Three different matters arose in the House during this last week about which I would like to comment.

The first of these was the States Grants Bill 1956 which authorises the payment to South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania of £18.3M. This grant to the claimant States is based upon the general principle of financial need. The Grants Commission recognises the fact that the States that are large in area and small in population are far more difficult and expensive to service and to govern than a small compact State with a relatively high population like Victoria. For example, the number of people per road mile is less - it is far harder to get electricity to the further corners of those States. In general, the duties and obligations of the State Governments in the claimant States, i.e., in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, are far more difficult to carry out than they are in New South Wales and Victoria.

There is another powerful reason why we in the richer States must subsidise development than the others. Australia will only become secure for the future if development throughout the Commonwealth is balanced. It is no use having a rich highly developed Victoria if other areas are left sparse and unpopulated. This fact, I believe, is so evident and so clearly recognised by every Australian at the present time that it does not need re-emphasis. As Victorians we have an obligation to the Commonwealth of Australia. We can only answer our obligations if we play our part, which we are able to do because of our financial supremacy, in the development of Australia as a whole.

The same considerations very largely apply to the vexed and difficult question of roads.

The Prime Minister introduced and gave the Second Reading Speech on the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Bill 1956. This Bill does not make any changes in the constitution, organisation or functions of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation but it does put the members of that Organisation on a secure footing. This Service was first begun by Mr. Chifley on the 16th March, 1949, and only minor changes have been made by the present Government. Very largely the original charter introduced by Mr. Chifley is still the basis of the Organisation. Without statutory provision for the
Security Service the men employed in that Service can be dismissed at
pleasure. The Government believes that the men in such important and
vital positions should be given security of tenure in their jobs as are
other Public Servants, although for obvious reasons the Security Service
must operate outside the framework of the Public Service Act.

The Australian Security Service is an organisation devoted
to the obtaining of intelligence relating to espionage, sabotage and
subversion. It has no police function. It is not concerned with
enforcement of law. It can't take or institute any executive action
which is not of a purely advisory nature.

In a very real sense though, as the Prime Minister said, it
does constitute a fourth branch of the Defence Force and it is only
reasonable that this Service so vital in present times should be given
real security of tenure for its officers, that is the purpose of the
Bill introduced by the Prime Minister.

The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs tabled a report
that should be of great interest to all New Australians. It is not
known yet whether the Government will, or will not, adopt the
recommendations set out in the report, but broadly they are -
That the extradition treaties with certain Communist countries should
be denounced. There are treaties with Albania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary,
Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia which would be affected. The reason for
this is that under the guise of present extradition treaties various
Communist countries have tried to have immigrants to Australia sent
home for purely political reasons. The present Government has said it
will not allow this and if there is any suggestion of a political
motive in seeking the extradition of any particular person then that
person will be allowed to stay in Australia. However, it is possible
that a weak Government in the future would not act in the same way.
Therefore, if these extradition treaties are denounced, it should ease
the minds of New Australians, some of whom may fear that Communism will
try to pursue them even in this country.
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