

1943-44.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

No. 27.

TUESDAY, 14TH MARCH, 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. CENSORSHIP INQUIRY.—Mr. Curtin (Prime Minister), by leave, made a Ministerial Statement informing the House that the Government had decided to establish a Committee of Members of Parliament to inquire into matters of censorship.
Mr. Menzies (Leader of the Opposition) and Mr. McEwen, by leave, also made statements with reference to the matter.
3. PROPOSED MOTION OF PRIVILEGE.—Sir Earle Page sought to raise a question of Privilege with reference to censorship control preventing the broadcasting of a speech made in this House and allowing the Government's reply to the speech to be broadcast, and indicated his intention to conclude with a motion.
Speaker's Ruling.—Mr. Speaker ruled that the matter was not one of Privilege.
Dissent from Speaker's Ruling.—Sir Earle Page handed in, in writing, the following objection to the Ruling :—That the Ruling of the Speaker given on a matter of Privilege sought to be raised by the Right Honorable Member for Cowper be disagreed with.
The debate thereon was forthwith adjourned to the next day of sitting.
Mr. Curtin (Prime Minister), by leave, made a Statement in connexion with the matter.
4. PAPERS.—The following Papers were presented, pursuant to Statute—
Arbitration (Public Service) Act—Determination by the Arbitrator, &c.—1944—No. 7—
Federated Public Service Assistants' Association of Australia.
National Security Act—
National Security (Man Power) Regulations—Orders—Protected undertakings (33).
National Security (Shearing of Sheep) Regulations—Order—Exemption.
5. 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—*And on the Amendment moved thereto by Mr. Menzies, viz. :—That all 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 ;

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- (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 resumed.

Ordered—That Mr. Coles be granted extensions of time (2).

Debate continued.

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

Debate continued.

Mr. Anthony 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.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the House, at eighteen 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. Blain*, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Hughes, Mr. James, Mr. Mountjoy, Mr. Spender, Mr. White, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Wilson.

* On leave.

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