confine most of his activities to the conversion of loans. There is no necessity for us to appoint a Resident Minister to carry out that work. On Monday night last I listened with a great deal of interest to Mr. A. C. Willis, the late Agent-General for New South Wales, who has recently returned from Great Britain. While in London Mr. Willis, at the instigation of Mr. Lang, then Premier of New South Wales, approached a number of English brokers and bondholders. They stated that they were prepared to convert the loans of New South Wales at a reasonable interest rate; and had it not been for the interference of the Federal Government, some satisfactory arrangement would

have been made. When Mr. Willis had practically completed his negotiations a statement appeared in the British press to the effect that the Federal Government would pay its debt in full. That statement cut the ground from under the feet of Mr. Willis in his efforts to bring about a reduction in interest rates, and it was to discredit that gentleman and to nullify his efforts that the Federal Government stated that Australia could, and would, meet its overseas obligations. Australia has met its obligations only at the expense of the community. Many of the unemployed have had to starve, and now a further burden is being placed upon the old-age and invalid pensioners so that Australia may meet its commitments overseas. I see no reason for a change in our representation in Great Britain. This is the first time in the long period during which the Commonwealth has had a High Commissioner in London that it has been proposed to put a Resident Minister into the position. The right honorable member for Flinders has commercial interests, not only in Australia, but also in Great Britain. The firm with which he is connected is in financial difficulties, and because of that he has had to make frequent trips to London.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I ask the honorable member to confine his remarks to the bill.

Mr. JAMES.—There is no need to rush this measure through the House. The right honorable member for North Sydney (Mr. Hughes) has frequently stated, in connexion with proposed political changes, that governments are constantly changing. This Government is occupying its position temporarily. After the next election, honorable members now on that side of the House will be members of the Opposition, and it is quite likely that the Government of the day will take advantage of this legislation to appoint one of its adherents to the position of Resident Minister in London. I urge the Government to insist on our representative in London, whoever he may be, using every endeavour to bring about a reciprocal pensions arrangement between Great Britain and Australia. The parents of many families who migrate here are debarred from a pension because of not having fulfilled the residential qualification. Yet, in many

instances, they have worked for long periods in industrial activities in England. British military pensions are payable in this country, and there should be a similar reciprocal arrangement between Great Britain and Australia in regard to old-age and invalid pensions. It is unfair for this Government to send the right honorable member for Flinders to Great Britain to act as our representative there. He has been elected to this Parliament as the representative of the people of the electorate of Flinders, and he should not be allowed to neglect them. According to the press, in his absence, his electorate is to be nursed by the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. E. F. Harrison). It is a shame that this Government should be prepared to send overseas a member of this House who has commercial interests there, and who will exploit them to the detriment of the manufacturers of this country.

Dr. MALONEY (Melbourne) [6.0].—This measure is intituled "A bill to amend the High Commissioner Act 1909". I accept the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons) that if it is agreed to, a considerable sum will be saved. I only regret that an attempt is not being made to save still more. I have known every High Commissioner for Australia. I was in London when sites for Australia House were being inspected. One site offered faced Trafalgar Square. It had a wide frontage but a shallow depth. My old friend, Sir George Reid, observed concerning it, "Too much face, and too little belly to build Australia House on". Subsequently, the present site was chosen. Sir George Reid was the first High Commissioner, and a very good one he was. Next came Mr. Andrew Fisher; then Sir Joseph Cook, and then Sir Granville Ryrie. It will be noticed that all the occupants of this position, except Andrew Fisher, were decorated with the tuppenny-ha'penny tin-pot thing termed a title. Only Andrew Fisher was plain Mister. But he discharged his duties as well as any other occupant of the office. I like Sir Granville Ryrie, because he is a plain, blunt man who speaks from his heart. He said when he was appointed that he did not know why the honour had been conferred upon him, and added that he

would do his level best. He certainly made friends in South Africa when he told the Boers that they were brave men who had fought a desperate fight for freedom.

I oppose this bill. It is an infamy, in present circumstances, to inflict upon the great Australian public the heavy expense which this office involves. In answer to a question which I asked in this House on the 20th September, 1928, I was told that up to the 30th June, 1928, the building had cost £621,700, and that the site had cost £379,800, making, in all, £1,001,500. The administrative costs then were £720,602.

Mr. GIBSON.—What is the present value of Australia House?

Dr. MALONEY.—There has been considerable depreciation in real estate in London as elsewhere. I made an inquiry on that very point, and the reply I received was as follows:—

The High Commissioner's office advises that it is practically impossible to estimate the value of the building and site but that there is no doubt that both would show a considerable increase on the cost.

We know very well that in consequence of the high taxation in England many aristocratic homes have been sold. Still, I do not think we would lose much, if anything, if we were to sell Australia House even now. We have all heard the old adage that promises, like pie-crusts, are made to be broken, and another equally common saying that the path to hell is paved with good intentions. It will be remembered that just before the consummation of federation, when we were discussing, on the public platforms of this country, the benefits that would flow to Australia if the colonies federated, it was often said that one result of federation would mean that we should be able to do with one agent-general for the Commonwealth and the States, whereas then six were needed, one for each State. It was actually promised that we should have only one agent-general, but the promise was not fulfilled. All the States still have their own agents-general.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—Oh, no! New South Wales has abolished the office; and so has Tasmania.

Dr. MALONEY.—Well, we still have four agents-general too many. I believe that if the people of Australia were consulted by ballot they would indicate by an overwhelming majority that the office of State agent-general should be abolished in every case.

In reply to my inquiry as to the number of persons employed at Australia House, I obtained the following figures:—Temporary, 313; permanent, 29; total 342. I was also informed that only 58 of these were Australians. I have no objection to British people. My mother was an English woman, and I love the land from which she came. But I think more Australians should be employed at Australia House. Whenever the British Government establishes an office of any kind in Australia the largest percentage of the staff is English. I ascertained when I asked the series of questions to which I have already referred, that 100 typists were employed at Australia House. They were described as clerks and typists. In this Parliament House, which is the home of the Commonwealth Government, and in which all our laws are made, we have only fourteen typists. Why then, should there be 100 at Australia House? I know, of course, that Mr. Percy Coleman, the former member for Reid, made a valuable report on the expenditure at Australia House, and recommended many economies; but I think the office should be closed and the building sold. If that were done an end would be put to a lot of humbug and nonsense. In these days it would be possible for us to have a representative in London in a modest office, and the members of the Government could, if they so desired, talk to him by telephone almost as easily as they can talk by telephone to officers at Civic Centre. There is no need for us to continue spending large sums of money on this office. I believe we should do better from a commercial point of view if we empowered the Government to grant travelling expenses to bona fide commercial travellers sent to England to represent specific interests. Arrangements might possibly be made for such persons to be allowed a certain percentage on the increased sales of Australian products in England, as shown by customs house

figures, following their various appointments.

The honorable member for Balaclava (Mr. White) had something to say, and I fear in a derogatory way, about professional politicians. As a matter of fact, the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) has always been quoted by me as a politician who, immediately he assumed government office, resigned from the directorate of his firm so that he could devote the whole of his time to his political duties. All honour to him for so doing. I make these remarks in reply to the unkind criticism of the honorable member for Balaclava.

I wish, also, to say a few words in reply to the observations of the honorable member for Gippsland (Mr. Paterson) about the "paltry salary." In doing so, I shall refer to Switzerland, the only real democracy in the world. In Switzerland, the people control the parliament, not only on election day, but on every day in the year. The Swiss people had a great compliment paid to them when, with only the reversal of the colours, their flag was adopted as the red cross emblem. On one occasion the Government decided to appoint a Swiss as a kind of commissioner in the United States of America. The officer appointed was to, as it were, sit astride the two continents. The Federal Government fixed the remuneration of the office at £400. The Swiss parliament always fixes a specific sum when making such appointments, and there are no additions to it. The officer, in this case, was to use the consular offices in America. The Swiss people were not consulted about the appointment, and were so incensed at the action of the Government that an initiative petition was circulated, with the result that the Government had to cancel the appointment.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 8 p.m.

Dr. MALONEY.—I say, with all reverence, that God never created anything His equal or His superior. Why, then, should the electors, who are the creators of Parliament, once in every three years, allow the created Parliament to make itself more powerful than the electors? If the people of Australia really had the power to control the Parliament that they have created

they would not allow the payment of salaries up to £5,000 a year. It is ridiculous, in view of our limited population, to countenance, any longer, the maintenance of an excrescence like Australia House, costing as it did over £1,000,000, including the land on which it stands, and a further £1,000,000 for other costs. This is unjust to the people who elected us, and it is not true democracy. I have always held that the law-maker fills the most important position to which man can aspire. Any man who gains the suffrages of his fellow citizens to become a member of Parliament, and therefore, a law-maker, should receive the highest salary that is paid in the State, excepting perhaps that paid to scientists and experts who are invited from time to time to report upon our railways and other institutions. For 50 years in and out of Parliament, and for 43 years in Parliament, I have endeavoured to make the people the controlling power in the country. Until that has been done this will not be a true democracy, for the created thing has more power than its creator.

Mr. HUTCHINSON (Indi) [8.7].—Honorable members are doing a disservice to their country in delaying the passage of the measure. I rise to reply to some statements which, if left unchallenged, would convey an erroneous impression concerning one who is not present to reply to them, a gentleman who has always manifested a very high sense of national duty, and at the moment is on the other side of the world in furtherance of the interests of his country, the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce).

The honorable member for Darling (Mr. Blakeley) declared that he was not going to indulge in a personal attack upon the right honorable member for Flinders—and promptly proceeded to do so. In attempting to belittle the administration of the right honorable gentleman, he alleged that Mr. Bruce had worked to the detriment of our secondary, and in favour of our importing industries. I find, on examining the *Commonwealth Year-Book*, that the contrary is the case. During the régime of the Bruce-Page Government there was a rather large increase in the number of factories in Australia and a noticeable increase in the

number of persons engaged in our secondary industries. My investigations also make it apparent that, despite the protestations of honorable members opposite, the number of factories declined somewhat, and the number of employees in secondary industries declined considerably during the period that the Scullin Government was in office, and that despite the huge array of tariff schedules introduced by that administration.

An attack was also made upon the borrowing policy of the Bruce-Page Government. Every honorable member knows perfectly well that the great increase in borrowing that took place in the six or seven years during which that Government was in power was chiefly on behalf of the States, not of the Commonwealth. It was largely because of the endeavours of the right honorable member for Flinders, in collaboration with the right honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page), that the Loan Council came into being. That body had the effect of steadyng Australia's borrowing, and of making it possible to obtain loans on better terms. Certainly it has stood as a bulwark of safety during the rather disastrous period through which we are passing.

The honorable member for Darling stated that the right honorable member for Flinders is a person devoid of Australian sentiment. There are two classes of Australians, those whose outlook is bounded by our shores, and those who realize that the security and safety of the Commonwealth are bound up with Imperial relations, and a sound international outlook. If the sneer of the honorable member for Darling places the right honorable member for Flinders in the second category, it becomes a high compliment.

The same honorable member insinuated that the right honorable member for Flinders is not temperamentally fitted for the task that he has undertaken. All who know the right honorable gentleman would scout the suggestion that he is temperamentally unbalanced, incautious, apt to be swayed by illogical contentions, or by sentimental appeals. Honorable members who cannot do better than make such ludicrous attacks upon a person

noted for his logic and imperturbability should remain silent.

Then the accusation was levelled at the right honorable member that, while overseas, he will sacrifice the interests of the nation to his personal advantage. The honorable member who made that accusation should feel ashamed.

The honorable member for Hunter (Mr. James) declared that the right honorable member for Flinders obtained the bulk of his education abroad, and considered himself so superior to the people of Australia that, when the war broke out he enlisted in Great Britain. Those who are familiar with the right honorable gentleman's history are aware that he had a splendid athletic and scholastic career in one of Melbourne's public schools. On the second point I may say that instead of returning to Australia to enlist, and so wasting time, the right honorable member for Flinders, being in England at the time, seized the earliest opportunity to enlist, so that he might give his services during the dark days of 1914-18, an example which might well have been followed by a goodly number of honorable members on the other side of the House. Very few members of this House, I am sure, really believe that the Government could have appointed any one else who would perform this work as satisfactorily as Mr. Bruce could do. For once, I shall venture to assume the role of prophet. I am quite certain that after he has accomplished his mission, and performed a great national service for Australia, Mr. Bruce will return, with his reputation enhanced both at home and abroad.

Mr. THOMPSON (New England) [8.16].—It seems to me that the real purpose of this bill is being clouded by a personal attack directed by members of the Opposition against the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce). I exonerate the right honorable the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin), whose remarks were very fair, and of that critical nature which we have come to expect from him. One can only conclude, after hearing the speeches of some of his colleagues, however, that they have been waiting for the opportunity to throw mud at the right honorable member for Flinders.

Mr. BEASLEY.—Of course, the right honorable member never threw any mud himself!

Mr. THOMPSON.—No, I do not think he ever did. This personal attack by honorable members who are opposing the bill has completely vitiated their arguments. Their criticism is clearly inspired by personal malice of a type that is seldom seen in this House, and which I myself have never witnessed here before.

Mr. WARD.—That is a great pity!

Mr. THOMPSON.—Yes, it is, and I may add that it is only since the advent of the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward), and his colleagues in this House, that we have got down to the low level—almost to the gutter level, I might say—that characterizes on some occasions the proceedings of the Parliament of New South Wales.

This bill introduces a new principle. The proposal to send a Resident Minister to London has been discussed before, but it has always been regarded as impracticable. I was surprised, therefore, to learn that the matter had been revived by this Government, and that it was proposed to appoint such a Minister. I like to see new ideas introduced—we do not have enough of them in Australia—and if this is going to be an improvement on the ghastly failure of the high commissionership during the last fifteen years, it is to be welcomed. I am sure that the great majority of the citizens of Australia have been bitterly disappointed at the results achieved by the High Commissioners in London. This is not due to the calibre of the men who have represented us abroad, although it is true, as somebody has said, that they have generally been discarded politicians or ex-Ministers. The office has been dragged down to the level of a mere political job, to be offered to some individual who has become, for the moment, inconvenient. No fault could be found with some of the men who have filled this position in the past. Such men as Sir George Reid and Sir Joseph Cook rendered good service to their country, and the recent occupant of the position, Sir Granville Ryrie, has filled it worthily, considering his own confession that he was not used

to that kind of work. At any rate, he has maintained the prestige of Australia.

The point at issue in connexion with this proposal is not the merits or demerits of the right honorable member for Flinders. We who have known the right honorable gentleman, and have seen his work as Prime Minister, regard him as the outstanding man for a position such as this. We have no doubt that the Government has chosen wisely. Nevertheless, this appointment represents a new departure in Australian politics, and I should be surprised if it turns out to be more than a temporary experiment. I am not hostile to the Government on this issue, but I remind honorable members that a condition upon which members are elected to this Parliament is that they remain in Australia and personally attend to the needs of their constituents. It is obvious that if the right honorable member for Flinders, useful as he may be to Australia while abroad, is to remain in London for two years, he will not be able to represent the people of Flinders in this House. It may be that the electors of Flinders are sufficiently patriotic, or will be so flattered at his having been picked on for this experiment, that they will be quite satisfied to allow their representative to go abroad practically for the whole term of Parliament, and, if so, it shows that they have been able to take a larger view of the matter than we may expect the electors of most constituencies to do.

Mr. MAXWELL.—They have their remedy in their own hands.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Yes; but is it fair to put any electorate in the position of having to take it or leave it? Is it fair to say to the electors of Flinders, or any other constituency, "This is the man we have selected to send abroad. He is going to London as our ambassador for two years, and we are handing over to one of his colleagues the task of representing you as well as his own constituents". I am assuming that the Government has not taken any steps to find out whether the electors of Flinders are agreeable to this most radical change. I presume that the prestige of Mr. Bruce is so high to-day that the great majority of his electors are prepared to subscribe to that change; but does not that of itself

indicate that the Government is able to do this only because of his high prestige and outstanding personality. No other electorate would subscribe to the arrangement for a moment. If a man who was standing for Parliament were to tell the electors that, if elected, he had a chance of going abroad as ambassador for two years, I feel sure that he would not have a chance of being returned. It is evident, therefore, that the Government is merely making use of the services of Mr. Bruce while they are available, and is not contemplating making this form of representation a permanent one. Therefore, in my opinion, the position could have been met without introducing this bill, merely by allowing Mr. Bruce to go to London for six or twelve months in order to carry through the necessary financial operations. It would only be necessary to announce to the people that, in due course, he would be returning to Australia, and that the position of High Commissioner would then be reconsidered.

There is no doubt that the High Commissionership will have to be reviewed in the near future. Some honorable members have referred to the high cost of Australia House, and have questioned the actual value of the High Commissionership to Australia. It is extraordinary that, although originally the High Commissioner was supposed to perform all the functions of a Resident Minister, and almost those of an ambassador, in London, he has never actually done anything of the kind. We have always had the spectacle of a stream of Ministers going to London on one pretext or another. The last Government cannot dispute that, because it sent as many of its members abroad as did any other government. Indeed, on one occasion, it sent nearly half the Ministry.

Mr. GARDNER.—Only four Ministers.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I stand corrected; it sent only four. This sending of Ministers abroad has proved of how little use the High Commissionership has been to Australia. On the financial side, also, it has failed us. A little while ago we found it necessary to send a high Treasury official, Mr. Collins, abroad, as our financial adviser, and for the last twelve months he has been virtually in charge of Australia House.

The position of High Commissioner will shortly become vacant, and the Government, I think, is wise in not following the haphazard practice of its predecessors in grabbing the first handy man and sending him abroad as Australia's representative. The Government has done the right thing in holding up the appointment. I feel sure that, perhaps before twelve months have gone by, the Government will be forced to alter its policy of having a Resident Minister in London. I do not think that it will be possible or practicable for the right honorable member for Flinders to stay away from Australia and continue to represent a section of the electors of the Commonwealth. On the surface the proposal is a most extraordinary one, and I think the Government will be forced to make an alteration, because the new arrangement will be found to be impracticable. In the meantime, there is no High Commissioner in London, and we must have some one there with the necessary status and authority to handle the gigantic financial operations now crowding on us. The right honorable member for Flinders understands high finance, and can handle big operations, and as a Minister he will have the necessary prestige to move effectively in London financial circles. I disregard the suggestion that the position will be merely a social one; but a country's ambassador must have social prestige, and the right honorable member for Flinders will represent Australia with dignity. He will certainly create a favorable impression on the other side of the world.

He has been attacked on the ground of his alleged financial incompetency and the record of the Bruce-Page Government has been cited, mostly by persons who were not in this Parliament when it was in power, and are mere newcomers to politics. I venture to say that the most vitriolic of the critics of the right honorable member for Flinders have not taken the trouble to look up the figures of the Bruce-Page régime. They are figures whose accuracy cannot be challenged. In its six and a half years of office, the Bruce-Page Government borrowed £220,000,000.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. THOMPSON.—It has been claimed that the qualifications of the right honorable member for Flinders are vitiated by the financial record of his government, and I want, briefly, to indicate the merits of the financial administration of that Government to show why we have so much faith in this particular appointment. One of the outstanding qualifications of the right honorable member is the great success with which he handled the financial problems of Australia. A great deal has been said about the tremendous borrowings of the Bruce-Page Government, and about its extravagance. As a matter of fact, in the six and a half years it was forced to borrow £207,000,000 on behalf of the States. Members of the Labour party in the State Parliaments were just as insistent as other parties in forcing the Commonwealth to borrow on their behalf, so that money could be spent on State public works.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! If I were to permit the honorable member to adduce many more figures relating to the financial administration of the Bruce-Page Government, I might just as well allow him to traverse the whole of the record of that Government. Honorable members will admit that they have been given great latitude during this debate, but I must now insist on some attempt being made to connect remarks with the bill.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I accept your correction, Mr. Speaker, but some honorable members, having already cited figures, I thought it proper to reply to them. Briefly, I may say, that the Bruce-Page Government established sinking funds which reduced the war debt by £45,000,000. That was done under the leadership of a gentleman who, some honorable members say, has not the capacity to be a Resident Minister in London or to carry out important financial transactions. The record of the Bruce-Page Government stands for itself. It is true that there was a lot of money to spend, and that the right honorable member spent it like a gentleman, but during the whole of that time there was an insistent demand from all quarters that the Commonwealth Government should spend

every penny it could lay its hands on. In those years, the Government which did not borrow at the rate of £40,000,000 a year was regarded as a "dud"; as one that was not doing its job. It is of no use saying now that the happenings of that period were evidence of the incapacity of the right honorable member for Flinders, or that he was the most disastrous Prime Minister whom Australia has ever had, and certainly the worst man we could send to London to handle important conversion operations. For these reasons, apart from the point I have raised, that it is very doubtful whether the electors of Flinders are getting a fair deal, I cannot find fault with the present proposal. So far as the personality of the man chosen is concerned, the case is complete. I think that 90 per cent. of the people of Australia, even the supporters of the vociferous party opposing the Government, if asked their opinion, would say that they have perfect faith in the ability of the right honorable member for Flinders to represent Australia in these important financial transactions abroad.

Mr. WARD (East Sydney) [8.40].—The whole of the debate seems to have centred upon the gentleman chosen as Resident Minister in London, and very little reason has been shown by supporters of the Government why any one should be sent to the other side of the world as Resident Minister. I have heard it suggested that one reason why the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) has been chosen is that he was not prepared to take a subordinate post in this Cabinet as a Minister without Portfolio, and thought that it would probably sound much better if his title were Resident Minister in London; and that if a conversion loan is successfully floated he will return to take up the position he has occupied since the general election, although not nominally—that of leader of the Government and Prime Minister.

I am not satisfied that the Government has given us the full reasons why the right honorable member for Flinders has been sent to the other side of the world. With all due respect to those who say that the negotiations at Ottawa were carried out satisfactorily so far as Australia is

concerned, I beg to differ from them. I say that the interests of Australia were sacrificed, and the people of this country will realize that in the near future. We find, on reading the press reports, which the Prime Minister says are substantially correct, that—

Australia undertakes that protection by tariffs shall be afforded only to those industries which are reasonably assured of a sound opportunity for success, and undertakes also that during the currency of the agreement the tariff shall be based on the principle that the protective duties shall not exceed such a level as will give British producers the full opportunity for reasonable competition on the basis of the relative cost of economical and efficient production.

Who is to determine this? In my opinion the right honorable member for Flinders is transferring the seat of Government of the Commonwealth to the other side of the world. From London he will indicate which Australian industries the British capitalists think should be sacrificed. He is certainly qualified to undertake that task. So far as his Australian outlook is concerned, all that we can say about him is that it was the misfortune of Australia that he was born in this country. It is all eyewash for the right honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) to try to justify this appointment by saying that it is very necessary that members of this Parliament should have a knowledge of foreign affairs and international events, while a film depicting development in another part of the world is not permitted to be screened in Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. WARD.—Other honorable members—

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is not a question of what other honorable members have said; the Chair must insist on the strict relevancy of the debate to the provisions of the bill.

Mr. WARD.—The honorable member for Balaklava spoke of professional politicians; of men unsuccessful in other callings, but having the gift of the gab, being able to secure positions in Parliament. In reply to him, I say that the man who has no outside ties can speak his mind in this chamber; but the man with outside interests is inclined to let his judgment be dictated by those interests. The right honorable member

for Flinders will not only find his task in London a pleasing one, but will also be serving his own interests as a member of a big importing firm which is not favorably disposed towards the building up of Australian industries. The right honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) remarked that it would not matter if no saving were being made as the result of the Government's proposal. Of course, in dealing with the appointment as Resident Minister in London of a member to whom honorable members opposite, and in the Country party, look with reverence, thousands of pounds can be spent without comment; but within a few days, when supporters of the Government will be dealing with invalid and old-age pensions, they will consider every penny! We are told that the palatial quarters provided for the High Commissioner in London are not sufficient to house the right honorable member for Flinders. What are his special qualifications, of which so much has been said to-day? If we require a representative in London merely to wear a top hat at the right angle, or look well in spats, no doubt the right man has been chosen for the position. I understood that we were to hear some useful remarks from the honorable member for Corio (Mr. Casey), but despite his experience on the other side of the world, the only contribution that he made to this debate was an objection to the insinuation that the right honorable member for Flinders was not a suitable person to represent Australia abroad. I make no apology for what I have said concerning the right honorable member. He has not an Australian outlook, and he cannot possibly look after the interests of the people of this country in a proper manner. If the desire was to appoint a British Imperialist to represent us in London, the right man has been chosen. He will make a good representative of Britain, but a poor one of Australia. The object of the Ottawa Conference was to organize the British Empire as a solid economic unit, so that it would be in a favorable position to compete with other similar combinations of peoples, including those of the United States of America, which are making inroads upon the British

markets. Great Britain does not desire the secondary industries of Australia to be built up. It wishes to see them sacrificed, and desires that we shall confine our attention to the production of the raw materials required in factories overseas.

I remember, a few months ago, the Government and its supporters scoffing at certain suggestions put forward by my party for the conversion of loans at reduced rates of interest. That policy was said to be one of repudiation. It was declared that my party was proceeding on wrong lines, and that there should be no compulsory conversion of loans. When the party opposite, in conjunction with the then government, appealed to the public for the conversion of internal loans, it promised that compulsion would not be applied; but the Government said to the bondholders: "We shall give you until a certain date to convert voluntarily, and after that you will have to convert". Let the Government lay its cards on the table, and say frankly why the right honorable member for Flinders is being sent abroad. It should let the people know that Australia's interests are being sacrificed. The people will realize that, in any event, a few months hence. Many members opposite will in all probability be remembered solely as one-Parliament members. Their return at the last election was due to the fact that on that occasion the electors suffered from a form of temporary insanity. The sooner the people have an opportunity to return to power a government with a truly Australian outlook to correct the wrongs committed by the present anti-Australian Government represented on the other side of the world by an anti-Australian Resident Minister—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member may not apply the term "anti-Australian" to a member of this House. I ask him to withdraw the expression.

Mr. WARD.—I withdraw it. If a revulsion of feeling has not already occurred throughout the Commonwealth, public opinion will inevitably swing against the Government at no distant date, and an opportunity will then be afforded to put into operation a true Australian policy. If the qualifications of the right honorable member for Flinders-

are beyond question, why this spirited defence of them? Many supporters of the Government have rushed to his defence.

Mr. WHITE.—Because he is absent.

Mr. WARD.—The right honorable member had not to wait until he left Australia to know what my party thought of him. I realize that the Government has the necessary number of supporters in this House to enable it to pass this bill, and to retain the right honorable member as Resident Minister in London for as long a term as it will remain in office; but honorable members opposite should not prate about his special qualifications. The fact cannot be disguised that he has gone to London as Resident Minister to obtain directions from the British imperialists as to certain action that shall be taken in this country, and those instructions will be carried out to the letter. The Government may go ahead with its policy; but the members of my party will tell the people the true position. Although we number only five in this House, we represent 540,000 voters in New South Wales. If the opportunity were presented for another election, our numbers would be vastly increased, and the fact would be revealed that we now have the support of the majority of the electors in that State. When a true Labour Government is returned to this Parliament, this anti-Australian bill will be repealed.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL (Warringah—Minister for the Interior) [8.54].—This simple measure merely gives the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), while in London, the powers of the High Commissioner, and it is extraordinary that so much extraneous matter has been imported into this debate. The most bitter attacks have been made on the right honorable gentleman. Some honorable members were unfair enough to preface their remarks by stating that they did not intend to be personal, and to follow that opening observation with spleenetic outbursts, because the right honorable member, being absent, could not reply to them. If he had been here, I venture to say that not one of those members would have been game to say a

fraction of what they have said this afternoon and to-night. When the right honorable member is in this chamber, he can well look after himself. We have listened with close attention to the statements that he has made on various occasions on important subjects, and the utterances of few members of this House have commanded so much respect as have those of the right honorable member for Flinders on financial matters, imperial issues, and foreign relations. When the history of this country comes to be written, it will not deal with the record of members like the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward), but blazoned on the scroll of fame will be the name of the right honorable member for Flinders. The honorable member for East Sydney asked why it was thought necessary to defend him. I admit that it is unnecessary to defend him either in this House or before the people; but should we who are his friends allow his name to be traduced in his absence by men who are not fit to clean his boots? If the views expressed by the speaker who has just resumed his seat are a fair sample of Australian opinion, I have no desire to be associated with it. I realize, however, that he has merely voiced sentiments that may be heard in the purlieus of Woolloomooloo. They are not true Australian sentiments; but the honorable member for East Sydney knows no others. Brought up in that atmosphere, he grovels in it, and he will never get out of it.

The purpose of the bill is clear, and I do not intend to analyse the speeches of honorable members who have opposed it. For many years it has been recognized that Australia should have a High Commissioner in London. The thoughtful members of the community realize that Australia has interests which are not bounded by the confines of this continent, but extend throughout the world, and that it is necessary to have a representative in London to safeguard our interests there. It has never been proposed in this House until this afternoon that we should abolish the office of High Commissioner. The Leader of the Opposition

(Mr. Scullin) suggested that if he had remained in office he would not have renewed the appointment, but would have permitted the financial adviser in London to do the work previously carried out by the High Commissioner. If so, why did the right honorable member make that belated announcement on this important subject? Of course, the right honorable member feels it incumbent upon him to oppose the action taken by this Government, and nobody in this House, so far as my recollection goes, has proved a greater adept than the Leader of the Opposition at putting up bogeys and knocking them down. I sat amazed at the way he advanced debating-club arguments, and then proceeded to dispose of them with a seriousness that was most impressive to those who did not know him. Apparently, honorable members opposite would have us believe that matters of such far-reaching consequences as the conversion of overseas loans could be dealt with satisfactorily by an officer at Australia House. I need hardly mention the advantage to Australia of having, at the heart of the Empire, a man who knows what the Commonwealth Government wishes to have done. I feel sure, also, that if the people had an opportunity to express their views on this subject, they would be overwhelmingly in favour of the appointment, because they know that, by his ability, courage and diplomacy, he would be able to carry through successfully any mission entrusted to him. The majority of honorable members will agree that no member of this House could better discharge the responsible duties which will fall to the lot of the right honorable member for Flinders while in London. I rarely take notice of the interjections of the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward), or, for that matter, of the interjections of other members of the group to which he belongs. They represent only about 5 per cent. of the electors of this country, and are remarkable more for the noisy expression of views than for common sense in its application to the practical affairs of everyday life. I strongly deprecate the unfair attack made by members of this group this evening upon the right honorable member for Flinders, who has given

such sterling service to this country, and is destined to render still greater service during the next few years. The overwhelming majority by which the bill will be carried will truly reflect the estimation in which the right honorable gentleman is held by the people of Australia.

Mr. A. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [9.4].—The Minister for the Interior (Mr. Parkhill) did not deal with the merits of the bill. He confined his remarks to a defence of the appointment of the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) to an entirely new position created by this Government. It is not my intention to say anything about the right honorable gentleman who, for the next year or two, is to be Resident Minister for the Commonwealth in London; but I do not share the views of the Minister for the Interior, who has just treated the House to an idolatrous panegyric of his Cabinet colleague, and I may add that his opinion is not endorsed by a considerable number of people in this country. This is not because they have any personal animus against him, but simply because their conception of Australian sentiment is not his. The Minister for the Interior deprecated the personalities which, he said, had been indulged in by the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward); but, apart from criticism that is personal or offensive, the projected appointment by this Government of a Resident Minister in London is a fit subject for criticism. The Minister for the Interior deplored any criticism of the right honorable member for Flinders, but in his own references to the honorable member for East Sydney he said things of an offensive character such as, so far as my knowledge goes, have not been said by any other member of this House.

Mr. BEASLEY.—And was not called upon to withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! I ask the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Beasley) to explain his statement that the Minister for the Interior made offensive remarks concerning another honorable member, and was not reprimanded by the Chair.

Mr. BEASLEY.—I was referring to the remark of the Minister for the Interior concerning the anti-Australian outlook of the right honorable member for

Flinders. The Minister almost went to the level of the gutter in his attack on the honorable member for East Sydney, saying that he came from the gutters of Woolloomooloo.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If that is all he has to complain of, I ask the honorable member for West Sydney to apologize for what he said.

Mr. BEASLEY.—I apologize.

Mr. A. GREEN.—What the Minister said was that the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) was brought up in the purlieus of Woolloomooloo, and could never get out of them. I consider that remark highly offensive, and remind the Minister that the honorable member for East Sydney was elected by a substantial majority of the people living in that electorate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! There was considerable interruption when the Minister for the Interior was speaking, and I did not understand him to refer to the honorable member for East Sydney in those terms. If he did so, I ask him to withdraw the remark.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—What I said was that the sentiments which the honorable member for East Sydney were expressing were the sentiments of the purlieus of Woolloomooloo.

Mr. A. GREEN.—The Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) in support of the bill to-day, said that the appointment of the right honorable member for Flinders was made because of his financial ability and prestige. The Minister emphasized the latter point, and suggested that the right honorable gentleman had been selected for the position because of his wide knowledge of the financial problems which confront Australia. I, and other honorable members on this side, take the view that we need to cultivate an Australian sentiment, not necessarily in antagonism to Great Britain, but because our trade interests need special attention. The Ottawa Conference decisions reveal the fact that we must be prepared to fight for the preservation of our trade interests, just as the British delegates at Ottawa fought for the trade interests of the Mother Country. The representative in Great Britain of White House does not sink his individuality as an American citizen. He does

not pose as an Englishman, in order to make himself acceptable to the people of Great Britain. They know that he comes to them as a plain American, representing the views of the Government of the United States of America, and does not deem it necessary to go to the court of St. James in court dress. That, I suggest, is the spirit which the representative of Australia should emulate in the Mother Country. I am opposed to the bill, because such an appointment has never been found necessary before, and because the Ministry has advanced no sound reason why it should be made. The other dominions have not taken similar action. The Dominion of Canada, which lies closer to the heart of the Empire, and could more readily spare a Minister for a few months, has not deemed it necessary to have a Resident Minister in London. The Government's proposal is a departure from established precedent. The honorable member for New England (Mr. Thompson) made a strong point when he urged that the electorate represented by the right honorable member for Flinders had a right to be considered in this matter. Personally, I have nothing against the right honorable gentleman, but I entirely differ from him on political matters, and I share the view of the honorable member for New England that the electors concerned should have been consulted. The right honorable gentleman conducted his campaign from abroad to a large extent, and I feel sure that had the electors been told that, within a comparatively short time of his election he would be sent as Resident Minister in London for a period of two years, he would not have been returned. Mr. Collins, the Official Secretary of Australia House, was appointed by the Government led by the right honorable member for Flinders, and is well equipped to carry through successfully any loan conversion operations that may be deemed necessary. The new Resident Minister will be obliged to wait until the London market is favorable, just as Mr. Collins would have to wait, had he been entrusted with the mission. Some time ago, it was anticipated that loan conversions on a large scale would take place. We were led to believe that immediately upon his arrival

in London the right honorable member for Flinders would get in touch with financial interests and take steps to convert our overseas debts into securities bearing a lower rate of interest. We are now advised that the only operation before Christmas will be the conversion of the £13,000,000 due by the New South Wales Government.

Mr. GREGORY.—There will be another conversion next year.

Mr. A. GREEN.—Neither the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) nor anybody else can foretell that next year will be more suitable than the present. He cannot do this job better than it could be done by Mr. Collins, and, as the proposed appointment involves an entirely new departure, something without precedent in Australia or in any other portion of the Empire, the Government will have to support it with stronger reasons than have yet been given to this House before it will be approved by the people. Even the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) has stated that he regards the proposed appointment as an experiment. The Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) declared that he has advocated for years the appointment of a Resident Minister in London. He has also advocated for years, without result, the creation of new States, and, apparently, will continue to do so for many more years. The right honorable gentleman is fond of chasing a will-o'-the wisp. The reasons advanced by the Attorney-General cancel the arguments adduced by other supporters of the bill. We are told that the passage of the bill is necessary in order that the right honorable member for Flinders may take control of the staff at Australia House. Without this legislation he can still take charge of the staff while he is in London, but I hope he will not remain abroad for more than a few months, because the present Ministry is not over-rich in ability, and if the right honorable member for Flinders is as capable as his friends have declared during this debate, his right place is in Australia. I can see no justification for the bill, and the reason for its introduction is a mystery.

Mr. E. F. HARRISON (Bendigo) [9.18].—In answering some of the criticism that has been directed by members

of the Opposition against the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), I do not propose to follow them to the depths to which they descended. At the outset I wish to nail the oft-repeated lie that the right honorable member for Flinders was educated abroad and has no sympathy for Australia. He was born in Australia and received his school education here. At the outbreak of war he was in England completing his education, and in order to avoid the loss of time that would be involved in returning to the Commonwealth to join up with the Australian Expeditionary Force, he enlisted in a British regiment, and while serving with it was gravely wounded.

This bill has been introduced at an opportune time. Australia has experienced two years of serious depression, but now, because governments are restoring the country to a firm financial footing, our credit overseas is so improved that an opportunity presents itself to reduce appreciably the interest payable on the external public debt. If Australians are true to themselves, the New South Wales loan of £13,000,000, which will fall due in a few weeks, will probably be converted at a lower rate of interest, which will represent a saving of between £150,000 and £160,000 a year. I remind the House that large loans are not converted by merely publishing a notification in a newspaper. Careful negotiations are necessary between the financial houses and the representatives of the borrowing dominion. The doors of banks and other financial institutions are strongly guarded, and do not open to everybody. I say nothing in disparagement of Mr. Collins, who has given extraordinarily good service to Australia, but he has not access to those financial circles in which it is necessary to explain Australia's present situation and its prospects. A favorable impression in those circles is essential if we are to effect a conversion upon satisfactory conditions. In those circumstances it is fortunate that the High Commissionership is at present vacant, through the expiration of Sir Granville Ryrie's term of office. This has enabled the right honorable member for Flinders to proceed from Ottawa to London to carry out an operation for which the ground was most carefully

prepared by the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) on his recent visit abroad. Probably in connexion with the High Commissionership alone a saving of £2,000 a year will be effected, and if the Resident Minister in London is able to effect the conversion of the maturing New South Wales loan upon improved conditions, he will in one year save 70 or 80 times his own salary. The present official secretary at Australia House has not been in the Commonwealth for several years, and has no first-hand knowledge of the perils through which Australia has recently passed. If the conversion operations are to be successful, we must have on the spot a man who can speak with authority and first-hand knowledge. Who is better fitted for this critical task than the right honorable member for Flinders, who left Australia recently after taking an active and prominent part in the public affairs of the Commonwealth? Mr. Collins, whom I have known and esteemed for many years, is without up-to-date knowledge of Australia's financial problems, and has not the authority and prestige which will be enjoyed by the right honorable member for Flinders. Whatever may be done for us by our representative in London, our fate will be more or less in our own hands. If we make fools of ourselves and follow false prophets who would lead us to destruction, we shall not satisfactorily convert the overseas debt and reduce our interest bill. On us alone the success of the impending transactions depends, and our mouthpiece will be the Resident Minister in London. His appointment has been described as a political plum. Having been very closely associated with him prior to his departure from Australia, I am able to say definitely that he did not desire to go abroad, but went from a sense of public duty. The fact that this bill may be operative for two years does not necessarily mean that the right honorable member for Flinders will remain abroad for that period. Probably when he has completed the task which has been delegated to him, he will return to Australia, where his real interests are. But if in order to complete his mission he should be required to stay in London longer than he originally contemplated, the bill will permit him to do so for two years and no

longer. During his absence, which, I hope for Australia's sake, will not extend to two years, I shall attend to the work of his constituency. So far I have not heard from any elector of Flinders criticism of the right honorable gentleman for having gone overseas in obedience to the call of duty. Without exception, all of his constituents who have spoken or written to me have expressed pride and satisfaction in the fact that their representative has been chosen for this important task. I am convinced that upon his return not only will his electors express their approval of the service he has given to Australia, but the people of the Commonwealth generally will be satisfied that the fruits of his mission have well justified the departure which this bill proposes.

Mr. PROWSE (Forrest) [9.28].—This debate has reminded me of the saying that a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country. I predict that future generations will proudly refer to the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) as a great Australian. Other public men of the past have been subjected to similar criticism and attack, but to-day we honour them for their loyalty to principle, their integrity, and their wisdom. Far too much debate has taken place on a comparatively simple proposal. It is true that no appointment of the nature now proposed was ever previously made in Australia, but the present financial situation is without precedent in Australian history. I have been recollecting the cabled correspondence between the then Prime Minister (Mr. Scullin) when he was in London and his colleagues in Australia in connexion with the proposal of the then Treasurer (Mr. Theodore) to issue a fiduciary currency. Message after message came from the right honorable gentleman to warn Cabinet that if this proposal were persisted in, our credit in London would be destroyed and Australia would be unable to meet its obligations. Amongst the members who have spoken most disparagingly of the right honorable member for Flinders are some representing New South Wales. Yet the conversion of a debt of that State will be the first and most urgent problem to be tackled by the Resident Minister in London. The character of the right honorable member for Flinders has been disparagingly

referred to. The right honorable member is *persona grata* in any company, no matter how high it might be, either in England or in Australia. If any commercial concern had an important mission to accomplish, would it not select for the purpose a person who was acceptable everywhere, and who thoroughly understood the business? In this case the Government is not incurring additional expenditure. I differ from those who say that the right honorable member for Flinders is in any way anti-Australian. I have sat in the Commonwealth Parliament for as long a period as the right honorable gentleman, and can say of him that I have not met one whose integrity or chivalry was higher than his. I, as an Australian, am glad to have been associated with an Australian of his type. I believe that he will render inestimable service to the Commonwealth, and that in no sense will he let Australia down. I cannot understand how the idea has occurred to the minds of some persons that the right honorable gentleman was anti-Australian at Ottawa. I should have been pleased had he given way a little more to the Mother Country in order to obtain for Australia a greater measure of reciprocity.

Much has been said regarding the necessity for saving money. If we were to calculate the cost involved in the discussion of this matter, we would realize how much could have been saved had it been debated on its merits.

Mr. PRICE (Boothby) [9.33].—The right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) ought to feel flattered at the attention that has been paid to him during the course of this debate. Most of the speeches have been purely partisan, and those who have opposed the proposal of the Government have made out a very poor case.

The point has been made that this is a departure from established practice. I remind honorable members, however, that the subject was discussed at the Imperial Conference that was held in 1925 or 1926, when it was decided that, in the near future, each of the governments there represented should have a Resident Minister in London. I am in favour of this step, because I believe that one who has had experience in the Cabinet must

have a thorough grasp of Australian affairs. Australia is the first of the dominions to take this step, and I believe that, in thus acting, we are serving the best interests of the Commonwealth. The honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) has decried the right honorable member for Flinders; but I consider that he is the right man in the right place, and I hope that he will continue to work on Australia's behalf in London for some time to come. One of his first duties will be to arrange for the conversion of the New South Wales £13,000,000 loan, and I feel confident that he will bring that operation to a successful issue.

Mr. HOLLOWAY (Melbourne Ports) [9.40].—I regret that the tone of this debate has been so considerably lowered since it was initiated. I cannot find in the bill any reference to either the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), or any other person. I hope that the personal element will be kept out of the discussion.

In fairness to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin), may I point out that he did not oppose Mr. Bruce's remaining in London for the period necessary to complete the pending loan conversion; but, as a matter of fact, suggested that that was a wise course to adopt. The real principle has been cleverly side-tracked by some of the professional debaters in the House who, as the Minister has pointed out, have put up a straw man merely for the purpose of knocking it down. The honorable member for Gippsland (Mr. Paterson) this afternoon delivered an excellent speech, probably the most logical to which we have listened; but he made it on wrong premises, because he focussed attention on the wisdom of allowing a Minister to remain in London until the loan conversion operation was completed. Not a single member has opposed that. I have listened to every speaker, and have not heard one object to the right honorable member for Flinders remaining in London for the purpose of effecting a reduction in the interest on our overseas indebtedness. My only complaint is that that problem was not tackled long ago. I have accidentally come across a speech that was delivered in the House of Commons in April last by Sir Robert Horne. He

did not suggest that Australia would be acting in an undignified manner, if it sought a reduction in the rates of interest. He pointed out to the members of the House of Commons that Australia could not possibly meet her obligations if England remained any longer on the gold standard, and said that it was almost criminal to suggest that the smaller countries, the new countries, the primary producing countries, including Australia, should be expected to meet their obligations unless prices were increased, and there was a departure from the almost criminal practice of making debtor countries pay twice as much as they borrowed. He further said that instead of the people of Great Britain taking a hostile view of a suggestion by Australia that repayment of loans should be postponed or that interest rates should be lowered, they almost welcomed such overtures. Yet this matter has been held up here because of party political differences, and meanwhile, Australia has been suffering.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the right honorable member for Flinders should be allowed to complete the pending loan conversion; but I and the Opposition as a body are opposed to the principle of having a Minister permanently resident in London. That, I consider, is an honest attitude to adopt. I, and the school of thought to which I belong, believe that there is danger in Australia being governed according to expert outside advice. We are suffering to-day as a result of the acceptance of the advice of supposed experts who have visited Australia during the last four or five years. Austria like Australia and many other small countries also is suffering as a consequence of the acceptance of the advice of financial experts, particularly in Great Britain. The advice that they gave three or four years ago is now obsolete in Great Britain, and is entirely contrary to the opinions of the experts of to-day. I object to the way in which the debate has been conducted. It has been turned to new premises altogether. The Opposition has been charged with being opposed to the loan conversion operations. Honorable members supporting the Govern-

Mr. Hollonay.

ment have even pointed out the amount of money that would be saved by these operations, as if the Opposition were all centred upon not allowing the Minister to remain in London to carry on that work. Actually we are opposed to this bill because we think that by allowing a Commonwealth Minister to be permanently resident in London, we shall add to the danger of this country being controlled from overseas.

Mr. E. J. HARRISON (Wentworth) [9.46].—With the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Holloway), I deplore the tone that has crept into this debate. It seems to me that we should endeavour to help Australia in this time of depression, not only by giving due consideration to the problems that beset us but also by aiding the Resident Minister in London to arrange a successful conversion loan. The tone that has been adopted in this debate may considerably embarrass the conversion of that loan, because, instead of the Resident Minister receiving the wholehearted support of this House in his efforts to secure the conversion of the loan, accusations are being levelled at him by the Opposition that will embarrass him. Notwithstanding the statement of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports that no objection is being taken to the proposal that the Resident Minister should remain in London until such time as the conversion is accomplished, some honorable members object to the appointment of a Resident Minister in London at all. They seem to resent the fact that the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) is to represent Australia abroad. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports suggests that this will be a permanent appointment, but I refer him to the provision in the bill which states that it shall remain in operation for a period of two years and no longer. The position of Resident Minister in London, therefore, cannot be considered as permanent.

Mr. MAXWELL.—It is purely experimental.

Mr. E. J. HARRISON.—That being so, the arguments of the Opposition cannot be substantiated. The honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Ward) said that the debate has centred round the name of the right honorable member for

Flinders, and not the bill itself. The general tone of the speeches from the Opposition suggest that in their opinion he has an anti-Australian outlook, but I, for one, certainly prefer the outlook of the right honorable member for Flinders to that of members of the Lang party who represent a group of persons who have no claim at all to be considered as Australians. It is a wise move at this stage to have a Resident Minister in London, if only to convince the people there that we in Australia have a national outlook and a clear understanding of international questions. Reference has been made to the educational qualifications of the right honorable member for Flinders. It is wise that we should select such a member as our representative, mainly because of those qualifications since, at least, they have given him a breadth of vision and sportsmanship, that cannot be claimed to be possessed by those who now attack him. Had he no other qualification than the fact that he was instrumental in bringing about the fall of the Lang Government, it would be sufficient to establish his status in the eyes of oversea financiers. The members of the Opposition have professed to show great consideration for the constituents of the right honorable member for Flinders, whom, they say, are likely to be disfranchised while he remains overseas. Let me suggest that they should rather watch their interests in their own constituencies, because their positions in this House may, in the near future, be seriously jeopardized, because of the attempts they have made by mischievous statements to prevent the successful conversion of the loan.

Mr. GREGORY (Swan) [9.53].—I support the bill. At no time since the war has it been so necessary as it is to-day to have a responsible Minister resident in London. The confidence of oversea investors in Australia is being gradually restored. In November, loans amounting to £13,000,000 have to be converted. Some heavy loans are maturing next year, and there is the probability of a big conversion taking place. We could not have chosen any more suitable person for the position of Resident Minister in London than the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce). I cannot understand the attitude of the Leader of the

Opposition (Mr. Scullin), who has contended that the work of conversion should be left entirely to Mr. Collins, our principal officer in London. What would the Opposition have to say if the Government failed to ensure the success of the conversion loan by neglecting to send a capable representative overseas?

Mr. MARTENS.—The Leader of the Opposition did not say that the conversion should be left entirely in the hands of Mr. Collins.

Mr. GREGORY.—The Leader of the Opposition said that this matter could well be left in the hands of Mr. Collins, and that there was no necessity for this appointment. I have nothing but contempt for honorable members who have attacked the right honorable member for Flinders. I am entirely opposed to the permanent appointment of a Minister in London. That would hardly be a wise procedure, in view of the great distance to the Old Country. If I thought that the object of the Government was to make this position permanent, I should protest against the bill, but I do not believe that that is the desire of the Government. I hope that, in the near future, the Resident Minister in London will be able to make such financial arrangements there as will permit him to return to this country. We should not appoint a politician to the position of High Commissioner. We must encourage trade and business enterprise. Instead of appointing some one from our political ranks, we should appoint a business man who would be able to inspire confidence in the British commercial world, and to stimulate our trading relations with Great Britain and Europe in general. I should like embodied in the bill a provision to the effect that no member of Parliament should be eligible for such a position until at least eighteen months after he had ceased to be a member. We can best build up our export trade by appointing the most suitable representative overseas. I hope that the Government will give consideration to my suggestion, particularly in respect to, not only the High Commissionership, but also to appointments to the High Court.

Mr. ROSEVEAR (Dalley) [9.58].—The bill, although short, has some peculiar features. The main argument of

Ministers in support of this measure is that the appointment of a Resident Minister in London will enable us to have a better understanding of foreign policy, will give us a first-hand opportunity to convert loans that are falling due, and will probably enable us to secure a reduction in the rate of interest on the money that we owe abroad. I am not very much concerned about sending a Resident Minister to London to enable him to become better acquainted with foreign policy. The further we keep away from the countries which breed international difficulties the better for Australia. We are quite close enough to the intrigues of Europe without sending Ministers abroad in an endeavour to participate in them. One argument used in the debate is that because we have always had a High Commissioner, we should appoint either a High Commissioner or a Resident Minister in London. It has also been argued by the supporters of the bill that this position has always been filled by a political dead-head. Evidently, past governments have appointed political dead-heads to this position in London in the belief that they would adequately represent Australia. Yet it is now claimed that we must send a first-class Minister abroad to take up the cudgels on behalf of the people of Australia. There is not the slightest doubt that the right honorable member for Flinders is a capable Minister. The right honorable member for Flinders overshadows every other member of the Ministry. It was evident while he was in Australia that he dominated the Cabinet and the party of which he is a member. I have not the slightest doubt that when he is abroad he will also continue to dominate the Government, and that the real Government of the Commonwealth will be transferred from Australia to England. The question of whether it will be difficult to convert Australia's overseas indebtedness is one on which there appears to be a difference of opinion. Our overseas indebtedness will be converted regardless of whether the right honorable member for Flinders is or is not in London. The time is rapidly approaching when overseas bondholders will have no alternative but to agree to a conversion of their holdings at reduced rates of

interest. There is nothing extraordinary associated with the conversion of loans. There have been two remarkable instances of successful conversions since the termination of the war. The conversion of Great Britain's war debt to the United States of America was arranged without the assistance of a resident minister in Washington. That conversion was effected not because America's regard for the mighty dollar had lessened, but because America's capitalists realized that Great Britain could not continue to pay the interest that was then being charged. For precisely the same reason the Government of this country forced a conversion loan upon local bondholders, but at the same time it allowed the overseas bondholders to go scot-free. Eighteen months ago we advocated a policy of interest reduction which honorable members opposite denounced, but which this Government now supports. We realized it was impossible to continue to pay the present rate of interest on our overseas debt. Honorable members opposite who called it repudiation at that time now have to admit that a conversion is absolutely necessary if Australia is to carry on. If our suggestions had been adopted eighteen months ago the amount representing the difference between our revenue and our interest payments would have been sufficient to provide employment for the hundreds of thousands of our unfortunate fellowmen who are now walking the streets in search of work. The policy of this Government has led it into difficulties, and it is now endeavouring to recover its position by demanding further sacrifices from the people. The overseas bondholders, as well as the Government, realize the actual position. The services of a High Commissioner, a Resident Minister, or any other representative in London, will not be needed to bring about conversion of our overseas indebtedness. Our loans will be converted; there is no doubt about that. The rates of interest may not be at the figure that the Government desires, but they will be governed by what the bondholders consider is the country's capacity to pay, as was the case in the conversion of Great Britain's war debt to America. The rates eventually

fixed will be such that the people of Australia will have to keep their nose to the grindstone for many years to come. The Government, which is now forced to face the facts, should have done what is now proposed eighteen months ago. A reduction in overseas interest will be one of the greatest factors in solving Australia's present difficulties. There is no need to appoint a Resident Minister in London to arrange a conversion; the bondholders will be forced to convert, but it will be at a figure closely approximating the country's capacity to pay.

Mr. BERNARD CORSER (Wide Bay) [10.5].—It is not my intention to prolong the debate by repeating the arguments that have been advanced by some honorable members opposite; but their bitter references to the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce), who, they presume, is to be appointed Resident Minister in London under this bill, cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged. I feel quite sure that honorable members opposite do not really believe half of what they have said concerning the right honorable member. Rather do they recognize his ability, value and influence; it is their fear of him politically that has impelled them to make the statements they have made. They are anxious to harass the Government of which he is a member, and to endeavour to destroy his influence and power, which have been of great value to Australia. For party political reasons they have attempted to belittle the right honorable member in the eyes of Australians. The bill is to amend the High Commissioner's Act, by making provision for the appointment in Great Britain of a Minister or a commissioner authorized by the Executive Council or the Governor-General. It does not provide that the functions of the Resident Minister shall be confined to converting our overseas indebtedness; but it is apparent that one of his most important duties will be the handling of a big conversion loan. I contend that there is no one in Australia more likely to secure a better hearing from Great Britain's financiers than the right honorable member for Flinders in his efforts to convert Australia's overseas debt of approximately £580,000,000. It has been suggested

by honorable members opposite that all the work needed could be completed within one year, and that there is no necessity to appoint a Minister for two years. There is nothing in the bill to compel the Minister appointed to remain in London for two years if there is not sufficient for him to do; but, in view of the highly important duties which he will have to perform, the term provided is not unreasonable. The Resident Minister is to act as High Commissioner, and in that capacity will be expected to use his ability in increasing trade between Great Britain and Australia. London is still the financial and commercial centre of the world, notwithstanding that other countries have much larger populations. Every nation of any importance has its ambassador in London, and it is with these that our Minister will confer with a view to securing new treaties and new markets for the products of our primary industries. The United States of America is represented in London by an ex-Treasurer, and it is only right that the Commonwealth should have the most able representative in Great Britain for at least the term provided in the bill. Such a representative can negotiate treaties, extend our trade, confer with the representatives of other nations, and generally act in the interests of the Australian people. I am sure that whether the duties which fall upon the shoulders of the right honorable member for Flinders relate to the conversion of our overseas indebtedness, the carrying out of services usually rendered by the High Commissioner, or the negotiating of trade agreements, they will be discharged with dignity and honour to himself and with credit and benefit to Australia. All who are prepared to give honour where honour is due will admit that the right honorable member for Flinders has, throughout his public life, endeavoured to do the best he could for Australia, and has rendered this country invaluable service.

It has been argued that the appointment should not be made, because it will mean that the electors of Flinders would be left without parliamentary representation. I consider, however, that these electors are being honoured in the highest degree, for no other honorable member of this Parliament will be entrusted

with such important and responsible duties in relation to our financial and commercial operations. I believe that the electors of Flinders will realize this, and will be proud that their representative has been honoured by appointment as the Resident Minister in London.

Mr. RIORDAN (Kennedy) [10.12].—I am interested to learn that the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) has already been selected as Resident Minister in London. I thought that perhaps the right honorable member for North Sydney (Mr. Hughes), who represented this country abroad in the critical years between 1914 and 1918, might have been chosen. It is to be hoped that the right honorable member for Flinders will live up to the high hopes that have been expressed in relation to him this evening. Australia has, in the past, borrowed heavily abroad. Our overseas indebtedness considerably exceeds £500,000,000. It was not necessary to appoint a Resident Minister overseas to raise this money. Australia, in the past, has been able to borrow money as and when she desired it at the market rates. In the last year or two, we have had a financial expert abroad to watch the interests of the Commonwealth. Mr. Collins, who formerly filled the chief position in the Commonwealth Treasury, is a financial adviser to the Government. If a Resident Minister is appointed overseas, and given the duty of watching Australia's interests in regard to conversion operations and other financial transactions, it would appear to be unnecessary to keep Mr. Collins there. Will the Nivison Group also continue to advise the Commonwealth Government in financial matters after the right honorable member for Flinders assumes his new duties? This right honorable gentleman, we are told, has the facts of our financial business at his finger tips, and is a financial expert of the highest calibre. I hope, therefore, that we shall not duplicate services by allowing Mr. Collins to remain in London while Mr. Bruce is doing the work.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) said this afternoon that he was opposed to the principle of the appointment of a Resident Minister overseas. It

was then said that it would not be necessary for the right honorable member for Flinders to remain in London until the last document had been signed. What loans will have to be converted this financial year? We know that £13,000,000, borrowed by New South Wales will have to be converted, but this State, and other States as well, have, in the past, conducted their own conversion operations satisfactorily. Money, like every other commodity, is available at market rates, independent of the personality, pleasing mannerisms, or method of approach, of individuals. In fact, a man who can tell the best story is, by common consent, the one who needs watching most carefully, for he is the most dangerous. The straightforward honest man usually has a definite proposition to submit to his creditors. Men who have no such proposition have need to tell a good story. These are usually the people who, to use an Australian phrase, "bite you." Australia will, doubtless, be able to get what money she needs at market rates at the time the conversion has to be effected. We well remember that in 1920, the Queensland Government found it necessary to convert two loans, one of £12,000,000, and the other of £10,000,000, but the Commonwealth Nationalist Government did its utmost to render conversion operations impossible unless the Queensland Government undertook to grant an extension of leases to certain pastoral lessees. Is it now proposed that the Resident Minister in London shall be in a position to barter?

There would have been very little discussion on this bill had the Prime Minister given us sufficient information when he introduced it. All he said was that the appointment was to be made for two years, but might be extended. We know very well that once a new principle is established it is very difficult to abrogate it. Whenever appointments such as that now contemplated are made, the appointee takes all possible steps to consolidate his position. Usually, he begins by building up a big staff around him. There are already indications of that in this connexion. Expenditure is also incurred in regard to housing, and that, too, has happened in this case. At a time like this, when the country is taxed

to the utmost, and the call is for economy, we should economize at the top. If we cut the roots of a tree often enough, we shall destroy the tree, whereas by lopping its branches we improve it. When I recall that loans amounting to over £500,000,000 have to be converted overseas, I am reminded that not many months ago a voluntary conversion took place in Australia. It was, however, voluntary only in name, because those who did not convert their holdings voluntarily were compelled to do so. The Australian bondholder, as well as the man who fought in the Great War, has made his sacrifice. The London money market is improving, and to-day money is cheaper than it has been for some time. Other countries are obtaining loans at low rates of interest, and Australia, which has been a good customer of Great Britain, and has met all its obligations in the past, can look forward to renewing its loans at the ruling rate of interest. Since money lenders are not renowned for lending money for reasons of sympathy, the Resident Minister in London will have to barter with them in the same way that he and his colleagues bartered at Ottawa by giving away Australia's industries. The honorable member for Forrest (Mr. Prowse) regretted that we did not give away more at Ottawa than we did. Our export trade in mutton has been limited by the Ottawa agreement to such an extent that Australia is in a more unfavorable position than before. What has this country received as a result of the Ottawa Conference?

Mr. CAMERON.—We do not know yet.

Mr. RIORDAN.—We ought to know, because the country will have to foot the bill.

Mr. DEIN.—What has all this to do with the bill?

Mr. RIORDAN.—All these things have to do with the appointment of a Resident Minister overseas. The right honorable member for Flinders, whom I recognize is an outstanding personality, although in London, will continue to dictate the policy of this country. But he in turn will have to submit to dictation by those who dictated the policy agreed to at Ottawa. The gentleman who will control our destiny did not enjoy the confidence of his party sufficiently to obtain full

ministerial rank. Surely there is some inconsistency opposite. If the right honorable member for Flinders has such outstanding ability, why did the United Australia party first place him in a subordinate position, and then, at the first opportunity, shanghai him overseas? I was pleased to hear the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. E. F. Harrison) say that he would look after the electors in the Flinders electorate during the absence of their representative. In order to serve the interests of Flinders, the honorable member is prepared to neglect the interests of Bendigo. Were he really concerned about the best interests of the people whom he represents, he would fight for the continuation of the gold bounty, with a view to reviving the gold-mining industry in his district. In my opinion, the principle of government from London is bad, but if it is necessary to have a Resident Minister in Britain, why not have one also in Japan, and China, and, indeed, in every country with which we do business? What has been said to-day about the right honorable member for Flinders has been said in the past of Sir Granville Ryrie, Mr. Andrew Fisher, Sir Joseph Cook, Mr. Devereux, and others. I am not deceived by these words of praise. Australia should be represented in Britain, not by politicians, but by men trained in the commercial world. Half a dozen commercial travellers in London would do more good for Australia than could be achieved by the same number of politicians, who would only pile up expenses.

Mr. BAKER (Oxley) [10.29].—I associate myself with those who have expressed their opposition to this bill. The House has been given scanty information as to the purpose of the measure. If honorable members on this side have criticized the qualifications of the gentleman whom it is suggested shall carry out the duties of High Commissioner, the responsibility lies with the Government, which appears to be basing its case upon the abilities of the suggested appointee. While Prime Minister of Australia he showed remarkable ability in concealing the fact that he possessed any. The chief memory that we have of him is that he took over from the Hughes Government a surplus in the vicinity of £7,000,000

and bequeathed to his successor in office a deficit of £6,500,000.

Another reason which probably actuates the Government in this appointment is that the position of the Prime Minister is similar to that of the individual mentioned in Pope's poem, who, like the Turk, could "bear no brother near the throne". In this instance, it also suits the right honorable member for Flinders. On the one hand, it removes a dangerous rival, and on the other it enables the person concerned to pay a good deal of attention to his private business overseas.

Mr. LANE.—Why cannot the honorable member be fair?

Mr. BAKER.—I am fair. I shall quote from a journal which cannot be accused of being unsympathetically disposed towards the Nationalist member for Flinders or the Nationalist party. My reading is from the Melbourne *Argus* of the 23rd December, 1931, and is as follows:—

It is possible that Mr. Bruce, notwithstanding his long experience both as Prime Minister and Treasurer and his prestige overseas, will not be a member of the Ministry at all. Mr. Bruce, who is now returning to Australia from a trip to England, has his hands filled with the affairs of the business of Paterson, Laing and Bruce, which he has again taken up since his temporary retirement from politics. It is questionable whether he will be able to spare the time to attend to the administration of an important public department.

That appeared at a time when there was considerable discussion regarding the possible personnel of the new federal ministry. The quotation indicates that that gentleman was more concerned at the time about his own commercial affairs than about the affairs of the nation.

Mr. LANE.—On whose authority was that written?

Mr. BAKER.—The quotation is from a newspaper which is a strong supporter of the present Government. It may be interesting to see how far the principle contained in the bill conflicts with the High Commissioner Act 1909, which it is intended to amend. Section 7 of that act reads—

A person appointed to be the High Commissioner shall not during his tenure of office be or act as director or agent of or hold any office in any company or syndicate

whether incorporated or unincorporated or hold any other employment, or engage in any business whether within or without the Commonwealth.

That section is not being repealed by this bill. Though nominally the right honorable member for Flinders is to become Resident Minister in London, he will at the same time perform the duties of High Commissioner. That is in direct conflict with the provisions of section 7 of the principal act. Apparently, the Government has not yet considered that point.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—How can the honorable member make his remarks relevant?

Mr. BAKER.—The right honorable member for Flinders, who is a director of a company, is to carry out the duties of High Commissioner.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—Who said that the right honorable member was a director of a company?

Mr. BAKER.—Judging by his activities of the past six months, and previously, that is evident.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—The honorable member does not know the right honorable gentleman's private business.

Mr. BAKER.—The point to which I have referred should have been considered by the Government before it introduced the bill. This intention of the Government was not mentioned in the Flinders or any other electorate during the last federal election. It would have been interesting to witness the reaction of the electors of Flinders if told that if they returned the Right Honorable S. M. Bruce, ostensibly to lead the Government, he would be sent overseas for an indefinite period. Incidentally, immediately the right honorable member was defeated in 1929, while Prime Minister, he displayed so little interest in Australia that he went overseas and had not sufficient consideration for the electors to return to this country in time to participate in the election campaign.

The Prime Minister admits that the measure is designed to fulfil a temporary need. That the Government realizes the dangers of the bill is manifest from the fact that it has limited its operation to a period of two years. The whole procedure of sending overseas a

person who is noted for his anti-Australian sympathies is in conformity with the anti-Australian interests of a Government that has introduced an Australian-industry-smashing tariff in the past few days. The Government declares that one reason for the project is to effect economy. If the Government were sincere it would not appoint anybody to the position for some time. If it is determined to appoint somebody it would be wise to select either an official who understood the position overseas, or some member of the community who has in the past shown strong Australian tendencies, instead of strong Australian antipathies.

Question—That the bill be now read a second time—put. The House divided.

(MR. SPEAKER—HON. G. H. MACKAY.)

Ayes	42
Noes	16
		—	
Majority	26
		—	

AYES.

Bell, G. J.	Lyons, J. A.
Blacklow, A. C.	Marr, C. W. C.
Cameron, M.	Maxwell, G. A.
Collins, T. J.	McBride, P. A. M.
Corser, Bernard	McClelland, H.
Dein, A. K.	McGrath, D. C.
Dennis, S.	Nairn, W. M.
Fenton, J. E.	Page, Dr. Earle
Francis, J.	Parkhill, Archdale
Gabb, J. M.	Paterson, T.
Gregory, H.	Perkins, J. A.
Guy, J. A.	Price, J. L.
Harrison, E. F.	Prowse, J. H.
Harrison, E. J.	Stacey, F. H.
Holman, W. A.	Stewart, F. H.
Hunter, J. A. J.	Thompson, V. C.
Hutchin, A. W.	Thorby, H. V. C.
Hutchinson, W. J.	White, T. W.

Tellers:

Gardner, S. L.
McNicoll, W. R.

NOES.

Martens, G. W.
Riordan, D.
Rosevear, J. S.
Scullin, J. H.
Ward, E. J.

Tellers:

Gander, J. H.
Watkins, D.

PAIRS.

Riley, E. C.
Maloney, Dr.
Anstey, F.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.
Bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2—

This act shall continue in operation for a period of two years and no longer.

MR. BEASLEY (West Sydney) [10.45].—I move the following amendment:

That the words “two years” be omitted with a view to insert in lieu thereof the words “six months”.

The supporters of this bill have argued that the main purpose of appointing a Resident Minister in London is to effect the conversion of our overseas debt. If we accept that argument, we take leave to point out that, unless this conversion is carried through within six months, Australia's finances will be in a very sorry plight. The taxpayers cannot continue to meet the present exorbitant rate of interest. We on this side of the House have urged for the last eighteen months or two years the need for undertaking this conversion, and the longer it is delayed the more serious the problem will become. A further reason for proposing to reduce the duration of the act is to minimize the expense incidental to the keeping of a Resident Minister in London. By moving this amendment I hope to impress upon honorable members, and upon the people generally, the urgency of converting our overseas debt.

MR. ROSEVEAR (Dalley) [10.48].—I support the amendment. If the object of this mission is to be achieved at all—namely, the conversion of our colossal overseas debt—it must be done this year. In his budget speech the Prime Minister warned us that if the Hoover moratorium—

THE CHAIRMAN (MR. BELL).—The honorable member must confine his remarks to the clause and the amendment. There is nothing in either the clause or the amendment relating to the Hoover moratorium, or the conversion of our overseas debt.

MR. ROSEVEAR.—I submit that we are entitled to state our reasons for moving that the duration of this measure be six months instead of two years. There must have been some reason for fixing it at two years in the first place, and we certainly have a reason for seeking to reduce the period to six months.

The CHAIRMAN.—Nothing in the bill and certainly nothing in this clause gives any reason why the Resident Minister in London should be appointed to do the work referred to by the honorable member.

Mr. ROSEVEAR.—I suggest that a period of six months is sufficient for the work outlined by the Minister who introduced the bill.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member is in order in arguing that a period of six months is sufficient for the Resident Minister in London to do that work, but not in referring to moratoriums or anything of the kind to which no reference is made in the bill.

Mr. ROSEVEAR.—We claim that a period of six months will be ample for the Resident Minister in London to do all the work it is proposed he should do. No reason has been given for extending the period to two years.

Mr. SCULLIN (Yarra) [10.52].—If the amendment is designed to weaken the proposition before the committee, it meets with my approval, but I wish to make it clear that while I vote for the amendment, I do not accept the principle of the bill even to the extent of six months. I prefer to vote straight out against each clause, but if the amendment goes to a division, I shall vote for it as being the lesser of two evils. I cannot oppose the amendment. That would be tantamount to accepting a longer term. On the other hand, to vote for the amendment is tantamount to a declaration that it is necessary to have a Resident Minister in London with these powers for six months. That, I dispute. The arguments advanced about the loan conversion are to a large extent a subterfuge. I do not dispute the importance of that work, and the need for a Minister to be in London while it is being done has never been challenged by any one on this side of this chamber, at any rate not by me. How could I challenge it in view of the importance of the conversion operations? I must agree with the mission now being undertaken, even if a Minister has to remain in London longer than six months. But I do not think he need stay longer than six months. When the preliminary arrangements are being made he must be in London, but those steps having been successfully taken,

there is a capable officer in London to leave in charge. I differ, however, from the present proposal of the Government to have a Resident Minister in London, and that is the principle involved in this bill.

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—Where is it to be found in the bill?

Mr. SCULLIN.—The whole thing is involved in the bill. There is no need for this measure to give the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) the power to control Australia House. If the secretary who is already there has no High Commissioner, he will act under the instructions of any Minister who is in London just as he would act under instructions from a Minister in Australia.

Mr. JAMES (Hunter) [10.55].—I support the amendment. Like the right honorable the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin), I am opposed to the bill as a whole on the ground that it conflicts with the High Commissioner Act 1909, as the honorable member for Oxley (Mr. Baker) has just made clear. On the same ground I support the limitation of the measure to a period of six months.

Motion (by Mr. THOMPSON) put—
That the question be now put.

The committee divided.

(CHAIRMAN—MR. BELL.)

Ayes	41
Noes	17
Majority	24

AYES.

Blacklow, A. C.	Marr, C. W. C.
Cameron, M.	Maxwell, G. A.
Collins, T. J.	McBride, P. A. M.
Corser, Bernard	McClelland, H.
Dein, A. K.	McGrath, D. C.
Dennis, S.	McNicoll, W. R.
Fenton, J. E.	Nairn, W. M.
Francis, J.	Page, Dr. Earle
Green, R.	Parkhill, Archdale
Gregory, H.	Paterson, T.
Guy, J. A.	Perkins, J. A.
Harrison, E. F.	Price, J. L.
Harrison, E. J.	Prowse, J. H.
Holman, W. A.	Stacey, F. H.
Hutchin, A. W.	Stewart, F. H.
Hutchinson, W. J.	Thompson, V. C.
Jennings, J. T.	Thorby, H. V. C.
Lane, A.	White, T. W.
Latham, J. G.	Tellers:
Lawson, John	Gardner, S. L.
Lyons, J. A.	Hunter, J. A. J.

NOES.

Baker, F. M. J.	Makin, N. J. O.
Beasley, J. A.	Martens, G. W.
Blakeley, A.	Riordan, D.
Forde, F. M.	Rosevear, J. S.
Gabb, J. M.	Scullin, J. H.
Green, A.	Ward, E. J.
Holloway, E. J.	Tellers:
James, R.	Gander, J. H.
Lawson, George	Watkins, D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question—That the clause be agreed to—put. The committee divided.

(CHAIRMAN—MR. BELL.)

Ayes	41
Noes	16
Majority	25

AYES.

Blacklow, A. C.	Lyons, J. A.
Cameron, M.	Marr, C. W. C.
Collins, T. J.	Maxwell, G. A.
Corser, Bernard	McBride, P. A. M.
Dein, A. K.	McClelland, H.
Dennis, S.	McGrath, D. C.
Fenton, J. E.	Nairn, W. M.
Francis, J.	Page, Dr. Earle
Gabb, J. M.	Parkhill, Archdale
Green, R.	Paterson, T.
Gregory, H.	Perkins, J. A.
Guy, J. A.	Price, J. L.
Harrison, E. F.	Prowse, J. H.
Harrison, E. J.	Stacey, F. H.
Holman, W. A.	Stewart, F. H.
Hutchin, A. W.	Thompson, V. C.
Hutchinson, W. J.	Thorby, H. V. C.
Jennings, J. T.	White, T. W.
Lane, A.	Tellers:
Latham, J. G.	Gardner, S. L.
Lawson, John	Hunter, J. A. J.

NOES.

Baker, F. M. J.	Martens, G. W.
Beasley, J. A.	Riordan, D.
Blakeley, A.	Rosevear, J. S.
Forde, F. M.	Scullin, J. H.
Green, A.	Ward, E. J.
Holloway, E. J.	Tellers:
James, R.	Gander, J. H.
Lawson, George	Watkins, D.
Makin, N. J. O.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3—

After section nine of the High Commissioner Act 1909 the following section is inserted:—
“9A. The Governor-General may issue to any Minister or to any member of the Executive Council a commission authorizing him, during the pleasure of the Governor-General, to exercise the powers . . . assigned to the High Commissioner.”

Mr. BEASLEY (West Sydney) [11.8].—What is the significance of the phrase “to any Minister or to any member of the Executive Council”?

Mr. LATHAM (Kooyong—Attorney-General) [11.9].—The distinction is between what are described in the Constitution as Ministers of State administering certain departments, and Ministers without portfolios. They are all members of the Federal Executive Council, but a Minister without portfolio is not strictly a Minister of State in the constitutional sense.

Mr. JAMES (Hunter) [11.10].—I also direct attention to the point that was raised during the second-reading debate by the honorable member for Oxley (Mr. Baker). Proposed new section 9A of the High Commissioner Act provides that the Governor-General may issue to any Minister or any member of the Executive Council a commission authorizing him “to exercise the powers and to perform the duties which, in pursuance of this act are or may be conferred upon or assigned to the High Commissioner.” Section 7 of the High Commissioner Act reads—

A person appointed to be the High Commissioner shall not during his tenure of office be or act as director or agent of or hold any office in any company or syndicate, whether incorporated or unincorporated, or hold any other employment, or engage in any business whether within or without the Commonwealth.

We all know that the right honorable member for Flinders has interests in private business houses, notably that of Paterson, Laing and Bruce Limited. Would not the performance by him of the duties of High Commissioner be a contravention of the act?

Mr. LATHAM (Kooyong—Attorney-General) [11.12].—There is no inconsistency between this amending bill and the High Commissioner Act. Section 7, to which the honorable member for Hunter (Mr. James) has just directed attention, refers to a person who is appointed as High Commissioner under the terms of that act for the period mentioned in section 3. This bill does not appoint a person to that office at all. All that it does is to empower a Minister or member of the Executive Council to perform the functions and duties of the High Commissioner. When a Minister is being

appointed for a temporary period, there are not thought to be the same reasons to apply the provisions of section 7 to such appointment.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Nevertheless, this bill is a violation of the spirit of section 7.

Mr. LATHAM.—It is open to Parliament to legislate that every member of it should surrender all commercial, industrial and financial interests; that, in fact, he should be occupied with no other duties. It could so provide for Ministers and, if it thought proper, any person appointed under any act; but I am glad to say that up to the present Parliament has taken the more generous and the wiser view that Ministers and members should not divorce themselves from the general activities of the community.

Mr. BEASLEY (West Sydney) [11.14].—It is clear, from the remarks of the Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) that the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) would not be eligible for appointment as High Commissioner, and that any such appointment would be in contravention of section 7 of the High Commissioner Act.

Mr. LATHAM.—If it fell within section 7, yes.

Mr. BEASLEY.—Therefore, the point made by the honorable member for Oxley (Mr. Baker) was an important one.

Mr. LATHAM.—It is perfectly obvious that a distinction is being drawn between a Minister and another person appointed as High Commissioner.

Mr. BEASLEY.—One aspect which we should bear in mind is that, while the right honorable member for Flinders has not actually been appointed High Commissioner, he will discharge all the functions and duties of that office.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Under a different title.

Mr. BEASLEY.—That being so, the explanation offered by the Attorney-General is very thin.

Mr. SCULLIN.—The bill certainly violates the spirit of the original act.

Mr. BEASLEY.—There is no doubt about that, and I am certain that the people generally will appreciate the point that has been raised by the honorable member for Oxley.

Mr. HOLLOWAY (Melbourne Ports) [11.15].—I should like to know from the

Minister in charge of the bill (Mr. Parkhill) if it has been specially drafted to overcome the difficulty which has just been mentioned, namely, that the right honorable member for Flinders or any other honorable member was ineligible for appointment to the position of High Commissioner under the principal act?

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL (Warringah—Minister for the Interior) [11.16].—The bill was not drafted for the purpose suggested by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Holloway). Nor is it true to say that the measure is merely a subterfuge to enable the Government to invest the Minister who happens to be in London with authority to discharge duties ordinarily performed by the High Commissioner. It would be anomalous for a Minister to be at Australia House and have no authority whatever.

Mr. SCULLIN.—The Minister surely does not seriously suggest that a Minister would have no authority over public servants in Australia House!

Mr. ARCHDALE PARKHILL.—I do. Some of our officials there are of very high standing, and some Ministers are still modest enough to be disinclined to exert control without specific authority from Parliament. The bill merely provides that the Minister who happens to be in London for the time being shall exercise the necessary authority of and discharge the duties ordinarily performed by the High Commissioner. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin) has admitted that it is essential for some Minister to be there, although he affects to believe that later everything can be left to Mr. Collins, the Official Secretary. The Government takes the view that the Minister in London should be authorized to do all that it is proposed to do.

Mr. BAKER (Oxley) [11.17].—If this bill is not a subterfuge, why does not the Government give the Resident Minister the title of High Commissioner? Obviously, the reason is that it would be a contravention of section 7 of the High Commissioner Act. The Attorney-General (Mr. Latham) said just now that, as the Resident Minister would be in London for only a short period, it was not necessary to do so; but when he was speaking to the second

reading of the bill, he expressed the opinion that the appointment should be for a longer period than two years; that, in fact, it should be approved as a principle. This bill is a violation of the spirit of the act of 1909, which it seeks to amend. The Attorney-General added that, if the act were so construed as to render the right honorable member for Flinders ineligible, it might also be suggested that it should apply to all members of Parliament. As a matter of fact, the Constitution does restrict members of Parliament by preventing them from holding an office of profit under the Crown, and provides, further, that no member shall be absent from a session of the Parliament for more than two months without leave. Certainly it was never contemplated that legislation would have to be introduced to provide for such a position as has now arisen.

Mr. WARD (East Sydney) [11.22].—Evidently those who framed the original act thought that a definite restriction should be imposed upon the business activities of any person occupying the position of High Commissioner. The mere transfer of the duties of High Commissioner to a Resident Minister does not alter the principle laid down in section 7 or reduce the opportunities of the occupant of the office to further the interests of any firm with which he is connected. The suggestion earlier in the debate, that some personal advantage might accrue to a representative of an important firm holding this office, was ridiculed. It is apparent, however, that great care was taken in the framing of this clause, because the Government realized that the principle contained in section 7 must be violated if the right honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) were to occupy the office of High Commissioner, while retaining his connexion with a private business firm. For that reason I shall vote against the clause.

Question.—That clause 3 be agreed to—put. The committee divided.

(**CHAIRMAN—MR. BELL.**)

Ayes	32
Noes	16
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Majority	16
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	AYES.
Blacklow, A. C.	Lawson, John
Cameron, M.	Lyons, J. A.
Collins, T. J.	Marr, C. W. C.
Corser, Bernard	Maxwell, G. A.
Dein, A. K.	McClelland, H.
Dennis, S.	Parkhill, Archdale
Fenton, J. E.	Perkins, J. A.
Francis, J.	Price, J. L.
Gabb, J. M.	Stacey, F. H.
Guy, J. A.	Stewart, F. H.
Harrison, E. F.	Thompson, V. C.
Harrison, E. J.	Thorby, H. V. C.
Hutchin, A. W.	White, T. W.
Hutchinson, W. J.	
Jennings, J. T.	
Lane, A.	
Latham, J. G.	

	Tellers:
	Gardner, S. L.
	Hunter, J. A. J.

	NOES.
Baker, F. M. J.	Martens, G. W.
Beasley, J. A.	Riordan, D.
Blakely, A.	Rosevear, J. S.
Forde, F. M.	Scullin, J. H.
Green, A.	Ward, E. J.
Holloway, E. J.	
James, R.	
Lawson, George	Tellers:
Makin, N. J. O.	Gander, J. H.
	Watkins, D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.
Clause agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment;
report adopted.

THIRD READING.

Mr. LYONS.—I ask for leave to move the third reading.

Mr. SCULLIN.—I object.
Motion (by Mr. Lyons) put—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the remaining stage from being taken without delay.

The House divided.

(**MR. SPEAKER—HON. G. H. MAOKAY.**)

Ayes	33
Noes	16
Majority	<hr/> 17 <hr/>

	AYES.
Bell, G. J.	Latham, J. G.
Blacklow, A. C.	Lawson, John
Cameron, M.	Lyons, J. A.
Collins, T. J.	Marr, C. W. C.
Corser, Bernard	Maxwell, G. A.
Dein, A. K.	McClelland, H.
Dennis, S.	Parkhill, Archdale
Fenton, J. E.	Perkins, J. A.
Francis, J.	Price, J. L.
Gabb, J. M.	Stacey, F. H.
Guy, J. A.	Stewart, F. H.
Harrison, E. F.	Thompson, V. C.
Harrison, E. J.	Thorby, H. V. C.
Hutchin, A. W.	White, T. W.
Hutchinson, W. J.	
Jennings, J. T.	
Lane, A.	

	Tellers:
	Gardner, S. L.
	McNicoll, W. R.

NOTES.

Baker, F. M. J.	Makin, N. J. O.
Beasley, J. A.	Martens, G. W.
Blakeley, A.	Riordan, D.
Forde, F. M.	Scullin, J. H.
Gander, J. H.	Ward, E. J.
Green, A.	
Holloway, E. J.	<i>Tellers:</i>
James, R.	Rosevear, J. S.
Lawson, George	Watkins, D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion (by Mr. LYONS) put—

That the bill be now read a third time.

The House divided.

(MR. SPEAKER—HON. G. H. MAOKAY.)

Ayes	33
Noes	15
Majority	18

AYES.

Bell, G. J.	Latham, J. G.
Blacklow, A. C.	Lawson, John
Cameron, M.	Lyons, J. A.
Collins, T. J.	Murr, C. W. C.
Corser, Bernard	Maxwell, G. A.
Dein, A. K.	McClelland, H.
Dennis, S.	Purkhill, Archdale
Fenton, J. E.	Perkins, J. A.
Francis, J.	Price, J. L.
Gabb, J. M.	Stacey, F. H.
Guy, J. A.	Stewart, F. H.
Harrison, E. F.	Thompson, V. C.
Harrison, E. J.	Thorby, H. V. C.
Hutchin, A. W.	White, T. W.
Hutchinson, W. J.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Jenninga, J. T.	Gardner, S. L.
Lane, A.	McNicoll, W. R.

NOTES.

Baker, F. M. J.	Martens, G. W.
Beasley, J. A.	Riordan, D.
Forde, F. M.	Rosevear, J. S.
Gander, J. H.	Scullin, J. H.
Green, A.	Ward, E. J.
Holloway, E. J.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Lawson, George	James, R.
Makin, N. J. O.	Watkins, D.

PAIRS.

Gibson, W. G.	Riley, E. C.
Hawker, C. A. S.	Blakeley, A.
Abbott, C. L. A.	Anstey, F.
Scholfield, T. H.	Maloney, Dr.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 2) 1932-33.

Bill returned from the Senate without requests.

APPROPRIATION (WORKS AND BUILDINGS) BILL 1932-33.

Bill returned from the Senate without amendment.

House adjourned at 11.45 p.m.