

1917-18.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

No. 37.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, 10TH JANUARY, 1918.

1. The House met, at half-past two o'clock p.m., pursuant to adjournment.—Mr. Speaker took the Chair, and read Prayers.
2. MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—NEW MINISTRY.—Mr. Hughes informed the House that following upon the acceptance by His Excellency the Governor-General of the resignation of the Government he had been commissioned to form a new Ministry. This he had done, and as soon as the members of the Ministry were sworn in he would make a further announcement to the House. Mr. Hughes suggested that meanwhile Mr. Speaker should leave the Chair.

Accordingly, at thirty-two minutes past two o'clock p.m., Mr. Speaker left the Chair.
At twenty-five minutes to five o'clock p.m. Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

3. FORMATION OF NEW MINISTRY.—Mr. Hughes informed the House that His Excellency the Governor-General, having accepted the resignation of the late Government, and having commissioned him to form a new Administration, he had formed it as follows:—

The Right Honorable WILLIAM MORRIS HUGHES, P.C., to be Prime Minister and Attorney-General;

The Right Honorable JOSEPH COOK, P.C., to be Minister of State for the Navy;

The Right Honorable SIR JOHN FORREST, P.C., G.C.M.G., to be Treasurer;

Senator the Honorable GEORGE FOSTER PEARCE, to be Minister of State for Defence;

Senator the Honorable EDWARD DAVIS MILLEN, to be Minister of State for Repatriation;

The Honorable WILLIAM ALEXANDER WATT, to be Minister of State for Works and Railways;

The Honorable PATRICK McMAHON GLYNN, K.C., to be Minister of State for Home and Territories;

The Honorable JENS AUGUST JENSEN, to be Minister of State for Trade and Customs;

The Honorable WILLIAM WEBSTER, to be Postmaster-General;

The Honorable LITTLETON ERNEST GROOM, to be Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council;

Senator the Honorable EDWARD JOHN RUSSELL to be an Honorary Minister.

Mr. Hughes also read, and laid upon the Table, the following Memorandum:—

Commonwealth of Australia.

Governor-General,

9th January, 1918.

On the 8th of January the Prime Minister waited on the Governor-General and tendered to him his resignation. In doing so Mr. Hughes offered no advice as to who should be asked to form an administration. The Governor-General considered that it was his paramount duty—

- (a) to make provision for carrying on the business of the country in accordance with the principles of Parliamentary Government;
- (b) to avoid a situation arising which must lead to a further appeal to the country within twelve months of an election resulting in the return of two Houses of similar political complexion, which are still working in unison. The Governor-General was also of the opinion that in granting a commission for the formation of a new administration his choice must be determined solely by the parliamentary situation. Any other course would be a departure from constitutional practice, and an infringement of the rights of Parliament. In the absence of such parliamentary indications as are given by a defeat of the Government in Parliament, the Governor-General endeavoured to ascertain what the situation was by seeking information from representatives of all sections of the House with a view to determining where the majority lay, and what prospects there were of forming an alternative Government.

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As a result of these interviews, in which the knowledge and views of all those he consulted were most freely and generously placed at his service, the Governor-General was of opinion that the majority of the National Party was likely to retain its cohesion, and that therefore a Government having the promise of stability could only be formed from that section of the House. Investigations failed to elicit proof of sufficient strength in any other quarter. It also became clear to him that the leader in the National Party, who had the best prospect of securing unity among his followers and of therefore being able to form a Government having those elements of permanence so essential to the conduct of affairs during war, was the Right Honorable W. M. Hughes, whom the Governor-General therefore commissioned to form an Administration.

4. PAPERS.—The following Papers were presented, by command of His Excellency the Governor-General—
 Norfolk Island—Report of the Administrator for the year ended 30th June, 1917.
 Northern Territory—Report of the Administrator for 1915-16 and 1916-17.
 Papua—Annual Report—For year 1916-17.
 Postmaster-General's Department—Seventh Annual Report—1916-17.
 Severally ordered to lie on the Table, and to be printed.
5. SUPPLY RESOLUTION [SUPPLY BILL].—The House, according to Order, resolved itself into the Committee of Supply.

(In the Committee.)

SUPPLY BILL (No. 4) 1917-18.

Sir John Forrest moved, That there be granted to His Majesty for or towards defraying the services of the year 1917-18 a sum not exceeding £3,449,972.

Debate ensued.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir John Forrest moved, That there be granted to His Majesty for or towards defraying the services of the year 1917-18 a sum not exceeding £1,211,615.

Question—put and passed.

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

The House resumed ; Mr. Chanter reported accordingly.

Resolved—That the House will, to-morrow, again resolve itself into the said Committee.

6. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.—Sir John Forrest moved, pursuant to contingent notice, That the Standing Orders be suspended to enable the remaining stages to be passed without delay.
 Question—put and passed.
7. SUPPLY RESOLUTION.—The Resolution reported from the Committee of Supply was read, and, on the motion of Sir John Forrest, was adopted by the House.
8. WAYS AND MEANS RESOLUTION.—The House, according to Order, resolved itself into the Committee of Ways and Means.

(In the Committee.)

SUPPLY BILL (No. 4) 1917-18.

Resolved, on the motion of Sir John Forrest—That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year 1917-18, there be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum not exceeding £1,211,615.

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

The House resumed ; Mr. Chanter reported accordingly.

Resolved—That the House will, to-morrow, again resolve itself into the said Committee.

The Resolution reported from the Committee was read, and, on the motion of Sir John Forrest, was adopted by the House.

Ordered—That Sir John Forrest and Mr. Hughes do prepare and bring in a Bill to carry out the foregoing Resolution.

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9. SUPPLY BILL (No. 4) 1917-18.—Sir John Forrest then brought up a Bill intituled "*A Bill for an Act to grant and apply a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending the thirtieth day of June One thousand nine hundred and eighteen,*" and moved, That it be now read a first time.

Question—put and passed.—Bill read a first time.

Sir John Forrest moved, That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question—put and passed.—Bill read a second time.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole.

(*In the Committee.*)

Bill agreed to, and to be reported without amendment.

The House resumed; Mr. Chanter reported accordingly.

On the motion of Sir John Forrest, the House adopted the Report, and the Bill was read a third time.

10. ADJOURNMENT.—Mr. Hughes moved, That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the House, at nine minutes to nine o'clock p.m., adjourned until to-morrow at eleven o'clock a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT.—All Members were present (at some time during the sitting) except—Lieut.-Col. Abbott^{*a}, Sir Robert Best, Mr. Burchell^{*a}, Mr. Fleming^a, Mr. Kelly, Mr. McGrath^{*a}, Brigadier-General Ryrie^{*a}, and Mr. Yates^a.

^{*} On leave.

^(a) Joined Australian Imperial Expeditionary Forces.

WALTER A. GALE,
Clerk of the House of Representatives.