

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

SPEECH

BY

The Rt. Hon. R. G. MENZIES, C.H., Q.C., M.P.,

ON

MINISTERS OF STATE BILL 1959.

[From the "Parliamentary Debates," 14th April, 1959.]

Mr. MENZIES (Kooyong—Prime Minister) [8.5].—I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In accordance with the announcement made by my colleague, the Treasurer (Mr. Harold Holt), a little earlier, and in accordance with the agreement of the House, I propose not to confine my remarks to the one bill, but to discuss the whole of the matters covered by the three bills which have been referred to. And that, I am sure, is desirable, because they all arise from the one investigation, the one report, and the one series of determinations by the Government.

It is not, Sir, for the first time that the Parliament has had to consider its own emoluments, its salaries, its allowances and

its superannuation benefits, because, of course, under the Constitution of this country as it still stands, the salaries of members of the Parliament—then called allowances—were fixed at an amount of £400 per annum. But they were fixed until Parliament otherwise determined, and, as everybody here knows, that means that Parliament can from time to time, as it thinks appropriate, determine these matters. On this occasion, as on two prior occasions, it was decided that a committee quite outside of Parliament—but a knowledgeable committee—should investigate these matters and make recommendations to the Parliament through the Government. This is the third occasion on which that has happened and, as on every prior occasion on which

there has been a change of salary or allowances—going back for over half a century—there has been a remarkable uproar, largely fermented, as I will indicate later, by sections of the press, and, to a large extent, based upon an unwillingness or an inability to understand what the duties of members of Parliament are and what the duties of Ministers are. This, after all, tonight, is an opportunity, which I would not willingly have missed, to enable at least some hundreds of thousands of people in Australia to learn that there are two sides to this question, and I regard my responsibility this evening as a responsibility to see that the Parliament's side of this matter becomes known to thoughtful people who, in our experience, will always come down with a sensible judgment if they have the materials before them.

In order to begin this exercise, Sir, I think I should point out something that most honorable members are familiar with—that this, of course, is not the first occasion on which this kind of thing has happened. When this Parliament began, 58 years ago, the payment to members of the Parliament was £400 a year. That was in 1901. In 1907, it was increased to £600 a year, and there was an enormous press agitation. I think it was at that very time that some talented writer coined the great phrase about a salary grab, to which, of course, people of even greater genius have since added such expressions of "raiding the Treasury". The payment to members was increased to £600 a year in 1907, and that increase was violently opposed by, among other people, the very newspapers that have fermented and led the agitation against the increases now proposed. The payment fixed in 1907 stood until 1920—after the first world war. There had been a great world war, with all its economic consequences. There had been all the inevitable inflationary pressures of a great war. Yet, in 1920, when a proposal was brought forward by the then government to raise the amount to £1,000, the agitation surpassed even that of 1907. That agitation came from the same people, the same very wealthy interests, and was directed to the same object.

In 1932 the depression was on, and this Parliament reduced the £1,000 in accordance with the Premiers' plan. I think it

must go on record that that was the first and only time when these great newspaper interests approved of what Parliament was doing. Between 1932 and 1938, as the depression lifted, certain gradual restorations were made by Parliament until, by 1938, the sum of £1,000 had been completely restored. That was greeted with a volley of abuse, of course.

In 1947 the amount was, by legislation, raised to £1,500. We had a very spirited argument in this House on that occasion, which I have taken the opportunity to re-read in order to refresh my mind on it. Once more there was a violent press campaign, directed not to one point that exercised my mind and those of some other people in this House at that time—that wage pegging was still in existence—but directed to the eternal proposition that you must never increase the salaries of members of the Federal Parliament because—let us face it—we are not worth it.

In 1952, following a report, further improvements were made. There were improvements again in 1956, and now we have the current proposals. There may be some honorable members in this House—I am sure there are—who have never previously encountered these somewhat wintry blasts, but I can assure them that they are no colder to-day than they were in the past, that they go on and on, and if anybody took the trouble to investigate the nature and source of the press campaign since 1907, he would be irresistibly driven to the conclusion that if these gentlemen had had their way, members of the Federal Parliament would still be paid £400 a year, because no improvement of their salaries has even been lucky enough to secure the benediction of the press.

I refer to that matter of history because it is very important that we should understand the existence of this classical contest that has gone on between the members of Parliament who, if I may say so on behalf of all honorable members, have been elected by the people to sit in Parliament and to administer the government of the country, and those who, elected by nobody but themselves, undertake to assume control of the affairs of the country. It is a classical contest.

On this occasion I have followed the press campaign with great interest. I can

assure all honorable members that I have not lost much sleep over it, but I have followed it with a certain academic interest. I have become accustomed now—well, I did many years ago—to all those rather contemptuous expressions that are used by some newspaper critics. But on this occasion an unbridled attack—I should refer to it at once—has been led in Sydney by the “Sydney Morning Herald” and its somewhat curious satellites—I think that is a courteous term—and in Melbourne by the “Herald”. I want to make an attempt to assist public thought to achieve a balanced judgment in this matter. I know that from the point of view of the press that will be a futile attempt, but I hope that I will be understood by a good number of people in this country.

In the main, what people have learnt about this matter has been derived from newspapers such as the ones that I have mentioned, and I want to say something about the campaign of each of those two newspapers in plain terms and, I hope, with that restraint which characterizes me. I have a clear duty to my fellow members in this Parliament, and I am not unwilling to discharge it. I have a clear duty to the whole institution of Parliament to put this matter in its right perspective. Sir, I have referred to the classical contest between the press and Parliament. Who interprets public opinion? Who influences public opinion? Who gives effect to public opinion? Is it Parliament, freely elected, known man by man and woman by woman, and representative of the people? Or is it the press, self-elected, anonymous, and in some cases representative only of the wealth and whims of a few? In that contest Parliament must win if parliamentary government is to be preserved.

Those are preliminary remarks, and I hope that they will be regarded as by no means irrational. I believe that they go to the root of this matter. So now I shall look at this campaign, which has influenced so many people and, for all I know, has influenced so many honorable members. The line adopted by the Melbourne “Herald” has been almost impossible to follow, although on the whole it has done its utmost to whip up feeling against private members of the Federal Parliament. It has been almost friendly at times to the improvements now advised by the Martin committee

in Victoria but, of course, they were made in reference to the Parliament of one State, and therefore they have much more appeal to the Melbourne “Herald” than recommendations made with respect to the much more important Parliament of the nation.

It was, I think, on 18th January that I announced the appointment of a committee to inquire into parliamentary salaries and allowances. On 19th January, following the announcement of the appointment of that committee—an independent committee appointed to examine parliamentary salaries and allowances, a committee against which, and against any member of which, no word has been spoken or could be spoken to impugn their independence or their probity—the Melbourne “Herald” published a leading article. I am sure that honorable members would be grateful if I recalled the terms of that article to their minds. The Melbourne “Herald” stated—

In announcing the appointment of an independent committee to report on Parliamentary salaries and allowances, Mr. Menzies is choosing the fairest way of answering those members of the two Federal Houses who have been suggesting that another increase in their pay is merited. The principle of periodic and independent reviews is sound.

If rates are to be reviewed early in the three-year life of each Parliament, as Mr. Menzies suggests, it should follow that the findings of the committee are followed throughout this term, and are applied in their entirety.

Mr. Clyde Cameron.—Who said that?

Mr. MENZIES.—The Melbourne “Herald” on 19th January, 1959. Then it concluded by saying—

It is right that parliamentary service should be adequately rewarded, and that its expenses should be periodically reviewed. But restraint in demands for privileges, and a lead in accepting the umpire's decision, are expected from the nation's elected spokesmen.

These, Sir, were the words—on the whole, rather pious words. But who gave the lead in rejecting the umpire's decision? The same newspaper! When the report of the umpire was made, this very newspaper became highly critical and indeed almost vitriolic. So far from recommending that the umpire's decision should be taken, this very newspaper argued that there should not only be frank debate, which everybody welcomed, but far-reaching amendment. Oddly enough, the newspaper still said on 30th March of this year—

Sir Frank Richardson and his colleagues examined the whole question of parliamentary

rewards very closely. The higher rates they recommend for the Prime Minister, senior Ministers, and the Leader of the Opposition might well be justified. There is good reason to question some of the other increases.

When I read that, it was one of the few occasions in my life when I felt that I almost had a pat on the back—it was high time my emoluments were increased. I began to feel almost like the managing editor of a newspaper.

The statement would convey to any reader the impression that those who control the Melbourne "Herald" had a quarrel in particular with the salaries of private members and that there was no quarrel really with what was proposed for people like myself. But in the great campaign to lower the prestige of Parliament, and correspondingly to increase the authority of the press, this newspaper succeeded in contradicting its own attack. It has a representative at Canberra, who wrote and published, not only in the Melbourne "Herald" but in the "Courier-Mail" in Queensland, an article about the recommendations concerning myself, which up to that time I had thought were being rather pleasantly received. For complete dishonesty, this article will take a lot of beating. I want to say this quite plainly: It is high time that it was understood by some of these people that those who live by the sword are liable to perish by the sword.

This man made two points in particular. The first was that, under the recommendations, the Prime Minister is to be given a total salary of £10,000, but that as he will get an additional £4,000 odd in special allowances, he will be receiving more than the Prime Minister of Great Britain. This was put in headlines. As the writer well knew, that story was completely untrue. The Prime Minister of Great Britain does, I believe, get a net salary of £10,000 sterling, which I would have thought was a very modest salary for a man carrying his responsibilities in the world. But does the "Herald" suppose that he maintains No. 10 Downing-street and Chequers and discharges all his representational duties out of that salary? Of course not! Every child knows that other financial arrangements are made about these places and that substantial entertainment expenses are met on behalf of the Prime Minister of Great

Britain. However, it was thought fit, in order to stir up public opinion, to pretend, quite dishonestly, that by comparing my salary—or my projected salary, because I have not got it yet—and allowances with somebody else's salary, omitting his allowances, passion would be aroused.

A second aspect was developed by the same gentleman. It was a second fantastic untruth. He offered to drop a crocodile tear over the Governor-General. Sir, I am sorry to have to refer to this and I do so with the greatest goodwill to the distinguished Governor-General of Australia. This man dropped a crocodile tear. He said, "Isn't this terrible; the Prime Minister of Australia is to be given £10,000; that is all the Governor-General gets, and that is what he was getting in 1901". He even achieved the great skill of referring to it as a unique industrial anomaly. I do not need to tell my distinguished friend, the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Evatt), or anybody else who has been in office in this country, that it is quite true that the salary of the Governor-General has stood at £10,000 since 1901. It is equally true, though this writer suppressed it, that that salary is free of tax, whereas the Prime Minister's salary is, of course, like anybody else's, taxable.

It is also true that ever since 1901, instead of changing the salary itself, every government in succession has accommodated the Governor-General's office to the changes that occur by carrying on the Estimates more and more of the expenditure that the Governor-General has to incur. The total vote to-day of that kind is just on £50,000. I do not object to it; I think it is quite right. For the comparable items which might be related to the Prime Minister's allowance, the total would be certainly not less than £17,000 or £18,000. But the newspaper, so desperate to create a false impression in the public mind, set out to tell these two absolutely cracking lies in order to stir up public opinion.

Having said that—I hope with great moderation and restraint—I will turn to the other champion dealing with us—the "Sydney Morning Herald". Judging by recent experience, this newspaper understands the art of monopoly better than, perhaps, anybody else in the country. I

say this quite plainly and I hope that many thousands of its readers may hear or read what I say about it: It has conducted a completely vicious and misleading campaign. I admit that its reputation for accuracy has steadily declined in recent years—certainly whenever I have had the misfortune to be in the way. Its antipathy—I was going to say to my Government, but I think I should say to any government that happens to be in office—is well known. But, day after day, it has published leading articles on this matter. These articles have a singularly undergraduate quality in their thinking and expression, but at any rate they lose no opportunity to cry down the quality of the Federal Parliament. Sir, I hope I will be allowed to say this, and I hope that people will ponder over it: I have not observed that any of the rich men who control this newspaper have offered themselves for parliamentary service or have come out of their comfortable anonymity so that the people may see them and judge them.

One of the most unctuous opinions repeatedly expressed by this journal is that we should not seek to attract able men to Parliament by increasing salaries, since parliamentary service is a vocation to which men and women should not be lured by money. Sir, perhaps I can speak with some authority about this matter because I do not think my worst enemy would think I did not have some sense of vocation in this matter. My six years as Opposition Leader with a parliamentary salary of £1,000 for the most part and an Opposition leader's £400 a year with no travelling allowance or electorate expenses, cost me a substantial proportion of my savings—with the complete approval of this newspaper. Sir, I believe in Parliament as a vocation which involves sacrifices, sometimes of money, almost always of family life and of the helping of the future of children. The present recommendations for members will make none of them rich. They mean simply that they will not be or become so financially embarrassed as to have their public capacity affected.

But, Sir, I have always heard—I have been credibly informed if that is the right phrase—that the leaders of the press had a sense of vocation themselves sufficient to make them regard themselves as the Fourth

Estate. How do those gentlemen of the "Sydney Morning Herald" regard their own vocation? There is a quite simple test by which the general public can determine the good faith and merit of the "Sydney Morning Herald's" opinion. Let that newspaper publish on its front page in respect of its managing director—whose name I think is Henderson—his salary, the expenses of all kinds paid on his behalf by his company, a short summary of the benefits by way of concessional shareholdings which have come to him, and a precise amount of his superannuation benefits, both in terms of capital and income. Let them not weary in well-doing. So that comparisons may be fair and assist the judgment of their readers, let them also publish similar details in respect of their next two most highly paid executive or editorial officers. Then let them publish on the same page—and without benefit of interlarded comment—the corresponding figures with which, if they have read the Richardson report, they are quite familiar, for the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade of the National Government. The readers of the "Sydney Morning Herald" would then, Sir, have an opportunity of addressing themselves to the important question somewhat overlooked in this context: Which trio has the more responsible task in this nation?

Now, Sir, having said that, I want to turn to one or two other aspects of this matter. First of all, it has been said—and said by people of repute whose opinions I respect—that the time for these proposals is not opportune; that it may lead to some impact on the basic wage, or inflation or something of that sort. I respect that view. It is a circumstance which the Cabinet itself discussed very elaborately before we appointed a committee. All I want to say about it is this: The proposal to which effect is now being given is a proposal that the salary and allowances of members of this Parliament should be dealt with every three years, at the beginning of each Parliament, and that the decision should endure, except for some quite phenomenal or catastrophic circumstances, for the whole of the period of three years.

Perhaps it is overlooked that in some States the basic wage is adjusted on the cost of living every quarter, but in the Commonwealth jurisdiction there has, in effect, now

developed a practice of an annual review of the basic wage. Therefore, the basic wage or some aspect—some material aspect—of wages will be under examination every year, and therefore every year will be a year in which it is the wrong time to deal with the salaries and allowances of members of Parliament. We do not do it this year, but we do it next year. But next year, the same business is on. Honorable members will understand quite plainly that if you are to refuse to have parliamentary salaries and allowances dealt with because in the same year there are wage investigations, then parliamentary salaries and allowances will not be dealt with at all for many years to come. That is my answer to those who, quite honestly, feel that this is untimely. It always was untimely, by the way. I do not remember any occasion on which somebody did not find it possible to say that the time was not ripe. But a matter of this kind cannot be left indefinitely. It is not decent to say to members of this Parliament that year after year, whatever comes or goes, they are not to have their emoluments and their expenses adjusted. It would be a monstrosity.

Indeed, Sir, I think I ought to permit myself this remark: There are still a few people in Australia who look back to what they believe to be the good old days when members of Parliament were not paid at all. I say this as somebody who, I would have hoped, was notoriously not greedy on these matters: Unless there were payment of members of Parliament and that payment was adjusted from time to time in the light of the demands of members of Parliament—if we went back to the old days—there would be no Labour Party except by great sacrifices on the part of trade unions and people outside to enable them to come here. Payment of members of Parliament was one of the earliest reforms advocated in the nineteenth century, and a very good reform it was since it enables Parliament to be made up of a general cross-section of the country and not of people who are the paid representatives of some group and of people so well off that they do not need to be paid at all. That is not true parliamentary representation. We have in this House representation of every kind and class of activity in the country, and it is a good thing for Australia that that is so.

I apologize for being so long, but the time must not be begrudged that will enable the other side of this controversy to be made known.

Let me say something about the salaries and allowances that have been recommended for members. The committee has recommended an increase of £400 a year in the salaries. Now Sir, whether that figure is right or wrong is, after all, a matter of judgment after consideration of the facts. It is not a matter of prejudice. It is not a matter of guesswork. It ought to be a matter of judgment on the facts. It has nothing to do with principle; it has nothing to do with conscience. What the increase ought to be is a matter than can be determined only with a knowledge of the evidence on which the committee acted. How can we know what the evidence was? Honorable members of this House, of all parties, laid material before the committee and gave confidential information. They are not going to have that information published to the world.

Mr. Clyde Cameron.—I do not mind if my overdraft is published.

Mr. MENZIES.—No, but that is because your bank manager is familiar with it already. These things are not to be made matters of public notoriety. I have not seen the material put forward by any honorable member, nor has any newspaper writer. The committee saw this evidence, and the committee formed its judgment on it. Somebody might have said that the increase should be £200. I would have thought that in all the circumstances nobody could decently have suggested less than £200, having regard to the events that have occurred. Somebody might say £200; somebody else might say £250, and, indeed, somebody might say £500. The committee has formed its judgment and has said £400—and this is the recommendation, mark you, which has brought down the major volley of abuse, the recommendation for the increase for private members. It has been said, "I do not mind about the Ministers", and "Of course the Prime Minister ought to be paid more", but private members? No!

Somebody had the impertinence to say that this committee had sat secretly, that there was something furtive about the whole

business. Furtive! The committee was appointed and a public announcement made. The committee then sat. It advertised to the public that it would be glad to receive evidence from members of the public, either orally or in writing, and it invited every member of both houses of this Parliament, by circular, to offer such information as they cared to. Not only were various members of the public interviewed, at their own request, by the committee, but—and I state a conservative figure—no less than 1,500 written communications were received by the committee from persons other than members of Parliament. Every one of those communications was read; every one of them was laid before the committee. Therefore the committee had the material before it on which it could apply its mind to the decision. What it did was to set out to establish a standard which would enable men of ability and without private means to offer themselves to Parliament and to remain in Parliament. Does anybody quarrel with that as a standard? Does anybody in Australia want to have a national Parliament—remember that this is the great Parliament of the country—from which men of ability without private means will be excluded for financial reasons? The question has only to be put to answer itself.

Now, Sir, I have stated the position as regards salaries. Of course it has been said, not here but elsewhere, "The federal committee was hand-picked". Well, I suppose it was. I suppose every committee that is appointed, without being elected by somebody, is hand-picked. I suppose the newspaper editors and their right-hand men are hand-picked, since I have no reason to believe that they are elected by anybody. Therefore, if hand-picked means chosen, we plead guilty—they were chosen. But, as I said before, I have not read or heard of anybody sufficiently bold to accuse the three prominent citizens who sat on the committee of dishonesty or of indirect motives or of intellectual incompetence.

It is very interesting that the Victorian Government appointed a committee which recently made a report. I do not think there was one man on the committee who could be accused of being—what is the expression—a great business tycoon. They seemed to me to be well known, highly re-

garded, respectable, normal citizens, and they made a report. The interesting point is that, despite the material difference in responsibilities between the Parliament of the nation and a parliament of one State, that committee made recommendations certainly no less adequate than the ones that we are considering, and in some respects even more so. But I have not so far read any attack either on the membership or on the report of that committee.

Now, Sir, apart altogether from salaries, the Richardson committee made recommendations regarding increases in the electorate allowances of members. There has been an enormous amount of misleading comment on this matter. I just want to make one or two remarks about this aspect. I know that every honorable member is aware of these facts, but I am sure that many people are not. Of course this practice of publishing members' salaries and allowances, adding the two together and calling the result the salary, is a clever little trick.

Mr. Luchetti.—Dishonest.

Mr. MENZIES.—It is quite dishonest, quite fraudulent, but I find that people are misled by it. I wonder what would happen of some of the people who practice this little trick had their own expenses added on to their salaries and the totals published as their salaries. Dear me, I can hardly imagine the consequences of it! Of course, electorate expenses are granted in order to cover electorate expenses. They are granted to recoup a member of Parliament for the expenditure which he must incur if he is going to be a conscientious and competent representative of his electorate. Of course, the expenses vary from place to place. How can you do more than establish a sensible average in matters such as this? I will undertake to say that there are honorable members in this House, with large, rambling country electorates, who spend far more in attending to their electorates, going from place to place, driving their cars, paying their hotel bills, attending to their correspondence and paying postages, than they get under the existing allowances.

I thought the committee did a very sensible thing in regard to this matter. Realizing that all this argument about allowances was grossly misunderstood, it set out to

classify some of the items on which members have to spend money. It mentioned donations, subscriptions, accommodation, travelling expenses, postages and other matters. I am not going to take up time in reading that part of the report. I only hope that most people will ultimately read it. But, having looked at it and considered it, who are we to say that the sum that is calculated is wrong? How would I know? Take my own case, as Prime Minister, with a major responsibility for Cabinet decisions. How on earth would I know what the honorable member for Darling (Mr. Clark) has to spend, or the honorable member for Macquarie (Mr. Luchetti), or the honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Browne), in the course of a year in representing their particular electorates. The committee, I think, directed its mind to that with the greatest possible care, and it has made recommendations. Apparently, we are invited to reject these recommendations, not in favour of a carefully calculated sum but in favour of a mere guess, a mere uninformed guess, as to what the amount should be.

Now, Sir, the next point that I want to mention—it also has a bearing on this matter—was mentioned by the Richardson Committee in its report for, I think, the first time. It is very well for people to affect to sneer at members of Parliament—the very ones whom they elected to this place as the best available candidates not so long ago! But most members of Parliament have the great privilege of possessing a wife, and everybody who has sat in Parliament for any time at all knows that his wife works as hard as he does in the representation of the people. I marvel from time to time at the labours that are undertaken by our wives, some cynic may say in our interests, but I prefer to say in the interests of the discharge of our public duties. The committee has pointed this out. Is the point of view that that does not matter? How can the wife of a member of Parliament or a Minister discharge her public responsibilities and at the same time do what she would like to do about the bringing up and educating of her family? This is a matter of far more than money. This is the sacrifice that is made by people who go into Parliament, and the whole future of the sons and daughters of very many members of Parliament has been

affected by the fact that there has been no opportunity to give them the close parental consideration that would normally be given in the ordinary household. I do not want to be like some of these critics and convert everything into cash. I will content myself by saying that I think a parliamentary wife is worth something, and that it would be a great pity if a member of Parliament did not receive a degree of remuneration which enabled his wife to do these things in the public field while, at the same time, discharging her duties as a wife and as a mother.

I turn now to members' pensions. This committee did a valuable service in this respect because it pointed out—many honorable members more familiar with the details than I am may have realized it already, but it certainly pointed out to me, among others—that this parliamentary pensions scheme, so far from being something for which the taxpayer assumes complete responsibility is, in an uncommonly high degree contributory. You know how people are so willing to sneer about these things, saying, "Oh, yes, they have pensions and they pay practically nothing for them". That is a lot of nonsense. I have yet to hear of any superannuation scheme outside Parliament under which an employee, if we may so describe ourselves for that purpose, pays 10 per cent. of his salary into the superannuation fund. The committee pointed this out, and said—I am sure that nobody could seriously disagree with it—that therefore these pension benefits ought to be improved, that a slight increase in the payments by members would enable that improvement to be made, and that under anything short of abnormal circumstances, the fund would be, as it is to-day, extraordinarily solvent. I do not think it is very good English to say that something is "extraordinarily solvent", but it means, presumably, that there is a pretty substantial credit balance, thanks to members contributions. The present recommendations will still leave the parliamentary pensions scheme much more onerous to contributors than any outside scheme of which we have knowledge. But I do urge that the people should understand that although there has been a whipping up of opinion on this matter, the parliamentary pensions scheme is in fact one for which members themselves carry a degree of responsibility

greater than that which people in superannuation schemes in any other walk of life that I know of are called upon to carry.

One question that arises at once is whether the pension benefits should be made retrospective. I use the word rather loosely. The question is whether those who, having gone out of Parliament, are already drawing parliamentary pensions, should have the benefit of these improvements. There is no recommendation on that point by the committee. The Cabinet is of opinion that in these circumstances, as there will be additional contributions and additional benefits in future, the contributory pensions now being paid ought to remain on their existing footing and that the increased pensions ought to have only a future operation.

Now, Sir, having said that, I turn to the great problem of Ministers' salaries. I do not propose to say very much about it. No man is much of an advocate in his own cause; I very much prefer to do what I have been doing so far, that is, to advocate the cause of members of this Parliament. But, of course, Ministers' salaries were bound to be reviewed. I hope that everybody in Australia will understand that when the first Richardson committee was appointed and made its report in 1955 the Cabinet expressly excluded from its terms of reference the salaries of Ministers and parliamentary officers, because we felt that at that time in some particular circumstances we had to show a little restraint on this matter, without denying to members their right to a review. In the result, seven years of great economic changes and stresses and all kinds of circumstances have gone by since the salaries of Ministers in this Parliament were looked at, and I would think that somebody would need to be a pretty mean Australian to come along at this stage and say that they ought not to be reviewed on this occasion.

Sir, in the result, the committee has looked at this matter. It has recommended two things about Ministers, one an increase in salaries and the other a series of non-contributory pensions for Ministers with a minimum period of six years of service as Ministers and a maximum period of ten years or more. We have given a

great deal of thought to this. We shrewdly suspect that the committee regarded these two things as being in parallel and recommended them both, thinking that they supplemented each other. But we had many discussions and we quite freely reached the conclusion that to introduce these pension payments for people other than the one exception, that was originally established years ago in regard to a Prime Minister, would be wrong. We thought that it would be a good thing if, instead of having non-contributory pensions for Ministers, we applied ourselves to the task of seeing whether some suitable contributors' fund, quite distinct from the members' fund, could be worked out. Of course, that will take time. Therefore we say nothing more about it except this, that we are not legislating for non-contributory pensions for Ministers on this occasion.

Sir, I had no idea, when I stood up, that I was going to speak for an hour, and it seems fantastic to have to refer, before I sit down, to one magnificent item—motor cars—because the committee made a recommendation. I do not know why; it is not a very great matter. But it was to the effect that anybody who had been Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in this House for five long, weary years was to have for three years after he left Parliament the benefit of an official car, no doubt for public and official functions. Well, it is one of those little things that have attracted so much attention from some people that one would think it was almost earth-shaking. In fact, there has been so much argument about it that anybody who stands a chance of being a beneficiary from it would, if he is like me, sooner be without. Therefore, we drop it. It flutters to the ground like a dead leaf. It is gone. I hope that that knowledge will give everybody great comfort, and I part with it, myself, with no sorrow at all.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude with the hope that the Australian public, now having heard, in an imperfect way and by no means exhaustively, the case for their elected representatives in Parliament, will consider that case with care and will determine it with their usual judgment.