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1901-09-25

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker

took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

NEW MEMBER

Mr. SPEAKER

informed the House that he had issued a writ for the election of a member to serve in the House of Representatives for the electoral district of Darling Downs, in place of the Honorable William Henry Groom, deceased, and that the writ had been returned with a certificate of the election of Littleton Ernest Groom, Esq., indorsed thereon.

Mr. L.

E. Groom took and subscribed the oath.

QUESTIONS

PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES ACQUISITION BILL

Mr WILKS

- In view of the request made by the Honorable John See, the Premier of New South Wales, in reference to the Property for Public Purposes Acquisition Bill, will the Prime Minister delay the passing of that Bill until the State Governments have had an opportunity to thoroughly consider what effect it will have if passed into law % Will the right honorable gentleman also provide an opportunity for the Commonwealth Treasurer to hold a consultation with the Treasurers of the various State Governments for the purpose of effecting an harmonious agreement 1

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- The matter involved in the telegram which I received last evening from the Premier of New South Wales applied specially to clause 45, and perhaps also had some slight reference to clause 44, of the Property for Public Purposes Acquisition Bill, and, in reply, I have informed the Premier of New South Wales that, while the Bill will be proceeded with by the House, the clauses in question will not be dealt with until there has been an opportunity for the full consideration which he desires. I have also made the suggestion to him by telegram that a conference should be held in Melbourne at an early date between representatives of the Commonwealth and of the State Governments concerned. Such a conference would be of a consultative character, merely for the exchange of views, in order to endeavour to establish that harmony and co-operation which we all wish to exist between us and the State Governments, and it is not proposed that it shall be the subject of distinct resolutions, or procedure of that kind, because, of course, the Commonwealth has a reserve power to legislate in all cases by virtue of the authority given to it by the Constitution. It is, however, earnestly desired by this Government that there shall be no occasion for complaint to be made by any State Government of our dealing inconsiderately or hastily with any matter of legislation in which its interests are deeply involved. I think this is a matter upon which a conference for discussion and explanation, which would smooth the way for every one concerned, might take place. In addition to answering Mr. See's telegram, I have intimated to each of the other State Premiers the substance of my telegram to him, and have asked them to express their opinions upon the subject.

Mr THOMSON

- Will the Prime Minister, before the second reading of the Bill is moved, lay upon the table a memorandum showing, in connexion with the illustrative value of £10,000,000 odd, what is the value of the property of each transferred department in. each State

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Mr BARTON

- I should explain in reference to this matter that the figures contained in the tables which some honorable members have already seen are not intended to represent with any approach to accuracy the amounts or values of the properties which will be the subject of transfer. They have been prepared merely to show by way of illustration how a proposed method of dealing with the question - not a method of compensation or valuation - should be arrived at. Almost any other set of figures would have done as well to show what operation the proposal would have. I want it to be particularly understood by honorable members that

there is no attempt on the part of this Government to lay it down that any figures set opposite the column of values are intended to operate as the ultimate valuation. The only intention is to endeavour to show how, with any given set of figures, the proposal will work out. We shall lay as much information on the subject before honorable members as we can. I do not care to delay the passage of the Bill, but I have agreed in my telegram to-day to postpone the discussion of the clauses in which the States are immediately concerned until there has been an opportunity for some such conference as has been suggested.

Mr THOMSON

- Perhaps I may be allowed to inform the Prime Minister of the nature of the information which I desire, and my reason for desiring it. "What I particularly wish to know is the value of the buildings of the Customs department in each State, and my reason for asking for that information to be stated separately is, that there is power under the Constitution Act to deal with the buildings of the Customs department differently from other buildings.

Mr BARTON

- I do not think there is any power to deal with any class of buildings differently from any other class, except so far as section 85 of the Constitution Act provides. I want my honorable friend to clearly understand that there cannot be placed upon the table by this Government at the present time any accurate valuation of these buildings. All we can lay down is rules as to the manner in which, in failure of an agreement between the Commonwealth and the States, the Governor-General's discretion with regard to methods, not of valuation but of compensation, may be exercised, subject to the advice of his Ministers. It is not possible for us to lay before the House an accurate valuation of these properties, for the reason that the State authorities are making inquiries on the point, and we must receive the result of those inquiries before we can institute - if we institute at all - any independent valuation.

SWEARING-IN PAVILION : CENTENNIAL PARK, SYDNEY

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I desire to draw the attention of the Prime Minister to a matter which some time ago formed the subject of a question which was answered favourably by him. Has he yet made provision for the re-erection in Australian marble of the swearing-in pavilion in the Centennial-park, Sydney ?

Mr BARTON

- No such provision has been made. A proposal has been received, asking that the Government of the Commonwealth should consent to the construction of some reproductions, in rather a large size, for the use of the various States, of the beautiful building to which the honorable member refers ; but no proposal has yet come before, us for the reconstruction of the whole building in marble on its present site. As the expense of such a work has been computed at between £17,000 and £20,000, my honorable friend will see that the matter is one which the Commonwealth Government must consider twice if the proposal is made to it. We are, however, considering a proposal under which each State, as well as the Commonwealth, would receive a reproduction of the building in a form which would serve to remind those who come after us of the beauty and the value of the edifice.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- What I referred to was a proposal for the re-erection of the structure at a cost of £8,000. The Premier consented to consider the question, though I did not at the time mention to him what the probable cost would be.

Mr BARTON

- The only estimate which I have seen with reference to this matter is one which was arrived at by a conference of experts held in Sydney, from which it appears that the cost would be £17,500 or more. Since then I have had no direct proposal from any source which warranted the supposition that the work could be carried out at a less cost. If I receive any such proposal I shall give it due consideration.

PACIFIC ISLANDS LABOURERS BILL

Mr PAGE

- I wish to know from the Prime Minister what is the cause of the delay in proceeding with the Pacific Islands Labourers Bill?

Mr BARTON

- I am afraid that the delay is such as is unavoidable in connexion with all projects of legislation. The Bill

will be distributed this week, and I hope that it will be found acceptable to all sides of the House.

THE TARIFF

Mr O'MALLEY

- Will the Prime Minister tell us when he intends to bring in the Tariff Bill ?

Mr BARTON

- The honorable member, with his very keen memory, must recollect that I promised last week to make a statement on the subject to-day.

Mr O'malley

- I was- afraid the right honorable gentleman had forgotten his promise.

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Mr BARTON

- I have now to intimate that the Treasurer will make his Budget speech next Tuesday week, on which date the Tariff proposals of the Government will be made known.

Mr O'Malley

- Will the Tariff be brought down at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, or in the evening ? It would be a convenience to the press to know.

Mr BARTON

- On that point I shall consult the convenience and general health of the Treasurer.

PAPERS

The Clerk laid upon the table the following papers : -

Return of men and women voters in South Australia and Western Australia.

Return of aliens in Queensland.

Return of Commonwealth officers not transferred from any State service.

Sir WILLIAM

LYNE laid upon the table :

Return of votes polled at the election, Darling Downs division, Queensland, held 14th September, 1901.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS

FOREIGN SHIPS OF WAR IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS

Mr HENRY WILLIS

asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice -

Whether the number of foreign ships of war admitted to Australian waters, at the same time, is limited, and whether the position of anchorage allotted to them can, in some degree, be controlled by the forts or torpedo boats ?

Minister for Defence

Sir JOHN FORREST

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

There is no limit as to the number of foreign ships of war to be admitted to Australian waters. Foreign ships of war are allotted anchorage ground under special regulations.

COMMONWEALTH CLOTHING FACTORY

Mr PAGE

asked the Minister of Defence, upon notice -

Whether it is the intention of the Government to initiate a clothing factory on similar lines to those on which the institution at Pimlico, England, is conducted ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- There is no such intention at present.

POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL

Report adopted.

EXCISE BILL

Report adopted.

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- I move -

That the standing orders be suspended to permit of the Bill being passed through its remaining stages. In submitting this motion, I believe I am interpreting the wish of the House, that the Bill should be sent on to the Senate, and all the preliminaries to the Tariff Bill should thus be settled as soon as possible.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION BILL

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In Committee

(consideration resumed from 20th September

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page 5081 .

Clause 4 -

The immigration into the Commonwealth of the persons described in any of the following paragraphs of this section (hereinafter called "prohibited immigrants") is prohibited, namely : -

Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of 50 words in length in the English language dictated by the officer.

Mr. ISAACS

(Indi).- When progress was reported on Friday, I intended to say a few words on this clause, and to endeavour, as far as I could, to bring this matter to something like a definite point. I believe we have really arrived at a somewhat critical juncture, and that we need all the reasonableness we can command to properly deal with this question. There is no real difference of opinion, as I gather, in this committee as to the object aimed at. On the one hand, the Government, I am satisfied, is as whole-hearted in its anxiety to attain this object as is any honorable member, and I should like to say, if I may presume to do so, that I am perfectly convinced there is no section of the committee, . and no honorable member, who, in whatever they have said, have evinced any want of appreciation of the value of the British connexion. Why should we ? From every consideration of advantage and sentiment, we ought to prize this connexion, and cherish it. But the discussion, after occupying a rather wide range of ground, has centred itself, if I may say so, in the question as it effects the Japanese nation. I do not know why we should have left the Hindoos out of consideration altogether ; but still, as a matter of fact, the discussion seems to have centred itself around the Japanese. For my part, I am only too ready to accord to that great nation the fullest meed of praise for the marvellous and magnificent strides it has made in the path of what we may call Western civilization. But, at the same time, it must be conceded that their characteristics and ours will not blend with advantage to this country. That is con- ceded, as I apprehend, on all sides of the committee. They would be a serious drawback to this country socially, politically, and industrially. I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that their admixture with this community would not tend to elevate the tone of this continent, or to dignify the Empire. From a political stand-point I cannot imagine their participating, as we "do, in this great grant of representative government that we possess. I cannot imagine that they, with their ideas, suitable no doubt for their own country, and admirable for their own surroundings and environment, would be suitable to guide and direct this country either in prosperous or in adverse circumstances. At the same time, I do not wish to see them settled in numbers on the soil in the character of a dependent people. As for their effect on our industrialism, I fear that very much ; and we have only to look at what is going on to-day in America, without recurring to ancient precedent, and to recollect that within the recent past - it is not, I am sorry to say, complete even yet - white operatives of Massachusetts, in the cotton factories, have been compelled to submit to a reduction of pay because of the longer hours and smaller wages of the blacks in the Southern States. We do not want that sort of thing here, and so far as we can avoid it, it shall not happen. So far it seems to me we are all agreed. Where is the point of variance ? The point of variance, if we concentrate the matter, is that some of my honorable friends wish to take, regardless of all other considerations, as it seems to rae. a course that certainly has the merit of being direct and undisguised, but which is open to the undoubted criticism that it is, by reason of its acknowledged offensiveness to a great and powerful nation - a friend, I hope, of the Empire - calculated to embarrass those who are at the head of the helm of the State in the old country, and who have, I do not hesitate to say, sufficient burdens already on their shoulders, without our 'unnecessarily adding to them, It is not a choice between two alternatives. It is not a choice, it seems to

me, between taking what is not inaptly described as the definite course on one hand, and a destandardising of our country. I should not hesitate if I had only these two alternatives to choose from. But if we can get, as I have no doubt we can, as effectual a means of carrying out our object - perhaps more effectual in point of time - and one that would not be open to the observation of being an affront to a foreign nation, and therefore an embarrassment to the Imperial authorities, I do not see why we should not take that course. If we have a

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equally good for ourselves and equally powerful, why reject it ?

Mr Wilks

- It would be equally insulting to the Japanese.

Mr ISAACS

- No, not equally insulting to the Japanese. But even if it were so, it would not be embarrassing to the home authorities, and that is a great consideration.

Sir William McMillan

- Is that what the honorable and learned member proposed in his speech on the second reading ?

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Mr ISAACS

- It is practically that proposal, but I am going to make a small alteration which I think will better meet the circumstances, and be the most advisable course. It is a small but important alteration which I think ought to be welcomed and gladly accepted by my honorable friends on the Opposition side. I cannot conceal from myself, and I am sure no honorable member will be able to conceal from himself, the necessity for circumspection. These are some of our earliest steps. These are some of the early efforts of Australia, which will have undoubtedly a great effect on our future history. While we must not fear to tread where it is necessary to tread, I do not see why we should go out of our way to take a different course when we have an easy one equally effectual and lead us to the same goal. It has been said that there will be peril to the empire if we take the step of excluding the Japanese. To repeat in effect what I said, if the only course open to us besides admitting them into the country was to put their exclusion on the face of the Bill, I would put that exclusion on the face of the Bill and run the risk, because the other peril would, in my opinion, be the greater. This Empire is a great Empire, and must expect to take perils and meet them as it is able to do. It is an incident of greatness, which greatness cannot shun; but if we have before us a course which I think will enable us to speak with equal force and efficiency, without the risk of a rejection of the Bill, what is to prevent our taking it ? I suggested the other day that we should insert a sub-clause in this Bill, providing that all persons and all classes and descriptions of persons who were declared by proclamation of the Governor-General to be 'prohibited immigrants should be prohibited' immigrants.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- That is what they did in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

Mr ISAACS

- By virtue of an Act of Parliament

Mr Henry Willis

- No, by proclamation.

Mr ISAACS

- We are taking the power by Act of Parliament. What I propose to do is to insert a few words of restriction, which will enable us to avoid putting upon the face of the Bill anything that can possibly be construed into an affront by any nation. The insertion of the words proposed will prevent any distinction from being made between nationalities. Their use would prevent the Japanese Ambassador in London from approaching the Imperial authorities and asking them if, as an ally and treaty-bound friend of the Japanese, they would permit a Bill to go forth to the world which upon its face bore an insulting distinction, to say nothing of the feeling that would be engendered by such a Bill in the case of some powerful princes in our Indian Empire. The course which I propose has the advantage that it will not leave it in the power of the Ministry to declare whom they wish to be prohibited immigrants. It will be equivalent to an Act of Parliament ; it will not run the risk of being rejected by the Home authorities, and when it becomes law it will speak with the voice of all Australia. My proposal is to insert after the word "namely," line 5, of clause 4, the following words : -

Any person under any class or description of persons declared by joint resolution of the two Houses of Parliament to be prohibited immigrants, or prohibited immigrants.

By adopting the method which I suggest we shall avoid placing anything upon the face of the Bill which can be construed into an insult to a foreign nation.

Mr Glynn

- That is only accomplishing our object by a subterfuge.

Mr ISAACS

- I feel sure that my honorable friend is animated by a desire to do what is effectual with the least possible friction. He will see that it will give power to the two Houses by resolution - just as they have the power now by legislation - to declare with all the force and effect of a united Australia who are to be prohibited immigrants.

Mr Henry Willis

- On whose initiation will the Houses decide ?

Mr ISAACS

- Any one can initiate the matter so far as that goes. My desire is that we shall get an effective Bill through. I am desirous of excluding undesirable immigrants, but I do not want to have on the face of this Bill a provision which may lead to its rejection or which may result in delay. If we insert the words which I suggest, not only shall we gain elasticity, but we shall enable the two Houses, without going through the formalities of protracted legislation, to say whom they desire to see declared prohibited immigrants. That will prevent any Ministry from having a despotic power, it will enable the whole world to see what is the opinion of the Parliament of Australia, and it will not leave it open to any foreign nation to ask the Imperial Government to disallow our legislation.

Mr Glynn

- What I would do I would do straight out, and not by a subterfuge.

Mr ISAACS

- Of course my honorable friends have the choice of doing this with a velvet glove or with the iron hand exposed. We can achieve our object as effectually in the way I desire as it can be accomplished in the way they suggest. But there is this important difference, that by adopting the method which I propose, there will be, so far as we can see, no possibility of rejection. There will be equal power and force resident in the Parliament of Australia.

Mr Fisher

- Would the Bill be rejected if it contained such a proposal as we suggest 1

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Mr ISAACS

- I do not think that it would. But it would probably cause serious embarrassment and ill-feeling, and I want to avoid that. Why should we fee the Imperial Government into a position which may be extremely obnoxious and embarrassing to them 1 I want still to have the same power in our legislation as we would get under such a Bill.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable and learned member is only postponing the affront.

Mr ISAACS

- I am considering the Home Government, and I am considering the Empire of which -we form a part. I am less solicitous about offering an affront to the Japanese- though I do not wish to do that - than I am of embarrassing the Home Government.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- How does the honorable and learned member know that the -course suggested will embarrass them '!

Mr ISAACS

- We have our own opinions on that point. We have it from the representatives of the Government in this Chamber that, in their opinion, the adoption of the amendment of the honorable member for Bland would embarrass the Home authorities, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that it would cause delay.

However, that is a matter upon which -we have to judge for ourselves. I believe that the adoption of my proposal will have the advantage of obviating any unnecessary friction or ill-will. At the same time, it will furnish us with an equally powerful and masterful grasp of the whole situation, and will enable us, with

equal force and vigour, to keep our country free from any -deteriorating or destructive influences, such as we are now seeking to avoid.

Mr Watson

- May I ask the honorable and learned member if he will defer moving his amendment until a decision has been arrived at upon the amendment of which I have given notice ? I would point out that his amendment occupies the same position as my own in the Bill. I refrained from moving my amendment on the last day upon which the matter was : under discussion, so as not to limit the debate, and .prevent honorable members from making speeches upon the general question. I therefore ask the honorable and learned member temporarily to .give way, in order that my amendment may be placed before the committee.

Sir William McMillan

- The debate on the second reading was brought unexpectedly to a conclusion when the honorable and learned member for Bendigo intended to speak, and there has been an understanding that the fullest latitude of discussion would be given at this point, until we came to the question of specific amendments. I do not think that that period has yet been reached, and I -would ask the honorable and learned member for Indi to postpone moving his amendment until 'the debate has proceeded a little further.

Mr ISAACS

- I certainly would not like to do anything that would displace the honorable member 'for Bland, but I do not see' that my amendment is antagonistic to his. There is nothing to prevent the two being carried, one after the other.

Mr BARTON

- May I make a suggestion, which I think will obviate any difficulty ? The amendment given notice of by the honorable member for Bland commences with the words " Any person," and then proceeds to specify its object. The amendment of the- honorable and learned member for Indi begins with the same words. It is quite competent for the latter to move his amendment as an amendment upon that of the honorable member for Bland, in such a way that the division upon the last moved amendment will take precedence of the other.

Mr ISAACS

- I did not understand that the honorable member for Bland intended to .move his amendment in this part of the clause. I most willingly allow him to choose whether his .amendment or mine shall be discussed first.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- In speaking upon this question I feel that it is not necessary to offer an apology for 'making what might be considered a second reading speech, inasmuch as it was understood when the second-reading debate -closed that honorable members would-be-able in committee to speak freely upon the general question. As one who has been sent here pledged to support a white Australia, I think I may be permitted to refer to the unfolding of 'the Government policy by the Prime Minister at Maitland. Upon that occasion he declared that he was in favour of -a white Australia. In -moving the second reading of this Bill he reiterated that the Government were pledged to preserve Australia for the Australians. Viewed in the light of the experience-gained in other parts of the world, it will be seen that paragraph (») of clause 4, as it stands, will not carry into effect what the Prime Minister has stated to be the policy of the Government. There has been a mandate from one end of Australia to the other for a white Australia, and it is the duty of every honorable member who has -pledged himself to it to bow to the decision of the :people and to see that their wishes are, as nearly as possible, carried out. A number of proposals have been brought forward by the friends of the Government for no other purpose, as far as I can see, than to prevent a straight-out issue from being placed before this Parliament. Those honorable members who support the Government admit that it is necessary that Australia should be preserved for the Australians, but they would like to put off the decision of this question to some distant date. I am here, however, to -give a straight-out vote, and as the Opposition have been good enough to say that they do not regard this as a party question, I think that it devolves upon the Government to come round as nearly as possible to the lines of the policy they have laid down. When the Federal constituencies were being addressed upon the various questions that were expected to occupy the attention of this Parliament, it was well understood that all parties were agreed that the coloured labour question should be decided at once and for ever as

far as Australia was concerned. It was admitted by the representatives of the Government that the influx of Chinese or other alien races was most undesirable, and the Attorney-General, in his speech on the second reading of this Bill, told us that there were no less than 50,000 coloured aliens in Australia to-day - the greater number of these being Chinese and Japanese, and a small proportion being Polynesians. It is our plain duty, therefore, to prevent any further influx of these coloured aliens into our midst, and no proposal having this object would, I think, be as effectual as that put forward by the Opposition - that is, the straight-out course. This question of excluding coloured aliens is no new one. It was debated in some of the provinces of Canada as far back as 1884. We know also that the matter has been fully dealt with in Africa. In Natal the colonists have been most persistent in their demands for the exclusion of foreign, coloured races, and although the legislation passed there has been referred to by the Secretary of State for the Colonies as

An example for us, it must not be forgotten that the particular form of enactment passed there was forced upon the Natal Government at the dictation of Downing-street, because the Hindoos raised a very strong protest against the proposed legislation in that colony. I believe that the Government proposal would prove ineffectual even with the insertion of the word "European" instead of the word "English." If the Government have a policy on this question, let them announce it. As the Opposition are disinclined to make this a party question, the Government will lose no prestige, and they will lose no influence by altering their present proposals. They may lose a little moral influence by sliding from one side of the question to the other, but they will not suffer in the estimation of this Chamber by accepting the decision of the House on this great question. I am of opinion that the Government proposal will be ineffectual for many reasons. I fail to see how the heterogeneous races that are to be found at Cairo will be prevented from entering Australia by the imposition of the educational test proposed by the Government. There are also large numbers of the natives of South Africa who would find the educational test no bar to their entering the Commonwealth, and large numbers of the Hindoos, who landed in Natal before the agitation was raised in that country against their immigration, are now able to talk English fairly well, and would find no difficulty in complying with the requirements of paragraph (a). Many of these natives were able, even before they went to Natal, to speak and write English fully up to the standard likely to be required by the officers administering this Act and one may travel through province after province in British India and find thousands of men who would be able to pass a test similar to that now in operation in Natal, and which the Government have embodied in this Bill. Away in the West Indies, again, there are hordes of coloured men, half-castes, and others, who would be able to pass any ordinary test such as is proposed in this Bill. At Hong Kong also there are tens of thousands of people who would similarly find no difficulty in doing all that was required of them under the educational test, and the same remark applies to a considerable number of the residents of Yokohama. In the islands - of the Pacific - in Fiji, in "New Caledonia, and in Tonga - there are many thousands of Polynesians who are able to read and write sufficiently for all the purposes of the proposed test, and in Samoa and in the Hawaiian Islands there are thousands of natives to whom no obstacle would be presented by it. In the Hawaiian Islands there are more schools in proportion to the population than we have in Australia, and the children are all taught to read and write - chiefly in the English language. Then again there is a Negro Republic in Africa where not only is the English language spoken, but where the currency and the weights and measures of Great Britain are in use. The population of that country would find no difficulty in passing this educational test - to say nothing of the millions of negroes to be found in the southern States of America. I am referring to all these places because they are adjacent to Australia. In San Francisco they have in Chinatown a population of 50,000 Chinese - a little colony in itself - who are more or less acquainted with the English language. All these people to whom I have referred can speak English fluently, and are endowed with sufficient intelligence to enable them to overcome any such obstacle as would be here presented. In the Hawaiian Islands the well-to-do people are principally Chinese, and half the population of Chinese and Japanese in Honolulu not only speak and write English well, but own most of the valuable property. The men who roll about in their carriages are half-castes, and belong to that race of men who have come into existence through the admixture of the Chinese, Japanese, and kanakas. It will, therefore, be seen that the proposal of the Government would not be sufficient to keep out hordes of men who would be free to come in here and add to the 80,000 coloured aliens who are already in our midst. These people would be easily able to pass the educational test, and the phrase, "Australia for the Australians" would be a byword, and would

have no meaning, just as "a white Australia" coming from the mouths of the Government really has no significance whatever. The facts I have mentioned must command the serious consideration of honorable members. I find that legislation restricting the invasion of aliens has been adopted in all the countries of Europe, and has been applied to aliens from any part of the world, lest the low standard of living of these people should have a tendency to degrade the people into whose midst they might go. Even in Turkey we find that for the reason just stated, objection is taken to the immigration of aliens of a degraded class. These low-class aliens are legislated against in all parts of the world, and notwithstanding the statement made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that it is a tradition of Great Britain that we shall not enact legislation that shall be prohibitory of these people, it is only in recent years that this matter has been neglected. We find that the question was under consideration, politically, as far back as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Mr. Wilkinson, who has written a book upon the alien invasion of Europe says -

To sum up, therefore, it appears that in all European nations - with one insignificant exception - some measures, more or less drastic, have been taken, either for prohibiting the admission, or for the expulsion of destitute and undesirable aliens. This policy is the deliberate outcome of years of thought and legislation. It is framed in the interests of the native population in each country, and is, in all cases, fully in accordance with the popular will. It is generally recognised throughout Europe that it is the duty of every State to deal with its own paupers and undesirable citizens, and it is recognised also that the only way to bring about that desirable end, is by other countries politely but firmly refusing to admit them. Thus it may be safely said, that in the continent of Europe, all countries liable to suffer from undesirable immigration have taken steps to guard themselves against it - with one single exception. That exception is Great Britain.

That refers to modern times. But I find that in Great Britain Alien Exclusion Acts were passed in 1390, 1402, 1439, 1491, and 1543, and in the reigns of Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth similar proposals to that advocated by the honorable and learned member for Indi were adopted in Great Britain, and undesirable aliens were excluded by proclamation. In the Georgian and Victorian eras the Alien Acts contained regulations for the expulsion of aliens "if the State requires it," and in 1846 Sir George Grey, in moving the adoption of the Aliens Act, said -

The grounds upon which it is proposed to pass this legislation are simply those which this country has always maintained, and has every right to maintain, namely, that of self-protection.

The people of Great Britain have also spoken out distinctly upon this question, notwithstanding the statement of the Honorable Mr. Chamberlain that the people of Great Britain would be greatly incensed if the Crown were called upon to assent to legislation prohibiting the lower classes of coloured aliens from coming into our midst.

I find that 46 labour organs and trades unions in Great Britain have condemned unrestricted alien immigration into the country, for the reason that we wish to restrict such immigration here - that it will have a tendency to lower the standard of living and morality, and to drag the people of the States down to the standard of the lowest class of immigrants who come to their shores. With these facts before us, we are justified in taking a course which will preserve Australia to the Australians, just as legislation is enacted in Great Britain and in other European countries against undesirable immigrants being admitted to their shores.

Mr Glynn

- The English Act of 1846 was never put into force.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Because there was no need to put it into force. It was special legislation, enacted at the time of continental disturbances, and could have been put into operation if the necessity had arisen. The Attorney General, in a very long speech, which has given great satisfaction to the supporters of the Government, sought to justify the measure which we are now considering, but, having very carefully looked through what he said, I am inclined to the opinion that all his sympathy is not with the Bill, nor with the Opposition, nor with the labour corner whose views have been represented by the honorable member for Bland.

Sir William McMillan

- He took a lot of trouble to show that.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Yes, a lot of trouble and a great deal of time ; and it takes a great deal of time and trouble to find out what his speech meant. He said - and it is a very important statement - that of 80,000 coloured aliens there are 40,000 Chinese, and that these 40,000 Chinese and more than 20,000 Japanese had come to our shores since he himself took a very active part in enacting legislation in what was then the colony of Victoria against their immigration. In his statement to the House he told us that he was speaking not for himself but as representing the Government ; so that all he has said has to be taken as representing the views of the Government of which he was the spokesman. He said -

There have been determinations which hereafter may have important consequences arising out of our administration, as well as other measures which will be submitted to Parliament, all having in view the accomplishment of the same end. That end, put in plain and unequivocal terms, as the House and the country are entitled to have it put, means the prohibition of all alien coloured immigration, and more - it means at the earliest time, by reasonable and just means, the deportation or reduction of the number of aliens now in our midst. The two things go hand in hand, and are the necessary complement of a single policy - the policy of securing a "white Australia."

It would appear from that that the honorable and learned gentleman is in favour of a white Australia. He told us that the threatened invasion in 1855 and 1883 received his careful and determined opposition, and that he indited a despatch to the Colonial-office, in which it was stated that Australia relied upon uniform legislation in order that its voice might be thoroughly appreciated and respected at Downing street, and would look to the Colonial office to see that diplomatic measures were taken, so that its wishes might be respected and enforced. For, he said -

We may have in the future some development which may call for the application of the Monroe doctrine in the Pacific. But far more important than that, and a far more significant declaration at the present time, is this for a white Australia. It is the Monroe doctrine of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I believe that it is. Australians have said definitely that they will have a white Australia, and whether this Government are or are not prepared to give it, the question will come up again. If they do not give it on this occasion, the people of Australia will still have it. Notwithstanding the fears of the Attorney-General of the possibility of the yawning cannon of the Japanese being brought to our shores by their ironclads, the Government will find that Australia has spoken out on this subject as America has spoken out upon the Monroe doctrine. America, indeed, has spoken upon the very question which we are now considering. She spoke upon it many years ago, and her voice has been respected. Our voice will also be respected if we are determined, earnest, and sincere. In 1896, the Premiers determined in conference that there should be uniform legislation upon this question, in order that provisions against the immigration of Chinese might be so pronounced that there might be no invasion or influx of these people in the future. But, although Bills were passed by the Legislatures of several States, and a despatch was sent from Victoria by the Attorney-General of the day, they were not assented to by Great Britain. I believe that the Victorian measure was assented to, and when it was found that Australia was in earnest and had passed uniform legislation which she expected, an was stated by the Attorney-General, who was then Attorney-General for Victoria, to be passed, the authorities in Great Britain said - "We decline to allow you to enforce legislation which will have the effect of making these people unable to enter Victoria." But when the Colonial Premiers were in London, Mr. Chamberlain had repeated conferences with them. He knew that they were able men, men as capable as himself, and he had to treat with them on equal terms. He had really to induce them to follow his advice, because their experience of Australian affairs was greater than his. He told them that there was only one measure that would be acceptable to the British Government, and that was what is now known as the Natal Act. He re-stated the case for Australia in these words : -

I wish to direct your attention to certain Legislation which is in process of consideration, or which has been passed by some of the colonies, in regard to the immigration of aliens, and particularly of Asiatics. I have seen these Bills, and they differ in some respects one from the other : but there is no one of them, except perhaps the Bill which comes to us from Natal, to which we can look with satisfaction- I wish to say that Her Majesty's Government thoroughly appreciate the object and the needs of the Colonies in dealing with this matter. We quite sympathize with the determination of the white inhabitants of these Colonies, which are in comparatively close proximity to millions and hundreds of millions of Asiatics, that there shall

not be an influx of people alien in civilization, alien in religion, alien in customs, whose influx, moreover, would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population.

Nothing could be more conciliatory than the statement there made. Mr. Chamberlain was talking to men who were not likely to be bluffed, and he found that he would have to go slow, and pave his way. He was leading up to something, a declaration such as really put the fear of him into the heart of the present Attorney-General, as honorable members will find if they read the honorable and learned member's speech. Mr Chamberlain was leading up to the determination which had been arrived at in Cabinet by the British Government to continue to refuse legislation to Australia, just as they are now doing to other parts of the world, such as Canada. He said -

An immigration of that kind must, I quite understand, in the interests of the colonies, be prevented at all hazards, and we shall not offer any opposition to the proposals intended with that object, but--

This "but" is most significant - we ask you also to bear in mind the traditions of the Empire, which make no distinction in favour of or against race or colour, and to exclude, by reason of their colour, or by reason of their race, all Her Majesty's Indian subjects, or even all Asiatics, would be an act so offensive to those peoples that it would be most painful to Her Majesty to have to sanction it. It is not because a man is of a different colour from ourselves that he is necessarily an undesirable immigrant, but it is because he is dirty, or he is immoral, or he is a pauper, or he has some other objection which can be defined in an Act of Parliament.

It is not the colour of the man that is to be the pretext for excluding him. It must be upon some other grounds that he is to be excluded. Mr. Chamberlain came from under the rose in that declaration, and he has been most consistent in carrying out that line of policy ever since. He extols then the industry of the Hindoo. Here we come to the old question that caused the British Government to be firm. They were apparently indifferent until objection was raised by the rajahs of India and the princes of Hindustan, who believe themselves to have come from the same stock as ourselves in past ages, who do not believe they are different from us in any shape or form, who say that they are as intelligent, and that their standard of knowledge, education, and art is as high as our own, and that they should be respected by all civilized people. We find that His Majesty the King is to be crowned Emperor at Delhi, which is the important place from which all these objections have come, as will be seen if the matter be looked into thoroughly. It is from that part of India that the objections have come to class and colour distinctions in legislation of this kind. It was not until objections were raised by the rajahs of India, and of Hindustan in particular, from which the emigrants to Natal were taken on labour agreements, that any action was taken at all; and their influence was so great in Great Britain as to cause the British Government to prevent the proposed legislation in Natal, and insist upon an educational test, so that the susceptibilities of the Indian princes might not be offended. It is not a question, they say, of colour, but a matter of character. I am not here to vote upon those lines. Domestic legislation, judiciously applied and administered, should be left to regulate the character, status, and the morality of people who are admitted to this country. I am here to vote on the coloured question - the question upon which Mr. Chamberlain says we are not called on to legislate. I am here to oppose the dictation of Mr. Chamberlain on this question, and to vote in favour of a "white Australia" - in favour of preserving the race, blood, and stamina of the people of Australia for all time. Mr. Chamberlain's recent despatch to Queensland is another instance which shows clearly what are the opinions and intentions of Downing-street on this important question. When the Home authorities recently rejected the Bill passed by the Government of Queensland for application to the northern part of that great State, they refused to allow any restriction to be placed on the employment of Asiatics in the sugar mills there. That Bill, to which Mr. Chamberlain would not advise Her Majesty to assent, embodied disqualification based on the place of origin, which is practically a distinction of race and colour, and in this matter Mr. Chamberlain returned to his old argument that we must not legislate against colour, but against character. In his despatch he said -

Any attempt to impose disqualifications on the base of such distinctions, besides being offensive to a friendly power, is contrary to the general conceptions of equality which have been the guiding principle of British rule throughout the Empire. But disqualification for certain employments on the sole ground of place of origin is a measure to which any Government concerned may reasonably object : and in the present Bill the aboriginal natives of two continents and of the Pacific Islands are disqualified solely on that ground.

It will be seen, therefore, that, according to this dictum, Polynesians should also be admitted to our midst, and, when once admitted, should have free access to every walk of life - that they should be employed as men may choose to employ them, notwithstanding the desire of the whole of Australia that they shall not be brought into competition with Europeans, who have to live up to a European standard. Mr. Chamberlain's attitude reminds one of the lines written by Dr. Mackay -

The second is a milder preacher ;

Soft he talks as if he sung :

Sleek and slothful is his look ;

And his words, as from a book,

Issue glibly from his tongue.

With an air of self -content,

High he lifts his fair white hands ; " Stand ye still . ' " ye restless nations ;

And be happy, all ye lands !

Fate is law, and law is perfect ;

If ye meddle, ye will mar ;

Change is rash, and ever was so :

We are happy as we are.

When we come to a consideration of the question as it arose in Canada, we find that the British Government declined to assent to a measure similar to that which we now have before us. According to a recent press telegram it appears that Great Britain, at the instance of Japan, has persuaded the Canadian Government to disallow a Bill lately passed by the Legislature of British Columbia, imposing an educational test for the purpose of excluding Chinese and Japanese immigrants, and forbidding their employment in certain kinds of work. That is, in effect, the Bill we have before us at the present time, though it goes a little further and provides what was provided in the Queensland legislation rejected a few months ago.

Mr Piesse

- That Bill specified the people.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The Bill really means Chinese, -Japanese, and other coloured people, say the people of India. The Chinese Restriction Bill of British Columbia in 1884 was enacted for the purpose of excluding Chinese, and that province of British North America has been most persistent in this matter. There is as much credit due to the people of British Columbia as to the people of Victoria for their efforts in this direction. From the very earliest period the people of British Columbia have legislated against the influx of Chinese into their province, and in 1885 they passed a second Bill even more stringent than that of 1884, in order to prevent an influx of Japanese into their midst. This raised amongst the Japanese a similar indignation to that which was shown by the Chinese in 1895-6. In 1884-5, the Chinese Emperor sent a commission to Canada to inquire into the condition of his people, and into the laws which operated against the equality of Chinese with Europeans. The Chinese Government made a protest at the Court of St. James, and urged that not only were those laws unjust, but also a violation of the treaties between China and Great Britain; whereupon Great Britain, as she has done on a more recent occasion, made representations to the Government of Canada that the laws should not be restrictive as against the Chinese. China in those days had not had the sad experience of a war with Japan, and her voice was as strong as that of Japan, and her desires quite as much respected. We find that the British Government treated the Japanese as they did the Chinese on a former occasion, but the same respect is not shown to China to-day, simply because she has no ships of war, though the intelligence of the higher grades of the Chinese is quite as high as that of the people of Japan, and should be respected accordingly. With these proposals before us, and with our experience of Great Britain in regard to legislation that has been enacted in other colonies, it is necessary that Australia should be firm if she wishes to have her voice respected. The Attorney-General in his speech recently took a sudden turn after perusing the despatches that were written to Australia from Downing-street, and we find that he is opposed to the definite proposals which are before us to-day. I would direct the attention of honorable members to the remarks of the Attorney-General, who said -

The Government have no particular love for this method of proceeding any more than for any other method, but they realized - as honorable members of this House who share their responsibility must realize - that when a reasonable request was preferred in a most reasonable conciliatory manner to the people of Australia, it had to be taken into account.

It is the opinion of the Attorney-General that the Government have no more love for this Bill than for any other Bill, and that they have no love at all for this restrictive legislation.

Mr Glynn

- A man should not defame his own offspring.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- He certainly should not.

Mr Deakin

- It is "a wise child that knows its own father."

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I should judge from that remark that the Attorney-General is not fathering this Bill at the present time, although he earlier stated he spoke for the Government. If the Attorney-General is not at one with the Government, have we not the experience of the Minister for Defence, who has no sympathy whatever with the Administration on a certain question, but said there was nevertheless such a thing as being faithful to it. Again, we have the case of the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, who, while he did not approve of certain legislation introduced here, said it was his duty to be faithful to the Government and to support the Bill. It appears, however, that the Attorney-General is not faithful to the Government. He has no sympathy whatever with the proposals of the Government, and I should think his place was, outside of this Ministry. The Attorney-General further said -

A nation which is capable of the achievements which Japan is able to exhibit artistically, and politically, and of the industrial expansion now going on in that country, is justified in resenting - as we should ourselves resent - any unnecessary reflection upon its character by another nation.

He said again -

Japan is justified in resenting 3113' unnecessarily offensive legislation on the part of another nation, just as we might object to being classed with the peoples of the Pacific Islands, as if the Polynesian residents of those islands and ourselves were on the same plane.

Further on, the Attorney-General said -

To lump all these peoples together as Asiatics and undesirables would naturally be offensive to a high-spirited people like the Japanese, and surely, without any request from the British Government or without any representations from the Japanese people, mere considerations of courtesy, such as should exist between one civilized people and another, should lead us to make this distinction. Considerations of simple politeness, such as honorable members extend to each other in this House, should at least govern the actions of civilized nations in their dealings with one another.

This legislation, it appears, is merely a matter of politeness and consideration for the Japanese - the politeness that one European would show to another is to be shown to the Japanese to the extent of admitting them to our shores. It appears that the Government have no policy on the question, if the Attorney-General is to be taken as their spokesman. The Secretary of State for the Colonies would appear to have won over the Attorney-General to his way of thinking, and the latter is of opinion that the British Government and the British connexion must be supported to the extent of casting aside the aspirations of the Australian people, and admitting coloured aliens to our midst, On the ground that to do otherwise would interfere with the British Government in certain negotiations they are conducting at the present time. If Australia is to be cast aside on every occasion that a knotty point is raised in the East, I suppose that we shall repeat the experience which we had when the war broke out in South Africa. Upon that occasion the very first slice of concession which had to be made was made to Germany and the United States by giving to them the Samoan Islands. The concession was one which was opposed to the desires of the Australian people, and although a mild protest was raised at the time, that protest was not sufficiently backed up by the Governments of the day, out of consideration to the delicate negotiations which were in progress at that time between certain countries and Great Britain. It was feared that these people would step in and support the Boers against Great Britain. These concessions will have to be

made at the expense of Australia, because the plane of battle is now being moved to the Pacific Ocean, and it is in this part of the world that these matters will be fought out in the future. Every concession that is made will be made at the expense of Australia, and at the sweet will of Downing-street. Whilst Mr. Chamberlain and the Government of this Commonwealth urge that the adoption of such a proposal as that of the honorable member for Bland would embarrass the British Government, we have every reason to believe that they would not be embarrassed in the slightest degree. Under a treaty between Great Britain and Japan, provisions have already been assented to in favour of Australia legislating against the influx of coloured aliens. In this treaty it is stated that the people of Great Britain and Japan shall be at liberty to travel within the countries mentioned, and shall be protected. It is provided that they shall be as free in one country as in the other with certain exceptions. Those exceptions extend to India, the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, the Cape, Natal, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, and New Zealand. Thus we see that Australia is at perfect liberty to legislate against the influx of Japanese. The Japanese has no voice in the matter. Under that treaty the Japanese Government have already assented to Australia legislating in favour of his exclusion. Mr Glynn

- But they asked us to adopt separately the spirit of the treaty.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I think that some action was taken in Queensland. There is no reason why we should not act because we have everything to gain, and were excluded from the operation of the original treaty. Notwithstanding this fact, we find that in British Columbia, which is one of the provinces of Canada, the Imperial Government, at the simplest hint from Japan that she was displeased at similar legislation, recently used their influence at Ottawa to prevent such legislation from coming into operation. It is for us to see that the aspirations of the Australian people are not thwarted either by the action of the present Government or of Mr. Chamberlain in Downing-street.' He desires to abrogate this treaty in favour of the Japanese simply because he has a knotty question to settle in the East. But if he has about him men who are capable of discharging the duties of diplomatists, this question will be dealt with just as America dealt with it. In America they will have no fuss. If they are in earnest they say so, and their opinions when they are advanced are respected. There they have dealt with this question with a strong firm hand, and their decisions have been enforced, even though by so doing they recently gave offence to the Japanese. Certain Japanese ladies, when called upon to submit to the ordinary test which is required of persons travelling into American territory, in order that it may be determined whether or not they are suitable persons to be admitted to the country, objected. Quite a fuss was made through their representative, but they were very soon told by the authorities at Washington that America would govern her own affairs as she thought best. As a result, these Japanese women were dealt with in the same way as other people were dealt with. The decision of the American authorities was at once adopted, and no more was heard of the matter. Just after the Spanish-American war was concluded, the American Government were confronted with the question of whether they should admit into the United States the coloured people of Porto Rico, the Hawaiians, and the Filipinos. A decision was immediately arrived at by the Supreme Court of the United States that the United States of America could govern her colonies in any way that to Congress seemed best. As a result the Filipinos, Hawaiians, and Porto Ricans are not admitted into the United States to-day, although they are colonists of that country. America will not forego, at the present time, her right to exclude undesirable immigrants even in favor of these people, to whom she has given the protection of the stars and stripes. That is a case in point for Great Britain to consider. Great Britain says that her Indian subjects shall be admitted to any part of Australia. Australia, however, does not desire their presence, and is prepared to enact legislation to prevent them from coming here. The colonial aspect of this question was very much under notice in 1887. It was at that time the Chinese immigration aroused the irritation of the industrial community of this continent, and their voices were heard upon the public platform. Deputations waited upon the Premiers of the various Australian colonies, and they made their voices heard to such an extent that united action was taken against the influx of the Chinese. The Emperor of China - as in the case of British Columbia - sent a Commission to Australia. The commissioners went from one end of Australia to the other, and found that there were restrictive laws in operation for the exclusion of the Chinese, but not for the exclusion of people from European countries.

They made a protest against this discrimination, and urged that it was in violation of the laws and treaties existing between China and Great Britain. The result was that Lord Knutsford sent a circular letter to the Governments of Australia, calling upon them to answer the objections which had been raised by the Chinese Court. Immediately an outcry was raised all over the continent against this circular letter. It appeared from the tone of the letter that the Government of the day were opposed to the legislation then in operation. Lord Carrington was called upon by his Ministers to send home a despatch which had no uncertain ring about it. The other colonies sent similar despatches. The answer of Australia was so full and complete that Lord Knutsford had to do what Mr. Chamberlain would have to do if we were only sufficiently firm. He had to surrender to the expressed decision of the several Cabinets of Australia. When he received the replies of the Governments he telegraphed to know under what law the Chinese were restricted from coming to our shores. A reply was sent by the late Sir Henry Parkes, and I think that it is worthy of consideration. That veteran was told by Members of the New South Wales Parliament that he had no Act of Parliament to support him in the stand which he had taken. Coming from so great a constitutional authority - from a man with 50 years' longer experience in colonial affairs than has Mr. Chamberlain - the answer was significant. He said -

I care nothing about your cobweb of technical law. I am obeying a law far superior to any law which issued these permits, namely the law for the preservation of society in New South Wales.

That was the stand taken up by Sir Henry Parkes, who, by the way, is seldom quoted in this Chamber. Lord Knutsford again telegraphed to know upon what law the Chinese were excluded, and the reply of Sir Henry Parkes was that both laws and treaties must give way to the strength of colonial feeling. That was the decision of Sir Henry Parkes on that occasion. And I would ask, what is the colonial feeling to-day? It is undoubtedly strongly against the admission of Chinese or Japanese into our midst, and there is also a determined feeling among the people of Australia that the Polynesians should not be admitted here. Furthermore, there is an impression on the part of the people that the legislation proposed by the Government, being similar to that in operation in Natal. - or rather upon the statute-book of that colony - will be ineffectual.

Sir John Forrest

- Where has it been ineffectual?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- In Natal.

Sir John Forrest

- Oh! no.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Furthermore, the law in British Columbia has proved ineffective, and so far as Natal is concerned, the authorities there were not permitted to enact the law they desired to have brought into operation. I would refer the Minister for Defence to the law that, was enacted in British Columbia, in 1884, which was passed to exclude the Chinese; it was found insufficient for the purpose, and an amending Act of a more rigorous character was passed. If we desire to know the experience of British colonies upon the Chinese question, we have only to refer to the little province of British Columbia, and to the colony of Natal, in order to find that in both those places the law has proved ineffectual.

Sir John Forrest

- Does the honorable member refer to the education test?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Yes. If the right honorable gentleman had been in his place during the early part of my speech, he would have heard me give a list of the places which are within a few days' or at most three weeks' journey - of Australia, where there are hordes of people who would be able to pass the educational test provided for in the Bill. It has been proposed to provide for a test in some European language instead of in the English language; and I should like to know what is meant by "a test in any European language." If a negro comes here, and is prepared to go through a test in the English language, is it proposed that on his passing such a test he should be required to go through a further examination in the French language, and after that in the Dutch language? If any such course is taken, it will be a brutal one unworthy of the intelligence of men representing the whole of Australia, and I should not be prepared to support any such

method of exclusion. If a man is able to pass one educational test - assuming that an educational test is adopted - he should be enabled to enter the Commonwealth. But as a means of exclusion, even tests in two or three languages would prove ineffectual with many men belonging to the coloured races. Some of the natives of Ceylon, for instance, are able to talk Dutch almost as well as Dutchmen, and they can talk English very well, while a large proportion of them can talk French and write it too. At Cairo, the same class of people can be found. If we are reasonable all we can ask is that aliens should pass a test in one language. Then we should have the standard of civilization - the standard which Mr. Chamberlain wants, and the standard which the Princes of India want ; and we should have hordes of men coming here, and should find ourselves face to face with a problem similar to that which now confronts the people of the United States. Moreover, we could not possibly keep out the people of the Pacific Islands, who talk what they call the American language. There will be hundreds of thousands of aliens who will be able to come in under the labour regulations relating to tropical agricultural pursuits in Queensland just as readily as they can do to-day. There is only one means of keeping Australia white, and that is by absolute exclusion, and if the present Government are afraid of the Japanese they will find that the people of Australia do not share their alarm. If the people of Australia are determined that they will not have the Japanese any more than the Chinese, we shall have to obey their will. It has been said that the Japanese have a higher development of art and culture than have the Chinese, but the Attorney-General is not supported by reliable writers in that statement. It is found that the Chinese are quite abreast of the Japanese in all matters of business, and friends who are engaged in business in the East, tell me that as commercial men the Chinese are far superior to and are more reliable than are the Japanese. We have not forgotten that during the China-Japanese war the Japanese did not behave themselves at Port Arthur any better than did the Chinese before them. The Japanese, however, have ships of war, and have had some training, and they also have the swagger of the Britisher ; because of this some people are afraid of them, but the people of Australia have exhibited no such fear. They have put their foot down, and have said, with no uncertain voice, that they will have a white Australia, and I am prepared to vote against the Government if need be on this question, in order that the will of the people may be accomplished.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I regret that I had not an opportunity of addressing myself to this Bill during the second reading debate. This question is one which I think we cannot in any way magnify. It is undoubtedly the most important question that Australia can be called upon to face. It is one that is generally admitted to be difficult of solution, and the proposal of the Government shows us at once the trouble that has been experienced in dealing with it. The moment I saw the solution offered by the Government I came to the conclusion that it was grossly inadequate to meet the demands of the situation, and after all the thought that I have been able to give to the subject, and all that I have heard during the debates in this House, I have come to the conclusion that no real solution has been presented, short of the perfect one which is embodied in the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. The debates that I have taken place on this question have been spoken of in one or two quarters as displaying disloyalty and immoderation in many respects, but, from all I have read and heard, I think no one, either in our midst or in the mother land, could accuse a single speaker of having used any expression that was capable of being construed into disloyalty or immoderation. The matter is of such vast importance that we should be wanting in that fair sense of the responsibility due to the position we occupy if we did not speak out as plainly as honorable members have done, and I think I might go further and say that still more plain speaking is required if we are to adequately impress the Home authorities as to our feeling on this matter. No one could take exception to the general tone of the discussion. There has been no disposition on our part to any spread-eagleism or "hifalutin" upon a matter in which we admit that the embarrassments of the Home Government are considerable, and I feel that, determined as we are to arrive at a proper solution of this subject, we shall always approach it in a spirit of loyalty and moderation. At the same time I object to the question being hemmed round with what I might call the tradition which has ruled in Great Britain that there should be no distinction of race or colour in any of our enactments. Political principles are never fixed, the world is moving on in everything, and in all political matters we are in a state of flux. Whatever the tradition referred to may have been in the past, and whatever good it may have done, I hold that it has not been a universal tradition, and is not such a tradition as ought to rule us today. When we have to deal with a

question of this sort we should not slavishly follow traditions or precedents. We have, in this rising Commonwealth of Australia, to make precedents for ' ourselves, and we have to display that originality of thought, that definiteness of expression, and that sincerity of act and emotion that were exhibited by our fellow men in the United States in the early days of their history. I hope, therefore, that we shall not approach this great question trammelled in any sense by tradition or precedent derived from any part of the world. The problem is ours, and must be solved by us, and the only way we can solve it is by adopting the amendment of which notice has been given by the honorable member for Bland. The problem is one which is peculiar to Australia. It affects no other part of the world as it affects us. We have taken as a heritage from our predecessors this vast continent, which they have done more than any other race in the world could have done to bring to its present high state of prosperity, and we take this heritage under a Constitution which is second to none for the democratic development of its principles ; and if we are to develop this great land in the interests, not only of Australia, but of the whole civilized world, we are bound to see that the civilization here is maintained as an Anglo-Saxon civilization. Therefore, this is a great national question, and I am happy to say that there has been no attempt to make it a party question in any sense whatever, but, on the other hand, a patriotic unanimity of desire to allow party feeling to slumber whilst we are dealing with this matter. Outside the House an opinion seems to have been formed that this is a labour question - that is, that it is interesting alone to what are known as the labour organizations of Australia. I deny, however, that in that sense this is a labour question. It is a national question, and, though I am ready and willing to follow the leader of the labour party - since he has brought forward an amendment which adequately expresses my views - I deny the right of any one to assume that the interest in this matter is restricted to any one section of the community. If any proof were required of this view of the facts, we have it in the speech delivered by the honorable member for Wentworth very early in the debate. That speech, to my mind, was one of the best, if not the best, which has been delivered on the question in this Chamber, and it has given a feeling of great satisfaction to the whole of Australia. In the honorable member we have a gentleman who is noted for his loyalty and his caution, and who is not considered by any one to have a bias in the direction of labour or social legislation. He grasps the nettle, and tells us plainly, after a lifetime of commercial activity, and after long experience in the political world of Australia, that the only way to obtain what we desire is to move boldly in the direction of it. If anything was required to prove to us that we are united in this matter, and that it is a national and not a labour question, the admirable speech delivered by the honorable member does so. The danger to Australia has been referred to over and over again, and I do not think it can be magnified. Here we have a fair new Commonwealth, its lands almost unoccupied, offering every inducement to people to come from all parts of the world and settle amongst us. There are close to our shores, in view of the modern means of transit, hundreds of millions of people of a civilization which differs from ours. We know well from recent experience that great numbers of these people would be only too willing to move out of their over-populated lands, and to come and settle on our fertile shores. It would be very much to their advantage probably, but it would certainly not be to the interest or for the good of the people of Australia, if they did. Our civilization is distinct from that of the nations of whom we are in this matter afraid - and I use the word " afraid " advisedly. We are afraid that our civilization will be permanently injured by contact with a large number of persons of races belonging to a different civilization. To my mind it is not a question of colour at all. The distinction of colour comes into it ; but it is a question of difference in civilization. Since my boyish days, when I read books upon the civilization of mankind, I have regretted that there are so few civilizations in the world. I regret that the civilizations of the American continent became extinct, because I believe that it would be a good thing for the world if we had a greater variety of types of civilization than we have. But I do not think that anything is to be gained in the interests of humanity or of Australia by intermingling the existing civilizations. We see in the natural world that no good comes from hybridization, because hybrids reproduce the vices of both parents with the virtues of neither, and for this reason I think we should preserve our civilization intact and uncontaminated. I am, therefore, prepared to support the amendment at all costs and at all hazards. I am willing to admit that the Japanese, the Hindoo, and the Chinese civilization may ultimately evolve something higher in the development of humanity, but whatever it evolves will necessarily be something different from that which has been evolved by European civilization. With my faith in Australia, and the grand start she has had, I look forward to seeing European civilization carried to a higher eminence in Australia than it has yet been

in any other part of the world. Therefore I hold that, whatever may be the cost, and whatever time it may take to accomplish the object we have in view, this House should, in the interests of the Commonwealth, take a decided stand, and move steadily forward year after year until the end is obtained. The very nature of the legislation which is likely to be enacted in Australia will provide an additional attraction to those whom we wish to exclude. The tendency of our legislation is more in the direction of socialism, of improving the lot of the masses, than that of the legislation of any other part of the world. This must necessarily create conditions which will attract men of civilizations which I hold to be inferior to ours. The question is one which we must solve, not for the present day, but for posterity. I do not believe that I or my friends, or our immediate descendants, are likely to suffer greatly from the invasion of the races which we wish to exclude. But there is no doubt that the danger to our remote descendants is extremely great, and even threatens their political extinction. We have to legislate to-day not so much for ourselves as for posterity. That being so, we can go as slowly "as we like, so long as we keep in view an adequate solution of the problem. It has been said by some that we, a mere handful of people, occupying this continent - a mere 4,000,000 - have no right to set up our will against the desire of 40,000,000 of people residing in Great Britain, as expressed by their representatives. But, as we are endeavouring to solve this question not for ourselves but for our descendants, we must look forward to a time when the population of Australia is likely to be 100,000,000, and that of the dear old mother land may not exceed 60,000,000, and we have therefore no right to allow the opinions of the larger population there now to settle the question in a way which will hand down a legacy of increased difficulty to our descendants. If the population of Australia is likely to become 100,000,000 within a little over a century, we must ask ourselves, in the interests of the whole British race, what is to be the character of this future Australian people? If we admit races of another civilization, we are likely to have a mongrel breed, thoroughly out of sympathy with the aspirations of people of the British stock, and Australia will then be no friend of Great Britain in her hour of need and trouble. But, if we preserve the characteristics of our European civilization, the Greater Britain that is to be here will be the natural ally and friend of the mother country in those troubles, which, judging by the history of humanity throughout the centuries, must come upon her sooner or later. In the interests of Great Britain herself we should preserve here the English race, and make it so prosperous and free that Australia will be the best security for Great Britain in years to come. I do not think that the magnitude of this question is well understood in the old country, or that Mr. Chamberlain, although he has been so ably advised upon it, understands it as we do. He does not know the temptations which Chinese and Japanese have to come here. The great mass of the English people have no interest in the question at all, and if we voice the feeling of Australia in such a way that it will be impossible for the people of England to misunderstand it - if we give good reasons for the faith that is in us - we shall, by this debate and the comments which will take place upon it, so instruct them that their future Ministers, who will have to decide finally upon legislation of this sort, will not be able to withstand our wishes. We have had kings in England who were statesmen, and statesmen of the British race who were kings. The greatest men in English history were men who would not have thought twice as to how to deal with this question. In England they are celebrating - and I think it is a pity that we have not had a similar celebration here - the millenary of Alfred the Great. He was an ideal Englishman, and if the question could have arisen in his day, or if he had lived in our day, it is evident in what way he would have dealt with it. How would Queen Elizabeth have dealt with such a question had she had a dependency like Australia? How would such men as Pitt, who hailed with satisfaction the American revolution when he knew the gross facts of the case, have dealt with it? How would men like Rhodes deal with it? The giving of annoyance to Chinamen, the irritation of the Japanese, the coming into conflict with the Indian subjects of His Majesty would have been difficulties which would have been brushed aside by such rulers as unworthy to weigh in the scale with the hopes and fears of Australia at the present moment. But in what way 'do the Ministers of the Commonwealth propose to deal with the problem? They have brought down a measure the fourth clause of which provides that no one shall be allowed to enter the Commonwealth unless he can write 50 words in the English language. I thought at one time that Ministers were acting under secret instructions from the Colonial-office in this matter; but, when the egregious folly of this test is considered, one is forced to admit that that cannot be so. Many persons of Japanese, Chinese, and other races whom we desire to exclude, can read and write English far better than the natives of friendly European powers who are desirable immigrants. Such a clause as this - as I pointed

out to the Prime Minister when he introduced the Bill - would exclude French Canadians, and he said, in answer to my interjection, that he would deal with that matter directly. I have not seen that he has dealt with it in any way. A clause like this- would have prohibited my fellow-countryman - if I may be allowed to call him so - the honorable member for West Sydney, had it been in operation when he arrived in this country at nine years of age, and when he could not speak or write a word of English. A clause such as this would prohibit the natives of the Channel Islands, the Gaelic inhabitants of the North of Scotland, and many other very desirable immigrants. But it would not prohibit many undesirable immigrants, the exclusion of whom is the very object of the Bill. Japanese could come and go through the test, and the Chinese, knowing of the test would work up their knowledge and be prepared to pass it. Hindoos will do the same, and the answer to all this by the Prime Minister, so far as he has given an answer, has been a sort of- enigmatic assertion, " We can provide for all this ; you must trust the administration." In other words the proposals of the Minister have no principle, and all we have to depend on is the administration of the law by the officers of the Government. What will that amount to ? How is the Act to be administered ? When a Japanese presents himself to a landing waiter, has the visitor to be reported to the superior officer as a man speaking very good commercial English, but as a man who is an undesirable immigrant on account of his race ? Is that the way in which this Act is to be administered ? Is it to be that the superior officer will say - " Oh, give him schedule 4," ordering him to write some 50 words of Johnsonian English containing the peculiar old Latin derivations into which the doctor was so famous for turning his thoughts - a task which would at once floor the Japanese, and cause him to be sent away ? On the other hand, if a desirable German immigrant approaches the same officer, has he, though possessed perhaps of no more English than would enable him to say " good-day," to be treated under schedule 16, and asked to write out 50 words from the Child's First Reader, and before he has settled whether " dog " is spelt with a " t " or a " d," to be admitted as a desirable immigrant? The Prime Minister has admitted that he is not committed to this proposal altogether - that it is not a vital principle of the Bill, but that he is willing to make the test a European language. If a Japanese can speak and write English and French well, will he have prescribed some antique Spanish diction, or 50 words, from some Florentine poet? Is a German who comes here to be allowed to pass in his own language, while we stop the Japanese who can speak French ? If that is the intention I hope the committee will pause before we commit ourselves to such a piece of deceitful legislation, wanting in principle and in everything that ought to commend it to honorable members. We have no right to look at the consequences of passing this measure with the amendment of which the honorable member for Bland has given notice. If we think that the amendment is the light way of obtaining that which we all wish to obtain, and we think that that which we wish to obtain is absolutely necessary for Australia, we must leave the responsibility of vetoing this measure with His Majesty's Ministers at home. I do not myself fear that the Bill will be vetoed. I am willing to admit that in the first instance it may probably be vetoed ; but I am perfectly certain that if the same measure is presented again, some solution of the difficulty will then be found, if it has not been found in the interim between the Bill being first vetoed and its second presentation.

Mr Mauger

- How long will that take ?

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- It will take, at the very longest, two years. I do not know whether the honorable member for Melbourne Ports favours the amendment or not, but the course I suggest would give an adequate and final solution of the difficulty. The Bill, as proposed, gives no solution whatever. The clause has been adequately described as a piece of hypocritical legislation, which means more than it says, and which is to be administered in such a way as to give expression to the will of the Ministry of the day. That is not the way Australia ought to legislate. We ought not to give power to Ministers to administer an Act in any way they like. If we were dealing with a matter of internal administration, we would not submit for a moment to a clause which could be administered one way for one person and another way for another, and if we would not submit to such legislation in our internal affairs, we have no right just now, when we are for the first time making our voice heard in the councils of the world, to frame a measure on such deceit and obliquity; but we ought to act on principle in " scorn of consequence." A vast majority of honorable members who have spoken have been entirely against the Government proposal. Some honorable members, however,

have been fairly frightened by this bogey of the Colonial office, and have admitted that if it comes to be a question of vitality to the Government they will support them. That is a poor statement to have to make in support of the clause, namely, that if they were free to vote, they would vote against the Government proposal. When the Government told the committee that though the Bill is not vital to the Government the clause is vital to the Bill, the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne said that in that case he considered himself free to vote against the clause and in favour of the amendment. The Prime Minister, whom I believe we are to hear again on the subject, spoke undoubtedly under very great restraint. I looked for the cause of that restraint, and I can see nothing further than that he is depending on the administration and not on the principle of the clause. That is, I have already said, a wrong and wicked principle for the committee to adopt. The Attorney-General, in speaking in support of the Government measure, delivered one of those able and eloquent speeches for which he is so justly famous. No better speech probably has been delivered in this debate ; but that speech, from the beginning right through till nearly the end, was, every line of it, an argument in favour of the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. It was only when the Attorney-General came to the finish and had to square those views which he had expressed, and which are so thoroughly in accord with those of the whole of Australia, with the Government proposal that his speech came to a "lame and impotent conclusion." The speech was probably the very best that could be delivered in favour of a "white Australia," and of those definite conclusions which are aimed at in the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. But notwithstanding that the fact is plainly apparent to the Ministry and to everybody else that their proposal is totally out of accord with the opinions -of this committee, and that the whole community of Australia is out of sympathy with it - that it has been demonstrated over and over again that it will not secure the end we are aiming at, and that it is oblique, -deceitful, and hypocritical in its expression - notwithstanding all that, it seems that the Government are going to stick to the proposal, and endeavour to pass it through the House, or to drop all effort at legislation on the subject. I hope that even at the last moment the Government will re- consider their position, and will take advantage of the reiterated fact that the

Opposition have not the slightest inclination to make a party question of this Bill ; and that Australia is almost entirely united as to the wisdom of taking definite and strong measures in an endeavour to settle this question ; and that they will allow the amendment to go into the Bill, and be sent to the Home authorities. They can then consider what they will do if the Bill should be defeated, and probably, under these circumstances, some solution of the difficulty may be found. If the measure as it now stands should go home and be assented to, no possible solution will ever be obtained ; and for the reasons I have given I am going to support the amendment of the honorable member for Bland.

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Mr KIRWAN

- Like the "honorable member who has just sat down, I am going to support the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. I do this after very serious consideration, and I do it because I think that amendment is a better scheme than is the proposal of the Government. It is a better scheme, not only in the interests of the Commonwealth, but also in the interests of the Empire of which we are a part, and I say this having full regard to the very serious difficulties that are attendant on the question. It is the first question with which the Commonwealth Parliament has had to deal that is of international importance, and it is a question the solution of which will have very far reaching results. I must say, having fully considered the difficulties attendant on the satisfactory solution of this question, that the proposal of the Government must create a good deal of dissatisfaction amongst those throughout the Commonwealth who expected an effective scheme for a "white Australia," of which we have heard so much. Prior to the federal elections, the Prime Minister and the various members of the Ministry, together with those who supported their policy, talked a great deal about a " white Australia," and made it one of the most prominent planks of their platform ; they now come forward with this education test, it is somewhat disappointing to find such a very small result from all their talk on the question. The proposal of the Government, as several honorable members have pointed out, is objectionable, because it will not keep out undesirable immigrants, while it certainly may keep out desirable immigrants. What was said by, I think, the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister was to the effect that this educational test - or at any rate there was the implication - would be applied only to the coloured races. But even if that be the case, I

consider that if the Bill be passed in its present form it will be a very bad advertisement for Australia throughout the whole of Europe. This clause of the Bill will be published in the press of the northern countries of Europe, and it will be seen that an education test is necessary before admission can be gained to Australia. The consequence will be an undoubted diminution in the class of desirable immigrants who have for some years been coming to the Commonwealth - immigrants from Germany, Scandinavia, and other parts of northern Europe, who have added very- materially to our population. It has been proposed - or at any rate there has been a suggestion to that effect - that instead of the education test being in the English language, it should be in a European language. If Japan, or any other Eastern nation, feels very sensitive on matters of this kind, I fail to see why it should not be equally objectionable to them to have the limitation in the form of a European language. The discrimination will be just the same. It will be a matter of language and not of colour, and from the Japanese point of view I should say the original proposal, as it now stands in the clause, would be far more acceptable.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Japanese say that the English test is not objectionable, but that the European test is.

Mr KIRWAN

- The new proposal of the Government will not meet the wishes of the Japanese, and I fail to see why we should consider Japan in every matter of this kind. I very much doubt whether the British Government, if they knew the seriousness of the question to us, would pay so much attention to the wishes of Japan as some honorable members seem to think they are likely to do. To my mind the strongest argument against the proposal of the Government is that it has been adopted in one of the States of which I have some knowledge - Western Australia. This proposal, which was adopted in Western Australia in 1897, has proved altogether ineffective there.

Mr Barton

- On the contrary, since then there has been a large excess of departures over arrivals in Western Australia.

Mr. KIRWAN. - I fail to see what the number of departures has to do with the matter at all. The point which we have to consider is that of the number of the arrivals.

Mr Barton

- There have been 23 arrivals since the end of 1898, and 117 departures.

Mr KIRWAN

- The return which I have here states -

The Natal Act was passed by the Western Australian Government in 1897. Since the beginning of 1898, the arrivals of Asiatics have numbered 525, and the departures 890.

When we consider that the population of Western Australia is about 180,000, it will be seen that a total of 11,000 undesirable immigrants would be added to the population of the Commonwealth on the assumption that the same ratio of arrivals continued. The Prime Minister has directed attention to the fact that the arrivals included only 34 Japanese. I am sure that he does not know the facts in regard to the number - of Japanese women who are upon the gold-fields of Western Australia, or he would doubt very much the figures contained in that official return. For many years there have been a large number of Japanese women arriving on the gold-fields, and I think that, if he inquires from the police, he will find that 40 per cent, of the women of bad repute there are Japanese. There has been no check imposed upon the arrival of these women. I have here a copy of the North Coolgardie Herald, which is published at Menzies. It has a leading article which shows the state of the alien trouble in that district. The article states - The following petition is in course of signature at Mount Morgans and district: - "We, the undersigned business people and residents of Mount Morgans and district, hereby pledge ourselves that on and after 1st September, 1901, we will not patronise, by agent or otherwise, any teams that are owned or driven by Asiatics, or deal off Asiatic hawkers. "

Honorable members can imagine the state of things which exists in Western Australia, where this Act has been operative since 1897, when the people have to adopt a boycotting system such as is here proposed. Yet this Act, which has proved so defective in Western Australia, is introduced here by the Government.

Mr Mauger

- Is that result due to administration or to defectiveness in the Act?

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Mr KIRWAN

- These are the results after this Act has been in operation in Western Australia since 1897. Under the circumstances, I certainly think that we should hesitate before we agree to the proposals of the Government in reference to this matter. A good deal has been said concerning international complications which may arise in the event of our passing the amendment. We know that those international complications have reference chiefly to Afghanistan and Japan. The British Government are naturally desirous of securing the friendship of the Ameer of Afghanistan, and it is feared that any act of this kind might possibly offend the susceptibilities of the Japanese people. It is a question, therefore, of whether the Imperial authorities are going to consider the interests of the Commonwealth or some diplomatic success that they may secure in the East. To the majority of the people of the British Isles, I believe that the friendship of Australia is ever so much more important than is the friendship of Japan or Afghanistan. The British Parliament, in conferring upon us the Constitution which we at present enjoy, gave the Commonwealth the right to legislate upon matters of immigration and emigration: I have looked up the debates which took place upon the Commonwealth Bill in the Imperial Parliament. There was, I find, no indication given in those debates that there should be any limitation of the powers of the Australian Commonwealth in regard to emigration and immigration. In introducing the Bill, Mr. Chamberlain referred to the 39 articles which embody the legislative powers of this Parliament, and said -

Thirdly : Legislation dealing with the people of another race, not being natives of either of the States. I think that has in view legislation in regard to Asiatics.

That reference shows pretty clearly that the Imperial Government fully expected that some legislation would be passed applying to Asiatics. There is no reference to any limitation of the powers of the Commonwealth in this matter. It seems to me that the Home Government have learned more about Australia since Mr. Chamberlain made that noteworthy utterance which has guided the Government in the preparation of the Bill which they have now presented to this Parliament. It would appear that the Imperial authorities recognise the seriousness of this question of a "white Australia," and have decided to give us a free hand in regard to it. That view is borne out by the instructions sent to the Governor-General, which vary very materially from the instructions sent to the ordinary State Governors. In the instructions sent to State Governors, a number of Bills are reserved for the Royal assent, but in those sent to the Governor-General, Bills relating to immigration and emigration are not so reserved. This points to the fact that the British Government expected us to pass some such restrictive legislation. I would point out also that, if we do legislate in this direction, and Japan feels disposed to resent our action, and approaches the Imperial authorities in regard to it, the latter will be able to reply - "We have given to the Australian Commonwealth the fullest powers of self government. We cannot, therefore, interfere in a matter of this sort." Probably the Home Government would also point out to the Japanese that Australia could keep out not merely Japanese but their own subjects from India. I believe that that is the stand which they would take up, and certainly it would be a strong position for them to occupy. It must be remembered that we know nothing regarding the present feelings of the Home Government upon this question of immigration, although we know what were their views upon it many years ago. If the British Government realize the seriousness of the position, I feel sure that they will stand by us irrespective of the consequences. If they are opposed to the exclusion of Asiatics, it is because of their ignorance upon the question. It is a matter affecting our national existence, and if that fact were brought home to the British authorities, I feel certain they would support our attitude. We are here to preserve this continent as a heritage for the white races of the future. Australia is one of the last spots on the earth which have not been filled up, and it is for us to see that it is reserved for the white races. When the Home authorities realize that, they will be just as anxious to keep Australia white as is the Commonwealth. Not long ago the Commonwealth sent troops to South Africa to fight shoulder to shoulder with the British troops. They rendered invaluable aid to the Empire at a critical time, but I would point out that this question of a white Australia is of more importance to Australia than were the issues involved in South Africa to the Empire. I believe that the Imperial authorities will support us in connexion with this matter in the same way that we supported them in the Transvaal.

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Mr FULLER

- As one of those honorable members who have been returned to the House pledged to bring about a white Australia without delay, I make no apology for now addressing the committee. At the time the federal movement was at its height, great stress was laid upon the necessity for the Federal Government introducing, at the earliest possible moment, such legislation as would prevent the immigration of coloured aliens such as it is desired to keep out of Australia, and the feeling of the people in this direction was clearly expressed during the Federal election. At the present time we have too many of these aliens in our midst, and the sooner we get rid of them the better it will be for the whole of the people of Australia. Amongst the advantages that were prominently brought before the people as likely to follow from the federation of the States was the fact that instead of speaking as several disunited States upon matters of vast importance such as this, we should be able to make our influence felt as a united people ; but at the very first stage of our national existence, instead of approaching the British Government with firmness and determination, and straightforwardly and honestly putting before them the wishes of the Australian people, the Government propose in this Bill that we should speak with fear and trembling.- The whole of the actions of the British Government in connexion with the Australian colonies have been of a character which should have inspired us with every confidence, and have deprived us of all. hesitation in openly stating our views to them. "When the federation of Australia was first placed before the Imperial Government they hailed with delight the advent of a new nation growing up under the British Crown, and everything that has been done by the British Government in connexion with the birth of the Commonwealth should have induced us to regard them with feelings quite opposite to those which now seem to animate the Government. I believe it is absolutely dangerous to the social welfare of the whole of Australia to have these coloured aliens imported here, and I will support the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, because I think that it proposes to deal with the matter in a straightforward and honest way. The method proposed by the Government, namely, that of adopting an educational test, would, it seems to me, cause just as much irritation to a great nation like Japan as if we were to openly declare our intention on the face of the Bill. It is proposed to substitute the word "European" for "English" in connexion with the educational test ; and if we do that we shall immediately say that whilst the people of Europe can come in on such a test the Japanese shall not be admitted at all. That surely would be giving as straight a thrust at the Japanese as could possibly be administered. I believe with the honorable member who last spoke that the British people think more of us Australians, and of our friendship and kinship, than they think of the Japanese or any other people ; and this House will be recreant to its trust, and to its pledges to carry out the wishes of the Australian people, if we do not let the British Government know what is the true feeling of the Commonwealth on this subject. Governments exist to carry out the wishes of the people, and if ever there was a matter upon which the people of Australia have spoken out straightforwardly surely it has been with regard to their desire for a white Australia. I do not think one honorable member, except perhaps the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Cameron, has declared himself as being otherwise than in favour of having a white Australia, and whatever the Government may do now, it is certain that the pressure of public opinion throughout the whole of the Commonwealth will bring about a white Australia at an early date. It was the pressure of public opinion that brought about the Reform Bill in England, and public opinion in Australia will insist that we must have a purely white people ' settled on this continent. The references made to our attitude towards the Imperial authorities bring to mind the position taken up by the late Sir Henry Parkes in New South Wales, when that State was only a petty colony. When the Chinese question came up in 1888, at a time of great tumult in New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes made use of language in moving the second reading of the Chinese Restriction Bill, which I think honorable members might very well bear in mind when deciding how they will vote upon this subject. Sir Henry Parkes in speaking in general terms upon these matters said - "For a generation - long before some of the men who are listening to me took any part whatever in public life - and. at all times, I have opposed the introduction of Chinese upon these, as I conceive, national, and to a large extent, philosophical grounds. I maintain that in a country like New South Wales it is our duty to preserve the type of the British nation, and that we ought not, for any consideration whatever, to admit any element that would detract from, or in any appreciable degree lower, that admirable type of nationality. Now, I would like for a moment to examine the ground on which I stand. I contend that if this young nation is to maintain the fabric of its liberties unassailed and unimpaired, it cannot admit into its population any element that of necessity must be of an inferior nature and character. In other words, I have maintained at

all times that we should not encourage or admit amongst us any class of persons whatever whom we are not prepared to advance to all our franchises, to all our privileges as citizens, and all our social rights, including the right of marriage. I maintain that no class of persons should be admitted here, so far as we can reasonably exclude them, who cannot come amongst us, take up all our rights, perform on the ground of equality all our duties, and share in our august and lofty work of founding a free nation.

During that debate Sir Henry Parkes referred to the action taken by himself as head of the Government in communicating with the Home authorities, and he stated that in his despatch of the 31st March, 1888, he put forth our claim to be considered in the exercise of treaty rights in these words -

As these colonies form an important part of the Empire, it is submitted that our cause of contention is of sufficient national concern to be taken up by the Empire ; if we have no voice in the making of treaties, it seems only just that our interests should be considered and protected by those who exercise our power.

Further on the claim proceeds -

It is respectfully submitted that the examination of these principal phases of the question can only lead to one conclusion - namely, that the Chinese must be restricted from immigrating to any part of Australasia. The despatch concluded in these words, which formed the most significant part of the message that was sent to the Home authorities -

However desirable it may be to avoid the irritation and conflict of interests which may arise from local legislation of a drastic character, if protection cannot be afforded as now sought, the Australian Parliaments must act from the force of public opinion in devising measures to defend the colonies from consequences which they cannot relax in their efforts to avert.

It appears to me that it is the duty of honorable members to do their best to see that no efforts are wanting to carry out the determination of the people of Australia as expressed at the election of representatives to this House, and as far as I am personally concerned, believing that it will be to the interests of my native land to keep out these alien races, and that we should be relieved of those amongst us at present as soon as possible, I intend to vote for the straightforward course proposed by the honorable member for Bland.

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Mr BROWN

- The clause now under discussion is without doubt the vital part of this Bill, and the vote of the committee upon it will decide whether this is to be an Alien Restriction Bill in fact or in name only. During the last election the question of the exclusion of coloured races from Australia loomed up more largely before the people of the Commonwealth than any other matter, and there was good reason for it. We have been engaged in subduing this vast continent, and in peopling it, and in carrying out that work in these latter days we have been brought face to face with the fact that there will have to be a contest for supremacy with the alien races of Asia - particularly with the Chinese, Japanese, and the peoples of the great Indian Empire. One of the main considerations that influenced the people of Australia in deciding that it would be a good thing to federate was the fact that, in spite of all efforts on the part of the different States to shut out undesirable immigrants, the work in that direction had been ineffective for want of unity. It was the hope that some effective measures in this direction might be brought into operation by the Government of the Commonwealth that gave a great impetus to the federal movement, and it was rightly considered that, speaking as one people, we should be able to deal with this question more satisfactorily, and at an earlier date, than if we continued to act as separate States. There was no dissentient voice, so far as I am aware, as to the desirability of keeping a white Australia, but there was the greatest unanimity on the part of all political parties in promising the electors that their wishes should be carried into effect as speedily as possible. The Government, in accordance with their pledges, have submitted a proposal, but instead of bringing down a straight-out measure to prohibit the introduction of these undesirable races, they propose to establish an educational test. So far as we can see at present, it is intended that we shall appear before the world as being concerned, not so much with the question of race, as with the question of education, because on the face of the Bill it is proposed to enact that, if people outside our bounds can attain a certain knowledge of our language, that will be sufficient to throw the Commonwealth open to them. But that is not the position that was put before the electors at the last election. Then the people desired that no consideration should be allowed to stand in the way of a white Australia, and I do not see how we are going to attain that end unless we are prepared to legislate directly for the exclusion of the

Asiatic races to which so much exception has been taken. It has been admitted that the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland is definite in its terras, and that it will totally exclude these Asiatic races from the Commonwealth; but the question of expediency has been raised, and we are told that it will be better to follow a roundabout rather than a direct method. We are to tell these people whom we do not desire to see here that we do not object to their colour, but to their inability to speak our language, and that when they have made themselves sufficiently acquainted with it to pass the test to which we submit them, We will waive all objection on other scores, and receive them into our midst as equal with ourselves. I hold that that is not the position which was put before the electors of the Commonwealth, nor a compliance with the mandate which they gave us. If they spoke to this Parliament upon any one question more clearly than upon another, they so spoke upon this question, and the mandate which we received from them was to see that the Commonwealth is preserved for the white races of the globe. On those grounds I support the amendment in preference to the provisions in the clause as it stands. The amendment provides in a straightforward, honest, and effective way for meeting the difficulty which we have to face. In dealing with this matter we must consider and weigh the claims of Asiatic peoples- - whether Chinese, Japanese, or our fellow subjects residing in India - to admittance here with our obligations to the great Empire to which we belong, and to the people whom we directly represent. If the purpose that we have in view is the exclusion of all persons of Asiatic race, is it honest to pretend that we do not wish to exclude them, and propose to exclude them only if they have not acquired a certain knowledge of our language? If that is our object, well and good. Let us tell the people of the Commonwealth that we are satisfied with that position. .But if that is not what we desire, and if we are certain that it will not comply with the mandate of the electors to preserve the purity and maintain the predominance of white races in Australia, let us adopt the course best calculated to secure what we aim at. Undoubtedly the British governing authorities have to look at this matter from a large stand-point. They have to consider the relations of the Empire with other powers as well as its relations with us. At one time during the debate there was a feeling that the British authorities were not prepared to allow us to legislate to the full extent necessary for our protection ; but I was glad to learn, from the very able address delivered by the Attorney-General, that that is not so, and that the British authorities do not raise the question of our right to legislate upon this subject. All the Home Government say is that, in view of their relations with the foreign powers whose subjects we seek to exclude, they prefer that we should ad 01)t a certain form of legislation, and limit our restriction to a language test, rather than go in the direction of absolute prohibition. I take it, however, that if we are satisfied that it is necessary for our national welfare that we should legislate for total prohibition, they' will be prepared to consider the position from our stand-point. The Attorney-General informed us that what the Government proposed is only an instalment of legislation on the subject, and that if necessary it will be supplemented by more drastic provisions. But to pass such legislation would not, to my mind, be carrying out the mandate of the people, which was to secure the total prohibition of coloured alien immigration. If the measure is passed as it stands, time must be allowed to test it before further legislation can be introduced, and if it is found wanting, the number of undesirable aliens in our midst will be increased before we can take any remedial action. I think that the more honest course to pursue with respect to the races which we desire to exclude, the British authorities, and the voters whom we represent, is to pass legislation which we believe will be effective. If assent is refused to that legislation, we can ask for the reasons for its refusal, and then consider' whether those reasons are such as we should accept. The honorable and learned member for Indi is very much concerned about the susceptibilities of the Japanese. He would have us to suppose that if we told the Japanese nation that we did not wish Japanese subjects to enter our territory it would be greatly offended ; but that if we took power to legislate by resolution it would not have the sense to know what we are aiming at.

Mr Isaacs

- I took a great deal of pains to explain that that is not what I meant.

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Mr BROWN

- Then I am sorry that I have misunderstood the honorable and learned member. What I wish to know is, what objection can there be to telling the Japanese straight out, by Act of Parliament, that we wish to prohibit their immigration ?

Mr Isaacs

- I thought I explained that in two speeches that I addressed to the House.

Mr BROWN

- I believe the Japanese would prefer straightforward dealing upon our part, and that they would rather have a prohibition Act in black and white upon our statute-books than an Act enabling us in an underhand or back-door way, such as has been suggested, to deal with their exclusion by resolution. I refuse to believe that they would not see through such a proposal, and that it would not be as objectionable to them as the passing of a direct prohibition Act. Only the other day we received a cablegram to say that one of the Canadian States proposed to adopt an educational test for the exclusion of certain immigrants, and that the British Government, at the instance of Japan, had induced the Canadian authorities to disallow that legislation. That shows very clearly that the Japanese know what the legislation means. We may call it in the Act of Parliament an educational test, but they know that it is a mode of preventing their people from entering the State and sharing in the advantages which the country affords. They object to it as such, and use their powers of diplomacy with the British Government to bring about a disallowance of the legislation. To say that the Japanese people will not be fully cognizant of the fact that we are endeavouring to legislate against them as a race and as a people, and that we are endeavouring only to secure a knowledge of our language, is a position which I confess I do not understand. I give the Japanese credit for having a greater amount of knowledge and intelligence than to be deceived by such a pretence. I desire to enter my protest against this roundabout method of dealing with this matter, and to signify that it is my intention to give my support to the straight-out and straightforward method. I will undertake to bear my share of any blame that may attach to this course. I will leave those who prefer the other course to justify themselves before the electors of the Commonwealth, whom they told they were coming here to legislate, not for a high standard of knowledge in languages, but for a "white Australia."

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Mr SPENCE

- "If it were" possible for the Prime Minister of England to listen to the debates in the first Parliament of Australia, he would realize, think, as we do, that above all the questions that have brought us together, this question of a "white Australia," is one on which there is the greatest degree of unanimity. We have the Parliament absolutely unanimous in thinking that we should take a stand as a young nation on new lines - that we should profit by the experience of other countries, particularly the experience of the great federated States of America, which from their initial mistake have a trouble facing them which is puzzling the best minds and intellects amongst their great people. The United States people have some 13,000,000 of a coloured race in their midst, and they do not know what to do with them. The best minds of their statesmen seem incapable of formulating a programme or a proposal that is calculated to effectively deal with these aliens, who appear in many cases to have become more degraded since they were made free than they were under slavery. I do not wish to dwell on that phase of the question, but to say that the Australian people, I am glad to realize, are awake on this question. In the addresses that were delivered on various platforms, throughout Australia during the agitation to bring about federation, this alien question was a prominent topic, and it was the question particularly which caused us to wait until Queensland could be persuaded to join in the Federation. We understood that that colony, as it was then termed, suffered more from the influx of kanakas, Japanese, and other undesirable aliens than did any of the other colonies. The Australian people have emphatically said that they are going to give a chance to those who will come after us, to build up a civilized nation which we hope will set an example - as indeed we have already done in the shape of advanced legislation - to the rest of the world. I am one of those who believe in the British-speaking race as having a mission. I realize the great advantages we possess in being part of our great Empire, and I am proud of our connexion with Great Britain. I do not want to be understood as forgetting the connexion for one moment, but I want also to remember that we are a self governing people - that Britain has said to us - "You are to have a Constitution under the Crown, but you are to practically govern yourselves." The British people have proved their capacity for self-government, and their consideration for others. We have an island continent, and we are going to put a ring fence round it in order to give a chance to the best people of the world to develop it as a civilized State ; and we are justified in doing that. If the authorities in the old country say that we are not to do that, or in any way prohibit us from doing it in our own way, they are interfering with our powers of

self-government, and forcing on us evils which we know positively, from the limited experience we have already had, and from our studies of other countries, will lead to the degradation of the Australian people instead of aiding them to build up a civilized nation.

Mr Ewing

- The "ring fence" would not last a week without the strength of the British Empire behind it.

Mr SPENCE

- I do not want to do anything to break the connexion with the Empire, to which I am proud to belong. That is not a matter of a written Constitution, so much as one of racial feeling and of blood ties ; and we want to remember that it is the blood tie we want to keep pure. I do not believe that the British Government, or Mr. Chamberlain, who is now speaking for the British Government, want to apply for one moment to Australia that commercial spirit which underlies their dealings and relationships with other countries. There has been a danger in the past from that commercial spirit, which has brought inferior men here under contract to do work which ought to be done by our own people, and I am very proud to find Parliament so unanimous on the matter now. Wherever commercialism holds sway - I am speaking of pure commercialism - there are no humanitarian considerations. Whilst England is a commercial nation and must consider her relationships with various other powers, still she is strong enough and able enough to assert herself and to justify the protection, if it be needed, she may have to give to Australia in taking a stand in which she believes. England, as I understand the Attorney - General, already believes in that stand, and Mr. Chamberlain realizes that we are under especial circumstances justified in legislating in a way not called for in Great Britain. If that be so, then our right to self-government is an important one, which should be asserted, though I do not want it asserted in an objectionable way. We have been told by the leaders of the House that we have power to legislate in any way we think proper, and the issue is narrowed down to the mere question of whether we are to take the advice tendered by Mr. Chamberlain and apply the indirect method, or to adopt the straight-out method, which may delay the measure a little longer. I am not so much influenced as I think some honorable members are by consideration for Japan. It is a nation we somewhat admire, because it has shown that its people have capacity for reform. They have changed very rapidly within a recent period, and as we like progressive, energetic, go-ahead people, we seem to have a sort of admiration for them. But we like them best in their own country. I have yet to learn that there is any special desire on the part of the Japanese to come here. I do not think the authorities of that nation will be very sensitive about the way in which this law is drawn. I do not believe that any of the nations are very sensitive upon such a point ; and I would put the matter in this way : Should we feel very much hurt if the Japanese passed an Act prohibiting Australians from going to reside in that country?

An Honorable Member. - Yes.

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Mr SPENCE

- I do think we should feel annoyed. We should not take it as a slight or send our fleet over there. If the Chinese nation passed a law declining to admit Australians to that country, should we feel annoyed ? I do not think we should trouble our heads about it. No doubt a number of these people come here, brought out under engagement by men over them, just as the Chinese were taken out to California. In that country it was thought it would be a great thing to get cheap Chinese labour, and one man brought out a Chinaman to make boots. Very soon, however, that Chinaman started a business for himself, and ruined the other man, to whom the question did not then present itself in the same light as when he desired to import cheap labour. Just the same thing occurred in the building trade, and that led to legislation against the Chinese in the United States. No doubt individuals will desire to come to Australia, but so far as the nation or the authorities of the nation are concerned, I do not think we have had it shown to us in any way that they are likely to raise much objection to the legislation now proposed. If they have any very strong objection to such legislation being enacted in a country to which they desire to come, that objection will apply to any means adopted to stop them. They will have just as much objection to this indirect language test, with which they cannot comply, and indeed they would be justified in feeling much more annoyed than if we said straight out, " We think it is better for us and for your people that you should "not mix with us ; you do not improve us, and we do not improve you - we cannot commingle." The honorable and learned member for Indi has indicated another amendment under which a resolution would have to be

passed by both Houses of Parliament. Whilst the object could be attained more quickly by a Bill, that would be a declaratory act by the Government of the Commonwealth through the Parliament. But would that declaration not be cabled to Japan ? What is the difference between a resolution of that kind, which names the nation, and the proposal of the honorable member for Bland 1

Mr Higgins

- The resolution would be carried only at a dangerous time. That is another objection.

Mr SPENCE

- I presume that if the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi were passed, then, as soon as the measure received the Governor-General's assent, Parliament would pass a resolution. If that is not to be the case, what is the good of the amendment 1 I admit the weight of what has been urged in favour of the Bill especially by the Attorney-General, but the only argument brought forward was that the language test would be the quickest way of dealing with this matter. I am quite conscious that the Prime Minister has said he would prefer the straight-out method ; and practically there is no division of opinion regarding the amendment. The Government believe that to be the best course, the only difference of opinion being on the point of time. Unless the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi, if carried, were acted upon as soon as the assent to the Bill was given, we should be acting treacherously to the country which sent us here to legislate in this matter at the earliest opportunity.

Mr Isaacs

- There is nothing to prevent our acting on the amendment the moment the Bill becomes law.

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Mr SPENCE

- My contention is that the honorable and learned member for Indi had better support the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, seeing that the difference between the two proposals is not sufficient to make it worth while to take the roundabout way. We should not be acting honorably, if, after passing a resolution of the kind in both Houses, we failed to notify the countries concerned. Would it not be our duty to immediately cable to Mr. Chamberlain that we had declared that the aboriginal natives of Asia, - because we should include all those people - were undesirable immigrants, and that we were not going to allow them to land 1? Mr. Chamberlain would have to notify those nations ; and where I ask is the difference between the proposals 1 If we carried the amendment of the honorable member for Bland the Imperial Government would be able to say - " At the beginning of their national life they have dealt with this question, and have passed a law which is best suited to their conditions, and which declares straight out that they will not allow these undesirable immigrants to enter their shores." When the British Government had once explained why such action had been taken the matter would have ended. If Japan wished to deport her population here she might possibly make a little fuss, but I have not heard of anything to justify the assumption that Japan would take up any such attitude. Perhaps we have been making too much of Japan. Because China is a somewhat weaker power than we thought her to be a few years ago it is often urged that she constitutes less of a menace to Australia than does Japan. In my judgment, however, we have greater cause for apprehension from China than from Japan. That danger arises chiefly from the fact that China is being cut up and dismembered. We know that already there is a British sphere of influence in China, but we do not know that a portion of China, in a few years, may not have become British. Another source of danger is in India. There the population are becoming educated to a knowledge of English. There we have millions of a population " connected with our own Empire. Unless we are very decided and strong in our attitude, we have more to fear from China and India than from Japan. I do not think that many Japanese have a desire to come here. .But I would point out that the Syrians and Hindoos are gradually creeping in. They are not sent here by the Governments of their own countries, but they are coming here in units. The greater our population, the greater will be the proportion of these undesirables who will come here unless the door is closed upon them. I regret very much that the Government have not shown greater courage in dealing with this question, because I believe that it would be wise to deal with it in the straight-out manner proposed by the honorable member for Bland. The Prime Minister has said that if the test imposed in this Bill proved to be insufficient we could go further. To my mind, it would be just as well to settle the matter right away. It is important that we should look at it from the point of view of our self-governing powers. Either we are to have self government or we are not to have it. It has not been shown that England will get into any

complication with any country if we adopt the proposal of the honorable member for Bland. I can quite understand that negotiations may have to be entered into, and that we may have to explain why this great section of the Empire - a section which the Imperial authorities have had to appeal to for help in time of great trouble and difficulty - desires that Australia shall be kept white. I believe that the British Government would readily consent to our accomplishing our purpose in what we believe to be the most effective way. Let us say at the birth of the nation that we are going to adopt that course which is calculated to give our people the best possible opportunity. What is the aim of all legislation but to make the conditions of life as good as we can? If we are not to have a measure of this kind, I do not think it worth while working for social reform any longer, because all such reform would be nullified by the deterioration of the race. The influx of these aliens would so lower the aggregate standard of the community that in a very short time social legislation would be ineffective. But, if we keep the race pure, and build up a national character, we shall become a highly progressive people of whom the British Government will be prouder the longer we live and the stronger we grow. I do not think that the Imperial authorities would hesitate to give their assent to a straight-out proposal to close the door to those people who would degrade our national character, lower the standard of the energy and capacity of our people, and thus weaken the Empire itself. The Hindoos have shown themselves to be friends of England ; and some of our best fighting material has come from India. But I refuse to believe that if these coloured men were living here they would maintain our present living wage. The lack of welding together, owing to the differences between their ideas and instincts and our own would be a permanent obstacle to its maintenance. I hope that the committee will carry the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, as I feel confident that no difficulty will arise from the adoption of that course.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I am one of those unfortunates who were not able to address the House upon the second reading of this Bill. I therefore avail myself of the broad spirit of this particular clause to address to the committee the arguments that I should have used had I been present during the second reading debate. I am very much afraid that the remarks I intend to make will seem exceedingly heterodox after the very continuous flow of advocacy for a white Australia, and for the necessity for taking up a very strong attitude towards the Imperial Government in this connexion. There has been a good deal said about a determination to keep Australia white and pure, two phrases which I am bound to say I have not been able to clearly understand after all the speeches which I have heard and all the newspaper articles which I have read. I think that this measure is a very important one, but I do not regard it as important for all the reasons which have been given by many honorable members. I think it is important in this respect, that the debate on this great question - and it is a great question - and the results of this debate will constitute a sort of mirror in which we, as a people, can be seen by other nations, because for the first time in Australian history we are put to the test to demonstrate our sincerity in using so many glib phrases which though they apply admirably when they involve concessions by other people, yet seem to change their meaning altogether the moment they involve concessions to be made to others. We talk very fluently, especially in one part of this House, about the equality of man. Whenever gentlemen who use that term very freely appeal to it, I always observe that it is in order to obtain some concession for the particular class which they represent. I am not speaking of its use in this House particularly, but rather of the broad sense of the political term. "The equality of man !" "When we inquire "What man V we may be told " Australians." But when we attempt to apply that term in its broadest sense, as implying human nature, we are met with the answer - " Oh no, we draw an important distinction." That is one of the matters upon which we are to be put to the test. We talk much, too, from time to time about the open door; and in national political phraseology it is generally taken to mean that the doors shall be open which we wish to force open. But when other nations talk about opening our doors for the purpose of letting their products into our country, we find that the very men who are most free in the use of this phrase, immediately change their attitude and, in effect, say : " We want your door to be open, but our door is not to be open." (Referring to interruptions) I am glad to recognise that whatever differences of opinion exist between honorable members, whether upon fiscal or broad sociological principles, we are all ready to regard one another as sincere. From the time of our meeting here in May last, I have never heard an expression by any honorable member which indicated a refusal to credit another honorable member with the same sincerity in the expression of his

views that he expected other honorable members to credit him with. I am bound to say that that experience has been a good, one because it has made me feel freer in the expression of my own opinions. But we are about to be put to the test, not only in regard to this debate, but in regard to its results. We may depend upon it that in this very early stage of the history of Australia, when we have to some extent consolidated ourselves as a branch of the great British Empire, all those great nations which have been suffering for years from earth hunger, are watching very carefully through their consuls and representatives the attitude which the Australian people are going to assume in this- their first attempt at a foreign policy. We have dealt with this matter in the different States. But it has never been dealt with in the same courageous way as it is being dealt with by this Parliament. Already that national spirit is beginning to assert itself by which men say, "We, the Australian people, desire a certain state of things to exist. If the Imperial Government does not like it there is an alternative." That spirit has not been expressed in those bald terms, but something like that sentiment has been, voiced, and I deprecate that attitude in the strongest possible way, because I can conceive of no circumstances whatever in which it would be politic or desirable for us - whether we look at it from a patriotic or from a purely utilitarian point of view - to speak slightly or lightly of the Imperial connexion. If, because of this, I am to be dubbed an Imperialist, I am proud of the term ; because I recognise not merely the broad spirit of Imperialism, but the fact that we depend for our future upon that Imperial connexion. The statesmen and thinkers in all parts of the world who closely study the history of other nations are watching carefully the spirit we show and the attitude we are going to take up on this particular question. We are being put to the test, and we should remember this when we speak of the open door, of the equality of men, and of our Christian principles ; and when at the very moment we are sending forth our people to preach those Christian principles to others, yet propose to turn round and shut out many of those whom we are seeking to convert to those principles. Although we are being carefully reported in Hansard, and in our local newspapers, our words are even more wide winged ; they are going out to the larger world ; we are being put to the test, not merely as parochial politicians, but as statesmen, to be judged by our utterances as to how far we are capable of grasping our position as a part of the Empire, and as one of the many powerful peoples who have now to deal with the politics of the world. This is a very great responsibility ; and when I hear men talk, not carelessly perhaps, but as if they could not see beyond the limits of their own particular locality, I cannot help thinking that it does not bid fair for our future if we should be thrown upon our own resources instead of nestling snugly under the broad wing of the British Empire. It shows another thing to my mind : it illustrates in some respects the extent of our knowledge of other peoples. We have heard a great deal in this debate, and in anticipation of this debate, with regard to certain races like the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Indians ; but I am bound to say that my experience is that these races are not at all understood. Men speak of the Japanese nation as if they were a simple horde of people living in a disorganized way, without anything approaching to the constitutional or civilized perfection that we ourselves have reached.

Mr CROUCH

- No one has said that in this House.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I am not referring to more enlightened men such as the honorable and learned member, but to those who show disregard for the necessity of maintaining the friendship of a nation like Japan with regard to the interests of the Empire than to our own interests. The history of this measure is a singular one, and under other circumstances I might have been inclined to give my vote silently without speaking upon the matter ; but at present the question is in rather a strange position. The Government have introduced a measure which proposes an educational test in one language, that of England ; and if that Bill were before the House for its second reading, I should have no hesitation in voting against it. I think that to have established a single test in a single language - that being our own - for the whole world, would have undoubtedly made us the laughingstock of Europe. We should have been the butt of the whole civilized world if it were shown that we Australians had deliberately legislated to shut out of Australia all Europeans who could not pass an examination in our own language. The whole question, however, is very much broadened by the suggestion that the test should be a European one ; but I see a difficulty even in that case. I greatly respect the good opinion and friendship of the Japanese people, and I recognise that, by mentioning the names of European nations and not mentioning Japan, we are significantly differentiating

the Japanese from the Europeans. It is recognised that thousands of Japanese already speak the English language, which is taught universally in their schools; so that in making the test English we are really not excluding the educated Japanese at all. Therefore, it comes to this - that if we are to choose between adopting a European test and thus appearing to exclude the Japanese, and adopting the English test, so as not to differentiate Japanese from European powers - I should prefer to seem to exclude the Japanese, knowing full well that they who are educated would have a chance of coming in as well as the educated of other races. These, however, are not the three alternatives before the committee. The amendment proposing a European test comes from the honorable member for Melbourne ; but the honorable and learned member for Indi has made a further suggestion which has taken the form of an amendment that the languages should not be named at all.

Mr Isaacs

- If the honorable and learned member will allow me, I would explain that my amendment proposes that any persons, or class or description of persons, - who are declared by joint resolution of the two Houses of Parliament to be prohibited immigrants, shall be prohibited.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Then the honorable, and learned member's amendment would have the effect of limiting instead of extending the provisions of the Bill. I was crediting him with the desire to make the Bill more expansive.

Mr Isaacs

- How does my proposal limit the provisions of the Bill ?

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Because it gives the Government power to name any particular nationality for exclusion, and that is a limitation, because it provides a power to limit which would not exist, save for the amendment.

Mr Isaacs

- I am afraid I have not conveyed my meaning to the honorable and learned member.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The further choice we have is one I have very little sympathy with - that is the proposal of the honorable member for Bland, which involves absolute prohibition. I have no sympathy with that whatever, and therefore, with these four choices before us, I am bound to say that until some of the amendments which will give greater scope to the Japanese are put into shape, my disposition, is to favour the European educational test, because I am satisfied that a large proportion of the Japanese people are able to speak our language, or would be able to qualify themselves to come within the European test. It is very difficult to know, out of the multiplicity of proposals which have thus been made, what is to be the ultimate question put before the committee ; and I think that we have very good reason to complain of the want of definiteness on the part of the Government in regard to this matter. Although we have become a little demoralized in the Australian States with regard to the leadership of parties, I think that in this Parliament we are entitled to expect some element of leadership in the Government. I do not know to which proposal the Government will attach most importance. We were told by the Prime Minister that one aspect of the Bill was vital ; but when he was put to the test by the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne he explained that he meant "vital to the Bill," which I understood to indicate a distinction between the vitality of the Bill and the vitality of the Government. ' That interpretation was evidently the " right one, because the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne replied, " Very well ; then I shall vote as my opinions dictate - for the amendment of the honorable member for Bland."

Mr Isaacs

- I do not think that the honorable and learned member for North Melbourne added those last words.

Mr Barton

- He said that he would hold himself free to choose that course which in his judgment would be best to secure a white Australia.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I accept the correction. At all events, in the one case he was going to consider himself bound to party, and in the other he would consider himself free to follow his own judgment. That is an attitude with which I have very little sympathy, though I shall not comment upon it now. We have a perfect right to complain, however, that, although the Bill has passed its second reading, and we are now considering its most

important clause in committee, and the debate upon it is apparently nearly at an end, we do not know what principle the Government propose to stand by with regard to the measure, which is one of the most important - though I do not admit that it is one of the most urgent - which could be dealt with by this Parliament. The inconvenience is this : Honorable members, like myself, may address themselves to the measure, and may subsequently find other amendments proposed which may require further explanation on their part, whereas, if the Government had intimated, or would intimate now, what particular one of the numerous proposals which have been made they intend to stand by, every honorable member, as he addressed himself to the measure, could say to which of the many he intended to give his support. I have said that of all that have been put forward up to the present time, I favour that providing for a test in any European language. As I have pointed out, I consider that the proposed English test, if adopted, would make us the laughing stock of Europe. It is not by what we mean, but by what we say, in our Acts that we shall be judged; and for it to go forth to the world or to Europe that we, the people of Australia, are declaring at this initial stage in our history, that no citizen of another country shall enter our ports unless he can pass an examination in our own language, would, as I have said, make us the butt of the civilized world. , The European test has this disadvantage, that, whilst it announces to the world that we are open to receive the people of any European nation, it differentiates one of the most civilized races of the East - the Japanese - from the European races, and therefore gives the people of that race good reason to complain that we are generalizing them with African, Asiatic, and Pacific nations, and excluding them from the classification of civilized peoples.

Sir Malcolm Mceacharn

- Might it not be better to provide that the test shall be a knowledge of the English language, or such language as may be prescribed ?

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I am sure that the committee is not so constituted, nor if it were so constituted would honorable members be in the mood to leave this so open a question. I am sure, from what I have heard in this chamber, and from what I can see of the temperament of federal members, that it is a matter upon which this Parliament is determined to legislate, and which it will not leave to merely Ministerial action by the laying of resolutions upon the tables of both Houses, thus effecting a legislative purpose without going through all the routine which every Bill has necessarily and properly to go through in order that it can be fully digested before being made law. When the head of the Government was introducing this measure in its original form, I interjected that it was a hypocritical measure, and he referred to my interjection as if to emphasize an indiscretion on my part. I do not, however, regret using that -word, and I repeat that the Bill in its original form was a highly hypocritical measure, because it must have been clear to every one who heard the speech of the Prime Minister that, although on the face of the Bill, the English language -was made the test as to whether certain peoples should be allowed to enter the Commonwealth of Australia, the measure was intended to apply not to Europeans at all, but merely to Asiatics and other coloured races. I say again that the Bill as introduced was hypocritical in form, and to a great extent its form is still hypocritical. Whilst we are professing a profound anxiety about the educational qualifications of people who may come to our shores, the foundation of the Bill is racial prejudice, and the desire - I will not say the fear, though the word " fear " has entered largely into some of the speeches which have been made - that some other races who by reason of their possessing certain qualities, which I think come under the category of old-fashioned virtues, shall not come here and be a menace to our industrial System. The Attorney-General has gone so far as to say - and I think it a humiliating confession - that the principal reason for shutting out the Japanese race is, not that they are a low type of humanity or a degraded people, but that they are too thrifty. They work too hard, and they are too provident, and they possess so many of those old-fashioned virtues that we Britishers cannot compete with them in. our daily life. That is one of the things which, I think, would be best left unsaid. I think it is a humiliating confession to go forth to the world from one in so high a position that the truth is that we are afraid to come into contact and competition with a race like the Japanese.

Mr Deakin

- Because of their inferior standard of living. I was careful to explain that.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- That is a very general statement, which has been detailed by other honorable members. What is this inferior standard of living? The statement means that these people live at less expenditure than we do. I think it will be generally admitted that amongst the old fashioned virtues were economy, thrift, sobriety, and simplicity of living. I recognise that there is an economic side to the question which makes these people objectionable, but I leave that for the present. 15 k

Mr Isaacs

- It was an old-fashioned virtue to work for sixteen hours a day.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Honorable gentlemen do not differentiate between acts which may be prevented by legislation of another character, and qualities which are inherent in another people, and on that account make them such great opponents. We hear great complaints of the dirty, filthy, and insanitary conditions under which the Chinese live ; but every one knows that to live in that condition is not peculiar to the Chinese. We know what the condition of things was in Sydney three or four years ago - a condition of things which was said to give rise to the plague, and which was of such a disgraceful character that words could hardly describe it. Nor was that condition of things referable only to the.. Chinese quarter of the city. I want to be fair to these people. It is so easy to point., to a hovel in a Chinese garden, and to say,.. "That is the condition in which these - people live." When that statement is made it is only fair to point to the slums of. many of our big cities, and to ask whether many of those of a low type of our own race who are living there are living under better conditions than the Chinese. The insanitary condition -which we complain of among these people does not involve the carrying of a measure of this kind ; it could be equally easily remedied by the passing of local Acts requiring persons to properly drain their premises, to keep their habitations in a fit condition, and generally to live amid surroundings equal to those of the most reputable of the British race living near them. That could be done in mere self-defence.. We recognise that it is a most allowable precaution to prevent other people from, menacing our health by the manner in. which they live. It is also possible to limit the hours during which these people shall: work. It is all very well for the honorable and learned member for Indi to say in an ad captandum way - " These people work sixteen hours a day." I work sixteen hours a day during a great many of the days of my life ; but we know that the working classes are limited in their hours of labour in order to distribute the work more widely among them. Therefore, in that respect, these people could be dealt with. Although I do not want to stand here as a champion for the purpose of exalting these aliens beyond their deserts, I do stand here as one who] wants to deal fairly with other races. I do not want to hear them maligned or libelled without good justification, and therefore- 1

Say that it is a humiliating confession on the part of the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne that his reason, at all events, for not wishing to admit those people is that they are too good, too thrifty, too hard-working, and too provident to be brought into competition with our own people.

Mr Wilks

- Too beastly virtuous.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- -One honorable member says - and this is only another example of the sort of language and sentiment indulged in - that they are " too beastly virtuous." I say that the public ought to hear those phrases ; because they ought to know how far this sort of legislation is founded on hysteria, and how much it is founded on good sense and good reasons. I should have voted against this Bill in its original form, because if it had been honestly placed upon our statute-book it would have meant that some of the most eminent men of Europe would have found themselves barred from entrance to our country, unless we actually " winked at " a breach of the Act, and allowed them to come in. Honorable members know very well that there are hundreds and thousands of not merely educated, but cultured and. distinguished, men in Europe who can speak no more of the English language than the majority of us can speak of German or French. I venture to say that if we were put to the test of correctly writing out 50 words of French, a very small number of us could do it. The Bill in its original form would have meant that a member of the French Academy, a German professor, or an Italian cardinal would have found it impossible to enter Australia except by leave of a Customhouse officer or with a passport from the Government.

Mr Higgins

- If the test were applied.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- If the test were applied ! That is the hypocritical part of the proposal to which I object. While it is said the English test should be the test, the honorable and learned member himself is aware that it was never intended, even if the Bill passed, to apply the- test to the people of other European nations who come under the heading of civilized people.

Mr Higgins

- That is the reason I was against the test, as being hypocritical.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I am very glad to hear that. I was the only member who at that time thought fit to use the word, but I am very glad to find, now that it has been used, that a great many others are of the same mind, although they did not so express themselves. The Bill in its present form: - if I may so refer to it - with the European test, is not hypocritical, because it says, as plainly as words can say, that any European language is a sufficient test if a man desires to come into our midst. And it also plainly says that none shall come within the Commonwealth who cannot pass that European test. There is no great hypocrisy about that; 'the hypocrisy lay in the fact that it was intended to admit the people of European countries although they could not pass the test which the Bill provided. But if we say plainly that we will admit anybody who can pass a test in a European language, a great part of the hypocrisy is gone, and we have a Bill which honestly says what the people of Australia mean. I asked the right honorable gentleman who introduced the Bill whether he had considered what the original term meant, -because I do not think it can be doubted that, apart from our making ourselves the laughing-stock of Europe, if we had persisted in the Bill in its original form we should have found ourselves in a very awkward predicament had some other European nation reciprocated the treatment accorded to them. If France or Germany had been so eccentric, and so wanting in level-headedness, as to say they would reciprocate, I should like to know what sort of attitude we should have adopted on finding ourselves treated in exactly the same way as we proposed to treat those nations. I therefore made a further observation at the time by asking the Prime Minister whether he had considered what would be the possible effect upon us as a people if we received reciprocal treatment from some of the older countries of Europe ? Now, there is another aspect of this measure as it stands to which I will refer ; and I think I am quite justified in criticising the Bill in its original form. At present, the Government have not given a distinct statement as to the respect in which the Bill is likely to be amended. Are the Government losing sight entirely of the condition of things existing in other parts of the Empire, and forgetting that in Canada at the present time there are nearly 1,500,000 French people, a very large proportion of whom do not speak English? Are they forgetting that at the Cape there is a very large proportion of British subjects who confine themselves to the Dutch language, and that in the Mauritius there is a very large proportion of the population, British subjects, who do not speak any but the French language? Had the Bill remained in its original form, we should have been in the extraordinary position of passing a measure the test of which would have excluded nearly 2,000,000 people, in three of the most important branches of the Empire, because they could not speak with purity the language which is spoken in other parts of the Empire.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It would have excluded half the Welsh people.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- My Welsh friend, the honorable member for Parramatta, reminds me that under the original Bill many of his countrymen in Wales would not have been able to enter the Commonwealth. I say further of this Bill that it is premature in every sense of the word. We are now in a session, the first in our history, which is literally choked with legislation. No one can doubt that the most important measures which are upon the notice-paper at the present time, are those measures which deal with the machinery of the Commonwealth. Already many questions are arising which the Federal Court of the Commonwealth will have to decide as between the States and the Commonwealth itself. Only within the last few days one has arisen of tremendous importance, with regard to the taking of the assets of the States by the Commonwealth. Yet while this Bill is being pressed on in deference to the wishes of a section of the House, this particular machinery Bill is not yet heard of, except through being placed on the notice-paper.

Mr Barton

- Does the honorable and learned member mean the Property Acquisition Bill?

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I am speaking of the Judiciary Bill. I was pointing out that while we are in a session which is literally congested with measures for setting the machinery of the Commonwealth in motion, we are having this Bill forced on us at a moment which is exceedingly premature, as I shall show. If we take the whole Commonwealth, and each of the States individually, we shall find that this constant repetition of statements as to hordes of aliens coming into Australia is an exaggeration. We find that in different States, where' it is said we are being inundated with Asiatic nations, the people who are coming in can, as a matter of fact, almost be counted on one hand. Yet this Bill has been forced on largely for political and electioneering purposes.

Mr McDonald

- It is too early for that.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Surely not; because honorable members know that they entered into undertakings at the last election that this measure should be forced on, and they are now only fulfilling their obligations to their constituencies. But whether these obligations were entered into with' a due regard to the business of the Commonwealth, and with due regard to the necessity of passing those Bills which are more essential to the progress of the Commonwealth, is another matter altogether. I do not accept it as a principle that because a large number of anticipated members give a variety of assurances to their constituents that certain measures which have a popular flavour about them shall be forced on in the first session, that is a justification for the House precipitating those measures when there are other matters of much more importance to be dealt with. I was referring to the Judiciary Bill, and saying that already many questions are arising between the . States and the Commonwealth which will call for the interference of the Federal Court of the Commonwealth ; but the Bill which is to constitute that court is not yet heard of. It is on the programme, but as things are going, I think honorable members will agree with me, there is very little prospect of such a Bill being passed during this session. That Bill will therefore go on to the second year of the history of this Parliament. Yet there is no court of appeal from the supreme courts of the different States - no court to decide questions of State rights. In the meantime the Immigration Restriction Bill has come forward prematurely, as I think I shall prove to the satisfaction of honorable members at a later stage of my speech. I have been very careful to look into the facts which I thought would justify this statement. We have heard a great deal too about the terrible condition of things in Queensland, and we were told that a Dr. Maxwell, was about to investigate the sugar industry and report for the edification of the Federal Parliament. That report has been published many weeks, but I have never heard anything of it from the party who are pressing this measure on. We are hearing no quotations from the report.

Mr Barton

- It has nothing to do with this measure.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- It has a great deal to do with the question of a " white Australia."

Mr Barton

- That is another matter.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Perhaps the blackest people who come into Australia are the kanakas. I am bound to say that I cannot separate this particular race from other aliens when the broad general question of a " white Australia " is being discussed. We hear much about the purity of races and the whiteness of peoples, and yet I am told I am out of place in referring to the kanakas. Indeed it has a very important bearing, because when we look into Dr. Maxwell's report, we find the astounding statement - astounding in the face of the electioneering statements which had been made previously - that during the last few years the number of kanakas in Queensland has actually been reduced by 1,900 instead of having been increased, and that the cultivation of sugar has gone up 150 per cent, or 200 per cent. Dr. Maxwell says in the plainest possible language that the kanaka is a declining factor in the Queensland sugar industry. That a fair statement, and I shall have an opportunity of dealing later with Dr. Maxwell's other references.

Mr FISHER

- That is fiddlers' news to the members for Queensland.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- It may be fiddlers' news to certain members of the House, but I do not think it is fiddlers' news to the general public out of doors, because they have been taught to believe that the shores of Queensland were swarming with Asiatic people. - Mr. Page. - So they are.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- No, they are not.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The public have been told over and over again that the purity and whiteness of the Australian Commonwealth is being endangered by the incursion of these hordes of Asiatics. I say that it is a fable ; that it is altogether a fairy story. I wish to deal with all the Asiatic races in a moment on the basis of returns which I have had the privilege of seeing at the hands of the Prime Minister. We have heard a great deal in the course of this debate about the Empire, It is a very large word, and has a very large atmosphere about it. I have noticed, however, in common with most of the references to the Empire, that a great many people are in favour of the Empire, as a sentiment, so long as it means some advantage to Australia, but I see very little disposition in the speeches made from time to time in regard to the making of Concessions in the interests of the Empire. My reading of the term " Empire " is that it has a very utilitarian basis - that it is simply a partnership of nations. We have a partnership of commercial men, a partnership of the States in the Commonwealth, and a partnership of nations in the Empire. It has always seemed to me to be a sound general principle that when once a partnership exists it should not be open even in a business sense for any particular member of it to say, " I want such and such a policy adopted in this partnership, and if you do not give it to me I shall dissolve." That is the spirit in which I hear a great many men approach this question.

Mr Higgins

- Who are they ?

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I hope that ray honorable and learned friend does not expect me to give names. The same thing applies to this Commonwealth, and we ought to recognise it. The history of the United States ought to be a powerful object lesson to us - that it is not in the interests of a national partnership to say, " If you do not give me what I want, I shall secede." Let us imagine the position which would have been created if the people of Tasmania a month ago had said, " We are so determined to preserve the right of receiving letters for ' Tattersalls,' that if the Federal Parliament abolishes it, we will secede from the Federation." Honorable members know that the Minister for Defence said a little time ago that if Western Australia did not get the transcontinental railway they asked for, they would break up the Commonwealth. I am bound to say that even some honorable members in this corner of the House saw the humour of that threat. But that little humorous reference really illustrates the force of my argument, that neither in a business nor in a national partnership is it open to any one member of it to say, " If I do not get my way I shall secede." After all, although Australia is a large and important place, we shall have to put on a wider lens if we desire to understand the logic of the British Empire. It is not open to us to say, "We do not like the action of those who are at the helm of the Empire, and therefore we propose to cut the painter." That is the spirit which we have seen exhibited here a few years back ; and although the phrase is not used much nowadays, I have heard it said, " We must consider our position." I think we should do well occasionally to look at this question . of Empire from the other point of view. I should like to ask honorable members to consider what the Empire has done within the last two or three years. I remember when the gentleman at the head of the Opposition used a most eloquent illustration of that idea in one session of the Convention when he said that the British Empire was a whispering gallery, and pointed out that the smallest complaint from its outskirts reached the centre and found a sympathetic echo there. I say that the British Empire is as nearly as possible a complete organism, so that if we affect any part of its outskirts, there is immediately a communication with the nerve centre in England, and we get a return action which endeavours to correct the injury. We have experience of this only the other day - even to-day - in connexion with the Transvaal war. There was a body of British citizens, contributing no taxation whatever

to the Empire, whose liberties were being infringed by another people ; and that Empire has added one-third to its national indebtedness - a sum of £200,000,000- in order to enforce the granting of those rights of free citizenship. That is surely a generous sort of action ; and I think that we should do well to reflect upon these things when we speak thoughtlessly of what we owe to the Empire, and act as if we were under no obligation to it. We must remember, when we are attempting to do something which we are told in the most pleasant way possible would be inimical to the interests of the Empire, that it is our duty to consider whether we ought not to make some reciprocal sacrifice in order to facilitate the management of this enormous national proprietary which stretches right round the world. We are told very plainly in connexion with this question that certain countries in the Pacific are in such a position that their friendship is essential to the easy working of Imperial affairs. Is it not our duty, seeing what the Empire has done for other British citizens in other parts of the world, to take into consideration those difficulties, and at least to cultivate a mood in which to make some sacrifices in the interests of that great Empire? ,Ave are called upon at this time to do that. I know that there is a very natural tendency on our part - standing here as we do in comparative security - to exclaim, " What does it matter to us ? We want the people of this country to be pure and white ; and although other parts of the Empire have suffered by the incursion of these Asiatic races, we are going to start afresh, so that we may stand out from the rest of the world as a specially selected race of people." That is a very fine ideal, but, like a great many ideals, it may not be practicable. I venture to say that it is not practicable if we have a due regard to the interests of the Empire, of which after all, though we have a very large territory, we form a very small part from the point of view of population. I should like to say that I am so deeply impressed with the obligations which Australians are under to the Empire as a whole that I cannot conceive of any circumstances which would justify us in speaking lightly of the Imperial connexion. I would ask honorable members for a moment to allow me to name some of the difficulties involved in this question, when looked at from an Imperial point of view. Looking more closely than one usually does to the constitution of the Indian Empire, I find that the British Government are practically supervising the government of 45 provinces under 45 different Indian princes. These 45 princes are exercising individual control over their general peoples. They have 50,000,000 people under them. These 45 separate communities comprise, as a whole, twelve or thirteen times the population of the Commonwealth of Australia. Cannot honorable members recognise the diplomatic difficulties to be dealt within this connexion alone? Outside of these 50,000,000 people, there are a further 230,000,000 in India with whom the Imperial authorities have to deal. Although every honorable member may not realize it, there is a very large proportion of these Indian subjects who are as highly educated as ourselves. I find that at least 18,000,000 of the Indian people are recorded in authoritative works as being either "literate" or "learned." That number represents nearly five times the population of this Commonwealth. In its original form this Bill was going to indiscriminately bar the whole of these people admission to this country. I do not say that it is desirable that they should all be allowed to come here. I sympathize with the desire to keep a large preponderating portion of Australia as British as it is at the present time. What I want to avoid is the hysterical treatment of this question. I have no desire to see low-class Indians, Chinamen, or Japanese, generally known as coolies, swarming into this country. It would be a menace to our peace and good government. But there is an obligation on our part to deal with this question in such a way that we do not unnecessarily offend the educated classes of those nations which are likely to be of great assistance to us in the future. Who can doubt for a moment the importance of a friendly feeling existing between the British Empire and the Japanese and Chinese people ? Honorable members may think little of the Chinese at the present time, because they have just emerged so badly from a war with a community of the nations of Europe. But evidence of the wonderful recuperative powers of a nation is afforded by the case of Japan. We know already that they have resolved to apply Western methods to the government of China, and as we understand the enormous wealth of the country, who can doubt that before the world is very much older the Chinese will stand in a position almost as important, and almost as influential as that occupied by the Japanese at the present time ? That is the position that the British Government have to take into consideration, because we know that there is great rivalry between the European nations as to which of them shall stand best with these Eastern peoples in the case of future trouble in the East. Honorable members will recollect what a magnificent and dramatic effect was produced on the statesmen of Europe only 25 years ago, by the action of Lord Beaconsfield in bringing a regiment of Indian troops from India and landing them at Malta,

thus clearly indicating to European nations that that was merely a sample of what we could do to supplement our British forces in the event of any trouble arising. We all recollect that, and to recollect that incident is to realize - to a mind that has any imagination at all - the immense utility of our friendship with these Eastern peoples. Now, will honorable members consider for a moment that one of the difficulties of the Empire lies in the fact that we have in Canada to deal with 1,500,000 of French people; that in the Mauritius we have 250,000 French colonists; that in the Transvaal, before the war - and no doubt a very large proportion of them will be there afterwards - there were 36,000 Dutch people; that in the Orange River Colony, before the war, there were 70,000 Dutch people; and that in the Cape Colony there were 370,000 Europeans, a large proportion of whom speak the Dutch language. One has only to consider for a moment these figures, and what they indicate, to realize the immense importance of considering the interests of the Empire as a whole when we are dealing with legislation of this kind. And then as to the actual power of these Eastern peoples: I find that at the present time Japan, with a population of 44,000,000 - I am taking the figures of 1899 - has a regular army of 125,000, with reserves numbering 280,000; that she has 31 ships of war - four of them the most modern in the world - ranging from 3,000 tons up to 12,000 tons, and travelling at the rate of from 11 to 24 knots per hour.

Mr Watson

- With an empty Treasury.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The honorable member has reminded me of a fact I am very glad to mention. Although Japan has a population of 44,000,000, and has accomplished all the work that I have mentioned, she has a smaller national debt than the State of New South Wales.

Mr Watson

- Quite so, but no assets.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- This means that the financial condition of Japan is such that it has been able to undergo this enormous transformation from its previous primitive state into a condition similar to that of Western nations, without adding to its national debt a greater sum than is now owed by New South Wales.

Mr Watson

- Her total wealth is less than that of Holland.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I contend that the facts stated show at once immense powers of economy, national as well as individual; and these point to considerable national ability in the endeavour to build up a State. I should like to examine for a moment what I may call the moral ground upon which this Bill and the agitation which has preceded it has been built up. We are told that the great desideratum in view is purity of race; but I should like to know whether we British people are the most entitled to talk of such things. I think I am right when I say that there is no race on the face of the earth that is of a more mixed character than the British race.

Mr Page

- Let us have it white.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I am talking about the purity of the race. In my desire to be perfectly fair I do not hesitate to say that the Chinese and the Japanese and the Indians are in the strict sense of the term purer as a race than are the British or the American peoples - I say that advisedly. I admit that the mixture has been an unmixed good, because it has no doubt developed qualities which are answerable to a great extent, not only for the progress of the British people, but also for the progress of the American people. Still, when we are talking about the desirability of the absolute purity of race, we should remember that in the strict sense of the term these peoples whom we desire to shut out are of far purer race than ourselves, and that we cannot, therefore, afford to boast of our own racial purity. We know, too, that so far as Great Britain is concerned our ancestors were disporting themselves with painted skins when Julius Caesar invaded Britain, and coming down to later days we know that the bulk of the British people were simply serfs under their Norman conquerors. Although these facts are rather historical and academic than practical, they should appeal to the minds of those who have laid so much stress upon the purity of the British race. Now

looking at the moral aspect of this question, I should like to read an extract from a book published this year by one of the greatest living authorities on China, namely Sir Robert Hart, Inspector General of Chinese Customs, a man who has spent a large part of his life in China, and who is fully acquainted with the people. His expression of opinion only shows how wide of the mark the average Britisher is in condemning the Chinese as an immoral and degraded people. This book was published as late as this year. In it Sir Robert Hart says : -

The Chinese. are a proud, some say a conceited people, but they have very good reasons for their pride, and their conceit has its excuses. Far away from the rest of the world, they have been living their own life, and developing their own civilization ; while others have been displaying what humanity may attain to with a revealed religion for its highest law, and a Christ for its pattern, they have been exhibiting what a life a race may rise to and live, without either. The central idea of them all is filial piety ; reverence for seniority, intensifying with every generation that has transmitted it, settles all the details of family, social and national life. Instead of " Commit no nuisance," the placard on the wall says " Respect thyself." They are pre-eminently a reasonable people, and when disputes occur, it is the appeal to right that solves them. For thirty centuries the recognised and inherited worship of right has gone on strengthening : and so strong is the feeling that to hint to them that right must be supported by might excites something more than amazement. The relations of sovereign to subject, and man to man, have been so long authoritatively acknowledged and defined that the life of the people has been poured into and shaped by a mould of duty, while the natural division of the Empire into provinces has been so harmoniously supplemented by provincial and inter-provincial arrangements under metropolitan administration that law reigns everywhere, and disorder is the exception. The arts of peace have ever held the first place in the estimation of all ; and just as might should quail before right, so does intellectual prowess win honour everywhere, and the leaders of the people are those whom the grand competitive examinations have proved to be more gifted than their fellows. In no other country is education so prized, so honoured, so utilized, so rewarded. Along its lofty ladder, broad at the base and narrow at the top, the son of the poorest peasant may win his way to the highest post among the Ministers of State round the throne-; and such is the veneration for the simple vehicle of thought, the written character, that to tread on paper with either writing or printing on it is all but desecration.

These are the words not of an outside author, but of a highly practical man who is thoroughly well acquainted with the Chinese character in every portion of the empire, and who has filled the practical post of Inspector-General of Customs of the Chinese Empire.

Mr Page

- Let the Chinese stop in China.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I want to show the honorable member the character of the people who are stopping in China.

Mr Page

- Sir Robert Hart is of a different opinion since the war.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Another aspect (the commercial) of this question is this - The total trade of China at the present time - which cannot be generally known - represented by tonnage, entering and clearing, is 39,000,000, and I should like honorable members to realize that out of this 39,000,000 tons 23,000,000 tons per annum is trade with the British people - only 5,000,000 tons with the Japanese and only 3,000,000 tons with the Germans. So that 61 per cent, of the trade of China is transacted with the British people, and it can be easily understood why the Imperial Government is anxious not to do anything that would unnecessarily alienate the friendship of these people. We should seek to restrict immigration to the very best class of these Eastern people by a politic and statesmanlike course : to avoid deliberately insulting those whose friendship may be of the utmost importance to us in our future history. Another point upon which I wish to say a word or two is the alleged danger to Australia arising from the present state of affairs. I have already said that we have been inundated with statements as to the immediate danger in which Australia stands, and the urgency of this measure. I have had the advantage of looking at the figures of which I have spoken, and I should like to point out the condition of things in the Northern Territory - one of the States with regard to which we have heard the loudest and most hysterical cries. I refer to the condition of

things in the Northern Territory of South Australia. We have been told over and over again that hordes of Asiatics were coming down to land in this Northern Territory with the idea of taking a prominent part in the industries of that portion of the Commonwealth, but I find that between 1896 and 1901 - that is six years - the arrivals over the departures of all the Asiatic races totalled only 550, or an increase at the rate of 90 per annum. I find that in Western Australia during the last four years, the departures over arrivals of all Asiatics have totalled 375, so that the Asiatic population of that colony has decreased at the rate of 100 per annum during the last four years. I do not want to point a poor compliment to the State represented by the Minister for Defence, but at all events the Chinese are leaving Western Australia at that rate. In New South Wales, taking the Chinese only - because the return enables me only to do that - I find that during the past six years the departures over arrivals have been 1,900 ; that the Chinese have been actually leaving New South Wales during the last six years at the rate of 330 per annum.

Mr Watson

- That is under the restrictive laws.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- With the existing restrictions. That is to say that there is no need apparently for any further law to lessen the Chinese inhabitants of New South Wales. The returns for South Australia are not complete, as my right honorable friend will inform the committee. Those relating to Tasmania are also incomplete, but with regard to Victoria, 2,400 " Chinese and others " - that is how they are classified in the Victorian statistics, and I take it that the figures all relate to the peoples of eastern nations - have arrived during the last six years, or at the rate of 400 per annum. In Queensland, in six years, the arrivals over departures, of South Sea Islanders only, have been 2,000, or at the rate of 333 per annum, and the arrivals over departures of all Asiatics - including kanakas, I suppose - 3,900 for the six years, or at the rate of 650 per annum. This, therefore, is a yearly summary of the figures : - In the Northern Territory the arrivals over departures were 90 per annum ; in Western Australia the departures over arrivals were 100 ; in New South Wales the departures over arrivals were 330 ; in Victoria the arrivals were 400 ; whilst in Queensland the arrivals over departures were 650 a year. The total arrivals are 1,140, and the total departures 430; so that the total arrivals over departures for all Australia are of all Asiatics, 710 people.

Mr Piesse

- Those are the balances in all cases?

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Yes ; I take the arrivals from the departures, and [find that there is a balance of 710 arrivals over the departures for the whole of the Commonwealth. Now taking the Japanese alone, what is the state of things? The Japanese have been referred to frequently, but I can only take the statistics dealing with them for a period of two years. I find that in Western Australia the arrivals during the last two years were 29, while the departures were 83. In Queensland there were 206 arrivals, and 584 departures during the same period. There is no record as to the departures from New South Wales, so I count none, but there is a record of 42 arrivals. Therefore, the departures of Japanese from the three States of Western Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales for the last two years were 390 ; so that the Japanese, as far as one can ascertain, have been leaving these three States at the rate of 195 per annum, during the last two years, instead of coming into it. Turning to Dr. Maxwell's report; - which, perhaps, all honorable members have not had an opportunity of reading, because we get such an enormous mass of reading matter put before us - what do we find him writing with regard to the kanaka? Although the kanaka is dealt with under a separate Bill, I claim the right of speaking of him as forming part of that " scourge and contamination " to which one honorable member has referred. Dr. Maxwell states that as a result of white settlement there has been a decrease in the number of Pacific Islanders employed, yet a simultaneous expansion in sugar production. In 1885, according to his report, there were 10,755 kanakas in Queensland ; in 1890 - five years after - there were only 9,689 ; while in 1899 - nine years after - there were only 8,826.

Mr McDonald

- Now there are over 10,000 there.

Mr WATKINS

-Following that out to its logical conclusion the fewer kanakas we have, the more sugar we produce.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- So that between 1885 and 1899, a period of 14 years, the kanaka traffic, instead of being an increasing one, has been reduced by something like 1,900 people, although, as I shall show, sugar production has gone up from 100 to 150 or 200 per cent. This is what Dr. Maxwell says in the body of his report - In 1898, as it has already been stated, the number of white cane growers in Queensland was 2,610, with the production of sugar increased to 123,289 tons, and the number of Pacific Islanders reduced to 8,826. The actual reduction in the number of Islanders is 1,929, but the relative reduction is not less than 60 per cent, from what it was in 1885, when the production of sugar at these respective periods is considered. The logical indications of the situation are that the South Sea Islander is a declining factor in sugar production in Queensland, and that the decline is due to a natural operating law, by reason of which the lower is being gradually substituted by a higher form, and by a higher standard of producing agencies in these locations where the laws or conditions of nature, such as climate, do not operate in the opposite direction. This law may be expected to continue to operate, and with continued and increasing results, providing it is not checked through any device by which it may be sought to hasten the rate of movement of natural law.

I think those figures make it quite clear to any one who approaches the report with an unbiased mind that at all events the kanaka is a declining factor in Queensland. If honorable members acknowledge - as I have demonstrated - that such is the case, and that the arrivals over departures of all other Asiatic peoples in Australia are so infinitesimal as compared with our enormous population and our increase of population, then I think they will see clearly that this measure is not only premature, but hysterical. It is hysterical because it is based upon an assumption, on the part of people who have not been able to look into these things for themselves, that we are in the presence of a menace to the purity of their national life, whereas the whole thing is a bogey, a scarecrow. I venture to say that a large part of the scare is founded upon a desire to make political capital by appealing to some of the worst instincts in some of the more credulous of the people.

Mr Fisher

What about the large number of honorable members who believe in it?

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I name none of them. I do not say that there are not many politicians, here and elsewhere, who are perfectly sincere in their advocacy of measures for the reduction of this immigration ; but I contend that, so far as a large number of the people are concerned, the cry is hysterical, and that political capital lies at the bottom of it. . I do not want to be invidious or persona], nor do I apply my words at any particular section, but I do say that this scare has been used for political purposes. The moment we analyze it we find that it withers away into thin air. There is certainly no basis for it, or for the alleged urgency of this Bill, which has caused it to be pushed in front of machinery measures for which the people will shortly be crying out.

Mr McDonald

- Did the honorable member take up that stand during the elections ?

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I always stand up for what I believe in. I heard the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne inquire the other evening whether this was a vital question. He hung upon his question. The Prime Minister hung upon his answer, and said ultimately - "Yes, vital to the measure." Then the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne said for the first time that he would take his own course. It is an extraordinary, and, to my mind, an entirely new state of things, that where a man is impressed with the fact that a certain condition of affairs is really vital to his country, vital to the purity of the race of which he is one, he should put that question of purity of the race aside and-

Mr SAWERS

- The honorable and learned member said it was only a question as to the method.

Mr Page

- Be fair to the honorable and learned member.

Mr Higgins

- May I be permitted to make a personal explanation 1 The honorable and learned member's excellent

speech is marred by any attempt to misrepresent. I think he does not attempt to do so wilfully, but any one who heard me knows that what the honorable and learned member has imputed to me was as completely distant from my mind as anything could be. I asked the Government whether they regarded this particular method of dealing with the difficulty as vital? The Prime Minister said he regarded it as vital to this Bill. Any one understands what that means. I replied that, inasmuch as it was only vital to this particular Bill, I should vote in the way which, in my opinion, will best secure for us a "white Australia."

Mr Barton

- I said a great deal more than that, which I will explain later on.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- All honorable members who are acquainted with me know that I would never say or do anything to unnecessarily hurt the feelings of any honorable member. If I have misrepresented the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne in any way I offer him my apology most sincerely. I am bound to say that on the incorrect interpretation which it now appears I put upon what he said I was somewhat surprised. It did seem to me at the time that, although the honorable and learned member recognised that the condition of things against which this Bill is aimed really constituted a menace to this country, he was prepared to vote one way or the other, according -as the Government attached or did not attach party importance to the Bill. Now, I understand the honorable and learned member to say he recognised that in either course he took he would to some extent mitigate the evil.

Mr Higgins

- It is one thing to drop the Bill, and another to drop the policy. Any Ministry that drops the policy will be dropped by the country.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I am very glad to receive the honorable and learned member's explanation, because I have very great admiration for his literary and political ability ; and although I do not agree with all his political views, I credit him with very great sincerity. I am very glad that he has removed from my mind 'what I thought an unfortunate utterance. I think I have said practically all that I desire to put before the committee. I am bound to add, however, that I have never yet been satisfied as to what we really mean by a "white Australia." Whether we refer to colour or not I do not know.

Mr O'malley

- It is the skin colour.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

- That is admitted by ethnologists to be a question of climate and sunlight. If the tinge of colour is going to be made a ground for excluding people, or for treating them as subjects for exclusion, then it is going to be a question of climate. I understand the sentiment to be, although it is not very clear, that, with regard to the Asiatic races, the African races, and the Pacific races, there is a desire on the part of the House to, at all events, very much limit their immigration if not to absolutely exclude them. I should like to say, as a practical politician, that I recognise these two elements of statesmanship. If there is a danger to a State, that is a very good reason for interference on behalf of the State. I recognise also another element, namely, the fear of danger. Although there may be no real grounds for danger, as I think there are no real grounds here, if you find the people permeated, so to speak, with a fear of danger, it becomes necessary for all thoughtful men, who take part in the public affairs of the country, to put an end to - to allay that fear. Although I believe that the fear is, to a great extent, imaginary at the present time - at all events it is not an urgent danger - still on the ground that there is a very widespread fear throughout Australia that the possibility of the advent of the Asiatic is a menace to our national prosperity and national happiness, I am perfectly willing to fall in line to some extent with the movement, and to assist, at all events, to allay that fear. I believe this Bill will do that. But I believe that it will be allayed in "the most wise way by adopting a European test. I should like to say that unless the Government are prepared to offer some other solution of the difficulty which, whilst allaying the fear, will keep out the very worst class from which the fear arises, and at the same time having no effect which is calculated to slacken our hold of the centre of our great Empire, and to frustrate its attempts to stand in a friendly relation with the great nations of the East, I shall certainly favour the proposed amendment which makes the European test the one for admission to Australia. I shall certainly vote against the amendment for the complete prohibition of the

Asiatic, African, and Pacific races, and I shall vote, as I said before, against the purely English test, because I think it would bring down upon us the ridicule of most civilized peoples.

Mr REID

- I really must express my regrets to the committee that I was unable to take part in the debate on the second reading of this measure. I shall speak now, important as the matter before us is, only if I can have the assurance of honorable members that they will not resent the fact that I wish to make some remarks on the question generally. Although my speech should have been addressed to the second reading of the measure, I feel that the matter before us is of such a grave character that honorable members will pardon me if I take some part in the debate on the clause and the amendment before the committee. There is no doubt that in a way quite unusual, the spinal marrow of the matter before us is contained in the clause or in the amendment to the clause which is to be submitted by the honorable member for Bland. I suppose there is not a single member of this Chamber who does not honestly desire to prevent the influx of a large number of the coloured races of the world. Even my honorable and learned friend, in spite of the philosophical manner which often does him great injustice, must, I am sure, in his inmost heart be capable of feeling as strongly as other honorable members in this matter, if he could realize as vividly as others the gravity of the question. I do not think that any honorable member who views this as an urgent measure of legislation can justly be termed hysterical. I think that if ever there was a subject during the years that have gone by, or during the first election for this Commonwealth Parliament, which excited more strongly and more universally than any other the feelings of the electors of Australia, it was the subject we are now dealing with. I do not think I go far wrong when I say that the Federal Government, realizing the strength of the feeling on this subject - which, existed throughout Australia, took care to put this matter in the very fore-front of their appeal for the support of the people of Australia. From that time down to the present, the Federal Ministry have lost no opportunity - and no one can blame them - of emphasizing the position which they then took up. The Attorney-General has assured us that no question has occupied the attention of the Cabinet more frequently or more closely than this measure, which is so important that I wish as scrupulously as I can to avoid any remark which might seem to bear a tinge of party feeling. Honorable members on this side of the House know - every one of them knows - that I have never dropped the slightest remark calculated to influence them as to any vote which may be given or any views which may be expressed. I feel that upon these higher matters of national politics the less the sound of the party whip is heard the better. The fact that so honorable and learned a member of the Opposition as the honorable member for Parkes made the speech which he has just made, is, I suppose, one of the strongest proofs we can give that there has been no party concert in connexion with this matter. The speech made by the honorable member for Wentworth was made entirely without any sort of consultation with me. I had not the slightest knowledge of the line which the honorable member proposed to take, and, feeling as I do that I should endeavour to suppress any sort of party action, I never sought to influence his views in the matter at all. His speech was one which he delivered entirely on his own responsibility. I would like to ask the committee to remember that after all we are dealing with no new question. Fifty years ago this question was just as keenly to the front in our political agitations as it is to-day. When the gold-fields of Australia were discovered those of us who were then in this country can remember the thousands of Chinamen who swarmed here. Do we not remember the legislation which was then passed 1

Mr Wilks

- In the Victorian Parliament.

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Mr REID

- In Victoria - first of all, and again in New South Wales and Queensland. In those days this legislation excited the strongest displeasure of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Then the friendly ally of Great Britain was not Japan, but China; and the Secretary of State in a despatch in 1877 expressed his deep regret that a colonial legislature should feel called on to pass an Act excluding the subjects of a friendly power. I have the greatest possible feeling of indulgence for the spirit which animates British Ministers in viewing measures of this sort with disfavour. If our lot were cast in the mother country, we should feel more fit liberty to indulge the larger feelings of philanthropy than we feel here in Australia under the actual conditions of the future as they lie before us. Let us imagine for the moment that in the United Kingdom

nearly five per cent, of the population consisted of coloured races from Asia, that some 2,000,000 of Asiatics were settled in the United Kingdom. It strikes me that the feeling in the mother country would then become very much in touch with the feelings which we express in Australia to-day. Those who in Australia seem able to view this matter with much calm indifference would, I think, if the matter were brought closer home - if they were living near some Chinese den, and their children were exposed to any sort of contact with the persons to whom I refer - find that all their stoicism would give way, and that it was not altogether a matter of "climate and sunshine." We may be an inferior race - we may, compared with the Chinese, be a most uneducated and vicious people - but whatever we are we have fully made up our minds that the current of Australian blood shall not assume the darker hues. This is not a matter on which there is any room for discussion. That has been the feeling of the people right through, and no man can misunderstand it. There is not a single man who can sit in this House and say that he is a representative of the people of Australia while he does not share these sentiments. That being the state of the case, I come to the Bill which the Minister has submitted. I cannot sufficiently express in guarded language the indignation I feel at the method adopted by the Government in making this matter wear an aspect which it should never be made to assume. We may find it right some day to draw this line sharply ; at present it is only a colour line. There is no man at present who wishes to ban the races which inhabit the continent of Europe, because some of the best settlers throughout Australia are men who have come from these European nations. But the Government have put this Federal Parliament in what seems to me a most odious position before the world, when by this measure they have proclaimed to the world that their policy is that not one of these highly civilized nations - who share our blood, after all, to a very large extent - are to be allowed to come to Australia ; that unless they can satisfy some Custom official as to the degree of knowledge they possess of a language which is not their own, Australia is debarred to them. I cannot too strongly deplore the fact that the Federal Government have taken such an extreme course. There is, I believe, an Act in Western Australia in which such a provision is contained.

Sir John Forrest

- No, not quite.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- South Australia has such a provision.

Mr REID

- I understand that the South Australian Bill was not proceeded with.

Mr Glynn

- It was thrown out.

Mr REID

- The Bill was introduced in South Australia, but was thrown out. The Prime Minister in his speech quoted as a precedent that in Western Australia an Act was passed in 1897 which set out that a prohibited immigrant should include -

Any person who, when asked to do so, fails to write out in the characters of any language of Europe a passage in English of 50 words in length, dictated by the officer from a British author, and append his name in his own language.

Sir John Forrest

- It says in the characters of any language of Europe.

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Mr REID

- My right honorable friend is perfectly right. It does say " in the characters of any language of Europe a passage in English of 50 words." That I presume is a double sort of test. An English official reads an English passage, and the unfortunate Frenchman or German has to put it into another language. That is rather a wonderful test, It is what I call a double barreled prohibition. It is bad enough even for some of us to have to write our own language from dictation, but if we were asked to put into French on the spur of the moment some English read by a Customs officer, I think we should all have to be expatriated. This seems to be the source of the unhappy inspiration which has led the Federal Government to put into a Bill of this sort such a narrow and unstatesmanlike clause. Talk about insulting

Japan ! Is it not a remarkable thing that. Ministers are so permeated with a feeling of delicacy for the susceptibilities of the Mikado of Japan that they flaunt the whole of Europe in this contemptuous fashion?

Is it not singular that they flaunt all the races of Germany, France, Russia, Austria, and Italy, because the Prime Minister has laid it down that a knowledge of English is to be indispensable ? According to Hansard, page 3500, the Prime Minister said -

The chief difference between this Bill and the provisions of the Acts to which I have referred is that the English language is indispensable, and the words must be dictated by the officer. I have had no hesitation in regard to making the English language indispensable.

Mr McDONALD

-paterson. - There is no such thing as the English language. It is the British language.

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Mr REID

- I hope that my honorable and learned friend will not celebrate his recovery by interrupting me just now.

The Prime Minister goes on to say -

I do not see what claim there is on the part of any one seeking admission, who may be undesirable, to choose the language in which his test shall be taken.

Here is an indispensable test - an English test; - which, it seems to me, offers an unnecessary insult to the nations of Europe. I do not suppose that they will take the slightest notice of it. I do not suppose that they will ever hear of it. I do not suppose that the Mikado will ever hear of some of the speeches which have been made against the Japanese. I really think there is a trace of hysteria in the awful diffidence which His Majesty's Ministers feel in legislating against the influx of Japanese. It strikes me that Japan - like every other power - in carrying out its policy, views large measures of national interest from the standpoint of national advantage. Why is there this friendly alliance between England and Japan, or between any other two nations ? Is it a matter of sentiment ? Nothing of the sort. The fact is that it is supremely to the interests of these two great powers to keep a joint eye upon the movements of Russia in Asia. To talk about the friendship between these two great powers as being at all imperilled by any legislation that we may pass with reference to the management of this Commonwealth is to intrude into the realm of hysteria. Great nations do not come to great resolves except for great things. Japan is the ally of England to-day on high grounds of national interest, just as if the interest of Japan changed to-morrow, she might not be the ally of England but the ally of Russia. It seems to me that the hysteria of this matter is to throw over this momentous epoch in the history-making of Australia the shadow of these references to possible consequences to the might and interest of the British Empire. The treaty arranged between Great Britain and Japan seven years ago is an absolute exposure of the utter hollowness of all this talk.

Notwithstanding all the hysterical fear which overshadows the minds of Ministers regarding the sentiments of the Mikado of Japan, there is a solemn treaty in existence between Great Britain and Japan, and in that treaty Japan expressly recognises the right of the self-governing colonies of the British Empire to be exempt from its operations. In that treaty it was further provided that they should be open to make treaties for themselves with the Mikado of Japan. What does that mean? It means the recognition by Japan herself that these colonies are self-governing communities, that they have the right to fashion their destiny as their Parliaments decide, and that if Japan wishes to have a treaty or understanding with Australia or Canada - and the smallest dependency, Newfoundland, is not omitted - in reference to matters of mutual concern, such treaty is to be arranged between the British self governing colonies concerned and the Government of Japan. There is thus in the Japanese treaty a recognition of a sound broad constitutional principle, which ought never to be forgotten. What did the grant of self-government mean to the colonies of Australia 50 years ago? It absolutely meant that the moment Parliaments were erected in these southern lands, they carried with them all the ordinary rights of legislation in matters within their own province, which are possessed by the Imperial Parliament. Of course, there is the Royal assent needed to our measures just as the Royal assent is required to the measures of the Imperial Parliament, no more and no less. Therefore, we know that our legislation is subject to the risk, as is the legislation of the British House of Parliament, of being vetoed. But we have the assurance of the Attorney-General that there will be no difficulty of that sort. We have his assurance, and I think it is founded upon a proper knowledge and principle, that if we are in earnest and mean what we say, the British Government will not take the responsibility of interfering with our legislation. If we are not - if we think as matters stand that some other method should be adopted - well and good. Let it be done. Exactly that course was taken, and I was a party to it, only a few years ago. I wish to do full justice to myself in

regard to that matter, and I think it is a proper subject for me to refer to. As these States grow, different phases of the same great trouble arise. Until ten years ago, the great danger which Australia apprehended was in regard to an influx of the Chinese. Events have travelled since then, and we have come to see that it is not enough to exclude the Chinese, and that the principle must be pushed further. At the Sydney conference in 1896, over which I presided, - it was unanimously agreed that the legislation with reference to the Chinese should be extended to all coloured races, and a Bill was introduced and passed in the New South Wales Parliament upon those lines. After the session of the Federal Convention in the early part of 1897, some of us went to England, and there had a conference with Mr. Chamberlain. There is no doubt whatever that the result of that conference was that another measure was introduced into the New South Wales Parliament some little time afterwards providing as a test the knowledge of a European language, and passed. But now let me draw a distinction between the position then and the position to-day. We were then on the brink of the Federal union - the convention had met, although it had not concluded its labours. Queensland, the colony where this problem was and always will be the most serious, although it joined with us in the declaration I refer to, stood out. The Premier of Queensland was not at the conference, but his colony was represented by other Ministers, and he practically disowned what his colleagues had done, and entered into some treaty with the Japanese Government. He thus exercised a sovereign right, because the right to make a treaty is the prerogative of independent communities. That right has been recognised by the British Government and by the Japanese Government, in connexion with the instrument I have referred to. This treaty was passed. So far as New South Wales was concerned, the problem was a comparatively simple one. I go absolutely with the Government in saying that proper loyal statesmanship should induce us to proceed as nearly as we can on the lines of Imperial convenience in our legislation. I do not blame the Government for trying to do that, and as far as I was concerned I recognised that obligation. It was not a matter of grave urgency to New South Wales, because Queensland had made its own arrangement with Japan, and as we were within reach of a federal union,, which alone could deal with this matter in a national way, I felt no sort of difficulty in giving way so far as New South Wales was concerned.

Mr Watson

- The New South Wales measure was only tentative, any way.

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Mr REID

- Yes, that was made perfectly clear; and I do not think I need take up much time in showing the vital difference between the position I occupied then as the head of the Government of New South Wales, and the position I occupy now in this Chamber as a member of the Federal Parliament which has to deal with the continent as a whole as well as with that part of the continent where all the trouble and danger lies. The position is absolutely different, and, further, I say that whilst diplomacy and the requirements of diplomacy may often be studied with advantage, there are certain subjects upon which a people that claims to be respected must speak with a straightforward honorable voice. We are young at law-making, we are young at nation-building, but if we, in dealing with the foundation stones of our national laws and institutions, trim with the dexterity of diplomatists, we shall begin a line of legislation upon great affairs which will not enhance the character of Australia before the eyes of the world. What sort of respect can any Japanese Minister have for the Attorney-General when he has had the honour of reading the brilliant speech of my honorable and learned friend the other evening 1 My honorable friend, in one of those brilliant assaults upon the English language for which he is famous, out-Heroded the honorable member for Bland in the magnificent ease which he made out for the honorable member's amendment. There is one thing that my honorable friend, even in his novel surroundings can never lose, and that is that strong democratic instinct which has made his name honoured throughout Australia. It is only fair to say that. We hoard Alfred Deakin, but we do not find him in the Bill - we see him in the amendment. It is not because the Japanese are undesirable neighbours that the Attorney-General objects to them, but because they are dangerous competitors, and why 1 Partly because of their education. Does the Attorney - General not know that the English language is now being taught in thousands of schools in Japan, and if the Bill is passed at it stands what sort of attitude shall we stand in with reference to the Japanese or other coloured races, whose members diligently study perhaps for years to qualify themselves to become residents of Australia ? When the current of those who can pass the Customs test thickens strongly

enough, the Government tell us that they will use their prerogative powers to shut them out. We are told that this is one only of a chain of measures. But there is no sort of honorable statesmanship in putting upon our national statute-book a measure providing for admission to Australia upon passing a certain test, with the full intention of destroying that facility if those to whom it is offered take advantage of it. That is a depth of Australian duplicity - and diplomacy - which I hope this Parliament will never descend to. If we cannot emulate all the virtues of the Japanese which have been so eloquently spoken of by the Attorney-General, let us at least emulate them in the one little virtue of straightforward dealing between white, and yellow, and black. If the Government take up this position - that they have no sort of objection to the educated Japanese, or Chinese, or Polynesian - they will be justified in voting for this Bill, because that is the principle they have embodied in the measure. But if they want the House to believe that, although they have put that principle in the Bill, they do not want the educated Japanese, and that they will not let them in if they come here in formidable numbers, then they are asking this House to legislate upon lines that are not usual in civilized Parliaments when dealing with foreign countries. That, I think, is a perfectly legitimate criticism. Do the Government intend to stand by that principle? Do they mean to say that if 5,000 highly cultured Japanese arrived here, and could honestly pass the test under the Bill, the Government would let them in?

Mr Sawers

- They would never come.

Mr REID

- That is a good way of getting out of obligations. That is like the man who owed money, but said it did not matter, because his creditors would not turn up. If it would never occur, what is the use of the provision in the Bill ?

Mr Sawers

- It is aimed at the uneducated - the educated Japanese would not come here.

Mr REID

- Now, I understand that we have a slight rift in the lute - a slight diversity of view of the Japanese as between the honorable member for New England and the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General speaks straightforwardly, because he says, "The Japanese I am afraid of are not the ignorant, vicious, dirty, slovenly members of that race, but the industrious, virtuous, frugal, thrifty men." Now, the honorable member for New England says that the latter class of Japanese will never come here, and between the two honorable members every one ought to be satisfied.

Mr Sawers

- Add the word " educated " to the list of qualifications.

Mr REID

- Surely my honorable friend knows that the Japanese who can speak and write his own language correctly may be more highly educated than some of us ? Does not the honorable member see that the man who has learnt enough English to pass the Custom-house test may not be an educated man, whilst a Japanese who has not learned a word of English may be a highly educated man in his own country? According to this test no man can be an educated man unless he can talk 50 words of English according to the Custom-house officer's standard. The man who can squeeze through the test may be an uneducated man. But what I want to know is whether the Government intend to admit such of the coloured aliens as can pass the test.

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- Yes.

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Mr REID

- If I am to take that as a Ministerial assurance, I must admit that the Ministry stand on perfectly plain and straightforward ground, and that not one of the remarks which I have just been making would apply to such an attitude. I did not, however, understand the Attorney-General to say that, because he led us to believe that if the test proposed in the Bill did not prove stiff enough, the Government would adopt some more stringent measures, and that this Bill was only the first link in a chain of measures intended to achieve the desired result. Here we find the aim of the Government expressed by the Attorney-General in half-a-dozen words. At pages 4S05-6 of Hansard, the Attorney-General speaks of what is really the object

of the Government. He says - It was for this reason that so much stress was laid on this issue, and it is for this reason that, since the Government took office, no question has more frequently or more seriously occupied their attention, not only because of this one proposal now before the House, but with regard to executive acts that have been and will be necessary. There have been determinations which hereafter may have important consequences arising out of our administration, as well as other measures which will be submitted to Parliament, all having in view the accomplishment of the same end. That end, put in plain and unequivocal terms, as the House and the country are entitled to have it put, means the prohibition of all alien coloured immigration.

Now, there are the views of the Government. There is an express reference to executive acts, honorable members will observe. The only construction that can be put upon that statement is this - "We will apply this sham test. If it does not answer we will use our executive power. But we will do what our country expects us to do. We will prevent the alien coloured immigration at all cost." Is that the policy of the Government? Is it the Government policy that if numbers of these coloured races pass this test they will be admitted; or is it that if they show too strong a desire to come and pass the test the Government will take some other measure, either executive or legislative? It is for the committee to choose; but I cannot put it too strongly that in dealing with these large matters we had better express the mind and intention of this Legislature. There must be a division on this occasion between those who feel it to be their duty to Australia to pass a clear and unmistakable law embodying the policy of the people of Australia, and those who take refuge in an expedient which has not even the merit of being politically honest unless it is intended as a means of admitting the educated coloured races to Australia. It is honest then. If the Ministry say - "This is our first weapon; if it is too blunt we will try another," then I say these methods are not for Australia yet, I hope. But it is for the committee to decide. The honorable and learned member for Parkes spoke of our duty to make concessions for the Empire; he spoke of the feelings of the 50 semi-independent states of India; of the people there; the rulers there; the millions there just as the Attorney-General did. Now, so far as I can read the trend of the policy of all these races, the great bulk of them are just as anxious to stay where they are as we are that they should. There is no sort of eagerness, so far as the great body of these races are concerned, to trouble us, but unfortunately in our present state of development - a handful of people spread over a vast continent - the ordinary immigration into this country of a number which would never be missed from amongst the millions of Asia would cause a serious race taint to Australia. Then my honorable and learned friend speaks of the small numbers. Can we not remember the time, not so long ago, when, instead of the great Anglo-Saxon young nation that we see on this continent, there was a mere handful of settlers on the shores of Port Jackson? Can we not remember that the stream of immigration which has made us what we are to-day was in its first stages thin and disturbed? And so with the movements of these great coloured races to-day. The tiniest rivulet that begins to-day to trickle from Asia to Australia may become a mighty power to-morrow. What a painful zeal that was which saw that every little stone in the dykes of Holland was in its place, because the tiniest rift of that system of dykes might cause universal ruin and devastation; and we here, who have grown to this stage to-day, cannot forget our past so thoroughly as not to see that the tiny coloured streams of humanity that are coming into this great continent from those mighty races near us mean something that we ought to guard against. At any rate let us be honest and straightforward, and in our great measures of legislation say the thing we mean. As far as the British Empire is concerned, I venture to say that just as in all its might and its majesty it has managed to remain free and united with all its different races, each living in its own realms, so it will never be so strong as when it adds to its strength the strength of an Anglo-Saxon Australia. I feel that there are times when a man ought to forget, if he can, the political trammels which confine him. There are times when a man owes some duty to those who send him here, and if we are not prepared to do our duty on this occasion, then I think that the prospects of useful legislation at the hands of this Parliament will be remote. I realize strongly, too, that honorable members here feel upon them the tie of honorable political obligations. I feel that they are too honestly anxious to act up to the spirit of understanding which knits them to their constituents the people of Australia to act in any way inconsistent with our higher character in this matter. There are matters upon which we can have our political fight, and nothing happens, but when we come to deal with these things which lie at the very heart of the manhood and nationhood of Australia, we must then at least be true to those who send us here.

Mr. L.

E. GROOM (Darling Downs). Whilst I have some diffidence in speaking upon this question, seeing that I have so recently come from my electorate, I feel at the same time that, inasmuch as this is a national matter, it is perhaps rather fitting than otherwise that I should address myself to it. I have just come from a contested election, where the question of a white Australia was really a vital one, and I can say emphatically that I believe that principle has given an impetus to our national life. It is no mere catch cry ; it is no mere sentimental question ; it is a question striking deeply into the vital principles of this new Commonwealth. I look at it in this way: We are just on the eve of our national life, and it behoves us at the very beginning to decide who are going to be the citizens of the Commonwealth. It is not a matter that we have to decide for ourselves only. We have to decide it for posterity ; and it is right that we should determine definitely that Australia shall be for those of European extraction. This matter is perhaps of more importance to the members from Queensland than to those who come from other States, for the reason that we come from that part of Australia which is said to be so essentially a country for coloured races. It strikes us very deeply because those who are really opposed to a white Australia say that our island continent is divided into two portions, the north and tropical; the south and temperate. They say that it is utterly impossible for the white races to work in the north ; that as a matter of physical conditions the white man deteriorates there and cannot do the work. That being so, what is to follow? The opponents of a white Australia say the work must be done; that we cannot leave these wide and fertile fields uncultivated, and that, therefore, we must permit inferior races from Asia to enter the Commonwealth. What is the constitutional aspect ? The argument, which has been clearly penned, is that there will be two races in Australia ; two forms of government. In the north there will be the servile races working under aristocratic rule, while in the south the people will be governed by democratic principles. They do not hesitate to put that strongly. We do not hear the argument raised in this Chamber, but at the same time these people tell us that we are fighting against the climatic conditions of the continent. They declare that no matter what we may do in this Parliament the climate will settle the question. I do not believe that their position is correct. I believe that we want the whole of Australia for the white races. Seeing that the flow of coloured races to Australia is comparatively small at present, I think we cannot do better than stop it at the beginning. Honorable members for Victoria know that the rabbits were looked upon as very innocent tilings at the beginning ; yet they have multiplied enormously and rapidly, until they have become a great scourge. In Queensland we suffered in the same way from the prickly pear and other pests of that kind, and we say that we should stop the flow of coloured races to this land at the very beginning, and that we should do it decisively and firmly. I went before my constituents pledged to the principles of the Barton Bill, and I will certainly vote for it. There are two ways of dealing with this question. One is by means of treaty, and the other is by means of legislation. From what I have seen of the working of treaties in Queensland, however, I contend that we cannot attempt to regulate this question by such means. We must deal with it by means of restrictive legislation. A treaty is difficult to enforce. In the first place it is necessary to have loyal co-operation at both ends. It is a contract, and unless both parties to it are endeavouring to work loyally together a treaty is bound to result in failure. We have in Australia a desire to keep our country for the white races of the world. The Japanese may not have so strong a desire to assist US. They may wish to keep certain classes of their people in their midst, but until we get both parties imbued with the true spirit of the treaty it will not work well. This is a matter that has been fairly proved. I read now from the official correspondence placed upon the table of the Queensland Legislative Assembly at the request of

Mr. Brown. Sir James

Dickson, in a letter to the Japanese consul, dated the 7th March, 1889, said -

In this connexion I may state that certain facts have recently come to my knowledge which indicate that in some cases the Japanese authorities are being misled by persons wishing to proceed to Queensland, and who, in order to make it appear that they are merchants, produce, for inspection, goods to the value of some hundreds of dollars. These goods, however, do not actually belong to the persons professing to own them, who on arrival in Queensland hand them over to some of their compatriots already established in business in the colony, while they themselves engage in avocations, which, if stated. in the first instance, would, in the terms of the understanding with the Japanese Government, certainly have led to the applications for passports being refused. I shall feel obliged, accordingly, if you will be good enough to

bring these facts under the notice of your Government, in order that such precautions may be adopted in future as will preclude any similar attempts being made to evade the restrictions now imposed.

Then, again, on the 29th May, 1899, Sir James Dickson wrote another letter to the Japanese Consul, in which he stated distinctly -

I take this opportunity of informing you that, on the 8th May, instant, there were landed at Thursday Island, by the s.s. Yawatu Maru 39 Japanese, bearing passports stating that they were visiting Queensland for commercial purposes, who forthwith signed articles of agreement with Japanese owners of pearl-shelling boats.

That shows very clearly that this treaty which was intended to restrict the importation of Japanese labourers and Japanese artisans is an utter failure. These passports purport to be issued to men for commercial purposes only, but we find them used as a flimsy disguise for Japanese labourers and artisans, who are coming into the country just as freely as if there were no treaty in operation at all. So strongly did Sir James Dickson feel in the matter, that he drew attention to the fact that the working of the treaty was not satisfactory, and in another letter he said :-

Unless greater care is exercised by the authorities in that country to prevent artisans and labourers from obtaining passports for Queensland, this Government may find itself reluctantly compelled to introduce restrictive legislation dealing with the question.

The Queensland Government took up firmly the attitude that if the treaty did not succeed - as it did not really - they would not stand to it, but introduce restrictive legislation. I take it that the position is that we in Australia do not exercise delegated legislative functions. In the words of the decisions of the Privy Council, we so far as we are concerned in legislating in Australian matters, do really exercise sovereign jurisdiction and, therefore, we inherently possess the power to, and can deal with these measures in such a way as we deem fit. But at the same time it is incumbent upon us to listen to representations that are made to us by the home authorities. When we are told distinctly that certain measures are not acceptable for certain reasons, it is our duty, so far as we can, to secure the harmonious co-operation of the whole of the Empire, and pass such measures as we feel will be readily accepted. We should deal with this matter at once in order that the Bill may come into operation immediately. If we amend the Bill as proposed, the chances are that the Royal assent will be held over for some time, and may possibly be refused. It is theoretically within the power of the Crown to refuse assent, though in practice in Great Britain it is not refused; but in regard to the veto we are in a somewhat different position. The Imperial authorities throughout the Empire have constantly exercised the power of veto. It has been exercised in Queensland and in other States as well. What we ought to do is to pass the Bill on the lines suggested by the Government, and secure in the first year of the Commonwealth a recognition of the principle that we should exclude undesirable immigrants from our midst. If it be found that that is ineffectual, then I believe it is our duty to go further and speak firmly on the matter. We should continue to agitate and pass measures until Australia's will is carried into Australia's law. As regards the educational test, it has been the subject of considerable misrepresentation, and I do not think anybody has suffered so much from that misrepresentation as myself. As soon as it was announced that the test would be an English test, it was suggested throughout my electorate, by means of flaming placards, that the measure was an insult aimed at the other nations of the world, some of which have contributed their best virtues in building up Australia's population. In other words, men have tried to inflame racial hostilities with a view to blocking a measure which will really secure Australia to the white people. It is a peculiar thing that the people who raise the question, and who at this time are so particular to preserve the interests of the Germans and Scandinavians, happen to be great friends of the Asiatics.

Mr Page

- Philp and Co.

Mr L E GROOM

- I do not wish to mention any names, and the letters and other documents speak for themselves. When we find people trying, to stir up racial hostility at the very beginning of our national life, when we desire all the different races of Europe to co-operate in building up a nation here, we may well view with suspicion a good deal of the objections raised by them. I can appreciate the sincerity of those who desire to treat the matter in a straightforward manner; but as against that, there is the question of urgency. The Bill is urgent for the reason that we hope soon to have a Bill passed restricting the importation of kanakas. If the

present Bill is not passed, the result will be that those who want cheap labour will continue to try to get coloured labour into the Commonwealth from other places. A letter in the Sydney Morning Herald put the position clearly. It stated that as a fact of nature the Polynesian is a decreasing and a declining element, and seeing that the planters of Queensland are going to produce articles which will come into competition with the tropical produce of the rest of the world, they must get cheap labour elsewhere than from the islands. That means that they are looking to secure cheap labour from Asia for the purpose of growing sugar. The two questions are thus to a certain extent connected, and I think it is necessary for us, seeing that we shall have a Polynesian Restriction Bill to pass, to pass a measure at this stage to prevent the increase of Asiatics in this country. I am opposed to the immigration of these aliens, in the first place, because it goes without saying that we cannot blend with Asiatics. The feeling between them and us seems to be antagonistic. It is not a question of colour ; the antagonism lies deep-rooted in antipathy to the very nature of the Asiatics themselves. 15 | 2

They are differently constituted in their tastes, manners, and ways, and it is essential for us to preserve Australia for the European stock. In the second place, there is what is known as the constitutional objection. We should not have admitted into the Commonwealth a large class of persons to whom we cannot extend the franchise. We have here self-government under a Constitution, and every person who is a citizen of the Commonwealth, and who earns his living here and pays his share of the taxation, is entitled to a voice in the government. By this means we are able to secure on the statute-book the will of the people. If we are to have admitted into the Commonwealth a large number of Asiatics, that principle cannot come into full operation, because their views are different from ours. Their feelings are different,, and if we have them here without a voice in public affairs, we are striking at the very elements of democratic government. We should have a large number of people whose industries we are controlling by law, whose taxes we are taking, and whose lives we are controlling, and yet exclude them from the privileges of self-government. For that reason, I say, we must keep the Asiatics out. The third reason is what may be called the economic reason, which strikes at the very foundation of our civilization. We believe that we should have a high standard of civilization, though we are told that we should try and live as thriftily as the Japanese. But it is not our desire, I think, to lower the standard of civilization in any way. We like our State schools, and we like the comforts of civilization. We like to feel that every working man's son, by means of the educational advantages placed at his disposal, can be so trained that in the end he can attain the highest position in the Commonwealth ; and that pre-supposes that the parents receive adequate compensation and remuneration for the services they perform. That, we find, is not the case as regards the Asiatic, who will accept a low standard of civilization, and, so long as he gets enough for bare existence and maintains a roof over his head, is perfectly satisfied. For these social, economic, racial, and constitutional reasons, we must firmly and decisively keep Australia for the European races of the world.

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Mr WATKINS

- I quite agree with the honorable member who last spoke that it is desirable that we should deal with this question at the earliest possible moment, and should pass a Bill, which will not be delayed in any way. But it is of equal importance that we should deal with the question effectively. If we are to believe in what I may call the lecture we had this evening from the honorable and learned member for Parkes, it seems to me that the measure brought forward by the Government will simply mean that we are going to admit Japanese and all other classes of Asiatics from time to time. If that honorable and learned member fully believes in the opinions he has expressed, he should give his vote decidedly against the third reading of the Bill, because it seems to me that every word he uttered went to indicate that he was clearly in favour of allowing all classes of people to enter the Commonwealth. While he was free to taunt honorable members of this House with the statement that they pander to their electors, when they say they are favorable to the exclusion of those alien races, he alone is the man who is quite prepared to take up a firm stand in this connexion ; and he should be firm and say that he is in favour of admitting these people here. It is not for me to lecture to the honorable and learned member in return, further than to say that in common with many honorable members of the House, I am prepared to go a long way to please the mother country. But while we should be very sorry to do anything to lead the mother country into an entanglement, we have a right to know where this so-called partnership is going to lead us. If it is to be a partnership we should have at least some say in that partnership. If it simply means that we have

established a Commonwealth Parliament here, and we are to have our legislation dictated to us by one member of the partnership, then it is not a partnership at all.

Mr KING O'MALLEY

- They take all the dividends.

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Mr WATKINS

- As the honorable member says, they take all the dividends, and there is no partnership in the matter. I do not think for a moment that anybody is going to make the bold statement to-day that the people of Australia do nothing to assist the British nation, or to charge us with not being prepared to assist Great Britain in every way possible ; but it seems to me that this discussion about the proposal to exclude the alien races being vetoed by the British authorities is altogether beside the question. It is premature, I think. AVE should not anticipate anything in that direction. We have been assured by the Attorney-General that if we desire this legislation we can have it. I am satisfied that if Mr. Chamberlain occupied the position in which we find ourselves to-day, he would take up quite a different attitude to that which he at present adopts. I cannot agree with the educational test proposed by the Government, but if there is one thing more than another to which the British Government would have a right to object, it is the amendment suggested by the honorable and learned member for Indi. That amendment would, I think, be more readily vetoed than would any proposal which has yet been suggested. But even if it were not vetoed, I cannot see that it would be a straight and honorable way of dealing with this matter. Honorable members told the people during the recent election campaign that they were in ;favour of a white Australia, and it is their duty now to place the promised legislation upon the statute-book. The direct way of dealing with this matter is by adopting the amendment submitted by the honorable member for Bland. If we attempt to accomplish our object in a backhanded way, we shall be offering a greater insult to foreign nations than by dealing directly with the question. Let us point out to the Japanese that, whilst we, -desire them as friendly allies, we wish to keep Australia for our own people. I agree with the honorable and learned member for Parkes that the provisions of the Bill in regard to the educational test would constitute hypocritical legislation. I do not think that that is the class of legislation which we should sanction at the commencement of our national existence. We ought also to recognise that administration is just as important as is the passage of good legislation. I have always thought that a bad Act of Parliament well administered is better than a good Act badly administered. Administration is everything, and to allow any Government the right to say whether they shall put into force an Act of Parliament or withhold its operation from time to time is too great a power to give them. I can quite understand that the Government have put forward these arguments in all good faith. I quite admit that the educational test would only be enforced in certain cases ; but in the hands of an unscrupulous Minister or Ministers it could be applied to the detriment of the people of the Commonwealth. It could be enforced when it suited their own particular ends, which ends, however, might not be those of the people of Australia. I do not say that the Minister for Defence would attempt anything of the sort, but surely he does not claim to have a lease of the Treasury benches for all time. The best method of dealing with this matter is to adopt the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. Much as we may desire to be friendly with Japan or any other people of anything like a high standard, we must still look nearer home. Whilst we claim to be equally patriotic with those who find it necessary to be always preaching their patriotism to the mother country, we still feel that we have a right to be loyal to Australia. We are entitled to know to what length our powers go in this direction. If we are to be told that because legislation of a similar kind has been vetoed in Queensland, our legislation will also be vetoed, I ask, is there anything in the statement so frequently made, that the powers of the Commonwealth would be greater than the powers of any State 1 If not, why was this Federation inaugurated ? It seems to me that we ought to have greater powers in this connexion than the State Parliaments. I would point out that in four Acts which were passed in Queensland, and to which the Royal assent was given, that State asked for more than we are seeking here. I admit that they did not ask for the exclusion of coloured aliens, but they affirmed that they would not allow, these particular persons to be employed on the works provided for in those Acts. We declare that every alien who has been naturalized here shall have equal rights with every other citizen of Australia, but we ask, at the outset, for the exclusion of certain people from our Commonwealth. We do not wish to- entice them here and then to refuse them the rights which are enjoyed by every other citizen of the Commonwealth. I trust that when a

vote is taken, the amendment of the honorable member for Bland will be carried, and that we shall thus affirm that the principle of a white Australia shall be a reality and not a sham and an hypocrisy.

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Mr WATSON

- Before I move the amendment of which I have 'given notice, and which I think will not have the effect of restricting debate, I wish to say a few words as to what has been said in the course of the debate. Taking first the remarks of ' the honorable member for Parkes, it would appear as a fair inference from what he said that the Government in bringing this Bill forward were acting on the direct suggestion of that section of the House to which the honorable member for Parkes is fond of referring, as though it had struck upon a portion of his epidermis in a way that does not agree with him. But the honorable member seems to forget that the policy of a white Australia which this Bill purports to carry through, was put in the forefront of the Government programme, and also in the forefront of the programme of the leader of the Opposition, whom the honorable member follows at the present time. So that, although the labour party, I claim, had throughout the various States, a great deal to do with the popularizing of ' this emphatic cry for a white Australia, still, so far as the present position is concerned the Government would have been absolutely false to their pledges to the people if they had not brought in a Bill at this early stage in the manner they have done. Again, the honorable member for Parkes spoke of a phrase which, he said,, has been used by a certain section ; that is,. " the equality of mankind," or " the equal rights of man." Now, I, do not know that the section of honorable members whom I represent, has, at any rate during my term, used any such phrase. What we have claimed is that all citizens should have equal opportunities. We never say that "all men are equal." No sensible set of men would ever say so. But we say that every man should be equal with every other man in the eyes of the law, and that equal opportunities should be afforded so far as . the law can allow to every citizen. And we reserve the right to say who shall be citizens. We ask that they shall be on a moral and physical level with ourselves> and that they shall be such as we can fraternize with and welcome as brother citizens of what we hope will some day be a great nation. Again the honorable member spoke of the necessity on occasions like this of preserving a statesmanlike attitude. I agree with him in regard to that. I do not pretend to have any of the qualities of statesmanship myself, but, at least, I think am justified in claiming this - that if 100 years ago the people of America had had legislation of this character, with reference particularly to the immigration of slaves .to that country, and any man had lifted up his voice against that immigration, he would to-day have been hailed as a statesman by the people of America. The man who could have foreseen all the dangers, and the troubles, and the dire distress, that have followed in the footsteps of the introduction of black labour into America - the man who could have foreseen and even attempted to prevent that evil in those days - would to-day have been honored .as One who should have had the whole nation behind him in the work he tried to do. True statesmanship, to my mind, consists, not in putting forward a number of plausible platitudes and philosophical meanderings in this Chamber, but in looking ahead, and seeing what is likely to be in any way a menace to the people of our country in the future. We, who support this policy, do so in the interests of those who succeed us, and :for whom we have a trust in our hands to see that any action we take is such as will, as far as possible, prevent the likelihood of the occurrence of those dangers which we foresee. With regard to another point quoted by the honorable member for Parkes, as to the interests of the Empire, I do not think it is necessary to say much, because every honorable member who has spoken has been alive to the necessity of considering, as far as possible, the interests of the Empire when we are dealing with questions of such great gravity as this. But I do say that if there is a partnership in existence of which the honorable member spoke, then we should have some voice in governing the affairs of the partnership. Unless that is conceded, there is no true partnership. We have had "handed over to us by the British Government, as has been pointed out before, the power to govern ourselves, to control our own affairs within the four corners of the Constitution ; and, so far as this .particular matter is concerned, it is contained within the Constitution and has been handed over for our control 'and direction. I .wish now to come to the proposed amendment, but before moving it I have to say a word -or two upon the attitude of the Government. In my opinion the Government are -not justified in the attitude they have taken up with respect to the amendment of which I have given notice. The Prime Minister stated the other evening in answer to a question put by the honorable member for Northern Melbourne that he regarded clause 4 as vital to the Bill ; that is, that if the amendment of which I have given notice was carried the Bill

would be dropped. I say there is no justification in the position for any such statement or attitude on the part of the Government. If this were a party movement - if it were a question of displacing the Government - if there were any large divergence of policy between the Government and the majority of the House - if there were any of these considerations in existence, I -could understand their taking up the attitude of dropping the Bill or even of resigning the positions they occupy in the event of my amendment being carried. But, sir, there is no question at stake except the question of method. We pretend to be all of one mind, with the exception of the honorable member for Parkes, and I am not quite sure what his mind is upon the subject. But speaking generally, we are all of one mind with respect of the object -we are striving to attain. If we differ in method, if the Government .feel that the difficulties are such as constrain them to bring in no more drastic proposition than that which is now before the Chamber in this Bill, surely it is not necessarily a declaration of want of confidence in the Government if the committee should carry the amendment against their proposal. And I say this, sir : that the only effective way of dealing with the question at issue is by means of such an amendment as I have given notice of. If that is the only effective way of attaining the object, and the interests of the whole of the people of Australia are -at stake, then- I say that the Government has no right to attempt to coerce the members of this committee who desire to act in the interests of the people of Australia. If the question .arises of having to choose between this Government and the interests of the people of Australia, I am prepared to make up my mind at very short notice indeed. I contend that the Government will be justified in submitting to -the will of the House on -this question. There is no doubt that by an immense majority the House is against the Government, and if Ministers allow their supporters to vote free from the whip, we shall soon see what the feeling of this Commonwealth Parliament is. If, on the other hand, the decision of the House is to be forced in a certain direction, because members are compelled by party exigencies to swallow the speeches they made a few days ago, what will be the position - an utterly false impression will go out to the people of the world as to the mind of Australia upon this point. I contend that on matters of this sort, where it is only a question of method - I admit that .there are very important differences and distinctions - and where we are all aiming at the one object party lines ought to be relaxed sufficiently to allow us to come to a clear determination as to what is best in the interests of the whole people. Coming to the amendments suggested, I cannot see that any of them does away with the necessity for the proposal of which I have given notice. Speaking first of the suggestion to substitute the word "European" for the word "English," I quite agree as to the desirability of removing any possible ground for complaint on the part of the peoples of Europe. "We should not place any bar in the way of these European peoples coming here, seeing that they have proved very desirable colonists in the past, but I feel that there are other difficulties that perhaps involve an even greater insult to the Japanese people - who, of course, are susceptible so far as their dignity is concerned - than the proposal of which I have given notice. Moreover, there is this objection to be urged against the proposal of the honorable member for Melbourne, namely, that we have already tried it in several of the States and found it absolutely ineffective.

Sir John Forrest

- Where?

Mr WATSON

- In Western Australia.

Sir John Forrest

- No.

Mr WATSON

- I say yes.

Sir John

FORREST.~The honorable member knows better than I do.

Mr WATSON

- I say this, that the Government Statistician's report is different altogether from the return laid on the table of this House, and the right honorable member can reconcile them as he chooses.

Sir John Forrest

- I have full information, and I speak with knowledge.

Mr WATSON

- Then the right honorable member had better tell them to throttle the Government Statistician of Western

Australia. I find that in the first three months of this year there was an increase of 135 in the number of aliens in Western Australia - that is, of course, according to the statistician - and, so far as New South Wales is concerned, the Act has been inefficient. I quite agree with the attitude taken up by the leader of the Opposition in explaining the decision of New South Wales with regard to the Immigration Restriction Act in that colony. I was one of those who consented to accept the Natal Act as the basis of a tentative proposal only, on the clear understanding that if it did not work effectively we would endeavour to make it effective, and we have now reached a stage at which it is necessary to have something which will answer our purpose effectively.

Sir John Forrest

- Has not the New South Wales Act worked well.

Mr WATSON

- No ; for in spite of all statistics the number of coloured aliens other than Chinese in that State is increasing. They are to be found in every country town, and in George-street, Sydney, a few weeks ago I saw a number of newly arrived Hindoos who were just off the ship.

Sir John Forrest

- Had they passed the test?

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Mr WATSON

- From their appearance, and the fact that they had to be shepherded in Hyde-park by a keeper to prevent them going astray, I should judge that they had not. At any rate, if they had passed the test, so much the worse for the honorable members Bill. I think the Government have very little reason to congratulate themselves on the assistance they have received from the honorable and learned member for Parkes, because, as far as one can glean his attitude as to the introduction of coloured aliens, he seems ready to welcome thousands of educated coloured aliens, and he will support the Government proposal because it will permit of these men being admitted to the 'Commonwealth. That may be a very logical position from the honorable and learned member's point of view ; but it is no recommendation to the people of Australia, who want effective restriction of coloured aliens. With regard to the amendment proposed by the honorable and learned member for Indi, I object to it for two reasons. Firstly, it involves exactly the same issues as the amendment of which I have given notice.

Whatever objection might be urged against my proposal by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as to diplomatic trouble being likely to arise through the protests of Japan, would apply with a little more force to the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi. No subterfuge would get over the knowledge that the first use to be made of the power proposed to be given under his amendment would be to pass a resolution involving the prohibition of a number of nationalities, and therefore its purpose would be easily understood by the Japanese people who, after the speeches made here, would see that they were aimed at. In addition to that there is danger of delay in taking effective measures for the exclusion of aliens. Moreover, the spasmodic treatment of a matter of this kind by a series of resolutions would result in greater annoyance and insult to the people of a particular nation than if a clearly defined law were laid down early in our existence, as a part of our permanent policy. I admit that, if the committee reject the proposal which I now desire to move, I shall be prepared to favour that put forward by the honorable and learned member for Indi; but, as compared with my suggestion, I think it has a number of disadvantages in the direction I have indicated. I have just one remark to add upon the question of urgency. Stress has been laid upon the necessity for passing this Bill without anything in it that would be likely to cause delay, so far as the Colonial-office is concerned. In that connexion the honorable member for Darling Downs - who, I have the pleasure, if I may do so, of congratulating upon his opening speech - implied that, if the planters were denied at once the opportunity of getting additional kanakas, they would look elsewhere ; that, in the absence of some such provision as that contained in this Bill they would be able to get coloured labour from another place. So far as places outside Polynesia are concerned, it is not so easy as it may appear at first sight to obtain a large body of these people. Especially is that the case with regard to India. In view of the attitude hitherto taken up by the Government of India with respect to shipments of coolies even to British possessions, I feel assured that, in the event of delay taking place between the passing, of the Bill here and its acceptance by the Home authorities, representations by this Government to the Government of India would be quite sufficient to prevent any contract being legalized

in that country for the employment of coolies.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The Indian Government are not anxious to let coolies leave under contract.

Mr WATSON

- They are not anxious to permit coolies to go abroad under contract. The Government of India have not only discouraged the engagement of coolies for Fiji and British New Guinea plantations, but they have surrounded their engagement with restrictions of which the planters in those places complain very bitterly. Therefore I think that representations from this Government will get over any trouble so far as Indian coolies are concerned, while with regard to other nations, an act of State will be quite sufficient to exclude undesirable people from Australia pending the passage of this Bill.

Mr Barton

- While I have been endeavouring - ever since this question assumed the dimensions it has attained because of a recent influx - to exercise an Act of State with regard to persons who are not British subjects, many scores of people have come in. They all came in without restrictions because they were British subjects, and I could not exercise that Act of State.

Mr WATSON

- I have just made the suggestion to the Prime Minister that he should make representations through the British Government to the Indian Office.

Mr Glynn

- In England they do not exercise it against aliens except under an Act of Parliament.

Mr WATSON

- It has never become a matter of urgency in England.

Mr Glynn

- They passed an Act justifying it, but they have not exercised it.

Mr WATSON

- An act of State has been exercised in South Australia. I would urge upon the Prime Minister that he should not too readily accept the assertion that all these coloured people are British subjects.

Mr Barton

- I submit them all to very strict examination.

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Mr WATSON

- Their nationality is a matter more easily asserted than proved. I move -

That the following new paragraph be added, after the word "namely," line 5: - (a) "Any person who is an aboriginal native of Asia, Africa, or of the islands thereof. "

That will leave the question of Pacific immigration to be dealt with as the Government propose in the Bill relating to kanakas. I did not intend to put the amendment in this shape originally, but I think it is necessary to make some reference to the islands of Asia and Africa, in order to prevent the Act being evaded.

Progress reported.

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22:38:00

House adjourned at 10.38 p.m.