

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

No. 5.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, 8TH MARCH, 1923.

1. The House met, at half-past two o'clock p.m., pursuant to adjournment.—Mr. Speaker took the Chair, and read Prayers.
2. ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH.—NO-CONFIDENCE AMENDMENT.—The Order of the Day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the following Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be agreed to by this House :—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

We, the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament—

and on the Amendment moved thereto by Mr. Austey (*Assistant Leader of the Opposition*), viz.:—That the following words be added to the proposed Address :—

“but we regret that this House views with disapprobation the conduct of the Government in meeting Parliament with a Speech containing no evidence of any public policy. There is no mention of any intended policy upon the subject of international trade which the head of the Government has asserted to be fundamental to the progress and prosperity of Australia. There is no mention of a policy on the Sugar Agreement, which expires next June. There is no mention of a policy relating to the development of internal trade which is so vital to the employment of our people, but on the contrary the administrative methods pursued by the Government accentuate unemployment.

There is no mention of the attitude of the Government towards Arbitration, towards the Oil and Wireless Agreements, or towards Old-age and Invalid Pensions. The Speech makes no mention as to whether the Government intends to investigate the War Service Homes and other matters of maladministration exposed last Session by the Labour party.

In brief, this Government, which claims to be a Government of business men, gives no evidence of such qualification. There is not one subject in His Excellency's Speech upon which is given a definite, a concrete, or a composite opinion.

Under these circumstances, and in view of the peculiar methods under which this Government was formed, and in view of the fact that this Government discloses an unseemly haste to reach the haven of a recess of several months' duration, thus leaving in abeyance the discussion of these subjects vital to the welfare of our country, this House deems it necessary to protest and declare that this Government does not possess its confidence.”—

Debate resumed.

The House continuing to sit until after midnight—

FRIDAY, 9TH MARCH, 1923.

Debate continued.

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put.

The House divided—

Ayes, 20.		Noes, 32.	
Mr. Anstey	Mr. McGrath	Mr. Atkinson	Mr. Latham
Mr. Blakeley	Mr. McNeill	Mr. Bamford	Mr. Lister
Mr. Brennan	Mr. O'Keefe	Mr. Bayley	Mr. Mackay
Mr. Coleman	Mr. E. C. Riley	Mr. Malcolm Cameron	Mr. Mann
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Scullin	Mr. Corser	Mr. Manning
Mr. Forde	Mr. Watkins	Mr. Duncan-Hughes	Mr. Marks
Mr. Gabb	Mr. Yates	Mr. Frederick Francis	Mr. Earle Page
Mr. Albert Green		Mr. Gardner	Mr. Thomas Paterson
Mr. Lacey	<i>Tellers.</i>	Mr. Gibson	Sir Granville Ryrie
Mr. Lazzarini	Mr. Fenton	Mr. Roland Green	Mr. Seabrook
Mr. Makin	Mr. Parker Moloney	Mr. Groom	Mr. Stewart
		Sir Neville Howse	Mr. Thompson
		Mr. Hunter	Mr. William Watson.
		Mr. Hurry	
		Mr. Jackson	<i>Tellers.</i>
		Sir Elliot Johnson	Mr. Marr
		Mr. Killen	Mr. Prowse

And so it was negatived.

Mr. McGrath moved, as an amendment, That the following words be added to the proposed Address:—

“but this House is of the opinion that, if Imperial Conferences are to be held to deal with matters of an Imperial character, this House affirms its right to know—

(a) the proposals to be dealt with; and

(b) who is to represent Australia at such Conferences,

in order that this Parliament may express its opinions before the people of Australia are pledged to policies on Foreign matters which may be inimical to their interests.”

Debate ensued.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question—That the proposed Address in Reply be agreed to by this House—put and passed.

Mr. Stewart (Minister for Works and Railways) informed the House that Mr. Bruce (Prime Minister) would ascertain when it would be convenient for His Excellency the Governor-General to receive the Address in Reply, and honorable Members would be notified accordingly.

3. PAPERS.—The following Papers were presented, pursuant to Statute—

Norfolk Island Act—Ordinance of 1923—No. 1—Preserved Fish Bounties.

Northern Territory Acceptance Act and Northern Territory (Administration) Act—Ordinances of 1923—

No. 2—Darwin Town Council.

No. 3—Electric Energy Agreement.

Northern Territory Acceptance Act and Northern Territory Crown Lands Act 1890 (South Australia)—Reasons for resumption of portion of Telegraph Reserve at the Katherine, Northern Territory.

4. TIME OF NEXT MEETING.—Mr. Bruce (Prime Minister) moved, That the House, at its rising, adjourn until this day at eleven o'clock a.m.

Question—put and passed.

5. ADJOURNMENT.—Mr. Bruce (Prime Minister) moved, That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the House, at eighteen minutes past four o'clock in the morning, adjourned until this day at eleven o'clock a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT.—All Members were present (at some time during the sitting) except—Mr. Donald Cameron, Mr. Charlton, Mr. Josiah Francis*, and Mr. Charles McDonald.

* On leave.

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