

Address by Dr H. V. Evatt

Transcript of Dr H. V. Evatt
Parliamentary Speech - Flags Bill 1953
House of Representatives
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The Opposition supports this bill. The passing of a statute which defines and describes the Australian national flag is an important event in the history of the nation. The flag that is now Australia's national flag, which is based on the Blue Ensign, is a very beautiful flag. It is probably the most beautiful flag in the world. It incorporates Union Jack, which indicates the integral association of Australia with the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth of Nations. I do not think that there can be any objection to the other provisions of the bill. Although action to implement my suggestion cannot be taken now, I suggest that on some future occasion steps should be taken in order to prescribe rules, similar to those that are prescribed by the statutes of the United States of America, for the flying of the Australian national flag. The American statutes provide, for instance, the manner in which the flag must be displayed and the days on which it must be displayed. They provide that when the flag is used on a speaker's platform it shall be displayed above and behind the speaker. They also provide that the flag should form a distinctive feature of the ceremony of unveiling a statue or monument but that it should never be used as a covering for a statue or monument. All of those provisions, of which I have mentioned only one or two, are designed to give to the flag of the United States of America a special significance. One of the most impressive features of the immigration scheme which was introduced when the honourable member for Melbourne (Mr. Calwell) was Minister for Immigration was the ceremony that was performed when new Australians were admitted to citizenship and when the Australian flag was displayed with great prominence and with a great effect upon our new fellow citizens. I understand that that procedure is still being followed. I could suggest other matters that are similar to those to which I have referred in relation to the American flag: It is sufficient to say that Australia is no longer marching to nationhood. It is a nation in its own right and a nation that is integrally associated with Britain and the British Commonwealth of nations. There should be special provision of the kind to which I have referred. The Government should not be content with the passing of this legislation, but it should protect the flag in the same way that such countries as the United States of America protect their flags.