

## REMOVAL OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

### Will Parliament be Consulted?

Members of the Opposition fear that the passage of a line on the Estimates as a first instalment for a new Government House will be taken by the Government as the approval of Parliament to remove Government House from its present position. They desire that the matter should be dealt with by Bill, so that both Houses may be consulted. In the Assembly on Tuesday the Hon. A. H. Peake asked whether the Government was going to be satisfied simply with the passing of the preliminary sum on the Estimates, or whether it was going to seek the approval of Parliament by Bill before entering upon the project?

The Premier said the fact that the amount had been placed on the Estimates did not mean that anything was going to take place immediately. The idea was that the money was there if the necessity arose. More had been made out of the matter than there had been any necessity for. There was nothing under consideration at present regarding the removal of the residence. The money had been placed on the Estimates, so that should a suitable property be offered, the Government might be in a position, without any great expense, of accepting it.

The Hon. A. H. Peake asked whether he was to understand that the Government was going to seek the approval of Parliament to the proposed shifting of Government House, or did the Premier regard it purely as an administrative act; also, if the line on the Estimates were passed, would the Government then consider it was authorized to shift the site of Government House to where some enterprising agent might find a property suitable for the purpose?

The Premier—I don't know anything about that. Since I have been Premier I have done no business with any private agents, whatever they may be. When it becomes a vital question for the removal of Government House, I will get the best legal advice of my Attorney-General. If he says it is constitutional, I will bring in a Bill for the purpose, and if he says it is not, I will not.

Mr. Chesson—You will always do the right, won't you?

The Premier—The sanction of the House will always be got.

In reply to Mr. Rudall, the Premier said nothing definite had been done in relation to the purchase of a new Government House. For the last year or two it had been recognised that the present site was too valuable to be left as the Government Residence, and that the building should be used for other purposes. The Government, however, had nothing before it as to what was to be done with the building on its removal. If the Government had money or means when it had considered the position it would launch out.

The Hon. A. H. Peake asked the Premier would he undertake not to buy a property until Parliament had empowered the Government to shift Parliament House.

The Premier said he had told the member there was nothing before the Government. If he found it was the duty of the Government to introduce a Bill for the purpose it would be introduced.

The Hon. A. H. Peake—Will you buy another property?

The Premier—If I find out I am justified in buying a property if it is offered to me, I will buy it. It will be submitted to this House, and if the House passes it, I will purchase it. I will get the best legal advice possible. I will get advice from the Attorney-General.

The Hon. A. H. Peake—You will have to go outside for it. Continuing, he said the Premier had not answered his question. He wished to know whether, before the Government did anything in connection with the removal of Government House, he would give Parliament—and by that he meant both Houses—an opportunity of expressing itself regarding the proposal? It was all a question of finance.

Mr. Rudall—Before the Government buys the fresh land you mean?

The Hon. A. H. Peake—Yes. The point about which he desired information was concerning the sum on the estimates. Was it the intention of the Government to use that amount should some enterprising agent present a property, and say it was a good thing for the Government to buy, or was it the intention of the Government to get the permission of Parliament before doing anything?

The Premier said there was an amount on the Estimates and members on the other side would be able to discuss it, and approve or disapprove. If the line was passed the sanction of Parliament would be given for the purpose.

The Hon. A. H. Peake—Oh, no.

## READY FOR FLIGHT.

### The Antarctic Monoplane.

#### Passages Booked by Ladies

"Now she's right!" The speaker was Lieut. Watkins, the airman of the Mawson expedition, who on Tuesday afternoon put the finishing touches to the rehabilitated monoplane, which will be an important factor in the equipment of the expedition to the ice regions of the south. Two huge cases in which the machine had been packed in England were landed from the mail steamer Macedonia on Saturday, and conveyed by lorries to the Cheltenham Park Racecourse, where arrangements have been made for public flights. Lieut. Watkins and his assistants began unpacking at 9 o'clock on Sunday morning. Evening saw that part of the task over, but it had been accomplished only by genuine hard labour, which one can readily comprehend when one glances at the solidly built, well-framed, zinc-lined packages. On Monday the machine was set up under cover of a large canvas marquee, situated on the north-eastern end of the course, and the best part of Tuesday was occupied in fitting out and re-adjusting the numerous parts of the mechanism. It was intended by Lieut. Watkins to have had a trial flight during the afternoon, but a strong south-east wind induced him to postpone the initial ascent until a more favourable opportunity. The engine had in the meanwhile been tested, first under the marquee, and then in the open with satisfactory results. As near as possible all the adjustments had been made as they were before the monoplane was shipped in London, but Lieut. Watkins desired to take no risks of damaging the machine in a descent in a high wind. The coming down apparently is the difficult part of flying, and he wanted to be assured that everything was in perfect condition before subjecting the monoplane to a severe test. The necessary "tuning up" can be accomplished only by actual flight, and the only man who can definitely tell when that is accomplished is the operator.

#### —The Machine.—

A remarkable-looking machine is the "Mawson" aeroplane. It resembles nothing so much as a huge dragon fly. "The latest thing in monoplanes," is how Lieut. Watkins describes it, "and eminently fitted for its projected mission in the high latitudes of the south polar regions." It is known as the R.E.P., the initials of the maker's name, Robert Ernault Peltrie, one of the most famous inventors and designers of heavier-than-air flying machines in Europe. As she stands with her skids and wheels on the ground, she measures 36 ft. from tip to tip, and is 44 ft. across from plane to plane. The total weight is 1,200 lb., including the engine, which turns the scale at 300 lb. One notices the strength of construction. The undercarriage consists of crossed, hollow steel tubing, interlaced with 14-gauge piano wire, each wire having a breaking strain of 5 tons. This runs the whole length of the machine. The plane wings are supported by steel tubing and steel wires of marvellous strength. All the movable parts have been made on ball bearings to afford the minimum of friction. Each of the plane wings is about 30 ft. long and 8 ft. wide. These are constructed of scantlings, covered with "Continental" fabric, resembling a fine linen. The two tail planes, each measuring 6 ft. by 12 ft., the rudder at the stern, the stabilizing fin, and the whole of the body, in fact, are clothed with the same material. For use in the antarctic sledges have been specially prepared. These are necessarily longer and heavier than the skids which are ordinarily attached to the undercarriage, and are made of ash, faced with phosphor-bronze, to give them a smooth-running surface. The engine, which, after all, is the mainspring of the machine, has five cylinders, and at 1,250 revolutions per minute, it develops 64 h.p. It gives a direct pull on the spring balance of 500 lb. The laminated wooden propeller measures 8 ft. in diameter, with a 5 ft. 2 in. pitch. The equipment includes a spare one, as well as two spare cylinders and duplicate parts. Seating accommodation is provided in the machine for a passenger in addition to the operator, but a second passenger may be carried with slight discomfort, and with three average-weight persons, oil, petrol, and other accessories, the machine has a lifting power of about 700 lb. This, says Lieut. Watkins, she has accomplished with absolute ease. The engine is started with an accumulator, switched on with the magneto afterwards. Seated in the body of the machine, the airman operates the rudder bar with his feet, and an upper bar

operates the wing warping, for lateral balance, elevation, and depression—fore and aft, for going up and down, and upwards for lateral balance. Enough oil and petrol are carried to cover a distance of 300 miles. To prevent undue jolting in alighting the undercarriage runs in piston fashion up the main supporting steel tubing.

#### —Successful Engine Trial.—

During Tuesday afternoon's trial the engines made 1,100 revolutions per minute without being opened out, and the noise of the whirling propeller, and of the un-silenced exhausts, was like one continuous explosion. "If that propeller going at 400 revolutions were to strike an onlooker's hand," said Lieut. Watkins, "it would sever it as a guillotine would, but at 1,100 revolutions it would probably cause no more than a bruise, but the propeller would smash into thousands of pieces."

#### —Flight Passages Booked.—

Intense interest is being taken in the monoplane. Each day since its arrival at Cheltenham it has been viewed by scores of people, and Lieut. Watkins has already booked passages for at least a dozen persons who want to experience the sensation of flying through the air. Five of this number are ladies.

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Mr. C. H. Madigan, the Rhodes scholar, of Adelaide, has been granted leave from Oxford University to accompany Dr. Mawson's expedition to the antarctic. He will return to South Australia by the R.M.S. Orvieto.