

Parliamentary salaries and allowances.

The Government has decided to set up an independent Committee of Inquiry to report on the salaries and allowances paid to Senators and Members of the Commonwealth Parliament and also to report generally on related matters.

It will be recalled that both the Committees which have previously examined and reported on these matters - the first in 1951/52 under the Chairmanship of the late Mr. Justice Nicholas and that of 1955 chaired by Sir Frank Richardson - recommended a review at suitable intervals. The 1955 Committee stated in its report that "a periodic review of Parliamentary salaries is necessary irrespective of the way in which changes are made and in fact whether any changes are made." In the course of the last Parliament, my colleague the Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. Harold Holt, in his capacity as Leader of the House intimated to Members that a review of these matters should be made early in the life of each new Parliament and subject only to quite abnormal circumstances the conditions then determined should apply unchanged throughout the life of that Parliament. That is the view of the Government. It has discussed the arrangements now proposed with the Leader of the Opposition, the Rt. Hon. Dr. H.V. Evatt, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. A.A. Calwell.

Salaries and conditions of Senators and Members were last reviewed in 1955, and the last review of the emoluments of Ministers and office bearers of the Parliament was made in 1952.

The terms of reference of the Committee will be --

- (1) To enquire into and report upon the salaries and allowances payable to Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, including those paid to Ministers and Members who are office bearers of the Parliament.
- (2) If it be reported that it is necessary or desirable to alter such salaries and allowance or any of them, then to recommend the nature and extent of the alterations that should be made.

- (3) Generally, to enquire into and report upon the conditions which apply to the service of Members of Parliament and Ministers, and any other related matters which may come to the notice of the Committee in the course of its enquiries and which it may consider should be reported on.

The members of the Committee will be --

SIR FRANK RICHARDSON, who was a member of the 1951/52 Committee as well as Chairman of the 1955 Committee and who has been requested by the Government to be Chairman of the present Committee.

MR. G.E. FITZGERALD, BA., B.Com., FASA, FAC(Aust), FCIS., who was a member of the 1955 Committee, and

MR. N.L. COWPER, CBE, BA, LL.B., have also been asked to be members. All three have indicated their willingness to serve.

Sir Frank Richardson is well-known as a leading Melbourne businessman and has served Australia most capably in a number of honorary capacities. Mr. Fitzgerald is a highly qualified and prominent Melbourne accountant, and Mr. Cowper, a prominent Sydney solicitor, is on the Executive of the Australian Institute of Political Science and has made a special study for many years of political and constitutional matters.

It is expected that the Committee will hold its first meeting shortly.

Mr. K.H. HERDE of the Prime Minister's Department will be Secretary of the Committee.

CANBERRA.

17th January, 1959

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