

1945.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

No. 54.

WEDNESDAY, 27TH JUNE, 1945.

1. The House met, at half-past ten o'clock a.m., pursuant to adjournment.—Mr. Speaker (the Honorable J. S. Rosevear) took the Chair, and read Prayers.
2. ALTERATION OF HOUR OF NEXT MEETING.—Mr. Chifley (Acting Prime Minister) moved, That the House, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow at half-past ten o'clock a.m.
Question—put and passed.
3. DARWIN LANDS ACQUISITION BILL 1945.—Mr. Lazzarini (Minister representing the Minister for the Interior) moved, pursuant to notice, That he have leave to bring in a Bill for an Act to authorize the acquisition by the Commonwealth, for certain purposes, of land in the Northern Territory of Australia comprised in the Town of Darwin and its environs, and for other purposes.
Question—put and passed.
Mr. Lazzarini then brought up the Bill accordingly, and moved, That it be now read a first time.
Question—put and passed.—Bill read a first time.
Ordered—That the second reading be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.
4. BANKING BILL 1945.—The Order of the Day having been read for the further consideration of this Bill in Committee of the whole House—
Mr. Speaker left the Chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8 debated—

Mr. Fadden moved, as an amendment, That the following sub-clause be added :—

“(10.) Where an authority under this section is refused, an appeal against such refusal may be made to a Full Court of the High Court constituted by not less than three Justices.”.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 9 and 10 agreed to.

Clause 11—

Mr. Anthony moved, as an amendment, That the words “ for the protection of the depositors of the several banks ” (page 4, lines 27 and 28) be omitted with a view to inserting the words “ to ensure that each of the several banks shall meet its liabilities to its depositors, and safeguard the interests of its borrowers ” in place thereof.

Debate ensued.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 12 agreed to.

Clause 13—

Mr. Fadden moved, as an amendment, That the following proviso be added to sub-clause (5.) :—

“ Provided that where a bank is of the opinion that it can carry on and control its own business it may apply to a Full Court of the High Court constituted by not less than three Justices, to be released from the control of the Commonwealth Bank.”.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Menzies (Leader of the Opposition) moved, as an amendment, That the following sub-clause be added :—

“(7.) In exercising any of its powers under this section the Commonwealth Bank shall not be subject to direction by the Governor-General or by the Treasurer.”.

Debate ensued.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

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Clause 14—

On the motion of Mr. Menzies, the following amendment was made, after debate :—

Page 5, line 46, after " faith " insert " and without negligence ".

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15—

On the motion of Mr. Menzies, the following amendment was made, after debate :—

Page 6, line 2, omit " tangible assets ", insert " assets (other than goodwill) ".

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 16—

Mr. Abbott moved, as an amendment, That the following words be added to the clause :—" and thereafter it shall be the duty of the Commonwealth Bank to exercise its powers under this Division solely for the purpose of regulating the volume of credit and currency in Australia in terms of the general objectives set out in section eight of the *Commonwealth Bank Act 1945* ".

Debate ensued.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 19 agreed to.

Clause 20 debated and agreed to.

Clause 21—

Mr. Menzies moved, as an amendment, That after " Bank " (page 7, line 9) the words " which shall not be unreasonably withheld in any case where the proposed withdrawal is for the purpose of meeting commitments to depositors " be inserted.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Fadden moved, as an amendment, That the following words be added to sub-clause (1.) :—" other than in the case of a decrease in the amount of the average of that bank's total assets in Australia for any month below the amount of the average of its total assets for the preceding month or to enable that bank to follow the advance policy determined in accordance with section twenty-seven of this Act ".

Amendment negatived.

Debate continued.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 22—

Mr. Corsier moved, as an amendment, That all words after " rate " (page 7, line 24) to the end of the clause be omitted with a view to inserting the following words in place thereof :—" determined from time to time by negotiation between the Commonwealth Bank and the trading banks, regard being had to the then general level of interest rates and the level of costs of conducting banking business ".

Debate ensued.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Hutchinson moved, as an amendment, That the words " , not exceeding Seventeen shillings and sixpence per centum per annum, " (page 7, lines 24 and 25) be omitted.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 23 debated—

On the motion of Mr. Rankin, the following amendment was made, after debate :—

Page 7, line 39, after " bank " insert " or within such further period as is specified by the Commonwealth Bank ".

Mr. Anthony moved, as a further amendment, That the following proviso be added to the clause :—

" Provided that no requisition of foreign currency in terms of this section shall be such as to reduce the excess balance of foreign currency held by any bank below the amount of surplus foreign currency held at the date of the commencement of this Division. ".

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 24 agreed to.

Clause 25—

Mr. Hutchinson moved, as an amendment, That all words after " Bank " (page 8, line 14) to the end of the clause be omitted with a view to inserting the following words in place thereof :—

" (a) shall sell foreign currency to a bank where that bank has complied with the provisions of this Division and is in the opinion of the Commonwealth Bank likely to suffer a shortage of foreign currency to meet legitimate commitments ;

" (b) may sell foreign currency to a bank if the Commonwealth Bank considers that for any reason it is desirable to do so. ".

Debate ensued.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Fadden moved, as an amendment, That paragraph (a) be omitted.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 26 debated and agreed to.

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Clause 27 debated—

Mr. Anthony moved, as an amendment, That all words after "so" (page 8, line 37) to the end of the clause be omitted with a view to inserting the following words in place thereof:—"in pursuance of its duties set out in section eight of the *Commonwealth Bank Act 1945*, the Commonwealth Bank may determine broadly the policy in relation to advances to be followed by banks by giving directions as to the classes of purposes for which the advances may or may not be made by banks and each bank shall comply with any broad directions so given, but nothing in this section shall be construed as empowering the Commonwealth Bank to determine policy with respect to the amount or nature of securities taken by a bank against any advance made by it".

Debate ensued.

Progress to be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

The House resumed; Mr. Riordan reported accordingly.

Resolved—That the House will, at the next sitting, again resolve itself into the said Committee.

5. ADJOURNMENT—COUNT-OUT.—Mr. Chifley (Acting Prime Minister) moved, That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Mr. Rankin called the attention of Mr. Speaker to the fact that a quorum of Members was not present.

The Bells having been rung, and a quorum not having been obtained within the prescribed time,

Mr. Speaker thereupon, at sixteen minutes past eleven o'clock p.m., adjourned the House until to-morrow at half-past ten o'clock a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT.—All Members were present (at some time during the sitting) except Mr. Blain*, Mr. Curtin*, Mr. Evatt*, Mr. Falstein, Mr. Forde*, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Langtry, Mr. Lemmon, Dame Enid Lyons, Mr. McEwen*, Mr. Pollard*, Mr. Spender, Sir Frederick Stewart, Mr. Watkins, and Mr. Wilson.

* On leave.

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