

1943-44.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

No. 18.

WEDNESDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1944.

1. The House met, at three o'clock p.m., pursuant to adjournment.—Mr. Speaker (the Honorable J. S. Rosevear) took the Chair, and read Prayers.
2. HEADSTONES ON SOLDIERS' GRAVES—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.—Mr. Forde (Minister for the Army), by leave, made a Ministerial Statement informing the House of the reasons for removing the letters "A.I.F." from and substituting therefor the letters "A.M.F." on headstones on the graves of Australian soldiers in New Guinea.
3. PAPERS.—The following Paper was presented, by command of His Excellency the Governor-General—
Beef from Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Farm, Werribee, Victoria—Report of Committee of Enquiry into standards of Meat Inspection.
Ordered to lie on the Table.
The following Papers were presented, pursuant to Statute—
Air Force Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1944, No. 34.
Commonwealth Shipping Act—Commonwealth Shipping Board—Cockatoo Island Dockyard—Balance-sheet and Liquidation Account, together with Auditor-General's report thereon, for year ended 28th February, 1943.
Customs Act—Proclamation prohibiting the exportation (except under certain conditions) of goods—No. 591.
Defence Act and Naval Defence Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1944, No. 27.
Lands Acquisition Act and National Security (Supplementary) Regulations—Orders—Land acquired for Commonwealth purposes—
Alice Springs, Northern Territory.
Archerfield, Queensland.
Hughenden, Queensland.
Longlea, Victoria.
St. Leonards, New South Wales.
Winchelsea, Victoria.
National Security Act—
National Security (General) Regulations—Orders—
Control of—
Essential materials (No. 6).
Hand tools (No. 4).
Manufacture of shovels (No. 2).
Use of land (15).
Wooden tool-handles (Manufacture and sale).
National Security (Stevedoring Industry) Regulations—Orders—Nos. 37-41.
Regulations—Statutory Rules 1944, Nos. 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35.
Seat of Government Acceptance Act and Seat of Government (Administration) Act—Regulations—1944—No. 1 (Liquor Ordinance).
4. COAL PRODUCTION (WAR-TIME) BILL 1944.—The Order of the Day having been read for the second reading—Mr. Curtin (Prime Minister) moved, That the Bill be now read a second time.
Mr. Menzies (Leader of the Opposition) moved, That the debate be now adjourned.
Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put and passed.
Ordered—That the resumption of the debate be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.
5. INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL 1944.—The Order of the Day having been read for the second reading—Mr. Evatt (Attorney-General) moved, That the Bill be now read a second time.
Sir Frederick Stewart moved, That the debate be now adjourned.
Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put and passed.
Ordered—That the resumption of the debate be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

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6. CONSTITUTION ALTERATION (POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION) BILL 1944.—The Order of the Day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question, That the Bill be now read a second time—*Suspension of Standing Orders*.—Mr. Curtin (Prime Minister) moved, by leave, That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent Mr. Menzies (Leader of the Opposition) concluding his speech without limitation of time.

Question—put and passed.

Debate on motion resumed by Mr. Menzies (Leader of the Opposition), who moved, as an amendment, That all the words after "that" be omitted with a view to inserting the following in place thereof:—

- "(1) the reinstatement and advancement of those who have been members of the Fighting Services of the Commonwealth in any war and the advancement of the dependants of those members who have died or been disabled as the consequence of such war, the reinstatement and rehabilitation of those other persons, who by reason of war conditions have been displaced from their normal peace-time occupations, the reconstruction of primary and secondary industry are the first obligations of government in the immediate period after the war ;
- (2) that the existing powers of the Commonwealth are not shown to be inadequate for such purposes ;
- (3) that it is, however, proper that any doubt on these points should be resolved by appropriate Constitutional amendment ;
- (4) that no amendment should be approved which would authorize the socialization of industry, the undue centralization of administration, or the maintenance of such laws as unnecessarily interfere with the liberty of citizens to choose their own means of living and to exercise their rights as free people ;
- (5) further, that the House is concerned at the extent of the surrender of legislative powers to administrative officials ;
- (6) that, to afford adequate power to the Government and sufficient protection to the citizen, the Bill should be withdrawn and redrafted so as to declare or provide, over a period of five years from the termination of actual hostilities, that the Commonwealth Parliament has, or should have (as the case may be) power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to the fullest repatriation powers ; the use of grants, loans, insurance, training and public works for the provision of employment and the prevention or correction of unemployment ; the organized marketing of primary products of which there is normally an export surplus ; and, notwithstanding anything contained in section 92, the prevention of unreasonable restraint of trade ; the prevention of inflation ; the use of economic regulations only to the extent necessary to deal with the problem of transition from war to peace ; air transport ; national health ; family endowment ; and the people of the aboriginal race ; but should not have power to enable the Executive to engage in any civil production, industry, or commercial process, not authorized by its now existing powers ;
- (7) that provision should be made that during such period the exercise of such additional powers, when it possesses a legislative nature, should be by Parliament or if performed by virtue of some delegation by Parliament should be in terms which when Parliament is sitting have been first laid before and not disapproved by Parliament, and when Parliament is not sitting have been circulated to members at least 14 days before becoming operative ;
- (8) that provision should be made for the setting up, within a period of two years after the termination of actual hostilities, of an elective popular convention for the review of the structure and working of the Constitution.

Debate continued.

Ordered—That Mr. Spender be granted an extension of time.

Debate continued.

Mr. Hughes moved, That the debate be now adjourned.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put and passed.

Ordered—That the resumption of the debate be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

7. ADJOURNMENT.—Mr. Evatt (Attorney-General) moved, That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Ordered—That Mr. Dedman (Minister for War Organization of Industry) be granted an extension of time.

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the House, at fifteen minutes past eleven o'clock p.m., adjourned until to-morrow at half-past two o'clock p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT.—All Members were present (at some time during the sitting) except Mr. Beasley, Mr. Blain*, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Watkins.

* On leave.

F. C. GREEN,
Clerk of the House of Representatives.