

DR. P.L. BAZELEY

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies

On 18th May, 1961 the Director-General of Health, Dr. W.D. Refshauge, acting under Section 56 of the Public Service Act, charged Dr. P.L. Bazeley, Director of the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories as following :

"That the said Percival Landon Bazeley between the tenth and seventeenth days of May, 1961, was guilty of improper conduct in his official capacity in that he, being an officer of the Public Service, made statements to the public press in criticism of, and attempted to promote opposition to, the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories Bill introduced in the Parliament by the Government".

The Director-General of Health suspended Dr. Bazeley as from the close of business on 19th May, 1961.

The charge against Dr. Bazeley and his suspension were notified to the Public Service Board on 18th May, 1961, and as no recommendation was made by the Director-General of Health that salary should not be paid to Dr. Bazeley during his suspension, the Board did not make an order under sub-section (4) of section 60 of the Public Service Act 1922-1960, depriving Dr. Bazeley of his salary during suspension.

On 26th May, 1961, Dr. Bazeley, in writing, denied the truth of the charge.

The Public Service Board therefore, on 7th June, 1961, appointed a Board of Inquiry consisting of :

The Honourable Mr. Justice Richard Moulton Eggleston,
Judge of the Commonwealth Industrial Court, Melbourne,
Chairman of the Board of Inquiry,

Sir Patrick Silvesta McGovern, C.B.E., and

Francis Patrick O'Grady, Esq., Deputy Director-General
of Posts and Telegraphs, Postmaster-General's
Department, Melbourne,

to inquire into the truth of the charge and to report to the Public Service Board its opinion thereon.

After two full days of evidence had been given before the Board of Inquiry, Dr. Bazeley admitted the truth of the charge and the Board of Inquiry, on 21st June, 1961, reported that, having regard to this admission and to the other evidence tendered, it found the charge to be proved.

The Board of Inquiry annexed to its report, at the request of Dr. Bazeley's Counsel, certain statements for the consideration of the Public Service Board. The Board of Inquiry said that it had not considered these statements in any way and was merely passing them on to the Public Service Board.

At the request of Dr. Bazeley the Public Service Board on 3rd July, 1961 received from Dr. Bazeley and his solicitor, oral and written representations which the Public Service Board might take into consideration when preparing the

recommendation it was required to make, under the Public Service Act, to the Governor-General. Similarly on 6th July the Director-General of Health was given an opportunity to put his views to the Public Service Board on matters relevant to the Board's recommendation to the Governor-General.

The Public Service Board has now reported to the Administrator of the Commonwealth, Sir Dallas Brooks, that it is of the opinion that the improper conduct proved in the case of Dr. Bazeley was a serious breach of a duty required of officers in a non-political career Public Service in the British and Australian tradition.

The Board recommended to the Administrator that Dr. Bazeley be removed from the Office of Director, Commonwealth Serum Laboratories and be reduced to an office in the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories having the designation of Senior Medical Officer, Grade 3, with effect on and from the date of the Order made by the Administrator in Executive Council.

The Administrator in Executive Council on 24th July made an order giving effect to the Public Service Board's recommendation. The contents of the Order have been conveyed to the Director-General of the Department of Health and through him to Dr. Bazeley.

In its consideration of the matter the Public Service Board has noted that at no time was there any suggestion that Dr. Bazeley had been guilty of misconduct in his professional capacity as a qualified medical or veterinary practitioner.

CANBERRA,

25th July, 1961.