

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT.

DIGEST OF DECISIONS
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

AND

IMPORTANT SPEECHES

BY

THE PRIME MINISTER
(THE HON. JOHN CURTIN).

No. 10.

PERIOD--1ST DECEMBER, 1941, TO 10TH DECEMBER, 1941.

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AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES. STRATEGIC ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

On 1st December, 1941, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) said—

“The important strategic route joining Western Queensland and the North-South road is rapidly nearing completion. The road will be trafficable for at least nine months of the year, but if seasons are favorable, it will be traversible for the whole twelve months.”

On 5th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—

“War Cabinet to-day gave consideration to the question of the construction of roads of strategic and operational importance. It was decided to proceed with all-weather strategic roads as follows:—Northern Command (Queensland), £616,000; Eastern Command (New South Wales), £15,000; Western Command (Western Australia), £17,000. Cabinet's decision will be referred to the Co-ordinator-General of Works (Sir Harry Brown), who will confer with the States and submit proposals for the apportionment of the financial responsibility between the Commonwealth and States, while the States' construction authorities will be consulted regarding construction details.”

(For earlier references, please see No. 8, page 22.)

GLEADALL BOMB.

On 6th December, 1941, Mr. Forde said he had interested himself in a number of new bombs invented by Staff-Sergeant L. R. Gleadall, of Brisbane. Demonstrations had been carried out that day. He said the inventions obviously possessed great merit and would fulfil the need for weapons which sections of fighting forces had been seeking. He was anxious that they be tested as soon as possible with a view to putting them into production.

NO EXPORT OF RIFLES.

On 10th December, 1941, Mr. Forde said—

“No rifles have been exported to other countries since I have been Minister for the Army—except to the Australian Imperial Force. Now, all the rifles that are being turned out are being used by our troops.”

MILITIA TRANSFERS TO AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

On 12th December, 1941, Mr. Forde referred to criticism of the decision to retain in the Australian Military Forces, men who were desirous of enlisting for overseas service. He said that, by the calling-up of all units for full-time duty, the training of men who were already in Militia units would be carried on without a break and eventually they would be trained as portions of formed units. Their training would not be disrupted, and there would be but a deferment of the processes of medical examination, enlistment, and transfer to the Australian Imperial Force recruit training depots, all of which

normally occupied considerable time and expenditure. Men who had notified their desire to serve overseas were being placed on special lists which would be held by units, and the men would be shown as having been posted to the Australian Imperial Force reserve. When the occasion warranted, the men could be readily transferred to Australian Imperial Force reinforcements. The action taken was based on a recommendation by the Government's military advisers in view of the gravity of the international situation, and was deemed to be in the best interests of the defence of the country, which overruled all personal considerations.

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

On 13th December, 1941, the Minister for War Organization of Industry (Mr. Dedman) said that the Government's aim was to ensure that universities trained students in the tasks most urgently needed. Those completing courses essential to the war effort would not be subject to military service, but those doing unessential courses would be called up.

(For earlier references, please see No. 5, page 24.)

CHRISTMAS DINNER.

On 13th December, 1941, Mr. Forde announced that a special Christmas dinner would be provided for Australian troops who were in camps, forts or garrisons on that day. A substantial increase had been approved in the messing allowance for troops on Christmas Day so that arrangements could be made for the special meal. Hospital cases and convalescent men in Australia, the Middle East and Malaya would receive an individual Red Cross Christmas parcel.

SEASONAL WORKERS.

On 13th December, 1941, Mr. Forde said that men who had been granted leave from military training for harvest operations and those whose training had previously been deferred for essential work in connexion with timber, flax, textile and the colliery industries, would be rendering the utmost service to the war effort by remaining at their civilian occupations until, and unless, called for.

(For earlier references, please see No. 2, page 8.)

USE OF MILITIA OVERSEAS.

On 15th December, 1941, Mr. Forde said—

“The Government has no intention of sending members of the Australian Militia Forces to any points outside Australia except to Commonwealth territories or territories under the control of the Commonwealth Government. There is no necessity to do so. Members of the Militia Forces are enlisted for the defence of Australia. Australian Imperial Force men are recruited for overseas service. Members of the Militia Forces will be trained and used exclusively for the defence of Australia and its territories. They cannot be used for any other purpose except by an amendment of the Australian Defence Act—which the Government does not intend to make, because there is no necessity.”

EXEMPTIONS FROM SERVICE.

On 16th December, 1941, Mr. Forde said—

“A review was recently made of those exemptions granted to Class 1 military trainees (single men up to 35) employed in industries not directly associated with the war effort. In the past very few men in certain trades have been called up but now that it has been decided to place the Militia on a war footing, it follows that more skilled tradesmen will be called upon. That is unavoidable if efficiency in the Army is to be brought to its highest level. The review has been necessary because many units requiring tradesmen have been maintained previously in cadre form, but are now being brought to full strength. The list of reserved occupations order is still, and will continue to be, rigidly applied and instructions have been issued that not only men entitled to exemptions, but those whose training had been deferred by order of the Adjutant-General, to enable production of urgently required materials and equipment, will not be called up unless required to serve in their usual capacity in the forces. It is possible that many men who have just been called up in Class 1 have gone over to war industries since they registered, and had been called up on particulars previously furnished. If it were known that they were in war industries they should not have been called up. I emphasized that every man whose age or condition, regardless of his occupation, brought him within Class 2 or Class 3 as defined by the proclamation of December 11, 1941, is required to register.”

SEASIDE AREAS.

On 15th December, 1941, Mr. Forde said that in any areas where there were forts or military establishments, strict regulations, guards and fences would prevent the public entering these places and he had no doubt that residents would closely observe any blackout, lighting restriction or other necessary restrictions.

PRISONERS OF WAR.

RED CROSS FACILITIES.

On 2nd December, 1941, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) announced that he had authorized a contribution of £750 to be despatched through the Australian Red Cross to the British Red Cross to provide further educational and recreational facilities for Australian prisoners in enemy countries.

(For earlier references, please see No. 1, page 23; No. 5, page 13.)

APPLES AND PEARS.

ACQUISITION PLAN ADOPTED.

On 3rd December, 1941, the Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce (Senator Fraser) said—

“The Government has decided to acquire the apple and pear crop of the coming season and dispose of it on behalf of the growers. At the

same time, the Government has decided upon certain reforms both in the scheme itself and in its administration. The Government was greatly influenced by the unanimous report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee which investigated the industry, and the best means of supporting it during the war. The Government has been impressed by the fact that, although the committee found faults in both the scheme and its administration, nevertheless the committee recommended continuance of acquisition as the best form of government intervention. Therefore, in spite of all difficulties and disadvantages, the Government has decided upon a scheme of acquisition. The Government expects that next year's plans will operate with much more satisfaction to Australia than the schemes of either of the previous years. Unless the Government finds reasons of governmental importance to the contrary at any time, it will adopt as a general guide—and will require the Marketing Board to adopt as a guide—the report and recommendations of the committee.

“The Government earnestly hopes that, whilst affording reasonable compensation to producers for their fruit, the scheme will also prove more beneficial to consumers. Every effort will be made to see that there is a wider and more efficient distribution of fruit. It is proposed that acquisition will commence on 1st January, 1942. In the meantime, details of the new plan will be worked out and necessary instructions given to the Marketing Board in regard to its operation.”

(For earlier references, please see No. 9, page 9.)

INDUSTRIAL MATTERS.

DILUTION OF LABOUR REGULATIONS.

On 3rd December, 1941, the Minister for Labour (Mr. Ward) announced that an amendment had been made to the National Security (Engineering Trades Dilution) Regulations to provide for the payment of full tradesmen's rates to all engineering trades apprentices in their fifth year of service. Under an amendment to these regulations made in October, 1941, it was provided that full tradesmen's rates should be paid to fifth-year apprentices of employers who were employing added engineering tradesmen. It was found in practice that the effect of this provision was to discourage employers from employing added tradesmen, as the employment of even one added tradesman would involve them in the payment of full tradesmen's rates to all their fifth-year apprentices. This was having an adverse effect on the placement of trainees turned out under the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme. Under the regulations as now amended, all employers of fifth-year engineering apprentices will be placed on the same basis, and there will be no financial inducement to employers to refrain from co-operating in the engineering trades dilution scheme.

(For earlier references, please see No. 2, page 14; No. 3, page 11; No. 5, page 17; No. 6, page 9.)

COAL-MINING INDUSTRY.

REGULATIONS ALTERED.

On 3rd December, 1941, the Minister for Labour (Mr. Ward) said—

“I tender my thanks to the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) and the Attorney-General (Dr. Evatt) for their valuable assistance in giving effect to plans for improving the industrial arbitration system. The Government has had under consideration for some time amendments to the National Security (Coal Mining Industry Employment) Regulations to provide for more expeditious handling of disputes as they arise in order to ensure that production in this very important war industry shall be continuous. Many stoppages have occurred and much dissatisfaction has manifested itself due to delays in hearing matters and arriving at decisions. Experience showed that amendments of the existing regulations were necessary and as a result of conferences between Mr. Curtin, Dr. Evatt and myself, amendments were to-day approved to give effect to the following:—

“Extension of the powers of Local Reference Boards to enable them to settle any disputes as to local matters, that is, matters which specially affect employees in the locality in which a Board is established. The present power of a Local Reference Board extends only to settlement by conciliation. The proposed provision will enable the Local Reference Board to hear and determine such matters. Matters which are not local shall be dealt with by the Central Reference Board.

“Provision is also made to provide for the appointment of a Conciliation Commissioner to be Acting Chairman of the Central Reference Board during the illness, or absence from any other cause, of the Chairman, providing that a Judge of the Arbitration Court is not available for appointment as Acting Chairman.”

REGULATIONS AMENDED

On 16th December, 1941, the Attorney-General (Dr. Evatt) said—

“The Minister for Labour (Mr. Ward) has discovered that, in a number of cases, the proceedings of Local Reference Boards under the National Security (Coal-mining Industry Employment) Regulations have been delayed. Those regulations were recently amended to prevent appeals from decisions of Local Reference Boards, except where the board was exceeding its jurisdiction by dealing with a matter of general import in the industry. At the same time, provision was made in the regulations to compel the chairman of the Local Reference Board to hold up the hearing and to refer to the Central Reference Board, at the instance of any member of the board; representative of employers; representative of employees, any question as to whether a matter was one of local or general application.

“In Mr. Ward's view, this power to compel has been exercised far too frequently and, in the future, it is proposed that it will be in the discretion of the chairman of a Local Reference Board as to whether

any such question should be referred to the Central Reference Board, which will then have power to determine whether it or the Local Reference Board should deal with the matter. During the present period of crisis, Mr. Ward will take every step necessary to prevent industrial tribunals from being delayed in the hearing and determination of industrial disputes. Mr. Ward considers that the amendment which has been made to the regulations to make the power of chairmen of Local Reference Boards discretionary only, will be a factor in preventing delay.

“A further amendment has been made to the National Security (Industrial Peace) Regulations to ensure that the settlement of the recent dispute in the coal-mining industry with respect to annual leave, which was given by the Conciliation Commissioner (Mr. D. B. Morrison), would not be disturbed. The amending regulation will give to Mr. Morrison’s decision the same effect as if it had been an award of the Central Reference Board and his decision will not, therefore, be liable to be upset by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.”

(For earlier references, please see No. 1, page 14; No. 2, page 14; No. 7, page 18; No. 8, pages 14-15.)

ACQUISITION OF STOCKS.

On 12th December, 1941, the Minister for Supply (Mr. Beasley) announced regulations for the compulsory acquisition of all coal stocks in New South Wales, and for the fixing of prices of coal throughout Australia as from 15th December, 1941. The Coal Commissioner will have power to—

- (1) Terminate all existing contracts for the supply of coal to other States.
- (2) Acquire by compulsion all coal at New South Wales pits for export to other States.
- (3) Fix all future prices for the purchase and resale of coal.
- (4) Limit rates of profit from all coal-mines or group of mines.
- (5) Insist that colliery waggons be made available for the carriage of coal from any pit, even if it is not the pit of the owner of the colliery waggons.
- (6) Fix prices for coal for consumption within New South Wales.
- (7) Grade all coal into classes such as gas and tail coal, and supply interstate buyers with coal of special quality instead of coal from certain mines.
- (8) Pay for all coal compulsorily acquired at the average colliery prices ruling on 1st December, 1940, plus any authorized increases granted by the Prices Commissioner.
- (9) Compel collieries to render accounts of interstate sales each month, so that prices can be adjusted where necessary.

COMMISSION APPOINTED.

On 12th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—

“The Government has approved of the formation of the Coal Commission to control the supply, production, distribution and all other matters affecting coal. Members of the commission will be: Mr. Norman Mighell (chairman), Mr. T. Armstrong (representing the owners) and Mr. B. Cunningham (representing the miners).

“Arrangements have been made for the commission to survey the existing regulations with a view to recommending such alterations which it considers necessary to enable it to carry out effectively in the broadest sense the functions assigned to it. The matter will receive urgent attention and I am assured by all concerned that the set-up of the commission is such as to induce confidence from all parties. I have received assurances of support and co-operation from the miners, and I look forward to the maximum output and best use of coal to play its part in the maximum war effort.”

(For earlier references, please see No. 5, page 5.)

ENEMY ALIENS.

EDUCATION OF INTERNED CHILDREN.

On 3rd December, 1941, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) said—

“The education of children of overseas internees who have been permitted to accompany their parents into internment is proceeding. Kindergarten and dining huts, equipped with diet kitchens for young children, and a school building for elder children, are at present in course of construction and will be used by children recently arrived in Australia. Adult internees are also encouraged to participate in educational activities and some hundreds are studying a wide range of subjects. Over 250 have prepared themselves for the University of Melbourne Leaving Certificate examination. All expenses in connexion with overseas internees and their children are borne by the Governments originally responsible for their internment.”

PROPERTY REGULATIONS AMENDED.

On 3rd December, 1941, the Treasurer (Mr. Chifley) said that a new Regulation under the National Security (Enemy Property) Regulations had been gazetted to provide that no alteration to the memorandum or articles of association of an Australian company, in which more than 20 per cent. of the shares were held by enemy subject shareholders, shall become effective until approved by the Controller of Enemy Property. The Regulation was designed principally to protect the interests of shareholders in Australian companies where such shareholders were the subjects of a friendly or Allied power whose country was in enemy hands. All occupied countries were deemed to be “enemy territory” for purposes of the National Security (Enemy Property) Regulations and technically, residents therein were “enemy

subjects". It was felt, however, that the interests of these people in Australian companies, where such interests were sufficient to affect a company's policy, should not be prejudiced because of their inability, owing to war conditions, to exercise their rights in the normal manner. The new Regulation safeguarded those rights.

LAND TRANSFER REGULATIONS.

On 16th December, 1941, the Attorney-General (Dr. Evatt) announced that by an amendment of the National Security (Land Transfer) Regulations former subjects of Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Japan, who were naturalized British subjects, were regarded as naturalized persons of enemy origin. The sale of land to such persons, and other land transactions with such persons, was prohibited except with the prior consent of the Attorney-General. Subjects of the countries mentioned who were not naturalized were enemy aliens and the sale of land to them, and other land transactions with them, was absolutely prohibited.

TRANSPORT.

REGULATIONS MADE.

On 3rd December, 1941, the Minister for Transport (Mr. Lawson) gazetted regulations providing for the control of rail transport by the Commonwealth to ensure the best possible use of the facilities in emergency. A committee, to be known as the War Railways Committee, will be formed to advise and assist the Minister in the administration of the regulations. It will consist of the chief executive officers of the Commonwealth and State railways systems. The chairman will be appointed by the Minister. The regulations provide the necessary power to conduct the essential services for defence and civil purposes without restriction.

(For earlier references, please see No. 4, page 14; No. 5, page 12.)

VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS.

EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION.

On 3rd December, 1941, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) said—

"Sufficient mortars have been distributed among the various centres in which the Volunteer Defence Corps is operating to ensure a full issue. The rate of rifle issue is being maintained at the highest possible level. Any increase will depend largely on the numbers obtained by impressment. A growing factory output will ensure supplies of light machine guns. Sub-machine guns will also be distributed. Approximately 11,000 uniforms have been distributed and more are being issued as rapidly as possible; production is rising and a full issue is not far distant."

(For earlier references, please see No. 6, page 23.)

FULL-TIME DUTY PERSONNEL.

On 5th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—

“Approval was given by War Cabinet to-day to the employment of full-time duty personnel with the Volunteer Defence Corps. It was decided that, for the proper administration of the corps, full-time duty personnel should be employed, totalling 29 captains, 73 lieutenants and 175 warrant and non-commissioned officers. The work of organization and administration has been carried out voluntarily, and in their spare time, by members but, with the increased volume of work now to be handled and the vital part the corps may be called upon to play in Australia's defence, it is no longer possible to depend on purely voluntary services. The appointment of full-time duty personnel will permit of the proper issue of, and accounting for, uniforms, equipment and training stores and will assist commanding officers in the training of units and the keeping of records and compilation of data required in connexion with the employment of the corps on mobilization.”

CALL-UP FOR SERVICE.

On 13th December, 1941, Mr. Forde said—

“Portions of the Volunteer Defence Corps will be called up for coast-watching and for defence of aerodromes. They will receive the same rates of pay as the Militia Forces. Arrangements are in progress for the calling-up of these men. They will be drawn as far as possible from the areas in which their services will be used.”

FAR EASTERN POSITION.

WAR CABINET MEETING.

On 4th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—

“War Cabinet, in consultation with the Chiefs of Staff, reviewed the preparedness of the Navy, Army and Air Force for any emergency. The precautionary steps that have been taken to meet any contingency that may arise were examined and authority given for further essential measures, if and when, they should become necessary.”

AUSTRALIAN WAR EFFORT AND CAPACITY.

APPOINTMENTS MADE.

On 5th December, 1941, the Minister for War Organization of Industry (Mr. Dedman) announced further appointments of his department, Professor Ronald Walker of the University of Hobart to be Chief Economic Adviser to the Department, the Chief Inspector, Personnel, Postmaster-General's Department (Mr. G. T. Chippindall) to be Deputy-Director, Department of War Organization of Industry.

APPOINTMENT OF SCIENTISTS.

On 11th December, 1941, Mr. Dedman said that two scientists were to be selected, having regard to their knowledge of industry and science, to spend about three months studying the position relative to the utilization of the scientific resources of the country in the war effort, by consultation with a few leaders in charge of war activities. These men would then submit to the Prime Minister proposals for making fuller use of such scientific help as was available in the country, and was unused.

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.

RESPIRATORS FOR CIVIL POPULATION.

On 5th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—
 “War Cabinet to-day discussed the matter of provision of respirators for use by the civil population of Australia in the event of gas attacks. It was decided to place an order in the United Kingdom for the supply of 1,000,000 respirator containers and that the Australian Department of Munitions commence, at the earliest possible date, the manufacture of the face-pieces for these containers at the rate of 40,000 a week. Arrangements will be made by the Department of Home Security for the storage of containers and face-pieces and their assembly and issue when required. The Department of Munitions will collaborate on the technical side of these matters and War Cabinet will later deal with the question of local production of the complete units. It is estimated that the provision of 1,000,000 units will cost £300,000.”

COMPENSATION FOR VOLUNTEERS.

On 16th December, 1941, the Minister for Home Security (Mr. Lazzarini) announced National Security (Civil Defence Volunteers' Compensation) Regulations providing a scheme of compensation and/or pension for Civil Defence Volunteers who were members of civil defence organizations approved by the Minister, who would administer the regulations. Members who sustained personal injuries in the course of training would benefit under the scheme and allowances for dependants were provided. All claims would be handled by the Repatriation Commission.

BULK OIL INSTALLATIONS.

On 17th December, 1941, Mr. Lazzarini announced National Security (Protection of Bulk Oil Installations) Regulations to vest in the Minister authority to require owners of bulk oil installations to take protective measures in connexion with those installations and to furnish reports in relation to protective measures. Provision was made for the constitution of a Bulk Oil Protection Advisory Committee. Before the erection of any bulk oil installations was commenced, the consent in writing of the Minister shall be obtained.

(For earlier references, please see No. 6, page 4; No. 7, page 20.)

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

QANTAS EMPIRE AIRWAYS.

On 5th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—

“War Cabinet to-day agreed to a request by Qantas Empire Airways Limited for the return of one flying boat, of those chartered by the Royal Australian Air Force from the company, as soon as the Chief of the Air Force Staff can arrange for the return. The machine will be requisitioned, if required in an emergency, during the two months of the period of return that has been approved.”

WOMEN DOCTORS APPROVED.

On 5th December, 1941, Mr. Curtin said—

“War Cabinet to-day gave approval to the employment in the Royal Australian Air Force medical service of women doctors, not exceeding a total of eight. They will be paid the rates of pay and allowances applicable to male doctors holding the corresponding rank. The duties of the new appointees will include clinical pathology at hospitals and general work at stations where members of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force are accommodated. Cabinet's decision was prompted by the difficulty being experienced in meeting the medical officer requirements of the services.”

LEAVE CANCELLED.

On 5th December, 1941, the Minister for Air (Mr. Drakeford) said that leave for Royal Australian Air Force personnel at Darwin had been cancelled for the present. This action had been taken some time ago when the Far Eastern position began to deteriorate.

AIR-ARMY CO-OPERATION.

On 10th December, 1941, the Minister for Air (Mr. Drakeford) said that the school of army co-operation, providing a basis for closer collaboration between the Air Force and the Army, to be established in Canberra early in the new year, would be under the control of Wing-Commander S. de B. Griffiths, Commanding Officer, Royal Australian Air Force Station, Canberra, pending the arrival in Australia of a Royal Air Force air-army co-operation expert. Squadron-Leader G. J. Quinan, commander of an Australian army co-operation squadron, would assist the chief instructor. Army instructors would be Major H. M. Ervine-Andrews, the first V.C. winner of the present war, and Major T. F. Howison, of the Australian Armoured Division. A comprehensive syllabus had been arranged by Air-Commodore F. M. Bladin, Air Officer Commanding Royal Australian Air Force Operational Area, and Colonel E. L. Vowles, Acting Director of Military Training.

(For earlier references, please see No. 1, page 15; No. 6, page 23; No. 7, pages 11-12.)

AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY.

On 13th December, 1941, Mr. Drakeford received advice that Squadron-Leader C. Rawlinson had been awarded a bar to his Distinguished Flying Cross, and Flight-Lieutenant D. A. Coke and Flying-Officer F. Fischer had won the Distinguished Flying Cross for outstanding bravery in the Libyan campaign.

On 17th December, 1941, Mr. Drakeford said—

“Flight-Lieutenant C. R. Caldwell, who is serving in a Royal Australian Air Force squadron operating in Libya, has been simultaneously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and bar for outstanding bravery.

MOVEMENTS OF PERSONNEL.

On 15th December, 1941, Mr. Drakeford said the Government did not intend to disclose, at this stage, its intentions regarding the future of the Royal Australian Air Force personnel serving outside the Pacific as to do so would be gratuitously to supply the enemy with valuable operational information.

REINFORCEMENTS IN MALAYA.

On 15th December, 1941, Mr. Drakeford said—

“Everything possible is being done to maintain and, if necessary, reinforce our air strength in the Malayan battle zone. Any action taken by the Government to supply reinforcements for sectors outside the sphere of Australian operations is, and will continue to be, consistent with the protection of vital home points from which our fighting forces receive their supplies of war materials and from which flow the commodities essential to the life of the community.”

IMPORTS.

RESTRICTIONS ON STERLING GOODS.

On 6th December, 1941, the Minister for Trade and Customs (Senator Keane) announced the introduction, as from 8th December, 1941, of restrictions on the importation of a wide range of goods from the United Kingdom and all other countries of the sterling area except New Zealand and British and French Pacific Islands. Mainly the goods are regarded as being unnecessary during wartime. In the case of raw cotton and tobacco leaf it has been found necessary to apply the import licensing principles to all sterling areas.

HIS HIGHNESS THE RAJAH OF SARAWAK.

On 10th December, 1941, the Minister for External Affairs (Dr. Evatt) announced that His Highness the Rajah of Sarawak (Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G.) had arrived at Brisbane that day. He had been requested by His Highness that the visit should be regarded entirely as a private one. In that circumstance, no undue publicity should be given to the visit.

AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION.

AUSTRALIAN DESIGNED RIVETING GUN.

On 10th December, 1941, the Minister for Air (Mr. Drakeford) said that Flight-Sergeant E. A. Lee, of Royal Australian Air Force Head-quarters, had designed a new and improved type of automatic riveting gun used in the construction of metal aeroplanes and parts which was being produced by Royal Australian Air Force trainees at No. 1 Engineering School, Ascot Vale (Victoria). The Lee riveting gun was more efficient, easier to handle and much faster in operation than the imported Chobert gun, and could be made at a fraction of the cost. It was estimated that the Australian gun could be manufactured by the Royal Australian Air Force for a few shillings, compared with approximately £4 if produced privately, and £50 if imported.

AUSTRALIAN-MADE BOMB RACKS.

On 13th December, 1941, Mr. Drakeford announced that universal bomb racks, capable of holding all types of bombs used by Royal Australian Air Force machines, were now being manufactured in Australia. The Pacific conflict would make it increasingly difficult to import bomb racks from Britain.

MUNITIONS PRODUCTION.

CHECK ON ENLISTMENTS.

On 11th December, 1941, the Minister for Munitions (Mr. Makin) said that conferences had recently been held between the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin), the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) and representatives of the Amalgamated Engineering Union to establish a more satisfactory basis for the employment of technicians in munitions factories, having regard to the essential requirements of the Army. A review of this question, which was at present proceeding, would check any wastage or inefficiency in the allotment of skilled workers to the services.

WAR CABINET.

On 11th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—
 "I have to-day appointed the Minister for War Organization of Industry (Mr. Dedman) to be a member of the War Cabinet."

TEXTILE TRADE.

COTTON GOODS "FROZEN".

On 11th December, 1941, the Minister for Supply (Mr. Beasley) said that because of excessive buying recently, existing stocks of engine cotton cleaning waste, cotton cloths, stockinette and sundry cleaning cloths had been "frozen" from that day. Future sales would be prohibited to people holding more than one month's supply based on 1940 usage. People with less may buy up to 1 ton or 14 days 1940 usage, whichever was the lesser.

(For earlier references, please see No. 4, page 9.)

VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

REPORT TO CABINET.

On 12th December, 1941, the Minister for Repatriation (Mr. Frost) said that the Cabinet sub-committee, comprising the Minister for Health and Social Services (Mr. Holloway), the Minister for Labour (Mr. Ward) and the Minister for Repatriation (Mr. Frost), recently appointed to consider proposals regarding general repatriation benefits for members of the forces would report to Cabinet shortly. Questions referred for consideration were preference for returned soldiers and vocational training for those members eligible under the present Repatriation Act. In view of the changed Pacific situation, the further question arose as to the scope of the act. At present it provided, so far as general benefits were concerned, for those who enlisted for service abroad, but events might lead to an amendment of the act to cover members of the Australian Military Forces enlisted, or called up, for home defence only.

(For earlier references, please see No. 2, page 10; No. 6, page 6.)

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION.

RUMORS DISCOUNTED.

On 12th December, 1941, the Minister for Information (Senator Ashley) appealed to the public to take no notice of rumors and to regard only official statements as authoritative. These would be issued as early as possible, and as frequently as was thought necessary. The Government's considered policy was promptly to release news which affected the operations of the forces whether it was good or bad.

RELATIONS WITH AMERICA.

DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN NEWS.

On 12th December, 1941, the Minister for Information (Senator Ashley) said that one of the results of the new Pacific situation was the tremendous increase of American interest in Australia. The Department of Information was doing everything possible to meet this new demand for news and information from Australia. In particular, the broadcasting division was transmitting on short-wave each evening to America a ten-minute news bulletin.

(For earlier references, please see No. 3, page 13.)

PRICES.

FIRM "DECLARED".

On 12th December, 1941, the Minister for Customs (Senator Keane) said that all services performed by the Parisian Laundry Proprietary Limited, 118-120 Oxford-street, Woollahra (New South Wales), had been brought under strict price control by a declaration. Action had been taken because the firm increased the prices charged on a large

section of its business after it had been advised by the New South Wales Deputy Prices Commissioner that it would be necessary to make application and justify any increases before putting them into effect. All firms should realize that instructions from Deputy Prices Commissioners should be strictly followed or immediate steps be taken by the trader concerned to discuss any difficulties with the Deputy Prices Commissioner.

(For earlier references, please see No. 6, page 14; No. 7, pages 21-22; No. 9, page 3.)

SOCIAL SECURITY.

PENSIONERS IN EMPLOYMENT.

On 12th December, 1941, the Minister for Social Services (Mr. Holloway) said—

“Any old-age pensioner who enters employment should immediately inform the Deputy Commissioner of Pensions at the capital city in which he resides. By so doing, overpayments of pensions may be prevented and the difficulties invariably attendant upon refunds will be obviated. If the work proved beyond the pensioner's capacity or ceases for any other reason, no difficulties will be raised in restoring pension payments from an appropriate date.”

BARLEY POOL.

1941-42 CROP FIRST ADVANCE.

On 15th December, 1941, the Minister for Commerce (Mr. Scully) said that the Government had approved of advances totalling about £1,000,000 to barley-growers as the first advance to be made on barley of the 1941-42 crop. The money would be made available by the Commonwealth Bank, which would also provide £700,000 for expenses incurred in the administration of the pool. All advances were less an average freight of 3½d. a bushel. The Australian Barley Pool Board was conferring with the Commonwealth Bank regarding machinery measures necessary for payment. It was anticipated that these arrangements would be completed to enable payment to be made towards the end of this month. Production this year had been a record and, in view of the serious limitation of export, it was estimated that a substantial loss would result from this year's pool.

(For earlier references, please see No. 4, page 13.)

OWEN SUB-MACHINE GUN.

NUMBER MANUFACTURED.

On 16th December, 1941, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) said—

“A substantial number of Owen guns have already been manufactured. I have received a photograph showing a long line of these new sub-machine guns.”

(For earlier references, please see No. 8, page 13.)

**WAR WITH FINLAND, HUNGARY, RUMANIA.
PROCLAMATION.**

Commonwealth of
Australia to wit.

GOWRIE
Governor-General.

By His Excellency the Governor-General
in and over the Commonwealth of
Australia.

I, ALEXANDER GORE ARKWRIGHT, BARON GOWRIE, the Governor-General aforesaid, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council and in the exercise of all powers me thereunto enabling, do hereby declare and proclaim that a state of war with the Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Kingdom of Rumania exists and has existed in the Commonwealth of Australia and its Territories as from the eighth day of December, One thousand nine hundred and forty-one at five o'clock in the afternoon reckoned according to the standard time in the Australian Capital Territory:

OF ALL WHICH His Majesty's loving subjects and all others whom these Presents may concern are hereby required to take notice and to govern themselves accordingly.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth of Australia this eighth day of December in the year of our Lord One thousand nine hundred and forty-one and in the fifth year of His Majesty's reign.

By His Excellency's Command,

JOHN CURTIN

Prime Minister.

GOD SAVE THE KING!

WAR WITH JAPAN.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT.

(On 7th December, 1941, Japan attacked United States territory.)

On 8th December, 1941, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said—

“The thread by which peace was hanging has been snapped, notwithstanding all the discussions and negotiations which the democracies persisted with in the hope that peace would be maintained. Japan has gone to war and it is necessary to point out that, prior to formal declaration of war, Japan wantonly assailed British and United States interests and places.

“For weeks past, peace in the Pacific has been hanging by a thread. The question was: Would Japan snap the thread? For no other country which could have made war in the Pacific desired war. Since February of this year the problem of the Pacific has been one of constant anxiety to the Government of Australia and to the governments of the democracies.

“Hit without warning brings its own retaliation. Men and women of Australia: The stern truth is that Japan commenced a war in the Pacific in which our security and our vital interests are at stake. I ask

the people of Australia to give the best that they can in the service of this country. The fighting forces are at battle stations. Every other man and woman should be at some place of usefulness.

"The Australian Government has taken immediate steps this morning, according to plan, to do everything necessary for the defence of Australian, British and United States interests. The Service Ministers and the Service Chiefs have acted promptly, as have other departments connected with internal security. No time was lost from the moment, early this morning when the news was received, in taking all necessary measures.

"This is the gravest hour of our history. We have a heavy responsibility. I ask every Australian, man and woman, to go about their allotted task with full vigor and courage."

PROCLAMATION.

Commonwealth of
Australia to wit.
GOWRIE
Governor-General.

By His Excellency the Governor-General
in and over the Commonwealth of
Australia.

I, ALEXANDER GORE ARKWRIGHT, BARON GOWRIE, the Governor-General aforesaid, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council and in the exercise of all powers me thereunto enabling, do hereby declare and proclaim that a state of war with the Japanese Empire exists and has existed in the Commonwealth of Australia and its Territories as from the eighth day of December, One thousand nine hundred and forty-one at five o'clock in the afternoon reckoned according to the standard time in the Australian Capital Territory:

OF ALL WHICH His Majesty's loving subjects and all others whom these Presents may concern are hereby required to take notice and to govern themselves accordingly.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth of Australia this ninth day of December in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and forty-one and in the fifth year of His Majesty's reign.

By His Excellency's Command,

JOHN CURTIN
Prime Minister.

GOD SAVE THE KING!

NATIONAL BROADCAST BY PRIME MINISTER.

On 8th December, 1941, in a national broadcast, Mr. Curtin said:—

"Men and women of Australia,

"We are at war with Japan. That has happened because, in the first instance, Japanese naval and air forces launched an unprovoked attack on British and United States territory; because our vital interests are imperilled and because the rights of free people in the whole Pacific are assailed. As a result, the Australian Government

this afternoon took the necessary steps which will mean that a state of war exists between Australia and Japan. To-morrow, in common with the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands East Indies Governments, the Australian Government will formally and solemnly declare the state of war it has striven so sincerely and strenuously to avoid.

“Throughout the whole affair, and despite discouragement, the Australian Government and its representatives abroad struggled hard to prevent a breakdown of discussions. Australia encouraged the United States to retain the diplomatic initiative on behalf of the democratic Powers. We did not want war in the Pacific. The Australian Government has repeatedly made it clear—as have the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands East Indies—that if war came to the Pacific it would be of Japan’s making. Japan has now made war.

“I point out that the hands of the democracies are clean. The discussions and negotiations which have taken place between Japan and the democracies were not merely empty bandying of words on the democracies’ part. Since last February it has been the constant aim and endeavour of the democracies to keep peace in the Pacific. It has been a problem fraught with grave difficulties but, in the view of the democracies, it was a problem that was capable of being overcome. Accordingly, the best brains of the democracies were brought to bear on the problem. It will stand on record that the President of the United States himself, the American Secretary of State (Mr. Cordell Hull), the British and the Dominion Governments worked untiringly and unceasingly. Yet, when the President of the United States had decided to communicate direct to the Japanese Emperor a personal appeal for Imperial intervention on the side of peace, the war Government of Japan struck. That war Government, set on aggression and lusting for power in the same fashion as its Axis partners, anticipated the undoubted weight of the President’s plea and shattered the century-old friendship between the two countries.

“For the first time in the history of the Pacific, armed conflict stalks abroad. No other country but Japan desired war in the Pacific. The guilt for plunging this hemisphere into actual warfare is, therefore, upon Japan. The recapitulation of events I have given you is necessary so that we in Australia may correctly assess the issues involved. The stern truth is that war has been forced upon us, not because of stubborn resistance on the part of the democracies to every demand that Japan made, but because Japan chose the method of armed might to settle differences which every other country involved was ready and willing to settle by negotiation and arbitration. Japan, by so doing, chose the Hitler method. While its diplomatic representatives were actually at the White House; while all the democratic Powers regarded the conversations as continuing; Japan ignored the convention of a formal declaration of war and struck like an assassin in the night.

"For, as the dawn broke this morning, at places as far apart as Honolulu, Nauru, Ocean Island, Guam, Singapore and British Malaya, guns from Japanese warships; bombs from Japanese aircraft; shots from Japanese military forces struck death to United States citizens and members of its defence forces; to the peaceful subjects of Great Britain and to her men on ships and on the land. The Pacific Ocean was reddened with the blood of Japanese victims. These wanton killings will be followed by attacks on the Netherlands East Indies; on the Commonwealth of Australia; on the Dominion of New Zealand; if Japan can get its brutal way.

"Australia, therefore, being a nation that believes in a way of life which has freedom and liberty as its corner stones goes to the battle stations in defence of the free way of living. Our course is clear, our cause is just—as has been the case ever since September, 1939, when we stood in the path of Hitlerism and declared that we would stand out to the end against ruthless and wanton aggression. I say, then, to the people of Australia: Give of your best in the service of the nation. There is a place and part for all of us. Each must take his or her place in the service of the nation, for the nation itself is in peril. This is our darkest hour. Let that be fully realized. Our efforts in the past two years must be as nothing compared with the efforts we must now put forward.

"I can give you the assurance that the Australian Government is fully prepared. It has been in readiness for whatever eventuality, and last Friday the initial steps were taken and fully carried out. From early this morning the Service Ministers of the Cabinet and the Chiefs of the fighting Services have done everything that has to be done by them. The War Cabinet met and put into effect the plan devised for our protection. This afternoon, the full Cabinet met and I am able to announce to you prompt decisions on a wide variety of matters—all of them vital to the new war organization that confronts us.

"All leave for members of the fighting Forces has been cancelled. An extension of the present partial mobilization of Navy, Army and Air Forces is being prepared. The Minister for Home Security will, to-morrow, confer with Army authorities on air raid precautions. Regulations will be issued to prohibit the consumption of petrol for purposes of pleasure. A conference will be held by the Minister for Supply with oil companies on the storage of fuel and the security of that storage. Arrangements will be made for all work on services that are essential nationally to be continued on public holidays in future, while, in this connexion, all transport services will be concentrated upon necessary purposes. The Minister for Labour will leave for Darwin immediately to organize the labour supply there. An examination will be made to ascertain what retail establishments should continue to trade after 6 p.m.—so as to conserve light, coal, transport services.

"These are some of the things decided upon quickly, but in no atmosphere of panic. There are other things that the Government has done. These, by their nature, are secret. But, in total, what has been done to-day adds up to complete provision for the safety of the nation.

"To-morrow, the War Cabinet will meet again, as will the Australian War Council, when the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues will be fully apprised of every phase of the position. The Parliament of the Commonwealth will assemble on Tuesday of next week.

"One thing remains, and on it depends our very lives. That thing is the co-operation, the strength, and the will-power of you, the people. Without it we are, indeed, lost. Men and women of Australia: The call is to you, for your courage; your physical and mental ability; your inflexible determination that we, as a nation of free people, shall survive. My appeal to you is in the name of Australia, for Australia is the stake in this conflict. The thread of peace has snapped—only the valour of our fighting Forces, backed by the very uttermost of which we are capable in factory and workshop, can knit that thread again into security. Let there be no idle hand. The road of service is ahead. Let us all tread it firmly, victoriously.

"We here, in this spacious land where, for more than 150 years, peace and security have prevailed, are now called upon to meet the external aggressor. The enemy presses from without. I have said that our forces are at their battle stations. They are not alone. It is true that Japan is not alone. But, as I speak to you to-night, the United States; Great Britain and her colonies and dominions, which include the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand; the great federation of Russian republics; the Netherlands East Indies and China are associated in the common cause of preserving for free men and free women not only their inheritance, but every hope they have of decency and dignity and liberty.

"We Australians have imperishable traditions. We shall maintain them. We shall vindicate them. We shall hold this country and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race and as a place where civilization will persist.

"Men and women of Australia: It is my duty to sound a tocsin! I proclaim a call unto you. I do it in the words of Swinburne—

"Come forth, be born and live,

Thou that hast help to give,

And light to make man's day of manhood fair,

With flight outflying the sphered sun,

Hasten thine hour

And halt not till thy work be done.'"

STATE OF WAR.

On 9th December, 1941, the Minister for External Affairs (Dr. Evatt) said—

“Instructions have been sent to the Charge d’Affaires (Mr. Officer), Australian Legation, Tokio, to inform the Imperial Japanese Government that a state of war exists and has existed between His Majesty’s Government in the Commonwealth of Australia and the Imperial Japanese Government, as from 5 o’clock in the afternoon, 8th December, 1941. I have also received a formal call this afternoon from the Japanese Minister to Australia (Mr. Kawai) and have submitted to him a communication which related the notification which has been sent to the Imperial Japanese Government.”

MESSAGE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

On 12th December, 1941, the Minister for External Affairs (Dr. Evatt), in communicating formally to the United States Government the declaration of war by the Commonwealth of Australia against Japan, conveyed the following message to President Roosevelt on behalf of the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) and the Commonwealth Government:—

“I desire to express our profound appreciation of the initiative, courage and patience displayed by the President and Secretary of State in their endeavours to prevent war in the Pacific and in their objective of outlawing force as an instrument of national policy.

“For the time being the attempt to maintain Pacific peace on a basis of law and justice has been checked by the sudden and treacherous attack of the Japanese forces while diplomatic negotiations were actually proceeding. The Commonwealth is honoured to be associated with the United States in resisting the aggressors until they are finally overthrown and until the principles for which the President has so frequently declared are established, not only in the Pacific, but everywhere in the world.”

In reply, President Roosevelt sent the following message to Dr. Evatt, to be conveyed to Mr. Curtin:—

“Please send my best wishes to the Government and the people of Australia. We did our utmost to keep the peace in the Pacific but our enemies had decided on aggression beforehand. This is now a world war in the true sense. We are in it with you and you will not find us wanting. I need not tell the Australians to keep a stout heart. I know that you will. We will win.”

PARLIAMENT APPROVES.

On 16th December, 1941, the House of Representatives, on the motion of Mr. Curtin, and the Senate, on the motion of the Minister for the Interior (Senator Collings), approved the following resolution unanimously:—

“That this House approves of the action of His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth in having advised the issue of proclamations declaring the existence of a state of war with Japan, Finland, Hungary and Rumania. Further, this House hereby pledges itself to take every step deemed necessary to defend this Commonwealth and its territories, to carry on hostilities in association with our allies, and to achieve final victory over our enemies.”

WHEAT POOLS PAYMENTS.

1941-42 CROP FIRST ADVANCE.

On 15th December, 1941, the Minister for Commerce (Mr. Scully) said that the Government had approved of the first advance on wheat of the 1941-42 crop at the rate of 3s. a bushel, less freight, for bagged wheat, and 2s. 10d. a bushel, less freight, for bulk wheat. This would involve £21,000,000. The Government had arranged with the Commonwealth Bank for the provision of the necessary funds. The Australian Wheat Board was conferring with the Commonwealth Bank regarding the machinery measures necessary for payment and it was anticipated that these arrangements would be completed to enable payment to be made towards the end of this month. About 142,000,000 bushels would be acquired this season, of which 80,000,000 bushels would be bulk and 62,000,000 bushels bagged. The crop was the first to feel the real impact of war. Market prospects were not good, the only certain outlet during the next twelve months being that for 32,000,000 bushels which would be required in Australia. Because it appeared that a second advance from sales would not be justified for a considerable period the Government had fixed the initial advance at the utmost that could be paid.

(For earlier references, please see No. 3, page 11; No. 4, page 13, No. 6, page 5.)