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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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R E P O R T

from the

STANDING COMMITTEE

of

PRIVILEGES

relating to

A STATEMENT APPEARING IN THE SYDNEY  
NEWSPAPER DAILY TELEGRAPH OF THE 18th  
OCTOBER, 1951, CONCERNING A DECISION  
OF THE JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE,

together with

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee.

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EXTRACTS FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

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No. 9 of 28th June, 1951.

9. COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES.- Mr. Harrison (Vice-President of the Executive Council) moved, by leave, That Mr. Clark, Mr. Evatt, Mr. McDonald, Mr. McLeay, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Swartz and Mr. Turnbull be members of the Committee of Privileges; five to form a quorum.

Question - put and passed.

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No. 29 of 18th October, 1951.

2. PRIVILEGE - REFLECTION ON HOUSE COMMITTEE.- Mr. Speaker drew the attention of the House to a statement in the Sydney newspaper Daily Telegraph of the 18th October, 1951, concerning an alleged criticism by the Prime Minister at a party meeting of a decision of the Joint House Committee to restrict the use of the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms. Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table a copy of the paper containing the statement and showing the name of the printer and publisher.

Mr. Menzies (Prime Minister), made a statement in connexion with the matter.

Mr. Evatt (Leader of the Opposition), as a matter of Privilege, moved, That the statement in the newspaper be referred to the Committee of Privileges for report.

Question - put and passed.

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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

Parliament House, Canberra.

Tuesday, 23rd October, 1951.

Present:

Mr. McDonald (Chairman)

Mr. Clark	Mr. Swartz
Mr. McLeay	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Sheehan	

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.  
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The Entry in the Votes and Proceedings No. 29 of the 18th October, 1951, recording a Resolution referring to the Committee for report a matter of Privilege raised by Mr. Evatt, was read by the Clerk of Committees.

The Committee further deliberated.

The Committee adjourned.

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Wednesday, 7th November, 1951.

Present:

Mr. McDonald (Chairman)

Mr. Clark	Mr. Sheehan
Mr. Evatt	Mr. Swartz
Mr. McLeay	Mr. Turnbull

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Committee considered the matter referred to it on the 18th October, 1951, concerning a report appearing in the Sydney newspaper Daily Telegraph of the same date concerning a decision of the Joint House Committee.

The Committee deliberated.

Ordered - That the Chairman prepare a Draft Report for consideration at a later hour this day.

The meeting of the Committee was suspended.

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The meeting of the Committee was resumed.

The Chairman submitted a Draft Report.

The Draft Report was considered, and agreed to, as amended.

The Committee adjourned.

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## R E P O R T.

On the 18th October, 1951, Mr. Speaker (Hon. A.G. Cameron) drew the attention of the House to a statement (Appendix "A") appearing in the Sydney newspaper Daily Telegraph of the same date concerning an alleged criticism by the Prime Minister at a party meeting of a decision of the Joint House Committee to restrict the use of the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms.

2. The Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies, C.H., K.C.) then rose in the House and said -

"My attention was directed to this publication just as I came in this morning. It purports to give a report, not of what I have said publicly, but of what I have said at the party meeting. I want to say at once that I do not admit any jurisdiction over a party meeting. I am not prepared to concede that what honorable members say in a private party meeting, when they offer their views on matters which concern them, can be canvassed in this House. Apart from that, the report which proceeds from some garbled account given by somebody is inaccurate. It appeared in the press yesterday morning that the Joint House Committee had decided to prevent members of the press and ministerial staffs from securing meals in the parliamentary refreshment rooms. I attended a party meeting yesterday and I invited, very properly I think, our representatives on the Joint House Committee to tell us the ruling. .... We were then told that the recommendation would include a rule against the selling of bottled liquor to non-members. I think it is right to say that every one entirely agreed with that rule. That is the material respect in which the newspaper report to which reference has been made, is false. I then offered my own view, which I am prepared to offer on any appropriate occasion, that to deprive ministerial staffs of the facilities for obtaining a meal in this building will be to make those staffs unworkable in this place, and that to exclude the members of the press from obtaining meals in this building and to turn them out in a place in which the nearest restaurant is a long distance away, will be to make their own work impossible. I venture to say that I had a perfect right to express those views at a meeting of my own party and, if the matter is presented to the House in a form in which we can deal with it, I shall offer them once more."

3. The Leader of the Opposition (Rt. Hon. H.V. Evatt, K.C.), as a matter of privilege, then moved "That the statement in the newspaper be referred to the Committee of Privileges for report", and the motion was agreed to.

4. Of particular significance in the consideration of this matter is the fact that the statement reported to have been made by the Prime Minister was made within the privacy of the Party Room. The Committee recognizes the right of Members in such privacy to express themselves with the utmost freedom on any matter. Accordingly, it is the view of the Committee that the right of the Prime Minister to state his views in such circumstances cannot be questioned.

5. It is a fact, however, that the matter proceeded further and that the alleged criticism of the decision of the House Committee, attributed to the Prime Minister, was published in the Daily Telegraph. The Prime Minister has stated that the report is inaccurate; that in one material respect the report is false. The means by which this newspaper obtained its information concerning the private proceedings of the Liberal Party Meeting has no relation to privilege; it may be that a breach of confidence is involved, but whether or not this is so, the publishers of the paper, knowing that the report emanated from a private meeting, must accept responsibility for its publication.

5.

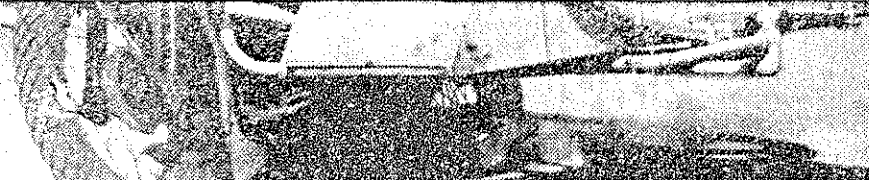
6. This newspaper publication has been closely examined by the Committee. It is definitely a severe criticism of the decision of the House Committee and the inferences to be drawn from the publication border on an insult to members of that Committee. At the same time, the publication does not contain any allegation or suggestion of dishonest or improper conduct by the House Committee or its members in the performance of their Parliamentary duties.

7. The Committee has reached the unanimous conclusion that, while it feels compelled to express its disapproval at this publication, it is of the opinion that it does not amount to a contempt and therefore does not constitute a breach of privilege.

Allan McDonald.

*Allan McDonald*  
CHAIRMAN.

Parliament House,  
Canberra, 7th November, 1951.



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN Signal Corps motor cyclists practised trick riding at the Sydney Showground yesterday for this year's Army Tattoo. The Tattoo will be held on November 1, 2, and 3.

# P.M. ON "SENSELESS" HOUSE RULE

CANBERRA Wed. — The Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) today criticised the Parliamentary House Committee's decision to stop sales of bottled liquor at Parliament House to non-members and to curtail food services.

Mr. Menzies described the decision as "most senseless, ill-considered, and provocative."

The Committee has decided that the Parliamentary bars will no longer supply a ration of bottled liquor to non-members of Parliament who work in Parliament House.

It has also decided that from January 1, the refreshment rooms will cease supplying meals to the Press, and to departmental and Ministerial staffs.

At the House of Representatives tomorrow, the Speaker (Mr. Cameron), a member of the Committee, will report the committee's decision to members.

The decision will stand unless the House passes a motion upsetting it.

In the lobbies tonight Liberal members predicted that Mr. Menzies would move tomorrow that the House should disagree with the Committee's decision.

Mr. Menzies made his

comments at a meeting of the Liberal Party.

He told the meeting that the Committee should reconsider its decision.

Mr. Menzies said that members of the Press Gallery and Ministerial staffs, particularly, should not be forced to travel long distances for meals.

He said that often he had to ask his own staff to work into meal hours.

That was possible only because they could get a quick meal in Parliament House.

## Inquiry urged

One of the reasons the Committee has given for its decision is that the serving of meals and the selling of liquor to non-members has contributed materially to losses in the refreshment rooms.

Several members urged at the Party meeting that Parliament should appoint a special committee "to inquire into the apparent rackets in bottled liquor" sold in the bars.

The members said that there seemed to be evidence that "something was radically wrong" when the profits were so small on the large turnover each year.

The Parliamentary Privileges Committee today wrote to Mr. Alan Reid.

The Committee asked Mr. Reid to appear before it on Tuesday, October 23, to be examined about an article he wrote in the Sydney Sun.

The article charged some Members of Parliament with having rushed the Parliamentary Members' bar, immediately after Budget announcements, to buy goods on which sales tax rates had been increased.

Mr. Reid said tonight that he would appear before the Committee.

## ALAMEIN DAY CEREMONY

The 9th Division Command will hold its annual Alamein Day Commemoration at the Cenotaph tomorrow.

There will be a reunion dinner at the Sydney Town Hall afterwards.

Tickets are available at 15/- through unit associations, or the secretary, at 39 Martin Place (BW7273).

...The Government should:

- Exempt industries vital to the Australian economy from reduction in company depreciation allowances for the first year.
- Increase the yield of capital securities on the loan market.
- Consider getting an overseas loan.

He said: "It is conceivable that the trend of world affairs will make a considerable elasticity in our defence allocations necessary."

"We should be careful to see that we do not throw idle through taxation some production facilities which we might later need for our defence programme."

Mr. Downer (Lib., S.A.) said the provisions for company taxation might threaten some small companies with extinction.

He appealed to the Government to deal leniently with cases of hardship from small companies.

Mr. Downer said he favored the imposition of a compulsory loan equivalent to the 10 per cent. increase in income tax.

...The official Mr. J. J. Kelly, an administrative officer of the Ministry of Shipping, made the report early this month.

In it he said the condition of Newcastle Harbour "could imperil the defence of the Commonwealth in a future war."

In his letter Mr. Cahill said that either Mr. Kelly had been misled or was "not sufficiently experienced to grasp the real significance of what he saw or heard."

Limitation of loading obtained only at Steelworks berths for such ships as Yampi and similar class vessels.

Mr. Cahill said the State Government had taken important steps to deal with situation of the harbor.

These included:

- Construction and commissioning of new dredging plant.
- Placing of orders for extra plant.
- Letting of a contract to an overseas firm for dredging 2,000,000 cubic yards of silt from the harbor.



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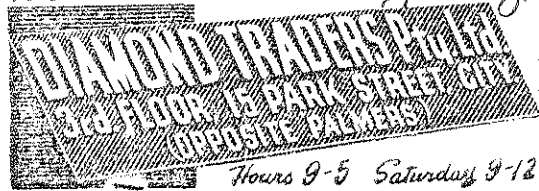
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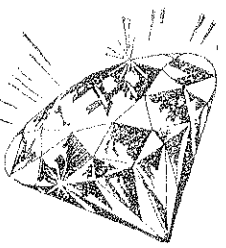
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## g bricks

rail of about 2000 ft of a factory wall

car flew past me. "Several bricks hit me on the legs.

"Luckily, there was a lull in traffic along Botany Road which is normally very busy.

"Several motorists had to go for the brakes to avoid running into the debris."

Bricks and mortar, a foot deep across Botany Road, held up traffic for about 30 minutes.