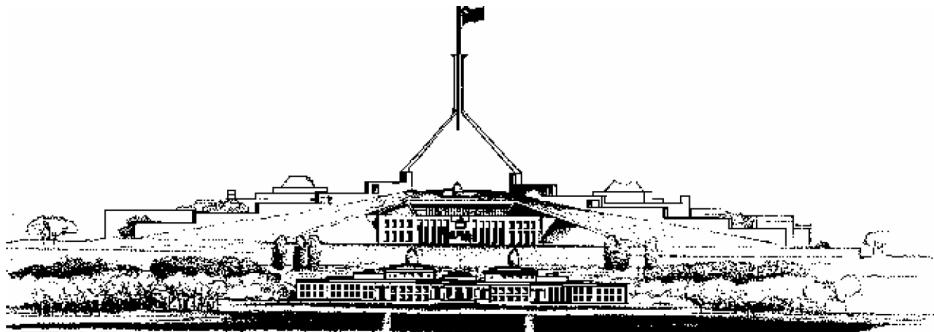




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives Official Hansard

No. 22, 1915
Friday, 4 June 1915

SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MEMBERS LIST NOT AVAILABLE

CONTENTS

FRIDAY, 4 JUNE 1915

CHAMBER

Question	SHORSTAGE OF FOOD SUPPLIES	3700
Question	OMISSION FROM NOTICE-PAPER	3700
Question	FEMALE TELEPHONE OPERATORS	3701
Question	CENSORSHIP OF NEWS	3701
Question	HIGH COMMISSIONER'S TERM	3702
Question	CRUISER BRISBANE	3702
Question	PANAMA EXPOSITION COMMISSIONERS	3702
Question	KILTED REGIMENTS	3702
Question	BROADMEADOWS CAMP	3702
Question	EXPEDITIONARY FORCES	3703
Question	PORT AUGUSTA-KALGOORLIE RAILWAY	3703
Unionists At The Front	Port Augusta to [4 June, 1915.] Kalgoorlie Railway.	3703
Question	PAY OF TROOPS AT RABAUL	3704
Question	DUTY ON SUGAR	3704
Question	BRISBANE-SYDNEY TELEPHONE	3704
Question	NORTHERN TERRITORY POPULATION	3704
Question	CASUALTY LISTS	3704
Question	RELIEF TO MAIL CONTRACTORS	3704
Supply Bill (No. 7).....		3705
Adjournment		3745

Mr. TUDOR.—The honorable member mentioned this matter to me last night, and as I had been in conversation on the subject with an officer of the Commerce Branch, I was able to procure the information contained in the following statement:—

AVERAGE CONSUMPTION, AND AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES 1914 and 1915, IN THE COMMONWEALTH, OR SUGAR, MEAT, BUTTER, BREAD.

The following figures show the average amount of foodstuffs consumed per head of the population of the Commonwealth:—

Average amount of Sugar consumed per head of population 2 lbs. per week.

Average prices—

15th April, 1914	...	2.70d. per lb.
15th April, 1915	...	2.72d. per lb.

Average amount of Meat consumed per head of population 4 lbs. per week.

Average prices—

Commonwealth	Rib Beef	Mutton
--------------	----------	--------

15th April, 1914	5.7d. per lb.	4.8d. per lb.
15th April, 1915	6.4d.	, 5.4d.

Melbourne—

January, 1915	Average 5d. per lb.
18th May, 1915	Average 8d. per lb.

Average amount of Butter consumed per head of population ½ lb. per week.

Average prices—

Commonwealth	15th April, 1914	1s. 3d. per lb.
	15th April, 1915	1s. 7d. per lb.

Melbourne—

January, 1915	...	1s. per lb.
18th May, 1915	...	1s. 11d. per lb.

Average amount of Bread consumed per head of population One 4-lb. loaf per week.

Average prices—

Commonwealth	15th April, 1914	7.5d. per 4-lb. loaf.
	15th April, 1915	9.7d. per 4-lb. loaf.

I may add that the Commonwealth Statistician gives the average consumption of meat per head per week as 5 lbs., and of sugar as 2½ lbs., but in the estimate I have taken only 4 lbs. of meat and 2 lbs. of sugar. The prices mentioned in the statement just read are the retail prices in every case.

House of Representatives.

Friday, 4 June, 1915.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

SHORTAGE OF FOOD SUPPLIES.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—Can the Minister of Trade and Customs state the consumption per week per head of the population of the Commonwealth of bread, butter, meat, and sugar, and can he inform the House what has been the movement in the prices of these commodities of late, and what any increase amounts to per head of population, or in the aggregate?

OMISSION FROM NOTICE-PAPER.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—I wish to ask you a question, Mr. Speaker, regarding an omission from the notice-paper. Yesterday I moved an amendment on the motion that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply. The amendment dealt with the providing of the necessities of life for the masses of the people at reasonable prices. After debate,

its discussion was adjourned. I submit that my amendment should appear on the notice-paper for the next day of sitting upon which it can be considered, but it does not appear at all. Not having been disposed of, it ought not, I think, to have been removed from the business-paper.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member is not in order in commenting on the subject-matter of his question. The omission of the amendment from the notice-paper is in accordance with the practice of this House, and of the House of Commons. The procedure adopted on this occasion has always been followed. Standing order No. 241 provides that after the Committee of Supply or Ways and Means has reported progress, the Speaker shall leave the chair without putting any question when the Order of the Day is read, except that on every third Thursday the first Order of the Day shall be either Supply or Ways and Means, and the question shall be proposed that the Speaker do now leave the chair. This not being the third Thursday, when the Order of the Day is read, the Speaker must leave the chair without any question being proposed, therefore the amendment has to be removed from the Orders of the Day. This is the procedure of the House of Commons as is shown in the following passage in *May*, page 610—

If an adjourned debate on the question is standing upon the notice-paper when supply, for the consideration of which in Committee it is not necessary to propose the question for the Speaker's leaving the chair, is to be taken, the order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate is removed, and procedure on the amendment lapses, in order that the Speaker, in obedience to the standing order, may leave the chair without question put.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—Do I understand that my proposition will not come before the House again?

Mr. SPEAKER.—That is so; it has lapsed.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—By leave of the House, I wish to make an explanation regarding the amendment. The Minister of Trade and Customs, when speaking to it, said that he would submit it to the Cabinet if I would promise to withdraw it, and I thereupon prepared a short statement in writing which I proposed to put before the House when asking leave to withdraw it. I had no desire to prevent any honorable member from expressing his opinion upon it. That statement, which I hold in my hand,

is to the effect that the Minister is prepared to submit the matter to the favorable consideration of the Government, and that the decision of Ministers upon it would be announced to the House. I considered that the purpose of my amendment would be largely achieved by that promise. I do not doubt the Minister; but I did not want any misunderstanding of what was in his and my own mind. As I have not been able to put before the House the statement to which I refer, and my proposal having been disposed of in a way not anticipated, I ask the Minister if he will take the course mentioned?

Mr. TUDOR.—I promised the honorable member, in the course of my remarks yesterday, to inform the Government of the amendment.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—The Minister said more than that.

Mr. TUDOR.—I shall do what I promised. I shall put the amendment before the Cabinet. I feel sure that every Minister, and every honorable member of the House, is anxious to do all that can be done to reduce the cost of living.

FEMALE TELEPHONE OPERATORS.

Mr. FENTON.—I ask the Postmaster-General if young women telephone operators are employed at the Sydney Post Office all night, and if it is intended to adopt the same practice in Melbourne?

Mr. SPENCE.—I do not think that young women are employed all night at the Sydney General Post Office, but I shall inquire. Women are employed all night at the Adelaide General Post Office at their own request.

CENSORSHIP OF NEWS.

Mr. JENSEN.—The honorable member for Henty recently asked a question regarding the censorship of news, and suggested that news which was published in England was prevented by the censors from appearing in the Australian press. I promised to make an inquiry, and I have now been furnished with the following information on the subject:—

The inference from Mr. Boyd's question is that information regarding hospitals is suppressed by the censors. This is not correct. It should be remembered that it is not the function of the censor's office to give out information.

Regarding the *Australia*, all Australian warships are now under the control of the British Admiralty, and any information is not withheld in Australia that the Admiralty may give to the public in England. Practically all information that passes the London Press Bureau is given to the public in Australia. Only in very exceptional cases is this rule departed from.

HIGH COMMISSIONER'S TERM.

Mr. GREENE.—Can the Minister of External Affairs inform the House what is the intention of the Government regarding the term of office of the High Commissioner? Is it proposed to make an announcement at an early date?

Mr. MAHON.—The fact was mentioned some time ago that the Government had extended for twelve months the term of the High Commissioner's appointment. I think it was also announced that the Government did not propose to add to that extension.

CRUISER *BRISBANE*.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Can the Assistant Minister of Defence say when the cruiser *Brisbane*, which is now being built at Fitzroy Dock, will be ready for launching?

Mr. JENSEN.—I think somewhere about the end of August.

PANAMA EXPOSITION COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. GREENE.—Has the Minister of External Affairs perused the letter of the correspondent of the *Argus* which is published in this morning's issue of that journal, and sets out the communications that have passed between the honorable gentleman and the Panama Exposition Commissioners regarding the appointment of Mr. Oughten. I ask the Minister if what is published is a fair *r  sum  * of what took place?

Mr. MAHON.—I have hurriedly looked through the newspaper article referred to. It contains numerous errors, and is otherwise incomplete and misleading. Its unauthorized publication has satisfied me that the affairs of the Commission require closer scrutiny, and that my action was necessary and proper.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Has the correspondence been laid on the table?

Mr. MAHON.—No. Some of what has been published is unofficial, being partially personal communications from one officer to another. The illicit disclosure of confidential documents which has occurred in connexion with this Commission has had no parallel within my knowledge outside the mushroom republics of South America. This remark applies not only to what is now published, but to the premature publication of incomplete official documents a week or two ago.

KILTED REGIMENTS.

Mr. LIVINGSTON.—Has the Assistant Minister of Defence read a letter which appeared in the *Argus* of 19th May, and was copied from the *London Times*, in which a soldier, writing from the seat of war, states that kilted men have a great advantage over all others? The letter is too long to read now, but I ask the Minister to read it for himself, and to consider its statements, so that at least one kilted regiment may be sent from Australia to the seat of war.

Mr. JENSEN.—I have not seen the letter, but I shall bring the honorable member's question under the notice of the Minister of Defence.

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—In view of the fact that it only costs about one-half the amount to supply a soldier with a Scottish kilt, as compared with the price of an ordinary uniform, will the Naval Minister consider the advisability of sending all the troops to the front in kilts?

Mr. FOWLER.—You do not know what you are talking about. There is three times as much cloth in a kilt as would make a suit of clothes for any man.

BROADMEADOWS CAMP.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I would like to ask the Assistant Minister of Defence a question relating to the Broadmeadows Camp, in order to clear matters up. There are persistent statements outside that all the deaths occurring at the camp are not being reported. Is it a fact that the deaths of some soldiers have taken place at their homes after their removal from the camp, and that similarly some cases of serious illness are being attended at the homes of the soldiers concerned. Were these cases declared in the return

the Assistant Minister gave to the House the other day?

Mr. JENSEN.—I think so, because I specially stated that only eleven deaths out of the forty reported had occurred at Broadmeadows.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—You said they had occurred at hospitals. Does that include homes?

Mr. JENSEN.—I think so.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Will you inquire?

Mr. JENSEN.—Yes, I will. I do not want to hide anything.

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

ENLISTMENT.

Mr. PIGOTT.—In order to encourage the enlistment of troops for the Expeditionary Forces, and create more military interest throughout Australia, will the Minister representing the Prime Minister take into consideration the advisability of adjourning this House for three weeks so as to allow each member to go into his own electorate, and induce as many suitable electors to enroll as possible. Will he also endeavour to get the co-operation of the States in the same movement?

Mr. TUDOR.—As far as I know, none of the State Parliaments are meeting at the present time except that of Victoria. Members of this House had the opportunity of doing what the honorable member suggests during the period from December last to April, and I certainly shall not recommend the Prime Minister to adjourn the House for three weeks now. Members have had the opportunity of doing the class of work referred to, and they still have it.

PORt AUGUSTA-KALGOORLIE RAILWAY.

Mr. GREENE (for Sir JOHN FORREST) asked the Minister of Home Affairs, *upon notice*—

1. How many miles of railway have been laid, during each of the last six months, on the eastern and western sides of the Transcontinental Railway?

2. What is the mileage between Kalgoorlie and the present head of the road and from such head of the road to Ooldea?

3. Whether it is not an open level plain the whole way from the present head of the road to Ooldea?

4. Will the progress be at least at the rate of 6 miles of rail laying a week till Ooldea is reached?

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are—

	Four weeks ended	Eastern Division.	Western Division.	Total.
1914.		m. chs.	m. chs.	m. chs.
Dec. 19 ..	17 79 ..	16 20 ..	34 19	
1915.				
Jan. 16 ..	10 23 ..	10 40 ..	20 63	
Feb. 13 ..	22 61 ..	20 74 ..	43 55	
Mar. 13 ..	24 31 ..	18 76 ..	43 27	
Apl. 10 ..	18 62 ..	14 36 ..	33 18	
May 8 ..	24 65 ..	21 77 ..	46 62	
Two weeks ended				
May 22 ..	5 37 ..	10 40 ..	15 77	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	124 38 ..	113 43 ..	238 1	

2. From Kalgoorlie, 249 miles 23 chains; from head of road to Ooldea, 375 miles.

3. Yes; although there are occasional cuttings and embankments.

4. Yes.

Mr. GREENE (for Sir JOHN FORREST), asked the Minister of Home Affairs, *upon notice*—

With reference to a statement made by him to a deputation of Federal members for Tasmania, to the effect that "owing to the heavy earthworks which were now in front of them, platelaying on the Transcontinental Railway had practically ceased for a time," will he state—

1. Between what mileages from Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta do the "heavy earthworks" occur?
2. To what extent do "heavy earthworks" necessitating the ceasing of platelaying occur on the western side, and for what time is it estimated the platelaying will be delayed on both sides?
3. Estimated the platelaying ordinary speed on the Nullabor limestone plateau at 1 mile a day, what delay in regard to this speed is likely to result?

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—The answer to the honorable member's questions is—

1, 2, and 3. The deputation waited upon the Minister in regard to the use of Tasmanian sleepers on the East-West line, which really means on the eastern section of it, as Tasmanian sleepers cannot, owing to freights, compete as to price with Western Australian timbers for the supply of sleepers delivered at Kalgoorlie. There is not any proposal to stop the platelaying in the western section, but, in a little time, the earthwork gangs on the eastern side will run into heavy cuttings, and platelaying on that section will have to slacken down for a time.

UNIONISTS AT THE FRONT.

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

1. Is he aware that the number of soldiers connected with our leading educational establishments who have gone to the front is as

follows:—Scotch College, over 400; Melbourne Church of England Grammar, over 300; University of Melbourne, over 290; University of Sydney, over 245; Sydney Grammar School, over 275; The King's School, over 170; Sydney Church of England Grammar School, over 160; Wesley College, over 155; Geelong Church of England Grammar, over 102; Geelong College, over 100; Xavier College, over 90; Newington College, over 80; Barker College, Hornsby, over 60?

2. In view of these figures, does he not think that, in fairness to all classes of the community, he should unreservedly withdraw the invidious comparison in favour of trade unionists made by him during the recent by-election for the Grampians?

Mr. TUDOR.—I was not aware of the exact figures, but the information supplied by the honorable member is most interesting. It is not apparent how the splendid response made by these establishments affects the policy of the Government regarding preference to unionists; and it is not known how many of the number are members of trade unions.

PAY OF TROOPS AT RABAUL.

Mr. GREENE asked the Minister, representing the Minister of Defence, *upon notice*—

1. Why are some of the troops in occupation of the late German possessions in the Pacific paid in German coin?

2. Is not the percentage which is being charged troops remitting money to Australia very heavy, entailing considerable loss?

3. Will the Minister take steps to pay the troops in Australian coin?

Mr. JENSEN.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are—

1 and 3. Without reference to the Administrator at Rabaul, who was supplied with British money for payment to troops, it is not known that payments of troops are being made with German money, but if in the past payments have been so made, it could only be for local use, because prior to embarking for return voyage to Australia all German money is redeemed in British money. Following on instructions issued by the Treasurer in May last, the Administrator will pay troops the full amount in British money.

2. Information is not available in the Defence Department, but inquiries are being made.

DUTY ON SUGAR.

Mr. GREENE asked the Minister of Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Is it proposed to remit the duty on sugar imported into Australia to cover the deficiency known to exist before this year's crop can be marketed?

2. If so, why?

Mr. TUDOR.—The matter is still under consideration.

BRISBANE-SYDNEY TELEPHONE.

Mr. FINLAYSON asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

Whether any reasonable progress is being made with the construction of the trunk telephone line between Brisbane and Sydney, and when it is expected that the line will be available for traffic?

Mr. SPENCE.—The question of the construction of this trunk line is under consideration, and a decision will be given at the earliest practicable moment.

NORTHERN TERRITORY POPULATION.

Mr. McWILLIAMS asked the Minister of External Affairs, *upon notice*—

1. What is the total white male population of the Northern Territory?

2. What is the number of the said white male population in the employ of the Federal Government?

Mr. MAHON.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are—

1. Three thousand two hundred and fifty-two at 31st December, 1914.

2. Nine hundred and seven, including 492 on railway construction works.

CASUALTY LISTS.

Mr. HAMPSON asked the Assistant Minister, representing the Minister of Defence, *upon notice*—

Whether the casualty lists issued by the Defence Department contain the names of men who joined the Expeditionary Forces in Australia only, or are they mixed with the casualties of British troops fighting in Gallipoli?

Mr. JENSEN.—The casualty lists issued by the Defence Department apply to units raised in Australia. Casualties of British troops are not included therein.

RELIEF TO MAIL CONTRACTORS.

Mr. CHANTER asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. Has he yet decided upon the form of relief to be given to mail contractors; if so, of what nature, and when is it to be given?

2. Has he considered the advisability of giving them a special subsidy to enable them to cope with their present difficulties?

3. Has he yet been able to make any arrangements with the Government of New South Wales to supply contractors with fodder on the same terms and conditions as they are supplying it to their farmers?

Mr. SPENCE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are—

1. Yes, by special subsidy. The question of the amount to be given is now receiving consideration, and will be decided as soon as the necessary inquiries to enable a decision to be arrived at are complete.

2. See answer to No. 1.

3. Have been in communication with New South Wales Government on the matter, but that Government is unable to also help mail contractors in the direction indicated.

ADJOURNMENT (*Formal*).

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Bourke a few moments ago handed me a letter stating his desire to move the adjournment of the House. I point out that this course should have been taken by him during the time that questions without notice were being asked. The honorable member handed in his notice some time after the business of the day had been called on. It should have been done prior to that. Under the circumstances, I cannot accept his proposal to move the adjournment of the House at the present time.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member can do what he wants in Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 7).

COMMANDANT LEE: RABAUL COURT MARTIAL—SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFFS: ROYAL COMMISSION -- WAR REQUIREMENTS: RECRUITING: REINFORCEMENTS: SUPPLY OF MUNITIONS.

In Committee of Supply:

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra—Minister of Trade and Customs) [10.55].—I move—

That a sum not exceeding £2,023,020 be granted to His Majesty for or towards defraying the services of the year ending 30th June, 1915.

I informed the Leader of the Opposition last night of my intention, acting on behalf of the Treasurer, to bring in a monthly Supply Bill to-day. This is the last Supply Bill of the year, and the reason it is brought on, perhaps, rather early in the month is that we desire to get it through the Senate before next Friday. Next Friday, being the 11th, I am informed that it will be impossible for the Treasury to make arrangements for carrying on unless we get the Supply Bill through by that time. I am anxious that the Bill should pass this House today. It contains the ordinary amounts which honorable members have discussed

on other Supply Bills, and relates to matters which have been under discussion on the Estimates during the last few months. I will ask honorable members to facilitate the passage of the Bill, and get it out of the way, so that the Senate may consider it as soon as they meet next Wednesday.

Mr. ANSTEY (Bourke) [10.56].—A week or so ago, when I was discussing the question of the formation of the Rabaul court martial, I questioned the propriety of Colonel Lee occupying the position of President. I did so on the ground, as I said, that any person occupying the position of judge should have his own record clean. There the matter rested until yesterday, when the Assistant Minister of Defence read out a statement in connexion with what was said to have been a court martial. I want to say distinctly that, if I said anything that improperly reflects upon any man, whether he is in the Army or out of it, I am quite prepared to make the fullest amends a man can properly make. I contend, however, that the report referred to by the Minister has justified me in the attitude I took up, that if Colonel Lee had suffered any disgrace he should not have been permitted to occupy the position he did. I pointed out then, in connexion with Colonel Lee, that the South African business had been going on for a period of years. The documents in connexion with it, presented to the Parliament of New South Wales, occupy over 100 pages, and they embrace correspondence over a period of several years. In the first place, they dealt tenderly with Colonel Lee. They asked him to try and settle his case, but he absolutely refused. It was then reported to Major-General Hutton, and a Board of Inquiry was held. It was presided over by Colonel Waddell, and another member was Colonel Knox. As I pointed out previously, the proceedings appeared to be so absolutely objectionable that the Government of New South Wales protested and submitted a complaint to the Federal Minister of Defence, Sir John Forrest; and the papers bear his minute to the effect that, as the Privy Council and the Supreme Court always made known their reasons for any decision, this Board should have done so, and that, as the notes of a Judge were public property, the notes of the Board should also be public property, and be made available

to the Government of New South Wales. Following on that, Colonel Waddell pointed out that unquestionably the notes were the property of the Defence Department, and should not be given up to the Government of New South Wales, and that he, being manager of a bank in New South Wales, and Lieut.-Colonel Knox, being a manager for Dalgety's, the demand upon them to give up their notes was a reflection on their honour and integrity—in spite of the fact that Colonel Lee had offered a payment by way of compromise of £168 on the £300 representing the first item. The next stage was reached when the Audit Department Inspector said—

There is a very grave element of suspicion in his failure to account for the £700 advanced by this State, and the matter should not be allowed to drop until the most searching investigation has been held.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Who said that?

Mr. ANSTEY.—Mr. Brodie, the Chief Inspector of Public Accounts in New South Wales. He said—

I am prepared to substantiate the foregoing charges.

In effect, he said, "I formulate these charges, and if I am given a court martial I guarantee to prove them, because I can call evidence, and put forward my own statement." Major-General Hutton absolutely refused to grant a court martial. The other day the Assistant Minister of Defence was probably under a misapprehension in this respect.

Mr. JENSEN.—I should have said "inquiry" instead of "court martial."

Mr. ANSTEY.—Yes, that is an admitted fact. Mr. Brodie said—

I should be allowed to give personal evidence in support of the charges, and have free access to all papers bearing thereon; I should be allowed to call and examine such witnesses as I may require to support the charges; I should be allowed to cross-examine Lieut.-Colonel Lee, or any witnesses he may bring to support his case. I should be allowed a copy of the daily notes of evidence. If allowed these facilities of conducting the case, I am prepared to prove that Lieut.-Colonel Lee received refunds of pay made to the English detachment of Lancers in South Africa amounting to several hundreds of pounds, the major portion of which he has absolutely failed to account for, and which he denied having received; and, further, that Lieut.-Colonel Lee drew cheques for £20 and £40 respectively on the 24th February, 1900, for which he has failed to produce any voucher or record showing his disposal thereof.

Again, he went on to say—

Additional information as regards the irregularities in that officer's accounts has been brought to light since the Board of Officers sat to inquire into the facts previously reported.

The request was refused, but the Defence Department said that there would be another Board. They said that the old Board would be reconstituted, and that Colonel Waddell and Lieut.-Colonel Knox would again sit, and go over the additional evidence, because, in addition to the £300 which Colonel Lee had, and which he had offered to square by the payment of £168, there came to light the further fact—that, although in the first place he had sworn that out of the £400 he had receipts from his predecessor, it transpired afterwards that he had secured refunds to the extent of £345. Therefore, in addition to the original charge relating to the £300, there was a further charge of appropriating £400, which was now made for the first time. But a court martial was refused. Then Mr. Brodie reported in July, 1903—

As no satisfactory explanation has been offered by Colonel Lee respecting his disbursement of the advance of £700, unless an inquiry on oath is instituted, or a court martial, there will be no alternative but for the proper officer of this State to lay a criminal charge against Colonel Lee for embezzlement.

The Board of Inquiry, which was the only tribunal that the Defence Department would allow, then sat, and any one who reads the report of its proceedings will see that there was no summary of evidence, nor any statement that Colonel Lee was not guilty, and that the Board simply set themselves to make explanations as to why the money had not been accounted for. So utterly unsatisfactory were the whole proceedings that Inspector Brodie wrote—

It is desired to be known whether I shall have the right to state a case for the Department I represent, to call witnesses in support of the case, to cross-examine the respondent or any of his witnesses, and to be furnished with a copy of the daily notes of evidence for guidance. The case is too serious to be dealt with in any other way, as a considerable sum of money is involved. If witnesses are to be called and examined behind my back as at a previous inquiry, then I strongly urge for the consideration of the Honorable Premier that a Royal Commission be appointed to thoroughly investigate the matter, or that it be placed in the hands of the Crown Solicitor, with a view to such proceedings being taken as may meet the case.

Then he went on to enumerate these points from time to time. The second

Board, which was the original Board reconstituted came to the same old decision in December, and Mr. Brodie reported to the chief of his Department—

It will be difficult, I think, for any judicial mind to understand, from a perusal of the evidence given by Lieut.-Colonel Cox—which in some extraordinary way is not referred to in the court's findings—together with an inspection of the exhibits handed in in support of Lieut.-Colonel Cox's evidence, also the evidence of Quartermaster-Sergeant Blow, Lieut.-Colonel Cox's Paying Officer, the corroborative evidence of S. M. M. Winch, Lieut.-Colonel Lee's Paying Officer, the evidence of Audit Inspector Campbell, and the admissions of Lieut.-Colonel Lee under cross-examination, how the Board could possibly have arrived at the findings they have. The evidence, to my mind, is so conclusive against Lieut.-Colonel Lee that I recommend the papers be now referred to the Crown Solicitor.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Is Mr. Brodie still in the Department?

Mr. ANSTEY.—I do not know.

Mr. GROOM.—Was he a witness in that case?

Mr. ANSTEY.—No; he was the prosecuting officer for the Audit Department of New South Wales.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—What is his position now?

Mr. ANSTEY.—I do not know Mr. Brodie, nor do I know Colonel Lee. I am merely talking about the constitution of courts martial, and I contend that they should be comprised of men of clean and unblemished records. The report of this Board, which the Assistant Minister of Defence read yesterday, concluded with the statement that there was no doubt Mr. Brodie had been prompted by consideration for the highest public interests, and not by any feeling of bias; but the Board had scouted all evidence; and that is one of my charges against courts martial generally. As I have said previously, Lord Russell of Killowen, in reporting to Queen Victoria, said that a great evil in connexion with courts martial was that the members of these tribunals were so prejudiced or biased, or so determined to protect their fellow officers, that they could not be said to be proper Boards to make investigations. Mr. Brodie wrote—

The evidence, to my mind, is so conclusive against Lieut.-Colonel Lee that I recommend the papers be now referred to the Crown Solicitor, with the view of determining whether Lieut.-Colonel Lee should be proceeded against criminally or civilly for not accounting to the Government of this State for the whole of the £700 advanced on 4th November, 1899, in con-

nexion with the pay of the English detachment of Lancers under his control in South Africa, the balance unaccounted for being £610 9s. 6d.

And six months after the second Board had met he reported that, in addition to the £300 and £400, making a total of £700, fresh defalcations had come to light. He wrote—

From inquiries since made it appears that Major Lee drew £476 12s. in South Africa, less £76 4s. remitted with roll, to which he was not entitled, and which is refundable to this State. In connexion with the non-adjustment of advance of £700 made to the Officer Commanding Lancers in South Africa, and for which Major Lee is responsible, it has been recommended on other papers that the matter be referred to the law advisers of the Crown.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Was the matter referred to the Crown Law authorities of New South Wales?

Mr. ANSTEY.—Yes.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—What did they do?

Mr. ANSTEY.—Inquiry may show what influence was at work. When there was talk about justice to Colonel Lee, it might have been the proper thing to ask the New South Wales Government to fill up the blanks in these documents before us.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—What happened after the reference to the Crown Law authorities?

Mr. ANSTEY.—Nothing was done.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Is there no minute?

Mr. ANSTEY.—This Board ignored all evidence. According to the papers, this is, in effect, what Mr. Brodie reported—

This Board has ignored all evidence, and I have no alternative but to recommend that the law authorities should proceed with a criminal prosecution for embezzlement.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Mr. Brodie recommended that the Crown Law authorities should take action. Is there any evidence of their decision?

Mr. ANSTEY.—No; Mr. Brodie's report finishes the matter.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—There must be some record of their decision.

Mr. ANSTEY.—The records are with the Government of New South Wales. Here is a most peculiar thing. If there was desire on the part of the Defence Department to secure justice, not so much for any particular individual, but in the public interest, why have they not made inquiries during the interval that has elapsed since this question was first

brought forward in order to ascertain what really took place?

Mr. FOWLER.—Does the honorable member say that the Crown Law authorities of New South Wales recommended that there should be a prosecution?

Mr. ANSTEY.—Yes.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE. — Where is the record of that?

Mr. ANSTEY.—It is not in the papers before me.

Mr. FOWLER.—Have you any evidence of it?

Mr. ANSTEY.—No, there is no evidence of it in the papers, but I make the statement.

Mr. GROOM.—Have you any official information to that effect?

Mr. ANSTEY.—No. Some people may say that it is absolutely improper to bring up such a case. Here is a contrary case of a man who enlisted to serve his country, and was discharged from the service at Broadmeadows, because fourteen years ago he had committed an error in connexion with a Waterbury watch. They raked up the record of a man fourteen years ago, and refused to permit him to fight for his country. Some people express indignation at my having raked up Colonel Lee's record, but there is a distinction between Colonel Lee and this private. The latter was not appointed to be the judge of another; he was merely prepared to shed his blood for his country, but he was not permitted to do so, though after the incident of the Waterbury watch he had led a blameless and unimpeachable life. Furthermore, he had ten days' pay due to him, yet the military officers refused to pay it.

Mr. JENSEN.—What is the name of that soldier?

Mr. ANSTEY.—I hand the name to the Assistant Minister, and if he can secure justice in that case I wish he would do so.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Do you think that the Department should not have raked up that case?

Mr. ANSTEY.—I do not. It was not for the sake of raking up a scandal, or reflecting on any errors in Colonel Lee's past that I introduced his name in this discussion; but I consider that he should have had sufficient discretion not to occupy the position of judge in a court martial; that is the only reason why I introduced his name in this connexion. A

statement appeared in the press on Saturday last that the Minister, "in justice to Colonel Lee," was going to have the papers read. Why "in justice to Colonel Lee?" If there was to be justice done, it was not to be for any particular individual, but for the country, and if it was to be done in justice to any particular individual, why should not the Assistant Minister have read the whole of the report?

Mr. JENSEN.—From the document that you have handed to me in regard to the private to whom you refer, I find he was discharged for having made a wilfully false statement in answer to a question—quite a different matter.

Mr. ANSTEY.—I am sure that the Minister, like myself, desires to elicit the truth. In this case, the man had served three months' imprisonment fourteen years previously. Was it not natural that he should make no mention of that fact? Was there any need for him to record it on his papers? But some one knew what had happened to him, and reported him, with the result that he was dismissed from the service because he had not disclosed that fact.

Mr. JENSEN.—But the honorable member did not put it in that way. This man was dismissed for making a wilfully false statement in answer to a question.

Mr. ANSTEY.—I leave the case to the Minister, believing that he will do justice. Is not the honor and reputation of a private in the ranks just as important as is that of a colonel? A week or two ago I brought before the House the case of Private Campbell. Is it not time that justice was done to him? Private Campbell was alleged to have made a confession. He swore that he did not do so. If he did not, and if the alleged written confession made by him is not producible, it stands out that officers have conspired and perjured themselves. We should have had the papers relating to Private Campbell's case produced with just as much readiness as have been the papers relating to Colonel Lee. There should have been a report from Colonel Holmes, stating what he has done with the alleged confession, or the confession itself should be produced. We should be able to give the common soldiery of the Commonwealth a guarantee that justice will be done to them. Then there is the complaint made by Dr. Antill Pockley, a

man of repute, that Major Maguire has failed to account for the effects of his son who was killed at Rabaul. The doctor says that they got away with his son's property, but nothing has been done by the Department in regard to that allegation. If we wish to encourage recruiting we must give a guarantee to the common soldiery that they will secure justice, and that justice knows no discrimination between officers and the men in the ranks.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—That is a perfectly sound position.

MR. ANSTEY.—It is; and it is the position which I take up. Questions in regard to these cases have been put, and have not been answered; nothing has been done. Colonel Lee stands condemned as a man who ought not to have occupied a position on the court martial. Without wishing to load up a man with any of the shortcomings of his past, I assert that the records of the country justify my original position that Colonel Lee should not have occupied a position on this court martial.

MR. CHARLTON (Hunter) [11.18].—This question has been brought before the House on several occasions. I think that the honorable member for Bourke was justified in taking up the stand that he did in demanding that certain matters relating to the court martial and all that happened at Rabaul should be cleared up; and I would remind the House that the Prime Minister has already pledged himself to see that they are. I am with the honorable member, and would have supported him all along the line in making that demand, and I have more than once expressed the view that honorable members have the right to come to the House with any grievance which they consider should be ventilated; but, whilst we have this privilege, we ought to be very careful not to attack the reputation of any man unless we have facts to support our charges. Now, what is the position in regard to Colonel Lee, whom the honorable member for Bourke has attacked, and who, I may say, is a stranger to me? Hearing the statements quoted last week by the honorable member for Bourke from the report of the Board, which, unfortunately, is not available at the moment, I concluded that this officer should not have been permitted to take part in the court martial. The honorable member certainly made it appear that there were chargeable against him

offences which made it undesirable that he should hold a commission in the Australian Army. I, like others, thought that there was some substance in what the honorable member put before us, but we found subsequently that he had carefully kept from the House the findings of the Board of Inquiry which dealt with the charges made against Colonel Lee in New South Wales. When I quote papers relating to an inquiry into a charge made against any man, I take care to do him justice. I certainly let the House know all the facts. In this case, if I had been attacking Colonel Lee, I should have put before the House all the facts relating to the findings of the Board of Inquiry which dealt with the ten charges that were brought against him. But we did not hear from the honorable member for Bourke a word about its findings.

MR. ANSTEY.—Is that true? I invite the honorable member to read the passage I have underlined in the *Hansard* report of my speech.

MR. CHARLTON.—The passage is as follows:—

A board of inquiry was appointed to investigate the case, its members being Colonel Waddell and Major T. F. Knox, one of whom boasted that he was manager of the Colonial Bank, and the other that he was managing director of Dalgety and Company; and they claimed that no reflection should be cast on them when they reported that this officer was not guilty of the charges brought against him. I at once concede that the honorable member mentioned that there was a Board of Inquiry into certain charges preferred against Colonel Lee, and that it found that he was not guilty of them. But the point that I wish to emphasize is that, if the honorable member desired to do justice to this officer he certainly ought to have read from the official report of the Board of Inquiry the charges that were made against him, and the findings of the Board. That is the position I take up.

MR. J. H. CATTS.—But the honorable member said that he did not mention the Board's findings.

MR. CHARLTON.—I have conceded that; but having mentioned that an inquiry was held, he should have given the House the findings of the Board which made that inquiry. The honorable member has made his position much worse than it was, because, at the outset of his

speech this morning, he said that, notwithstanding the facts placed before us by the Assistant Minister of Defence, he saw no reason to withdraw from the position he had taken up with respect to the charges against Colonel Lee. And what was the position that he took up? He said last week—

A court martial was refused. The Audit officers then recommended to the Government of the State that a criminal prosecution for embezzlement should be commenced, but that application was smothered by social influence. It is the man against whom these charges were made—Colonel, then Major, Lee—who was appointed president of the court martial constituted to try the Rabaul cases. He embezzled £611 of the money of the New South Wales Government, and the officers of the Audit Department of the State recommended that he should be criminally prosecuted. He was only saved from gaol by social influence.

The honorable member charged this officer with having embezzled certain money.

Mr. ANSTEY.—That is true.

Mr. CHARLTON.—No proof has been adduced that Colonel Lee embezzled any money whatever.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—There is Mr. Brodie's statement.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I know sufficient of Mr. Brodie to make me think twice about accepting all that he says. But I shall say no more of him; I make no charge against any one. Instead of saying: "In view of the findings of this Board, I withdraw my charge against Colonel Lee that he embezzled money," the honorable member for Bourke reiterates his allegation and says that the later information put before the House justifies the position he has taken up. He has not receded in the least from the ground he first occupied in this matter. If honorable members are going to avail themselves of their privilege to make such charges in this House when there is no evidence to support them, what is going to be the result? It was alleged, amongst other things, that Colonel Lee had failed to produce vouchers for certain expenditure incurred by him while on active service. Every one will realize the difficulty of keeping vouchers for every penny expended on the field of battle. When an officer is moving rapidly from place to place—when he has to look after the interests of those under him, and to make certain payments on their behalf while on the field of battle—it is quite reasonable

to assume that he will not always be able to produce vouchers for all that he expends. I venture to say that if any of us were in a similar position we should not be able to account for every penny that we spent.

Mr. HAMPSON.—We cannot do it, even when electioneering.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Quite so; honorable members are not able to account for every penny expended by them when conducting an election campaign. I rose because I believe in dealing out even-handed justice to every member of the community, and because I believe that those who are intrusted with commissions in our Defence Forces—those who have to lead our men—should not be badgered day after day without any justification at a time like this, when the country is at war. As a member of the Labour party and of this House I shall always do my utmost to see that every one secures a fair deal, and that the character of no man is improperly assailed here, either directly or by innuendo. When charges are made, they should be proved. I have never met Colonel Lee; I do not know him. But considerations of justice appeal to me, and justice, I think, should be done to this gentleman. No proof is forthcoming of the charge of embezzlement made against him, and we should not, under the protection of the House, make allegations against any man unless we can prove them. If we are prepared to make charges of this kind, we should make them outside, and thus give the gentleman concerned the opportunity to defend himself in the Courts of his country.

Mr. JENSEN (Bass—Assistant Minister of Defence) [11.27].—The honorable member for Bourke has taken up a certain attitude in regard to this matter, and appears to be determined to persist in it. In doing so, he is implying, it may be, quite unwittingly, that the Government allowed the recent court martial in Sydney to be conducted by officers who were not fit to hold that position.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—There is no doubt that that is the charge against the Government.

Mr. JENSEN.—It is practically said that the Government have been conniving with others in an attempt to smother up the alleged cases of looting at Rabaul. I may say at once that the Government have confidence in Colonel Lee, and in every member of the court martial which

tried the looting cases. That being so, it is our duty to defend them, whenever the necessity arises, on the floor of this House. I feel very sorry for Colonel Lee, whose name has been brought up in this House, where he has no chance of defending himself upon the charges made against him, and I think it is the duty of the Government to go to his rescue if they think he has been wrongly treated. We take the view that he was quite fit to occupy the position of President of the court martial recently held in Sydney. If we had had any suspicion regarding the charges levelled against him in 1902-3-4-5, we should have moved quickly in the matter. But, in face of the report of the Board of Inquiry that investigated the charges made against Colonel Lee, and which absolutely exonerated him of all wrong-doing, it is our duty to stand by him. In dealing with the whole of the Rabaul charges, the honorable member for Bourke has used extraordinary language, and has seen fit actually to imply that the Government are withholding a certain paper. The House has been told that a copy of a certain confession, in writing, was sent to the Minister of Defence from Rabaul, and the honorable member has said that the Minister is withholding it. The honorable member for Bourke desires to know where the confession is, and where the copy of it is.

Mr. BURNS.—That was stated in evidence, was it not?

Mr. JENSEN.—I wish to inform the Committee of the facts in my own way. The Minister of Defence, speaking in the Senate some few days ago, gave honorable senators the impression, perhaps, that he was quoting from some document which he held, but he was not doing so. He was quoting from correspondence sent to him from Rabaul by Colonel Holmes, and in that correspondence Colonel Holmes said that he was giving in his letter the gist of the confession. I wish to make it clear to the Committee that there were not three confessions signed by Campbell. Only one paper was signed by him, but true copies of it were made. One true copy was sent to the Administrator, who should pass it on to the Minister, and another copy was retained by Colonel Holmes, and sent to the Sydney *Sun*.

Mr. BURNS.—The *Sun* did not receive the copy.

Mr. JENSEN.—I am stating the facts. The officers who were concerned in that matter at Rabaul made a sworn declaration to the Minister of Defence in Melbourne a few days ago.

Mr. BURNS.—Was that one of the copies you gave to me in answer to my question?

Mr. JENSEN.—I do not know; but I have here a sworn declaration made on the 1st June, 1915, in Melbourne, as follows:—

Commonwealth of Australia.

The Statutory Declarations Act 1911.

STATUTORY DECLARATION.

I, William Walker Russell Watson, a Lieut.-Colonel in the Australian Imperial Force, and formerly a Lieut.-Colonel in the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, and Officer Commanding troops at Rabaul, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:—

1. That the papers attached hereto marked "A" and "B" are true copies of a letter written by Private R. B. Campbell, a soldier in the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, to the Editor of the *Sun*, a newspaper published in Sydney.

2. The said letter was written by the said Private R. B. Campbell in duplicate in my presence in the office of the Officer Commanding troops at Rabaul, and was signed by him in my presence.

3. Immediately after the said letter had been written and signed I directed a typist to make copies of the said letter.

4. The said papers marked "A" and "B" are the copies made by the said typist.

5. I examined the said papers with the original letters, and found them to be true copies.

6. Later in the same day I directed Captain Lane, Staff Officer to Officer Commanding Troops, Rabaul, to post one of the original letters to the Editor of the *Sun*, and to send the other of the original letters to the Administrator, Colonel Holmes.

7. The words "True copy, W. R. W. Lieut.-Colonel —, O.C.T." written at the foot of the said paper marked "A" are in my handwriting, and were written by me immediately after I had compared the said copy "A" with the original letters.

8. The words "True copy, W. R. Watson, Lieut.-Colonel, O.C.T." written at the foot of the said paper marked "B" are in my handwriting, and were written by me immediately after I had compared the said copy "B" with the original letters.

And I make this solemn declaration by virtue of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1911*, conscientiously believing the statements contained therein to be true in every particular.

W. R. WATSON, Lieut.-Col.
Declared at Melbourne, in Victoria, this first day of June, 1915.

Before me,
J. C. ORMISTON, a commissioner for declarations.

Now I will read the copy of the confession.

Mr. ANSTEY.—Have you any evidence as to what was done with the confession itself?

Mr. JENSEN.—I have not; but this is the paper marked "A" referred to in the statutory declaration:—

DEAR SIR,

Re your article in the *Sun*, Monday, December 7th, in reference to certain articles which were sold to one of the members of the Expeditionary Force. You mentioned in your letter that the articles were purchased in an English store. As a matter of fact the articles mentioned were purchased from another member of the force privately, and whether the articles were sent from Sydney by the people mentioned to the person who sold them or not I do not know, but when this man, I happened to be with at the time, discovered the names of the ladies mentioned he came to the conclusion that they must have been sent for the benefit of the troops, and I also came to the same conclusion.

However, as you mentioned in your letter, the pyjamas may have gone astray or have been stolen while unloading, but I am not in a position to state my opinion.

Meanwhile . . .

I am, yours truly,

R. B. CAMPBELL.

Rabaul, 21st December, 1914.

True copy—W. R. W., Lt.-Col. O.C.T.

This is the paper marked "B" referred to in the statutory declaration of Wm. Walker Russell Watson made before me this first day of June, 1915.

J. C. ORMISTON, a commissioner for declarations.

(COPY.)

DEAR SIR,

Re your article in the *Sun*, Monday, December 7th, in reference to certain articles which were sold to one of the members of the Expeditionary Force. You mentioned in your letter that the articles were purchased in an English store. As a matter of fact the articles mentioned were purchased from another member of the force privately, and whether the articles were sent from Sydney by the people mentioned to the person who sold them or not I do not know, but when this man, I happened to be with at the time, discovered the names of the ladies mentioned he came to the conclusion that they must have been sent for the benefit of the troops, and I also came to the same conclusion.

However, as you mentioned in your letter, the pyjamas may have gone astray or have been stolen while unloading, but I am not in a position to state my opinion.

Meanwhile . . .

I am, yours truly,

R. B. CAMPBELL.

Rabaul, 21st December, 1914.

True copy—W. R. WATSON, Lt.-Col., O.C.T.

Mr. MCGRATH.—Who says it is a true copy?

Mr. JENSEN.—I have read to the Committee a sworn declaration to that effect by Lt.-Colonel Watson.

Mr. MCGRATH.—But Campbell swore in court that he did not make any confession.

Mr. BURNS.—Why was that letter not quoted in the House before to-day?

Mr. JENSEN.—This officer has only recently come to Melbourne, and he has been in consultation with the Minister, who has done everything possible to get a true statement of the facts.

Mr. BURNS.—But you handed me a copy of that letter in February of this year; why was it not read in the House before to-day?

Mr. JENSEN.—The honorable member may put that question on the notice-paper.

Mr. BURNS.—I will. I have that letter.

Mr. JENSEN.—I will now read to the Committee a *précis* of the papers relating to the charges made against Major Beardsmore:—

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

Précis of papers containing charge against Major Beardsmore.

On the 6th March, 1915, Prisoner W. Penny swore on oath as follows:—

"I remember seeing Major Beardsmore at Rabaul chasing a black woman, and having his person exposed. A number of men of his company were present and also saw him."

The Court of Inquiry sitting at Sydney were instructed to fully investigate this matter, and to find out from Penny the names of the other witnesses referred to by him.

The Court communicated with the Comptroller-General of Prisons with regard to the matter, who submitted the following statement written by Penny:—

"Private Thomas Wilson is the only person I know by name who saw Major Beardsmore exposed; there are others, whom I could recognise. Wilson would know names of others belonging to "A" company, and on parade at this time. He was then transferred to the Provost Staff, to which I was corporal, coming into contact with Wilson, and thereby knowing his name. I was attached to Head-Quarters Staff, and never at any time heard the roll called of "A" company.

Wilson is now in prison in Goulburn Gaol.

My duties were to patrol the town of Rabaul and outskirts, passing at times many parades."

A statement was thereupon obtained through the same channel from Prisoner Wilson, who stated in writing as follows:—

"I, Thomas J. Wilson, hereby say that, being a member of the first Expeditionary Force that went to Rabaul last year, I was attached to "A" company, Major Beardsmore commanding. On arrival at Government House, Rabaul, the morning after arrival Col. Sergeant Mac exposed himself in sight of a number of men of his company by chasing a black woman for the purpose of having connexion with her. I could not say if he succeeded in his purpose, as I went forward to a

will. I did not see Major Beardsmore expose himself. He did not expose himself while I was there, and cannot say what happened after I left, but prior to leaving the men had found drink in the house, and a number of them stayed for a couple of days, Major Beardsmore with them, whilst the drink lasted."

Major Beardsmore has also denied on oath that he was guilty of the conduct alleged against him.

In view of the above, it appears clear that Penny's statements, on oath and otherwise, are utterly unreliable, and that he has laid himself open to a charge of criminal libel, if not perjury.

Lt.-Colonel, Adjutant-General.

Sec. D of D, 26th May, 1915.

That statement has been forwarded to the Attorney-General for his advice as to whether Penny should not be proceeded against for perjury. That statement by Penny absolutely denies that any such thing occurred, and yet Penny is supposed to be the person who gave the information upon which the charges were founded.

Mr. RILEY.—And Private Wilson also denies the charge.

Mr. JENSEN.—Quite so. This denial proves that there is nothing in the charges that have been made, yet we are told by the honorable member for Bourke that these things actually occurred, and that the officers, rather than the men who were convicted, should be in gaol.

Mr. FENTON.—Did not the Prime Minister promise the other day that a searching investigation of the whole matter would be made?

Mr. JENSEN.—Yes.

Mr. FENTON.—Is that being done?

Mr. JENSEN.—The papers have been referred to the Attorney-General, who is making an investigation.

Mr. LYNCH.—Then, why not wait until that investigation is completed?

Mr. JENSEN.—The honorable member for Bourke has brought forward again the matter of Campbell's confession, and it is my duty to reply to his statement.

Mr. McGRATH.—But you are dealing with a different case.

Mr. JENSEN.—The honorable member for Bourke stated that rapine and robbery were taking place at Rabaul, and yet the very men who are in prison for the offences committed have denied that they said the things they are alleged to have said, and it is on their evidence that the honorable member relies in order to prove what took place at Rabaul.

Mr. McGRATH.—I thought an inquiry was being held. Why not wait?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Why not wait until the Adelaide Conference is over?

Mr. JENSEN.—The Government have been blamed for appointing a court martial, the members of which did not possess the confidence of the country, and Ministers were charged for being parties to what was being done in Sydney to hush up the whole affair. The honorable member for Bourke has made charges of rapine, robbery, and loot at Rabaul, and the very men whose cause he is championing deny that they made the statements attributed to them.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I do not think an independent inquiry will do any harm.

Mr. JENSEN.—I am not saying that it will, and no doubt an inquiry will be held.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—If an outside inquiry is to be held, why not wait?

Mr. JENSEN.—Because the honorable member for Bourke has practically reiterated his previous statements, and it is my due, as Minister, that I should be allowed to say something on the question which has been raised. Having regard to the finding of that Court of Inquiry, the report of which I read yesterday, I do not think that Commandant Lee should be charged with the offences alleged by the honorable member for Bourke. The Court found Colonel Lee innocent, and he is entitled to the benefit of that finding.

Mr. McGRATH (Ballarat) [11.40].—I am very sorry indeed that the Assistant Minister has introduced the Rabaul charges into the discussion to-day, because we were promised a full inquiry into the allegations that have been made, and the honorable gentleman is prejudging that inquiry.

Mr. JENSEN.—I have quoted the statements of the men in prison.

Mr. McGRATH.—Those statements should be made, not before this Committee, but before any Board or Select Committee appointed to inquire into these matters. We are waiting for the report of that inquiry, but in a discussion regarding the finding of the Board which inquired into the charges against Colonel Lee, the Minister has introduced a number of declarations regarding certain statements made by the honorable member for Bourke last week in connexion with the offences at Rabaul. I repeat

that I regret that the Minister has introduced those questions at this stage, because he is to some extent prejudging the inquiry that has been promised.

Mr. JENSEN.—The honorable member for Bourke introduced the matter by mentioning Campbell's case to-day.

Mr. McGRATH.—Campbell's case is apart altogether from the others. We are concerned with two inquiries. One is to ascertain what has become of the original confession alleged to have been made by Campbell, and which the Assistant Minister admits cannot be found. He was quite right in dealing with that portion of the speech of the honorable member for Bourke, but honorable members understood that the main charges in regard to what took place at Rabaul were being inquired into by the Attorney-General. To-day, however, the Minister, is giving a partial statement.

Mr. JENSEN.—The Attorney-General is only inquiring into the manner in which the military inquiries were conducted.

Mr. McGRATH.—It is about time the House took a stand, and insisted on an inquiry.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—In what way?

Mr. McGRATH.—We should have an inquiry by the members of this House into these charges.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—If it came to a vote you would be absent, as you were last night.

Mr. McGRATH.—I did not know a vote was to be taken. The Acting Prime Minister told me that it would not be taken.

Mr. TUDOR.—I told you that the motion was going to be withdrawn.

Mr. McGRATH.—And I acted on that belief.

Mr. TUDOR.—I did not break faith with you.

Mr. McGRATH.—I quite agree. We should certainly have a full inquiry. We have not been blaming the Government for not expediting the inquiry, fully understanding that the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister were in Adelaide.

Mr. JENSEN.—The Attorney-General is only inquiring into all the evidence and the way the court was constituted, to see whether the court carried out the inquiry in a proper manner.

Mr. McGRATH.—I understood that the Attorney-General was inquiring into the statements made by the honorable

member for Bourke. We all understood that that was going to be done.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I thought it was a preliminary inquiry to see what steps should be taken.

Mr. JENSEN.—No, it was an inquiry to see if the court, recently held in Sydney, was a proper tribunal, and carried out its functions properly; and whether it refused to admit evidence which it should have accepted.

Mr. McGRATH.—If that is so, we are no further forward.

Mr. JENSEN.—The Attorney-General will then advise the Government what to do.

Mr. McGRATH.—We understood that the Attorney-General was making preliminary inquiries to ascertain what form of inquiry should take place.

Mr. TUDOR.—No such thing.

Mr. McGRATH.—Then I have been under a misapprehension.

Mr. JENSEN.—He is to ascertain if the inquiry was a proper one, and if justice was done.

Mr. McGRATH.—I regret that the whole question has had to be brought up, especially in view of some of the statements made by the Assistant Minister to-day. I hope, for the sake of the honour of the officers and soldiers of Australia, that those statements are true. What is going to be done with Private Campbell? The Minister has produced a sworn declaration that Campbell made a confession; surely the confession itself ought to be produced. We were told that it was forwarded to Colonel Holmes. If so, Colonel Holmes ought to be able to produce it. We ought to know why the confession was not produced at the court martial. Private Campbell was found guilty of making a false statement. It was assumed that he had made a confession, although the confession was never produced. Although the Assistant Minister could find time to defend Colonel Lee, he uttered not a syllable in defence of Private Campbell, who stands condemned to-day for having uttered a falsehood and then confessed, although there is no evidence to show that he did so.

Mr. JENSEN.—I resent that. I would defend any private in the Army as well as a colonel.

Mr. McGRATH.—The honorable member can resent it in a proper way by speaking afterwards. He has no right to interrupt my speech.

Mr. JENSEN.—One would think from what the honorable member said that I was here only to protect officers, and not privates.

Mr. McGRATH.—I wish to show the unfairness of what took place last night. The Assistant Minister of Defence last night tried to defend Colonel Lee. Let me remind him that the honorable member for Bourke distinctly said, as the *Hansard* report shows, that Colonel Lee was acquitted of the charges against him. Notwithstanding the remarks of the honorable member for Hunter, the honorable member for Bourke was perfectly fair, because he said that the Court of Inquiry acquitted Colonel Lee.

Mr. JENSEN.—He also said the whole business was smothered up by social influence.

Mr. McGRATH.—What he did say was that Inspector Brodie, who was the prosecutor at the Board of Inquiry into the charges against Colonel Lee, stated that there had not been a fair trial, and that he could not understand why Colonel Lee was not found guilty. Inspector Brodie asked for a criminal prosecution, and staked his reputation that, if a criminal prosecution was instituted, or if they could have a trial at which witnesses had to give sworn evidence, Colonel Lee would be found guilty. The honorable member for Bourke quoted Brodie's words; that is all he said, and I cannot understand why he should be now accused of being unfair to Colonel Lee. No one on this side wants to be unfair to a man simply because he is an officer, but I agree with the honorable member for Bourke that Colonel Lee should never have accepted a position on the court martial. He is the last man who should have gone on it.

Mr. JENSEN.—If Colonel Lee was not fit to occupy that position, he was not fit to be in the Military Forces at all.

Mr. McGRATH.—Other very strong charges were made by the honorable member for Bourke, particularly against Lieutenant Ravenscroft, especially in regard to his career in England. No answer has been made to those charges. All that the Assistant Minister did yesterday was to quote a little more fully from the report from which the honorable member for Bourke had already quoted. Nobody listening to the honorable member for Bourke could for a moment believe that he had said that the Board

of Inquiry had found Colonel Lee guilty. He distinctly said that he was found not guilty, and proceeded to quote the request of the prosecuting officer for a further trial with evidence on oath.

Mr. JENSEN.—He said the whole thing was smothered up, and according to that finding it was not smothered up.

Mr. McGRATH.—The least the Minister says about smothering up the better. This matter has nothing to do with the present Government. It occurred in 1904, and there are very strong reports current that the charges were smothered up by social influence. The man who knew all about the case asked that it be submitted to the Crown Law authorities, and further action taken. I guarantee that if Colonel Lee had been a private, further action would have been taken.

Mr. JENSEN.—Nonsense! Thousands of cases are submitted to the Crown Law authorities, and no further action taken.

Mr. McGRATH.—I will guarantee that, where the prosecutor practically stakes his reputation that he will get a conviction if he can secure an ordinary trial, with evidence taken on oath, there are not many cases of the kind which are not gone on with.

Mr. KELLY (Wentworth) [11.53].—We are not doing our country much good by canvassing these things. Unfortunately, charges levelled against our own people in this place can be used to the disadvantage of our own race in neutral countries, where our unscrupulous enemies are endeavouring to influence public opinion by fabricating untrue charges of atrocities against the allied troops.

Mr. WEBSTER.—They cannot say more than they are saying.

Mr. KELLY.—Can they not? Who, without corroboration, would believe the lying press bureau of Berlin? I am ready to believe this question was raised, in the first place, with the best intentions, in the belief that it was the only means of getting justice—

Mr. McGRATH.—Let us have an inquiry, and that will end it.

Mr. KELLY.—I urge honorable members to realize that in the United States of America a very strong press campaign is being carried on by the German Press Bureau to secure the support of the sentimentalists in that country against the Allies, and that it can do us and our race no good to have in this Parliament

this constant canvassing of the honour of Australian troops. We should remember that it never pays to wash dirty linen in public while an unscrupulous enemy looks on.

Dr. MALONEY (Melbourne) [11.55].—I do not quite agree with the honorable member for Wentworth. Looting has been the habit of all armies throughout the world's history, and I know—as one who was medical officer of a ship coming down on one occasion from China—that 250 men were reputed on that boat to be bringing back 450 tons of loot. Now that the honorable member for Bourke has brought the question before the public, I hope this Parliament will insist that either the Assistant Minister, or the Prime Minister himself, shall make a public statement that, no matter what robbery by soldiers or officers has been allowed in the past, if, from this time forward, any soldier or officer steals he shall go to prison. There can be no harm in that attitude. The great Arch-Duke who is leading the Russian armies is reported to have said on one occasion—referring, I believe, to army contractors—"He who robs I hang."

Mr. KELLY.—Do not you think we might trust our Minister to take the proper stand?

Dr. MALONEY.—I want from this time forth every officer and soldier to understand that if he steals he will be punished. I would not try a dog by a court martial, and I know no legal man who would advocate one. Have we not enough stipendiary magistrates and justices to try cases without constituting courts martial? The honorable member for Bourke is not the only one who has obtained information. I know of matters which I am keeping quiet, only waiting to get justice done quietly. Whenever a Bill has been brought in pertaining to military matters, my stock question to the Prime Minister has always been, "Is the civil law dominant over the military law?" Every time the answer has been "Yes." The Prime Minister said, from his place in the House, that he would go further than the honorable member for Bourke, and say that an officer who would be guilty of looting was worse than a private. I agree with the honorable member for Bourke, that when a common soldier is being tried, punishment very

speedily follows, but if the offender is an officer he can escape. The Assistant Minister made a slip of the tongue in describing the paper which the honorable member for Flinders has now in his hand as the record of a court martial. It is simply the report of an inquiry, and I had intended to read it fully last night. Having handed it to *Hansard*, however, I had not the opportunity to do so, but I saw sufficient of it to come to the conclusion that if ever there was a whitewashing inquiry, it was that one. I do not think any legal man in this chamber would like to see a man tried on a document of that kind. Even "Judge Lynch" in America is not, in my opinion, so evil as a court martial; and about the latter form of inquiry all authorities speak severely. I know that if the honorable member for Angas speaks out in the direct honest way that he usually does, he will agree with me that trial by court martial should not be tolerated in Australia. One who had had an honorable career in South Africa was dismissed on an *ex parte* statement that he had been tried for murder; and, but for the help I received from the Commissioner of Police and detectives in Victoria, he would have been a disgraced man. And what trouble did I not have with the heads of the Department over that case! I say emphatically that, if there is one Department that needs watching, it is the Defence Department, where anything is done that a particular clique may desire. There are men here who are colonels, but who had not the pluck to volunteer for service in South Africa; and yet these creatures are given power and control.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—That cannot be said about Colonel Lee, who was regarded as one of the best troop leaders in South Africa.

Dr. MALONEY.—I do not know Colonel Lee, and I do not wish to say a word against him; but if he had had any decency he would not have taken the position of a judge. The inquiry to which reference has been made regarding that officer was not conducted by a County Court, a Supreme Court, or the High Court tribunals, which are open to the public; and letter after letter, and document after document, were produced confidentially. I feel confident that the Leader of the Opposition would not care to be tried under such circumstances, nor

would advocate the abolition of the ordinary courts of justice in favour of the court martial. I do not question the courage of Colonel Lee, who went to the front and fought; I am alluding to those made-up colonels who never went when they had the chance. I could give names, but I do not wish to labour the question. While I am member for Melbourne, the military authorities, so far as my vote goes, shall not be given dominance over our civil life. I compliment the Assistant Minister of Defence on his splendid efforts; indeed, it seems to me that he has to do most of the work of the Department, and I feel certain that he will keep a firm grasp of affairs. But I warn him that he will have to watch the Department. We must not forget that one trial by court martial, over 100 years ago, caused a very sore feeling between England and America; and I am sure there is not a single honorable member who would advocate such a form of trial for our fellow citizens. I hope that from this time forth it will be enunciated that, if any looting or thieving is done by officer or private, punishment will follow, and that, while we have so many stipendiary magistrates and Judges, no court martial shall be allowed in Australia. If we were in a state of siege or of war, I could understand our having recourse to courts martial, but is there any legal member opposite who would choose the average soldier as being a judge of the law of evidence, or capable of adjudicating in such cases? The Opposition contains more lawyers than we have on the Government side, and it is to them particularly that I have addressed my remarks. If a court martial is good for a soldier in times of peace, it should be good for the civilian; but who would dare to suggest the latter? Though some of us may differ from the honorable member for Bourke as to his method of introducing this subject, that gentleman has undoubtedly done some good in checking the military power, which apparently desires to control everything in Australia.

Mr. JENSEN (Bass—Assistant Minister) [12.5].—The honorable member for Illawarra just now stated that some months back he held a confession from the Department.

Mr. BURNS.—I did not say anything of the kind; I said I had a copy of the letter that you read just now.

Mr. JENSEN.—The honorable member, I think, said that he held a confession.

Mr. BURNS.—I did not say I held a confession; but I asked why the document I referred to had not been brought before the House previously.

Mr. JENSEN.—At any rate, the honorable member said that he held such a document; and I wish to show that the Department is doing everything openly and above-board, and in no way trying to conceal anything from Parliament.

Mr. BURNS.—The 22nd February was the date of the letter.

Mr. JENSEN.—Yes, that is the date, and it is as follows—

Department of Defence,

Melbourne, 22nd February, 1915.

DEAR SIR,

With reference to your inquiry in Parliament on 15th December, 1914, as follows :—

Mr. BURNS : To ask the Assistant Minister, representing the Minister for Defence :—

1. Whether his attention has been called to a report in the *Herald* newspaper of the 4th inst. that two members of the Expeditionary Force on duty at Rabaul had purchased two pairs of pyjamas from a local store-keeper, and on opening them found in each pair a note from a Mrs. Dalton, North Sydney, and Miss Stevens, of Vaucluse, showing that the pyjamas had been donated to the Red Cross League for the men serving at the front?

I am directed to inform you that the Administrator was asked to institute inquiries into the matter, and a copy of the report furnished by him is forwarded herewith for your information.

Yours faithfully,

T. TRUMBLE, Acting Secretary.
G. M. Burns, Esq., M.P.,
Commonwealth Offices, Sydney.

Mr. BURNS.—That is an exact copy of what you read this morning.

Mr. JENSEN.—I have here a copy of the report sent by the Administrator of Rabaul to the Minister; and extracts from that were supplied to the honorable member for Illawarra. That report deals with the confession—

Mr. BURNS.—No; not the confession—only a letter to the *Sun*.

Mr. JENSEN.—In any case the very fact that that report was sent by the Administrator, Colonel Holmes, to the Minister, shows that every attention was being given to the matter in Rabaul. The report contains the following :—

My attention has been drawn to a paragraph which appeared in a Sydney newspaper, the

Sun, dated 7th December, alleging that certain garments which were forwarded by a Red Cross Society in Australia for the use of hospital patients had been purchased at the English store at Rabaul by a man of the Force under my command. I immediately caused inquiries to be made into the matter, and find that the report in question has no foundation whatever in fact. The man referred to is Private R. B. Campbell, and he is writing the following letter to the newspaper to correct the false report:—

Re the article in the *Sun*, Monday, 7th December, in reference to certain articles which were sold to one of the members of the Expeditionary Force, you mentioned in your letter that the articles were purchased in an English store. As a matter of fact, the articles mentioned were purchased from another member of the Force privately—

Then the report proceeds, as I read this morning—

Certain parcels of goods were received from the Red Cross Society, and went straight into the possession of the Principal Medical Officer at the hospital, and had been used exclusively for the purpose for which they were sent.

None of these articles were broached on the voyage or before unloading. It may be that a man who had received these while a patient in the hospital afterwards disposed of them, but I have been unable to ascertain whether this is so. Certainly the report as to the pyjamas having been purchased in an English store at Rabaul is quite wrong, as there is no English store in existence here, with the exception of the Government store, under the control of my Supply Officer; and at this store nothing whatever is sold to the troops, and no pyjamas whatever have at any time been stored there.

I considered the report as published a serious reflection upon the honour of those under my command, and is also a damper on the efforts of those good ladies who are doing so much at home for the comfort of the troops on service. It is to be regretted that respectable newspapers should publish statements of this kind before they had first established their facts. I have no hesitation in saying that this accusation is entirely false.

There is one other matter to which I should like to refer. The honorable member for Bourke introduced the name of Adjutant-General Dodds, and, in doing so, I think, cast some reflection on that officer. For the information of the House, and in order that the Adjutant-General may be cleared of the allegations made against him by the honorable member for Bourke, I desire to read the following document which is signed by the officer concerned:—

In the Melbourne press of last Friday morning, Mr. Anstey, M.P., is reported to have quoted in Parliament, on Thursday afternoon, a minute of mine, dated 3rd February, 1915, as follows:—

It is not proposed to take any notice of the insinuations of the writer of the letter relative to the officers.

Mr. Jensen.

In quoting my minute, Mr. Anstey failed to state the whole paragraph of my minute in question, which reads as follows:—

It is not proposed to take any notice of the insinuations of the writer of the letter, relative to the officers of the Naval and Military Expeditionary Force. They are apparently made with the idea that the Department would be influenced in the decision on these cases, in order to avoid a scandal, and, being made in such a way, do not appear to be worthy of notice.

The Adjutant-General goes on to say—

I do not think that any fair-minded person could fail to grasp the meaning of my minute, which is, briefly, that, notwithstanding Mr. Anstey's representations, or those of his friends, I declined to recommend their release from gaol as the price of their hushing up a public scandal. Had I done so, the probability is that nothing whatever would have been heard of the notorious Rabaul looting cases. In further explanation of the "half-truth" quoted by Mr. Anstey, attention is invited to the fact that at the date of my minute, so far as I am aware, no allegation of looting was in the possession of the Department, beyond the insinuation and the threat of the thrice-convicted criminal, on whose behalf Mr. Anstey appears to champion his case. More reliable information was received by me at a subsequent date, since which time I have not spared myself to do everything in my power to bring any offender—officer or other rank—to a trial.

By placing Mr. Anstey's "half-truth" on record against me in *Hansard*, my reputation as an Imperial official is at stake, and it is respectfully requested that action be taken to give equal publicity to the "whole truth" as was given to the "half-truth," if not in Parliament, at least, by means of the press. Otherwise, without such contradiction, it is quite possible that another Mr. Anstey of 1930 may quote the Parliamentary Record in *Hansard* against me.

With regard to Mr. Anstey's allegations that my minute has been removed from the file, I know nothing of this. I am not concerned with the keeping of the departmental records. I am of opinion, however, that this allegation is not even a "half-truth," and I have little doubt that the minute will be found in its proper place on the file to which it belongs.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta) [12.13].—I wonder now whether we can get away from this subject.

Mr. JENSEN.—Our officers have to be cleared of these charges.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—That is so; but the Prime Minister has already promised a full and exhaustive inquiry into the whole of the charges.

Mr. BURNS.—I think we ought to have a Royal Commission.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—When a statement was made in this House last Friday, the Prime Minister accepted the suggestion, made on all sides of the House, that

there should be an inquiry, either by a Royal Commission, constituted of members of this House, or of a Judge of a Supreme Court, or by some other means, to sift the charges to the bottom, and give an impartial verdict. That is the inquiry we were promised, and the inquiry we are waiting for. In my opinion, it is improper for us to be raking up these details, pending such inquiry and report. At the same time, every possible despatch should mark the proceedings, including, of course, the constitution of the Commission. There has been sufficient time to set an inquiry going; and I do not think the Ministry sufficiently realize the seriousness of the charges.

Mr. JENSEN.—Mr. Garran is now dealing with the matter.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Mr. Garran? Mr. Garran is not going to make the inquiry, is he?

Mr. JENSEN.—He is looking into the papers.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—And doubtless he will make some sort of recommendation, and then the Cabinet will have to make further inquiries. It ought not to take two days to get that inquiry going if the Government acted properly. In the meantime I want to call attention to another very serious aspect of this question, which, in my judgment, towers infinitely higher than questions of mere discipline at home, and charges that go back ten or twelve years. Are we aware of the fact that the fate of the Empire to-day is at stake; that while we are talking about pyjamas the whole of the Empire's energies over yonder are being directed to the settlement of the problem whether our national property shall be left to us intact or not? I do think it is time we exhibited a better sense of proportion. I am not underrating the importance of this inquiry, but I urge that we should first look after something infinitely bigger and infinitely more important—the national welfare of Australia as well as the welfare of the Empire as a whole. Have honorable members read the statement by the Minister of Defence published this morning? Have they read the cables which state that the Germans are pushing the Russian forces back again, and have actually captured the strongly fortified place which was wrested from them several months ago?

All this time, and while all these big issues are at stake over yonder, we here are directing our attention to trouble arising over a pair of pyjamas, or upon something that happened ten or twelve years ago. It seems to me that we have lost all sense of proportion. I invite honorable members now to leave this matter alone for the present; we must trust the Government to sift it to the bottom.

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—That is what they ought to do.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I can only say that we are now waiting for the Government to get a move on, and to inform this House of the facts at the very earliest possible moment. Now, leaving this matter for the present, let us consider the defence situation as a whole. A very serious position of affairs arises, in my judgment, owing to the statement made by the Minister of Defence in the press this morning in his appeal for recruits. He is lowering the standard, and he is asking urgently for recruits. He says he cannot get enough to fill his reinforcements. What does this mean? It means that our men at the front are being slaughtered to-day faster than we can find men to take their places. Surely this is far more serious a thing than the question of a pair of pyjamas. This is the position which we ought to face earnestly, and the sooner we face it the better.

Mr. JENSEN.—The Government did not bring up the question of the pyjamas. We were attacked on it, and we had to speak.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I am not blaming the Government at all, and I hope the honorable the Minister will not misunderstand me. I am asking the Government and the whole House to try to bring things into their true proportion, and place these matters in their proper setting. It appears to me that we are in the habit of getting hold of some small detail in this House, and magnifying it until it fills the whole horizon, but I hope we shall get away from that practice now, and give our attention to something which is far more serious. And why is it serious? I am afraid for one thing that Australia is so far away from the scene of conflict that we have not yet got hold of the idea that we are fighting for the integrity of Australia.

Mr. MATHEWS.—There is the same trouble in England, and they are only 30 or 40 miles away.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I know; but to a certain extent the position is accentuated even more in Australia. Let us not forget the fact that the Germans want Australia; that they want it more than they want England.

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—Hear, hear!

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—If the enemy won out to-morrow, they would not want to occupy England, but they would want to occupy South Africa and Australia, and, therefore, I urge that we are infinitely more concerned in this war than Great Britain even is or can be, so far as integrity of territory is concerned. We are the stake in the issue, and that being so, why is it that after ten months of war we have not more than 40,000 men in the fighting line to-day?

Mr. MATHEWS.—The Department cannot arm and uniform the men as fast as they enlist.

Mr. BURNS.—There have been 83,000 volunteers, have there not?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It is true that 83,000 men have volunteered since the beginning of the war, but we must not lose sight of the fact that 10,000 have been put out of action, either by sickness, death or wounds. We must not forget the wastage of war, and we must bend our energies to meet this want. I suppose there are over 20,000 men in our camps to-day, so that probably less than 60,000 men have actually been sent away, and as 13,000 or 14,000 of that number only went the other day, they are on the water still, so that actually we have not got more than 40,000 in the firing line.

Mr. BURNS.—What do you suggest?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It seems to me that we have the notion somehow that we are going to lick the world, but I am afraid we are looking at this war through the wrong end of the telescope.

Mr. BURNS.—I do not believe anybody thinks that.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The position is very serious. We want every man we can get at the earliest possible moment. Why is it that recruiting has slackened off? The honorable member for Bourke said just now it is because of the feeling that the men could not get justice.

Mr. MATHEWS.—That has a good deal to do with it.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I am not making any suggestions in regard to these charges, but I am saying that if there be anything in the matter at all it is owing to the way that we magnify these small and trumpery things. We appear to fail to get the whole situation in its proper perspective.

Mr. THOMAS.—Like that letter read by the honorable member for Balaclava, for instance.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It is infinitely more important that we should give attention to the bigger things than to something which happened ten or twelve years ago.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The Government have done right with regard to the Broadmeadows Camp trouble.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I admit that the health of the troops ought to be the subject of earnest non-party discussion in this House.

Mr. BURNS.—Yes, but exaggerations should not be allowed.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—There always will be exaggeration until the end of time, but we ought not to allow these smaller matters to fill the whole horizon so far as the future of this war is concerned. Do not let us forget that while our enemies have their teeming millions in the field, we have not been able in ten months to put more than 30,000 or 40,000 into the firing line. I submit, therefore, that all our efforts should be concentrated on the equipment of more men for the front, and in fitting them to meet the enemy. That is the thing that we have to consider. While the Government are inquiring into the charges that have been made, I plead that these matters should not occupy the whole of their attention. Why is recruiting falling off? I want to say in the most friendly way that I do not think the Government themselves are blameless in this matter, for it appears to me that they have adopted an attitude of complacency, and in all their public statements they have not indicated to the public outside the real gravity of the situation. Recruiting, so the Minister tells us, has shown a marked falling off lately. Is this to be wondered at in view of the fact that while Parliament is sitting here to-day the chief members of the Government are away in another and distant part of the Commonwealth formulating a party programme.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Can you not see the well-being of Australia in that?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I say that anything relating to the welfare of the people should just now be subordinated to the safety of the people as a whole. What would be the good of discussing all your party programmes, and all your schemes for the social welfare of the people, if the Prussians come here and take possession of our country?

Mr. PAGE.—There is no danger of that.

Mr. JENSEN.—The absence of the Ministers is not responsible for the falling off in recruits.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I submit that the responsible Ministers would be better employed trying to get recruits than discussing the question of the division of powers between the States and the Commonwealth.

Mr. FENTON.—But you held a general election when the war itself broke out.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member knows quite well that the general election was decided on, and was in progress, when war broke out; and, in view of what took place since, he ought not to complain, because his party benefited by that election.

Mr. FENTON.—Oh, I am not sorry.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Then why does the honorable member not hold his tongue about it? He has violated every statement made by the Attorney-General.

Mr. BRENNAN.—In my view, we should go on with business, and not put up the shutters.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Does the honorable member believe that the country should be shocked from end to end by party strife and warfare?

Mr. BRENNAN.—No.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The whole of the people outside do not think that we should do anything of the kind. This is the only Parliament, so far as I know, where party strife takes place at this period in the history of the Empire. It is the only part of the whole Empire where the energies of Parliament are not concentrated upon the prosecution of the war and the carrying of it to a final and complete success. I urge, therefore, that, instead of talking about party programmes which will plunge this country into political warfare, the leaders of the Government ought to be here attending to those urgent and vital national matters to which the Minister of Defence called

our attention this morning. How can we expect the people outside to regard the war as being so serious, and the need for men so urgent, when the leaders of the Government themselves take so complacent a view of the present military situation?

Mr. MATHEWS.—We do not forget that the exploiters are robbing the people during the war.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—All I have to say is that the Government have the power to stop the exploiters in a time like this. Nobody here wants to see the people exploited.

Mr. MATHEWS.—You know we have not the power.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I know the Government have the power; but the honorable member's party deliberately turned down the only serious effort yet made to stop exploitation.

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—We have not the courage to do it.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—An earnest attempt was made in the early stages of the war to stop exploitation by the appointment of three of the ablest and most disinterested men in this country as a Commission to make inquiries and advise the Government upon any action that might have been necessary. These men possessed as much business ability, acumen, intelligence, and experience for the conduct of inquiries of this sort as could be found in any part of Australia. We are told contemptuously by the Minister of Trade and Customs that they did nothing, and did it well. They sat for thirty-six days in about six weeks, sent in I do not know how many reports, and all they get is an unworthy sneer from the little man opposite.

Mr. TUDOR.—If I said anything about the honorable gentleman's personal appearance, he would strongly object.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I may tell the Minister of Trade and Customs that I do not speak altogether in a physical sense when I so describe him. When the honorable gentleman talks about these men in the way he does, I think it is time that some reply was made to him. I say that the members of the Commission are three of the ablest men in Australia to-day, and there is no honorable member on the other side who, if spoken to privately, would not admit that it would be impossible to pick a better business man

than Mr. Dugald Thomson for an inquiry of this sort. The Commission was contemptuously rejected and thrown aside. I want to put on record what the members of the Commission were appointed to do—

Know ye that We do by these Our Letters Patent appoint you to be Commissioners to inquire into and from time to time report upon the supply of foodstuffs and other necessaries of life required by and available for the people of Australia during the war, and from time to time report upon the amounts of such foodstuffs and necessaries available or likely to be available for export, having regard to the requirements of Australia, and also to report upon any matters relating to the conditions of trade and industry arising out of the war which, in your opinion, should be brought under the attention of His Excellency's advisers.

Here were three of the ablest men I could find in Australia appointed to be the eyes and the ears of the Government with a broad commission purposely vague, so that they might inquire into anything they thought fit to inquire into.

Mr. MATHEWS.—And to report to us, who have no power to deal with their reports.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—That is absolute nonsense. Under the War Precautions Act the Government have supreme power in this country over everything that associates itself with the conduct of the war. I say that the only serious effort yet made was made in the early days of the war, and, to the eternal discredit of the present Government, they flung the opportunities for action afforded by the appointment of the Commission contemptuously away. The Minister of Trade and Customs says that they did so because the Commission were doing nothing. He could do the work twenty times better! After all that the Government are doing, the honorable members on their own side are up in arms about the way things are going on.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Does the right honorable gentleman expect us to exercise now the powers which he refused to give us by referendum?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I want my honorable friends opposite to exercise the powers they have got to protect the people. It is of no use to give them all the powers they want if they will not use them.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Attorney-General says we have not the power.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I suppose that ends it. There are other men whose

opinion on the subject is equal to that of the Attorney-General, who say that the Government have the necessary powers.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I should like to hear the ex-Attorney-General on that point.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The ex-Attorney-General would not tell the honorable member that in a time of war the Government cannot control the foodstuffs of the people. What are the Government doing? That is a fair question to ask. Our friends opposite say that the cost of living is towering up, that there are cornerers and exploiters abroad in Australia. What are they doing about it? Where are the exploiters, and what are their names? They have shown what they want to do in these matters. Nothing could be more eloquent on that point than the statement of the Attorney-General on the sugar question the other day. If ever a man went into a case to get a political argument out of it, the honorable gentleman did then.

Mr. RILEY.—And he got one, too.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—If he did get one, the bottom has been knocked out of it already. It has been shown that the honorable gentleman's facts, as well as his inferences, were wrong. The Attorney-General would have been well advised, in my opinion, if he had consulted with Mr. Knox, and had tried to induce him, with all his machinery and his ability, to act on his side, and help the Government over these troublous times. He should have left the question of running Mr. Knox to earth and nationalizing the industry of his company until afterwards.

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—That would be business.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—That would have been business, but it was too good a political opportunity to let go. Instead of seeking the welfare of the people in a fair and reasonable way; instead of using the resources of the Government to secure cheap food, and plenty of it, for the people, the whole inquiry by the Attorney-General seems to have begun and ended in a desire to make a political argument for what is to come later.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Mr. Knox would sell sugar at £25 per ton if he had the power.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—All I have to say to that is that the Labour people in

New South Wales have told Mr. Knox that £25 per ton is a fair price for sugar.

Mr. MATHEWS.—We get it here at £21 2s. 6d. per ton.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Honorable members opposite should not lose sight of the fact that the result of all their regulating of prices is to send the price of everything up, and they will not be able to regulate it down. They are building up more corners in Australia, and causing more exploitation, than was ever known in the history of this country before.

Mr. RILEY.—That ought to suit the honorable gentleman's party.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It does not suit my party. I say that our first consideration in these troubled times should be the poor man and his home. He ought to fill our horizon. I fervently believe that in all that our friends opposite are doing in mixing up politics with their war arrangements they are only hurting the men they are supposed to be representing in this House. I wish to say that the Commission I appointed, of independent, able, and disinterested men, would have gone further to provide a solution of all these troubles than anything honorable members opposite have been able to do in the nine months since they contemptuously dismissed that Commission. My first charge against the Government is that they flung away the only opportunities so far made available to them for the purpose of collecting foodstuffs and regulating their distribution before and during the war in the interests of the people.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—I should like to know whether the right honorable gentleman's Government came to the conclusion that they would have the power to act upon the reports of the Commission on the instructions given to them.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I will tell the honorable member what my Government thought, and what I thought myself.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—Was it concurred in by the ex-Attorney-General?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I do not know, I am sure. The honorable member had better put the ex-Attorney-General in the box and question him.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—The opinion of the ex-Attorney-General, if given at the time, was important.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—We thought in setting up that Commission that it was

our bounden duty to mobilize the whole of the resources of Australia upon a war footing, with a view to conserving the interests of the people, particularly in the matter of foodstuffs.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Could the honorable gentleman have done it without proclaiming martial law?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—You will never do anything if you do not try. The honorable member will never do anything by sitting here and making interjections. For heaven's sake, run a risk or two, will you, in the interests of the people of Australia? Do not come here and expect every "i" to be dotted, and every "t" to be crossed before you do anything. People who do not want to act always raise these preliminary difficulties. That brings me to another point. We have been told by responsible Ministers that we could not get any more rifles than we were getting, and that the Government were doing the best they could. We set up two Committees of this House, and both have unanimously come to the conclusion that we could get more rifles. After being ridiculed and jeered at as I have been for months because of the statements I have made regarding our preparations for war, and after being told that I was talking hot air, these same Ministers say now that we can get two shifts at work at Lithgow, and can increase the output of the rifles. I say that a very serious responsibility is resting upon Ministers for having the Small Arms Factory working only one shift for ten months when we now learn that it might have been working two shifts. The inquiry showed that we could increase the output of rifles by 70 per cent. I go further and say that the output could be increased by 100 per cent. An increase of 70 per cent. is admittedly a cautious and conservative estimate, no doubt rightly made by men charged with responsibility, but do not honorable members think that it is time we had that increased output, and that we sent the rifles away to the front with 70 per cent. more men instead of leaving one man in the trenches to do the work of three men? That is the serious aspect of this question.

The honorable member's time having expired, leave to continue granted.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I shall not occupy very much more time. I wish to say briefly that, in my opinion, instead

of this Parliament being engaged in party warfare, and the formulation of party programmes—

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable gentleman made some very good party utterances just now.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I ask the honorable member to read the speech in cold print and say what he can find of a party nature in it. I venture to say that he has made more party speeches against the present Government than I have made.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Surely that is anomalous.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It is. We have sat silent for months and months, so as not to disturb or interfere with the Government.

Mr. BURNS.—Not even by asking questions for one and a half hours every day.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—While the honorable member for Melbourne Ports and his sturdy fighters at the back have been assailing the Government day in and day out, let him not talk about anybody indulging in party warfare.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I simply said that the honorable member was endeavouring to make party capital out of this matter.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I am not trying to do so. I am asking the Government to make it possible for us to remain behind them in this war, and to stop this fratricidal struggle within, for the purpose of enabling us effectively to deal with our enemies without. We can have our fight later, but at the present time every ounce of our strength should be pressed into the prosecution of this war. To avoid sending a man or a gun that we can send to aid in the fight which is now going on in the Dardanelles is a criminal thing. The fact remains that we have there an army of brave men holding up a foe whose numbers are largely in excess of their own. While we are looking on complacently we ought to read the statement made by the responsible Minister this morning in his appeal for recruits. For what is it an appeal? It is not an appeal to increase the standing army in the field. He does not make an appeal to increase our effective fighting forces in the field. He says, "Although no new units may at present be under organization." There are no new units in contemplation at all. He cannot get sufficient men to replenish the wastage of war. There are not

enough recruits presenting themselves for reinforcements alone.

Mr. WISE.—Is not the severe medical examination deterring a lot of men from volunteering? I know of a case of a miner who came 200 miles to Melbourne to enlist, and who was rejected because of his defective back teeth.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The trouble is that we have not the equipment.

Mr. PAGE.—Does the Leader of the Opposition call the honorable member for Wakefield a loyal man when he makes a statement of that sort, and allows it to get into the newspapers? He wants scourging.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The Minister of Defence says that his statement is true.

The CHAIRMAN.—I appeal to honorable members to assist me to carry out my duties. It is very important that I should hear what the honorable member who is addressing the Committee is saying. It is also important that I should hear any statement to which exception may be taken. Now I understand that some statement has been made, which, in the medley of voices it was impossible for me to catch. I ask honorable members to assist me to discharge my duties, otherwise I shall be compelled to take another course.

Mr. PAGE.—You want putting with the Germans.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I will tell the honorable member for Maranoa frankly that my opinion is that we have not sufficient rifles and sufficient equipment. In saying that I am merely saying what is being said all over the Empire. The public know well enough that we are not overflowing with munitions of war. Everybody knows quite the contrary.

Mr. PAGE.—The public knows that when war was declared you had no reserve ammunition.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I was not aware that there had been any lack of ammunition.

Mr. PAGE.—We will have a say on that matter.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member may have two says. He may blame us as he likes. I do not care about that.

Mr. PAGE.—Half of you want shooting.

The CHAIRMAN.—I must ask the honorable member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Something more than a withdrawal is required.

Mr. PAGE.—I will do nothing of the sort. I will not withdraw the statement.

The CHAIRMAN.—I appeal to the honorable member—

Mr. PAGE.—I do not care what happens, I will not withdraw it. I do not care what is done with me. Half of them over there, and especially Foster, ought to be shot. He wants interning.

The CHAIRMAN.—May I make another appeal to the honorable member to withdraw his statement?

Mr. PAGE.—I will not. I do not care what you do.

The CHAIRMAN.—Then the honorable member compels me to do my duty. I name the honorable member for Maranoa.

Mr. PAGE.—Any man who makes a statement in public like that made by the honorable member for Wakefield wants something done to him. I would settle him if I were Minister of Defence. I would have him with the Germans at Langwarrin. That is his proper place.

Mr. TUDOR.—I feel sure that every honorable member regrets as much as I do the duty which has been forced upon me. An interjection was made by the honorable member for Wakefield to which the honorable member for Maranoa has taken exception—

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Will the Minister of Trade and Customs repeat my interjection?

Mr. TUDOR.—I did not hear it. Unfortunately, the Committee was a little excited at the time. Honorable members were engaged in cross-firing, and the honorable member for Wakefield made an interjection to which the honorable member for Maranoa took exception. I do not know what that interjection was.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Why not let the honorable member for Wakefield say what it was?

Mr. TUDOR.—If the honorable member for Wakefield will withdraw his interjection, and the honorable member for Maranoa will also withdraw his statement, the Committee will be extricated from a very difficult position. I believe that the honorable member for Maranoa will withdraw his statement if the honorable member for Wakefield will withdraw his interjection.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—But the honorable member for Maranoa has been named.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then, unfortunately, I am forced into the position of moving—

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—May I suggest that the Chairman should ask the honorable member for Wakefield what he said?

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—He said exactly what you said immediately afterwards.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then I ask the honorable member for Maranoa to withdraw the statement to which objection has been taken, and I feel sure that the honorable member for Wakefield will then withdraw anything that he said.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—I will not.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—The statement of the honorable member for Maranoa was a serious accusation against every honorable member on this side of the chamber. It involved everybody.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then I ask the honorable member for Maranoa to withdraw it.

Mr. PAGE.—No. Not half of them should be shot, but the lot of them.

Mr. TUDOR.—I ask the honorable member to withdraw the statement he has made concerning honorable members opposite, otherwise I shall be compelled to submit a motion which I shall regret, and which, I am sure, he himself will regret upon calmer reflection.

Mr. PAGE.—In deference to the wishes of the Minister—

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Do not put it in that way.

Mr. TUDOR.—Put it in any way you like.

Mr. PAGE.—I feel very strongly upon this subject—much more strongly, perhaps, than a number of honorable members in this chamber.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I ask the honorable member to withdraw his statement.

Mr. PAGE.—I withdraw it, and apologize for having made it.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr. PAGE.—I wish to make a personal explanation, sir. I beg to apologize to the Leader of the Opposition for what I said just before we rose for luncheon. I can assure the honorable member that I did not mean it. I apologize to honorable members of the Opposition, too, for what I said.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—We were all sure that the honorable member did not

mean what he said. It was one of those ebullitions which come out sometimes, and arise, as I believe, from a very rare, very genuine, and loyal attachment on the part of the honorable member to the interests of the Empire, which I am sure blinds him, even to the necessity for frank criticism sometimes concerning the preparation for the defence of that Empire. The honorable member may disabuse his mind of anything on this side which would seem to suggest to him that there is any sting or resentment left; we know him too well for that. The question of munitions is, perhaps, the most troublesome question that the Empire has to face to-day. It is the question of questions for the whole of the Allies, and it has been so stated by the responsible men of the Empire. Jellicoe says, "I cannot get my ships in trim, because I cannot get them fixed up properly." French says, "It is a simple problem—men and munitions, but munitions, munitions, munitions." Kitchener says, "I must have munitions." Responsible people, after consultation with the authorities in the Old Country, are saying that the problem is "Munitions," and that men at the war are being needlessly slaughtered from the want of them. There can be no good in trying to hide these facts from the population of Australia. Everybody knows that we have not enough munitions, and, to cap it all, two Committees comprising sixteen members in all out of our comparatively small Parliament, have said unanimously that we have not been doing what we should in connexion with the production of rifles at the Small Arms Factory. They point out the difficulties which are there. They point out the difficulties of material, the difficulties of men, and the difficulties of housing. As regards the difficulties of men, I venture to say that there is no trouble on that score. Surely enough men have passed through the factory, and are working at other places in Australia, to man a second shift under proper supervision. The men themselves—and they are no mean judges in these matters—see no difficulty in working a double shift, and would infinitely prefer working two or three shifts to working the overtime which they are doing at present. You cannot convince me that with such machinery as there is in the factory, competent engineers cannot operate it after having been shown the way to do

Mr. Joseph Cook.

it. At the dockyard, in Balmain, I am told that there are about ten men who have worked at the Small Arms Factory at one time or other. Surely they could be mobilised and put back there? I am glad that after ten months the Government are beginning to recognise their real responsibility in this matter, and now see that something should have been done long ago to multiply the output of the factory. I know—and I speak with every respect—that the Minister has been taking the advice of his experts, but I venture to say—and I do it clothed with a sense of responsibility—that there are occasions when the Minister must talk plainly even to his experts.

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—Hear, hear, and walk right over them.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—No, I do not say that. My point is that the experts should not rule and dominate any Department. They are the servants of the Department, and the thing is for the Minister to get them with him to carry out a reasonable policy as far as he can—

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am very glad indeed that you recognise that.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I have never recognised anything else. The Minister ought to get all their ability placed loyally and cordially at his disposal in the carrying out of the high policy, which it is the function and the sole responsibility of Ministers to introduce. That is where I cannot help feeling that something is lacking, and I hope that I will be acquitted of party feeling in this matter. God knows I want to make no party capital out of this business. If honorable members would not introduce party interjections, I should be glad to steer clear of the lot of them. This is a matter high above and beyond all these things.

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—Hear, hear! It concerns the salvation of the Empire.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—What are the facts? While we have been at luncheon to-day there has been handed round a further casualty list containing 311 names. For the last week we have been getting a casualty list of 300 names a day, or at the rate of 2,100 a week. That means about 9,000 casualties a month. Add to that number casualties through sickness and other causes, and we have a wastage at the rate of 10,000 a month.

Mr. JENSEN.—But remember that you have a lot of those slightly wounded going back to the front.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Yes; but those men will not be going back immediately. My point is that while 10,000 men a month represent the wastage of war, the Minister, in his appeal this morning, asked for only 5,300 men a month to replace them; 5,300 a month, he said, is what we want for reinforcements. If the wastage is going to be 10,000 a month, and the replenishment 5,300, then, to use an Irishism, "It will be no replenishment." It means that, very soon, your army will not be very strong if the present rate of slaughter continues.

Mr. BURNS.—Where does the Minister get his instruction from? Does he not get it from the War Office?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—No.

Mr. BURNS.—We could send 200,000 men.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The War Office to-morrow would take a quarter of a million men if we could send them ready to fight. They need nothing so much as men to relieve the soldiers in the trenches. They need men for nothing so much as to give those who have borne the brunt of the fighting a little relief.

Mr. FENTON.—But could we equip that number?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—No.

Mr. FENTON.—If we have not got the material, how could we do it?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member will have the honorable member for Maranoa turning upon him if he begins to make such interjections. I know the difficulty, and he knows it, too.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Do you not think that Australia has done very well, and the Australians, too?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I think that we have done very well; I think that we could have done better. I am sorry that I have to say that.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—So am I.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I tell the honorable member that I have not been satisfied.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I am sorry to hear you say that.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Let my honorable friends look at the millions in the field, and look relatively at our population, and then decide the matter for themselves. It is our war. The enemy want Australia and South Africa. They

do not, in my judgment, want to possess England. I doubt if they would do it to-morrow if they could; but they do want those two countries, and, therefore, it is our war. I am sorry to have to say it, but there seems to me to be the notion, even yet, that we are sending troops to the assistance of Great Britain to fight a battle in which the Homeland is peculiarly interested over and above our own interests.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Who suggested such a thing? No one!

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—That is the thing we want to get out of our minds. Does the honorable member opposite think that an effective fighting force in the field, of, say, 40,000, is a sufficient number to defend Australia when all her interests are at stake, and when there are millions on the other side?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—But that is not the extent of our contribution.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—What does the honorable member mean?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I mean that in addition to that we have a Navy there.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Yes, a Navy, which, by-the-bye, is getting less, and again is not being replaced.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am with you there.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—That is the point which I am on. I am showing that the wastage of war is at the rate of 10,000 a month, that all the reinforcements the Minister is asking for is 5,300 a month, and that that does not increase your effectiveness in the field by one man. It makes up for about just half the wastage of war. The honorable member can read the list himself. If this kind of thing continues, and the rate of casualties is maintained, it means that we shall have very little fighting force there unless we get a move on somewhere.

Mr. JENSEN.—We are continually sending reinforcements.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I know.

Mr. JENSEN.—And many of those who are wounded only slightly will be back in the fighting line in a week or two.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It is to be hoped that they will. I believe that about 50 per cent. of them go back to the fighting line; but, even so, the appeal of the Minister of Defence this morning was for the balance of the reinforcements required, and there is no proposal, either now or in prospect, so far as his statement

this morning goes, for increasing the number of effectives in the field. That is the point I want to stress. I only want to get it into the minds of honorable members so that they may come out and help us to remedy the thing. That is the object of my criticisms all through, and if sometimes I seem to get warm in my expressions, it is because I feel in earnest about the situation, and am anxious to help. Concerning the Small Arms Factory, here is—perhaps I had better not say it, for, in my opinion, the reports from the two Parliamentary Committees constitute a reflection on the Defence administration during the past nine months. There is no escape from it. Nine months after the war has broken out, two Committees of this Parliament, comprising sixteen members chosen from both sides, and acting quite separately, attacked this problem from different points of view, and arrived at the same conclusion. A majority of the members of the Committees represented the party on the other side of the House.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Do you suggest that we would make a party question of the matter?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—No; and will the honorable member hold his tongue? I will not allow him to get party into it either.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Why use language like that?

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! Will the honorable member for Denison cease these interruptions?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I thought I was trying to show the non-party setting. Two Committees composed of honorable members from both parties have unanimously decided that there should be two shifts to make rifles at Lithgow. It cannot be made a party matter because the majority of honorable members on that side of the House who are not likely to do anything to hurt their own Government, say that two shifts should have been at work at Lithgow, and could be employed in a very short space of time.

Mr. BOYD.—The honorable member for Denison put his signature to the statement.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Hear, hear.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order!

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—The two Committees say that the output of rifles could be increased by 70 per cent.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—What have the experts been doing all this time?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It is of no use blinking the fact that these reports do furnish a condemnation of the methods of the Department in the administration of these works.

Mr. GREGORY.—It must not be forgotten that the men themselves were anxious for a second shift to be put on.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I have already said that.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Have you perused the evidence we took?

The CHAIRMAN.—Order!

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I advise you to look at the evidence.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I ask the honorable member to desist from interjecting.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I am not concerned with the evidence. The honorable member has put down his own name to the statement that the Department can get 70 per cent. more rifles out of the factory.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Look at the evidence.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—What is the use of the honorable member quibbling about the evidence?

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—You should read the evidence before you make these remarks.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—My wish is to emphasize the fact that we are not doing enough, having regard to the range and scale of this war, in the way of equipping men and manufacturing munitions. I hope that honorable members will constitute themselves recruiting agents. In my humble way I have been doing what I can in that connexion. One newspaper in Australia deserves special mention for the manner in which it has, throughout the war, advocated the making of every effort on the part of Australia to do its best. Since I proposed that Australia should send 100,000 men to the front, it has kept that object in view. Such a number would be a very modest contribution for Australia to make towards the defence of the Empire, and the sooner we can fulfil that ideal the better it will be for all concerned. Now, with regard to matters arising out of the war. As to the mobilization of our resources, honorable members opposite are constantly complaining that they have no power, and can do

nothing. Let me tell members of the Committee what I think can be done. I speak with great diffidence in the presence of my late Attorney-General, whom I have not consulted on this subject, and who may not agree with the views that I am about to express. I venture to say that we can do several things. In the first place, we have complete power to control exportation, and that implies the power to trace everything that is exported to its source. That is a tremendous power.

Mr. TUDOR.—I do not think that we can do that until we have got the stuff into our stores.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I think that we can.

Mr. TUDOR.—I shall be pleased to learn that that is so.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Then the Government has the power, which it has taken by legislation, to acquire anything it needs for defence purposes. It may take munitions or materials of any kind requisite for the defence of the country. That gives the Government power to commandeer to any extent. The Government could also get created a Royal Commission, like the Beef Commission of the previous Administration, and give it complete powers of investigation, comprising an inquiry into every detail, the examination of account books, and all other documents.

Mr. MATTHEWS.—That would merely end with a report.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It would be best to get the report of a Commission before saying where we should stop. I complain that the Government will not use the powers that it possesses. Honorable members opposite merely complain to make political capital. That ought not to be done. As to the recruiting of men, I am not sure that the time has not come for the registration of all able-bodied men in Australia. I do not speak of their mobilization; and, in referring to the matter, I am speaking entirely on my own responsibility. The flower of our manhood is going to the war, and many men have gone who ought not to be taking the place of others just as fit, who could be better spared.

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

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I should, by leave, like five minutes more.

Leave granted.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—Justice alone will soon require that we should do something in the direction I suggest, instead of leaving people to please themselves as to whether they will enlist. It appears to me to offend the very elements of justice to send the flower of our manhood to the war and to allow to remain at home those who cannot be got to realize their responsibilities.

Mr. TUDOR.—What does the right honorable member advise—conscription?

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—I think that it would be sufficient for the present if we had a call of the muster-roll. Something of the kind is provided for in the Defence Act of 1901. That Act implies a power of conscription for the protection of the national safety. On this subject, I speak with great deference, and with as little emphasis as I can, but I think that the time will soon arrive, if things continue to go on as they are going, to make a register, and call the muster roll, so that we may know what men are available, and may make sure that the manhood of the country is doing its duty. We are not doing, and we cannot do, without a complete cessation of party warfare, all that is necessary under the circumstances. We cannot properly mobilize our resources while the Labour party is carrying on an active party propaganda and warfare. We need to bring to bear at this juncture the whole of our resources, and to mobilize our munitions. The manager of the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow says that he has not been turning out more rifles because he has been short of timber for butts, and of metal for other portions. Are we to be told that there would be any lack of material in Australia could it be mobilized?

Mr. FENTON.—That is all right now.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—It would have been all right from the beginning if an earnest effort had been made. We need the mobilization of arms and men and of resources. The Government must do something of the kind which it has already repudiated. It must get some other body to help it in the mobilization of our resources. The war is not yet over. Indeed, it is "a long, long way to Tipperary." We are fighting a foe that

is not deficient in resources; a foe that made itself thoroughly ready before it began hostilities; a foe that has mobilized all its resources—scientific, military, and industrial—and put them wholly on a war basis. We are warring against an enemy that has thrown to the winds all moral considerations, and is murdering and maiming innocent people, and making the slaughter as frightful as possible, even poisoning with fumes of various kinds to gain its ends; an enemy that is ignoring all the fair laws of fighting, and will resort to any tactics if only it may win thereby. Opposed to a foe like this, which is constantly putting myriads of men into the field thoroughly equipped, we must do the same. We must put all our might and resources into the opposite scale. We must send into the fighting line every man and every gun that we possess for the protection of the national safety, the security of those who are near and dear to us, and the safety of the country that we love so well.

Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [2.40].—The Leader of the Opposition has addressed himself exhaustively to this matter, and I listened to his speech with pleasure, although he charged the party to which I belong with carrying on a party warfare while a great national conflict is proceeding. He says that we are holding a conference in Adelaide for the purpose of a party propaganda which would be best left alone at the present juncture. But as the well-being of the people depends upon party politics, we ought to have party politics every time. We cannot get away from the fact that any political party desirous of furthering the interests of the people is justified in taking whatever steps it thinks fit to do that. We know that in the Old Country there are industrial troubles. Does anybody here think for a moment that the men are looking for these industrial troubles? Rather is it that they are being exploited by great capitalistic concerns, that food prices have gone up, and that they are demanding higher wages so that they can keep themselves in a civilized condition; and they are justified in doing it. The honorable member knows that as well as I do. Take that great milling concern which has a capital of £800,000. Their profits last year amounted to no less than £400,000. They have been robbing somebody in order to get that huge amount; but, while they are crying out

against the men for not manufacturing munitions of war, we find that they are not paying any higher wages themselves during the time that they are making such huge profits as this. It is the duty of the party on this side of the House to consider the situation arising out of the stress of war, and to look after the interests of those they represent. If it is party politics to do that, then we will have to go in for more party politics. I would like to deal shortly with the action of the Government in regard to foodstuffs, and in this matter I may say that I am not here necessarily to defend the Government. As honorable members know, a Government can do much, but, as far as foodstuffs is concerned, I am of the opinion that this Government cannot do more than they have done. The High Court has knocked out any legislation that we have passed that might have helped us in this direction. Their latest ruling decided against the Inter-State Commission on the question of the right of New South Wales to seize all the wheat grown in that State; and it is quite evident that this Parliament has not sufficient power. If the Parliament itself has not the power, I am quite certain that we cannot create any body and give it the power.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—All the High Court has ever done is to tell you that you cannot do all this in your own way.

Mr. GROOM.—In the New South Wales case the High Court held that the Government had power of acquisition. They did not say that the Commonwealth had no power.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I am tired of reading reports and of Commissions collecting evidence as to what the powers of the Commonwealth are, only to discover that when we pass an Act of Parliament dealing with a certain matter we have not the power to bring that Act into operation. I know the Government is not scathless. If you selected the best men in this chamber and put them into similar positions, we could find fault with them; but I believe, as far as foodstuffs are concerned, that this Government has done as much as it possibly could have done with the power it possesses. The Government have supreme power over exports, and when an attack was made upon the most important section of our food supply, the Government

took the duty off wheat. They stopped the exportation of sugar; and they stopped the exportation of meat, except to the British Army. And I will show that in regard to sugar they have done a very great deal in the interests of the people outside.

Mr. GROOM.—What have they done?

Mr. MATHEWS.—In regard to sugar alone, we have here an example that can be presented to the world of how Protection has given Australia sugar at a cheaper price than it can be obtained anywhere else in the world. You cannot get away from that fact. Look at the price. In Brisbane it is £23; in New South Wales, £21; in Victoria, £21 2s. 6d. The right honorable the Leader of the Opposition states that the Government ought to have listened to Mr. Knox, and made an arrangement with him—the honorable member for Darwin, who is supposed to be a good business man, slipped on the same question—but if we had taken the duty off sugar, or if we took the duty off sugar tomorrow and imported sugar, it would be impossible to sell it in Australia at less than £25 per ton; and every honorable member knows it. Why not be candid and just in regard to this matter, and let the public know the real situation? In England the price of sugar is £27 6s. per ton wholesale.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—That is the price fixed by the Asquith Government.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I am quite aware that it is. The British Government have powers that this Government have not, and when the war started, being common-sense men, and knowing that they could not get sugar from Europe, they immediately ordered sugar from Jamaica.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—And put the price up.

Mr. MATHEWS.—We know that their action in going to a market outside immediately raised the price of sugar; and if we were to go into the market the result would be that the price here would be still further raised, that is, if we wanted a large quantity. But, fortunately, we do not want very much. But why not admit the fact at once, that if the Government had taken the duty off sugar it would have increased the price to the people of Australia to £25 per ton. The honorable member for Moreton thinks only of the grower. As a Protectionist, I say the

sugar-grower has a lot to growl about in regard to the price of sugar, for there is no doubt, in my opinion, that the Australian sugar-grower has not received that benefit from Protection that he ought to have received in the ordinary course of things. I will admit that at once, but on the general question, so far as sugar is concerned, this Government is entitled to universal praise.

Mr. GROOM.—What does the retailer pay per ton?

Mr. MATHEWS.—I cannot go into the retail price. All I know is, that if the wholesale price is £21 2s. 6d.—and there is a fixed retail price—when the wholesale price goes up to £25 the fixed retail price will go up sympathetically. I do not wish to charge the right honorable gentleman with having made a party speech this afternoon. To my mind, he spoke in a manner that I would like to see adopted more frequently in speeches delivered in this House. I accept the statement of the right honorable gentleman that he was not talking party politics, but, at the same time, he did attack the Government for not having done something. To my mind the Government have done all they could. They do not possess the power to do more.

Mr. RILEY.—If they had done more they would still have been criticised.

Mr. MATHEWS.—If they had done something they ought not to have done, they ought to be criticised. The right honorable gentleman also said that, instead of considering details as to pyjamas, and such like, it would be better for us to take into consideration the matter of keeping 100,000 men fully equipped at the front by supplying drafts to fill up the wastage of war. To my mind, it is this matter of "details" that is retarding enlistment. I do not go the whole way with the honorable member for Bourke, but incidents such as those with which the honorable member has dealt, and which we cannot get elucidated by the Defence Department, occasion all the pinpricks and dissatisfaction. Take, for instance, the horrible letters read to-day by the Assistant Minister of Defence, containing charges against officers at Rabaul. The reading of those letters turns me sick. If the charges contained in them were true the men accused must be sexual perverts, fit for lunatic asylums, and not prisons. We need not

be squeamish in regard to matters of this sort. We know that men associating with others would never go to the distance these men are charged with having gone unless they were mad. That is the stand-point from which the matter should have been considered. I do not believe these charges. They are too horrible to believe. I have heard the evidence on which the men who have made these charges were convicted and sentenced to four or five years' imprisonment. I believe that they should have been sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment, and that they should not have been released, considering that they carried out highway robbery of the heinousness described in the evidence. Every one knows the difference between highway robbery and looting. I do not defend looting, but one can understand that what is known as looting may be picking up something belonging to some one else—an action which is in no degree a crime compared with the action of men who, at the point of the bayonet on a loaded rifle, would rob a Chinaman of £200. That was not looting. I do not believe the charges laid by these men as indicated in the letters read to-day. However, I am not talking of this case particularly. Unfortunately, more Defence Department complaints, even before the war, have come under my purview than that of any other honorable member, because, owing to the fact that the barracks and the naval branch are situated in my electorate, the men come to me as their representative. I have been able to get little redress for them. The officers in the Department keep back the investigation of everything. That is a detail which has created in the minds of certain people the opinion that there is something untoouchable in the Defence Department that ought to be inquired into.

Mr. GREGORY.—Could not you have got this matter remedied by your party instead of bringing it forward in the House?

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable member knows that we are only a party where our platform is concerned. It is generally understood that outside the party platform the Ministry has as much power as any other Ministry can have, and its actions, therefore, in those matters do not come within the purview of the party. Therefore, honorable members must take every opportunity to

get matters redressed. I charge the Department with permitting an unfair method of recruiting. Men are accepted who are not healthy—at least, if they are healthy, other men who have been rejected should have been accepted. In other Departments there is always some spot on which one can lay his finger so that any trouble may be elucidated; but what is the matter with the Defence Department that we cannot do the same? As for the horrors we have heard to-day from the Assistant Minister—which were so terrible as to make me sick—it will go forth to the world, if the matter is not censored, that Australians have been guilty of crimes we have been hurling anathemas at the Germans for perpetrating. The fault lies with the Defence Department, though I cannot put my finger on the spot. The Department must take the blame for the fact that these matters cannot be elucidated and people cannot get the opportunity of seeing that they are set right.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—You are attacking the Government.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I am not attacking the Government from the stand-point of my party. It is the duty of the Minister of Defence to see that we do not have such things as these horrors brought forward in the House, and he can prevent it by giving to the men the opportunity to have such troubles squared up. Had that been done in this case these things would not have been heard of to-day. But the Defence Department will not give this opportunity. If a mistake is made it is hidden; it is never admitted; one can never get down upon it because the Department has methods of covering up all these things. The Prime Minister has promised to do certain things, and I hope that in future the Defence Department will see that when matters of this sort are brought forward the people can get explanations with regard to them. And I hope, further, that the Department will not hide anything, and that we shall not have a repetition of what has occurred here to-day at the outset of our career as a military nation. Whether the present war, in which it was necessary for us to participate, will put a stop to militarism I do not know. I think that it should go a long way towards doing so.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That remark has been made after every war.

Mr. MATHEWS.—There has never been such a war as the present. This is a war of nations, and not a war of armies. We are told that there is a system whereby the food question could be handled. We are told that under the stress of war the Government can take over every commodity. Every time that has been said the honorable member for Darwin has said, "Hear, hear"; but unless he has gone back on what he always preached in the past, the honorable member would be the last to accept such a method.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—By reducing the duties, if your party were prepared to do it, the cost of the necessities of life could be reduced.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable member has blown himself out at once, because if we take off the duty on sugar up goes the cost of the article.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—If your argument is correct, the sooner we quadruple the duty on sugar the cheaper it will be.

Mr. MATHEWS.—There is only one method by which the Government can take control of commodities and rule prices. We cannot do it under our Constitution; but there is a method, and that is by declaring martial law. The Government could then say, "In the stress of war we propose to commandeer all commodities on behalf of the people."

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Is that martial law?

Mr. MATHEWS.—Let me explain what I mean. I do not think we have the constitutional power to regulate the price of foodstuffs or to take over commodities and sell them to the public. The Federal Government can buy what they need for their Army and their servants, but I do not think they can buy to sell to the public.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The Government are going to do that in the Northern Territory.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable member overlooks the fact that the Northern Territory belongs to the Commonwealth. It is one of our own Territories, and we have full power there to do what we like in this regard. During my time I have lived under a state of semi-martial law, where the military were the all-pervading power. One had to obtain from them a pass to proceed from one street to another, and, in short,

everything was under the control of the military.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Not one of us wishes to live under military law.

Mr. MATHEWS.—No. Martial law will never be declared by any vote of mine, and I do not think that the honorable member for Darwin, who interjected "Hear, hear!" when it was suggested that martial law should be availed of for this purpose, would vote for such a thing. I am reminded of *Aesop's fable* of the frogs who yearned for a king, and who, when given a log of wood to act in that capacity, cried out at once that this was a dead, inanimate thing. They were then given a stork, and King Stork finished up by eating the lot of them. And so it would be with martial law. Notwithstanding that the civil law is dominant here, it seems almost impossible to keep the military or defence system within bounds. Once the military had control, everything relating to war and defence matters would be glossed over, and they would do whatever they pleased. I hope that when the war is over the Government will do what they can to bring about an improved condition; but I sincerely trust that martial law will never be proclaimed for this purpose. The consumers of Australia, who are demanding consideration in the matter of foodstuffs, would squeal most loudly of all if they were placed under the jurisdiction of martial law, because there is no feeling, no justice—nothing but a hide-bound procedure—associated with martial law, and it could not prove beneficial to a free people.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE (Flinders) [3.3].—With regard to the concluding utterances of the honorable member who has just resumed his seat, I, for one, desire to express as strongly as I can the hope that we in Australia may never be placed under martial law. Before dealing with one or two matters that have been raised in this debate, I should like to refer to an interjection made while the Leader of the Opposition was speaking by the honorable member for Maranoa, who, I regret, is temporarily absent.

Mr. FENTON.—He has withdrawn, and apologized to the Leader of the Opposition.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—No one was more confident than I was that the

honorable member would take that course as soon as he had had time for reflection. But it is not to that matter that I desire to allude. I attach the greatest importance to another interjection which the honorable member for Maranoa made, because we all know that there is no honorable member in whose breast there burns a higher glow of patriotism than in that of the honorable member himself. When the Leader of the Opposition was saying that if our enemies won this war, we should be likely to lose Australia, the honorable member interjected to the effect that such a thing was beyond all reasonable possibility. I desire, in the clearest and most definite way, to express my opinion upon this subject, because I feel sure that the great bulk of the people of Australia, notwithstanding the deaths and the disaster that have come to a thousand homes in the Commonwealth; do not yet realize the issue about which we are fighting. Let me put it now as clearly as I possibly can. If the result of this war were something like a drawn game; if Germany were able to retain possession of those lands of which she is now in military occupation; if we were not to weaken permanently her domination in Europe; and if she were in possession of that part of Belgium which she now occupies, is there a man in this House who does not know in his heart that, in a very short time, the rest of the coast-line between the Kiel Canal and the most southern part of the land she is now occupying would be German?

Mr. MATHEWS.—Holland would have to go.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Every one knows that the claims of Holland would be scattered to the winds, and no one knows that better than do the Dutch. But I am taking the more favorable case—the case of a drawn game, or drawn battle, between these great contesting Powers. If we had, then, a nation braced up to the highest military power, although broken down, it may be, for the moment, in its immediate attacking power, occupying that coast-line in the North Sea, coupled with a coast-line in the Mediterranean, with a population of 120,000,000, the most active, in some respects the most intelligent, and certainly by far the most highly-organized, in the world, how long do honorable members

think the British Flag would be dominant on the high seas?

Mr. KING O'MALLEY.—Or any other flag.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Or any other flag. It would be merely a question of one, two, or three years before we passed under German domination. But if, on the other hand, Germany wins this war; if she humiliates France, breaks the power of Britain, or actually gets control over, or weakens, relatively speaking, to a great extent the power of the British Navy, then as sure as the sun will rise to-morrow, British South Africa and Australia will at once become German possessions. Every man knows that, not only here, but in Germany, where they have not scrupled to make such a declaration in almost express terms. What I wish to bring before honorable members with all the force that I can command is that the bulk of the people of Australia have not realized this fact. It was with amazement that I heard such an interjection as that to which I have referred emanate from such a source, because there is no man here who would be more earnest and more strenuous in the desire to bring this fact before the whole of the people of Australia than the honorable member for Maranoa would be if he realized it. Last Saturday I was passing a sports ground not far from here, when my ears were suddenly greeted, as those of other honorable members have been, with a roar from the football field such as we sometimes hear. I am not here to say that people should not play football at a time like this, or that others should not go to see them do so—I think they should. But, after all, there was something in that roar from thousands of young throats that jarred upon me when I thought of the hundreds of homes in Australia where mothers are weeping for their sons who have fallen. The Leader of the Opposition has intimated that the time may soon come when we may have to think of registering all who can bear arms. I desire to go a little further. No honorable member will accuse me of making this a party question, because, in whatever steps the Government may take, and to whatever length they may go, I shall support them. And I venture to say that if the Government

go in the direction which the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, the right honorable gentleman can promise them the support of members on this side of the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS.—Hear, hear!

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—That is a step, the responsibility of which no party can, by itself, very easily take; it is a measure which, in any country, ought only to be adopted under the strain of extreme national danger. But I do suggest that there should be compulsory enrolment of all men who are within the ages at which they are capable of serving their country. Of course, many men will be exempt from such service by physical reasons, and no doubt there would be defined reasons for excluding many others, such as the fact that they have dependent upon them persons who cannot do without their support; but all other men in the community, single and married, should be on this register, and then we should not have to depend solely upon those who come forward voluntarily for this service. I put this view to honorable members: Those who have gone to the front, and who are fighting for us, for Australia, are drawn from all classes, all ranks, and all occupations in this country. There is no discrimination. No one can say that any particular occupation, or class, or set of people has not contributed its fair share, but it is undeniably a fact that from every section of the community it is the courageous, the active, and the good men who are going to the front—the men to whom above all others we look to carry on the affairs of the country and make Australia, in the future, what it has been in the past. Under the present system there is no doubt that men from all classes of the community—the men of heart, intellect, and courage—are going away, and if that process is to continue for a long time—and he is a sanguine man who would to-day fix a limit to the war—what will be the position of Australia? Are we to continue to be bled of our best? The national problem presents itself—and it is not for one party, or one man, to answer—what are we going to do about it? I will say no more at this stage than that should honorable members on the Ministerial side come to the conclusion that any measure of the kind I have indicated has become necessary, I feel sure they will be able to count on the support of the

majority, if not of all, the members of the Opposition. I wish now to deal in a very few words with a totally different subject. In connexion with a debate on the food supplies, some constitutional questions were raised, and my learned leader was asked whether I agreed with certain views he was putting forward.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK.—“Learned leader” is good.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—So the honorable member is my learned leader. I involuntarily fell into that expression after hearing his argument, but I may add that, even if I did not agree with him, I should not have the courage to say so. We have been asked what the Liberal Government were prepared to do under the circumstances. I wish to remind honorable members that war was declared on the 4th August, and that the general elections were to be held on the 5th September, so that the then Ministers were merely seat-warmers for the balance of their period of office; and the actual questions that have now become acute, although they were certainly foreshadowed, and although we foresaw that they would have to be dealt with, had not arrived at the position of requiring us to immediately deal with them. Nevertheless, foreseeing that some action by the Government in the direction of seizing foodstuffs, and other necessaries, might become imperative, the Board to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred was appointed. That Board was asked to do the work which the first paragraph of the motion proposed by the honorable member for Cook last night aimed at, and the Board was, in fact, proceeding with that work. What would the Liberal Government have done in the circumstances that exist to-day? I am not going to attempt to define the constitutional powers of a Government such as ours in time of war. I agree with the statement of the Attorney-General a few days ago that he would be a bold man who would place a limit to the powers of the Australian Government in time of war. I did not agree with his application of that view, because that application to the enemy contracts was about the most extreme possible, the problem in that case being whether we could put an end to contracts which were, in any circumstances, suspended during the currency of the war; thus the powers sought in this legislation could only apply after the

war. But with regard to the honorable gentleman's contention that it is impossible for a lawyer, or anybody else, to define the limits of the Government's powers, I would point out to honorable members that the overriding principle recognised in all countries is that all constitutional limitations give way to what is the supreme law of the land, the safety of the realm. Nothing stands in the way of that supreme law; if that safety is really involved all constitutional ties are like flax in a fire. If this country were in immediate danger of occupation by the enemy, is there any power that the National Government would not exercise to prevent such an occurrence? I venture to say there is not. But we have not arrived at that dangerous stage yet. I do not propose to press my argument any further than it will go, but that principle, *salus populi suprema est lux*, implies also that the supreme law must rest with the one Government that represents the whole of the people. How far that power would go is a different question, the resolving of which must depend on the circumstances of the case. But in considering how far it could be applied, honorable members must not forget that warfare now, more than ever before, is an operation in which, not merely those engaged with the weapons of onslaught in their hands are taking part, but also those who are providing the actual fighters with munitions, equipment, and food; and it is hard to say, in the complex industrial and commercial conditions now prevailing, exactly where war-like operations terminate. I am not prepared to say that, under the existing conditions in Australia, any power would reside in the Federal Government to go about buying foodstuffs generally and distributing them.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—That is the point.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—I have already said that I shall not try to carry my argument further than I think it will go under the present conditions of Australia, although that power might vest in the Government under conditions of more immediate stress. But if the stress is produced, if the high prices are caused by people taking advantage of our necessities as a nation to corner and store large quantities of foodstuffs, with a view to enhancing their price, and if those people form rings and conspiracies in order to

do that, they are performing an operation which not only interferes with the life of the ordinary citizen, who is not even indirectly connected with the war, more than all citizens are; but they are interfering directly with the carrying out of our preparations for war, with the provision of food and equipment for our men at the camp, with the provision for those engaged in manufacturing munitions of war, and practically with the wages due to the men who make our munitions. Those are part of the operations of warfare, and if there is an operation being carried out by people for their own benefit, a conspiracy amongst a number of people, or actions by any single person, the immediate effect of which is to impose upon the Government greater burdens and make it more difficult to find the supplies necessary for these or other operations immediately connected with the war—a result which would follow from any of the alleged corners or combinations which are now supposed to exist—then I say without hesitation, if they do exist, the Government could, without any further constitutional powers than we now possess, take steps to put an end to them, and to punish the people so engaged in a conspiracy against the safety of the realm.

Mr. MATHEWS.—If you wiped out the civil law first.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Far from that; but I will deal with that point later. If there are any people now engaged in garnering together foodstuffs and other things which are necessaries, directly or indirectly, to the community, the Commonwealth, in taking the steps necessary for its ultimate safety—and that covers a very wide ground—

Mr. THOMAS.—Would you let the High Court, or Parliament, or the Government decide that?

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—In questions of national safety no Court will go very far in attempting to limit the functions of this Parliament.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The parties concerned might resort to the protection of the civil law.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—They might. For my part, I should risk it. If the object is simply to say, "Things are dearer now than usual, whether through combinations or conspiracies or arrangements of the kind, therefore let us buy

the stuff and sell it to the people more cheaply," I hardly think that would or could reasonably, in the present conditions of Australia, be regarded as a legitimate exercise of the constitutional power.

Mr. FENTON.—That is the point.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—Honorable members can have my opinion for what it is worth, but I can hardly conceive of a case in which any considerable quantities of the foodstuffs of the people are now cornered, where you could not go further and say, "Such cornering interferes with all the operations, industrial as well as military, necessary to the defence of this country." The honorable member for Melbourne Ports talks about martial law. There is a little misapprehension on that subject. Martial law is a kind of thing which is only justifiable where civil law has become impossible, and has nothing whatever to do with any steps which a Government may find it necessary to take of the kind I have been describing. Martial law comes in where the Government, by its own unlawful action, trusting to the subsequent authority of Parliament, or even perhaps invested by Parliament for the time being with the power, takes away the civil rights of every citizen and places him under the jurisdiction of military officers. But that has nothing to do with the matter I was discussing.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Without martial law a man can resort to the law courts; under martial law he cannot.

Sir WILLIAM IRVINE.—When I say that the State, in the case of this great necessity, can exercise these extraordinary powers, I mean that where the necessity exists the State is not exceeding the law. It is merely carrying out the law which the Courts have over and over again recognised as being the law of laws—the law that overrides all other laws. The mode of carrying it out is always at the discretion of the Government. I have been dealing merely with the powers themselves. I do not want it to be assumed that, in advocating these steps, I am in favour of any application of martial law. I am not referring to the actual disciplining of soldiers, but speaking of the general civil population, and I say unhesitatingly that no circumstances exist that would justify any application of martial law to Australia at the present time. I ventured to inter-

vene in the debate because I thought the Committee was entitled to my opinion. We ought all to be perfectly candid when we are entering this crisis, and as to the more serious suggestion thrown out by the right honorable member for Parramatta, which receives my entire accord, it is a matter which ought to be taken into the immediate and serious consideration, not only of the Government, but of honorable members on both sides of the House.

Mr. ANSTEY (Bourke) [3.27].—The honorable member for Flinders has raised the debate to a higher plane than I reached in my remarks, and I propose, if I can, to follow his example. But if any reliance can be placed on what he has said, his speech was the strongest justification possible of the attitude that I have taken up during the last six months, both inside and outside the House. No man can indorse the honorable member's utterances without admitting that I have been absolutely right in my attitude.

Mr. CHARLTON.—But do not forget that the honorable member for Flinders said, "The time has not arrived yet."

Mr. ANSTEY.—I admit it, and I admit also that that statement was received with smiles of glee, although it should not be a matter of joy to anybody on this side.

Mr. MAHONY.—The honorable member was not playing to the gallery.

Mr. ANSTEY.—That is quite true. It was said yesterday, and it has been repeated to-day, that I am playing to the gallery. Let it be remembered, therefore, that I am appealing to the gods in the threepenny gallery, and not to the people in the stalls. I shall say no more about Colonel Lee, but the Assistant Minister interposed with other things. We were told that other matters were to be dealt with, and certain papers were introduced. Let me show the type of man I have to contend with. Among the papers was one from Adjutant-General Dodds, who practically told the Minister that the honorable member for Bourke told a deliberate half-truth, and did not state the other half of the truth. If any one will take that report, which the Assistant Minister put on the table this morning, and compare it with my speech in *Hansard*, he will notice that the very things which Adjutant-General Dodds says I left out are actually in the report

of my speech. Then the Minister's secretary, Mr. Duffy, adds a note to say that a certain report was not part of the report, whereas the very thing was part of the report. Here is another report in which there is a mass of falsifications, and which shows that the authorities are going from one private to another in order to get some other man to recant; but there has been no recantation. Before this Parliament met, I said that I had no desire to introduce the matter here. I pointed out that there were two undeniable facts, namely, that a body of private soldiers had been carrying on looting—an action that I never justified—and that officers had been doing the same thing; and, further, that, while the privates had been punished, the officers were free. All I asked was that these privates should be released without any publicity being given to facts that were no credit to the Army or the country. Such a step I regarded as only fair and just. This the Government refused to do; and I gave them fair warning, before the House met, that, unless they reconsidered their decision, I should make the matter public. That is my answer to the honorable member for South Sydney, who this morning referred to me as a "scavenger."

Mr. RILEY.—I said that the House was doing scavenging work—all who had taken part in the debate.

Mr. ANSTEY.—All I desired was that justice should be done in a quiet, unobtrusive manner; and it is no fault of mine that the matter has been ventilated in Parliament. We find many honorable members here ready to defend the officers, but very few equally ready to defend the private soldier. I shall say no more about the matter. There the facts are; and no one can justify proceedings which result in some men being imprisoned, while others, who are proved robbers, are walking about the country. Now I come to a more important matter. From the beginning of this war, I have distinctly said, time after time, that it was absolute folly for the people to regard the Germans as a body of cowards who were constantly on the run—that it was an absolute absurdity to tell the people that we were engaged in a sort of picnic, and that we could march to Berlin whenever we pleased.

Mr. LIVINGSTON.—Nobody has said that that I have heard.

Mr. ANSTEY.—It was said that the Germans would be on the run before Christmas, and that we should be in Berlin before the beginning of the year; and, further, General Joffre declared that he would have King Albert back in Belgium before that time. It was idle to delude the people with the idea that we had an easy task. The honorable member for Flinders has said that this is the most critical juncture in the history of the Empire; and the people ought to be taught to realize the fact. As I said months ago, the fight for the existence of Australia as a country and an independent nationality is being fought on the battlefields of Europe, and if it was our duty to mobilize our Forces for defence, it is equally our duty to mobilize all the resources of this vast continent in order to provide the necessities of life for our people. And my justification for taking that stand lies in the fact that there is ample power in the Constitution at present to enable the Government to do all this. These powers lie dormant in times of peace; but the moment war commences they become usable, and are sufficient to enable us to bring into play all the resources of the Government and the country. We can, as a matter of fact, do any mortal thing we choose. We can buy, sell, commandeer; and there is no power that can say us nay. We can import and buy and sell wheat, and we can commandeer all the meat necessary to supply the British Army. Who, or what, is to intervene to stop the exercise of these great national powers? We have been told that the Government cannot exercise the powers; but we were assured this morning by the honorable member for Flinders that the Government are absolutely free to do so. And what is the only limitation or qualification he places on that assurance? It is that he does not know that the time has arrived. That, however, is, after all, only a matter of opinion; and the Government should have been prepared to take the chances the moment prices began to rise. But there is a smile of glee because some sort of excuse is at hand for doing nothing. For nine months the Government have stayed their hand, and they are placed in the odious position that the honorable member for Flinders, the right honorable member for Parramatta, and others, who represent the most Conservative elements in the

country, are telling them what their powers are, and actually pushing them on to action. It ought not to be for Conservative representatives like these to tell a Labour Government what to do under the circumstances. One thing is left to the Labour Government and party, and that is to put behind them all the mistakes and errors of the past nine months, and inaugurate an active policy. This ought to have been done without the necessity for any chiding from honorable members opposite. We on this side ought to show that we are a party of progress and courage—we ought to do what is necessary, and find out afterwards whether or not we have the power to do it.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON (Lang) [3.36].—I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to ask the Minister of Home Affairs to look into a certain matter; but in his absence from the chamber I shall, in the meantime, remind honorable members, who have been making such justifiable outcries against the high cost of living, that this Parliament is primarily responsible for a good deal of what has been complained of in this regard, and they themselves are most to blame. If we had not placed such heavy duties on the necessary commodities and requisites of everyday life, with which the poorest amongst us have to be supplied, the conditions now would be much easier. We in this Parliament are not without responsibility in a large measure for increasing the cost of the food, clothing, furniture, building material, and other necessities of life, seeing that the duties range from 20 per cent. upwards.

Mr. BURNS.—How would the honorable member alter that?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—By retracing the steps we have taken, and reducing the duties, which, by the votes of Labour members, have increased the cost of living to the great bulk of the people. If a merchant imports £100 worth of goods, on which he has to pay 50 or 60 per cent., he has to charge for those goods £150 or £160, plus interest on the duty, seeing that that represents money out of pocket, and the importer naturally passes the cost on to the consumer. Consequently, working men's wives have to pay half as much again and more for their household necessaries. If honorable members are sincere in

their desire to do something to reduce the high cost of living they should be prepared to do it immediately, and not at some time in the future. We have nothing tangible before us regarding all these allegations of corners in foodstuffs and the operations of combines, but we have something tangible in the shape of extra taxation, which is so burdensome on the people. Are we prepared to recede from the position that we have taken up, and reduce the cost of living immediately? We have now the opportunity to our hands to reduce the cost of the necessities of life, because shortly we will have the Tariff before us for revision. Are we going to do it? I for one am prepared to do that; but I venture to say that some honorable members who profess to be the direct representatives of Labour in this Chamber, and who are so loud in their outcry against the high cost of living, are not prepared to put into operation this simple remedy which would have the effect of making it easier and cheaper for the people to live.

Mr. BURNS.—You did not say this at the last election.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I did say it, and have raised my voice and given my vote against it all the time. And, further, I have always fought for and advocated what I am now saying. The blame for this high cost of living should be placed on the right shoulders—the shoulders of honorable members who are themselves so very largely responsible for it. I do not know whether any of these combinations which have been spoken of are in existence, for we have not had one single concrete case put before us showing that there has been any cornering of food by any combine, trust, corporation, or organization. It is true we have had some vague allusions, but nothing tangible has been presented to us, and I say, unhesitatingly, that a good deal of this talk is indulged in simply to disguise from the workers the real truth about the matter—to distract attention from their own culpability in regard to it. If honorable members are really sincere in their desire to assist the workers they will show their sincerity by reducing the iniquitous taxes which have been placed on the backs of all those who have families to provide for and look after. There is one other matter

that specially concerns the Minister controlling the Home Affairs Department to which I desire to again draw his attention. It is in reference to resumptions in the Liverpool military area. This again concerns the wage-earners, and not people of wealth, who are able to fight their battles in the Courts of law, and in that way to withstand the tyrannies of the Home Affairs Department. In this case the men concerned are not men of wealth and substance, who can afford to fight the Government, but poor working men, dependent upon their daily wages, and their treatment by the Department is, in my opinion, very unjust. Their land is required for military purposes, and the departmental valuation is an absurdly low one.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—What lands are these?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—They are lands in the Liverpool area.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—But that is a big area; what part do you refer to?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I brought this matter personally under the notice of the Minister some time ago. The owners concerned are the Messrs. Walton.. I have explained the details of the case to the Minister. This land is situated only 13 miles from Sydney, and yet the Government have offered them only £3 per acre for it. If the Government did not require the land it could be sold for suburban allotments at a much higher price than that offered by the Department.

Mr. FENTON.—I am afraid you are going in for a "stone-wall."

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—No, I am not; but I have not been able to get justice for these men by any other means, and I am forced to bring the matter before Parliament in order that the owners may not be victimized by being compelled to sell for such a miserable sum of money as something like £3 an acre. I venture to say that there is not an acre of land within 13 miles of Melbourne or Sydney that is not worth at least £5 an acre. and very little of it could be got at that figure.

Mr. BURNS.—I paid as much per foot as that for land within a similar distance.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes, I am aware that land a similar distance from Sydney has been sold at a price much higher per foot than that which the Department is offering per acre for

this land, which is situated in the neighbourhood of George's River and Sutherland.

Mr. WEBSTER.—Surely one test case would settle this matter.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—But what is the Department doing? It is apparently using its power to harass—

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I say it is not incorrect.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—And I say it is incorrect.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—There has been a delay for two or three years, and yet the owners have not had satisfaction. They are paying municipal rates and other charges, and the Department persists in offering only a paltry sum for land that is worth at least double the amount offered. In my opinion that is victimization. On the face of it, land so close to Sydney must be worth more than that. I do not care where it is, if it is situated so close to the capital cities of Australia, it is worth more than the price offered by the Government.

Mr. BURNS.—How far is it from Sutherland?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I think it is about 3 miles.

Mr. BURNS.—You would pay 10s. per foot for it there.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Of course, the owners feel they are being unjustly dealt with, but they do not want to be forced into the Courts. Men in their position are not able to bear the expense of a test case. They might lose their employment if they absented themselves from work to fight the Government in the Law Courts. This is the position with regard to these men. They have only their daily wages to depend upon, and I think they deserve more generous treatment at the hands of the Department. The Department should err on the side of generosity rather than play the part of a skinflint or a Shylock.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—We always do err on the side of generosity. Why did you not tell me that you were going to dig this up? I would have been ready for you then.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I did not do so, because the Minister was away in Newcastle, but I brought this

matter before the Minister personally some time ago. I have gone into it with his officers, and have asked them to explain how it is that as high as £8 an acre has been offered for land adjoining that to which I am referring, and yet this land, which is said to be greatly superior to the other land, is valued at a lower rate. I will leave the matter for the present, and will deal with it again, if necessary, when the Estimates of the Home Affairs Department come up for discussion. In the meantime, the Minister can look into the case again, and in coming to a decision upon it, I ask him to use his own common sense, and not to depend entirely upon the opinions of valuers employed in his Department, which are not always infallible. The fact that the land to which I refer is only 13 miles from Sydney is proof on the face of it that it is worth more than the owners have been offered for it.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—It is a matter of valuation. Does the honorable member want me to go and value it?

Mr. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I have not asked the Minister to value it, but I do ask him to get some independent outside valuation, from a recognised competent firm in the city of Sydney. I ask him to require his officers to explain how it is that land adjoining the land to which I have referred, but less favorably situated from the point of view of access to the railway and utility, should be valued at £7 per acre, whilst only £3 per acre is offered for this land. I will give the Minister some papers I have connected with the matter, and I hope that he will review it, and will see that these men are not persecuted. I have spoken with some little heat, but it is because I feel that in this case a gross injustice is being attempted.

Mr. GREENE (Richmond) [3.53].—It was my intention to speak at some length on the subject which has occupied the attention of honorable members during this debate, and on the lines of the speeches delivered by the Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Flinders. In view of the hour, and the desire of honorable members to get away. I shall do little more than express my full indorsement of all that those honorable gentlemen have said. I feel, and have felt for a long time, that honorable members and the people of Australia gene-

rally, have not been fully alive to the seriousness of the position in which we are placed at the present time. We have been playing with the matter of our participation in the war almost from the beginning. When we take into consideration the relative wealth and population of the Commonwealth as compared with other parts of the Empire, to which it is so often our proudest boast to say that we belong, and then contrast what we have accomplished with what it is possible for us to do, we should hide our heads in shame, instead of blowing our own praises from the housetops as we have been doing. There is a vast deal for Australia yet to do before we shall have done our fair share in connexion with the tremendous struggle in which we are engaged.

Mr. WEBSTER.—The honorable member and his party proposed that we should send 20,000 troops.

Mr. GREENE.—That is an instance of what I mean. I am not complaining at all of the number of troops sent away in the first instance. That Australia should have been able in the first instance to mobilize and send to the front 20,000 soldiers was a great achievement well carried out. But what we have never fully realized is that that was only the beginning. For a long time it was not proposed to send any more troops to the front. It should be the business of the Government to set to work to organize this community from top to bottom.

Mr. JENSEN.—They have done so and the honorable member knows it.

Mr. GREENE.—I cannot see any signs of it. The Government have, in my opinion, entirely failed to carry out the organization of the manufacturing and commercial industries of the country.

Mr. JENSEN.—Have we not done that? We have commandeered practically every woollen mill and every yard of stuff turned out here.

Mr. GREENE.—That is not what I am talking about. I say that the Defence Department should at the present moment be in possession of information as to the capabilities of every manufacturing concern in the Commonwealth. A great deal still remains to be done. I feel convinced that we are as yet only upon the verge of this great struggle. When we recognise the wonderful organization of Germany, and contrast what the Germans have been able to do in struggling for life against practically the whole

world, with what we have done; and when we recognise at the same time that our very existence depends upon the subjugation of that great Power, we must admit the necessity of immediately getting to work. We should abandon altogether the methods that have been adopted up to this time. We should start afresh from this moment, and do our utmost to organize this country in such a way that it will be possible for us to apply every conceivable element of our national strength and wealth to further the success of the Empire in the great struggle in which we are engaged. I hope that the Government will lead the country, and will not be satisfied with what has been accomplished so far.

Mr. FENTON.—Will the honorable member follow them?

Mr. GREENE.—Yes, I will follow them if, in my opinion, their action is such as will further the interests of the British Empire. If it will tend to strengthen this country, and better fit us to succeed in the great struggle in which we are engaged, I venture to say that the Government can look for the support of every member of the Opposition. The conduct of the Opposition since the Government were returned to power is an earnest of their intention, and a proof that they are prepared to do their utmost to further the efforts of the Government in that direction. In nearly every channel to which we turn our attention, there is evidence that the Government have not gathered up every possible resource. I received a letter only the other day from an old soldier in my electorate, a man named Winterden, for whom I have the highest respect. He offered his services to the Government to train troops, but his offer was turned down, although he holds from Lord Methuen and from Sir Ian Hamilton the highest credentials which I believe it is possible for a soldier to hold. He has trained troops in nearly every part of Australia, and has had an almost continuous term of service in connexion with the Imperial or Australian troops for thirty-seven years.

Mr. THOMAS.—What is his age now?

Mr. GREENE.—He is a man of from fifty-two to fifty-five years of age. Almost from boyhood he has been connected with the Army. An Area Officer in the district of Lismore, for whom Winterden

entertains no very kindly feelings, has reported that this man is unable to command respect. The Area Officer has just come from a training camp. He has had no experience in the handling of troops, has not seen any active service, and has practically only just received his commission. Winterden naturally took serious exception to the report of this officer at the time. He complained to the Commanding Officer that the report reflected upon his character as a soldier, and should be withdrawn. The Commandant of the district would not withdraw it. Consequently, Winterden handed in his resignation. I do not wonder at his action in the circumstances. The charge against him was unsubstantiated—indeed, it was not inquired into. But he has now come along, and said, in effect, "I am willing to allow bygones to be bygones, and to place my services at the disposal of the Government." Yet the authorities have not accepted his offer. They have merely replied that it has been noted and declined. Here is a man who is surely competent to train troops, and we know that Australia has not too many competent instructors at the present time. This is merely another illustration that all which could be done has not been done, either on the military or on the civil side. I urge the Government to do more in the future.

Mr. FLEMING (Robertson) [4.2].—I would not trespass on the time of the Committee at this juncture, but for the circumstance that I was unavoidably absent when the Defence Estimates were under review. I wish cordially to endorse the remarks of many honorable members upon this question of defence. It altogether overshadows any other question. I desire to offer a few reasons why we are not sending as many men to the front as we should be sending. The first reason is to be found in the dislocation which has been shown to exist in the business aspect of the defence question as disclosed in the report of Mr. McC. Anderson. I should like to know how far the Government have gone in the direction of mending things. That report shows conclusively that the lack of business methods which has characterized our Naval and Military Forces is indeed a serious matter.

Mr. JENSEN.—It does not.

Mr. FLEMING.—The report shows it most definitely. I also desire to say a

word or two upon the attitude adopted by many of our military officers. Last session, the honorable member for Wannon and myself drew attention to the class of horses that was being supplied to men going to the front. I can say from a life-long experience of horses that a great many of the animals were of the wrong stamp. They were horses of a quality which any horseman would describe as "joey's," which is about the most contemptible term that a man can apply to a horse. They would "shut up" just when one wanted them to do something. When we directed attention to this matter, the Prime Minister referred our remarks to the military authorities, with the result that a report was received from Major Purcell, which I propose to quote. That report is of a character which is damaging recruiting throughout the country districts. It reads—

The whole of the horses purchased in this State for the Expeditionary Force (with the exception of an early commission given to Messrs. Dalgety and Company by the late Minister of Defence, Senator Millen, and none of these were issued if not veterinarianally sound), have been subjected to a searching veterinary examination, and only those horses that passed a severe veterinary test were issued to the troops. It is a well-established fact that infantry regiments contain a very small percentage of horsey men, the officers being particularly lacking in knowledge of horses, and to intrust horses to their care is exceedingly risky. The horses sent to the infantry units at Broadmeadows, and which paraded with them through Melbourne, left the remount dépôt in good, fresh condition, and were thoroughly sound. Owing to the unfavorable conditions they were subjected to by their inexperienced masters, and to the trying weather conditions, they certainly suffered somewhat in condition.

To my mind, that is a very mean statement to make. Whilst it is true that, from a veterinary stand-point, a great number of the horses were of first-rate quality, many of them were of decidedly poor quality. They were animals that would "cut up" under the best possible conditions. For Major Purcell, who is the author of this report, and who, I am informed, is an overbearing officer, to saddle the blame on the drivers of the animals, appears to me to be very mean. His and similar actions are, to my knowledge, doing a lot to prevent bushmen coming forward and offering their services for the front. They know their side of the game, and are prepared to do their little bit for the Empire, but they are not prepared to be told that

they do not know their business by those who know nothing about it. The report continues—

If some of them appeared untractable on parade it was probably due, in a great measure, to the fact that they were all country horses, unused to city conditions, and to the fact that they were badly handled by those under whose control they were. An idea seems to obtain among the uninitiated that these parades are show parades, and that the best horseflesh on hand is selected on the day of parade to create an impression.

As I have already remarked, I do not know Major Purcell. He may be a man of experience, but I think the odds are that the honorable member for Wannon and myself have seen a great deal more country pass under our stirrups than he has. When, therefore, he comes forward and "dubs" us as "uninitiated," how is he likely to treat the men under his control? We have been told that we should beware of martial law, and no doubt we should. When we get a report like that from Major Purcell, it makes us wonder what sort of treatment the men under his command will receive. There is another matter upon which I desire to touch, namely, the feeding of the horses. In New South Wales, the State Government have fixed the price of lucerne hay, with the result that a great deal of lucerne which, in other circumstances, would have been converted into hay, is now being fed off because by that means the producers can make more money out of it. As a consequence, fodder, which was already scarce in Australia, is daily becoming scarcer. It seems to me that the authorities should do something to insure a sufficient quantity of fodder for their horses, because they must recognise that fodder in Australia is extremely short. The military authorities should take decisive steps to see that a sufficient supply is forthcoming to insure their horses being kept in proper condition. I had intended to say a good deal in connexion with the preparation of Australia for defence purposes. But as we are at present—to use a colloquialism—"up against it," I propose to pass over that matter. We know that a great deal has to be done in the way of preparing Australia for defence purposes. We know that railways require to be constructed—not merely the strategic railway mentioned by the Prime Minister, but also a railway from Singleton to Carlingford, for the purpose of obviating the necessity for crossing the Hawkesbury River.

The latter may be, as an honorable member interjects, a State matter; but there is a number of things of that sort in respect to which the Federal Parliament could exercise its influence to bring about the desired conditions. Is the strategic railway of the Prime Minister to run only through Commonwealth territory? Not at all. This Parliament can bring its influence to bear in many directions to make the future of Australia more secure; but, to my mind, these things should be put on one side for consideration in the future, because there never was a time when the Parliament of a country could more decidedly say than it can now, "Let to-morrow take care of itself." We should put ourselves in a position to fight the battles of the Empire at the front, and to keep up supplies to the men. We have to supply the necessities of life, to equip and arm men, and to provide the munitions of war. Were this a suitable time I would deal at some length with the position as regards production, because it is undoubtedly in a worse state to-day than ever it was. We know well that our currency is tremendously inflated. We know that we shall have to meet that inflation of currency with a solid amount of gold when the war is ended. What are we going to do in Australia to produce that gold? We know that there is any number of areas where gold could be produced if a little encouragement were given. This Parliament could do much at this juncture to open up those areas, especially in the Northern Territory. During the last few years the gold production of Australia has fallen from, I think, £16,000,000, in 1903, to about £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 last year. The decrease has been steady and regular, and now is the time when we should set about to see if we cannot stimulate our gold production, so that we may have one of the very necessary things to avert the financial crisis which will threaten us, and will need some dodging at the end of the war.

Mr. JENSEN.—Is not that socialistic?

Mr. FLEMING.—I am not afraid of any person calling my proposal socialistic; I never have been. I believe in doing anything which I think will make for the good of the community, whatever it is labelled. The Government are not prepared, I fear, to view this matter from the broad and generous stand-point of trying to enable the Commonwealth

to meet the position of to-day and the conditions which we know must arise after the war. The best thing we can do now to put ourselves in a decent position, to uphold our little bit in the war is, I think, to send all the men we can get to the front, and increase the production which will be necessary to feed those men and the people in the Old Country. It has been reported in many newspapers that the Prime Minister has remarked from the platform, as well as in this chamber, that Australia is prepared to send "its last man and its last shilling," but what is the use of him talking in that way? What are we doing with the large inert body of men who stand between the present recruits and the last man he talks of? That is the question which we have to settle to-day. It is of no use for the right honorable gentleman to talk in that grandiloquent fashion. It will be a long while before we get to "the last man and the last shilling." Unless the Government do something to stimulate recruiting, to remove the barriers I have hinted at, and arouse some enthusiasm in connexion with the war, we shall never get down to "our last man" or "our last shilling," or anything near it. Without labouring the question or delaying the Committee at a time when it does not wish to be detained, it appears to be that both sides of the House have done too little, and that it is up to us to do, as the Leader of the Opposition said to-day, all that Australia can do in the way of putting men into the field, keeping up a regular supply of reinforcements, and seeing that every inducement is offered to our citizens to render that service to the Empire which the present crisis demands of them. We have the men and the money. All that we want to do is to put the men in the right place, and maintain them there in increasing strength, which Australia can well do if the Government and the Parliament will only unite in an effort to arouse enthusiasm, to keep up production, and make Australia play her part as she wants to play it, if she is only given the opportunity, in this great world-wide war in which she undoubtedly is one of the great prizes.

Question resolved in the affirmative.
Resolution reported.

Standing Orders suspended, and resolution adopted.

Resolution of Ways and Means, founded on Resolution of Supply, reported and adopted.

Ordered—

That Mr. Tudor and Mr. Archibald do prepare and bring in a Bill to carry out the foregoing resolution.

Bill presented by Mr. Tudor, and passed through all its stages without amendment.

State supervising officer, through the Collector, and as to Queensland by the Collector. The information from Queensland was that, on the 28th May, 5,768 boxes were being held in cool storage and wholesale houses. The information given by the honorable member may refer to a different date. Like honorable members generally, I hope that the butter stocks will soon be larger.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4.22 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT.

BUTTER IN QUEENSLAND.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra—Minister of Trade and Customs) [4.19].—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I desire to intimate that the first business on Wednesday next will be the consideration of the Estimates for the External Affairs Department.

Mr. GROOM (Darling Downs) [4.20].—On Wednesday the Minister of Trade and Customs supplied some figures as regards the quantity of butter held in stores in Queensland, and I have just received the following telegram:—

Telegram.—*Courier* yesterday reporting proceedings of the House of Representatives, Wednesday, Minister of Customs stated 5,800 boxes butter in cold stores, Brisbane. Absolutely wrong. Correct quantity, 3,000, of which 1,800 were shipped Melbourne, per *Cooma*, Wednesday.

It is possible that the full answer of the Minister was not published in the *Courier*, or that his answer related to the stocks of an earlier date. The wire is from a person who is in a position to speak on the subject, and I make it public to correct the erroneous impression that large quantities of butter are being stored, so that the public may be bled later on by an increase of price. Practically no butter has been stored. I might add that the people of Queensland could not get the wheat that was commandeered by the New South Wales Government from the farmer at 5s. a bushel without paying that monopolist £5 or £6 a ton for it; whereas, in contrast, a generous Queensland Administration has allowed Victoria to participate in any supply that it may have.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra—Minister of Trade and Customs) [4.21].—On the 28th May the honorable member for Cook asked me what quantity of butter was in stock, and information was furnished as to New South Wales by the