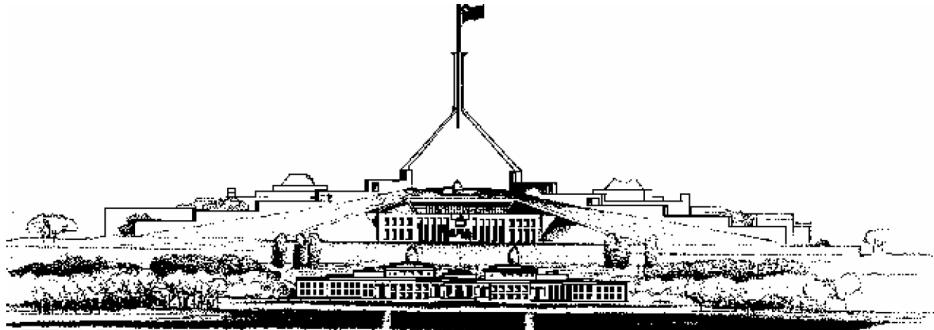




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House of Representatives

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House of Representatives.

Thursday, 8 March, 1917.

The CLERK having informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

RAIDER IN INDIAN OCEAN.

Mr. BOYD.—The Minister for the Navy asked me to repeat to-day a question that I asked yesterday. I wish to know if the Government will make a complete statement regarding the two vessels lost in the Indian Ocean, so that the public may know the exact facts, and not be misled by rumours which are gradually growing worse?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I am sorry that I have not a definite answer to the question, but I am making inquiries to ascertain if I can add anything to my statement of yesterday, and when I am able to do so, I shall let the honorable member know the result. I desire to read to the House the following statement concerning the presence of a raider in the Indian Ocean—

There have been rumours of danger in the Indian Ocean for some days past. To-day definite information has been received that a raider was on February 27th operating on the route between Colombo and Aden. The raider is a large cargo steamer of about 4,000 tons register, carrying guns and torpedo tubes. She also carries a seaplane.

After operating for a few days on one route it is usual for a raider to disappear for a time, and then to reappear on another route, possibly in quite another part of the world. Members will thus see that a raid on Australian routes is not impossible, and is a danger against which we must take precautions. We have not, since the early days of the war, since, in fact, the day the *Sydney* sank the *Emden*, been threatened quite so directly on the trade routes in these waters. There is, of course, no reason for any panic or at present for any check on the sailing of merchant craft.

The Atlantic Ocean has perhaps never during the war been quite as safe as the Indian Ocean is now, but the raider has brought the war a little closer to our part of the world, which has, by the protection of the British Navy, and of our own war-ships, so long lived in a condition of peace.

Mr. BOYD.—In view of the fact that the British Government publish daily the names and tonnage of vessels lost on the British coast through the attacks of submarines, will the Prime Minister say why

the Commonwealth Government cannot publish the names of vessels lost in Australian waters, and give the public full information concerning them? Are the British Government preventing the Commonwealth Government from doing what they do themselves?

Mr. HUGHES.—I know that there is an apparent inconsistency between the action of this Government, in connexion with the matter referred to, and the action of the British Government. At the same time, it must be remembered that the responsibility of the war rests upon the British Government and the British Admiralty, and not upon the Commonwealth Government. The attitude I take up is that, unless and until we are permitted to make these statements public, I do not feel free to do so. I think that, on the whole, that is the right attitude for this Government to adopt, although I admit quite candidly that in all human probability the first to know about these things is the enemy. For the honorable member's information, I may say that we have asked the British Government how far we may disclose those losses which occur in Australian waters.

GOVERNMENT MOTOR CARS.

Mr. PAGE.—As the Treasurer has asked the people of the Commonwealth to practice economy in every particular, I wish to know if it is true that a Minister whose Department has hitherto done without a motor car is now applying for one?

Sir JOHN FORREST.—So far as I know, no application has been made to the Treasury for money for a motor car, nor has any request come to me.

WORKS COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS.

Mr. KELLY.—I desire to ask the Chairman of the Public Works Committee, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether he will endeavour to furnish to Parliament prior to the prorogation, a statement of the cost in each case of the Public Works Committee's investigation of the following proposals:—(a) Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney; (b) automatic telephone exchange, North Sydney; (c) sewerage of the Federal Capital; (d) arsenal sites, Federal Territory; (e) other matters affecting the Capital City.

Mr. RILEY.—I have seen the question that the honorable member has placed on the notice-paper. The information is being prepared, and, if desired, will be presented in the form of a return.

PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Wool Appraisement, and Wool Selling Centres.—Memorandum, &c., *re*.

Ordered to be printed.

War Precautions Act.—Regulations amended
—Statutory Rules 1917, Nos. 41, 42, 50,
52, 53.

CENSORSHIP.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I wish to know from the Minister representing the Minister for Defence what are the conditions under which the censorship is exercised in Australia?

Mr. GROOM.—The honorable member having informed me of his intention to ask the question, I am prepared with the following reply:—

The Censorship is an Imperial establishment, being a branch of the Imperial General Staff. The head of this branch is the Chief Censor, War Office, London, who exercises general control over censors in all parts of the world, and to whom all censors are directly responsible.

The general instructions for censorship are drawn up by the Imperial Authorities, and these instructions specify the establishment, qualifications necessary, and the grading of officers employed on such work. The aims of censorship and methods of enforcing the same are also laid down by these instructions. Censorship is divided into three classes:—

- 1 and 2. Cable and Mail Censorship.—Both these branches of censorship are regulated solely by instructions issued by the Imperial authorities. All information gained in the exercise of these classes of censorship is forwarded direct to the Chief Censor, London. Information of local importance gained from the above sources is also directly conveyed to the Governmental Departments concerned.
3. Press Censorship.—This is regulated by instructions issued by the Chief Censor, London, as to the general aims of censorship, by the provisions of the War Precautions Regulations, which are based on the provisions contained in the Imperial Defence of the Realm Act, and by the expert advice of the naval and military authorities of the Commonwealth Government.

EXPORT OF APPLES.

Mr. GREGORY.—Is the Prime Minister in a position to make a statement regarding the exportation of apples?

Mr. HUGHES.—I have no further information to give, except that a cablegram was received yesterday from the Imperial Authorities in reply to a request from this end that every effort should be made to enable exporters to get rid of their produce. The Imperial Authorities are now considering how apples should be dealt with, as distinct from other articles on the list of prohibited imports. I again assure honorable members, and through them the Commonwealth producers of apples, that the Government will not allow them to suffer any more than is avoidable, and at the worst will relieve them of the greater portion of loss, if any, that may fall on them.

MALTESE IN AUSTRALIA.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—With reference to the Maltese who, I understand, are detained in a hulk in Sydney Harbor, I ask the Prime Minister what arrangements, if any, are being made to return these unfortunate British subjects, of a white race, to their own country? Is the right honorable gentleman aware that statements have been circulated to the effect that the wives and families of these unfortunate people are in a starving condition by reason of the fact that they have been deprived of the support of their bread-winners for so long?

Mr. HUGHES.—I had an interview this morning with Father Bonetti, who is acting on behalf of the Maltese. His statement was in substantial agreement with that of the honorable member so far as the position of these Maltese and their families is concerned. The reverend gentleman was in Australia at the time of the referendum campaign, and is perfectly aware of the circumstances which have led up to the present position. He knows that the Government at the time were forced to take certain action by statements deliberately made for the purpose of misleading the electors, that a horde of coloured people were coming into this country, and that these Maltese were the first of the horde. I did not attempt to justify to him, or to anybody else, the action that was taken, on any ground than that it was forced upon us.

as a means of refuting what was an obvious and palpable calumny. What I told the reverend gentleman was this: These men are here now. We have exhausted every means at our disposal to get them back to Europe, and have failed. The Messageries Maritimes Company will not take them back, and we cannot hire a transport to take them back. The latest development has, of course, accentuated the difficulty of dealing with them. I further said that if the reverend gentleman could give me a definite assurance, and by that I mean definite and positive proof, that these men can be employed, and that they are willing to join the union, I will let them in. That is the position. Father Bonett said that that, in fact, was the object for which the men had lived all these years, and had come out to Australia.

ELECTORAL BILL.

Mr. TUDOR.—In the absence of the Minister for Home and Territories, I ask the Prime Minister whether it is possible to take, this week, the first reading of the amending Electoral Bill, which is to be introduced before we adjourn, so that it may be circulated amongst honorable members before they leave for their homes at the week-end; and they may have an opportunity to learn what it contains?

Mr. HUGHES.—The honorable gentleman will realize that all this work has come upon us at the eleventh hour, and it is not an easy thing to draft a measure to enable the soldiers to vote for individuals. It was not so difficult to prepare a Bill to enable them to vote "Yes" or "No" upon a particular question. I am bound to say that the task involves considerable difficulties of draftsmanship. I have been endeavouring, with the scanty leisure I have had this morning, to grapple with it. I can say that a very rough draft of the measure has now been prepared. Later to-day, a motion in the name of the Minister for Home and Territories for leave to introduce the Bill will be moved upon the understanding that it is the rough draft of the Bill that will be introduced. If honorable members will agree to carry the Bill over the first-reading stage, it will be introduced, so long as it is understood that it will be nothing more than the rough draft, which we will do our best to hack into shape in the House.

NORTHERN TERRITORY.

APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR.

Mr. BAMFORD.—In the absence of the Minister for Home and Territories, I ask the Prime Minister if anything has been done in connexion with the appointment of the Administrator of the Northern Territory?

Mr. HUGHES.—No. The Government have not yet had an opportunity of considering the matter.

IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

Dr. MALONEY.—Yesterday a cablegram appeared in both of Melbourne's morning newspapers, stating that Sir Joseph Ward, in commenting on the new crisis in Australia, said that failing representation being sent Home, he hoped that Mr. Fisher would be appointed to watch the interests of the Commonwealth on the War Council. I ask the Prime Minister whether he has seen that cablegram?

Mr. HUGHES.—I have not seen it. Now that the honorable member has shown it to me, I have no observation to make on it.

Dr. MALONEY.—Will the Government consider the matter?

Mr. HUGHES.—Yes.

ADJOURNMENT (FORMAL).

SUGAR INDUSTRY.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I have received from the honorable member for Wide Bay notice that he desires to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., "The unsatisfactory condition obtaining in the sugar industry in Queensland caused by, among other things, the operation of Acting Judge Dickson's award, which has resulted in a large quantity of cane remaining unharvested and the almost entire cessation of planting and field operations in some districts, and which threatens to involve the Commonwealth and the Treasury in serious loss if permitted to continue."

Five honorable members having risen in their places,

Question proposed.

Mr. CORSER (Wide Bay) [2.53].—Because of the crisis that exists so far as the sugar industry is concerned, I forwarded to Mr. Deputy Speaker the notice that he has read; but since doing so, the Prime Minister has been

good enough to give two interviews to the representatives, including myself, of the sugar industry in Queensland, and, as I believe that he is now prepared to state what assistance his Government are willing to concede to the industry, I do not intend to take up the time of the House by further discussing the matter.

Mr. HUGHES (West Sydney—Prime Minister) [2.54].—The honorable member has set a good example, and I shall endeavour to follow it. The matter which he has brought under the notice of the House relates to an industry of the utmost possible importance to Queensland and to Australia, to which this Parliament has, perhaps, given more attention by way of legislation, financial assistance, and otherwise than has been given to any other. The question has engaged the serious attention of the Government during the last few days, and I am prepared to make a declaration of the policy of the Government in regard to it. The Dickson award has caused in the sugar industry of Queensland a condition of things that makes sugar growing under the present arrangement for the payment of £18 for raw sugar—94 per cent. net titre—impossible, because the cane-grower cannot produce sugar at the price under the rates and conditions imposed by the Dickson award, and the raw sugar miller cannot sell sugar at £18 per ton. Shortly, the position is this: The Government took over the industry soon after the outbreak of the war, and fixed the price of raw sugar and refined sugar. It also imported sugar from abroad in order to make up the shortage of the locally-grown article. Queensland has experienced one very bad crop and one very moderate crop; but we are assured that there is every prospect that that State will next season produce all the sugar that Australia will require. The planting season is now on, but men will not plant cane unless and until they are assured that the price they will get for it will enable them to pay the rates under the Dickson award or unless some tribunal is appointed to review and disturb that verdict. The Commonwealth Government will make a profit of £500,000 on the industry during the year ending 30th June by paying £18 for raw sugar and selling the refined article at £29 5s., less 6 per cent. As the hon-

orable member has stated, two deputations waited on me yesterday representing between them all the cane-growers in Queensland and practically all the millers except the Government millers, so that I had before me representatives of the whole of the industry except, of course, the workers, who fall under the award and may be assumed to be standing by it. I had before me the whole of the facts, and those facts I placed before the Government this morning. After considering the position, the Government decided that from 30th June next they will give to the cane-growers of Queensland all the profit and benefits of sugar retailed to the public at 3½d. per lb. They are not prepared to raise the price of sugar to the consumer, but they are prepared to give to the sugar industry generally the whole of the benefit of the price charged, less the expenses of Government management, which are very trifling, but which, nevertheless, have to be paid, just as the Wheat Pool expenses have to be paid. This means that the industry will receive somewhere about £22 a ton for raw sugar.

Mr. CORSER.—It will mean £22 7s.

Mr. HUGHES.—I do not propose to say that the price will be what the honorable member has mentioned, but it will be somewhere about £22. It means that the miller and the industry get all that there is in the industry, while the consumers will get sugar at the price at which it is now being sold to them. Of course, the Government will be short of that amount of profit which was going into Consolidated Revenue. This agreement is for the period of the war only and the season thereafter, because we cannot stop in the middle of a season. All disputes and industrial troubles and questions regarding the price of cane and so on are to go before the proper industrial Court provided under the laws of the State of Queensland. We give the grower, therefore, an assurance that he can plant his cane with the positive knowledge that he will get all there is in the industry, and we give the consumer an assurance that he will not be called upon to pay more for his sugar, while we leave all disputes to the State of Queensland and its industrial Court. There is no dispute now except that I understand there is an ap-

peal by the growers against some of the conditions in the Dickson award. I venture to say that the arrangement on the whole is satisfactory, and I have much pleasure in stating that a united deputation has accepted it unreservedly.

Mr. GREENE (Richmond) [3.2].—What is the position of the growers in New South Wales under the arrangement? There is no Dickson award there, but the growers are working under an agreement with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. How far will the arrangement between Queensland and the Commonwealth affect them?

Mr. HUGHES.—It cannot apply at all unless the New South Wales Government are prepared to sell us raw sugar, because we are working without profit, while the Colonial Sugar Refining Company wants its profit. If the New South Wales Government are prepared to sell us the sugar at the same price as Queensland, we can put the New South Wales grower on exactly the same basis as the Queensland grower.

Mr. GREENE.—Otherwise the Government intend to let the present arrangement continue?

Mr. HUGHES.—Yes.

Question resolved in the negative.

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES. CASUALTIES.

Mr. GROOM.—On 6th March, the honorable member for Melbourne asked—

Will the Honorary Minister representing the Minister for Defence have brought up to date, and made available to honorable members, the particulars, as to casualties, published in *Hansard* of the 8th December last, page 9590?

The following is the reply:—

SUMMARY OF CASUALTIES (NET) FROM AUGUST, 1914, TO 28TH FEBRUARY, 1917.

	Officers.	Chaplains.	Nurses.	Other ranks.	Totals.
Deceased ..	833	2	7	18,725	19,567
Wounded ..	612	7	..	26,204	26,823
Missing ..	80	3,402	3,482
Prisoners of war ..	31	921	952
Nature of casualties not specified ..	49	258	307
	1,605	9	7	49,510	51,131

* The above figures represent net casualties at date, i.e., after deductions have been made for all those who have resumed duty.

MILITARY CAMPS: COOKING.

Mr. GROOM.—On the 2nd March, the honorable member for Nepean asked—

As the appointment of professional men in charge of the cooking arrangements of the various camps in New South Wales is giving such great satisfaction, will the Minister extend the system to Victoria and the other States? Will he dismiss the amateur cooks, who are spoiling good food, and, by putting professional men in their places, remove one of the chief grievances amongst the men?

The Commandant, 3rd Military District, has furnished the following report in this matter, which indicates that the arrangements at present in force are satisfactory, and it is therefore not proposed to make any change at present:—

The system obtaining in the 3rd Military District is that men with previous experience in cooking, and who are medically unfit for active service, are required to attend a school of instruction for fourteen days, under a sergeant cook instructor. During this period each man is reported upon—(1) As to his knowledge of cooking, (2) cleanliness, (3) knowledge of Wiles Cooker, (4) power of command. The best men only are selected and enlisted for home service. Men appointed to take charge of the cook house are promoted to corporal. A sergeant is appointed to supervise the cooking in the camp. At intervals refresher courses are held in A.I.F. Camps. Since this system has been introduced a marked improvement in the cooking has been observed, and I do not recommend any alteration of the system, which is giving satisfaction in this district.

The question affecting the other States is being gone into.

CASE OF RETURNED SOLDIER ROYAL.

Mr. GROOM.—On the 28th February, the honorable member for Eden-Monaro asked—

What does the Assistant Minister for Defence propose to do with reference to the case of the returned soldier named Royal, who was charged with having assaulted a civilian at Queanbeyan, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment, without the option of a fine? Is the Assistant Minister aware that this cruel sentence is having the effect of paralyzing recruiting in country districts, and does he endorse the sentence imposed?

to which the Minister for Defence has furnished the following reply:—

Royal was charged with assault at Queanbeyan Police Court by a civilian named Oldfield, and was convicted and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. An appeal by Royal to the District Court was dismissed, and the sentence confirmed. The question of remission of

sentences awarded in civil Courts in civil proceedings not instituted by the Defence Department is not one within the powers of this Department. The Minister has made representations on the matter to the Minister for Justice, New South Wales, and he is informed that the State Government has since approved of Royal's release from custody on payment of the sum of £25.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

COST OF INVESTIGATIONS.

Mr. GREENE (for Mr. KELLY) asked the Minister for Works and Railways, *upon notice*—

What was the cost in each case of the Public Works Committee's investigation of the following proposals:—(a) Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney; (b) automatic telephone exchange, North Sydney; (c) sewerage of the Federal Capital; (d) arsenal sites, Federal Territory; (e) other matters affecting the Capital city?

Mr. GROOM.—The Public Works Committee being part of Parliament, I suggest to the honorable member that he ask the chairman of the Committee for the desired information. I understand that this has already been done.

WOOL APPRAISING CENTRES. TOWNSVILLE.

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

1. As Townsville is the fifth port of Australia as regards exports, and as during 1916 roughly 80,000 bales of wool were shipped from Townsville coastwise and direct to London, will the Prime Minister ask the Wool Board to consider the question of making Townsville a wool appraising centre?

2. Is the statement correct that the shipment of wool from Townsville to Brisbane for appraisal means an increased cost of 1ls. 2d. per bale, made up of harbor dues, wharfage, coastal steamer freight, landing charges, cartage, &c., at Brisbane?

Mr. HUGHES.—A comprehensive memorandum, prepared by the chairman of the Central Wool Committee, in regard to the wool appraisement centres, will be tabled to-day.

SCHEDULE OF WAR PENSIONS.

Dr. MALONEY asked the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

Whether he will consider the advisability of having posted in a prominent place on all post-offices the schedules of all war pensions pertaining to privates?

Sir JOHN FORREST.—The suggestion will be considered.

DISEASED MEAT FOR TROOPSHIPS.

Dr. MALONEY asked the Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

Whether he will state if F. Watkins Proprietary Limited supplied ox livers diseased with hydatid cysts and fluke to troopships on the 2nd and 6th March and the 8th and 26th May, 1916, or on any date in 1916?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—This firm did not make such supplies.

Dr. MALONEY asked the Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

Whether T. K. Bennett and Woolcock Proprietary Limited supplied ox livers diseased with hydatid cysts and fluke to troopships on the 2nd and 6th March and the 8th and 26th May, 1916, or on any date in 1916?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows:—

On 25th May, 1916, this firm tendered ox liver which was diseased, and it was rejected. This meat had been previously inspected and passed at the abattoirs, and it is not considered that the firm deliberately attempted to supply diseased meat.

Dr. MALONEY asked the Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

Whether W. Angliss and Co. Proprietary Limited supplied ox livers diseased with hydatid cysts and fluke to troopships on the 2nd and 6th March and on the 8th and 26th May, 1916, or on any date in 1916?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows:—

On 6th March, 1916, and 3rd and 4th May, this firm tendered ox liver which was diseased, and it was rejected. This meat had been previously inspected and passed at the abattoirs, and it is not considered that the firm deliberately attempted to supply diseased meat.

DEPORTATION OF MR. B. M. MARTIN.

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

1. Whether it is a fact that a Mr. B. M. Martin, a resident of Queensland, was declared guilty of seditious conduct, and was deported from Australia?

2. By what Court or authority was Mr. Martin tried, and was he given any opportunity to speak in his own defence?

3. What witnesses were called in connexion with the case?

4. Of what particular offence or offences was Mr. Martin declared guilty, and under what

law of the Commonwealth was he dealt with?

5. For how long does the penalty of deportation extend?

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

1. Bartholemey Martin, a subject of an allied power, and regarded as a defaulter from its army, and in possession of Spanish, Mexican, and American naturalization papers, who arrived in Australia about three years ago, was deported from Australia. Seditious conduct was one of the grounds which led the Minister for Defence to order his deportation.

2. Martin was not tried by any Court or authority.

3. See answer to 2.

4. Martin was dealt with under paragraph 2J of the Aliens Restriction Order 1915 (see *Gazette* of 2nd March, 1916), which authorizes the Minister for Defence to "order the deportation of any alien," and provides that "any alien with respect to whom such an order is made shall forthwith leave and thereafter remain out of the Commonwealth."

5. See answer to 4.

CHIEF INSPECTOR OF DAIRY STOCK.

Mr. SINCLAIR asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Whether any of the applicants for the position of Chief Inspector of Dairy Produce were considered suitable?

2. Does the Government propose to fill the position?

Mr. JENSEN.—The matter is under consideration.

WOOL APPRAISING AT ROCKHAMPTON.

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

1. Has he received from the Wool Board a full report as to the reasons why the Board declined to recommend Rockhampton as a wool-appraising centre?

2. Will he receive a deputation from the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce on or about the 12th instant, and at what hour?

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

1. Yes. The report will be laid on the table to-day.

2. In the face of the report it is not considered that any useful purpose would be served by an interview with the Prime Min-

ister, but arrangements will be made for a deputation to interview the Wool Committee on or about the date mentioned.

KALGOORLIE-PORT AUGUSTA RAILWAY.

EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER asked the Minister for Works and Railways, *upon notice*—

1. What is the total amount expended to date on the construction of the East-West Railway?

2. What is the revenue of the Traffic Department from the date of the previous returns submitted to the House to date showing outside revenue and departmental services separately?

3. What is the expenditure for the same period?

Mr. GROOM (for Mr. WATT).—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. £6,096,524. This includes plant, material, and rolling stock, for which credit will be given at the completion of the work.

2. The revenue from 1st August, 1916, to 31st January, 1917, the latest date up to which particulars are available, was—

Public traffic ..	£5,335	12	3
Construction traffic ..	64,510	0	4
Total revenue ..	£69,845	12	7

3. The working expenditure for the same period was £137,484 10s. 1d.

SUPPLY.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

In Committee of Supply: Consideration resumed from 7th March (*vide page 11118*) of motion by Sir JOHN FORREST—

That a sum not exceeding £3,798,652 be granted to His Majesty for or towards defraying the services of the year ending 30th June, 1917.

Mr. FINLAYSON (Brisbane) [3.15].—Will the Minister representing the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, and the members of the Liberal party allow me to extend to them my sincere congratulations on their having at last found the courage to do something. They have told us so often lately that they are a great party that any one regarding their conduct during the last few months might be inclined to think that that is only a name they have given to themselves. It is very certain that their disinclination to accept the responsibilities of government at a time when they said it was most necessary to have responsible

government in Australia gives one the impression that, after all, their ideas of greatness are limited to the numbers they have in the House, and do not extend to responsibility in regard to government. Nothing has been more amusing to me during the last few months than the absolute refusal of the Liberal party to accept the facts of the situation. The Leader of that party, the honorable member for Parramatta, was very fond of telling the public of the absolute impossibility of the situation. In a press interview in Sydney he said that the fact patent to all was that, in the midst of this great world war, a Government held office with some half-dozen supporters in a House of seventy-five members. That is not fair to the country, he said, and it violated every principle of democratic representative government; it was to try and rectify this anomaly that the conferences were taking place. It was only after a number of very peculiar efforts that had been made, and invitations refused, that the Liberal party at last found courage to accept some responsibility in regard to the government of the country. They were repeatedly offered charge of the Government, and, since December, if they had so chosen, they might, by the votes of the Labour party at any rate, have been put in possession of the Treasury bench absolutely without any association whatever with the Hughes party.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Was there ever any authoritative offer made to the Liberal party?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Leader of the Liberal party was under no misapprehension as to the fact that we were willing to support him in ousting the Hughes Government, seeing that his party had refused to support us in such an attempt. The Liberal party refused our offers, and for weeks—for quite a lengthened period—they did nothing but talk in the country about the great Liberal party, the unsatisfactory state of affairs in Parliament, and the seriousness of the national position. Yet they dodged every attempt to put responsibility upon them; and now they have got into such a peculiar position that one wonders how they can feel comfortable. They have allied themselves in the closest association and responsibility with a Government that has already got them into difficulties—that has already brought about a condition of affairs

that they were seeking most anxiously to avoid. They have brought themselves into association with a Government which is discredited in the country, and the burdens of which they will have to carry. They will have to answer to the people of Australia during the coming elections, not only for their own lack of responsibility, but for their share in the mal-administration of the Government that preceded them. Nothing, I think, has been more amusing than this attempt to form a National Government—than the way in which the Liberal party supplied the Prime Minister with a bag of salt to put on the tail of the Labour bird, so as to catch us in the trap. The Liberal party, after two days' anxious and lengthy meetings, decided that if the Labour party would come in they might accept some responsibility. They were not prepared to go with the Prime Minister by themselves, but if the Labour party would come in it would, of course, be all right—they were prepared to shelter themselves in that position. They knew well enough that we would not come in; and at the very time they were making the offers to us to join a National Government, they were telling the public on the platform and through the press how impossible it was for us to come in. They knew it, and yet they persisted in their efforts to rope us in. What other reply could we make? As a party we had deposed Mr. Hughes as our leader—we had repudiated him as Prime Minister. Consequently we were asked to admit that we were wrong in our action, to accept him again as our leader, and to acknowledge him as Prime Minister. The Liberal party attempted to get our nose in the bag.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Why, Senator Gardiner said that we were anxious to get our nose in the bag.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The honorable member's party was anxious to get its nose in the bag if it could induce us to do the same thing. By the formation of this National Government the Liberal party was anxious to evade the very position which has now been created. Let me review the formation of this so-called National Government. In 1914, soon after the outbreak of the war, we were faced with a general election in Australia, and Mr. Hughes, who was then in Opposition, made a proposal

to Mr. Cook, who was then Prime Minister, that a National Government should be formed for the period of the war. That offer was refused. The general elections took place, and the Liberal party was defeated. Mr. Joseph Cook went out of office, and Mr. Hughes became Attorney-General in the new Labour Administration.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Had that offer the endorsement of the Labour party?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The honorable member asked me that question last night.

Mr. SAMPSON.—But the honorable member did not tell me then.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—And I am not going to tell the honorable member now. It will be remembered that in 1914 and 1915 Mr. Hughes, being then on the Ministerial benches with a solid majority behind him in this House, and a particularly big majority in another place, absolutely refused all the offers that were made by the Liberals with a view to the formation of a National Government. Repeated offers were made to the Labour Government by the Liberals to form a National Government.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Does the honorable member say that the Liberal party made repeated offers?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Repeated suggestions for the formation of a National Government were made by the Liberal party in 1915.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—By whom?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Member after member asked questions relating to it, and made suggestions.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Nonsense!

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The honorable member is dreaming absolutely.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The *Hansard* reports are quite emphatic on this point. The name of the honorable member for Wannon occurs to me as one who was most persistent in suggesting the formation of a National Government.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The honorable member has got the wrong man again.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Mr. Hughes scorned the offers. Mr. Fisher said that he would not be found dead in a Coalition. That statement was made in response to a suggestion from the Liberal party that a Coalition Government should be formed. The honorable member for Eden-Monaro also advocated it. When in Opposition, it will be noted,

Mr. Hughes approved of the idea. But when the elections placed him on the Treasury bench, he was until a few weeks ago absolutely opposed to it. Then, finding himself in a minority, he decided to change his views in regard to the desirableness of forming a National Government.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Mr. Fisher is where the wicked cease from troubling.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Australian Labour party are giving effect to Mr. Fisher's ideas by refusing to have anything to do with a Coalition. Mr. Hughes himself, in newspaper articles, has written that Coalitions are always dangerous and generally disastrous.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—Especially when they have not a majority in both Houses.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—According to Mr. Hughes, when the right honorable member for Swan was in power, a Coalition was the right thing; but when he himself was in power, it was the wrong thing. The time, however, came when, though he occupied office, he did not possess power; and now it is quite refreshing to hear the high note that he adopts when he tells us that amongst all the allied nations Australia is the only one where politicians are demeaning themselves by dissension. Now, the Prime Minister has got a National Government; but what has it accomplished? It has certainly done nothing to commend its actions since it was formed, and the country, I venture to say, a few weeks hence will very clearly express its opinion of this immoral Fusion.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Does the honorable member think that that expression is parliamentary?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Shall I call it unmoral? The way in which the Prime Minister has repeatedly suggested that those who are opposed to the formation of a Commonwealth War Ministry do not desire the successful prosecution of the war is surely quite played out now. During his long political career, he has had to repel many accusations of being disloyal and unpatriotic. Yet now he himself suggests that those who are opposed to him are disloyal to the Empire. As evidencing how insincere was the invitation which came from Mr. Hughes to the Australian Labour party to join in the formation of a National Government, let me point out that right up to that time he had been abusing that party on the

platforms and in the press of this country. From the very inception of the conscription campaign until the suggestion was made for the formation of a National Government he had been denouncing the Labour party. No man in Australia has shown himself such a master of political Billingsgate as the Prime Minister, who has exhausted vituperative language in denouncing the friends with whom he was associated. He has said things that he knows are untrue. He has made statements concerning his former colleagues that are absolutely disproved by his own association with them.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I rise to order. I submit that an honorable member is not entitled to say that another honorable member has said things which he knows are untrue.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I withdraw the remark. The Prime Minister was denouncing us right up to the time that he asked us to join with him in forming a National Government. The gentle methods of persuasion adopted by him were the least likely to accomplish that object. What, Mr. Chairman, would you think of any man who, after abusing and insulting you, suddenly invited you, in the most kindly and courteous manner, to join forces with him, and then, as soon as you refused his offer, resumed his old methods of vituperation? Up to the time that we received the Prime Minister's invitation, he had nothing but the worst things to say of us. Had we been guilty of a fraction of the charges that he made against us, we should have been the last in Australia that he should desire to be associated with in the government of the country.

Mr. SAMPSON.—All these considerations were subordinated to the war.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Yes; but a man could not associate with people who were openly charged with being in the pay of the enemy, with having received German gold, and with having no interest in the war other than to secure the downfall of the Empire.

Mr. SINCLAIR.—We did not think much of the honorable member's party, but we insisted that they should be asked to join our National Government.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—It is to the credit of the Liberal party that they did insist, although the honorable member's interjection would indicate that they did not anticipate that we would accept the offer. The

Prime Minister places himself on a somewhat unnecessary pedestal. He says that we are animated by personal hatred of him. I have no personal animosity towards the Prime Minister, nor have I any wish to depreciate the magnificent services that he has rendered to the Labour movement. All the work that he has done for the movement is admitted; but there comes a time in the lives of some people when their character and conduct change. A man who has been for a lifetime honest and respected may, in a moment of stress or sudden temptation, commit an act that is always remembered against him, and his previous good character may be for ever forgotten. The Prime Minister's record up to the time of the conscription proposal was excellent. His interest in the Labour movement, and his enthusiasm for it, were acknowledged, and could not be gainsaid. But, because he chose to follow a course that was not commendable to those supporting him, he at once attributed our attitude to personal hatred. An honorable member last night made a slighting reference to my share in the Prime Minister's withdrawal from the party meeting. The resolution I proposed at that meeting made no reference to the right honorable gentleman's personal character. There was no attack upon him as an individual.

Mr. POYNTON.—You had the numbers, so you said nothing.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I did not know what the numbers would be. Here is the motion that I moved at our party meeting on the 14th November last—

That Mr. W. M. Hughes no longer possesses the confidence of this party as leader, and that the office of chairman of this party be and is hereby declared vacant.

There was nothing in that motion about expelling Mr. Hughes.

Mr. GREENE.—This is the best thing I have heard for a long time!

Mr. POYNTON.—The honorable member must think that we are very dense.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I shall try to enlighten the honorable member. Any party or institution worthy of the name, which has not the courage to change its leader when it is clear that such a change is necessary, must go down and suffer. The Liberal party would not for a moment hesitate to change its leader if he had lost its confidence. No party could continue to work under a leader in whom it had lost confidence.

Mr. POYNTON.—In what respect had the Prime Minister broken the Labour platform?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am not discussing that point; I am not discussing the question as to why we proposed to depose him as leader. I am concerned only with the bare, bald fact that our party as an organized body submitted a motion that the time had come when we should have another leader. We may have been right or wrong. Our leader is appointed by the members of the party, and those who have the right to elect must surely have the right to reject or recall. The motion meant that the chairmanship of the party being vacant the party could proceed immediately to appoint another to it.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Will the honorable member explain why this was done?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—No; that question has been sufficiently canvassed. I am merely pointing out that all the talk we hear about the Caucus having expelled the Prime Minister is wrong. We did not consider the matter of expulsion, and this talk of personal hatred is all moonshine and clap-trap.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—The action was taken because the Prime Minister was in favour of conscription, and all of us who followed him had to go because we supported conscription.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Nothing of the kind. In that argument the honorable member overlooks the fact that the party, as a party, never asserted that it had the right to expel a man. The party made no attempt to expel the Prime Minister.

Mr. GREENE.—Because the leagues had already done that for it.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—We had nothing to do with the leagues. If they choose to rehabilitate the honorable member for Denison, the honorable member for Grey, and the honorable member for West Sydney, the doors of the Caucus would have to be opened to them.

Mr. POYNTON.—We are not going to ask.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—That is my honorable friend's business. Why should we be abused regarding something for which we were not responsible?

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Is it a fact that a meeting was held, outside our Caucus, at which I was not asked to be present, and that the numbers were up against us?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I can only speak for myself, and I say deliberately that I had not the slightest knowledge as to what the numbers would be either for or against the motion. If any one in the room counted heads it was the Prime Minister; if he had not done so he would not have left the room that day.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I should like to have "Yes" or "No" to my question. I have been told that a meeting was held outside of our Caucus, and that you came out with the numbers. Say "Yes" or "No" to that.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—If we are to believe what every one says about us, not a member of the Labour party is fit to be associated and in company with members opposite.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Will the honorable member say "Yes" or "No"?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—No, I will say nothing about it. The honorable member wants me to say "Yes" or "No," and I tell him I know nothing about the matter he refers to.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I do not know, either.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Mr. Hughes now tells us that we are going to our masters. Well, we do not object, for we have said for weeks that that was the only reasonable solution of the present trouble. I agree with the right honorable member for Parramatta when he said that the position was intolerable, and a reflection on representative government, or something to that effect. I remind the Committee, however, that we are all going to our masters except the Prime Minister. Every other member that I know of is going back to his own constituency to ask his own constituents to indorse or otherwise deal with the attitude he has taken up. All are going except the Prime Minister.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—And George Dankel.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I wish here and now to express my deep sympathy with both Mr. Dankel and Mr. Stumm. Probably later on we shall have another opportunity of referring to this matter. I think these two gentlemen have the sincere sympathy of every honorable member. They are both highly respected, and have earned the confidence and esteem of their fellow members, no matter what their politics may be. I repeat that all the

members are going to face their constituents except the Prime Minister. There are all sorts of rumours as to where he is going to get his seat. Indi, Kooyong, Bendigo, Ballarat, and Corangamite have been mentioned, and now Boothby is the latest.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—He can come up to my constituency if he likes.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Prime Minister is not going back to his own constituents. It is an impertinence for him to talk about members going back to their masters when he refuses to face his own constituents. It is there, and nowhere else, that he can get indorsement of his policy. He may get a seat somewhere else, but it will be for ever a stigma on his record that when the time came to seek indorsement of his policy, he ran away from his own people to find security under the protection of somebody else who had to abandon his seat to allow the Prime Minister to get back. It is a most unfortunate position for the Prime Minister of Australia to place himself in. Honorable members opposite talk about this being a war Parliament, and—

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Prime Ministers before to-day have had to change their constituencies.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Yes, I am aware of that; but the circumstances were not such as we find them in Australia to-day. I have watched the political history of the Old Country pretty closely for a good many years, and I know that while the Prime Ministers have changed their constituencies at times, they have never done so except that for political reasons it was an advantage for the Prime Minister to represent some other constituency. This has never been done in England because the Prime Minister was afraid to face his own constituents.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Balfour was defeated last time he was Prime Minister, and had to seek another seat.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Yes, he went to another constituency, after having been defeated in his old one. It is all very well for Mr. Hughes to talk about members going to their masters when he himself is not doing that. I suppose he will get his seat, for if he is defeated in the first attempt, no doubt another seat will be provided for him, because some people

have an idea that he is indispensable. This is most unfortunate, because no man is indispensable.

Mr. POYNTON (Grey) [3.45].—I have no fault to find with what is contained in the financial proposals of the Government, but I regret there are some omissions. For instance, the balance-sheet shows a credit at the end of the financial year of £366,284, but this includes two years' taxation under the war-time profits tax. Unless the Government intend to introduce that Bill and get it through, the financial statement is a loaded document to that extent. This Parliament ought not to dissolve until further taxation is provided. There is not the slightest doubt that the people throughout Australia anticipated and have been expecting a war-time profits tax. The three months' Supply Bill which we are now considering will carry the Government up to June, and there will be no other opportunity of passing taxation measures to make our balances meet for this financial year. In the statement made by the Prime Minister to-day, he said that it had been decided practically to give all the profits, about £500,000, made under the sugar transactions to the Queensland people.

Mr. TUDOR.—That will all go now.

Mr. POYNTON.—Yes, it will disappear under the new conditions. This sum of £500,000, plus £400,000 for the 1915-16 war-time profits tax, and another £400,000 on the latter account for 1916-17, makes a total of £1,300,000 to the bad in connexion with the finances for this year. I note, also, that £350,000 is included as the revenue for the half-year under the entertainments tax. I do not know where the Treasurer got those figures from, because the House cut out the tax upon tickets under the value of 1s., and the result was that a considerable amount of revenue was lost. It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I am pleased to note that the Treasurer has adopted my proposal to establish a sinking fund of 1 per cent. against the war debt. I was rather astonished to read in the *Argus* the other day that the right honorable gentleman had reduced the percentage from $2\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 per cent., because in my financial statement I dealt at some length with the question of establishing a sinking fund. Just prior to

my leaving the Treasury I had an estimate made of our commitments. Although the estimates of the year's receipts were not complete, I got a statement taken out which will show honorable members the financial position in front of us. I venture to say that time will bear out the figures I am about to quote in connexion with our commitments, both at present and in the near future. As a set-off against the war expenditure, I take the receipts from certain taxation. I take, for instance, the revenue from the income tax, the revenue from the increase in the land tax—not the whole of the land tax, mind, because the original land tax was not imposed for war purposes—the probate and succession duties, the entertainments tax, and the war-time profits tax. Assuming that the war-time profits tax was passed, my estimate was that it would yield £600,000 in the first year, and £900,000 in the second year, or £1,500,000 altogether. The total revenue from the sources of taxation I have referred to would be about £9,000,000.

Mr. SAMPSON.—That is direct taxation imposed since the war.

Mr. POYNTON.—Yes, direct taxation imposed for war purposes.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Does that amount include the direct taxation imposed previous to the war?

Mr. POYNTON.—It does not include the revenue from the land tax previous to the war; that is the only direct taxation we had at that time. At the end of the financial year 1916-17 our commitments will be—interest on war loans, £4,780,615; sinking fund at 1 per cent. on war loans, £1,166,438; and war pensions, £1,200,000. I included another item which is not provided for in the financial statement now under consideration. I provided for repatriation. For that purpose I put down £2,000,000. But seeing that we could only collect the tax for half a year, I estimated to raise £1,000,000 in this financial year. These items make a total of £9,147,053. In my estimate I anticipated raising £1,500,000 from the war-time profits tax.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Yes, but that would be for two years.

Mr. POYNTON.—Does not the honorable member see that the Treasurer is not getting any revenue from that source? It is an accident of circumstance that we

will have to collect two years' tax now, because it was not collected before; but after the House meets again we will have to collect the tax for three years. There is nothing to prevent an additional tax being passed by the House before we go to the electors, so that we could collect this revenue in the present financial year. Otherwise, we shall end the year with a shortage of something over £1,000,000 on that account. I want honorable members now to consider for a moment what are the commitments for the next financial year.

Mr. SAMPSON.—In the case of the war-time profits tax, did you make adequate provision for the protection of new business?

Mr. POYNTON.—I did, and when the Bill is introduced I shall be able to give full information in that respect. We must get additional revenue from some source, or the Commonwealth will have to face a very large deficit. Already to-day £500,000 has been given away in connexion with the sugar business. That sum is included by the Treasurer in the figures which make up his balance for this year. He has also included two sums of £400,000 each from the war-time profits tax which he will not collect. There you have a total of £1,300,000 straight away. Let us now look at the commitments for next year. Assuming that the ordinary receipts and expenditure will be on the same basis in the new year as in the present year, the ordinary receipts from taxation available to meet war expenditure will be £7,521,000. In 1917-18 we shall have to raise £10,037,000 to meet the interest on war loans. I put the rate of interest at 4½ per cent., but that will be slightly under the actual cost.

Mr. SAMPSON.—On the war loans?

Mr. POYNTON.—Or our commitments for 1917-18 on the then total war loans.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Is the sinking fund included in that estimate?

Mr. POYNTON.—I provide a sinking fund of 1 per cent., namely, £2,113,000. The war pensions for that period will amount to £2,600,000. For the repatriation of soldiers I provided £2,000,000. These figures show that, as compared with the revenue we are receiving to-day from direct taxation, for the purpose of

the war we shall have to raise an additional sum of £9,229,000.

MR. SAMPSON.—Will the honorable member tell the Committee how much interest he provided for the year 1917-18?

MR. POYNTON.—I provided the interest on £211,000,000, and presently I will make the position very clear to the honorable member. I tried to estimate what our commitments in connexion with the war will be, assuming that the war was concluded, and that we had our men back on the 31st December, 1918. I think that I am underestimating the period when I speak of having all the men back at that time. While the men are away we must continue the cost, and for that purpose we will require to borrow something like £150,000,000 more. Let me put the position in brief. For the year 1916-17, we will need to raise £1,626,000 more than what is provided now by taxation. In 1917-18, we will require to raise £9,229,000 more than what is provided to-day by taxation, and the amount required for the half-year ending the 31st December, 1918, will be £6,444,000. So that in order to cover the items which I have referred to—interest on loans, sinking fund, repatriation, and war pensions—we will have to raise an additional sum of £17,299,000. The foregoing calculation is based on the assumption that the expenditure on our Expeditionary Forces will continue for the whole period to meet active service conditions. It is beyond doubt that our expenditure in that direction will not be reduced by one penny. In the estimate no allowance has been made for deferred pay in regard to which our liabilities on the 31st December, 1918, will be £17,049,000. If we had to raise a loan to cover that, the interest and sinking fund would mean a yearly expenditure of £980,000. Adding that to the £17,299,000 I have mentioned, the amount that will have to be made up by increased taxation comes to £18,279,000. The present War Loan indebtedness, including a final instalment of £2,000,000 from the Imperial Government, which had not been paid when I was in office, is £126,893,786. The loan recently floated will carry us on until the end of July next. At the end of the financial year 1916-17, we shall have about £4,500,000 of loan money in hand. Of course, nearly half of the instalments

of the present loan will still be unpaid on the 30th June next, because the payment of the principal is being made in ten instalments, of which only five would have been received by that date. On a monthly war expenditure of £4,500,000, our war indebtedness at the end of the financial year 1917-18 will be £211,302,000, and at the end of 1918 £250,000,000, which does not include the £17,000,000 odd liability in regard to deferred pay. Therefore, Parliament should, before the prorogation, put the financial position in order, because next year will be more difficult to finance than this year has been. When arranging the dates for the last War Loan of £18,000,000, I was under the impression that our indebtedness to the Imperial Government in regard to expenditure by them on our troops was £1,957,680. I obtained those figures from the financial statement of my predecessor, who was misled by an underestimate of the Defence authorities. I cabled to London to ascertain the facts, and learned that our debt to the Imperial authorities on the 30th June last was £8,500,000. Had I known this earlier, I should have tried to borrow £25,000,000, but the knowledge influenced me in extending the time during which applications might be made. I regret that the effort to keep the loan before the public is not so marked now as it was. At the end of this financial year we shall have in hand only one month's Supply for war expenditure. Acting on the advice of experts, chiefly on the advice of the Commonwealth Bank, I decided to fix the date for receiving loan applications as the 8th February. My advisers were under the impression that the wheat and wool money would have been paid by that date, but the harvest being late, only one instalment of £2,000,000 was paid. From the wool we expected £35,000,000, and from the wheat £32,000,000, but there was no payment of any importance on either account before the date fixed for the closing of the loan. I therefore extended the term during which applications could be made.

DR. MALONEY.—The Victorian Savings Bank helped a good deal with the loan.

MR. POYNTON.—I was indebted not only to that bank, but also to every bank in Australia except two, which are only in a small way. The banks used all their machinery to make the loan a success. I wish to point out, however, that every loan

raised on the present terms decreases the Commonwealth's field of taxation. The wealth of Australia is estimated at £1,000,000,000, but, as the £80,000,000 invested in the war loan is exempt from taxation of any kind, the taxable area has been reduced by about one-twelfth. If our permanent war indebtedness is increased to £250,000,000, and all future loans are raised in Australia, the taxable area will be reduced by one-fifth, if we deduct the amount already raised in London, which will make it necessary to increase the taxation on the remaining sources of wealth. Then, again, we have provided that inscribed war stock and war bonds shall be accepted for payment of probate and succession duties at face value, although there has been a bonus of £1 10s. 6d. given on every £100 advanced to the Government, making the par value of stock and bonds only £98 9s. 6d. The Treasurer estimates that he will receive this year £650,000 from probate and succession duties. It is always difficult to estimate the receipts from this source, but I doubt whether the amount estimated will be obtained, because the practice is for nearly every one who has property to provide for the payment of succession and probate duties with war stock or bonds. When Treasurer, I instituted a system of war-time savings certificates, which has been a great success in England. These certificates have a value of £1, £5, £10, and upwards. I also provided for war pence cards, for which special 6d. stamps could be bought, and, when thirty-six had been attached to the pence cards, the owner could take up a war-time savings certificate. I arranged also that the certificate should carry 5 per cent. compound interest, which would not, however, be exempt from taxation. Under this system a £1 certificate would cost the investor 17s. 4d., the difference being accounted for by the deduction of compound interest at 5 per cent. for three years.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. THOMSON).—The honorable member's time has expired. Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the honorable member's time should be extended?

HONORABLE MEMBERS.—Hear, hear!

Mr. POYNTON. — These war-time saving certificates are of great advantage to men of small means. Persons pos-

sessing but a small amount of capital are disinclined to invest it for a long term, because they do not know the moment at which they may require it. The English war-time saving certificates are issued for five years, but, under certain conditions, in the event, for instance, of sickness or other grave emergency, the money may be refunded at a lower rate of interest—practically savings bank interest—before the due date. Up to October last in England alone no less than £45,000,000 had been raised by this method. This was the latest figure I had when I made a statement for the press, but it was estimated that at that time the amount subscribed under this system had been increased by £17,000,000. In connexion with the wonderful "Victory Loan" the announcement was made in London the other day that nearly £20,000,000 of that loan was subscribed through the agency of these war-time saving certificates. Under the proposal I made the investment would, as a matter of fact, start at 6d., but I proposed certificates of £1, £5, £100, and £1,000. There is no need to limit the amount, because those possessing a large amount of capital can derive a greater profit by investment in the ordinary way in the war loans at 4½ per cent., free from taxation, than they could derive from war-time saving certificates. To the man of small means, however, the system affords the advantage of the additional ½ per cent. For a £5 certificate an investor would have to pay in £4 6s. 3d., and at the end of three years he would get £5. For the £10 certificate he would have to pay £8 12s. 6d. It should be remembered that the investor deducts his interest before he pays in. For the £50 certificate he would have to pay in £43 3s. 9d. and for the £100 certificate he would pay in £86 7s. 6d. The great advantage to the small investor is that his capital is locked up for a limited period. I had made arrangements in connexion with the system I proposed that in case of sickness or any grave emergency the investor in a war-time saving certificate should get a refund of his money and savings bank interest, but if he did not draw the money for the three years he would get the full 5 per cent. interest. It is because people of small means are disinclined to lend money for long terms that our Savings Banks are such a wonderful success. The adoption of the war-time saving certificate

would be a very great advantage to the Government, because it would involve, in connexion with a loan, only two transactions, the first in receiving the money, and the second in paying it out. Under the system of bonds and inscribed stock, with the payment of interest half-yearly, a tremendous staff of clerks is necessary to cope with the work involved. By the deduction of the interest in the first place all that work might be avoided. To show that there is plenty of money still available, it may be pointed out that the four loans floated in Australia have given us something like £80,000,000, and yet to-day there is far more money in the Savings Banks of the Commonwealth than there was when the first of the war loans was issued. As a matter of fact, the amount was increased by £4,000,000 since June last. The latest figures I have are that in the State Savings Banks of the Commonwealth the deposits amount to £88,914,316, whilst the deposits in the Commonwealth Savings Bank amount to £10,797,566, making a total of £99,711,882. There is a corresponding increase in the deposits in the Associated Banks.

I hope that, before Parliament rises, the Treasurer will introduce taxation to make both ends meet. I hope that he will give effect to the War Loan proposition to which I have referred. Under our existing legislation we make provision for interest at no more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and it will require to be amended to permit of the payment of interest at 5 per cent. on war-time saving certificates. I am quite satisfied that if the system is properly instituted it will be successful. It is important to remember that under such a system there would be a continuous stream of money coming in, as there is under the system in force in the United Kingdom to-day. It would encourage people to save, and, at the same time, assist in providing the money necessary to win the war. I have mentioned our commitments, and honorable members will agree that the help is required, not of a few individuals, but of every one in Australia, to provide the funds which are as essential to the winning of the war as are the men who are engaged in it. I trust that the Treasurer will give a stimulus to the latest War Loan. Under the legislation which has been passed by this Parliament, we have the power to in-

Mr. Poynton.

crease the amount of £18,000,000, last called for, up to £29,000,000. To-day we have had contributed over £20,000,000, and I am satisfied that we could easily secure the balance if a little effort is made to do so. I repeat that at the end of the present financial year we shall have provision for only one month's Supply for war purposes, and we must make an effort to get all the money that it is possible to obtain while it is available.

Mr. Higgins.—I call attention to the state of the Committee. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. PAGE (Maranoa) [4.25].—I am sorry that the Postmaster-General is not present, because I would not have risen to take part in the debate but for some remarks which the honorable gentleman made last evening. As he does not choose to come into the chamber, I must go on with my speech in his absence. The observations he made last night would lead one to believe that he represented the whole of the Labour movement, and was the only pure merino. I felt somewhat sore about what the honorable gentleman had to say with regard to the Australian Workers Union, and what he called the "junta." If there is one man in this chamber who, more than another, should be grateful to the Australian Workers Union, he is William Webster, the Postmaster-General of the Commonwealth. The Australian Workers Union have done something for the honorable gentleman that he could not have done for himself. They not only gave him place and power in the Commonwealth, but financially assisted him to secure his position.

Mr. MAHONY.—I think we should have a quorum. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. PAGE.—Last evening the honorable member for Gwydir fumed and fretted, and walked up and down like a caged tiger, when speaking of what the junta had done for him, and what he had done for the junta. I venture to say that if the relations between the junta and the honorable member were considered from the pounds, shillings, and pence point of view, it would be found that the honorable gentleman is a debtor to the Labour movement to a very great extent. He tried at one time to get into the New South Wales Parliament for the electoral division of Canterbury. The honorable gentleman stood at the time, not in the

Labour interest, but in the Protectionist interest, and he was pelted from one end of the electorate to the other with bags of flour. Therefore he has indeed a lot to talk about. These gentlemen make me smile when they talk of what they have done for the Labour movement. I wish to be candid. The honorable member for Moreton seems terribly concerned about "poor old Dad Spence," the honorable member for Darling. As far as that honorable member is concerned, his drop from grace has been a tragedy in connexion with this political crisis. He has been the father of the Labour movement in Australia; his name until a few months ago was one to conjure with; he had the love of every man of the pastoral branch of the Australian Workers Union from one end of Australia to the other, and I say, in all sincerity, his drop from grace has been a tragedy.

Mr. LYNCH.—He is more honoured than ever.

Mr. PAGE.—The voting does not prove it. Until the time that he slipped he had a majority of votes from all parts of Australia for the presidency of the Australian Workers Union.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—Was he not suspended, and the voting in his favour stopped?

Mr. PAGE.—The voting was proceeding all through the year, and up to the time that he seceded from the Labour movement he was in the ascendant on that ballot.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—He did not secede.

Mr. PAGE.—He did. Did not you all walk out like a lot of cattle going into the crush? You all went into the crush; and, like cattle, you were slaughtered. Certainly you walked out.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—Instead of suspending him, why did you not "chuck" him out?

Mr. PAGE.—He has not been "chucked" out; he "chucked" himself out.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—Did he not have to resign in order to get any votes at all?

Mr. PAGE.—The voting was going on long before his suspension took place, and up to that time he led in the ballot. It was from that moment that he went down, and went down badly, not only in Victoria and New South Wales, but throughout Australia, and there is nothing I regret in this political crisis more

than the fate that has befallen the honorable member for Darling.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—He does not worry about it.

Mr. PAGE.—He does. I cannot be told that the man who has carried the banner of Labour for a lifetime does not feel his position when he finds himself suddenly thrown out, and is passed in the street, as I have seen myself, by members of the Australian Workers Union. He would not be human if he did not feel his position.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It only shows the ingratitude of those who pass him in the street.

Mr. PAGE.—It shows that there can be no "monkeying" with the Labour movement. A man has to be a Labour man or has not to be one.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—He has to be a "lackey" of the Trades Hall, just as the honorable member is.

Mr. PAGE.—I can tell the honorable member that since I have been in the Commonwealth Parliament I have not been asked by the organizations in Queensland to vote for or against any proposition.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Except conscription.

Mr. PAGE.—They did not ask me to vote for or against conscription. I am pleased that the honorable member has made that remark, because a gentleman in another place is anxious to fasten on to me the report that I was a supporter of conscription. I ask honorable members who are now with the Government if they ever heard me talking in favour of conscription before the campaign started?

Mr. SINCLAIR.—I did.

Mr. PAGE.—Turn up any statement of mine where I supported conscription, and show it to me. The honorable member for Denison is one of the most sober and truthful men among those who have left us. I ask him whether he remembers the occasion when upstairs I opposed the taking of the war census. I stood up alone, and said to the present Prime Minister that he had bulldozed the Cabinet, and now came prepared to bulldoze the Caucus. Did I not say that, if I had to stand alone in the House, I would tell the country that what was proposed meant the thin end of conscription?

Mr. MAHONY.—What the honorable member says is perfectly true.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—That was in Mr. Fisher's time.

Mr. PAGE.—It was in Mr. Fisher's time; and when I stated that it was my intention to resign and contest my constituency on the issue, Mr. Fisher persuaded me not to do so. I felt very keenly about conscription so far back as then, and it ill-becomes any honorable gentleman in another place to try to fasten conscription on to me. However, that is beside the question. Last night the Postmaster-General tried to claim that the Opposition were all opposed to the voluntary system; that, though some of us had done something for recruiting, we were all at heart rebels and disloyalists. What has the Postmaster-General done to show his loyalty, except a little flag-waving and band-playing, and the despatch of sensational telegrams during the military service referendum campaign? Here is one telegram that he sent, "Addressed 2,000 people in picture theatre at Cessnock. Spoke for two hours"—that is how he does his bit, by speaking for two hours—"and answered questions for another hour"—he must have had a lively time; I know what platform work is, and I consider that he must have had one of the liveliest times of his life—"Splendid meeting"—no doubt it was—"Nailed down 'anti' delusions"—whatever they are; what did he nail them down with?

Mr. BOYD.—With his two-hours' speech.

Mr. PAGE.—God help the people who were listening to him! The telegram proceeds, "Letting the light into dark places." Is it not peculiar that every honorable member opposite is looking for light? The Prime Minister, when he came back to Australia, was still looking for light; he was looking for light at Fremantle. The Postmaster-General was looking for light at Cessnock. Neither of them has said what that light was. The other day there was a little reference in this chamber to a red light and a green light. The telegram proceeds, "The tide is turning." What tide was turning that the Postmaster-General had, like Mother Partington, to endeavour to sweep it back with a broom? Who turned the tide? This modern Sampson, who upset the whole building with his shoulders. I would like to know the lady who shone his locks. The telegram proceeds, "Civilization will survive!"—the whole civilized world was depending

upon the honorable member—"Australia will be there!" After all this flapdoodle about what he had done, about seeing the light, and about tearing the anti-conscriptionists to shreds, and doing away with all their delusions, came the fatal day—the 28th October—and the voting at Cessnock was—Yes, 975; No, 2,475. Then he went to Wellington and addressed a meeting, and he sent another telegram, "Bumper meeting at Wellington, though a bit lively." They made it a bit lively for him there; they began to know our William there, and they gave him another dose of what he got at Canterbury a few years previously. "I have mangled Doyle's manifesto, routed the shirker, inspired the worker, opened the eyes of the farmer, and made many converts." What would have happened if he had not gone there?

Mr. SINCLAIR.—How long did it take him to do that?

Mr. PAGE.—When he admits that the meeting was lively, you can bet your bottom dollar that it was. He mentions no time in his telegram. He merely says that he mangled Doyle's manifesto, routed the shirker, upset the worker, and deluded the farmer, and the voting turned out to be five to one against him.

Mr. BOYD.—Who is the Doyle referred to?

Mr. ANSTEVY.—He is the junta.

Mr. PAGE.—He is one of the junta in New South Wales. I have not met him, but I have read the manifesto referred to. If the Postmaster-General, when he faces the music in a few days, is going to do the same in his electorate as he did during the military service referendum campaign, his speech last night was his swan-song in this chamber, and if he is to rout the shirkers, delude the farmers, upset the workers, and tear up Doyle's manifesto on this occasion as he did on that, and his efforts are to have the same result, my advice to the Government Whip is to keep him out of any electorate about which my friends opposite are doubtful. When he was speaking last night, I interjected that it was a dirty bird that fouled its own nest. The least the honorable member could do was not to besmirch the character of the men who have stood to him, and by him, and put him in his present position. Some of those who are now sitting cheek by jowl with him will, no doubt, remember the nice, kind things be said about them. They have all got their arms round each other's necks now,

and one of them said to-day, "We are going to sink or swim together." Some of them are going to do both. What the consequences will be, time alone will tell.

When the Postmaster-General is throwing his compliments about, he ought to be careful of what he is saying. He accused every man on this side last night not only of being disloyal, but of believing in neither the voluntary nor the conscript system. He asked, "What have you done for voluntarism?" I interjected, "What have you done?" Since the referendum vote was taken, he has not been game to go on a single platform. Yet he had the cold audacity to talk here about what members of this side have been doing. I do not want to tell people that I am loyal, or about what I am doing, or have done; but my feeling towards Great Britain and Australia is that they can not only have my carcass to do what they like with, but every "bob" in my possession, too. Will the Postmaster-General say the same? If he will, I am prepared to hand over my bank book to the Treasurer to-morrow, giving him every "bob" I possess. That is my feeling towards this country.

There is no fairer country under the sun than Australia, and I will shed my last drop of blood in defence of the country that has been so good for me, and to me, and give it everything I possess, too. That is the patriotism that permeates me. If the Postmaster-General is a patriot, let him also put his lot into the pool, and show his patriotism in that manner. Let him put in all he can, whether it be little or much, and I will do the same. That will show how much our loyalty is worth.

When the new recruiting scheme was started in Queensland, Senator Turley and I went out just after Christmas, and put in time out west on recruiting platforms. We were so successful that my vice-chairman, now at Dalby, only yesterday sent me a letter asking me to shut up this "talking shop," and come out and get recruits. I am quite willing to do it, and as soon as I can be released from my duties here my dart is straight into my electorate to do my duty there to my country. Will the Postmaster-General do the same? Not much. He will have urgent business to do here in Melbourne, not only in his own Department, but in

minding the business of other Departments.

Mr. ANSTEY.—Won't he be after saving his own skin?

Mr. PAGE.—He will have the "S.O.S." signal up very quickly, and will be out as soon as the rest of us; but he will stop in Melbourne as long as he can. He should be the last to speak about what members on either side of the House have done towards recruiting. People who live in glass houses should not throw stones, and those he has thrown will come back on him.

As this may be the last time I shall have the opportunity of speaking in the House, I want to record in *Hansard* the facts as to what took place in New South Wales in 1893 and 1894. The State then passed through exactly the same political crisis as the Commonwealth is passing through to-day, and the principal actors in the events of that time were William Morris Hughes and William Holman. The same names were being applied to the honorable member for Parramatta when he was Leader of the Labour party.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Was not Senator Gardiner in it also?

Mr. PAGE.—Yes. At that time there were two parties in the Labour ranks, the solidarity party and the liquidarity party. Hughes and Holman belonged to the solidarity party. They said the whole Labour movement should be controlled, not by honorable members in Parliament, but by the organizations outside. They said the organizations should have the right to frame the platform, and that any man standing for Labour should sign it. The honorable member for Parramatta, who was then Leader of the Labour party, refused to sign it. He refused to be bound, and all the political vitriol possible was thrown at him when he stood for Lithgow. Those who are accusing the junta to-day of doing certain things are the very men that created that junta in 1893 and 1894. Their chickens have come home to roost. They find that they cannot restrain this junta. It will not do what they want it to do. They have controlled what they call the junta up to-day, but the outside organizations have taken a greater hand in politics than they took before, and rightly so. They sent us here to do certain things.

Mr. SAMPSON.—To register their decisions.

Mr. PAGE.—To register the decisions that they put in the platform. If a man signs a promissory-note and does not pay it, he commits a dishonest act. We sign the platform, and they expect us to carry it into effect. That is all they ask of us.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Is not Parliament a very costly machine to do simply the registration work of outside bodies?

Mr. PAGE.—I should like to see the honorable member doing something against his party, and see how he would get on, although he has not signed a pledge. One particular member, whom I shall not name, went against his party, and has remembered it ever since. The late Tommy Bent was in it, and so were the Minister for Works and Railways, and several other members of this House. The honorable member to whom I refer took it on himself to play a lone hand, and they not only sacrificed him, but scarified him from one end of Victoria to the other. Honorable members opposite, therefore, must not blame the Labour party as if they were the only ones to do that sort of thing. We have too often been deluded by promises by men who forgot them as soon as they got into Parliament. For the time being this vituperation seems bad, but we have been through it all before, and the Labour party will survive it all. A cork will stay under water only as long as a man keeps his hand on it, and even if we do go down at the next election—and I do not expect that we will—we will bob up again more serenely than before, as the cork does when the hand is removed. The only way to get pure and stable government in this country is by returning the Labour party, which stands for liberty, equality, fraternity, and humanity.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON (Lang) [4.55].—If this debate serves no other useful purpose it will, at any rate, have served the one of opening the eyes of the people to the character of their representation in Parliament when they repose their trust in the Labour candidates at a general election. We have had during this debate some entertaining and instructive light let in on the methods and practices of Caucus government. These revelations are very useful, because when we, as members of the Liberal party, attempted to open the eyes of the electors to the farce enacted under the name of Democracy, by which the Labour party,

professing adherence to the principles of equal freedom and equal justice, and the representation of the majority of the people, in practice showed that they did nothing for, and cared less about, such principles, the united voice of the Labour members declared that we were stating something which was not correct. We pointed out that their only guiding principle was slavish obedience to an irresponsible self-constituted authority which has been termed a junta, and which claimed, and exercised, the right to hold a sword over the head of every Labour member if he did not do its bidding, and to destroy his political career for ever by withholding from him any chance of getting another Labour selection. The public will now have the satisfaction of knowing that our statements on those occasions have been more than amply corroborated by members who, until recently, belonged to that party, but have severed their connexion with it through circumstances of overbearing tyrannical despotism which need not be again referred to. We have now some inside knowledge of the peculiar ethics which govern the constitution of that party, and the Caucus revelations in this debate show clearly that there can be no such thing as responsible government under Labour rule in this country.

Mr. FENTON.—You have responsible government now, have you not?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—We hope to re-establish responsible government. Those honorable members who recently belonged to the Caucus party, and have since severed their connexion with it, must feel already the beneficial effects of the freer political atmosphere they are now breathing.

Mr. FENTON.—That accounts for their ferocity.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—The ferocity seems to have been all on the other side. One of the most excruciatingly funny features of the whole situation is the vituperation and vindictiveness displayed towards their late leader by the members of what is now known as the Official Labour party. We have only to carry our minds back to a few short weeks ago, when the present Prime Minister returned from England, with exactly the same views that he has since been expressing. There was then in the minds of every member of the Caucus party the-

feeling that the speeches delivered in London—which they applauded and which they described as being the speeches of one of the greatest statesmen of the Empire—speeches by a man of whom they said they had every reason to be intensely proud—portended a certain course of action in the raising of the necessary reinforcements for the front; and they fully anticipated, and were prepared for the Prime Minister, as their leader, declaring straight out for conscription as soon as he returned. Had he taken the course which a strong man would have taken under the circumstances, undeterred by fear of what might happen to his party as a result of his action, I have reason to know that many of those who are amongst the most extreme in their denunciation of him would still have been amongst his heartiest supporters. It was only because he shirked a responsibility which he, as the Prime Minister of the country, ought to have shouldered—and I have never said anything to the contrary—he being the one man alone in Australia who was in possession of all the facts, and shifted it on to the people, that the present position of vitriolic personal animosity has arisen. He took what I consider was the most injudicious step of calling up the manhood of the country, without any discrimination—without any regard to the various interests, either of the men themselves or of employers and others—and, further, he delayed the taking of the referendum for so long a time as to give every opportunity for hostile organization, and for the work of misrepresentation, mendacity, destruction, and defeat to be arranged and efficiently carried out. It was only when this work was in progress that a number of those members, who otherwise would have been found behind the Prime Minister, decided, as a result of the pressure brought on them by the secret junta outside, and the fear of its disapprobation affecting the retention of their seats, to take a course in antagonism to him. We have to go back but a few weeks ago when the very men, who to-day cannot find words in the English language strong enough to express their deep detestation, abhorrence, and hatred of the Prime Minister, were rushing to be the first to buy tickets, at a guinea each, for a banquet given in his honour. Yet the Prime Minister is the same man with exactly the same sentiments to-day as

he expressed then; in that respect he has certainly not changed one iota. So there is something for those honorable gentlemen to explain. They have yet to explain the real reason for their peculiar change of attitude towards their late leader, who was but a few short weeks ago their idol and hero, and whom they now hound down from one end of the country to the other, in the vilest possible terms. The honorable member for Brisbane made some remarks about the attitude of the Liberal party towards the Prime Minister in this time of the Empire's peril. I remind that honorable member, and those who applauded him while he was speaking, that his statement that the Liberals were tardy in taking advantage of an opportunity offered them to take possession of the Treasury benches, is a flat contradiction of statements made by other members on the public platform to the effect that Liberals were trying by every possible means, and with indecent haste, to put their noses into the Treasury bag. One statement is a flat contradiction of the other; and it would seem that whatever course the Liberals had taken would, in the eyes of the Labour members, be wrong. If they had accepted the offer of the Labour party to occupy the Treasury benches, with the assured support of the Official Labour party, they would have laid themselves open to the accusation—and the just accusation—of having taken a mean advantage of the position of affairs to destroy the man who at that time was doing his very best in the interests of the Empire. Even if such an offer had been made—which it had not—the Liberal party was not prepared to take that contemptible course. What they did was to assure the Prime Minister of the same generous measure of support in the conduct of the war, and all matters arising out of it, that they had given to his predecessors, who are now denouncing the Prime Minister. It was only when the position became accentuated, and the intolerableness of the position became evident through the request of the Imperial Government for Australia, in the person of its Prime Minister, if possible, to be represented at one of the most important Imperial Conferences that has ever been held in the history of the world, that the Liberals saw how impossible it would be

to maintain the prevailing situation. Under these circumstances, and primarily to prevent undue delay in Australia being properly, effectively, and authoritatively represented at the Imperial Conference, the Liberals suggested that, if possible, there should be some attempt made to have a united Parliament to enable the Prime Minister to proceed at once to London. With that object in view, suggestions were made for a union of parties. The idea was to have a united War Government, and to set aside party aims and party platforms for the time being, in order that the whole attention and energy of Parliament might be directed to the successful prosecution of the war, to the exclusion of all extraneous matters of a domestic nature that might very well await a more convenient time and opportunity. To that end there were certain negotiations, as honorable members know, between the Prime Minister and the then Leader of the Opposition, the honorable member for Parramatta. When a proposal was made for a union of these two parties with this object, a suggestion was made by the Liberal Leader to the Prime Minister to secure unity of the whole Parliament by inviting the leader of each of the three parties to a conference, with a view to some basis of agreement, which would enable Parliament to deal effectively with the war problems. As a result of this, as already admitted by honorable members on the other side, and also by the Leader of the Opposition, a request was sent by the Prime Minister, at the instigation of the Liberal leader, to Mr. Tudor, as Leader of the Labour party, to join in a conference of the kind. That invitation was "turned down" by the Labour party, and an intimation to that effect was sent to the Prime Minister by its leader, the honorable member for Yarra. Then the position—and it is just as well to emphasize the point—was such that no other course was open but for the two remaining sections forming a majority—of this House, at any rate—to bring about some union by which the same objective might be attained. To that end the present arrangement was made, under which the Prime Minister is being supported by the Liberal party, with a view to bringing about, first, representation, at the earliest possible moment, of Australia at the

Imperial Conference, and, in the second place, the establishment of responsible government. The first of these objects has been again frustrated by unpatriotic action in the Senate. It ill-befits honorable members on the other side to attempt to throw a gibe at the Liberals for their attitude. The Liberal party has shown all through—ever since the last election—that they are prepared to temporarily lay aside and, as a matter of fact, have subordinated their party and platform, their party aims and provincial questions, to the supreme duty of assisting the Empire to meet the present peril. But they have been consistently thwarted by what is known as the Official Labour party, ever since the split between the sections of that party took place. On the shoulders of that party alone rests the responsibility for the Prime Minister not being in London at the present time—for Australia not being represented at an Imperial Conference which is actually now sitting. They, also, are alone responsible for honorable members of the House not being able to go throughout Australia, in their own and other constituencies, to assist recruiting with a view to adequately reinforce the men who are now shedding their blood in doing the Empire's service in the trenches at the front. In consequence of the operation of the secret junta to which reference is so often made—the junta which controls and orders the actions of honorable members opposite and their Caucus, as we are told by late members of the party—we are here in Melbourne listening to quarrelling over purely domestic matters concerning the internal affairs of one party. We, as representatives of the people of Australia, ought now to be travelling all over the country, doing our level best to assist the Empire in the matter of recruiting, for the purpose of securing the necessary reinforcements that cannot be obtained in any other way. Through the Senate, the Official Labour party are able to limit Supply to very short periods, which necessitates the House sitting for the greater part of each month. By this means they are able to prevent honorable members from attending recruiting meetings to help reinforcements being sent to the front, and are also preventing Australia being represented at the Imperial War Conference. In such cir-

cumstances I would like to know how they can claim credit for being imbued with any real patriotism at all. Their every act, despite their lip professions, proves that they are absolutely destitute of patriotism. All their actions are in line with certain organizations outside, and are designed at once to prevent Australia being represented at the forthcoming Imperial War Conference, and reinforcements being sent to the front.

Dr. MALONEY.—There is not a quorum present. [Quorum formed.]

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—My remarks are prompted by certain speeches which have been delivered in this chamber, and which were delivered for only one purpose. I do not think it is right that those speeches should be broadcast throughout the country per medium of *Hansard* without something being said to counter-balance the misrepresentations which they contain. In the first place, I enter my protest against honorable members opposite attempting to fasten on the Liberal party any ulterior object in connexion either with conscription, the imposition of duties on tea and kerosene, a reduction in old-age pensions, or the employment of black labour. It has been hinted that these are the things upon which our opponents propose to fight the ensuing election. We now know the main items of their programme of misrepresentation, and I take this opportunity of saying that they know full well that there is not one atom of truth in any of these allegations. The party with which I am associated has no intention whatever of putting taxes on tea and kerosene, reducing pensions, interfering with the "White Australia" policy, or forcing conscription on the people of this country. There is not a single member of the party who would consent to such a course of action on the part either of the Prime Minister or of any other responsible member of the Government.

Mr. BURNS.—Did the honorable member say "no" member?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes. No responsible member of the Government.

Mr. BURNS.—What about the honorable member for Henty?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—He is a private member, and must respect

the verdict of the people until that verdict has been reversed.

Mr. BURNS.—He said that he would assist to bring in conscription in defiance of the will of the people. Sir William Irvine said the same thing.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Sir William Irvine has frequently denied having said anything of the kind. Had there been any intention to do what has been suggested, the surest way of preventing it would be for the Labour party to assist in the formation of a United War Government. They declined to do so. They know perfectly well that nothing of the kind is intended. It is idle for them to accept the oral statement of one member of our party, who stated that he spoke for himself only, as binding upon the whole of the members of that party, or upon any section of it. But whilst honorable members opposite know this perfectly well, they will not hesitate to scatter broadcast such misrepresentations from the public platform. In their speeches here, we have had an indication of the lying campaign which is to be indulged in. Absolute falsehoods are the foundations upon which they are going to conduct it. It is just as well, therefore, that before Parliament adjourns we should endeavour to scotch this sort of thing, and warn the unwary of the subversive methods our opponents employ. Only yesterday the honorable member for Bourke expressed the hope that the approaching campaign will be conducted fairly, decently, and honorably. I echo his wish, and I trust that he will use his influence with his party to secure that end. So far as the Liberal party is concerned, its members have always fought political issues free from personalities, free from misrepresentation, and free from deliberate, intentional lying, but, unfortunately, that cannot be said of some of their opponents. We pride ourselves upon having fought political questions cleanly.

Mr. FENTON.—Honorable members may pride themselves on it, but they do not live up to their pride.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—We have always, I repeat, fought political issues with clean hands, and if we go down in the coming struggle, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that our fights

have been free from the blemishes I have mentioned. It is most regrettable that the approaching election has been forced upon the people at a time when the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth should be discussing with the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the Prime Ministers of the overseas Dominions, matters vitally affecting the present and future of Australia in relation to the Pacific, and other questions of the greatest importance to our future development, as well as to that of the Empire. I deplore that we, as the result of the actions of the Labour party, are compelled to be present in Parliament when we ought to be amongst our constituents endeavouring to stimulate recruiting, and to obtain those reinforcements which are so urgently needed at the front.

Mr. BURNS (Illawarra) [5.27].—A tremendous amount of political capital has been sought to be made out of the necessity which we are assured exists for a union of the political forces in this Parliament. Need I point out that there were many reasons which prevented such a union from being consummated. In this connexion I have only to recall the utterances of the Prime Minister in regard to those who differed from him during the recent conscription campaign. For example, he said that those on the anti-conscription side were in receipt of German gold, that the influence of the Kaiser was at work amongst them, and that they were connected with the Industrial Workers of the World. If these statements were correct then, they must be correct now. For the right honorable gentleman to make such statements about members of this Parliament, and immediately afterwards to invite them to join with him in the establishment of a National Government, was obviously to seek the impossible.

Mr. PIGOTT.—We did not say those things of honorable members opposite.

Mr. BURNS.—But the Prime Minister did, and while he holds the views which he does, I will not support any party which supports him. It has been said by various speakers that the conscription issue is dead. But we have also been assured by others that we must have conscription, and that they were prepared to go to the extreme of bringing it about

under the provisions of the War Precautions Act.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Who said that? The honorable member ought to be ashamed of himself.

Mr. BURNS.—At Dandenong the honorable member for Flinders made the statement that, so far as he was concerned, conscription would be brought in. Senator Lynch, the ex-Minister for Works and Railways, upon his return to Adelaide from Western Australia, also declared that he was not satisfied with the result of the referendum, and that he would fight for conscription. He said that he had always been a conscriptionist, that he was so still, and that, if the voluntary system failed, as it would, then conscription would be brought in.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The honorable member has just uttered a wicked falsehood.

Dr. MALONEY.—I ask that that statement be withdrawn.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—I withdraw it.

Dr. MALONEY.—I think we ought to have a quorum. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. BURNS.—I was referring to a statement made by Senator Lynch at Adelaide when I was told that I was not speaking the truth. Senator Lynch did make the statement.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—But the honorable member said that it had been made by several honorable members on the floor of the House.

Mr. BURNS.—I said that a statement of the kind had been made by one honorable member in the House, while several others had made it outside. The honorable member for Henty said in this House that he believed in conscription, and would bring it in, no matter whether it was by referendum or otherwise.

Mr. CORSER.—That is only his individual opinion; he does not control the Government.

Mr. BURNS.—Let me read to honorable members the following quotation from the Adelaide *Register* of 19th January last as to an interview which a representative of that newspaper had at Parliament House, Adelaide, on the previous day with Senator Lynch, then Minister for Works—

What the Tudor party will do I am not prepared to state, but I have a belief that, unless that party radically alters its mind, its support could not be depended upon. The Hughes faction stands in its present position because of a difference on that vital issue.

The Hughes party is not going to alter or modify its course; so that if the voluntary system is to be supplanted by compulsion, it can only be done by Mr. Tudor and his followers unsaying what they have said, realizing the truly desperate nature of the position, and making common cause with those who put the nation in front of all parliamentary party considerations.

Whatever change is wrought will have to be on their side. The two divisions of the Labour party cannot form a National Administration until then.

The whole of the men who belong to the so-called National Government of New South Wales took the platform in the recent referendum campaign, and were pledged to support conscription. It was not a written pledge—

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—What have we to do with them?

Mr. BURNS.—They are supporters of the honorable member's party; indeed, all belong to the one party. The members of the so-called National Government party in New South Wales are now signing a document pledging themselves to respect the decision of the referendum of 28th October, and to oppose any attempt to revive conscription. The majority of those who are signing this pledge are members of the Liberal party, who have denounced written pledges over and over again, asserting that the only pledge they are prepared to give is that of their spoken word. Why are they signing this pledge? They are running away from the issue. We were told that if the referendum were defeated they would try and try again. Mr. Holman, when speaking at Mascot, was asked, "If the referendum is defeated, what will you do?" His reply was, "We will go on until we get conscription." But to-day these very men, who said that they would go on until they secured conscription are running away from the issue because they want to save their political skins.

Mr. PIGOTT.—What has Mr. Holman to do with our election?

Mr. BURNS.—He will be very useful to the honorable member in the coming campaign. He is one of the executive of the National party in New South Wales, and will have a big say in determining the policy of the party, both Federal and State, when the elections take place. On the 13th of last month, Senator Pearce, in reply to a question by Senator Gardiner, stated that, "if in the altered circumstances the people indicate their will-

ingness to accept conscription, the Government will act." What did he mean by that?

Mr. POYNTON.—A referendum.

Mr. BURNS.—Then honorable members opposite would have referendum after referendum on the question, and spend £80,000 or £100,000 on each of these appeals to the people? When the conscription proposal was before the House, I opposed it; I have always opposed it, lock, stock, and barrel. The Prime Minister, when returning from England, was feted at Perth, and, in the course of a speech delivered there, said that he had "seen the light," and that he was going to take a certain course. He did not take the public into his confidence, however, as to what that course of action would be. He made a similar statement at Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney, but two hours before the Caucus meeting of about 23rd August last, even his own colleagues in the Ministry did not know what he was going to do. I asked Ministers what was going to be done, and they replied that they did not know. It was only three-quarters of an hour before the Caucus met that the Cabinet decided upon the course to be pursued in regard to conscription. But while the right honorable gentleman's own colleagues in the Ministry did not know what action he proposed, the honorable member for Flinders, Sir William Irvine, at a meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall, could say that he was going to follow Mr. Hughes wherever he went. The honorable member for Flinders was a consistent conscriptionist, and must have known what the Prime Minister intended to propose, otherwise he could not have said that he was going to get behind Mr. Hughes. The same statement was made by the honorable member for Balaclava. Apparently, those honorable members knew what was to take place, but the Prime Minister's colleagues, and the public generally, did not. We are told that the present situation has arisen out of the failure of the Senate to pass legislation. What measure has the Senate thrown out?

Mr. SINCLAIR.—It threw out a Supply Bill.

Mr. BURNS.—It did not. It merely made a request that a Supply Bill in which the Government asked for three months' Supply should be so amended as to provide for only one month's Supply.

Mr. SINCLAIR.—To stop recruiting.

Mr. BURNS.—Nothing of the kind. A question was asked in the House today as to the censorship in Australia, and the answer given was that the London office controlled it. I have seen in this country articles taken from London newspapers—articles which had passed the censor there—but the publication of which was not allowed here. Regulations issued from time to time, by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence, under the War Precautions Act, were responsible for the action of the Senate in refusing to grant more than a month's Supply. The Senate desired to keep a watchful eye on the Prime Minister and his doings regarding the censorship. If the censorship had been relaxed, the late Hughes Government would have had no difficulty in obtaining the three months' Supply for which it asked. But to safeguard the interests of the people and the press of Australia, the Senate took this action so as to make it necessary to summon a meeting of Parliament within the time prescribed for the laying of these regulations on the table. I have in my possession a manifesto that was issued to the Australian troops at the front by the present Prime Minister. This manifesto has been in the hands of the editors of various newspapers in Australia, who intended to publish it. It had to be submitted to the censor, however, and its publication was prohibited. Here is the manifesto. Honorable members will see across it the censor's stamp, and his blue pencil mark. This manifesto was good enough to issue to the soldiers at the front and in England, and surely it should be good enough for the Australian people to read.

Mr. SAMPSON.—What copy is that?

Mr. BURNS.—A copy which it was proposed to publish in Sydney. Honorable members will see on it the initials of the censor, Major, or Captain, Nicholson, and the date when it was received by him, namely, "6th December, 1916." I shall read this manifesto, so that even if the press cannot publish it it may be recorded in *Hansard*, and the public afforded an opportunity to see it. It is as follows:—

MANIFESTO TO AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS.

FROM MR. W. M. HUGHES, PRIME MINISTER
OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

Soldiers of Australia!

After more than two years of heroic effort, the tide of battle, which so long ran strongly with the enemy, who had been prepared for

and deliberately provoked war, turns slowly but surely in our favour. The results of the Great Offensive, during which you have added fresh lustre to the glorious name of Anzac, have shown that if the Allies but press resolutely on, decisive victory must crown their heroic labours.

But though the valour and dash of the Allied forces have pushed her legions back along a wide front, the day of decisive victory is not yet in sight. No one of you who knows the tremendous resources of the enemy, his courage, his determination, will say that Germany is yet defeated.

Yet she must be defeated.

The world yearns for peace, but any peace would be but a hollow mockery, unless the great disturber of the world's peace were first beaten to her knees. Until Germany is driven headlong from France and Belgium, and decisively beaten on her own soil, she will never consent to the peace that the Allies want and are determined to have.

In order to ensure decisive victory the Allies have decided to put every available man into the field, so that their Armies may be kept at full strength, and every man in the trenches kept fit by frequent reliefs.

The Path to Victory.

When you know all this, you know also that the path of victory lies stretched in front of you. You know it is on the Western Front that the crushing blow must be delivered. You know that more men are needed, and the British Empire must supply them.

France for nearly two years endured the brunt of the most ferocious batterings of the enemy. The bones of her gallant sons strewed the soil of their dear France like shells on the sea shore. She has covered herself with imperishable glory. She was never so great as in this supreme hour of her trial. Despite their great losses, her glorious soldiers still fight on with unshaken resolution, and will fight while one Frenchman, capable of bearing arms, remains alive.

Now is the hour when our race must prove itself worthy of its traditions and its heritage.

This is our War, Soldiers!

This is Australia's war just as much as France's or Belgium's. Our liberties and our national existence are equally, nay, more, at stake. Australia must do her share. Britain has told us what she expects us to do; it is not more than we can or ought to do; it is indeed, much less proportionately than she herself has done.

We have sent overseas and have in camp in Australia or in England and in the field less than three hundred thousand troops. Britain has five million under arms. If we had done as much we should have enlisted five hundred thousand instead of little more than half that number.

Voluntary recruiting has, unfortunately, proved quite inadequate to supply the necessary number of men during the past three months.

Though voluntarism fails, Australia must not fail. Duty, honour, and self-interest alike point the path we must tread.

The Spirit of Patriotism: The Duty of Free Men.

Upon the citizens of Australia, the freest Democracy the world has ever known, there rests a grave and solemn responsibility. They are called upon to show themselves worthy of their great privileges. The sacred duty of every free man is to fight in the defence of his country. Men ought not to wait to be compelled to do their duty, they ought rather to rush to the ranks on the first sound of the tocsin.

It was this spirit, soldiers, that inspired you to enlist. It was this spirit that spurred you to your great deeds on Gallipoli and in France. It is this spirit that now upholds you, and urges you on.

Voluntarism has Failed.

I had hoped that this spirit so permeated Australian manhood that we should only need to ask for men to be overwhelmed with recruits; but during these past five months the number of men offering themselves has been steadily falling off, and is now a mere fraction of those required for drafts.

The Government Proposals.

In these circumstances the Government has decided that the deficiency between the number of men required and the monthly quota must be made up by compulsion. On the twenty-eighth of this month, the citizens of Australia will be asked to vote "Yes" to the following question:—

"Are you in favour of the Government having in this grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over citizens in regard to requiring their military service for the term of the war outside the Commonwealth, as it now has in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?"

If the citizens and soldiers of Australia approve, the Government will thereafter provide that either by voluntary enlistment or by compulsion the regular monthly reinforcement shall be trained and sent abroad to maintain the Australian Army.

Exemptions.

The Government consider that the number of fit single men without dependants is sufficient, when supplemented by voluntary recruiting, to carry us through the war. The Government believe that it will not be necessary to call up married men. The following classes of single men will be exempt:—

1. All under 21 years of age;
2. Only sons;
3. Single men who are the sole support of dependents;
4. When one or more members of a family have enlisted, the remaining members up to at least one half of the whole family, will be exempt.

There will also be exemptions for the number of men requisite to carry on certain vital industries.

Other men who claim exemption for special reasons will have their cases heard by non-military tribunals, with appeal to a State Judge, and final appeal to a Justice of the High Court of the Commonwealth.

No State to Make up any Deficiency in the others.

No State of the Commonwealth which has furnished its own quota of reinforcements by voluntary recruiting or by compulsion will be required to make up the deficiency of any other State.

For the Term of the War only.

The power asked for to compel military service abroad will be granted to the Government for the term of the war only.

Australia's Duty to Britain and her Allies.

Soldiers, if the people of Australia vote "No," they encourage the enemy, they abandon you, they desert France that has shed its blood in the common cause, they desert Belgium, they leave unavenged those foul outrages inflicted upon women, children, and helpless non-combatants of the Allied nations, they repudiate the debt they owe to Britain, under the wing of whose mighty Navy they have lain secure and safe from all the horrors of this war. Indeed they cover Australia with the mantle of eternal shame; the glorious name of Anzac becomes a tarnished and dishonoured thing.

Australia Looks to You.

Soldiers of Australia, your fellow citizens, confronted with the greatest crisis in their history, look to you for a lead. Your votes are being taken first. I appeal to you who have gone out to fight our battles, who have covered the name of Australia with glory, to lift up your voices and send one mighty shout across the leagues of ocean, bidding your fellow citizens do their duty to Australia, to the Empire, to its Allies, and to the cause of liberty and vote "Yes."

W. M. HUGHES,
Prime Minister.

I have no objection to the manifesto, but I say the promises contained in it were not observed. It was stated, for instance, that only sons would be exempted, and I know of scores of only sons who were taken under the Proclamation.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—But that Proclamation referred only to home defence.

Mr. BURNS.—Did it? The exemptions also included all men under twenty-one years of age, as well as single men who were the sole support of their dependants; but these were taken into camp.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Every one knew that there would have been some revision.

Mr. BURNS.—I know of one case in which three sons of a family were fighting at the front, and the only son left in Australia was also sent into camp. Some of these cases were taken to the Appeal Courts. We had Mr. Smithers, one of the greatest organizers, at work during the campaign.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—I never heard a word about that case.

Mr. RILEY.—Will the honorable member say who signed that manifesto?

Mr. BURNS.—The Right Honorable W. M. Hughes, the Prime Minister.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—And it is a very good manifesto, too.

Mr. BURNS.—Now, with regard to the censorship, I have here a letter from a Sydney pressman, who gets letters and papers from all parts of Australia. The *Brisbane Worker*, the articles in which are censored before the paper is published, is sent to him every week.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—It is a good job they are censored, too.

Mr. BURNS.—Well, if the whole of the newspapers were censored in the same way, it might be all right. This man to whom I refer gets his paper a week late because of the censorship. The *Australian Worker* is treated in the same way, and papers addressed to him from Canada and other parts of the British Dominions reach him about a fortnight after the arrival of the mail. Even the Commonwealth *Hansard*, published under the direction of Mr. Speaker, is censored before he receives it, and generally it is a week late. When he asked the censor for a reason, he was told that there might be something of a seditious nature in *Hansard*, and so the censor had to look over it. I understand, however, that if anything of a seditious nature were said in this House, its publication in *Hansard* would not be allowed. Yesterday, because an affidavit put in by Dr. Maloney was out of order, it was withdrawn from *Hansard*. I am not taking any exception to this course at all. I am merely pointing out that if anything of a seditious nature were said in the House, it would be withheld from publication, and I cannot see why these men, located all over Australia, should be devoting so much of their time to censoring documents.

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

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [5.56].—I did not intend to take part in this debate at all, but so many references have been made to recent happenings that I find it imperative to say a few words. No one will accuse me of showing a spirit of malignity towards any member of this House, either during the recent campaign or within the precincts of Parliament. During this debate a good deal has

been said about what happened in Caucus, and as I happen to be connected with the executive, and have never, up to the present moment, expressed an opinion outside the party meetings, I feel I should say something now with regard to the conflicting statements that have been made from time to time, especially as the Prime Minister himself stated that there was one member on this side who could throw some light on the matters referred to. I want to say at once that the Prime Minister's statement relative to the party asking him go out to the different executives with a view to getting freedom of action for members now sitting on this side of the House towards conscription, was incorrect and misleading. At the Caucus meeting I immediately followed the Prime Minister, and whilst opposing his proposals—because I did not approve of any proclamation being issued calling up the men before the referendum was submitted to the people and decided by them—I suggested that this should be considered a national question. I saw that danger might arise in two ways, and I wanted to avoid that danger in the interests of the Empire. I felt it would be better if permission could be given to members of the party, who evidently were divided in opinion on the subject, to use their own judgment in connexion with it, and the Prime Minister did, at our request, consent to go to the executives to put that view before them. He did wait upon the executives, and, as we know, the executives did not approve of that action.

Mr. POYNTON.—They turned it down.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes, and we then had to go to the country, though many, like myself, did not approve of members' rights being curtailed in regard to their view of this important question. I told the Prime Minister, however, that I was prepared, now that a decision had been arrived at—although I did not vote with the majority—to stand in with the majority, as I have always done, and no party can exist unless you have solidarity in connexion with these matters. The result of the discussion was that we went to the people. I went before my constituents. I addressed, I suppose, three of the largest meetings that I have ever addressed on the South Maitland field. At each meeting I was asked, "Are you prepared to follow the Prime

Minister after the referendum has been decided?" I said, "So long as the Prime Minister is the accredited Leader of the Labour party I will loyally follow him, as I have done in the past." I stood to that statement, and had the Prime Minister remained within the movement to try to alleviate matters, he would have had no stronger supporter than myself in that direction. But when I had to choose between the Prime Minister's refusal to put to the party an amendment dealing with this position, and his walking out of the room, asking those who were prepared to go with him to follow, then I severed my connexion with the Prime Minister, because I am loyal to my party still. These are the bare facts.

Mr. WEBSTER.—You know why he did not put the amendment.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I do not.

Mr. WEBSTER.—What! The Prime Minister said that he did not put the amendment because men had come there tied, and were not free to vote.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I believe that if the amendment I had moved, with the view to bring about a reconciliation, had been put, and the Prime Minister had risen, as of yore, and spoken strongly in support of it, a majority of the members would have stood by him, in order to meet the State executives in Inter-State conference to discuss the matter, and see if we could not come to an arrangement.

Mr. POYNTON.—It had already been decided to cut his throat.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I will not discuss that question. That is the mistake which was made. I am putting the facts just as they occurred, because there has been very much said here on the subject. I want to leave the matter at that, because I have no ill-feeling towards the Prime Minister or any other honorable member.

I wish to say a few words now in regard to the honorable member for Fawcett. So far as my recollection goes, he has been consistent throughout in his attitude to conscription. I will say this, too, for that honorable member: He often defended the Government when it was not to his own advantage, because he was loyal to them outside and here.

Mr. FENTON.—And particularly the Prime Minister.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes. Further, he was an anti-conscriptionist from the very

first time that conscription was mentioned. He never supported, in any shape or form, the idea of conscription, or even the proposal to submit it to the people. He was against the taking of a referendum. He and I differed right through the piece in that regard, because I believed in the taking of a referendum, but not in the issue of the proclamation for home service.

Mr. WEBSTER.—The Labour executive had already spoken.

Mr. CHARLTON.—No; do not do an injustice to any man. In regard to this matter, the honorable member for Fawcett has been straightforward right through the piece. I want to make that point quite clear.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They cannot besmirch him in any way.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Nobody can besmirch the honorable member for Fawcett, because he has pursued an honorable course throughout.

I come now to the other matter, and I think it will be generally agreed that, as regards the remarks I am going to make, I cannot be charged with making a statement to suit the occasion. I refer to the decision of the Government not to agree to the appointment of a Commission consisting of High Court Judges, for the purpose of dealing with the statement of Senator Watson in the Senate, and the Ready charges. Even at this late hour, honorable members on the other side would do well to think before they go further. What are the Government doing? The Prime Minister has said to Senator Watson, "Whilst I will not grant a Commission composed of Judges of the High Court for the purpose of sifting your statements and the Ready disappearing trick, I am going to take out a writ against you, claiming £5,000 damages."

Mr. WEBSTER.—No.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I am only stating what the newspaper reported.

Mr. MANIFOLD.—The newspaper says that no sum is mentioned.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I stand corrected. The Prime Minister said that he was going to take out a writ against Senator Watson claiming damages. What does it mean? In the coming campaign it will have the effect of tying the tongue of every honorable member. The case against Senator Watson can be put off

in the Court month after month. It need not be dealt with at all until the elections have been concluded. It is *sub judice*, and any honorable member who says anything reflecting on the case is liable to find himself served with a subpoena to appear before the Court. No member of Parliament should be asked to appear in a Court to answer for any statement of his which he believed to be in the public interest.

Mr. WEBSTER.—Do you think that it was made in the public interest?

Mr. CHARLTON.—The very fact of the statement having been made by Senator Watson from his place in the Senate, and that it was relative to the position which obtained in connexion with the Government, made it a public matter. He spoke as a public man, and therefore he ought to have the privilege which every public man has within a Parliament. Nobody can say that I am bringing this matter up because Senator Watson happens to be on my side in politics. When the honorable member for Perth made the charges against Mr. Chinn in the House, and I was sitting in opposition to him; when members of our own party were telling that honorable member to make the charges outside so that Mr. Chinn could take action if he so desired, I was the man who stood up here and said that the honorable member was quite within his rights, that a representative of the people had the right to make any statement in his place under privilege with the view to protect the public interest. It cannot be said that I have changed my mind in any way. If every time an honorable member says something which is offensive or derogatory to somebody he is to be dragged into the Supreme Court, what is the good of Parliament? We might just as well close it up, for no honorable member would be safe. What will become of a member who has not 500 pence at his back if he has to run the risk of being dragged into the Supreme Court because of some statement which he has made in his public position? The thing is really preposterous. If a man makes a statement outside he takes the responsibility of his utterance, but in this Chamber an honorable member should be privileged to speak as he pleases. We have that privilege. I do not know what Senator Watson will do, but I do not hesitate

to say that if I were in his place, I, as a representative of the people, would say what I thought was necessary if I believed the statement to be correct and in the interest of the public, and I would never go outside to appear in a Court in connexion with my statement. I would claim privilege every time, as I would have a perfect right to do.

An HONORABLE MEMBER.—It is very cowardly.

Mr. CHARLTON.—From the early days of the House of Commons every representative of the people has had this privilege. If the Government appoint a Commission consisting of High Court Judges to go into the matter, surely nobody can take exception to them? They would bring in a decision, and if it reflected upon Senator Watson he would carry that odium before the people for having made a statement in which there was no truth. That is the position; there is no escape from it.

Mr. SAMPSON.—Without privilege we might as well shut up Parliament.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Exactly; that is my argument.

Mr. WEBSTER.—Do you suggest suspending the Government while an inquiry of that kind is being held?

Mr. CHARLTON.—The Ministry are already suspended. In a few weeks this moribund Government will have a dissolution, and must appeal to the people. The Houses will be sitting until the end of next week. I believe that Judges, or a Judge of the High Court, ought to be called in immediately, and an inquiry started next week. The Judges should be asked to expedite their decision, and it ought to be in our possession within a couple of weeks. Then nobody could complain as to a fair appeal not being made when we appeared before the electors on this particular matter. Nobody will say that I am speaking now with any ill-feeling towards the Prime Minister. I have a very warm corner in my heart for the right honorable gentleman by reason of the great work he has done for the Labour movement. I know what he has done, I know his work, and because I differ from him on this question, I am not one who wishes to put a dagger into him. On the other hand, I know the other man also. I know that Senator Watson is an upright man, with an exemplary character, the same as the Prime Minister bears. Let a proper tribunal be appointed to sift this

matter, and if it is found that Senator Watson has made any statements which reflect on the Prime Minister, and which are not in accordance with the facts, he will carry the odium attaching to that offence. I would be sorry for any man who had to appear before the people if a High Court Judge had decided that he had done an injury to a man by statements he had made in Parliament. In sanctioning an inquiry by Judges, or one Judge of the High Court, the Government will only be doing what is right and just in the interests of members of this House. Possibly the people will come to the conclusion that Senator Watson is being cited to appear before the Supreme Court for the purpose of keeping this matter in suspense until after the appeal to the people has been made and in order to prevent honorable members from speaking. If you take one statement to the Supreme Court, you cannot bring in any outside matter, or any matter which may be indirectly relevant to it, for the simple reason that you will be confined to the one issue before the Court. Where will the Ready disappearing trick go to? Can the Court deal with that matter? Can any one give evidence in connexion with it? After all, the statement would not have been made by Senator Watson had it not been for Senator Ready disappearing from the arena of politics.

Mr. MATHEWS.—You cannot disconnect the two.

Mr. CHARLTON.—No. But if you go to the Court in regard to one statement, you will be confined to it. If the Government desire to do the fair and honorable thing, they must appoint a Commission of Judges from the High Court to deal with the Watson and Ready cases, and clear the atmosphere, and let the public know that everything is right. I speak with feeling on this matter. I have been in public life for twelve years and a half, and I have never known anything like this to be alleged before. I have always endeavoured to take a straight and honorable path. I believe that other men who are concerned in this matter have done the same thing; but, evidently, there is a difference of opinion. Let the matter be settled by referring it to a proper tribunal. It would be a preposterous position for the House to say that, whenever a charge is levelled by a member against

the Government or the Prime Minister, or a private member, he will have to waive privilege and go into the Supreme Court. If that should ever become an established fact in Australia, then good-bye to responsible government; good-bye to poor men representing the people in this Chamber. They would be less than useless. They would not dare to open their mouths on any matter which they thought vitally affected the public, if it involved a reflection on somebody else, for if they spoke they would have to run the risk of losing their homes, and their wives and children might be rendered penniless in order to meet the costs of an appeal to the Court.

Mr. FENTON.—It would afford a splendid opportunity to blackmail members.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Exactly. There can be no escape from that position.

I wish to say a few words in regard to a question which was asked last evening, because, in these times, so much feeling is engendered. The question which was asked last night by the honorable member for Bourke in regard to Senator Watson and Mr. Baddeley waiting upon the Prime Minister seemed to me to be loaded. In view of the situation here, it is only fair that I should narrate the facts as they occurred. That question was prompted by an individual who occupies a very high place in connexion with the northern coal trade. The question was based upon suspicion, because he saw Senator Watson and Mr. Baddeley come over in the same train, and because Senator Watson went back last week in the same train that Mr. Baddeley travelled in. I wish to state the facts, and the Prime Minister—if he were here—would bear out my statement. In the previous week, Senator Watson went home on Thursday, and on Friday I received from Mr. Baddeley a wire asking me if I could arrange for a deputation to the Prime Minister in regard to troubles in connexion with mining. I saw the Prime Minister sitting on the other side, and the Acting Prime Minister was close to him. I went over and asked the Prime Minister if he could meet the deputation. He said, "I do not know what I will be doing next week, but if I am alive and well, and here, yes." "On the strength of that statement," I said, "I will tell him to come over." "Very well," said the Prime Minister, "he will take the risk." I said, "I will

ask him to come." He came over on Wednesday by the same train as carried Mr. John Brown and Senator Watson. After luncheon I saw the latter, and told him that I had arranged that Mr. Baddeley should see the Prime Minister on the Thursday or Friday, and that I would send for him at the appointed time. Until then, Senator Watson knew nothing of Mr. Baddeley's visit. The Borehole Seam mine at Newcastle, the foreign trade of the port having fallen off, has been slack, the mine working about two days a week. The Government is taking a large quantity of coal, and we thought that if we could get assistance for the mines that are suffering, it would be a good thing. The Caledonian, the West Wallsend, the Killingworth, and the South Waratah mines have been doing worst, and we asked if the Government could not give more coal orders to them. The Minister for the Navy told us that the Government had contracted to take 100,000 tons of coal from the Caledonian mine and 50,000 tons of coal from the Seaham mine, but that they were not likely to need all that coal, and, therefore, he was afraid that he could not give any help. The man who prompted the question asked in the House is the proprietor of coal mines, and has no love for the Caledonian mine, or any other in the Newcastle district.

I mention these facts so that it may not be thought that Senator Watson was endeavouring to help one coal mine proprietor at the expense of another. I hope that a tribunal will be appointed, consisting of one or more Justices of the High Court, to sift this matter. In the interests of Parliament and of all parties concerned, it should be cleared up as early as possible. No honorable member has a right to be called on to forfeit his privileges and expose himself to the cost of a legal action in defence of anything that he may say in Parliament. In my opinion, it is cowardly to try to drag an honorable member into Court for something that he has said in Parliament. When the honorable member for Perth made his charges against Mr. Chinn, there were those in my party, which was then in power, who said that he should repeat his charges outside; but I contended that, as a representative of the people, he was privileged, and should not be expected to forego that privilege.

Mr. GREENE.—The honorable member for Perth did repeat his charges outside.

Mr. Charlton.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes; but he should not have been asked to do so.

Mr. GREENE.—He was a man.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes; but he did not make his charges outside at the time I spoke of.

Mr. MATHEWS.—He did not make them in connexion with the Supreme Court action, but in connexion with the Police Court action.

Mr. GREENE.—He did make them outside.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes, but not at that time. I contended that he should not be asked to do that.

I wish to repeat now what I have said on previous occasions regarding the presentation of the Estimates, in the hope that something may ultimately be done to improve matters. I admit that the times are abnormal, and that the war has interfered with the administration of the various Departments, but I do not think that any Department, except the Defence Department, has been interfered with to such an extent as to make it unable to present its Estimates at least two months after the close of the financial year. Last year we did not get the Estimates until the year to which they applied had expired, and we have not yet got the Estimates for this year, which expires at the end of June. Last year the financial statement was delivered in May. Is it a fair thing that the financial year should be nearly over before a statement is made to Parliament of the financial position of the country? Surely the Estimates and the Treasurer's statement should be before Parliament early in the year. It is only after we have had the financial statement, with an account of the revenue and expenditure of the country, and the Estimates, that we know where we are.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The Treasurer would be superhuman who could do what you wish.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I am a member of a Committee that has examined the ex-Secretary to the Treasurer, the present Secretary, and the Auditor-General, of whom the first two say that there is no reason why the Estimates should not be presented early in the financial year.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They take no account of the political situation.

Mr. CHARLTON.—That has little to do with it. Parliament cannot control the Administration of the country when

it does not deal with the Estimates until most of the money provided for therein has been expended. During the year we spend week after week in discussing Supply Bills, wasting time, and heaping up expense in printing and the like, when we could deal with the Estimates early in the year, and do without Supply Bills. The Treasurer tells us that there will be a great increase of expenditure this year. But we shall know little about the financial position until we have received a complete statement. I admit that it is not possible for him to do much at the present time; but, as a general rule, Parliament should be made acquainted early in the year with the financial state of the country. We have voted a sum for the establishment of Naval Bases, but we do not know anything as to the plans that are being adopted. We do not know how much of the money has been spent, or how much of the work has been completed. We are supposed to safeguard the Exchequer, and yet we get no information about these and other important matters.

Mr. POYNTON.—What we badly need is a Supply and Tender Board.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I agree with the honorable member. During the short time that he was in office, he did excellent work; and, no doubt, had he remained there, he would have tried to make an alteration. The present state of affairs cries aloud for redress. Intelligent men should not be asked to discuss Supply Bills month after month, and then at the end of the year to sit up all night to deal with the Estimates. If the Estimates were disposed of early in the year, there would be more time to deal with the general business of the country. I hope that whoever may be Treasurer in the future will give consideration to this matter, and furnish the Budget and Estimates within a reasonable period; and, further, that the Estimates may be dealt with sufficiently early to make Supply Bills unnecessary.

Sitting suspended from 6.27 to 7.45 p.m.

Mr. PIGOTT (Calare) [7.45].—I find it difficult to understand why political parties in the Commonwealth Parliament should be unable to drop their differences of opinion in order that a National Government might be formed to devote their energies to the

successful prosecution of the war, as has been done in other parts of the Empire. In the United Kingdom we find that parties who have been opposed to each other for generations, and who have viewed each others' political ideals with hatred, dropped all their political differences at the call to arms, and formed themselves into a National Government to prosecute the war to the bitter end. In the House of Commons, previous to the war, there was a combination of Liberals, Nationalists and Labour members on the Government side numbering 398, whilst the Conservatives in opposition numbered 272. In proportion to their numbers, the political parties are now represented in a National Government of the United Kingdom that is carrying on the government of the country in this crisis to the satisfaction and admiration of the Empire. In South Africa political differences of opinion are most marked. There is the South African party of 54 members, the Unionists of 40 members, the Nationalists of 27 members, a Labour party of 4, and an Independent party of 5. Yet we learn that all these gentlemen find it possible to see eye to eye in the present great crisis. They dropped their political differences, and since the war began have loyally supported the Empire and the flag by forming a National Government. In Canada, there are 134 Conservatives and 87 Liberals in the Dominion House of Commons, and they have done the same. In our neighbouring Dominion of New Zealand, we find that Conservatives and Liberals have dropped their political antipathies, and have formed themselves into one party for the prosecution of the war.

Mr. SAMPSON.—There are no outside juntas there.

Mr. PIGOTT.—No; they present a common front to the common enemy.

Mr. FENTON.—Canada has not done that.

Mr. PIGOTT.—Yes, Canada has done it. During the last Commonwealth elections, shortly after the war broke out, members of the Labour party told the people throughout Australia that there should not be an election. They said, "Let us drop our political differences, and form a National Government."

Mr. FENTON.—I did not say that.

Mr. PIGOTT.—The honorable member may not have said it, but he knows as well

as I do that it was said. That was admitted in this House. The suggestion was made that in this Commonwealth we should drop party politics and form a National Government to prosecute the war to a successful issue.

Mr. FENTON.—What did the honorable member's party do? They spurned the overtures, whatever they were.

Mr. PIGOTT.—The Labour party professed to desire a National Government, and there is no doubt that they made the suggestion that such a Government should be formed. It was a party cry with them at the elections, but they knew that at that time it was impossible.

Mr. GROOM.—Mr. Fisher said that no suggestion was made.

Mr. PIGOTT.—Yes, I am aware that members of the Labour party put it down to Mr. Hughes, but wherever I went throughout my electorate, I heard that suggestion made, and honorable members have only to look up the newspaper files of that time to find ample confirmation of my statement. Why did we not form a National Government? It was because the writs of election had been issued, and there was no Government that could do so. Still it is very regrettable indeed, in my opinion, that we in this Parliament cannot see eye to eye at this particular juncture. I have looked through the financial statement with very great interest, and I congratulate the right honorable member for Swan upon the introduction of such a concise, clear, and up-to-date statement. Even members of the House who have not had a long political experience are able to follow it with ease. In previous financial statements, we have found the figures so jumbled and mixed, that it has been impossible to separate war expenditure from ordinary expenditure. This can be done at once in the statement which the present Treasurer has introduced. I regret very much to find that the estimated expenditure of the Commonwealth, other than war expenditure, exceeds that of the previous year by no less than £4,653,887.

It is time that we called a halt in such expenditure. We have enormous financial responsibilities to meet in this time of war, and we should curtail the ordinary expenditure of the Commonwealth as much as possible. If the estimated expenditure amounted to no more than that for last year, there might perhaps be nothing to

cavil at; but when such an increase as I have mentioned is shown, it is time that we gave very serious consideration to the matter. Looking through the items of estimated expenditure from revenue, not including war expenditure, I find that the sum of £2,081,510 is to be spent on capital works, and that the increase in expenditure upon ordinary new works is estimated at £499,292. In my opinion, these works, most of which are connected with the Naval Bases, should be very largely suspended. We are spending thousands of pounds in building Naval Bases, ostensibly for the purpose of accommodating our Fleet, whilst our Fleet is in the North Sea, and we have not a single battleship here. It is time that we called a halt, and decided to build our Naval Bases later on. We do not know where this expenditure is to end. I find that in the estimates for new works for 1916-17, an amount of £1,025,530 is set down for Naval works.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—To be paid out of revenue this year?

Mr. PIGOTT.—Yes; that is so.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Will the honorable member, as a representative of a New South Wales constituency, sanction the hanging up of works at the Federal Capital?

Mr. PIGOTT.—Yes; I will, as far as possible. I think that all these works should be suspended until the war is over. Every penny we can conserve should be ear-marked at this time for one purpose. We have only one thing to consider, and that is the war, and nothing but the war. I have noticed with satisfaction the following statement by the Treasurer:—

At the recent Conference of Premiers the following particulars were given:—
Estimated number of soldiers who can be settled on the land—

Up to 30th June, 1917 ..	2,400
Up to 30th June, 1918 ..	11,000
Up to 30th June, 1919 ..	13,600

Total number of settlers in three years ..	27,000
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Amount said to be required by States for land settlement, irrespective of purchase of land—

Up to 30th June, 1917 ..	£1,250,000
Up to 30th June, 1918 ..	£8,447,000
Up to 30th June, 1919 ..	£9,245,000

Total amount for three years ..	£18,942,000
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I am quite sure that every honorable member will agree that this is proper expenditure. The people of Australia will not mind being taxed, so long as ample and adequate provision is made for the brave boys who have risked everything for the cause of the Empire. There is another paragraph of the Treasurer's statement for which, I think, the primary producers of Australia will thank the right honorable gentleman. He says—

Information recently supplied to the Treasury shows that the cash payments already made to farmers on account of last season's wheat may be taken as £24,200,000. As the balance of the crop has now been disposed of, further payments of £8,000,000 may be expected.

There is a feeling of discontent amongst the farmers of Australia. Let me say that the men whom we should encourage more than any one else in Australia are the primary producers. I find, according to Mr. Knibbs' figures, that in 1914-15, the area under wheat in the Commonwealth was 9,651,081 acres; 1915-16, the area was 12,530,721 acres; and in 1917, the area was 11,524,031 acres. That is to say, that for these three years, the aggregate area cultivated for wheat was 33,705,833 acres. According to the New South Wales Agricultural Department, the expense involved in the cultivation of land amounts to £2 0s. 6d. per acre. We farmers consider that a fair cost is 35s. per acre. If we multiply the total area I have quoted for the three years mentioned by 35s., we shall find that £58,985,607 15s. was spent upon the cultivation of the wheat lands of Australia in those three years. The yield for the year 1914-15, unfortunately a bad year for the farmers, was 24,892,402 bushels, for which the farmers received £7,500,000. The yield for 1915-16 was 179,624,183 bushels, for which, at the rate of 3s. 6d. per bushel, less about 6d. per bushel which was deducted for expenses, the farmers received £27,000,000. The yield for 1916-17 was 143,475,516 bushels, for which the farmers have received £18,000,000. For the three years the farmers have received £52,500,000, whereas the cost of cultivation has been £58,985,607. This shows a net loss of £6,485,607, which has been met by advances from financial institutions, banks, and private persons who have come to the assistance of the farmers. There is a great shortage of food-

stuffs throughout the world. England is particularly desirous of getting as much wheat as she can. Therefore, we should above all things encourage the farming industry. The farmer does not need much urging. The Treasurer says, in his financial statement, "As the balance of the crop has now been disposed of, further payments of £8,000,000 may be expected." A small deputation of honorable members waited on him this afternoon, and he gave it most sympathetic consideration. I understand that he has made an arrangement with the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank so that the farmers may receive an extra instalment by way of advance on their wheat crop. When the farmers were asked to go into the Wheat Pool with their 1915-16 crop, they were informed that payment would be made on the 30th November last, but, so far, they have only received an instalment of the amount that they were promised. Therefore, I am pleased that the Treasurer is considering their position, and is guarding their interests. Before we prorogue, it is possible that we may take action towards repealing the Daylight Saving Bill, which is not acceptable to the people in country districts, nor, I believe, to many people in the cities.

Mr. BURNS.—It is not acceptable to any one.

Mr. PIGOTT.—The Bill went through like a flash. I put my watch on it, and found that the measure passed through this House in five minutes. Every honorable member on both sides voted for it, so that the responsibility rests on the whole Parliament, and not on any particular party. I was thunderstruck the other day when the Leader of the Opposition said that the duty on cornsacks should be repealed, seeing that he imposed the duty when he was Minister for Trade and Customs. I appealed to him repeatedly to remove that duty, but his replies were always most unsympathetic. Last night, when the honorable member for Echuca twitted him on the point, he denied the statement, and said that the responsibility for imposing the duty rested on the Fisher Government. Honorable members will find from *Hansard* that a vote was taken on the matter on the 27th August, 1915, and that the honorable member for Yarra was among those who voted that the duty should be continued. This duty caused so much concern to the farmers that they formed

a deputation and waited on the honorable member when he was Minister for Trade and Customs, but they got very little satisfaction for their trouble. Ministers, as we know—and it is not confined to Labour Ministers—can appear very sympathetic, and can smile very nicely when they receive deputations, but those who wait on them get very little satisfaction from them. It is a very important question. In 1915-16 we imported £3,908,350 worth of jute goods, and the 10 per cent. duty which was imposed upon them meant a direct tax of something like £400,000 on the farmers in that period. I am sorry that the Leader of the Opposition is not present.

Mr. BURNS.—I will bring him in if you like. We should have a quorum.
[Quorum formed.]

Mr. PIGOTT.—During the drought, when the graziers and farmers were at their wits' end to know where to get fodder, deputation after deputation waited on the honorable member for Yarra when he was Minister for Trade and Customs, urging him to remit the fodder duties, but he gave us no satisfaction. Some months later he came to the House and informed honorable members that he had removed the fodder duties. It was not done at the request of the graziers, but at the request of a number of cab-drivers living in his electorate, who, finding that they could not run their cabs owing to the high price of fodder, waited on the Minister and asked him to do what he had refused to do for the greatest industry in Australia. The graziers and farmers could go hang so far as the Minister was concerned, but he acted at once when a handful of cab-drivers came to him. When we were discussing the Bill dealing with the Industrial Workers of the World, the honorable member for Yarra insulted the fruit-growers and fishermen of Australia. He said that they were just as bad as members of the Industrial Workers of the World. He said that because a great many fishermen allowed a lot of their fish to rot, in order that they might not glut the market, they were just as bad as members of the Industrial Workers of the World who burnt property in Sydney.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—So they are.

Mr. PIGOTT.—The difference is that the fishermen are dealing with their own

property whereas the members of the Industrial Workers of the World are burning other people's property. I have a great many fruit-growers in my electorate, and they watch the market very closely. If they have a lot of ripe fruit they do not glut the market with it, but keep half of it back to rot or use otherwise. It is better for them to supply just what the market can absorb, so that they can obtain a fair price. The honorable member was wrong in comparing hard-working honest men with members of the Industrial Workers of the World. The honorable member for Yarra took exception to any suggestion for the exemption of fruit-growers under the proposed war-time profits taxation. Wheat-growers were exempted, but not fruit-growers, and the honorable member argued that fruit-growers were making fortunes since the outbreak of the war because jam was fetching a very big price. On the day on which the honorable member made that statement I looked up the quotations in the files in the Library to see what fruit was realizing, and I compared the prices given with those prevailing in the market on the same date in a year prior to the outbreak of the war. Under nine different headings of fruit there were three lots—best quality, second grade, and third grade. In those twenty-seven items there was only $\frac{1}{2}d.$ a case difference between the prices in November of last year and the November before the war. Yet the honorable member for Yarra says that these men should be taxed heavily, because they are making fortunes out of the war.

Mr. MAHON (Kalgoorlie) [8.15].—In some quarters surprise has been expressed that a motion of no-confidence has not been proposed in this Government. But that would be quite superfluous. It is obvious that what Disraeli said of another immoral political combination, that they have no confidence in each other, is quite true of them. However, I did not rise altogether to condemn the Ministry, because they have, at any rate, exhibited some death-bed courage. Doubtless they did not mean to appeal to the country, but circumstances proved too strong for the intrigue which was being carried on to extend the life of Parliament. I have heard a good deal

about the story of the Labour party's participation in this proposal, and the vociferous Postmaster-General last night drove me out of the chamber by his noisy endeavour to prove that the Labour party was responsible for that extraordinary proceeding. The most that he, or anybody else, can show is that the Labour party desired to avoid the expense of a double election in the present year. All they sought was to extend the life of the Senate until the natural time for the expiration of the House of Representatives.

Mr. WEBSTER.—They agreed to extend both to the June following October next.

Mr. MAHON.—Pardon me. I know quite well what was done, and there was never any proposal to extend the life of Parliament until next June twelve months. Some speakers seem to think it is a matter of reproach that we should have been willing to appeal to the Imperial Government to amend our Constitution, and a leading newspaper in this city made the extraordinary statement that it would be far better to see the six capital cities burnt to the ground than that the Australian Constitution should be amended by an outside authority. That kind of argument does not greatly appeal to me, because the authority that created the Australian Constitution must necessarily have the power to amend it. In any case, I can see nothing wrong in both Houses of this Parliament approaching the Imperial Parliament to make such an amendment. There is no surrender of our self-governing rights in a proceeding of that kind. After all, what we have to ask is, "Is it for the benefit of Australia? Is it in the interests of the Australian people that this thing should be done?" And it is absolutely unthinkable that both Houses of this Parliament should request the Imperial Government to do something which would be inimical to the interests of Australia. That kind of argument, therefore, falls to the ground.

Mr. RODGERS.—Some very good arguments to the contrary were given by your friends on the other side.

Mr. MAHON.—I have not heard them. Perhaps the honorable member, when he rises to throw light on the various subjects with which we are wrestling, will

quote some of the remarks to which he refers. At any rate, I am not committed to the opinions in question. I express only my own—for what they are worth. The Prime Minister seems to want to fasten upon his opponents the stigma of making an unprecedented personal attack upon him. The extraordinary somersaults which that gentleman has performed naturally call forth some criticism from his opponents, but I have not seen in any of the so-called "attacks" upon him anything so severe as the attacks made upon other leaders of parties in this Parliament during the last sixteen years. I do not think there is anything in the alleged assaults upon the Prime Minister to equal the attacks made upon Sir George Reid, for instance, during his term as Opposition Leader and Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is suffering from what may be called the exaggerated *ego*, that is to say, he imagines, since his visit to Great Britain, that the eyes of the whole planet are centred upon him, and that any criticism of him is a criminal offence, which ought to mean the obliteration of his opponents. He and his colleague, the Postmaster-General, have referred to the "junta." Speaking of the Postmaster-General, I am reminded that, up to the time he took office, nobody ever saw him smile. Since he has been in office nobody has seen him do anything else, except when the postal officials call, by way of deputation, to remind him of so many of his unfulfilled promises. Will the honorable gentleman tell me that the constitution of the so-called "junta" differs in any degree from what it was when he was one of its obedient servants?

Mr. WEBSTER.—I never obeyed, except according to my pledge and platform.

Mr. MAHON.—The honorable gentleman knows that he would never be on that bench if it were not for the "junta" he so freely denounces. The Prime Minister, too, talks about this "junta," but while it was doing his bidding, or working in conjunction with him, he had no word of condemnation for it. The "junta" does not now differ from what it always was. If it be evil now, it was no less evil when the Prime Minister obeyed it. In this connexion, a certain incident may be recalled. An honorable member, in the presence of the present

Prime Minister, asked the chairman of the party, " Supposing I have made a promise to my electors, and something which I am commanded to do by the party conflicts with that promise, whom am I to obey?" The answer given by the chairman of the party, with the knowledge and connivance of the present Prime Minister, was, " You must follow what the party declares, and not what you have promised your constituents." The whole essence of representative government was vitiated by that declaration.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—More revelations!

Mr. MAHON.—I should like to hear the Treasurer's revelations concerning some of his present colleagues. They would be quite as interesting as any that I could tell the Committee. I should like his private opinion, for instance, of his present leader, who called him a troglodyte.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—He did, but it was not true.

Mr. MAHON.—I know it was not—then. It was one of the many libels of which the right honorable gentleman has been a victim during his political career. But one cannot help commenting on the extraordinary position which he occupies to-night, following, as he does, a leader who had such an opinion of him as to say that he belonged to the age of troglodytes. The right honorable gentleman has forgiven his traducers, apparently. It is said that charity covers a multitude of sins, and the right honorable gentleman covers so much superficial area that, no doubt, there is some charity beneath where he stands.

Another gentleman supporting this Government, who, to my amazement, was left out of it, is the honorable member for Flinders. If there is a " whole-hogger " in this House or the country as a win-the-war patriot, it is the honorable gentleman. If this is a Win-the-war Government—a Government formed exclusively to press on with the war—why has he been omitted from it? Is it because he said he was in favour of another referendum on the conscription issue? Was he excluded because the members of the Government were afraid of the company of one who alone had the courage to say what they all thought? From his point of view, he is quite right. If he believes conscription to be of supreme importance,

he is right in advocating another referendum on it. It would make for more healthy public life if others on his side would express their opinions with equal courage and determination. Not long ago, when the honorable member was Attorney-General in a previous Government, the present Prime Minister referred to him as following the " red hand " of Ulster. It is to be feared that the Prime Minister knows very little about the legend of the " red hand " of Ulster. But, whatever its signification may be, the Prime Minister is forced now to let the " red hand " of Ulster point out the way that he must go. Because, unless I am very much mistaken, it is the honorable member for Flinders that will dictate to the Government their policy in military and other matters.

The appeal to the country is welcome, for the country ought to have an opportunity to express some opinion on recent incidents in connexion with Parliament. I suppose that nothing more extraordinary has ever occurred in Federal or State politics than the disappearance of a senator at night, and the appearance of his successor first thing in the morning. This promptitude is not characteristic of Government departments; and there are circumstances connected with the occurrence on which I think the people of the country will be glad to have the opportunity to express an opinion. Of course, there are many other matters which ought to be submitted to the people. For instance, there is a motion on the notice-paper by the Treasurer; and I suppose that many of his supporters, who have gone from the Labour party, will be interested to learn that he proposes to abolish preference to unionists in the Government service. The other day I asked the right honorable gentleman when he proposed to proceed with the motion, and I received from him an evasive answer.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—You did not give me notice of the question.

Mr. MAHON.—The Treasurer has given notice to move—

That this House disallows the regulation (Statutory Rules 1915, No. 127) laid upon the table of the House on 28th July, 1915, amending regulation 121, framed under the Public Service Act, and providing, amongst other matters, that—"In the selection of temporary assistance under section 40 of the Act, preference shall be given, other things being

equal, to the persons whose names are on the register in the State in which such assistance is required, and who are members of a trade union or industrial organization."

Sir JOHN FORREST.—You do not believe in that preference, do you?

Mr. MAHON.—The right honorable gentleman gave notice of that motion before, as he said last night, he unexpectedly attained office. I do not condemn the right honorable gentleman for his proposal, in which he is quite consistent.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—I believe in it, or I should not move it.

Mr. MAHON.—Exactly; but what about the late members of the Labour party who are now supporting the right honorable gentleman?

Sir JOHN FORREST.—I am not their keeper!

Mr. MAHON.—But those honorable members are supporting the Government, and they must vote for the right honorable gentleman's motion when it comes to a division.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—I do not think so.

Mr. MAHON.—Perhaps some accident may occur to prevent the motion being submitted. Ministers are not as frequently in attendance as they should be. So much so that one has difficulty in getting information required in the public interest.

Mr. PALMER.—The honorable member forgets that when he was Minister he was away month after month.

Mr. MAHON.—Not so. Whenever I was absent, good reasons existed; but I am not too sure that any of the present Ministers have adequate reason for their abstention from the business for which they are paid.

Mr. GROOM.—They are away for public reasons, attending to departmental business.

Mr. MAHON.—I understand that one of them is on a political mission in Adelaide.

Mr. RILEY.—There are two Ministers there.

Mr. MAHON.—Two of them are there? I understand that the Minister for Works and Railways, from whom the Committee is entitled to information regarding national works, is away on a political mission. I should have liked that honorable gentleman to be present, because some time ago he made a virulent attack on honorable members on this side, and he ought to be present to hear our retort. The

honorable member for Capricornia was most severely attacked; but, it being the first time, I presume he thought he might let the attack pass. There is a legal fiction—I am sorry the honorable member for Capricornia forgot it—that every dog is entitled to one free bite; and it is possible that, on this account, he determined not to resent the attack made upon him by the honorable member for Balaclava.

Mr. SINCLAIR.—You want your "free bite," too, apparently.

Mr. MAHON.—I should have been much more pleased to say what I have to say in the presence of the Minister concerned, but, as this is the last opportunity many of us will have to address honorable members before the dissolution, I may be allowed to say what I have to say without interruption from the honorable member for Moreton. I am hopeful that there will be no more attempts to juggle with the electoral system of the country in the way we saw some time ago, but that the elections will be carried out without any recriminations or personal attacks on either side. The people of this country ought to be able to give a verdict on the issue between the two parties, free from the antagonism and rancours which election battles unfortunately are prone to produce. At any rate, I think I can promise for honorable members on this side that we shall fight the battle as we have always done, fairly and honorably, and that if we win, we shall come back as before, with clean hands prepared to do what we have done in the past, namely, carry legislation in the best interests of Australia.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH (Denison) [8.37].—I desire to place my position not only before the Committee, but before the country. In doing so, and in dealing with the question of the extension of the life of Parliament, I shall say only what is in my own mind; I know nothing of what is in the minds of other people. What other people may think or believe does not matter; all I know is that when I left the meeting of the Labour party, I was of the opinion that the Prime Minister, during his visit to England, would, if possible, get an extension of the life of Parliament for about two years, or six months after the termination of the war. I left that meeting with that idea in my mind, and I was prepared to stand by it, and to explain to the electors why I was in favour

of an extension. The Prime Minister, in my opinion, left that meeting, and went to Great Britain with the feeling that he had a unanimous following behind him on this question. I forget whether I signed the document which has been referred to, but I know that I should willingly have signed it, and may have done so. However, the honorable member who referred to it has not the document with him, and I only wish he had; for what a disclosure it would make! We should then see in black and white how anxious members were for an extension of Parliament. Was that because we could hold on to our seats? No. Why was it? It was because our brothers were at the front fighting, and because it was not the time for a general election. How should I feel if, when addressing a political meeting, I were to get word that my brother had been killed at the front? Only two days ago I received a sad message of the kind; and how, under such circumstances, can we fight a political fight? These men at the front have left us here to represent them, and look after the welfare of Australia. They expect on their return to find Australia as they left it—one of the greatest countries on God's earth. They do not expect to find a country full of turmoil, bitterness, and struggle—man against man, woman against woman. And what is the struggle for? For the purpose of winning the war? No. Merely for the purpose of winning seats in this Parliament. I ask any disinterested person whether it is not cruel to ask a man to go to the front, and leave Australia in the hands of parties who are fighting as they never fought before? This is going to be one of the most bitter of fights.

Mr. PARKER MALONEY.—Are you going to make it bitter?

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—No; and I have never made a political fight bitter. Even my bitterest opponent in Denison knows that I always refused to descend to personalities; and on the first occasion when I contested the seat, he wrote a letter thanking me for the honorable, clean way in which I had conducted the election. Some of my friends advised me to "go" for my opponent, who, as a lawyer, could, they said, easily be discredited; but this I declined to do, as I knew he was an honorable man. I knew I had a platform in which I believed, and it is the same platform I stand by to-day. Where was the necessity, then, to descend to personal

abuse? In the coming election I shall conduct the fight in the same way, and I believe that I shall win it, because the rank and file of the workers in Denison know me, and will give me their votes. On the question of conscription the Labour party had almost hourly meetings. We sat day after day, and came to a decision at 2 o'clock in the morning. I there saw men with tears in their eyes who declared, "Hughes, we will go down to hell with you." But what did they do outside? What did one of those men do? Did he stick to the Prime Minister? No. He deserted. What did I do? While the Prime Minister was speaking at that meeting, I wrote down what I intended to do, and, after showing it to the present Leader of the Opposition, I burnt it, because there was no need to show it to the Leader of the party. What I wrote down was that I should follow and stick to him through thick and thin, and I think my resolve will win me the seat for Denison. Even if I were wrong, the people of Denison would stand by me for being consistent and honest, regardless of pressure.

When the Prime Minister came back from England, he gave a description of what he had seen at the front, and told us what was likely to happen in this country if reinforcements were not provided. What did we do in 1914? We went from platform to platform and read the manifesto issued by Mr. Fisher at the instance of the Labour party, in which it was stated that Australia would stand by the Old Country in this war to "the last man and the last shilling." Mr. Hughes showed us the advantages that would be gained by sending reinforcements to the front, and I have since learned that the more men we have there the greater the number of lives that will be saved. The honorable member for Capricornia stated last evening that at the time of the conscription referendum men were not required at the front, and, in support of his contention, he stated that no less than 50,000 Australians had been reviewed by the King at Salisbury Plain. I do not know how many Australians were reviewed there, nor do I think the honorable member knows. I doubt whether the Defence Department itself knows. Yet the honorable member for Capricornia stated that there were

50,000 Australians encamped on Salisbury Plain. If there were, they were there because they were not trained men. It is idle to send undisciplined men to the front. They would be useless in the trenches, and their lives would be needlessly sacrificed. But if men were not required at the front—as was urged by the honorable member for Capricornia—why, in heaven's name, have Australians been kept in the firing line since 1914—men whom we know personally, and who are longing to get back to their wives and children? Ask the Assistant Minister the nature of the letters he is continually receiving, and he will say that by every mail he gets communications from wives and children asking that their husbands and fathers may be relieved from duty. Why is this so? Because there are not the required men available to relieve them? Is that fair? I ask any unionist who believes in forty-eight hours a week whether it is right to keep men eighty-eight hours weekly in the trenches? Is it right to keep them there nineteen days in succession? Only a few days ago I received a letter from a relation of mine who is now in the hospital with his toes almost dropping off as the result of "trench feet," due to his being kept too long in the trenches. Yet the honorable member for Capricornia says that there were 50,000 Australians reviewed by the King on Salisbury Plain, and that men were not required at the front. If he knows that there were that number of Australians in England at the time of which he spoke, he knows more than does the Minister for Defence.

Recognising these facts, what sort of a man would I have been if, to save my political skin, I had consented to obey those whom I had no right to obey? If it can be shown, by reference to the Labour platform, that I was pledged to oppose conscription, I shall be thankful indeed. But conscription was not mentioned on the platform which I signed three years ago, and in the manifesto which Mr. Fisher issued at the request of the Labour party in 1914, he assured the Old Country that we were with her to "the last man and the last shilling." What did the *Worker* recently say? It said that politicians were being taught that their masters outside—meaning the Labour organizations—

were going to take a more active part in politics. The present Prime Minister pointed out to us that men were urgently wanted, and a number of us agreed to follow him. Why? Because we believed that it was necessary to secure the men required to win this war and because we were in honour bound to redeem our promise to the Imperial Authorities. But we believed that as soon as the referendum had been decided, even if we were defeated, nothing more would be heard of the matter. We soon discovered that that was not so. I have been informed that two members of our party, namely, the honorable member for Illawarra and Senator Ferricks, actually attended a meeting in New South Wales on the Sunday preceding the memorable Caucus meeting in Melbourne, at which they were instructed to come down here and vote for the deposition of Mr. Hughes from the leadership of the party. I do not say that the statement is correct, but if it is not, let the honorable member for Illawarra refute it. How can members of Parliament discharge their duties faithfully if their attitude is to be dictated by an outside irresponsible body? It has been said that the Prime Minister, the honorable member for Darling, and others were asked to explain their position to that body, when, as a matter of fact, their fate had actually been decided in advance? Was that just? I am very pleased that the honorable member for Brisbane has released me from any obligation to observe secrecy by reading today a motion which was submitted in another place. Apparently, that motion applied only to Mr. Hughes and to his expulsion. But what self-respecting body of men would sit in that meeting after such a resolution had been carried?

Mr. POYNTON.—They wanted to include us in it.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I took the motion to mean that we were all to get out. In support of my statement, I intend to quote from the *Hobart Mercury* of Thursday, 16th November, 1916. Mr. Lyons, the president of the Political Labour League of Tasmania, upon being interviewed by a representative of that journal when the Hughes Government was formed, was asked, "What about

the position of Mr. Jensen and Mr. Laird Smith in relation to the Labour party?" To that Mr. Lyons replied, "They are in the same position as all other followers of Mr. Hughes. They have cut themselves adrift, and saved the organizations the trouble of doing it for them." Surely that is definite enough. What could we do in the circumstances? I ask any unionist in Australia if I have ever been remiss in the discharge of my duties? Yet I was not even given a hearing.

In the face of these facts, the honorable member for Kalgoorlie has the temerity to declare that members of the Official Labour party enjoy the same freedom to-day that they did previously. If that were so, why is it that certain members of that party are being so bitterly opposed in the ballot for selection? Had I been a member of that party to-day, my selection would have been contested. Why? Because Denison is a fairly easy Labour seat now, which it was not when I captured it. It has been said that we would not have been here to-day but for the Labour movement. But I would remind my honorable friends opposite that in the time of Jimmy Hall, before the formation of the Labour party, I was carpeted by the Tasmanian Railways Commissioners for taking an active part in politics. After that I had no intention of seeking election to Parliament; but some time later I was approached by members of the Labour organizations, who assured me that they could not find a man who could win the Denison seat, and who expressed the belief that I could secure it. I advised them to go to Mr. L. L. Giblin, who is the Lecturer in Mathematics at the University, and ask him to become a candidate, as I thought he could win the seat. In a fortnight they came back to me and said that he could not be induced to stand, and that, consequently, I must contest it. I did so, with the result that I am here to-day. I was also one of the framers of the Railways Superannuation Fund in Tasmania. It was formed, and I subscribed to it, with the result that at the age of sixty-five years I would have been entitled to retire with a pension of about £2 a week. That may not seem much, but it represents £2,000, and there is not a man in the Labour party to-day who will have that amount at the age of sixty-five

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years. In addition, I was entitled to receive a week's pay for every year that I had been in the service. I have been twenty-one years there. I had to forfeit that pay when I consented to contest the Denison seat in this House. I did not mind that, because the feeling which existed in the constituency at the time made it a pleasure to me to work for it.

But what a difference there is over here! Men call you "brother," but they would stab you in the back if they had an opportunity. What do I find here? The secretaries of unions are continually being opposed for their positions. A man will come from the other end of the world. Nobody will know who he is, or what he is; but he will criticise the work of the holder of the office. Why? In order that he may contest the position later on. I represented the Waterside Workers for six years in the Federation, and did my bit side by side with the Prime Minister. When they expelled me, they did it in the most kindly way by affirming that they were no longer going to have a member of Parliament to represent them, and each union thanked me for my past services. One of these gentlemen, who became a union secretary, jockeyed out of that position a good man who had been there for years, and who was of a splendid type. A little later the union could not get an audit of its books, and when it did get it, it was discovered that the organization had lost several hundreds of pounds. Where is that man to-day? In gaol. Who put him in gaol? The union. And he was one of these gentlemen who was going to show us how to run a union on up-to-date lines. It is not the rank and file of the Labour party outside who are criticising me; it is rather the few who would like to have my seat. They say to themselves, "Denison is an easy seat to win." They think the same in regard to Bass. I shall not allude to what the honorable member for Maranoa has said to-day, because his remarks did not apply to me.

Mr. PAGE.—Why is the honorable member putting up a dummy, only to knock it down again?

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Because I wish to acquaint the Committee with a few facts. I do not know what is in the honorable member's mind, but I am stating actual facts. We find to-day that one of the candidates for selection to run

in the Labour interest for the representation of Tasmania in the Senate is Mr. Woods, a prominent officer of the Political Labour League; while Mr. Ben Watkins, another prominent member of it, is seeking selection so that he can contest my seat as the selected candidate of the Official Labour party. Not one of these men who have criticised me so bitterly can say that I have departed from one plank of the Labour platform; the only thing they could find against me was that when the right honorable member for Parramatta addressed a meeting at Hobart in connexion with the military service referendum, I occupied a seat on the platform.

Mr. PAGE.—No man has a mortgage on a seat.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I recognise that. But a man who has done justice to his constituents is entitled to expect re-election. I have as much right to stand for the electorate of Denison as has any man.

Mr. PAGE.—Hear, hear!

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—What would be said of Justices of the High Court who proceeded to adjudicate on cases involving business matters with which they were directly concerned? Yet that is what is being done by these league officials.

I agree with the honorable member for Maranoa that the Labour movement will still go on. It will continue to grow, because it will be cleaned up as a result of our action, and the rank and file of the party will arrive at a true appreciation of these officials who are after other men's seats. If at every election we are to have a change of representatives—one man going out and another man going in—I question whether it will be a good thing for Australia. Where the secretary, the treasurer, or the committee of a union are doing honest service, we should keep them in office. They are tried men, and should not be replaced unless they retire or pass away. I invite honorable members to consider for a moment the position of the honorable member for Darling, Mr. Spence, who has been expelled from the Official Labour party. He is beloved by every one; no man would say an unkind word of him. Some one said of him to-day, "He is not sad." But have honorable members ever watched his face when he has been talk-

ing to them of what he did for Labour in the early days? Have they watched him as he talked of his struggles in the early days, when there was no payment of union secretaries, and when he had almost to starve in the cause of unionism? Is it reasonable to believe that he does not feel sad, in view of the treatment he has received at the hands of the Official Labour party's organizations. He must feel very keenly the treatment meted out to him, because he is still the same old Spence that he was when he first fought for unionism. He has not departed one iota from the principles and opinions he held when he first entered the Labour movement. He is a fine old man, a king of humanity, a man of marked intelligence. One has only to hear him talk to recognise that. I understand that on one occasion, he adjudicated in a certain case at Campbelltown, and began by putting all the members of the legal profession out of doors. He very speedily fixed up an agreement, and one of the most conservative gentlemen in the town declared that he had never listened to an abler or more intelligent man. And what has this outside Labour organization done to the honorable member for Darling—this fine old man who has made the Labour party what it is to-day? Even the most bitter opponents of the cause he has so long espoused admire him. And yet this old gentleman has been cast out. In the days of his old age he has been turned adrift by the Official Labour organization. Is that what we call brotherly love? Is that the sort of Socialism for which we have been working? Is that the sort of Socialism we want? Unhesitatingly, I say it is not. It is something which will cast us adrift in our old age and leave us as paupers. Read the writings and the speeches of Socialists like Thomas, the French Minister, and those of the many French and Belgian Socialists of prominence, whose names I need not mention. These men went to the Bristol Labour Conference with a petition to the British working people to assist France and Belgium in stemming back the on-rushing tide of Huns, who were laying waste their land. Not a Labour man refused to listen to that petition. A leading German Socialist told me, in Switzerland in 1911, that in 1914 Germany would have, from a Socialistic

point of view, the most triumphant general election it had ever experienced. He said, "We have only to secure the agrarian vote—we have only to win over the farmers—and we shall sweep the polls. Then the Constitution of Germany will have to be altered." The German Emperor recognised this fact, and seeing, as he believed, an opportunity to conquer other lands, he declared war, and set to work to crush the German Labour party. He has done so. He has crushed the Socialists out of existence. Only one of their leaders dared to stand against him, and that man to-day is in prison. Socialists from Belgium, Italy, and France have visited Great Britain, with the object of urging workers to join with them in the fight to save their countries from the Huns.

In view of all these facts, how could we on this side of the House do otherwise than we have done? Our only desire was to save our country. Surely because of that desire we are not to be spoken of as "scabs" and "blacklegs." Why should such abominable epithets be applied to men who have worked far into the night in the cause of Labour. No one works harder than does a Labour member while the House is in session. I have rushed from this House at 3 o'clock on a Friday, caught the steamer for Hobart, reached there, after a rough passage, on Saturday evening, addressed a meeting the same night, returning home early on Sunday morning; addressed a meeting again on Sunday afternoon; spent the whole of the next day in meeting my constituents; addressed another meeting on Monday night, and next day have boarded the steamer once more, and have been in my place in this House on the Wednesday afternoon. Labour men are almost worked to death. My wife has walked from house to house for three months at a stretch, canvassing, not for me, but for another Labour candidate. And to-day we are practically driven from pillar to post by a few outside Labour men, who would like to have the seat I occupy in Parliament. A few days ago there appeared in the *Herald* a statement of the business to be considered at the coming Labour Conference. We find that one branch of the league objects to universal training, which has been invaluable to

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Australia. Other branches say that the salaries of members should be pooled. Members of Parliament, they say, should be paid a living wage. Who is to be the judge of what is a living wage?

Mr. PAGE.—It strikes me that if salaries are to be pooled, the honorable member is just getting out in time.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I do not intend to get out. The honorable member for Maranoa, we are led to believe, is a rich man. I am not.

Mr. PAGE.—I am not a rich man.

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

HONORABLE MEMBERS.—Go on.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—(*By leave*).—I thank the honorable member for Bendigo, who has been good enough to give way to me, in order that I may conclude my speech.

We have been told of the solidarity of the Labour party, and it has been said that the majority must rule. Is there any understanding—is there anything in our constitution to that effect? The honorable member for Kalgoorlie said that it was laid down in our constitution that the majority must rule; but honorable members of the Official Labour party know that that is not so. We were free to vote as we pleased on any question outside the Labour platform. By way of illustration, I propose to refer to something that occurred in the Official Labour Caucus when the question of conscription was under consideration. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports, Mr. Mathews, is involved in this, and I regret that he is unable, owing to other important public business, to be present this evening. I told him that I intended to refer to this matter, so that I am not doing him any injustice. Before the honorable member for Brisbane submitted his motion at the Caucus meeting that the Prime Minister should be deposed from the leadership of the Labour party, the honorable member for Melbourne Ports said, "I am not in favour of conscription, and I shall not be bound by any vote of this party."

Mr. HANNAN.—Hear, hear!

Mr. PAGE.—That is what he said.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Then if he was not to be bound by any vote of the party on a question outside our platform, why

should the Prime Minister and myself, together with others who stand with us to-day, be blamed for refusing to be bound by the vote of the Official Labour party on a question outside the party platform? What is fair in the one case is surely fair in the other. I told the honorable member that I was going to mention this fact, and he said, "You are quite correct." He was consistent in the action he took. How, then, can we be charged with inconsistency? Why should we be pushed out of the Labour movement, which is as dear to us as it is to every member of the Opposition. We decline to be pushed out of it, and we shall not be pushed out. I shall appeal to those to whom I have appealed before, and I feel sure that they will give me the consideration that I have always received at their hands.

The honorable member for Illawarra has just entered the chamber, and I should like him to say whether it is not a fact that he would have had a seat in this House sooner than he did if he had received justice at the hands of the few men who are now opposing me. Does he think that they gave him justice when he stood for Denison? Decidedly not. Denison was to be kept for a certain Labour man when it was felt that it could be won. Meantime the honorable member for Illawarra was put up for the constituency. And did these people help him? Did they go from house to house canvassing for him? Did they put their hands in their pockets to assist him in his candidature? No; I can tell the Committee what they did when I went there, and they thought I had a chance of winning the seat. They put every obstacle in my way, and one of the leading members of the organization cleared out of the district for a fortnight before the polling day. The honorable member for Illawarra knows that this is true. My opposition to-day is coming from the same old quarter. It comes, not from the rank and file, who have always helped a Labour candidate, taking the most active interest in the contest, but from men who dare not fight me openly. It emanates from men who would come in at the back door and deprive me of my seat. They were not prepared to contest the Bass constituency, because they did not think it could be won by a Labour man.

The honorable member for Maranoa is left unopposed again and again, because he represents a very large and difficult constituency to canvass. He is a good fellow, big in brain and big in heart, and his constituency is also a big one. It is because of the difficulties it presents to a candidate that he is not worried by union officials, who would take it from him. He does not know what it is to have a union man constantly watching him, always finding fault with him, and telling him that he would be a much better representative. One man, it is said, can do little. But one man can upset a party; when he knows it is safe, he can criticise the Government which he was returned to support, and can score off it.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I know of one man who broke up two parties.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I do not think that is quite correct. I do not regret having supported the Prime Minister, because I believe he is honest in his convictions. Would he have made such a sacrifice if it had been otherwise, and when letters were reaching him to the effect that his wife and child would be murdered? Surely such communications as that would disconcert even the honorable member who has interjected. We must admit, even if we disagree with the Prime Minister on certain matters, that he had nothing personally to gain by his action; and let us, therefore, keep the personal element out of this discussion.

Dr. MALONEY.—I think it is only fair that the policeman's account of that incident should be taken into consideration.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I think the right honorable the Prime Minister was quite honest in his belief that if we are to win the war we must have the men at the front. We know that 8,000 men saved Paris; and I have learned from my reading of American neutral journals, that of the 200,000 men who were rushed to France in the early stages of the war, 160,000 were either killed or wounded. Those are the men who saved not only Great Britain, but the Empire, and with the Empire, Australia. How long would we be able to hold Australia, the most progressive country in the world, if the British Navy were annihilated? Would we not be ungrateful to England, therefore, if we did not send the last man and the last shilling in the true sense of

the word, to do a little for the Mother Country which has done so much for us? Away on the North Sea, British ships and ships of the Australian Navy are keeping watch. It is because of this fact that Australia, up till very recently, has enjoyed an era of great prosperity. Thanks to the British Navy, we have been able to sell and send our products to the people of the Mother Country. Surely then it is up to us, no matter what our politics may be, and out of gratitude to those working men of our own class who are risking their lives in the North Sea, to do our best now to help them. We believed we could get the numbers here by the means we adopted; but, because we were honest, and attempted to do that, we are now to be crucified by our political opponents. Let us be honest about this matter. The Prime Minister said, on behalf of this Government and those who are supporting it, that the people, having decided the issue of conscription, that decision would be respected. In the face of this assurance, it is cruel to say, as some men in New South Wales are saying to-day, that the conscription issue has been raised. Surely the people of Australia will not be misled by these tactics.

I desire now to refer to a subject mentioned by the honorable member for Hunter, namely, the question of appointing a Commonwealth Supply and Tender Board. From my experience of the Defence Department, I am confident the appointment of a Board as suggested would save thousands of pounds to the Commonwealth. Members of the Public Works Committee have done excellent work by pointing out the disadvantage of carrying so much stock in certain classes of material, for not only is store room unnecessarily occupied, but a large amount of capital is lying idle. The operation of a Supply and Tender Board would remedy this state of affairs, and I hope, therefore, that if the honorable member for Hunter returns to this House he will pursue the subject; and if I am here, I can promise him every assistance.

Another matter of interest to the people of Tasmania is the embargo to be placed on the importation of motor cars. In my State, we have a railway service right along the sea shore, and consequently the back country is served by good roads and motor cars, with the result that settlers are able to obtain

their goods much more cheaply, and to reach the cities with greater ease than in former years. If the proposed embargo on the introduction of motor cars is put into operation, this traffic will be interfered with considerably. Then, again, we have a big tourist traffic, and a large number of people in my constituency earn a living by catering for tourists. I have been told by travellers that there is no finer touring country in the world than Tasmania.

Mr. FENTON.—It has been well advertised lately.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—That is because the Railway Department spent about £5,000 in establishing tourist bureaux in Sydney and Melbourne, and in advertising, by other means, the advantages of Tasmania as a holiday resort. I know the honorable member wanted to draw me off this subject by his interjection, but I do not intend to go into that matter at all, as I know nothing about it.

The steamship service to Tasmania is another matter to which I invite the attention of the Postmaster-General or the Treasurer. The companies do not issue return fares to Tasmania, because under the system of single fares they can get more revenue than they would obtain for return tickets, with the result that some people are disinclined to travel, as they are not sure when they will be able to get back. I have been approached by many in my constituency, who feel the injustice of this practice, to bring the matter before the House, and I hope therefore that the responsible Minister will give this subject his careful attention without delay.

Mr. HAMPSON (Bendigo) [9.25].—The honorable member for Denison has referred to certain matters which it was not my intention to deal with when I came into the chamber, but after his speech, I think they merit some recognition from me as one who has been in the Labour movement for a great number of years. I have only joined two societies in my life—one being the Australian Natives Association, which I joined from patriotic motives, and as a friendly society; and the other is the Labour party. It appeared to me that the honorable member for Denison was making rather an appeal to his constituents than attempting to inform members of this Chamber on the subjects

he mentioned. He asks why he finds himself in his present company, and in opposition to those with whom he was returned to Parliament. He tells us that conscription as an issue was not in the Labour party's platform, to which he and the gentlemen who left the Labour party were pledged, and he asks what right has any outside body to say how he shall vote on that question. It is one of those issues which arise, I suppose, about once in a century, and it might just as truly be said that, because there is nothing on the Labour platform with regard to slavery, the Labour movement in Australia is not strongly opposed to that principle. What was the issue upon which he was sent to represent his constituency? He was returned with other representatives of the Labour party, pledged to support the Government during the time of the war.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—To win the war.

Mr. HAMPSON.—You were sent here to assist the Government to conduct this war on a voluntary system of recruiting. Mr. Fisher gave that pledge in this House, and that pledge was repeated by Mr. Hughes when he became Prime Minister. He declared that he was not going to introduce conscription, and therefore you were pledged in that way. The voluntary system had not broken down. The facts are against you. The figures from your own Department are against you, and yet you come and introduce a measure to try and force conscription on the people. We entered this war with great ideals. We entered it to oppose German militarism; to repel the invaders of Belgium. We wanted Belgium restored and indemnified, but we do not want it to be done by you endeavouring to place the conscript system upon Australia—the very system on which German militarism is based. There are the points at issue. Where you differ from your stand when you were sent into the House is with regard to your pledge. You ask what were you pledged to. You said in the pledge which you signed—

I hereby pledge myself not to oppose the candidate selected by the recognised political Labour organization.

You pledged yourself to that.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—When I entered this Chamber?

Mr. HAMPSON.—Yes.

Mr. PALMER.—I rise to order. My point of order is that the honorable mem-

ber is continually addressing his remarks apparently to me individually, and not to the Committee, through the Chair.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member will please address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. HAMPSON.—Yes, sir. If God had only given him as much brains as the devil has given him impudence, he would be a decent member.

Mr. FOWLER.—I rise to order. I heard the honorable member for Bendigo use a distinctly objectionable expression towards the honorable member for Echuca.

Mr. HAMPSON.—What was it?

Mr. FOWLER.—The honorable member said, "If God had only given him as much brains as the devil had given him impudence." I should say that he does not require to be reminded of the exact words he used. He knows well enough that his observation was distinctly objectionable, and therefore I ask that it should be withdrawn.

Mr. PALMER.—As such words have been addressed to the Committee by the honorable member, sir, I expect a withdrawal of them. The honorable member tried to drive his son to the war, and yet he is against conscription.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—As the honorable member has taken exception to the use of the words, I ask the honorable member for Bendigo to withdraw them.

Mr. FOWLER.—On a point of order, sir, it is not required that the honorable member for Echuca should take exception to the use of the words. The Standing Orders provide that an expression of that kind should be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—I must ask that the expression be withdrawn.

Dr. MALONEY.—Speaking to the point of order, sir—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—I do not want to hear the honorable member, as I am quite prepared to give a ruling.

Dr. MALONEY.—Do you, sir, rule that I cannot speak?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—Will the honorable member resume his seat?

Dr. MALONEY.—Do you, sir, rule that I cannot speak to the point of order?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—I do not want to hear the honorable member. I am quite prepared to give a ruling. The honorable member for Echuca regards an expression used by the honorable member for Bendigo as offensive, and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. HAMPSON.—If the honorable member for Echuca regards the remark as offensive, I will withdraw it. I will not ask for a withdrawal of what he said about me, but I will reply to it. I understood the honorable member to say that I endeavoured to drive my son to the war.

Mr. PALMER.—So you did.

Mr. HAMPSON.—That statement is distinctly untrue, and now that you have raised the question you might allow me to reply.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member must withdraw the word "untrue" as applied to the statement of another honorable member.

Mr. HAMPSON.—Well, sir, the statement is absolutely incorrect.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—Will the honorable member continue his speech?

Mr. HAMPSON.—I may say that my son is in New Zealand and is married. When he was leaving here I told him that rather than be conquered I would prefer to be dead. I said that Germany would never conquer Australia if all persons were like myself.

Mr. POYNTON.—Is it true that the statement is in the letter?

Mr. HAMPSON.—I told my son that I would never use my vote to force a man to go to the war.

Mr. POYNTON.—That is not in the letter.

Mr. HAMPSON.—Yes, it is.

Mr. POYNTON.—Read the letter.

Mr. HAMPSON.—Never mind about reading the letter; the statement is there. I have held that opinion all along, and I have never shifted one point, while others did. I opposed conscription because I believe in keeping the civil law supreme. During all the ages there has been a contest—with the military power at times and with the clerical power at other times. These conflicts have been in the interests of the people. It has taken a long struggle to make the civil law supreme. It is only in the last desperate

resort that a nation should go for compulsion. That was not the position in Australia. You have never had an example like it in the world.

Mr. PALMER.—I rise to order. The honorable member is continually addressing me as "you." I object to being addressed in that way.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member will address his remarks to the Chair and not to any honorable member individually.

Mr. HAMPSON.—I was not referring to the honorable member as an individual. When I used the word "you" I meant those honorable members on the other side who support his ideas. Through the whole course of human history the struggle has been to keep the civil law, which we have established in this country on a better basis than has any other country I know of, supreme. Therefore, we oppose the idea of carrying military power and rule to the extent of taking men by the scruff of the neck, as it is sometimes said, and running them into camp. It was the attempt of the Prime Minister to try to introduce this new principle which led to the whole of the recent trouble. Here is what the honorable member for Denison said in this House only so late as the 14th September last—

I believe that it has been said in my electorate that I will be opposed, and that in a three-cornered fight the Liberals will win. There will be no three-cornered fight, because, if I am not selected by the Labour party to stand in the Labour interest, I will simply go back to my calling as a worker.

Where is the Labour party selecting him now?—

If, for example, the election is on a Saturday—

Mr. POYNTON.—You ought to be concerned about your own election. Leave his election alone.

Mr. HAMPSON.—The next will be the fifth election which I have fought in five years. That is a better average than most members of the House have. I hear honorable gentlemen on the other side talk about the necessity to be unanimous here, and to have only one party. I remember that, upon the death of Mr. Arthur, it was the Liberals who fought the constituency I now represent, and did so with all their might. They did the same thing when the seat for the Grampians was vacant. Was

anything said then in regard to having unanimity here and one party? No. When the Liberals thought that they had an opportunity to grab any seat they contested it. At the present time they are pursuing the same course. What, for instance, are they doing at Corio and at Ballarat? The Win-the-War party, or the National Federation, which is the Liberal party under another name, are going to contest the seats of the two honorable gentlemen who are doing their duty at the front. What is the sneer which we get from the Prime Minister? He says that neither of these two honorable members has been under shell fire.

Mr. POYNTON.—That is true.

Mr. HAMPSON.—Yes. You cheer the man you get from the street and put in khaki, and say that he is a great man, and is doing his duty to his country. But because you have two Labour politicians in khaki, from Corio and Ballarat, the Prime Minister sneers at them, and says that they have never been under fire. I will return now to the speech made by the honorable member for Denison in September last. He continued—

If, for example, the election is on a Saturday, I shall, if I am not nominated, go back again on the Monday to work at my trade.

Did he say the same thing to-night? No; he is going to contest the seat, and he will get all those influences which opposed him at the last election to support him. He said—

If I am not selected to support Labour that is not my fault; but I shall not come back here supporting anybody else.

I can imagine the honorable member telling the crowd at Hobart from a platform a similar tale to that which he has been relating here to-night. But it is idle for him to act in that way. The disturbing influence in the politics of Australia arose from the fact that our party selected a chairman who became Prime Minister when Mr. Fisher resigned the position to take the High Commissionership. The honorable member for West Sydney went to the country on the important and vital issue of conscription. No doubt he was thoroughly convinced that it should be introduced. He went Home, and came back, and I suppose he thought that he would introduce into Australia a measure similar to that which

his friend, Mr. Lloyd George, introduced into Great Britain; but he reckoned without the intelligence of the Australian public and the force of public opinion. He came back from the referendum, after slandering his own supporters, who had worked with him for twenty-five years in the Labour movement. It is twenty-three years since I spoke for the right honorable gentleman when he first won a seat in Sydney. During the referendum campaign he used such vile language; he was so vituperative towards those who had worked with him for years, that it created a feeling of bitterness, and the majority of the party felt that he was not fitted for the position of leader any longer. When we met after the referendum campaign, what broke the Labour party was this: A motion was moved for the deposition of the right honorable gentleman from the leadership. He knew that if the motion were carried it would depose him from the position of Prime Minister at the same time. When he would not submit to the will of the majority of the party he took up his papers, and asked those who agreed with him to walk out of the room. These men deserted the party; they were not pushed out, and what the Prime Minister has suffered, and so on and so forth, is the result of his own doings. He was not prepared to submit to majority rule in the party. He denied the right of the majority to depose him. He took out the Prime Ministership in his pocket, and those who followed him left the Labour party. A stop-gap Ministry was formed to carry on the Government. Mr. Hughes saw the Governor-General the same night, and the names of the new team were published next morning. There was then thrown on the Liberal party the choice between depositing and following the Hughes party. For a few months they followed it. Then came the invitation to attend the Imperial Conference. But because Mr. Hughes felt that as things stood he could not go Home in safety, a Coalition was arranged. The Liberals and the Hughesites, who deserted from the Labour ranks, say that they are going to restore responsible government. Many Liberals are dissatisfied because of the recent scandals, but Mr. Hughes cannot be deposed while he holds the Prime

Ministership in his pocket. If he were, everything would go into the melting pot again. Therefore Australia is being scoured to find a seat for this gentleman, who cannot face the constituents who elected him to this Parliament.

Mr. POYNTON.—There is Bendigo.

Mr. HAMPSON.—Let him come to Bendigo. If the people of Bendigo do not want me to represent them, let them say so.

Mr. RODGERS.—The honorable member will be fully occupied.

Mr. HAMPSON.—I have lost so many elections that I cannot count my defeats; but I have won four times in succession, and on three occasions my candidature, instead of costing money, was profitable to those who supported me, because more was subscribed than had to be expended. On the first occasion when I won, the election cost only £8. Not many get a seat in Parliament on those terms. Indeed, I hear that a large number cudgel their brains to find ways of bringing their election accounts within the legal limitation, and actually spend more than the law permits. I did not rise to refer to these matters, about which a good deal will be said during the electoral campaign, but was prompted to do so by the remarks of the honorable member for Denison. Sometimes I feel like the honorable member for Darwin, who said that he thought he had a constructive rather than a destructive brain. Having seen so much in my trip round the world, I feel that I ought to make public more information. The censorship that has been exercised in this country seems to me to be absurd in many respects. I was pleased with a sub-leader in to-day's *Argus*, which showed that the more you take an educated Democracy into your confidence the better will be their response. Of course, you must not make public information that will be of use to your enemies, but if you withhold information that should be made public, you create distrust and suspicion, and, instead of assisting, interfere with the conduct of the war. I have never understood why the fact that in the early part of the war we assisted New Zealand and South Africa should be hushed up. It would have a good effect on our public to be told that we were able to produce .303 rifle cartridges, which could be made use of. I was surprised to see what was being done in England, Scotland, and Ireland in the making of shells. In

Ireland, even during the rebellion, shells were being turned out more cheaply than in Great Britain. A factory was built in four weeks, and I saw there 700 persons, who were fed on the premises. The machinery that was being used had been commandeered from jewellers' shops, technical schools, and all sorts of places. Women and girls were being paid two and three times as much as they had previously earned in the linen mills, cotton mills, and biscuit factories, and in domestic service. What has occurred in the Old Country is a triumph in organization. We pride ourselves on being smart people, but we have utterly failed in this matter. There is an exhibition of Australian-made shell cases in the Queen's Hall which, to the uninitiated, may be striking, although actually it shows the futility of what we have done. The Massey-Harris Company, in Canada, has a factory in which men, not women and girls, are employed, every man being paid not less than 1s. 4d., or 28 cents, per hour. The pay is higher than the trade union rates, and the head man told me that there had not been a strike for twenty years. The factory is 1,000 miles from the seaboard, and makes shells at a profit at a price of 6s., or 1½ dollars each. It commenced when the price was 13s. 6d. per shell—the 18-lb. high explosive.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They would not give us a chance here.

Mr. HAMPSON.—We failed utterly and abjectly. Millions of money have been poured into Canada in payment for munitions which she has produced. Australia has done well in finding men—no other Dominion has done better—and in raising money; but in the production of shells we have pitifully failed.

Mr. MATHEWS.—That is the fault of the British Government.

Mr. HAMPSON.—It is not. I was interested in this matter before leaving Australia. I took the trouble to go to Newcastle and see the Broken Hill Steel Works. They were producing steel there which they offered to us for £10 10s. per ton. Our shells were turned down because of a microscopic hair-line flaw in the steel. The manager of the works told me, in his Yankee way, "I don't believe it is a flaw at all. You can't make steel without it." We saw men in Sheffield chiselling out this flaw. Whilst that was given as one of the great reasons why we

did not produce shells in Australia, the Government at the present time are sending this identical steel away to Great Britain, with our artisans, to have it made into shells over there. You, sir, as an Australian with patriotic blood tingling in your veins, will not tell me that that is a right policy to pursue. To send our raw material and our skilled workmen away from the country at a time like this is a huge blunder.

Mr. BAMFORD.—What raw material are we sending away?

Mr. HAMPSON.—Steel.

Mr. BAMFORD.—No; it is being made into rails.

Mr. HAMPSON.—We are sending away some steel rails, I admit, but I am speaking of our lamentable failure to produce shells. I talked this matter over with the Minister for Defence. I made inquiries of the Victorian Railways Commissioners, and interviewed the Premier of this State on the subject before I went away to the Old Country. I endeavoured to induce the authorities to undertake the manufacture of shells at the Newport Workshops, where there are thousands of skilled employees. I wanted them to get into the shell manufacturing business at the time the agitation arose. I found, however, that their idea at that time was to turn out only 250 shells per week from a concern of that description. They thought that if they made gauges for private employers they would be doing their part in the war. It is no wonder that we could not make any headway when people in authority took such a pinhole view of the situation. The Massey-Harris people are turning out shells in millions, though they got into the business, as I said, at 13s. 6d. per shell body, when we were offered £1 1s. They put in £60,000 worth of new machinery, and made a profit out of their first order sufficient to pay for the whole of the machinery. Now they run a hospital in London, give thousands of pounds to patriotic funds, and have got their price for shells down to 1½ dollars, or 6s., and are still making a profit. The organization of their scientific and technical work has been such that, while wages have risen, the cost of production has gone down. They get their steel a little cheaper than we could get it. They pay about £8 per ton, whilst the steel here costs £10 10s. per ton; but the increased cost here should not have been any bar to our successful

production of shells. They are paying higher prices in England.

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

Dr. MALONEY.—I think we should have a quorum. [Quorum formed.]

Mr. RODGERS (Wannon) [10.0].—The Treasurer has placed before the Committee and the country a very candid statement of the finances of the Commonwealth. It is right that, at this stage in the prosecution of the war, Australia should stand four-square to her responsibilities, and her financial responsibility is by no means a light one. The Treasurer has been very candid, and his statement is full. He has shown us that, with our ordinary obligations for services, plus the expenditure for the prosecution of the war, we must, in addition to ordinary revenue, find each year a sum of £6,800,000 as interest on the loans, &c. That is reckoning our war indebtedness at the figure at which it stands to-day. We know that that debt is going to accumulate, and consequently the Treasurer's estimate of £6,800,000 additional revenue required will be vastly increased; and the people of this country should be prepared for the increased taxation which must follow. I wish to deal very briefly with recent developments in the political life of this country. I do not propose to trace the history of all the happenings since the declaration of war, except to say that there was a period during which I think the whole of the citizens of Australia had but one object in view, and that was to stand to their obligations to prosecute the war with the utmost effort of which the nation was capable. Unfortunately, that condition of affairs does not exist to-day. Whether the decision to consult the people as to the methods to be adopted by which we should win the war was right or wrong—and it is too late now to hold a *post-mortem* upon it—it is sufficient to say that the taking of the referendum divided the people of Australia into two great hostile camps. That is greatly to be regretted. The attitude of the party to which I belong, since it appealed to the people for authority at the last election to conduct the war, and since that authority being given to our opponents in politics, has been to follow the Government in every measure they believed to be necessary for the prosecution of the war. For over two years the Liberal party has been the

shadow following the figure, at first, while Mr. Fisher was Leader of the Labour party, subsequently when he was succeeded by Mr. Hughes, and to-day when Mr. Hughes leads the present combined party. Our attitude, and the forces behind us, have been consistent in this regard throughout. But, unfortunately for the country, there has been a family quarrel amongst those opposed to us in politics. That family quarrel has placed Australia in such a position that we are not now prosecuting the war with the same unanimity and vigour as we did before.

Dr. MALONEY.—I draw attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. RODGERS.—As a result of this unfortunate cleavage we have to-day the Official Labour party, the Hughes party, and the Liberal party; and the Liberal party and the Hughes party have coalesced for the purpose of prosecuting the war. There has been no fusion, and no attempt at fusion. We have not attempted to put our two platforms together and come to a common agreement. I have no authority to bargain away the principles that brought me into this House, and I have no intention of doing that. The only reason why I have voted for the present arrangement is because I believe that of the members of the old Australian Labour party the keenest and most earnest in the prosecution of the war are to be found on this side of the House, and because it little matters who may be the individual placed in charge of the prosecution of the war, so long as he has been elected to his position by the country, and is sincere and patriotic in the performance of his duties. The Liberal party and the forces in the country behind it are prepared to put aside their individual and political ideals for the time being, until we get the great struggle over. It will then be time enough to see where we stand, so far as domestic politics are concerned. I was one of those who, when the recent negotiations were under consideration, both voted and worked earnestly for a National Government of the three parties.

Mr. BURNS.—Because you wished to kill them.

Mr. RODGERS.—Kill whom?

Mr. BURNS.—The National party.

Mr. RODGERS.—Now that the honorable member has made that interjection, I may say that the object we had in view was the patching up of this family quar-

rel, and the Leader of the Official Labour party and the party itself must accept the responsibility for its continuance by declining to take their share in the task imposed upon us along with our comrades and relatives who are in the trenches today. It is all very well for honorable members to say, "We could not work with Hughes or the Leader of the Liberal party." Their friends and their relatives in the trenches are fighting side by side with our relatives. All are members of the great Anzac party. They are sinking their private differences as to political matters which they held before they left these shores. They are facing the same odds and sharing the same dangers. It is lamentable that here we are rent asunder while our fellows are fighting together side by side for us and their country.

Mr. MATHEWS.—We are fighting for them here.

Mr. RODGERS.—Notwithstanding all the bitterness that has taken place, all the vile attacks upon, and the vendetta against, the Prime Minister, and certain members of his party who have followed him, I still think that even yet it is possible for Australia to square up and face her obligations as one united country. Therefore, I say it is unfortunate that once again the Commonwealth is to be lashed into one of those turmoils such as we experienced during the recent referendum campaign. Even now attempts are being made by the Tudor party to resurrect the old cry of conscription. I do not know how far it is going to help my friends opposite, but if there is anything in the democratic principle of the majority having its way, we should respect the view of the people once it has been given, or wipe out the provision in our Constitution that provides for the holding of a referendum. The military service referendum was taken in the constitutional way, and, though I bitterly regret the result of it, we are bound to accept the verdict of the people; otherwise I do not know how we could carry on the government of the country. Last night I listened to a very interesting speech from the honorable member for Bourke. It was a truly characteristic speech from the honorable member. He understands the art of politics as well as any honorable member opposite; in fact, he has now no equal over there. On the eve of an election, he knows how best to "rig"

political platforms. He knows the value of a placard. His object last night was as patent as could be. He did not care anything about conscription for the time being. Some one else could play with that. He gave the lead to his party. He said, "Never mind the Watson business. There in detail stands the statement of Senator Watson, and there in detail stands the statement of the Prime Minister." When the first statement was made in this chamber by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, and in another place by an honorable senator, I came here on the following morning for the purpose of casting a vote in a certain direction. I did not know that the Senator Watson business was to come on, and I asked a question whether, in view of the alarming statements made, the Prime Minister proposed to refute them. Not for all the tea in China would I have cast a vote to extend the life of Parliament had not the Prime Minister emphatically denied the statements that had been made. He has done so, and I accept his word against those who made statements against him. In the same way, the honorable member for Bourke last night placed no reliance on Senator Watson's statement. He knew very well that the people would see the Prime Minister's statement in rebuttal, that the statements of the President of the Senate and of Senator Pearce would also be on record, and that the people were likely to believe the statements of the three against that of Senator Watson; and so he went "nap" on ex-Senator Ready. He made no charge in reference to this matter. In fact, no charge has yet been made in connexion with ex-Senator Ready. He simply talked of the fact that this gentleman had been spirited out of public life. Very well. I have a proposition to make. Ex-Senator Ready is still a member of the Political Labour party; he is still a member of the Official Labour party; he has not resigned and he has not been cast out. Why, then, do not honorable members arraign him? Why do they not call him before his political masters as the honorable member for Maribyrnong, who only went a step or two outside the Caucus room, was called to account by his political masters? Why do they not call ex-Senator Ready before them and have an investigation? They make the charge concerning him, and, therefore, the responsibility is on their heads. They have the machinery for dealing with him. He is

still a member of their party, and has not resigned.

Mr. MATHEWS.—He has gone.

Mr. RODGERS.—They can call him to account. Why do they not do so? They tell the country that this man has betrayed them and their party, yet they decline to lay any charge against him in their own movement. Why? Because they wish to keep the thing dangling over people's heads by means of insinuation, innuendo, and suspicion. It will give them a new placard for the elections. The great Australian Labour party, as they call themselves, have an obligation to this country, because they have charged one of their men with corruption, and, after all, he is a comrade of theirs, and fought with them in the political trenches. The responsibility of substantiating that charge is theirs, although they claim that he has left them and gone over to the enemy. I propose to pass over that business, but it is a sorry spectacle to see this young nation in its present internal condition while a life and death struggle is going on in the other part of the world. It is not creditable to Australia. We have stood high in the eyes of the world. The achievements of our battalions in their great contests have put this country on a high pinnacle. When, in this young Democracy, 300,000 men jumped to arms of their own accord, they put on record one of the finest performances possible for a young nation, but other countries will judge us by the way we are acting while those men are fighting, and a sorry spectacle we cut. The condition of war has necessitated many important changes in the conduct and management of our internal business. I have always, in times of peace, been a keen believer in the individualistic idea, but, in times of war, all must stand by the nation. It should be "all in," and I would have gone further than most of the people who put the proposal for a special referendum. I cannot believe that it is right and fair that on a particular band of people who happen to fall between certain ages, and on their relatives, should fall the responsibility for the safety of the country in war time. If in times of peace individuals have the fullest freedom to enrich themselves they should, in times of war, give their brains, services, ability, and all their resources to their

country. I believe in the fuller measure of national service that Mr. Lloyd George has imposed on the Old Country. In the re-arrangement of our internal affairs that I spoke of, we have had to bring into existence the grouping or pooling system. We have had to create a pool in connexion with nearly all our big primary industries, and the people have not objected. Individual growers of wool and wheat and producers of metals and other articles have not objected to the fact that freedom to make their own individual bargains has been taken from them. In the main, I approve of the principle as a war necessity. The conduct of the Wheat Pool has been a very big matter, considering that the machinery had to be improvised and the Pool brought into existence without much time to spare. Slight irregularities have occurred in some matters, and in regard to them, differences of opinion may have arisen, but I rather regret to have to call attention to the fact that, whereas the managers of the Pool became trustees for the individuals who place their wheat in it, they have, in some cases, allowed themselves to be turned into a debt-collecting agency. Scrip which should have gone to the grower of wheat has been handed over by them to the State Governments, even when those State Governments held no lien over it.

Mr. CORSER.—Some State Governments demanded it.

Mr. RODGERS.—By so doing the State Government commits a breach of trust. The wheat is put in the Pool by the farmer on terms specified by Act of Parliament in this Chamber, but the managers of the Pool arrange with the States in some cases, instead of sending on the certificate as directed by the individual grower, to hand it over to the State Government, so that the Government may hold a lien over it for the payment of certain obligations. There are many young settlements in this country where the farmers are beginners, who have had a terrible struggle to get through, unlike old districts with plenty of cash reserves backed up by many years of settlement. They desired to arrange their finances, and when their scrip is sent to other hands dislocation of their affairs takes place. I can give a specific case. A young farmer had 900 odd bushels of wheat in the Pool. He made an arrange-

ment with the bank to anticipate the arrival of the scrip to pay his obligations and commitments, for which he had the money he expected to receive all parcelled out. He had made particular arrangements with the State Government with respect to certain moneys owing to them. Notwithstanding all this, the scrip did not arrive at his bank, but was handed over to the State Government, and all his private arrangements were upset. This struggling farmer had to pay 1ls. 6d. for second-hand cornsacks and 2s. dockage for using second-hand bags, so that he was landed for 13s. 6d. That is not the way to help struggling farmers over their difficulties. I was to-day a member of a deputation which waited on the Treasurer to endeavour to get the Government at this important time to guarantee a minimum price for the scrip representing the production of the last two years. We pointed out that a system had sprung up of speculators endeavouring to buy the scrip. The firms who ordinarily deal in wheat are forbidden to operate in the scrip. The millers have to buy from the Pool, and cannot rightly bargain in the scrip. The big shipping agents are agents and confidential advisers for the Government, and therefore cannot rightly buy it. There is therefore no money in the ordinary sense in the trade to buy scrip, but many speculators have taken advantage of the fact that the farmers have no knowledge of the prospective value of their scrip, and have bought it as low as 7d., before the last 6d. advance was made, although 1s. has still to be paid on it. We hope the Treasurer will see his way to fix a definite price, as has been done in Great Britain. That will be a stimulus to increase the area, and where the expenses have mounted up for cornsacks, and so forth, it will give the farmer an absolute guarantee as to the return. I do not say that the farmer should have any such guarantee before he puts in his crop, but in the wider interests of the State itself it is important to follow the policy adopted in the Mother Country. The Wool Pool is another important arrangement, which will handle £30,000,000 worth of money. It is, of course, impossible for every man to be paid at the same time, but some have been paid, and others are not likely to get their money until May, or, perhaps, June.

Mr. LIVINGSTON.—Do they not pay fourteen days after appraisement?

Mr. RODGERS.—Unfortunately in some cases the appraisements will not be made until May or June.

Dr. MALONEY.—I draw attention to the fact that there is not a quorum present. [Quorum formed.]

Mr. RODGERS.—In order to obviate the inequality of treatment to the various wool-growers, I advocated at an early stage that out of the special equalization fund that has been created some provision might be made for the payment of interest to those whose clips are not appraised until May or June, or late in the season. There is another fund that falls into the Wool Pool by which this might be done. I refer to the appraisement of skins; and to the provision that, if skins realize in the Old Country more than the appraised price here, the surplus does not go to the grower of the skins, but into the Wool Pool. That fund might very rightly be ear-marked to pay the interest in the way I suggest. I now wish to refer to the question of repatriation, and it is one on which I am not in full agreement with the Treasurer or the Government. I have, as much as any man in the country, contended that a scheme of repatriation should have been taken in hand before now. There are already 25,000 returned soldiers in this country; and no doubt a lot of work has been done, and many men dealt with. Splendid work has been done by private individuals, who gave freely of their time and ability; but that is not sufficient. All the money allotted up to date for repatriation is £321,000.

Mr. MATHEWS.—No, no; there has been spent only £21,000.

Mr. RODGERS.—The sum of £325,000 has been placed at the disposal of the authorities.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Yes, but not spent.

Mr. RODGERS.—The sum of £325,000 has been placed at the disposal of the trustees. If that be spread over 25,000 men, it means £13 a head; while if it be spread over two-thirds, it means £20 a head; and over half of them, £26 a head. That is amelioration, not repatriation. If we give a man a few pounds in this way, he will simply nurse his wounds and curse the country. These men ought to be absorbed in our industrial life. I know that Senator Millen is taking the matter in hand, and will grapple with it. If we allow this matter to drift, we shall be blameworthy, for, unless they are looked after, the men will simply swell the ranks of the unemployed. Although

the War Councils will not be suspended, Parliament is likely to be out of session for at least two months; and we ought to clearly realize the difference there is between relieving and absorbing our returned soldiers.

Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [10.32].—My reading of the Treasurer's statement is altogether different from that of the honorable member for Wannon. In that statement, on page 6, we are told that the expenditure in connexion with repatriation to 31st January of this year has been £21,000, leaving a balance of £304,000. Then we are further told that the administration of the Soldiers' Repatriation Fund has cost £7,500. There has been an enormous amount of work done voluntarily; and yet, for an expenditure of £21,000, we find an administrative cost of £7,500. We promised our soldiers that they would be looked after when they returned; and I am certain we all know of hundreds of deserving cases. I have not a word to say against the officials who have the conduct of this work. They have a big job, mean well, and have done much; but I cannot agree that the cost of administration, in view of the amount of expenditure, is a fair one. I cannot conceive where the honorable member for Wannon gets an expenditure of over £300 000. I marvel at the fact that, up till the present time, they have expended only £21,000 in this direction. I know two blind men who are waiting to be placed on a piece of ground with a house apiece. I know a dozen returned soldiers who have lost the opportunity to acquire businesses because they could not get the money with which to purchase them. Repatriation is one of those things which the Win-the-War party will have to look to better than it has been doing. During this debate there has been a fit of abuse indulged in by honorable members on both sides of the chamber, and a good deal has been said about the personal hate of the Prime Minister by members of the Australian Labour party. But the fact is that amongst that party I have heard very little personal ill-will expressed towards the right honorable gentleman. We do say that he has wrecked our movement for his own personal aggrandizement, and for the purpose of elevating himself above all others. Officially, we are justified in entertaining strong feelings against him on that account. He asked those who agreed with him to follow him out of the memorable

Caucus meeting, and they did so. Had he alone left the room, there would have been no disruption of the party. The right honorable gentleman never loses an opportunity, either here or elsewhere, of traducing members of the party on this side of the chamber, as well as the organizations outside. I could understand such abuse coming from the honorable member for Flinders, or the right honorable member for Swan, who for ten years have hurled anathema at the Labour movement. But the Prime Minister is one of those who assisted to build up that movement, and who always insisted that no man was superior to it. Yet at the first opportunity he attempted to smash it.

Mr. LYNCH.—Does the honorable member think that he did so wantonly?

Mr. MATHEWS.—I do.

Mr. THOMAS.—What pledge did he break?

Mr. MATHEWS.—He left the party.

Mr. THOMAS.—He was driven out. He was declared disloyal by the executive.

Mr. MATHEWS.—It is well known that the Prime Minister at a certain stage of that Caucus meeting announced that he intended to leave it, and invited his supporters to follow him.

Mr. LYNCH.—Does the honorable member say that the party had power to retain him as their leader after he had been expelled by the outside organizations?

Mr. MATHEWS.—He had been expelled by his league when we met at that meeting, and sat under him.

Mr. THOMAS.—And it was at once moved that he should be deposed.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Mr. Hughes was the chairman of a duly constituted meeting of the Labour party.

Mr. THOMAS.—What was the first motion submitted?

Mr. MATHEWS.—It was a motion calling upon the Prime Minister to make a statement on the position, which he refused to do. Evidently he desired to ascertain the temper of that meeting, and I admit that he soon got it. Yet for hours he sat in the chair, and left the room of his own accord, after inviting his supporters to follow him.

Mr. WEBSTER.—After a number of men had told him that they had to vote as they had been instructed.

Mr. HANNAN.—That statement was never made.

Mr. WEBSTER.—It was, and the honorable member was one of those who made it.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The Prime Minister deliberately broke up the Labour movement by inviting his supporters to leave the meeting with him. Is it any wonder that, in the circumstances, there is a strong feeling against him by members of the Australian Labour party? But so far as personal friendships go, there is no sign of a “rift in the lute.” Yet the Prime Minister tells us that against him alone is the whole strength of the Labour movement directed. How many Labour members would have been in this Parliament today but for the solidarity of the Labour movement? Wantonly the Prime Minister broke up the movement, and he must accept the blame for so doing. In the circumstances, all his nasty remarks concerning the Labour party go by the board. How many times during the past ten years has he been told by those with whom he is now associated that a Labour representative was not allowed to exercise his brains—that the Caucus stultified him? Yet he submitted to all that sort of criticism until quite recently.

Mr. LYNCH.—Was not the honorable member himself the first man in the Caucus to demand a free hand in this place?

Mr. MATHEWS.—I wish to deal with that phase of the question. The honorable member for Denison referred to it in my absence, but was good enough to tell me that he intended to do so. I am very pleased that he did bring the matter forward. He has strengthened my position in this House.

Mr. THOMAS.—And in the coming election?

Mr. MATHEWS.—Yes. The honorable member told me the other night that I was only an anti-conscriptionist to save my political skin.

Mr. THOMAS.—I certainly did not.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Well, such a taunt has been thrown at me in this House. Let me explain my attitude in regard to conscription. I was born and reared in the British Army, which was brought together on the voluntary system. The British soldiery, with whom I associated for years, were always pointing proudly to the fact that Britain had a volunteer army as against the conscript army of the Continent. Conscription was talked of sometimes in Great Britain, and there was such a thing as men being compelled to enlist because of being thrown

out of work. There was also a measure of conscription in connexion with the militia; but I always found that every man in the British Army was against conscription. That was the atmosphere in which I was reared. When this war broke out, that fact did not prevent me from standing side by side with others in the endeavour to put before those who were fit to go to the front the seriousness of our position. Night after night I did that in common with other members of Parliament; and, because I did so, I was told that it was easy to tell by my speeches that I was at heart a conscriptionist, but was afraid to say so. To that charge I replied that I went on the public platform to advocate voluntary enlistment because of my utter detestation of conscription.

Mr. WEBSTER.—What would have happened in this war if England had not been conscripted?

Mr. MATHEWS.—I do not think that conscription has placed an additional man on the fields of France. The only effect that conscription in England has had has been in connexion with industry. I come now to the Caucus meeting. When the Prime Minister saw the light, and was talking of taking a vote on this question of conscription, I said that I refused to vote upon it because, even if the proposition were carried, I would not support it. Rather than do so, I would have gone out of the Labour movement, and would not have opposed the man who was selected to take my place. I was not going to throw to the winds the opinion that I had held for years on this question. One of my principal reasons for opposing conscription is that I desire that justice shall be done to those who enlist. So far as I am concerned, it is a matter, not of sentiment, but of hard facts. Men who go to the front are not treated fairly; their wives and families are not treated fairly, and they themselves are not when they return. We already have 20,000 men awaiting repatriation. If men could be compelled to enlist, there would be no repatriation and no 6s. a day for them. The *Hororata*, which left here towards the end of last year, carried a large number of recruits for the front, and for twenty-four days those men were supplied with rotten meat. On Christmas Day, the men committed it to the deep with musical honours. I complained of this to-day in the Parliament House grounds to a gentleman who is endeavouring to do

well by Australia, and his only reply was, "Mathews, we have to win the war." Are we going to win it by supplying our men with bad meat?

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—It is the Queensland Labour Government that is supplying the meat.

Mr. TUDOR.—No; this meat was supplied in Victoria. I was a Minister at the time, and I know the firms responsible for it. I put a stop to such meat going away.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—The best Queensland meat is going into the boats to-day.

Mr. MATHEWS.—On every transport we have an officer of high rank. Brigadier-General Williams is to leave in charge of a transport, and I know him well enough to believe that if he found he had only bad meat for his men, he would put into the first port and obtain a fresh supply. When the officer in charge of the men on the *Hororata* knew that bad meat was being supplied, he should have made for the nearest port. The men responsible for the supply of such stuff should have been hanged. If we had compulsion, the position would be worse than it is. In one particular camp on Salisbury Plain, the men for five weeks did not receive sufficient food. The fool in charge of them did not know how to improve the position; but the officer who replaced him soon made a change. If men could be compelled to enlist, they would soon be treated as the German conscripts are treated whenever the opportunity offers. The authorities have a nice way of dealing with men in the Army who try to redress wrongs. The honorable member for Denison, while Assistant Minister for Defence, took up one case for us—the case of Quill, Fountain, and Dalton—and reduced to eighteen months their sentence of three years' imprisonment. They were sentenced to three years' imprisonment for refusing to go to a waterless place without taking a sufficient supply of water. They had had experience of it, and when they urged that they should take something more than their water-bottles with them, the sergeant in charge said, "I have been ordered to take out this detachment, and you must go." This was somewhere on the Canal. The men brought the matter before a commissioned officer. Quill, Fountain, and Dalton were elected as their spokesmen, and their reward was a sentence of three years' imprisonment. They were sent back to Australia, where we have a nasty Parliament which intervenes in such

cases. The result is that their sentences have been reduced. But no other men under sentence are to be sent back to Australia. They are to remain where there is no one to advocate leniency or justice.

Mr. LYNCH.—This is a good recruiting argument.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—It will bring in a lot of recruits.

Mr. MATHEWS.—No doubt. That is why I say to the Win-the-War party that they should perfect their repatriation scheme, and look after the men who enlist.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—Does the honorable member want us to win this war?

Mr. MATHEWS.—My patriotism goes further than the mere lip-patriotism of the Win-the-War party. They will not tell about the rotten meat that was served to the men on the *Hororata*, and that is one reason why there is trouble over this question.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—One would think they never got anything else but rotten meat.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I know that that is not the case. But I say these things ought to be remedied.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—It was unnecessary for them to eat the rotten meat. They could have gone without it.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They could not get anything else. One reason why I am not a conscriptionist is because even under the voluntary system the men are not treated properly. Another reason is that because Australia is different from any other part of the Empire. The honorable member for Bendigo explained the position. Canada has been making shells by the million. And what a nice attempt we made! The British Government, however, are now taking our artisans and our steel to England to manufacture shells there. We were told that we were too far away from England to undertake this work, that they were altering the gauges too often, and that we could not get the proper formula for the steel. I do not blame the Minister for Defence for this, because as far back as October, 1914, he endeavoured to get from the British Government formula for the steel for shrapnel shells, but without success. Mr. McKay, who took an interest in the Munitions Committee, went away to America, and he brought back with him a formula which was found to be obsolete and useless. The engineers in my electorate then came to me to arrange a de-

putation to the Minister for Defence, but the Minister said it was no good, because he could not get the formula from the British Government. I will tell the House why he could not get that formula. It was because it is a trade secret of Armstrong's, and the Vickers, Maxims, and the rest, who are making the shells in England.

Mr. GREGORY.—Then how did they manage to get the formula in Canada, Japan, and the United States?

Mr. MATHEWS.—They must have got it afterwards, but Australia could not get it. I want to know why this formula for shrapnel shells is held by private firms, while men by the million are shedding their blood for the Empire.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—I do not think that that was the trouble in Australia. I believe the steel was defective.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Of course it was, because we could not get the proper formula.

Mr. GREGORY.—It has taken you a long time to find this out.

Mr. MATHEWS.—No, it has not. I mentioned the matter eighteen months ago. The honorable member will find my remarks in *Hansard* showing that I brought it up then.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—You had your own Government in power then.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I know we did.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—Then why did you not do something?

Mr. MATHEWS.—I am not blaming this Government at all over the matter. I am blaming the British Government. In regard to this war, Australia is different from every other part of the Empire. Only last Saturday there appeared a cable message in the *Herald* stating that the trade in Canada had increased enormously, that the industries of the Dominion were working three shifts, producing commodities and munitions, and there was nobody out of work. In Australia, on the other hand, there are thousands of men unemployed, and I want to see these things righted.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [11.0].—I was somewhat amused at the remarks of the honorable member for Kalgoorlie in regard to the proposal on the notice-paper in the name of the right honorable the Treasurer concerning preference to unionists in the Public Service. I desire leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.4 p.m.