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1901-11-05

House of Representatives

The Clerk having informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker,
The Deputy Speaker took the chair at 7.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PETITION

Mr. R. EDWARDS presented a petition from 66 cane farmers of Johnstone River district, Queensland, praying that the House would cause inquiries to be made into the working of the sugar industry in that State before placing on the statute book any enactment which would prejudice the industry, and above all preserve intact the first principles of the Constitution of the Empire, and hold sacred their homes and means of livelihood.

Petition received and read.

Motion by R. Edwards proposed -

That the petition be printed.

Mr McDONALD

- I do not propose to raise any objection to the printing of this petition, but I would point out that its full text has already been published, and that a number of papers containing it have been sent to members of this House. I think that every member of this House has had one.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- I have not received one.

Mr McDONALD

- I think it is rather a waste of money to print the petition, but if the honorable member for Oxley desires it to be printed I shall raise no objection.

Mr R EDWARDS

- The petition has not been officially placed before this House, and, as it is the desire of the petitioners that that should be done, I think it would be very undesirable to place any obstacle in the way of printing it.

Mr McDONALD

-PATERSON. - I do not know whether it was due to the bad acoustic properties of the chamber, but I heard very little of the petition when read.

Mr McDonald

- I rise to a point of order. The honorable member for Oxley has already replied, and I understand that the rule is that after the reply of the mover of a motion no one can speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.- I was about to ask the honorable member for Oxley whether he intended to take any action on the petition, as otherwise I could not accept his motion. The standing orders provide - No member shall move that a petition be printed unless he intends to take action upon it and informs the House thereof, and that such action will be taken within fourteen days.

Mr R EDWARDS

- As I intimated during debate on the second reading of the Pacific Islands Labourers Bill, it is my intention at a later stage to move that the Bill be referred to a select committee. I now desire to inform the House that I intend to take action on the petition within fourteen days.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

QUESTIONS

COPIES OF COMMONWEALTH STATUTES

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Mr L E GROOM

- I desire to ask the Attorney-General, without notice, if his attention has been drawn to the remarks of the Chief-Justice of Queensland, that, although he is supposed to receive copies of Acts of Parliament, he had not yet received copies of the statutes of the Commonwealth Parliament, and whether it is his intention to arrange that the Chief Justices of Australia shall be supplied with copies of the Commonwealth statutes.

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

- I have taken steps which I understood had led to the Chief Justices of the various States being supplied with copies of the Commonwealth statutes. I shall inquire into the reasons for any omissions.

ERSKINEVILLE AND DARLINGTON POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICES

Mr G B EDWARDS

asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

What reasons were given in departmental reports for closing the post and telegraph offices at Erskineville and Darlington, in the State of New South Wales, and proposing the substitution of mere letter-receiving boxes for the postal facilities hitherto enjoyed by these populous suburbs ?

Minister (without portfolio)

Sir PHILIP FYSH

- The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows : -

The reasons given in the departmental reports of the New South Wales inspector for closing the post and telegraph offices at Erskineville and Darlington are as follows: - Erskineville - As Erskineville office is only about 35 chains from Newtown office on the west, and about 44 chains from Alexandria on the east, it could be closed without any serious inconvenience to the public. A letterbox might be erected in the locality of the present post-office, and a licensed stamp vendor appointed. Darlington - As the Darlington office is only 30 chains from the George-street west Post-office, and as the maintenance of the two offices so close together is unjustifiable, and seeing that the whole extent of the Darlington borough is within three-quarters of a mile of the George-street west post office, I am of opinion that the Darlington post-office is unnecessary.

REFUNDS OF DUTIES

Mr BATCHELOR

asked the Minister of Trade and Customs, upon notice -

) Whether it is true that the Government -

refuse to undertake to refund to importers the difference in case the duties collected are higher than the duties finally imposed by Parliament ?

oblige contractors for Government supplies to undertake to lower their prices to the extent of the difference between the duties collected and the duties finally imposed ?

If the answer to (a)) be in the affirmative, what is the reason for the policy ?

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow : -

The Government cannot give any undertakings in this matter on account of the difficulty of securing the benefit of any rebate to the person really affected by the duty.

I have no knowledge of this matter, but it will be further inquired into.

WOODVILLE POST-OFFICE

Mr BATCHELOR

asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

What is the cause of the delay in erecting the Post-office at Woodville, in the State of South Australia ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

- The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows : -

A sum of money is included in the loan expenditure to cover the cost of erecting a building for the post and telegraph office at Woodville in the State of South Australia. As soon as parliamentary sanction is given the work will be proceeded with.

TRANSFER OF DAWES BATTERY TO NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr WATSON

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether the Premier of the State of New South Wales has made any representations to the Prime Minister with respect to the re-transfer of the Dawes Battery site to the State Government for park purposes ?

If so, what is the decision of the Federal Government in the matter?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow : -

Yes.

Not yet given.

PACIFIC ISLANDS LABOURERS BILL

Second Reading

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Debate resumed (from 11th October, vide page 6007) on motion by Mr. Barton,

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. HIGGINS(Northern Melbourne).After three weeks of theorising about the Tariff we have come to business at last, and a very serious business it is. I understand that to some people this Bill appears as involving the destruction of the sugar industry, whilst to others, and apparently the majority, it removes a great danger to our national character, and means the removal of a great hindrance to the achievement of our national hopes. I have felt that we representatives of the southern States ought to be chary and slow about expressing our opinion - that we should be listeners rather than talkers, learners rather than teachers. At the same time, it is one of the most cherished desires of the workers of Victoria that we should have a white Australia.

Mr McDonald

- It is the same in Queensland.

Mr HIGGINS

- I have been strongly affected personally by the ideal of a white Australia, and by the hope of being able to keep away from our shores for ever the black trouble which has afflicted other civilizations. It has always seemed to me that the intermingling of the black and white races involves the degeneration of both - it is injurious not only to the white races, but also to the black races. At the same time I have felt that "curse of scanty knowledge" which was referred to by the honorable member for Brisbane when the Bill was last before the House. I do not think any of us would presume to dictate to those who know the true conditions under which kanaka labour is employed, and I have listened to every word that has been said during this debate. It is one of those matters on which I have felt that we ought to listen to the minority. I have had personal experience of the bitterness of being one of a minority to whom the people would not listen, and I have determined that, so far as I am concerned, those honorable members in the minority on this question, who have so pluckily and honestly stuck to their guns, shall get a full hearing and due consideration. I am anxious to allow any theory I have to be corrected by those who have practical knowledge of, and who have been brought into personal contact with, the kanakas in Queensland ; but I am quite sure that the honorable member for Brisbane will agree with me that the personal knowledge we should seek is not merely the knowledge which comes from the bank parlour, or from inspecting plantation returns, or seeing their bank pass-books. In the determination of this question we should not look for the judgment of those who merely know what it means from behind a brandy and soda and a long cigar in a city club. I particularly desire to ascertain what those men think who and whose wives, whose sisters, and whose children have to feel the effect upon labour conditions of the presence of the kanakas. In looking for the judgment of these people, I observed in a reprint from the Brisbane Courier, a passage which describes the places in which the sugar plantations are most numerous. It describes the large coastal districts, represented by such towns as Childers, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Bowen, Mackay, Cairns, and Port Douglas. I think honorable members would be acting wisely if they inquired what those who represent these big centres in Queensland say. The two districts first mentioned, namely, Childers and Bundaberg, are represented by the honorable member for Wide Bay. I think there is no doubt as to his views upon this matter. Rockhampton is represented by the honorable member for Capricornia, whose views, I also understand, are undoubted upon this matter.

Mr Page

- They are very pronounced.

Mr HIGGINS

- They are very pronounced, I believe. The other four districts are represented by the honorable member who occupies a seat in the corner, the honorable member for Herbert. To whose opinion should we look more than to that of honorable members who represent the sugar districts ? They represent not merely their own views, but we must assume those of a majority of their constituents. If ever there was an

election in Queensland at which this question of black labour was made the crucial test, it was the Federal election which took place a few months ago. Up to the present, therefore, I have had no occasion to alter my theory. It was a theory based upon second-hand information, but it is strengthened by the fact that the people of the sugar districts, through their representatives, speak as with one mind in favour of the stoppage of the kanaka traffic. In this House there are nine representatives of the State of Queensland, seven of whom are in favour of the immediate stoppage of that traffic. I do not know what more evidence can be required. Those honorable members who are opposed to this Bill, and whose courage, pluck, and honesty we all admire, represent, I understand, the Brisbane district.

Mr McDonald

- They advocate only an extension of time.

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Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- The sugar districts have never had an opportunity of speaking at all. The honorable member for Wide Bay represents the diggings.

Mr HIGGINS

- The miners are against the kanaka traffic, and in such large numbers that they are determined that they will not have it at any cost. The miners are not fools. They are as intelligent as any other class of electors. The fact that the miners vote in such large numbers for the stoppage of the kanaka traffic should, I think, authorize us in acting.

Mr McDonald

- Fifty odd constituencies in Queensland out of 61 declared against kanaka labour.

Mr HIGGINS

- We have been asked to be generous to Queensland. That is what I wish to be. Seeing that Queenslanders at the general elections of 1883, and again in 1888, declared in favour of the stoppage of the kanaka traffic, what am I to say to them? I understand that the worst of all systems of plural voting is in vogue in Queensland. But it could not be brought into play at the recent federal election. The explanation of the fact that the State Parliament of Queensland appears to return a majority in favour of the retention of kanaka labour is simple enough. An elector resident in Brisbane can vote for a candidate in the district of Carpentaria.

Mr Fisher

- For sixty-one electorates.

Mr HIGGINS

- Bad as is the plural voting system in Victoria the plural voters have to record their votes in their districts.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- At the Commonwealth election a man could exercise only one vote.

Mr HIGGINS

- That is the reason why Queensland returned seven members as against two in favour of the abolition of the kanaka traffic. I admit that there are many vested interests which have to be considered. It is not the desire of any honorable member of this House to unnecessarily interfere with vested interests. There is no doubt that the storekeepers who supply the kanakas with ribbons, knives, &c., and the shippers who trade with them, are all interested in this traffic. We cannot interfere with a big industry which has been growing up for so long, without touching a number of subsidiary industries. It is just like knocking down a big tree in the forest - a number of small trees fall with it. I have carefully read all the objections which I can find against this Bill, and I regret to find that attempts have been made in some quarters to draw improper issues across the trail. One writer, whose opinions I recently read, stated that we cannot have a white Australia because we have black aborigines. I can only say that it is not the intention of those who vote for this Bill to interfere with the native inhabitants of this land. I feel quite certain that they will do anything in their power to see that justice is done to the aborigines of this continent.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- That is a paradox.

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Mr HIGGINS

- I hope it is a paradox which is true. I have heard of people who affect a hyper-religious tone in regard to

this question, and who urge that we should consider the stranger within our gates. To me the point is whether we should allow these strangers to come within our gates. I quite recognise that we should consider them in a Christian spirit when once they are here. But the question which faces us is, is Northern Australia to be peopled by white or by coloured races? You cannot have both. There is a Gresham law as to human beings, as well as to money - the bad money drives out the good, the inferior race displaces the superior. I remember that in 1893, the New South Wales Parliament passed an Act making bank notes a legal tender, which was not the law in Victoria. When I was giving gold for change, I was told by the person with whom I was dealing - "I have not seen a piece of gold for two or three months." In that case all the gold had gone to Melbourne, but the paper money had been kept in Sydney. On the very same principle, if we allow the black man to get a footing in the northern part of Australia, the white man cannot, and will not, be able to do so. It is not a mere matter of the sugar industry ; it is a question whether Northern Australia shall be peopled by white men or not. I feel convinced that people who are used to a high standard of life - to good wages and good conditions - will not consent to labour alongside men who receive a miserable pittance, and who are dealt with very much in the same way as slaves. I also want to be generous to the kanakas themselves. Some of the pamphlets which are given to us say - "Ok, do not be unkind to the kanakas ; allow them to come under the Christianizing influence of the Queenslander ; allow them to come within the scope of the churches and chapels and to get civilized." It so happens that I have here a letter written by a missionary in West Tanna, from which I shall read a few extracts -

Labour schooners have been doing their deadly work, and many of our lads and young men have gone, in too many cases, to their death.

Mr. Macdonald-Paterson. - What date is that?

Mr HIGGINS

- August, 1901. The missionary further says -

The mortality among the kanakas in Queensland is simply appalling. But the evil does not end there. The fresh young blood is sucked out of the islands by these labour vessels. Family supports are taken away, and the families rapidly decay. I know villages which have gone to pieces through this cause. This labour traffic, stained with the hearts' blood of the people, has done more than all other causes to depopulate these islands, and it has been aided in its dire work by their trade in firearms, a trade which has lined the pockets of British as well as French and other traders with ill-gotten gains. A third prolific cause has been the introduction of European diseases among the natives by it. Our hearts cry out, "Oh, Lord, How Long?"

Then he says further on -

Since this kanaka labour traffic began, it and its evils have swept away more than the half of the once large population of the New Hebrides, and other groups.

He also says -

The arguments for its continuance in Queensland are just the same that American planters used there for the continuance of slavery, but America flourished and prospered more than ever after the curse of its slavery was swept away, and no doubt so will Queensland after the dark blot of its kanaka labour traffic has been suppressed.

Mr McDONALD

- Paterson. - America had the black population left.

Mr HIGGINS

- And so much the worse for America. I have seen a little of America, and I can say that that country, more especially the Southern States, would have been ten times better off if the negroes had not been left there. There are no conditions under which degeneracy of race is so great as those which exist when a superior race and an inferior race are brought into close contact.

Mr McDONALD

- Paterson. - And so it would have been better for Queensland if she had never had the blacks.

Mr HIGGINS

- I am very glad to say that up to the present there is not such a large proportion of blacks in Queensland as in America, and it is our business to stop any large numbers from entering that State. But the sole argument used against the Bill is that it will destroy the sugar industry.

As to that I do not quite know whether honorable members who advocate kanaka labour appreciate the position which most of us take up. I am one who would go so far as to urge the abolition of the kanaka traffic, even if it meant the absolute loss of the sugar industry. Of course, if we approach the question from that point of view, the argument that the Bill will destroy the sugar industry has not much force ; but, no matter how strong our opinions may be, it is our duty to endeavour to see whether it be correct that the sugar industry will be destroyed. I have watched the debate, and I find that the "destruction" is gradually reduced until it at last seems to come to a question whether there shall or shall not be trashing. It is not contended, I understand, that the sugar industry will be destroyed in Southern or Central Queensland, but that that argument now applies to only the northern part of the State. I understand that white labour can do everything except trashing, and if I rightly followed the honorable member for Herbert it is questionable whether trashing is worth the expense. This work, I am informed, is done in the off season when the kanakas have not enough other work to do, and the Colonial Sugar Company, who have the biggest interest in the industry in Queensland, do not do trashing on their own account, but insist on its being done by those who take land from them.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- The Sugar Company do not grow cane.

Mr HIGGINS

- I think I can correct the honorable member for Melbourne. The Colonial Sugar Company, although they have plantations of their own, lease a quantity of their land, and the trashing is done by the leaseholders. At all events, I cannot conceive that the resources of invention are so exhausted as that there should be absolutely no device found to achieve the same results that accrue from trashing. My experience is that, the more legislation takes the burden off human beings, the more invention and enterprise are stimulated, and the greater increase there is in the number and improvements of appliances.

Mr Bamford

- Invention has never been stimulated by the planter.

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Mr HIGGINS

- So long as men can get sugar grown and brought to market by cheap labour - that lazy method - we may be sure they will never apply their minds to the invention of appliances which will achieve the same results without so much harm to human life. I am glad the Ministry have taken a statesmanlike view of this measure, and, by means of the Tariff, are going to give those who grow sugar by white labour a great advantage. If I am not wrong, those who grow by white labour are to have the advantage of a rebate which will mean £5 per ton.

Mr Deakin

- Is the honorable and learned member speaking of sugar cane?

Mr HIGGINS

- I am speaking of cane.

Mr Deakin

- Then the difference is as £3 is to £1.

Mr HIGGINS

- From the report of the Colonial Sugar Company, I understand that owing to the Tariff they will be able to give better prices to the growers than before. The proposal in the measure is to have the recruiting of kanakas stopped after the 31st March, 1904, and to enable the Government to deport any kanakas after the 31st December, 1906 ; and I understand that this will not cause any violent breach of present conditions. There was a very analogous change made in the early part of last century in connexion with the slave trade. I do not mean the abolition of slavery, but the abolition of the recruiting of slaves. An Act was passed at the end of March, 1807, stopping the recruiting of slaves. There was no compensation provided, and the Act came into force on the 1st January, 1808. I have no doubt the slave trade had been going on much longer than has the kanaka trade, and that there were hosts of vested interests. But the British Parliament did not suggest that any compensation should be given, nor did it make any trouble about the alteration. It is argued by some that there should be a commission of inquiry. I can conceive of cases in which it would be well to have a commission of inquiry, but what would be the result of a commission in this case? What could it do? Could it give us any more information than has been given so

well already ?

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- Certainly.

Mr HIGGINS

- Then I must accuse honorable members who have spoken in favour of the retention of the kanaka trade of failing to give us all the information in their possession. I should be very glad indeed if they were to give us more. I have listened to their speeches, and if there were a good reason for the retention of the kanaka, one might reasonably expect that they would have advanced it.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- I spoke only for 40 minutes instead of 40 hours.

Mr HIGGINS

- The honorable and learned member could say more in 40 minutes than most honorable members could say in 40 hours. I am assuming in his favour that his speech on the second reading of this Bill contained the most salient points in favour of the retention of the kanaka. To my mind it is almost revolting to allow the kanaka trade to go on for two years longer. It means that kanaka labourers who have never been in Queensland before will be brought from the islands and subjected to the evil influences which arise from that trade in the tropics. It means a continuance of the injustice for two years more. When we look at the history of this question in Queensland we find that the kanaka traders had notice to quit long ago. They had notice to quit at the elections of 1883, and again at the elections of 1888. There was an Act passed, which became law, forbidding the importation of kanakas after 1890. There have been commissions of inquiry, and investigations, as well as debates ad infinitum in the Queensland Parliament, and still the people of that State are convinced that this traffic should be stopped.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- The result of the commission of inquiry was that it was considered inadvisable to do away with the trade.

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Mr HIGGINS

- The result of the elections was that it was decided that the kanaka should go. Of the three members of the commission of inquiry there were two who were strong pro-kanakas. The third, who was the late honorable member for Darling Downs, reported against the retention of the trade. Any one who has read the commission's report will see how much more energy and care were given to the consideration of the subject by the late honorable member for Darling Downs than by the other members of the commission. The others actually copied his words, but altered his conclusions. I hope we shall strike while the iron is hot. I must remind honorable members who are strongly in favour of this Bill that although there appears to be a large majority in this House who hold that view - and I think there will be in another place - those who are interested in the retention of kanaka labour are not yet beaten. I have to warn honorable members that there are tremendous monetary influences behind these men.

Mr McDonald

- They are prepared to spend £30,000.

Mr Mauger

- In what way?

Mr McDonald

- That is the question.

Mr HIGGINS

- They have been beaten time after time in the Queensland elections, but still they have managed to hold on to the trade. I want it to be understood that a mere victory upon the second reading, or in carrying the Bill through committee, will not do. What we want the Government to do - and I hope they will do it - is to see that the Bill passes through both Houses before the end of this month, Tariff or no Tariff, and I trust that we shall not allow any business to interfere with the important work of clearing away this stain from our shores. I observe that the honorable and learned member for Brisbane has said that this Bill is the result of a combination of lawyers and labour.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- I said that we were under the lash of lawyers and labour, not only in regard to this Bill, but in relation to the Tariff.

Mr HIGGINS

- I am on the same side as the honorable and learned member in regard to the Tariff, and I am sure no lash is needed in that case. If the honorable member objects to the alliance of lawyers and labour--

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- I did not say there was an alliance. I said that we were under the lash of both.

Mr HIGGINS

- At all events the honorable and learned member objects to both joining in the same lashing. I understand the honorable member objects to lawyers and labour. Lawyers have no objection to be found in alliance with labour.

Mr Fisher

- The honorable member is himself a lawyer.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- I am a labour member, too.

Mr HIGGINS

- I am very glad to hear it.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- I have always represented labour.

Mr HIGGINS

- I do not see why the honorable and learned member should object when lawyers and labour happen to unite for good purposes. He had no objection to the help of other lawyers so long as they were on his own side. I will only say that those who "toil not, neither do they spin," are glad to get the help of lawyers upon certain occasions, and I am glad to find that there are a number of us, who belong to the much tarnished occupation of the law, who are willing to help those who have to work for their living to secure what they regard as justice. In regard to the Bill itself, I think clause 2 will require some modification. That clause provides - "Pacific Island labourer" includes all natives not of European extraction of any island except the islands of New Zealand situated in the Pacific Ocean beyond the Commonwealth.....

I have looked up the Gazetteer, and I think that Japan is within the Pacific Ocean. If it is not, it certainly is within no other ocean.

Mr Barton

- The honorable and learned member agrees with the leader of the Opposition on that point, but I think that by the insertion of one syllable we can prevent any trouble on that account.

Mr HIGGINS

- I was going to suggest that the Government might place in a schedule all the islands which are to be included within the scope of this Bill. The Government are going to allow "persons employed as part of the crew of a ship" to land here. The Prime Minister will know that there is no more effective loop-hole than that. We have learned that in Victoria. Men who would otherwise be prohibited are often entered as members of the crew of a ship in order to secure their admission into the country. Some precaution will have to be taken in regard to the exception made in the Bill in favour of allowing the admission of persons employed as part of the crew of a ship, who would otherwise be prohibited from landing. What is to prevent a trader from entering 20, 30, or 50 kanakas as members of his crew? There is no limit to the number of men who may constitute a ship's crew, and once they are entered as such it is almost impossible to prevent them from entering the country. Apparently the Prime Minister has waived also his objection to legislating against the entrance of British subjects. There are British subjects in several of the islands which come within the scope of this measure, but, notwithstanding the fact that they are British subjects, this Bill will prevent them from entering the Commonwealth.

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Mr O'Malley

- Some of the kanakas are American citizens.

Mr HIGGINS

- Some of them are. That reminds me that, in August last, a kanaka stood for election as governor of Hawaii, and that the chief plank in his platform was the introduction each year of no less than 10,000,000 of Chinese. I have seen the picture of the man. He was a grand fellow, and had a large following. His proposal was to introduce no less than 10,000,000 Chinese every year in order to develop the country.

Mr Barton

- He was worse than the Standard Oil Trust.

Mr HIGGINS

- His idea was that the Chinese would be so disorderly that the Americans would have to send ships of war there, and that that, inasmuch as he was a boatman, would mean more work for the boatmen. At all events he was not elected. I have to say, in conclusion, that I regard this Bill as the most vitally important measure on the programme which the Government has put before us. I shall watch its course through both Houses with the deepest anxiety, and I feel sure that there is no Bill which will have so deep and far reaching an effect, if we can succeed in carrying it as it stands.

Mr MAUGER

- In view of the very great importance of this question, I crave the indulgence of the House to say a few words upon it. Recognising its importance I determined to gain as much information as possible by paying a visit to the centres in which these sugar plantations are situated. I should like at the outset to thank the Queensland Government for the facilities they afforded in connexion with that personal investigation. From the time I landed in Brisbane to the time I left, the Queensland Government afforded me every facility for gaining information, and for making a thorough investigation. Not only were the Queensland Government officials kind and helpful, but the owners and managers of the plantations afforded a very great amount of useful information. I notice that a number of clergymen who criticise this proposal have visited Queensland, and have gone as far as Bundaberg, but I was assured when I reached Brisbane that unless we went as far as Cairns in the north, we should not be seized of the information it was necessary to gain in order to speak intelligently upon this question. I quite agree with those who make that assertion. Going no further than Bundaberg, with its semi-tropical climate, one gets no idea of the difficulties, troubles, and anxieties which must be endured by those who are developing the northern districts. I quite agree that in order to gain anything like reliable and complete information it is necessary to go as far north, at any rate, as Cairns. With that object in view, and in order that we might gain the fullest information, I went as far as Cairns with my friend Colonel Reay, who has written some very excellent articles on this question. I may say, at the outset, that almost every Government official, and certainly every planter and every man interested in sugar growing, asserted that sugar growing was absolutely impossible without the aid of kanaka labour. That was the chorus rung in our ears from the time we entered Queensland until we left it, and we almost began to think that that was really the case, until we came in contact with another class of people. The labourers themselves, the ploughmen on the plantations, and the working men's representatives, were just as emphatic that sugar growing was possible by means of white labour, that it could be carried on successfully, and that this great industry would not by any means suffer should kanaka labour be abolished. I am prepared to admit that what are known as the sugar farmers in North Queensland, who are developing that remarkable country - for it is a remarkable country, and one needs to visit it to gain the faintest idea of its character - the men who are developing that country are deserving of every thought and every consideration we can give them. I recognise that the pioneers in North Queensland are deserving of our hearty commendation, and all the support we can possibly give them. They are sturdy, manly, enterprising people; but when I have said that I have said all I think I can say in their favour.

Mr Fisher

- Whom does the honorable member mean by the "pioneers"? The sugar growers were not the pioneers.

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Mr MAUGER

- Perhaps not in the strict sense of the term, but I refer especially to the small men, the struggling cane farmers. They are men who are labouring under difficulties that members of this House can hardly realize. But let me say at this stage that to my mind there are greater difficulties against which the planter has to contend than the abolition of kanaka labour. There is a kind of land boom going on in Northern Queensland, and struggling farmers are paying as much as £9 per acre for their land, and from £2 10s. to £3 per acre for clearing, and on this capital value they have to pay interest.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Where is this?

Mr MAUGER

- On the Herbert River.

An Honorable Member. - Is it rich land?

Mr MAUGER

- It is exceedingly rich land.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- They pay a great price for perhaps 5 acres, not more.

Mr MAUGER

- That does not alter my argument one bit.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I do not believe the prices to which the honorable member refers are paid.

Mr MAUGER

- I hold that what is at the root of successful sugar growing is not so much kanaka labour as the land question. If the small farmers have to pay anything like so exorbitant a price as is being demanded for this land - for rich land admittedly - it is impossible for them to grow sugar successfully.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I think the honorable member must be dreaming upon the subject.

Mr MAUGER

- I can tell my honorable friend that I was told of not one, but of dozens of farmers who had to pay this price for their land.

Mr Fisher

- The honorable member is under the mark.

Mr MAUGER

- I am quite sure I am under the mark. I am quite sure these farmers had nothing to gain by telling me that they had to pay £9 per acre, and that the land cost them altogether from £11 to £13 per acre, on which they had to pay interest. They almost implored us to urge the appointment of a Royal commission to inquire into the matter.

Mr Knox

- That is what we want.

Mr MAUGER

- The difficulties of opening up the land, the scarcity of labour in the north, and the more serious difficulty of the excessive price which they had to pay for land, impelled them to ask for consideration.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- They are free agents surely ?

Mr MAUGER

- My honorable friend ought to know that there are a great many men in this country who are not free agents. I have heard that expression applied to other classes of labour, and I know that men are not free agents when they are compelled either to go upon the land or work for wages that are insufficient.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- They are not compelled to pay £9 per acre for land that is not worth it.

Mr MAUGER

- Men are often compelled to pay £9 per acre for land in order to get a living for themselves and families. Men are often forced into a condition which renders them far from being free agents, and we know that in the labour market, as well as in the commercial market, bargains are often struck which have only one side to them, and that men are compelled to close, not because they wish it, but because they must. I am quite prepared to admit that in the north of Queensland, perhaps, for some considerable time, it will be extremely difficult to get white labour, but the Government do not propose that kanaka labour should be taken away from the sugar farmers immediately. They propose to give them five years.

An Honorable Member. - They want ten years.

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Mr MAUGER

- My opinion is that if they were offered ten years they would ask for twenty years. But given five years, and given railway . communication in the opening up of the country, and anything like enterprise on the part of the Queensland Government, I believe that all the labour necessary can be secured at a

reasonable rate in Northern Queensland. In the less northerly parts there will be no difficulty at all. That is admitted. Mr. Gibson, one of the largest sugar growers in the Bundaberg district told me that he believed that sugar could be grown without the assistance of kanaka labour, and that it was only in the extreme north that the immediate stoppage of this traffic would be felt. I am convinced that the labour that is to be found in abundance in the large centres of population could be successfully applied to this industry, if the Government were in earnest in helping the sugar planters who are developing the northern part of Queensland. I hold in my hand a resolution arrived at by the Chamber of Commerce in Mackay, one of the centres of sugar production in the northern districts. They affirm -

That Polynesian labour involves no social, moral, or other danger to Queensland or the Commonwealth.
Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Hear, hear.

Mr MAUGER

- That is their affirmation, and the honorable member for Melbourne cheers it. I consider that that statement is not borne out by experience, and that this labour is a menace, morally, economically, and socially. I think I can prove the statement. First, with regard to the social aspect. We know that there are very stringent regulations in regard to the kanaka traffic, but these regulations are to my mind "more honored in the breach than the observance." That opinion is borne out by the fact that the very first kanaka I met on the canefields in Northern Queensland was deaf and dumb. That is only an incident, but it is a striking one.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I suppose that the honorable member got a good deal of information out of him !

Mr MAUGER

- This is too serious a matter to be sarcastic about. There are regulations providing that no deaf and dumb boys shall be allowed upon the plantations, yet, as I say, the first I met was both deaf and dumb.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- How many more are there ?

Mr MAUGER

- One of the leading planters on the Herbert River assured me that every one of the last eight women sent on to his plantation was diseased, and five of them he expected would never come out of hospital. There are two striking instances of the way in which the conditions are being broken, and will continue to be broken. I was assured by another planter whose name I can give, if necessary, that he had protested time after time against kanakas being thrust upon him who, for many reasons, were physically incapable. This statement was made to me in the presence of Col. Read, who took a shorthand note of it. This planter said that the examining officer had time after time sent to him men, pictures of whom he shewed to us, who were disabled in limb or wind, or otherwise physically, and had forced these men upon him, contrary to his own wish and request.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- It is the greatest balderdash in the world !

Mr MAUGER

- It may be, but I am stating facts, of which proof can be given.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- How could they force the planter to take such men?

Mr Fisher

- Such statements have been proved over and over again, but no notice has been taken of the proof.

Mr MAUGER

- There was nothing more patent to me than that many of these men and women were physically contaminated with the worst of possible diseases. We are permitting the spreading of this contamination amongst the white population. I know the full significance of the words I am using, and I say that there is a moral infamy being spread in Northern Queensland which ought to make us blush. When I hear men, for whom I have the greatest possible respect, sometimes ministers of the Gospel, talking about the softening influence exercised upon these people, I can come to no other charitable conclusion than that they know not what they talk about.

Mr R EDWARDS

- How long was the honorable member in Queensland ?

Mr MAUGER

- That is immaterial. I was afforded every facility for learning. If these are facts which I am stating, it does not matter how long I was there.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I say they are not facts.

Mr Page

- Every word is true.

Mr MAUGER

- Saying that they are not facts will not alter their truth.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- Was it the planter himself or the planter's manager who told the honorable member these things ?

Mr MAUGER

- In one case it was the planter himself, and in the other case it was the planter's manager. I went over the hospital myself, and was shown several of the women incarcerated there, if I may use that word. There can be no doubt about the statements I am making, and the evidence given to me.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Does it not strike the honorable member that these diseases were given to the kanakas by the white people themselves ?

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Mr MAUGER

- However the kanakas may have got these diseases, surely it is the duty of this House to keep our own people free from them. I am no apologist for the crimes or vices of white men, but I am speaking in the interests of those who come into close contact with kanakas, and who are likely to be contaminated with their diseases. I am asked how long I was there. I was there some fourteen or fifteen days, and I was afforded every facility for getting information.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- The honorable member is an authority on the subject after fifteen days !

Mr MAUGER

- I was assured by the managers of sugar plantations that if I stayed six months I could not get more information on the subject, the conditions being much the same in really every instance.

Mr R EDWARDS

- The honorable member spent only seven days among the sugar plantations.

Mr MAUGER

- As to this Polynesian labour involving no social, moral, or other danger, a letter has been read from a missionary who wrote to Dr. Paton on the subject. I am not going to waste the time of the House by reading that letter again, as it appears in Hansard, but I may point out that it was a letter of a man who had been in Queensland the greater part of his life. I want now to call another clergyman to witness - a clergyman who cannot be charged with paying a flying visit, and who speaks of what he knows and testifies to what he has seen. Listen to the burning words of this reverend gentleman, Canon Pyke. Here, however, I would say that he unjustly alludes to the labour party as considering only the economic side of the case. That I deny. To my mind, the economic aspect is very important. It is important wherever issues affecting labour are involved. But it is not the most important aspect of this question by any means. If I have any quarrel with leading reformers, it is that they dwell too much on the economic side of the reforms they advocate.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- The honorable member has too much faith in clergymen !

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Mr MAUGER

- I quite agree that there is an economic side to this question, but there is also a moral side to it, and I do not agree with Canon Pyke that the party with whom I usually concur think that the economic side is more important than the moral. These are Canon Pyke's words -

At any time during the past fifteen years there have been from 1,500 to 2,000 Chinamen in the district.

These women established themselves in the Chinese quarter, which speedily became the rendezvous of the kanakas. They plied their unmentionable traffic openly, without restraint, so that the rising youth of the town were attracted by their blandishments. The facts came under the notice of certain people, amongst whom was a parish priest, and steps were taken to abate or abolish the evil. A petition was presented to the municipal council. The council, after long discussion, decided by the casting vote of the mayor to leave things alone. One of the local papers defended this decision on the grounds that the Japanese women were a necessary protection to the white women, who but for them would be liable to molestation. Anyone knowing the whole circumstances would understand that such an argument represented the feelings, not only of the majority of the council, but of the major part of the population. There you have the alien question in its naked state. What will remain when the economist and the politician have done their work ? Reduced to the first principles, it is a question of morals and religion - exactly the things which are deliberately and wilfully ignored by the political parties. The writer has lived in North Queensland many years, and has personally studied this question from its alphabet. He affirms deliberately that the Cairns incident is a reduction to the lowest common denominator of the facts concerning every sugar district in the State. The alien races come here from social and moral conditions essentially different from our own. Their customs, their instincts, their laws of thought and life have been developed under circumstances which cannot be compared with those existing here. They cannot understand us, nor readily adapt themselves to our ideas. We have imported into the country thousands of men who know nothing of self-control, whose passions have been undisciplined by social custom, religious authority, or moral consideration, and to whom sexual morality, particularly, is almost unknown. 'We have put them to live under conditions that would strain the moral forces of the most cultivated and best disciplined Europeans. Can we wonder at the facts that lie behind the argument of the Cairns press? The marvel is that the country has not been horrified by some wholesale outrage. The present winter has witnessed unsaleable things in broad daylight in the main street of Cairns. Then, in juxtaposition to this, we have the presence of women from Japan whose ideas of virtue do not include modesty and chastity. No one reading between the lines of the address delivered by the Bishop of South Tokyo in the Sydney Town-ball, on the last night of the missionary jubilee of 1900, will be surprised to hear that the Japanese women ply their disgusting trade in full blaze of day. Lastly, there is the moral degradation implied in the argument that this state of things is necessary. We fear the argument is unanswerable if the alien is to remain in our midst? but the contemplation of such a necessity sends a shiver through our moral nature. Can any system be for the welfare of the nation which demands the existence of these abominations ? Can the moral life of any community be secure when these immoralities are regarded complacently ? Can any consideration justify these things ? Whatever the economist may have to say, surely the church can find only one verdict, a verdict which is summed up in two words - " White Australia." Surely no honorable member will contend that this gentleman does not know what he is writing about, or that he has anything to gain by writing in that way? On the contrary, he has everything to lose. He is living in. the midst of those planters ; his church is situated in the very heart of this district, and, he speaks of that which he has seen. I unhesitatingly assent that if there were no economical reasons, the moral reasons underlying the statement in this indictment are quite sufficient to demand a unanimous vote- of the House on this Bill. I hold that the moral life of Northern Queensland is being contaminated by this semi-slavery; and on this point I would commend to the House the very striking words of Karl. Pearson in. his recently published booklet, entitled National Life from the stand-point of Science. He says -

If you bring the white man into contact with the black you too often suspend the very process of a. natural selection on which the evolution of a higher type depends. You get superior and inferior races living on the same soil and that co-existence is demoralizing to both. They naturally sink into the position of master and servant, if not admittedly into that of slave owner and slave. Even in the case of Eurasians whom I have met, mentally and physically fine specimens, I have felt how much better they would have been had they been pure Asiatics or pure Europeans.

In another part, he says -

The civilization of the white man is a civilization dependent upon free white labour, and when that element of stability is removed it will collapse like those of Greece and Rome.

We also have the testimony of. the Chief Justice of Queensland. What does he say? Just what Karl Pearson says in his booklet Every year that passes deepens my conviction that a free, self-governing

population and a servile population not admitted to a share of. the government, cannot exist in the same country.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- How long ago is it since he said that?

Mr MAUGER

- He may have changed his opinion, but he cannot have changed the fact.

Mr Henry Willis

- But he said something else, too.

Mr MAUGER

- If it is a fact, as Karl Pearson asserts; that where we try to blend the black and white, deterioration is inevitable, surely it is just as much a fact when Sir Samuel Griffith asserts it. But if he has changed his opinion on the economic side of the question, that does not alter his opinion on the social, side of it.

Mr L. E. Groom. - He has never changed his view on that point.

Mr MAUGER

- I do not see how he could. . He may have changed his view as to the necessity for this particular class of labour-, but surely he cannot; have altered his opinion in regard to the effect of trying to blend white men and black men. I contend that Polynesian labour is a danger to the social and moral welfare of this community. I know that it is being urged- in many quarters that we are doing a moral wrong to these people in determining to have them removed from our shores. We have had the pulpit ringing with denunciation of the measure ; but surely no honorable member will contend that the kanakas have come here of their own accord. No honorable member will contend that if we allowed them a free choice to come to work in Northern Queensland the labour would be supplied.

Mr R EDWARDS

- They have done so over and over again.

Mr MAUGER

- Does my honorable friend mean to assert that kanaka labour would be available in anything like the number required if it were not recruited ?

Mr R EDWARDS

- How could they come?

Mr MAUGER

- Do they want to come in the first instance?

Mr R EDWARDS

- They come willingly.

Mr MAUGER

- I most emphatically disagree with my honorable friend. I hold that the labour is recruited ; that it is, to a large extent, forced ; that the men do not understand the nature of the agreement into which they enter; and that daring their removal from the islands to Northern Queensland they are subject to treatment which we have no right to apply to them. There is no getting away from the fact that they are in the position of semi-slaves. What are we told by the planters ? That this labour is docile, tractable, reliable.

Mr R EDWARDS

- To do work which white men cannot do.

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Mr MAUGER

- I do not admit for a moment that there is any labour which black men are capable of doing that cannot be equally well performed by white men. I contend that delving in a railway trench, or in a railway cutting in Northern Queensland is infinitely more trying and arduous than trashing in a cane-field. Further, I hold that the charge that is continually being levelled against Australians - that they are drunken and unreliable - is without foundation.

Mr R EDWARDS

- Who said that ?

Mr MAUGER

- We are continually hearing in Northern Queensland that the kanaka is necessary, because he is reliable and docile. I admit that he is reliable and docile, but not that he has freedom. He is a semi-slave, and is

compelled to do as his master dictates ; and that being the case, his presence is a menace to the Commonwealth and to free labour. The petitioners go on to say that the withdrawal of the kanaka labour would not be sufficiently counteracted by the imposition of any protective duty, that European labour is not available to replace the Pacific Islanders, and that the Immigration Restriction Bill will not permit either European or any other labour to be imported under contract. We sincerely hope that it will not be possible to import any labour under contract, because we hold that there could be no greater menace to free labour than the importation of any kind of workmen under contract, and that contract labour under any conditions or circumstances is undesirable. I am quite prepared to admit that the sugar industry is a great one, and that its existence is of the greatest possible importance to white labour. I acknowledge, further, that when I visited North Queensland I did not witness any acts of personal cruelty, or anything approaching to it, and that the kanakas appeared to be well fed. When I have said all that, however, I am brought face to face with the fact that there are social and class distinctions between the whites and blacks that must be a direct menace to this Commonwealth. We can go into the beautiful mansion of the planter - because, compared to the "humpies" or huts of the kanakas the planters' houses are mansions - and see the different safeguards with which he surrounds his own children or family ; we can then contrast these safeguards with the dangers to which the working men's children are subject, and understand how it is that the working classes are anxious that the evils arising from the employment of kanakas should be removed from their midst. It is easy to realize that the planter has no fear because he and those belonging to him are isolated and kept apart from the black labourers, but it is the daughter of the ploughman or the labourer or the mill hand who is liable to contamination through this evil, and it is the working men, who, on social, moral, and economic grounds, unitedly and determinedly pray that they may be relieved of the presence of the kanaka. The other day I was asked by a minister of religion how I could possibly justify my action with regard to black labour. He said - Has not God " made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." I admitted that, but pointed out that the reverend gentleman, like many others, had quoted only a part of the verse, because it continues - " And hath determined the times before appointed, and bounds of their habitation." I hold that the bounds of the habitation of the kanakas are to be found in the Polynesian Islands. Apart from this, there is no justification for our taking them from their own islands for the purpose of making richer a number of our own people. Further, I hold that in the interest of the kanaka himself, it is wrong to carry on this traffic. We know of the fearful mortality that takes place amongst these natives, and that in many cases they are dying off like sheep. If the sugar industry depends upon the labour of the kanakas, they ought to be better housed, and better fed, and better paid. Instead, however, of their receiving the highest pay, they receive the lowest pay it is possible to give them ; their clothing is unworthy of men, and their habitations are semi-barbarous in character. I hold that it is the duty of this House to support the Government in its determination to give to succeeding generations a white Australia, unpolluted by this black evil, and free from all the troubles that follow in its train.

Question resolved in the affirmative. Bill read a second time.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- When speaking during the debate on the second reading of the Bill, I intimated that it was my intention at a later stage to move that this Bill be referred to a Royal commission, with the object of obtaining more information upon the kanaka question and upon the sugar industry in Northern Queensland. I think honorable members of this House are very much in need of more information with regard to the sugar industry, which has been flourishing for a good number of years past in Northern Queensland, and I cannot understand why the Government should be afraid to grant the request for an inquiry.

Mr Page

- They are not afraid.

Mr R EDWARDS

- They are afraid that they will not find things as bad as they have tried to make out.

Mr Page

- They are worse.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I think the honorable member for Maranoa is in error in stating that things are worse than they have

been represented. The only objection that could possibly be urged against granting an inquiry is that a few months delay would be involved, but there would be no danger in that, and it would be much better to incur the delay of a few months than to run the risk of destroying, or even injuring, one of the most important industries that Queensland possesses. I am only asking what is reasonable, and what the sugar planters have a right to expect from the Commonwealth Government. It is a principle of British law that no criminal can be convicted without an inquiry being held into the charge against him, but apparently Queensland is not to be allowed the same rights and privileges as the greatest criminal in the land. Queensland has already been convicted in the minds of honorable members, who have come to the conclusion that that State has been guilty of something very serious indeed.

Mr Page

- Why did the honorable member fight the question on the platform at the last election?

Mr R EDWARDS

- I shall be able to justify the attitude I am taking up. As I say, Queensland has already been convicted, and now this Parliament is about to pronounce sentence, without extending British fair play and common justice. If this Bill is carried it will inflict a great injustice on Queensland, and will create a bitter feeling against federation and the Commonwealth Government for a generation to come. I am personally very anxious to avoid any cause of irritation.

Mr Fisher

- The honorable member is acting in the right way to cause irritation.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I would ask the Government to appoint a commission before any decisive steps are taken with regard to the kanaka question in Queensland. I am quite sure that the Queensland Government will undertake that the number of kanakas shall not be increased during the time that the inquiry is proceeding. Honorable members know very well that provision has already been made in the Immigration Restriction Bill to prevent the admission of any other alien races to our shores. By forcing this Bill through, against the wishes of Queensland, we shall be exhibiting a most unfriendly attitude towards a sister State, and doing a serious injury to many industrious settlers. Had the kanakas been as numerous, or had they belonged to a country as powerful as is Japan, the Prime Minister would have hesitated before displaying such an unfriendly attitude towards them. Personally, I am inclined to think - and I have heard a good deal about this matter during the past two or three weeks - that the Government have been forced to introduce this drastic measure by a section of this House. To my mind, the provisions contained in the Bill were dictated by the Queensland labour party. In support of this view, I may mention that in other States there is reason for thinking and saying this. In one of the Tasmanian papers, published at the beginning of last month, I find the following :-

Some members of the labour party were anxious to insist that the traffic should cease in three years, and not in five years, as the Ministry proposed. But in view of the fact that the deportation was to begin practically at once, a general agreement was arrived at that the party should give its united support to the central provisions of the Bill, with the reservation that the alterations of detail and not of moment, which might suggest themselves, should be considered later on.

Mr Barton

- Who said that?

Mr R EDWARDS

- The Weekly Courier of 5th October. It is published in Launceston. The article continues - There are indications that the Kanaka Bill will go through the House of Representatives practically unaltered, as it is understood that the Government consulted the Queensland labour party as to the general character of the measure.

Mr Barton

- Is that a statement to the effect that the Government consulted the labour party upon this question, because, if so, it is absolutely false?

Mr R EDWARDS

- I have no knowledge of the paper.

Mr Barton

- I should think not, because the honorable member is an honest man.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- I think that those who know me will say that I am equally honest with the Prime Minister. When I make a promise I adhere to it. In the last issue of United Australia I find the following, under 'the heading of "The Voice of Queensland " : -

If Mr. Barton and his colleagues were not wholly given over to the sixteen or twenty labour representatives who sit on the Opposition corner, and to whom at least two-thirds of the Prime Minister's speech on the introduction of the Kanaka Bill were addressed, they would pay more heed than they appear to be doing to the powerful appeal which has been addressed, by the Premier of Queensland, to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. "The State Government," said Mr. Philp, " was totally unprepared for legislation of so summary and drastic a nature as contemplated in the present Bill." Naturally, they had trusted to some attention being paid to the opinions of authoritative persons, and especially to those of Br. Maxwell, a recognised expert, who was commissioned by the Commonwealth Government to -report upon the whole sugar industry. It must be assumed that Mr. Philp represents the Queensland people ; for otherwise there would be some counter expression of opinion, either in or out of the State Parliament ; yet, though Queensland speaks through the highest political authority in the State, the federal Government is adamant - why? because the legislation is being demanded by the labour party, and 'the Commonwealth Government has not the resolution to do what it must know to be just.

Mr Barton

- Is that the same rag?

Mr.R. EDWARDS. - No ; this is another rag, namely, United Australia.

Mr Deakin

-It is the same class of paper.

Mr R EDWARDS

-I think that honorable members have seen some very valuable articles which were written by the Attorney-General published in that paper.

Mr Deakin

- I did not write that.

Mr Barton

- Perhaps the honorable member for Oxley will allow me to say that that paper has assumed a partisan tone - notwithstanding the assistance which my honorable and learned friend the Attorney-General and myself have given to it - which vendors it unworthy of credence.

Mr R EDWARDS

- There is some very good reading in it Still.

Mr Mauger

-But it is very one-sided.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- It is like the honorable member's speeches.

Mr R EDWARDS

- It continues-

Another argument - and a strong one- is that there are in existence State laws by which the black labour will be gradually got rid of ; yet the Commonwealth has stepped completely over it to satisfy this reckless demand for almost instantaneous suppression, and now proposes to handicap the industry (so far as black labour is concerned) to the extent of £2 a ton on its products - beginning in July next.

In answer to the superficial contention that the senators of Queensland, as representatives of that State, are in favour of instant abolition, Mr. Philp answers that those same senators represent only 29,000 but of 104,000 electors. He further says that the State of 'Queensland will be " victimised " ; and there can be no doubt that if that State had, at the last moment, consented to join the union, only on condition that the black labour question should be reserved for the local Parliament, the concession would have been immediately granted. The Queensland people may well feel bitter.

They will feel more bitter still if this Bill becomes law.

Mr Fisher

-From what newspaper has the honorable member : been quoting ?

Mr R EDWARDS

- The extracts which I have read are taken from United Australia, one of the papers to which the Attorney-General has been writing.

Mr Deakin

- It is now a partisan paper.

Mr Barton

- I altogether disown the opinion of that paper, although I have been connected with it.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- Those extracts confirm my opinion that the provisions contained in this Bill have been dictated to the Government by the Queensland labour party. Possibly that party believe that they are taking the proper course to bring about a white Australia. But I believe that, by forcing the Government to pass this measure against the wishes of Queensland, they are doing a serious injury to the very people whom they particularly desire to benefit. The passage of this measure will result in many thousands of white workers being thrown out of employment. We had that experience in Queensland ten years ago. I mentioned this fact some three weeks back, in speaking about the number of white men who were thrown out of employment in 1891, when the sugar industry nearly collapsed. The state of the industry at that particular period was such that Sir Samuel Griffith, who was then Premier of Queensland, saw that a very serious error had been made, and that if this industry were to be saved, labour would have to be got in some way for the planter. The right honorable gentleman at that time subordinated his own opinions for the benefit of Queensland. I do not say that the right honorable gentleman changed his mind, because I believe that at that time - and at this day - nor was more desirous than Sir Samuel Griffith for a white Australia. However, - seeing that a large number of white workers were thrown out of employment because of the legislation he had introduced and passed through the Queensland Parliament, Sir Samuel Griffith decided on changing his policy, and issued the manifesto which I shall have the pleasure of referring to later on. The result was that kanakas were again allowed to come into Queensland, and planters were supplied with all the labour they required. The industry then went forward by leaps and bounds until the manifesto issued by the Prime Minister at Maitland; and now the planters are getting into difficulties similar to those they experienced about 1890. Financial institutions and banks will have nothing to say now to any sugar securities, and planters are beginning to seriously think not of putting in any more cane, but of getting rid of their properties as quickly as they can.

Mr Page

- How many properties have changed hands since the Maitland speech?

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Mr R EDWARDS

- I am afraid that none as yet have changed hands. I said I would justify myself in the stand I have taken in reference to the sugar industry of the State from which I come. I shall do so by reading what I said at public meetings when I was before the electors in March last. I was reported as follows : - The last sentence brought him to the question of a white Australia, a question which was just now so very prominently before Queenslanders, although he did not think there was much more in the cry than to catch votes. (Applause.) But this question was closely related to the well-being of an industry in Queensland - that of the growing and manufacture of sugar. (Applause.) Queensland could not afford to sacrifice an industry such as this. (Applause.) - This industry was the means of providing employment to over 20,000 white people, and he was prepared to support any measure having for its object the gradual abolition of coloured labour. There were 50,000 men, women, and children who derived a benefit from or were interested in the sugar industry, and he would be no party to agree to any hasty or reckless legislation that would bring ruin and disaster to an industry which provided directly or otherwise a living for such a large number of persons. (Applause.) Rather than destroy he would build up and establish other industries, so that they might have abundant and regular work for all their people. He would urge that a Royal Commission of independent men be appointed to take evidence as to conditions of labour on sugar plantations before he would imperil this important industry. There were in our midst Chinese, Syrians, and Japanese, who were a far greater danger to Queensland, together with the Hindoos, than the few thousand kanakas who were entirely employed on the sugar plantations.

He had not known during his 32 years in Queensland the kanaka to become a tradesman or a storekeeper.

A Voice. - Have you known them to become coachmen ?

Mr. EDWARDS said he never had one for a coachman. (Applause.) He objected to kanakas being employed at anything outside of the sugar industry, and did not want them to be in Queensland permanently, but only until the planters could do without them. A number of years at any rate must be given them. As to Chinese, Syrians, Japanese, and Hindoos, they were or became here expert tradesmen, or they opened shops, and were keen competitors with all the white workers throughout the State. Those were the people who became a great danger to Queensland. They had increased in Australia something like 100 per cent. during the last ten years. There had been some 7,000 or 8,000, and now there were between 15,000 and 16,000. Something ought to be done to restrict those people in particular. (Hear, hear.) He only wished them to use their common sense in the matter. Those whose cry was the loudest for doing away with the kanakas were the people who were quite prepared to consume sugar grown in other countries by people who were, it might be said, nothing else but slaves. It was said at one time that the planters employed kanakas because of their cheapness, but a white man had told him the previous night that a white man could do as much work as that of four kanakas. If that was the case, it could not be for the sake of cheapness that kanakas were employed, and they might depend upon it that if the planters could get reliable white labour they would be only too glad to do away with the kanaka. Let them not, however, ruin the industry which had done so much for the colony. If they did so then 20,000 white workers would become unemployed, and nobody wanted that. (Applause.)

I am rather afraid that if this Bill becomes law there will be a much larger number than 20,000 white workers thrown out of work, because the industry is much more extensive now than it was ten years ago. What I have quoted is what I said to the electors of Oxley in March last, and I think I said something to the same effect at nearly every meeting I held during that month. The electorate of Oxley is one of considerable extent, comprising no fewer than half-a-dozen State electorates, which return seven members to the Queensland Parliament. All classes are represented in the electorate, including working men, shopkeepers, merchants, manufacturers, and a very large number of farmers, none of whom are directly, but all of whom are indirectly, and largely interested in the sugar industry. As I explained in the House a few months ago, the farmers are interested in the industry indirectly, because it gives them a more extensive market and better prices for their dairy and farm produce. I should like to give honorable members as much information as I can upon this question, which I feel is one of very great importance - of very much more importance than the Federal Tariff - to Queensland. I have had conversations with honorable members of this House, some of whom have readily admitted that they know nothing about the kanaka question or much about the sugar industry, and who, under the circumstances, are under the impression that the safest course for them is to follow the Government. Other honorable members who do not know anything about kanakas, whose colour they hardly know except by hearsay and who know nothing about the sugar industry, regard themselves as occupying a judicial position. They listen to the arguments for and against the Bill, in the sincere hope of being able to arrive at a right conclusion before the division takes place. Of the latter honorable members I have some hope, but as to the honorable members who are as much in the dark as the Government themselves, 'and yet are ready to follow whatever course the Government may take, I have very little hope of converting them. I should now like to read the opinion of the people of Townsville as expressed soon after the provisions of this Bill were made known -

The opinion at Townsville is that the Bill is simply a means to ruin the industry earlier than was expected. The assurance that the Tariff proposals will compensate planters impresses nobody, as the conviction is strongly held that the industry cannot be conducted in the tropics without special labour, and that the labour market is incapable of providing white labour, even if it were suitable.

That report is taken from the Argus of October 7.

Mr Bamford

- Subsequently a public meeting censured the council for passing the resolution.

Mr Page

- They were censured before that at the elections.

Mr Barton

- Has the honorable member any report of public meetings of citizens in Queensland which have condemned this Bill?

Mr Page

- Even in Brisbane no such meeting has been held.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I shall place some reports of such meetings before the House before I have concluded. I shall be able to put before the House reports of public meetings held in various parts of Queensland to consider this Bill.

The following report is taken also from the Argus of 7th ult.: -

Dismay at Cairns.

A feeling of utmost dismay prevails amongst planters, shippers, and merchants in the Cairns district in regard to the Pacific Island Labourers Bill. In the event of the measure becoming law there will, it is said, be an absolute depreciation of property. No hope is entertained of palliating the effect by any remedial provisions of the Tariff. A feeling of insecurity predominates, and the collapse of the whole industry is foretold, because other aliens may be treated in the same way as is proposed to be done with the kanaka.

I quote again from the Argus of the 7th ult., an extract giving the opinions voiced by the Brisbane Courier:- The Brisbane Courier, of Thursday, says - ' Mr. Barton asks that the Kanaka Bill be read along with the Budget and Tariff presently to be introduced. His faith apparently is that the sugar duty about to be proposed, will enable the planter to carry on the industry with white labour. This faith rests on the assumption that the difficulty in the utilisation of white labour is a difficulty of wages only. It is nothing short of astounding that, after all the representations made by those who know, after the reiterated illustrations to the contrary, produced by this and other journals, after the report of Dr. Maxwell himself, which, if it proved anything, proved that the desideratum was racial adaptation rather than wages, the Government of the Commonwealth should cling to this assumption, and make it the basis of legislation.'

Mr Barton

- The Brisbane Courier has expressed every possible opinion in regard to the question of black labour.

Mr R EDWARDS

- It gives very correct opinions.

Mr Barton

- But all of them cannot be correct ?

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Mr R EDWARDS

- I find that in his report Dr. Maxwell sets forth that in 1885 there were 38,557 acres of cane crushed, 55,796 tons of sugar made, and 10,755 Pacific Islanders employed in the industry in Queensland. In 1899, however, there were 79,435 acres of cane crushed and 123,289 tons of sugar made, yet the number of kanakas had been reduced to 8,826. That is, in proportion to the whole of the Queensland sugar industry, the employment of kanaka labour had been reduced by about 60 per cent, during that period. At the date of the making of the report the average area under sugar cane, per grower, was 42 -6 acres. It has been pointed out that this indicates that as the number of small growers has increased kanaka labour has decreased, and that the kanaka is not a source of much danger to a white Australia. It is the Japanese and other coloured races we have to fear. A few days ago I received a letter from a working man in Brisbane, in which he criticised the Tariff as well as the provisions of this measure. I ought to inform the Prime Minister that this gentleman's criticism of the Tariff was not altogether unfavorable, although he acknowledged that there were some items which might be very much improved. Referring to the working men, he then went on to say : -

With one part they are not satisfied - that is the Kanaka Bill - and they are all of one mind. It means destruction to the sugar industry in the north. And a strange thing : I was talking yesterday to some labour men, that is, wharf labourers, and they don't want the kanaka to go. They wish to keep him. They say if he goes the Hindoo will come, and he will be worse. I mentioned the Immigration Restriction Bill. "Oh !" they replied, "the British Government will have something to say on that point."

I have also received a letter from a sugar planter residing at Geraldton. That gentleman writes -

Many thanks for the Kanaka Bill, though at the same time we most heartily wish the measure had never been conceived. Things are indeed gloomy in North Queensland now, and business is at a stand-still.

Land security is absolutely valueless, as we know only too well. Banks and other financial institutions refuse point blank to do business in tropical securities, and the farmers - ourselves amongst them - working on borrowed capital, feel the pinch most acutely. Of course, existing crops will be harvested*, but further planting will be represented by the minus sign, in view of the early extinction of our labour supply. The opinion amongst all classes here, save the socialists, is that Queensland, and especially North Queensland, has been most criminally sold by Mr. Barton for the support of legislators who seek to secure a monopoly of all wages work in Queensland at an impossible rate - men who would cheerfully witness the ruin of an industry in which ?7,000,000 of money are invested, to say nothing of other smaller investments in the tropics.

Yours, &c. ,
and W. Harding.

I have reports of a number of meetings held by associations in various parts of Queensland to consider this measure. The first that I will quote is the report of the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland.

Mr Page

- Where does that association meet ?

Mr B EDWARDS

- In Brisbane.

Mr Page

- I thought so.

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Mr B EDWARDS

- The head-quarters of the association are at Brisbane. The following is a statement giving the -
Results of Meeting held at Brisbane on 16th October, 1901.

A special meeting of the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland was held in the rooms, Courier Building, Wednesday, October 16, to consider the action of the Federal Ministry in regard to the Pacific Islanders Bill. Mr. j. Macdonald, chairman of the Council, occupied the chair, and there were present a large number of representative members.

The chairman said the meeting was called because it was considered by the council that the leading agricultural society in Queensland should have an opportunity of considering the proposed legislation regarding kanakas, which, if passed in its present form, would be, without doubt, a death-blow to the sugar industry. As an agricultural society, he maintained that they had a right to take such business into consideration ; and although it was one of the rules that no party politics should be discussed, he felt quite sure there would be no dissentient voice on the action taken. Notices had been sent out to all the leading agricultural societies, and the action of the National Association had been endorsed by them. Replies had been received from about twenty, and there was a remarkable unanimity in the opinion that serious injury would be done to the sugar industry. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. j.Reid moved "That in the opinion of this association, the effect of the proposed Pacific Island Labourers Bill, if passed in its present form, will be immediately disastrous to the sugar industry. This meeting considers that, before legislative action is taken, a Royal commission be appointed for the purpose of holding an exhaustive inquiry into the conditions of the sugar industry." In doing so he said that the replies received from the other societies were sufficient justification for calling the meeting. Seeing that the association was identified with the agricultural interests of Queensland, they could not permit legislation of so important a nature to pass without taking some action. The chairman's action in calling the meeting would be endorsed by everyone having the interest of the State at heart. The matter was of great concern to Queensland. Dr. Maxwell's report ought to have appealed to an educated man like Mr. Barton. A fairer and more impartial report could not have been put forward. Dr. Maxwell pointed out that the kanakas in Queensland were paid only one-third of the amount that was paid to the white labourers engaged in the industry. It had been said that it was impossible to produce sugar in Queensland without the aid of black labour, and the statements of the people engaged in sugar-growing ought to be accepted as of some weight and value. Mr. Barton seemed to have listened only to the representations of a certain little party who objected to black labour, and to have closed his ears to the words of those whose interests were at stake. Supposing, however, that sugar could be produced by

white labour, and all that was required by the Commonwealth was so produced, what would become of the industry when the production was more than was required by the Commonwealth? With one or two good seasons they should be in the position of being able to supply more than the requirements of the Commonwealth. If white labour was used entirely then they would be in a serious position. As soon as they had a surplus above Australian requirements they would come into contact with sugar grown by the very cheapest labour, and the Commonwealth would be paying a high price for local requirements in order that they might be able to send away their surplus at a very great loss. He considered that no better means could be obtained to ascertain the facts regarding the industry than a Royal commission.

Mr. Abercrombie seconded the motion. He said the state of the country by the drought was very disastrous, and the proposal of the Federal Premier with regard to the sugar industry would be equally far-reaching in its effects. The matter was of great importance, almost of primary importance as far as the agricultural interests of the north were concerned, and in the south of Queensland their prosperity had been to a large degree dependent on the demand in the north for the produce grown in the south. He held that the people concerned in the industry, whose opinions they had obtained, were in a better position than the ordinary voter, who was supposed to have given a verdict against the retention of the kanaka, to give an opinion on such a question. The matter could be viewed from a religious, moral, commercial, or political aspect, and there was no justification for Mr. Barton's action, no matter from what standpoint it was viewed. When Mr. Barton and his confreres induced them to join in becoming one Commonwealth, he said no action would be taken without having the matter well sifted; but when he found it necessary to placate the Labour party to help him pass other measures, Queensland's interests were made subservient. They had been sacrificed so that he could obtain place and power. Some clergymen were inclined to say that there were objections to the kanaka being employed from a religious stand-point, but those gentlemen were false to their Christianity. They would cast the kanaka out of their midst, but did they forget that he was created by the Almighty just as much as they were? They had seen the result of the few demands made in the north by the white people to do the work. In every case it had been a disastrous failure. If they took away from the planters in the north the only labour they had suitable for the work, they were ruining their industry. It meant they must give up sugar-growing, and in a few years it would be wiped out. The kanaka was harmless, and in no way contaminated the whites. They were not in this respect like the Hindoo or other Asiatics. From the commercial stand-point it was necessary that the kanaka be retained. In the tropics, rice, coffee, &c., as well as sugar, would require black labour for their cultivation. If they were going to make any use of their northern territory they would have to do it with black labour, otherwise the land would have to remain waste. Unfortunately they had sent a majority of members to the Federal Parliament opposed to black labour.

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Mr Page

- That's the point. All the white men will have votes vet.

Mr. R. EDWARDS.-

It was a matter of selfishness. The Labour party feared that with blacks in the country some portion of labour might be taken from them, and they did not see that by doing certain work the blacks created work for the whites. Sending those men down had given Mr. Barton a certain right to say he was acting in accordance with the views Queensland had expressed at the federal election; but they were not returned by the votes of the majority of the right-thinking people in the State. A large portion of those who voted knew nothing of the conditions of the industry. Had a majority of men favorable to the retention of the kanakas been sent down, no doubt the Bill would have been altered. If black labour was taken away they would have to utilize the products of other places where sugar was grown by black labour or by Continental cheap labour. Malpractices might have been resorted to in the past in connexion with the kanaka, but that had been altered, and now the kanaka was better cared for than a great many white men cared for their wives and children in this city.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Now, we shall go farther north to get the opinion of the leading kindred agricultural societies. This is the opinion of the Townsville Pastoral, Agricultural, and Industrial Association of Queensland -

Resolved -

That the Townsville Pastoral, Agricultural, and Industrial Association views with alarm, based on first-hand

knowledge of the conditions surrounding the sugar industry in Queensland, the legislative interference with its present labour supply proposed in the measure before the Parliament of the Commonwealth ; (2) That, while putting to one side the untried problem of whether Europeans can labour in the cane-field without physical deterioration, it appears to the association to be certain that a sufficient supply of Europeans to supply the vacancy caused by the departing kanakas will not be available within five years ; (3) That, consequently, in Spite of the higher wages made practical by the fiscal proposals of the Commonwealth Government; the areas of cane under cultivation will decrease considerably, and this will increase the cost of manufacture so greatly that the mills will cease operation, and the industry be extinguished ; (4.) That the disappearance of kanaka labour desired by Australia should be so arranged as to give the sugar industry in the tropics a fair chance of continued existence, and this could be done without danger to the "white Australia," which we all desire, by extending the period for the substitution of European for kanaka labour to seven years, whilst stimulating production with the former class of labour by a rebate on the excise.

Then there is this telegram, concerning a meeting of the Isis Agricultural Association at Childers - Meeting last night of the opinion that the proposal in the Pacific Islands Labourers Bill will annihilate the industry. Demand commission of inquiry. Thank Mr. Philp for his letter, and indorse statement therein. Great enthusiasm.

Mr Fisher

- I have a resolution to the opposite effect from a meeting held in the same district.

Mr R EDWARDS

- These resolutions were passed at this meeting. : -

That this meeting of cane growers and other persons interested in the sugar industry, are of the opinion that the proposals contained in the Pacific Island Labourers Bill now before the Federal Parliament, if given effect to, will practically annihilate the sugar industry, and they urge the justice of the demand for a commission of inquiry before any decisive steps are taken with regard to South Sea Island labour.

That this meeting desires to express their thanks to Mr. Philp for his lucid exposition of the conditions surrounding our industry, contained in his letter to the Federal Premier, as it appeared in the Courier, of the 8th inst., and wish to emphatically indorse of their own knowledge the correctness of the statements contained therein, and to urge upon him the desirability of ascertaining to what extent the Federal Parliament has power to interfere with the labour laws of this State.

Mr Mauger

- What is the honorable member quoting from ?

Mr R EDWARDS

-From " The Voice of Queensland Agricultural Societies." Probably the honorable member has a copy of the pamphlet.

Mr Spence

- I thought we had the voice of Queensland from her representatives here, but it appears we have not.

Mr McDONALD

- Paterson. - We have only had the voices of New South Wales and Victoria so far.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- The Pioneer Farmers' Association of Mackay passed the following resolutions : -

Resolved-

That this association, consisting principally of small cane farmers, after many attempts during the past ten years to grow sugar entirely with white labour, find it impossible to do so successfully, because of physical causes. It is distinctly a climatic, not a financial, difficulty, and one which money cannot cope with.

The Kanaka Bill now before the Commonwealth Parliament, will, if carried into effect, seriously diminish the production of sugar in Queensland, and on a large portion of the northeast coast there is no other agricultural industry under such legislation that can take its place.

That the proposed legislation, if it become law, may benefit a few large mill-owners in the the south of Queensland and New South Wales, while at the same time ruining a large number of small growers in North Queensland, many of whom, in good faith, and on the understanding that there would be no sudden alteration in the existing labour conditions, and that kanaka introduction would not be abolished

until a sufficient substitute was provided, mortgaged their homes as security for loans amounting to £1,500,000. This was expended in the erection of co-operative sugar mills. These mills will now, in many cases, be worth scrap iron.

The association protests against the treating of the sugar, tariff, and labour questions as one, maintaining that they are all quite distinct. As the Queensland sugar industry employs some men at high wages, men of European race, numbering with dependants about 28,000, besides affording a large market for southern manufacturers and producers, it also is exposed to the most severe competition of cane sugars grown and manufactured entirely with coloured labour, costing 1s. a day in Java and Mauritius, and from European beet sugar, produced with labour costing 1s. to 2s. a day, and State subsidies by export bounties, it is most deserving of protection, apart from the fact that it also employs 9,000 kanakas. We also point out that under the Federal Tariff the cost of production will be considerably increased because of the new duties on implements and machinery. We also desire to have it clearly understood that the sugar industry of Queensland claims protection to counteract the bounty-fed sugar and sugar produced wholly by cheap coloured labour, quite apart from the question of kanaka labour.

The association desires to point out that although the kanaka, for forty years, has been coming between Queensland and the islands, they so far show no likelihood of becoming a component portion of our social system. Nor has the kanaka mingled with the white races ; so that the fear of him becoming in a future period a racial trouble is utterly groundless. In connexion with the foregoing, we point out that what is termed a piebald population is due almost entirely to Asiatics and aboriginals, and not kanakas. Asiatics always have been objected to by the small cane farmers.

We point out that at a comparatively short distance from the Australian coast are numerous small islands from which kanaka labour comes. These, geographically, belong to the Commonwealth. At the same time a powerful foreign nation is anxious to acquire their possession. We venture to submit that it is better statesmanship to bind these islands for trade and other purposes to the Commonwealth than to entirely sever our connexion with them.

That in the event of the Commonwealth

Government giving compensation to the cane growers, to which it certainly is entitled, the abolition of the kanaka still will be a misfortune to the Commonwealth. It will mean that the richest portion of tropical Australia will lie idle and unproductive, while a numerous body of European wage-earners; now employed there, will be compelled to seek a living elsewhere.

This association asks the other associations of Queensland to support the stand the Premier has taken on the subject, and express a hope that he will, in the interests of the State, maintain his firm attitude.

Now we come to the south of Queensland. I will next quote a resolution passed by the Drayton and Toowoomba Agricultural and Horticultural Society : -

That, in the opinion of this society, the effect of the proposed Pacific Islands Labourers Bill will be immediately disastrous to the sugar industry, and to the trade of Queensland generally ; also to the agricultural interests of the Darling Downs ; and suggests that it should not be proceeded with until a duly appointed Royal commission has fully reported to the Federal Parliament on the condition of the sugar industry.

The Bundaberg Council of Agriculture has passed the following resolution : -

Resolved. - 1. That the abolition of kanakas as proposed will be injurious to this State. 2. That it has never been practically demonstrated or shown by inquiry that cane can be grown by white labour. 3. This council would respectfully point out the injury a large number of struggling farmers would sustain if the present bill is passed, and would ask for a Royal commission to be appointed.

The secretary of the Halifax Farmers' Club has sent the following telegram : -

The Halifax farmers strongly protest against the Kanaka Bill being passed before a Royal commission inquires into the sugar industry. The bill at present means ruin to the farmers of this district. After years of pioneering and labour, the industry in tropical Queensland cannot exist many years without kanaka labour. White labour is not available or reliable. Thirty years' experience by the farmers of this district confirm the fact that white labour cannot and will not trash, cut, and load cane.

Mr Mauger

- Is that a sugar-growing district?

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- A great sugar-growing district.

Mr R EDWARDS

- This is from the Lockyer Agricultural and Industrial Society -

Resolved - That the committee of the Lockyer Agricultural Society heartily support the National Association of Queensland in protesting against the action of the Federal Ministry re the Pacific Islanders Bill.

Again, the Central Downs Agricultural and Horticultural Association have passed the following resolution -

Resolved - That, in justice to the sugar growers, the Federal Premier, before legislating on the kanaka question, should appoint a commission to inquire and report ; failing that, he should allow the sugar-growers the extended term demanded for the employment of South Sea Island labour.

These resolutions are from farmers of the Darling Downs.

Mr Fisher

- Has not the honorable member for Darling Downs been elected since that resolution was passed?

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Mr R EDWARDS

- No ; this resolution was passed since the honorable member was elected. Now I come to the electorate of the honorable member for Wide Bay. The Wide Bay and Burnett Pastoral and Agricultural Society have passed the following resolution : -

Resolved - This society views with alarm the proposed Pacific Islanders Bill now before the Federal Parliament, and it is of opinion that if such Bill is passed without modification it will ruin the most important industry in Queensland. It is, therefore, most desirable that immediate steps be taken to bring pressure to bear upon those who have the responsibility on such a question, with a view to getting an extension of the time at which such labour shall cease to be brought into this State.

Again, keeping to the same district, the following resolution comes from the Titana Fruit-growers and Farmers' Association : -

Resolved - That the association considers that the Kanaka Bill as proposed by the honorable Mr. Barton is far too drastic, and will tend to cripple the sugar industry of Queensland for years to come if carried out in full, and express the desire that it be extended to 10 years, and that we favour a Royal commission on the matter.

Next comes a resolution from the Western Pastoral and Agricultural Association, Roma -

Resolved - That in the opinion of this meeting it is undesirable to pass any legislation dealing with the question of kanaka labour until the receipt of a report from a Royal commission, duly appointed by the Federal Legislature, for the purpose of making an exhaustive inquiry into the subject, and that this Association consider that the Kanaka Bill, if passed in its present form, will inflict a gross wrong on a worthy and hardworking section of the community of Queensland.

Next the Mount Mee Farmers' Association say -

We believe that it would be very injurious to the interests of this State and the Commonwealth if the sugar industry was by any means discouraged ; and we also believe from Dr. Maxwell's report and other information that black labour is essential to the successful cultivation of sugar-cane. We still further believe that there is little or no danger to be apprehended from the continued immigration of the Pacific Islander. Therefore, we believe we are right in lending our aid in protesting against the action of the Federal Ministry re Pacific Islanders Bill. The secretary, in transmitting this, states that he was unable to call a meeting, but he had interviewed most of the members, and they unanimously indorsed the statements.

The latter part of the statement is straightforward, at all events. Then comes a resolution from the Burpengary Farmers' Association -

Unable to hold a meeting owing to the unfavorable weather ; but the chairman stated that the feeling of the members was unanimous that the Federal Government should not interfere with kanaka labour as at present regulated - at any rate, for a period of seven years. "Next I quote a telegram from Cairns. It comes from the Australian Pastoral and Mining Association of that place -

This society has placed on record that in its opinion the proposed legislation means that the cane-farmers will be ruined, and the land will revert to its natural state.

The next resolution is from the Mossman's Farmers' Association -

Resolved - The farmers of Mossman River, the most northern Queensland sugar district, see nothing but ruin and destruction in the Kanaka Bill.

The following telegram was read from the Hughenden Pastoral and Agricultural Association : -

Resolution passed in accord with views of your association re Pacific Islanders Bill, and association considers it would be injurious to sugar industry and colony at large if kanaka labour withdrawn.

The Townsville Chamber of Commerce sent this telegram : -

Chamber just unanimously passed resolutions protesting against the Kanaka Bill in its present form.

Anxious to co-operate with you and others for united action.

From the secretary to the Upper North Pine Farmers' Association we have the following statement : -

The secretary stated that owing to the short notice there was no time to call a meeting; but he had considered with some of the leading members, and they were confident that had a meeting been called a motion protesting against the action of the Federal Ministry would have been unanimously carried.

Mr. L.G. Gorrie, the president of the Queensland Acclimatisation Society, wrote: -

At a meeting of the council it was unanimously resolved to indorse the action of the National Association in its protest against the Bill.

From the Johnstone River Cane Growers' and Manufacturers' Association this telegram was received : -

Resolutions that petition be presented Federal Premier to reconsider proposed legislation, which means absolute ruin to northern cane-growers.

A telegram, which is addressed to the Hon. R. Philp at Melbourne, from the Mackay Harbor Board, was handed to me a few moments ago, as follows : -

At meeting to-day the following resolution was carried unanimously : - That the Mackay Harbor Board view with alarm the proposed legislation contained in the Pacific Island Labourers Bill now before the Federal Parliament ; that such legislation will be detrimental to the income of this board, owing to the reduction that must take place in the exports of sugar from which the board's chief income is derived, as well as from diminished imports. The board, having expended £25,000 in harbor improvements, and incurred liabilities for other sums of money to complete same, will be unable to carry on their work if the proposed legislation is carried into effect. The port being incomplete will be useless, and all the money spent will be lost.

There is no doubt that this will be a very serious matter to the Harbor Board of Mackay. If the sugar industry is in any way checked there will be no revenue, and, therefore, as money for these improvements was borrowed possibly from the Queensland Government, the lenders will never see a penny of it. It has been generally thought that all the evidence forthcoming in favour of the retention of the kanaka to work on the sugar plantations in the tropical portions of Queensland would be from that direction ; but honorable members will have noticed that I have read a number of resolutions which are strong evidence of a feeling, even in Southern Queensland, in favour of the employment of that labour. Here is other evidence from the secretary to the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce -

I have the honour, by instructions, to forward you a copy of a resolution which was unanimously carried at a quarterly meeting of this chamber, held last evening- " That, in the opinion of this chamber, it is undesirable to pass any legislation dealing with the question of kanaka labour until the receipt of report from a Royal commission duly appointed by the Federal Legislature for the purpose of making an exhaustive inquiry into the subject."

The secretary to the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce sends this resolution -

That, in the opinion of this chamber, the effect of the proposed Federal Kanaka Bill will be immediately disastrous to the sugar industry and to the trade and commerce of Queensland ; and we would therefore suggest that, before proceeding further with the Bill, an exhaustive inquiry be made.

The secretary to the Brisbane Chamber of Manufactures sends two resolutions, as follow : -

That, in the opinion of this chamber, the effect of the proposed Federal Kanaka Bill will be immediate disastrous to the sugar industry and to the trade and commerce of Queensland ; and we would therefore suggest that, before proceeding further with the Bill, an exhaustive inquiry be made.

We are also of opinion that if, in the wisdom of the Federal Parliament, it is decreed that kanaka labour be abolished, at least seven years should be granted to the sugar-planters before the provisions of the Bill are enforced.

From the Mount Bauple Sugar Company I received the following letter : -

At a meeting of the directors of the Mount Bauple Central Mill Company Limited, held on Saturday, 12th October, 1901, the subjoined resolution was earned unanimously : - "On behalf of the cane-growers at Mount Bauple we would respectfully express our opinion that the Pacific Island Labourers Bill will be ruinous to us, and we would respectfully suggest that the recruiting of the boys be allowed till 31st December, . 1907. ' Also that the rebate of excise on cane grown by white labour be 6s. a ton from the 1st January, 1902, so as to give every inducement for a vigorous trial of white labour in the cane-fields."

An Honorable Member. - Where is Mount Bauple ? Mr.R. EDWARDS. - In the electorate of the honorable member for Wide Bay. That is where the honorable member got that large minority.

Mr Fisher

- No ; I got a majority there. I got a majority in every sugar district but one.

Mr.R. EDWARDS. - I have also received two resolutions passed at a very large public meeting which was held in Brisbane on the 22nd October -

That, in the opinion of this meeting, the proposed Commonwealth legislation with respect to Pacific Island labour threatens the destruction of the sugar industry in tropical Queensland, and will prove disastrous to the trade, shipping, commerce, and wages-earners of the State.

That, having regard to the fact that special legislation already exists in Queensland dealing with Pacific Islanders, and restricting their employment entirely to tropical agriculture, this meeting is of opinion that it is desirable an exhaustive inquiry into all the circumstances connected with tropical agriculture should be made before action is taken by the Federal Parliament.

Mr Fisher

- Three-fourths of that meeting were against kanaka labour, and the chairman knew that when he declared the resolutions carried.

Mr R EDWARDS

- The resolutions were passed anyway.

Mr Fisher

- No.

Mr R EDWARDS

- This is the voice of the majority of that meeting.

Mr McDonald

- Of the minority.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I am going to pay a visit to the electorate of Wide Bay.

Mr Fisher

- I shall answer for that.

Mr.R. EDWARDS.- I hope that we shall hear the honorable member by-and-by on the evidence that I have produced. My only object in speaking and quoting at such length is that I feel it my bounden duty to place before honorable members all the evidence I can bring, so that they may have as much information as possible regarding the kanaka question and the sugar industry generally in Northern Queensland. I think that they want more information, as they are not in possession of all the facts which they ought to know, and which would enable them to legislate rightly on behalf of such an important industry in the sister State.

Mr Fisher

- Did not all these resolutions emanate from the Brisbane Courier ?

Mr R EDWARDS

- I can assure honorable members that I am only just beginning my remarks. I have only covered a very small portion of the subject.

Mr Fisher

- Put in a file of the Courier; it would do just as well.

Mr R EDWARDS

- The honorable member for Brisbane has quite a volume of information which he can lay before honorable members, and we feel that we are in duty bound to give honorable members all possible enlightenment on the subject. Now I desire to read a report of a special meeting of the Maryborough Chamber of Commerce, held on 22nd October. I need not read the names of those present. The report

states -

The president briefly stated the objects of the meeting, and touched upon the ruinous effect the Bill would have upon the sugar industry if passed in its present form. He had lately been informed by a gentleman who had spent thirteen years in Geraldton and Cairns, that the Bill would certainly kill the industry in the north. That gentleman was Mr. F. Hives, and his idea was that every responsible body in the country should cable a resolution to Mr. Chamberlain on a given date, to block the Bill if passed in its present form. Of course, that could not be done before the House of Representatives and the Senate had dealt with the measure, and it had been referred to the home authorities for the Royal assent.

Mr Higgins

- That is the very way to help the Bill on.

Mr B EDWARDS

- The next speaker was Mr. Harrington, who, I understand, is the managing director of Walker's Foundry, Maryborough, and who probably knows the Wide Bay district as well as does any man. Walker's Foundry employs something like 700 men.

Mr Fisher

- Not quite so many as that.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- At any rate, many hundreds of men are employed at the foundry from which the sugar plantations are supplied with machinery to the value of over £30,000 a year. The report continues -

Mr. W. F. Harrington, in moving the first resolution, said that Queenslanders were perfectly aware that sugar could not be grown without coloured labour, but the difficulty that beset them was to impart that knowledge to the southern people and the legislators in the Federal Parliament. No matter what facts and proofs they advanced they seemed to produce no effect on those persons, who regarded it as a foregone conclusion that the kanaka must go. If they would only come and see for themselves, or appoint a Royal commission, the people of Queensland would be satisfied. The press had been teeming with most impressive and convincing evidence, and yet they seemed to be in no more hopeful position now than when Mr. Barton delivered his Maitland speech. He thoroughly agreed with Mr. Hives that, if necessary, they must approach the Imperial authorities as a last resort to save the industry from extinction. If a united appeal were made, he felt sure Mr. Chamberlain would not turn a deaf ear to it. The Federal Government should have left the kanaka question in the State Government's hands to deal with. He was sure that Queensland would never have federated had she known that her sugar industry would be attacked in this ruthless manner. He moved - " That this chamber, in a most emphatic manner, protests against the Pacific Island Labourers Bill, now before the Federal Parliament, as, if carried into law, a cruel injustice will be inflicted on the sugar industry, and irreparable loss sustained by those engaged therein. They strongly urge that a Royal commission be appointed to inquire into the whole of the conditions of the sugar industry, prior to any legislation being enacted in connexion with the employment of Polynesian labour therewith. Failing the appointment of a Royal commission, this chamber urges an extension of the recruiting of islanders for at least seven years."

Mr McDONALD

- I rise to a point of order. I do not desire to interrupt the honorable member, but we have had such a number of these newspaper reports read to us that I think we should return to some form of order. Standing Orders 267 and 268 bear upon this matter, and provide that no honorable members shall read extracts from newspapers or other documents referring to debates in the House during the same session. These newspaper reports are pure comments upon the Bill which is now before the House, and upon the debates which have taken place in connexion with it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER

- It will be within the recollection of honorable members that, acting in another capacity some little time ago, I gave a ruling in accordance with the honorable member's contention. The committee then expressed the desire that reference should be allowed to reports dealing with debates during the current session, and, as that seemed to be the unanimous feeling of honorable members, I take it that the House desires that the same course shall be followed until our standing orders have been reported upon and amended.

Mr McDonald

- I submit that the debate on the second reading of the Bill has been concluded, and that we have now arrived at another stage altogether. The reports which the honorable member is now reading refer to a matter which has already been decided upon by this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER

- The honorable member for Oxley intimated to me that he intended to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, and he is now quoting the opinions of people in the State of Queensland in order to show why the Bill should be so referred. I have carefully followed the honorable member's remarks, and I cannot take exception to anything he has stated.

Mr.R. EDWARDS. - I ascertained, after consultation with the officers of the House, that I should be perfectly justified in the action I am now taking. I regret very much that it should be necessary for me to take up so much time, but I desire to place before honorable members all possible information.

Mr Mauger

- We have had that information direct - every one of us.

Mr R EDWARDS

- But I desire to place it officially before the House.

Mr McDonald

- Suppose we rake up the Hopeful case again - as we should be perfectly entitled to do.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- I hope the honorable member will do so, because he will then give us an opportunity of showing why the kanaka should be retained.

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Mr McDonald

- If we read the report of the Hopeful case there is no one in this House but would blush with shame.

Mr.R. EDWARDS.- The report proceeds -

Mr. HenryPalmer seconded the motion, and remarked that he began sugar growing 35 years ago on Tinana Creek, and had continued more or less in the industry ever since. The extraordinary measure which had been put before the country made them think that they had men legislating for them who were no better than fools. The way they were going about the abolition of the kanaka would be most ridiculous and absurd were it not so serious a business for the planters, especially in the north. As far as his long experience went, he had no doubt whatever that if the Bill passed the northern pin lanterns at least must go. It was only by coloured labour that they could maintain their position. So great would be the ruin of property, and the misery of thousands, that it was difficult to realize that a serious attempt was about to be made by persons presuming to be statesmen to pass a measure that would produce such direful results. There were legislators who were going to vote for the Bill who admitted that they knew nothing about the industry. It was scandalous the way this thing was being rushed through in a state of complete ignorance. The cry of "White Australia" at any price was a fallacious one, and would never be fulfilled. They were making the harmless kanaka the scape-goat for the time being, but if the kanaka went to-morrow Australia would remain almost as black as ever, and would continue so the end of time. No country in the world of the size of Australia, and so much of it in the tropics, was of one colour. The belief that white men would supplant the kanaka was utterly fallacious, and the bonus on cane grown by white labour would at best be but a temporary benefit to the grower. The grower must have a full supply of labour to keep the mills supplied, for unless the mills saw a sufficient supply of cane forthcoming for the season they would not crush at all. The effect of the Bill would be that the supply of cane would fall off, the mills would gradually drop out of operation, and the production of sugar would be so diminished that the people of Australia would no longer submit to the high duty and bonus to support it. There seemed little hope of impressing the southern people with these facts, and it seemed that they would have to go to the Throne for justice. Mr. Chamberlain was a sterling man where oppression was concerned, and he would not see the planters driven out and ruined.

Captain Mackellar supported the resolution, and indorsed all that had been said by the previous speakers. The resolution embodied what the planters had asked for when Mr. Barton first arrived in Queensland on his Ministerial tour, namely, that a full inquiry be made into the conditions of the sugar industry in Queensland before legislation was passed. He referred to the terrible depression that followed

the State anti-kanaka legislation prior to 1893, and said the effect of the present Bill would be infinitely worse. In the north the outlook was regarded as utterly hopeless, and it was hard to realize how very disastrous the effect of the Bill was going to be. Old residents would remember what Maryborough was in the busy days of the sugar industry on the Mary River, when from sixteen to twenty sugar mills, large and small, including Yengarie, were in full swing. It was Sir S. W. Griffiths' anti kanaka legislation that had crippled the industry in the Maryborough district, and it had never recovered its former position again. Most of the sugar lands were now lying idle, and where thousands were settled there were now but hundreds. In taking away kanaka labour the Federal Government should find a satisfactory substitute, and this should be done before restrictive legislation was resorted to. Mr. Barton had declared in Maryborough that, in any legislation that was brought forward, he would not allow such a great industry upon which Walkers Limited, the saw-mills, and other splendid industries in that town so largely depended to be injured ; but he had, nevertheless, struck a blow greater than they could yet realize. The Isis and Bauple districts would never have gone in for sugar but for the repeal of the restrictions on kanaka labour, and the assurance of the continuance of reliable labour that was given with it. He and many others had gone in for sugar growing solely on the understanding that reliable labour was to continue. He hoped that the southern growers, who might secure a few profitable years with the aid of the bonus and the surplus white labour of Brisbane, would not throw over the northern planters, but all stick together. Even the Nerang Central mill farmers, though so close to Brisbane, were unable to take off their crop without black labour. How, then, were the Mossman, Mulgrave, and other northern districts to get white labour to replace the kanaka ? The southern farmer, who imagined that he would get along all right with the bonus, should remember that, if the industry went out in the north, the people of Australia would not go on paying a bonus to keep up a high duty for the benefit of a handful of southern farmers producing a few thousand tons of sugar. Mr. G. H. Reid, who would probably succeed Mr. Barton, had declared that, when the kanaka went, free-trade would be resorted to. Dr. Maxwell had told them that in New South Wales and Southern Queensland many growers were possessed with the idea that if the industry died out in the north it would be all the better for them ; but it was a selfish and foolish notion, for it was only the great magnitude of the industry that induced the Federal Government to offer concessions and protection, and it was the north that gave the industry its great magnitude. He then referred to some of the arguments of the supporters of the Bill, such as the moral aspect of kanaka labour, and warmly denounced the slanderous and untruthful statements that were made under this head. Then there was the "slavery" cry, and he ridiculed the statement that the "boys" did not understand their agreements. It was strange that so many "boys" should return again and again to the plantations and work under them. In the great majority of cases every attention was paid to the moral, spiritual, and temporal welfare of the " boys." "Thej' could scarcely wonder at the attitude of the southern people when the Federal Premier made the wild and unfounded statements about the kanaka that were to be found in his speeches. He (Mr. Mackellar) thoroughly believed in majority rule, but it was surely only right that the majority should understand what they were doing. For that reason he appealed for the fullest inquiry, and that the matter should be thrashed out on the facts. If that were done, and the matter put before the public by impartial judges, he would then be prepared to bow to the decision of the majority. But if the majority still decided to deprive them of the labour which had been assured to them when they had invested their all in the industry, then fair compensation should be made for the losses they would suffer, because the present asset of from seven to nine millions would be worth not seven hundred thousand if there was no reliable labour to carry it on with. Those who had mortgaged their properties to the Government for central mills, and who relied on the promises of the State Government to continue kanaka labour, -would have a special claim for compensation. The planters did not wish to clear out of the industry if they could help it, but it would be a hard job :for the industries and businesses of the towns to keep going if they did, and they, therefore, had a claim on the townspeople to help them to fight this drastic measure. It was not a question of retaining the kanaka for an indefinite period, but of postponing the commencement of the restrictive process for a reasonable time to enable them if possible, to face the situation and overcome the problem of reliable labour. As the Bill stood, the withdrawal of the reliable labour set in immediately, without giving them any time to look about. Mr. Atlee Hunt, the Federal Premier's private secretary, had strongly advised him after the visit to Bundaberg that Queensland should send down several good lecturers to educate the south on the question. If casual visitors from the south were so impressed with what they saw, what might they not

expect from a Royal commission composed of southerners ? When the Bauple mill started, the majority of the growers decided to try and grow the cane without coloured labour, but now all but three were employing kanakas. He hoped that by united and strenuous effort they would at least succeed in gaining an extension of time.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

Mr Poynton

- From whose speech is the honorable member quoting ?

Mr R EDWARDS

- I am quoting Mr. Mackellar, a sugar planter in the Wide Bay district. Then the Maryborough Chamber of Commerce passed the following resolution -

That this chamber in a most emphatic manner protests against the Pacific Island Labourers Bill, now before the Federal Parliament, as, if -carried into law, a cruel injustice will be inflicted on the sugar industry, and irreparable loss sustained by those engaged therein. They strongly urge that a Royal commission be appointed to inquire into the whole of the conditions of the sugar industry prior to any legislation being enacted in connexion with the employment of Polynesian labour therewith. Failing the appointment of a Royal commission, this chamber urges an extension of the recruiting of islanders for at least seven years. The Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce, I understand, has despatched the following telegram to the Prime Minister : -

Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce humbly pray that in the opinion of this chamber, proposed Pacific Islands Labourers Bill will have paralysing effect on sugar industry and trades and commerce.

This State generally would respectfully suggest that the Bill be altered as follows : -

That recruiting be permitted until 31st December, 1907 ; that kanakas in Queensland not to exceed 10,000 at any time, and to be employed as specified under present Queensland laws and regulations.

Reasons for suggestions are that, owing to the large amount capital involved in the 20 a industry, if proposed Bill be passed much capital invested will be absolutely lost, and many worthy colonists ruined.

Ten thousand kanakas cannot possibly menace Australia in either racial or moral way. Health officer states there is not a kanaka half caste in this district ; that kanaka preferable to any other alien labourer ; wages earned by him spent in Commonwealth ; that kanaka does not compete with labourer, but creates higher-grade work for him ; that immigration of kanakas has done very much to civilize and christianize South Sea Islanders ; that during harvesting season it would be impossible to get sufficient white labourers to do the work. An additional ten hundred men would be required in this district, and to maintain that staff, a floating reserve of at least six thousand white men would have to be available, and that reserve does not exist here ; that the rebate of excise on sugar-cane grown exclusively by white labour be six shillings per ton, ten per cent., cane beginning 1st January next, for if sugar can be produced by white labour, every inducement should be given at earliest date possible to those farmers and planters who would endeavour to grow cane under these conditions, so as to prove conclusively whether sugar-cane can be so grown or not.

S. Meiklejohn President.

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- That is a good long telegram.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- This question" is so important that people are obliged to spend money in endeavouring to give honorable members as much information as is possible. The following letter, dated 23rd October, is from the Bundaberg Harbor Board : -

Sir, -I have the honour, by direction, to forward you herein the following resolution, which was duly passed at last night's meeting of this board : -

That the Federal Premier be written to and advised - '

That this board views with apprehension the provisions of the Pacific Islands Labourers Bill now before the Federal Parliament. This board affirms that its revenue is almost entirely obtained either directly or indirectly from the growth of sugar cane in this district. It has embarked upon, and during the past year commenced, a very heavy expenditure of £60,000 in connexion with a comprehensive scheme for river improvements, so as to enable suitable steamers to use the ports, such as are absolutely required by the

sugar industry. Anything tending to restrict the development of the sugar industry would be disastrous to the revenue of this board, and would probably prevent us from fulfilling our obligations to the State Parliament on account of interest and redemption of loan ; at least it would greatly embarrass the board. The Federal Government and this board are in harmony in desiring that the sugar industry should be carried on as far as possible With white labour. It is desirable that the change should be by evolution, mid not by revolution ; because, although the farmers might do their utmost, any sudden shortage in cane would probably close up one or more mills (as it is impossible* to work sugar mills, unless they are fully supplied) and a mill once closed seldom re-opens again, as we hare witnessed at Mackay and Maryborough. We therefore would respectfully suggest that to encourage the growth of cane by white labour, the Federal Government at mine make the rebate to cane-growers using white labour only, Os. per ton instead of 4s. per ton , also that the largo plantations bc allowed to divide their plantations into portions, and elect to grow certain of these portions with white labour only, and thus earn the rebate which would at the same time have the effect of gradually doing away with black labour, without placing too great a strain on the white labour available. This will induce and encourage both the small farmers and the large growers to endeavour to grow cane by white labour, which is the desire of all parties. To enable the above to gradually come into operation without imperilling the industry, we trust you will agree to allow the present Queensland Polynesian Act to remain unrestricted for at least four years, except that the number must not be increased beyond the present total. The above wo consider will both give large and small growers an opportunity to gradually change present methods, and will also induce all to give a fair trial to growing cane by white labour. This board fears that if the kanaka is hurriedly deported before other alien labour, the Asiatic aliens from the southern colonies, will be attracted to Queensland during the crushing season, while in tho slack season they would be idle and in relatively large numbers would form a menace to the white population of the sugar districts.

I have now to put before honorable members an account of a meeting held by the Chamber of Commerce, Bundaberg [House counted].

Mr BARTON

- Will my honorable friend allow me ? I think that the House has done its duty to-night. The State Parliament of Victoria has not sat to-day. We have got through as much business as was possible in the circumstances, and I will not accuse the honorable member for Oxley of endeavouring to obstruct the passage of the Bill.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I have no such desire.

Mr BARTON

- I say I will not accuse the honorable member of that, and he knows me well enough to understand what that means. So long as I have the assurance of the honorable member that there is no intention of obstructing the Bill-

Mr R EDWARDS

- I assure the Prime Minister that I have no such intention.

Mr BARTON

- I shall be quite content to allow him to continue his speech at the next sitting of the House. If the honorable member moves for leave to continue his remarks to-morrow, I shall agree to that course.

Motion proposed -

That the honorable member for Oxley have leave to continue his remarks at the next sitting of the House.

Mr MCDONALD

- I have no objection to the motion, but it appears to me that the only purpose which the honorable member for Oxley can serve in continuing his speech is to carry out the desire of certain politicians in Queensland, that certain opinions which have been expressed should appear in Hansard in order that they may be sent to England and used as a pretest against the passing of this Bill and the giving of the Royal assent to it. It appears to me that it will lead only to a considerable waste of time. It can serve no other purpose. We have listened very patiently this evening to a great deal of matter read by the honorable member, which has no weight or value whatever. It ho a sprung entirely from one particular source. I certainly should have given the honorable member credit for declining to allow himself to be pulled in this way. However, he has been pulled, and I am not going to raise any further objection to leave

being given to the honorable member to continue his speech to-morrow. Nevertheless, if wo allow the business of the House to be conducted in this way it will not be very creditable to us.

Motion agreed to.

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22:34:00

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.