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1901-11-26

House of Representatives

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

QUESTION

TARIFF BY-LAWS

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- I desire to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs when the departmental by-laws referred to in the Tariff will be issued; and if he is aware that owing to such by-laws not having been issued, certain machine tools which, under item. 74 of the Tariff, are free of duty when specified in departmental by-laws, are being charged 25 per cent. ad valorem duty?

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- The by-laws are in course of preparation, and will be ready for issue so soon as item 74 has been passed in the committee.

PAPER

The Clerk laid upon the table

A return showing the imports of farm, dairy, orchard, and allied products.

QUESTIONS

CUSTOM-HOUSE HOURS

Mr KIRWAN

asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice -

Whether, in view of the very great inconvenience said to be caused by the recent change in the Custom-house hours, he will either revert to the old system or sanction only such change as will not prejudicially affect the shipping community generally ?

Mr KINGSTON

- Inquiry does not establish the existence of any inconvenience necessitating the change referred to.

COST OF PRINTING

Mr MAHON

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

When the return respecting the cost of printing for the Commonwealth, ordered by this House on 10th October last, is likely to be ready for presentation ?

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

- A return has been presented, but as it did not appear to be as complete as was desired, it has been returned in order that further additions might be made to it. I am informed that it will be ready almost immediately in its complete form.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY

Attorney General

Mr DEAKIN

-I move -

That, until otherwise ordered, this House do meet at half-past two p.m. on Monday in each week in addition to the present sitting days.

That on each sitting day, until otherwise ordered, Government business do take precedence of general business.

It has been intimated to honorable members that probably it may be necessary to sit beyond the time at which we have been accustomed to adjourn on Fridays. That may not in every case be necessary, but an intimation was given to honorable members to be prepared for sitting if necessary five nights in the week.

Mr Poynton

- Meeting at half-past ten o'clock on Friday morning, too ?

Mr DEAKIN

- Yes ; and it may even be necessary, although we hope not, to ask the House to meet at half-past ten o'clock on every day of the week.

Mr Watson

- No; that is too much. We cannot sit late at night and early in the morning.

<page>7727</page>

Mr DEAKIN

- If it is a question between sitting late at night and early in the morning it is only fair that honorable members should be offered their choice. If there are many honorable members who would rather meet (or the extra hours in the morning than sit late at night I may say that the latter course would suit Ministers very much better. If such a proposal is submitted it will mean practically the almost entire abandonment of administrative duties while the House is sitting. That is a very undesirable and inconvenient state of affairs, and, therefore, it is to be hoped that no such emergency may arise. It is with the greatest reluctance that even this proposition is submitted, and submitted, it is to be hoped, to a cordial acceptance, and for a short time only.. If honorable members cast a glance back upon what this session has already achieved they will perceive that it is of necessity absolutely unprecedented in its character, and will, I think, prove to have been equally unprecedented in its duration, and in the importance of the work performed. What we have undertaken to essay in this session has been to create a complete administrative organization for the whole Commonwealth - a work in itself of immense importance and great intricacy. We have also sought to establish the cardinal principle of a white Australia as a permanent condition upon which the development of this country is to take place ; and now we are engaged in the task of blending into one the whole of ' the producing and commercial interests of the hitherto separated States, placing them upon a national basis, providing for that interlacing of business and other interests, which must prove the surest foundation for the structure now being reared. Even to essay these tasks in a single session means a session of inordinate length of prolonged sittings and of immense undertakings. Consequently, honorable members will realize that the plea put forward to them to make the further sacrifices demanded by this motion is one that springs from the extraordinary nature of the situation, and the extraordinary demands now made upon us. I think they will realize that at the point in this session which we have reached it becomes a public duty for them to make a still further sacrifice We are day by day proceeding, in Committee of Ways and Means, to consider the first Tariff of the Commonwealth. Upon the revenue re- ' suits of that Tariff depend the expenditure of the Commonwealth for this year, and the degree to which it will be possible to cope with the demands which are being made from all sides upon its various departments. Further, every State of the union finds its capacity to deal with its financial situation suspended temporarily during the discussion of the Tariff. It is scarcely too much to say that Government expenditure throughout Australia is limited, or locked up, pending the consideration of the Tariff. Until something like an approximate estimate of its returns can be formed, there is no Treasurer in Australia who will feel free to unloose his purse strings to the calls which are being made upon him. Therefore, in the interests of the Commonwealth itself, and of all its States, it becomes incumbent upon us at the earliest possible moment to determine, at all events as far as we can, the lines upon which the Tariff is to be laid down. In addition to the public obligations there are very large private interests involved. There can be no doubt but that many commercial operations are being delayed, and many others restricted, in various parts of Australia, in consequence of the uncertainty still prevailing as to the adoption of certain items of the Tariff. Although complete freedom of action is not to be expected on the part of commercial men until the Tariff is finally settled, there is no doubt that its passage through this Chamber will be taken as involving a pretty sound indication of what it will ultimately be.

Mr Conroy

- It has to pass the Senate yet.

<page>7728</page>

Mr DEAKIN

- Business men will be able to draw their own conclusions as to what the Tariff is likely to be, and, after it has passed this House, will feel free to some extent from the restraint under which they labour at the present time. Considering all these private business and public interests, it becomes a matter of the greatest urgency that we should dispose of the Tariff as soon as possible. I venture, therefore, to submit to the House that we are compelled to shoulder this burden as best we can, and must endeavour to deal with the remainder of the Tariff as expeditiously as possible. If I may be permitted to add a single word, I

would remind the House that no one can say that the Government have exhibited any ; undue haste in pressing the consideration of this question upon them. The House first, and the committee afterwards,, have had an absolutely free hand, and the proposals now made will increase the opportunities of honorable members for discussing the details of the Tariff. May I be permitted to urge upon honorable members that by abstaining from interjections, by ignoring interjections that are made, by the condensation of remarks, and by our agreeing tacitly to accept, on each side, a single statement of each argument of importance, permitting minor arguments to make their own way, we can - without curtailing any privileges, or involving any unfair sacrifices on the part of honorable members - so hasten our proceedings as to dispose of the Tariff within a reasonable time. I would ask honorable members not only to excuse the proposal, but to accept it, and to unite in so expediting our proceedings that we may arrive at a conclusion as speedily as possible. In conclusion, it appears to me that if we are able to conclude this Tariff in time for the holidays, there may reasonably be a demand on the part of honorable members for a little leisure. If, however, we cannot conclude the Tariff by that time, the circumstances are so exceptional that we shall require to ask honorable members to be content with the shortest possible adjournment. We must complete the Tariff which the Commonwealth Treasurer and the State Treasurers and the public generally are so eagerly awaiting.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I take it that this is not a party question. The Government in their wisdom have decided in view of the urgency of public business that more time should be devoted to it between now and the adjournment for Christmas. I do not intend to take it upon myself to express an opinion for honorable members on this side of the House. As far as I am personally concerned, owing to the absence of the leader of the Opposition, I have made arrangements to be present continuously until we adjourn. I am also deeply anxious that we should dispose of the Tariff as soon as possible ; but I feel that we have an arduous and very lengthy task before us. I had hoped that such changes would have been made in the proposals as would have enabled us to very much simplify and shorten the work; but when we go into Committee of Ways and Means, I shall have to draw attention to a state of affairs which justifies the complaint of absolute breach of faith on the part of at least four of the Ministers. I refer to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister in charge of the other Chamber, and Sir Philip Fysh, who is a pronounced free-trader. This Tariff will have to be reviewed by another Chamber, which equally represents the people, in the light of our consultations. While that Chamber is practically coordinate with us, it is a Chamber of review, and I take it 'that its conclusions will be largely framed in the light of the work we do. Therefore, so far as I am personally concerned, I am willing to agree to the proposal of the Government, which will afford us more time for consideration. So prohibitive have some parts of the Tariff become, and so necessary is it to consider each item in all its bearings, that we shall require to make the closest possible investigation, line by line, and item by item. I agree with the Attorney-General that it is impracticable to take away all the time of the Executive Government. If we were to sit in the mornings, we should also sit fairly late at night, and that would' impose too great a strain upon members of the Ministry, as they would probably have to compress a whole week of Executive work into one day. I am prepared to make the sacrifice now asked for in order that we may have the fullest possible time for the consideration of a question, which is not merely one of ordinary legislation, but which, if settled in undue haste and without the fullest consideration, and upon existing lines, may have an injurious effect for the next century upon the people of Australia.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I should like to ask the Attorney-General if he could not agree to the House meeting on four days of the week at ten o'clock in the morning. We might meet at ten o'clock in the morning, and sit until eleven o'clock at night for four days in the week. That would enable honorable members from New South Wales and South Australia to get to their homes; but to come hereon Mondays also and sit until late at night is nothing less than parliamentary sweating. It means sweating the Hansard reporters, and also the newspaper reporters ; and the Commonwealth Parliament ought not to begin a course which it should be the aim of our legislation to prevent on the part of others.

<page>7729</page>

Mr CONROY

- I do not feel inclined to agree with the Government proposal, which would never have been made had it

not been for the fact that some twenty Victorian members live in and about Melbourne.

To meet the wishes of .the Government would be -a distinct injustice to honorable members whose homes are in Kew South Wales or South Australia, who were .perfectly justified in calculating that, as in the case .of an ordinary Parliament, this Parliament would sit not more than three days a week, and that they would be left two or three days in which to attend to their private .affairs.

Mr McDonald

- How about honorable members from the more distant States ?

Mr CONROY

- Those honorable members from the first recognised that they would not be able to return to their homes at the end of each week. Had such a proposition as that now before the House been made by the Ministry before .Parliament met, it might be said that we were forewarned, but that was not the case. I do not suppose any one will pretend for one moment that the allowance given to honorable members is sufficient to compensate for their whole time being given to their parliamentary duties, and even those who at the outset may have thought so, must have now realized the expense of supporting double households. We are now asked to condone the fault of the Ministry, who, if they had any conception of their true parliamentary duties, would not have occupied the time of Parliament in legislating for the taking over of the Postal department and the Defence department. In connexion with the taking over of the Postal department, something like six weeks of valuable time were occupied in debating the second reading of the Bill, and considering the clauses in committee. I say nothing of discussions on .more urgent matters; but the result of taking over the Postal department has not been to relieve the administration in the various States, but rather to increase the confusion in connexion with the bookkeeping as between the States and the Commonwealth. For that waste of time the Ministry are solely responsible. They do not seem to have even that knowledge which comes to the ordinary man outside Parliament, who is perfectly able to foresee the consequences of attempting to introduce such measures at this stage. To see clearly the waste of time that has been caused by the Ministry, we have only to look at their action in regard to the Defence department. About a fortnight of solid sittings was devoted to the measure to provide for the taking over by the Commonwealth of the Defence department, and that time was absolutely wasted, not to mention the present dual control, which is rendered necessary by the fact that the States must exercise administrative authority, seeing that the Commonwealth is not yet in a position to do so. Now, the Ministry come forward with a proposal--

Mr Mahon

- Suggested by the Melbourne Age.

Mr CONROY

- The Ministry come forward with a proposal, not on their own initiative - because they always have to be bolstered up from somewhere or other - but on .the initiative of a newspaper, which on Friday and Monday last declared that Parliament must be coerced, and actually proposed that honorable members should sit eighteen hours a day. Ministers certainly do not set an example, by sitting in the House. There is not one Minister with, perhaps, the exception of the Minister for Trade and Customs, who does so.

Mr Watson

- What about the Treasurer 1

Mr CONROY

- The Treasurer has been sitting continuously in the House for only the last few days. The Minister for Trade and Customs has been devoting the .whole of his time to nine hours sittings of the House during the last 30 days. The Prime Minister, every one will agree, has not been in the House ten .days, although his attendances are recorded for the 90 odd days ; and we have had other members of the Ministry giving, perhaps, one hour a day to attendance in the House. Victorian members, in spite of their proximity to the Chamber, attend to their own business until four o'clock, or perhaps half-past five o'clock, and then devote . a couple of hours to the House. They come in and make a couple of speeches, so as to " take in " their constituents.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member must withdraw that remark.

<page>7730</page>

Mr CONROY

- I withdraw the remark; but these speeches make it appear that these honorable members have been sitting continuously. These . are the members who protest against the time of the House being wasted, although they frequently do not come in sufficient numbers to form a quorum. It would very often be possible to call attention to the state of the House. When the Ministry are responsible for the waste of time to which I have referred, it is simply absurd for them to come forward with the present proposal. If it could be shown that in any other deliberative assembly in the world asimilar proposal had been adopted, something might be said for the present attitude of the Government. According to some honorable members on the Ministerial side, they conceive that their parliamentary duty consists simply in coming here and listening to the arguments of their fellow members. But if honorable members have not time to read up and study questions which are to come before us, we are no better fitted for our duties than any body of men in the street would be. We ought to attend Parliament with a special knowledge of the subjects which are to be debated ; and that is impossible if more time is not given for private study. Without special knowledge we are not in a position to dissent from proposals submitted, and we cannot accept Ministerial statements which are bound to be coloured by. party views. It is quite absurd to ask any Parliament to legislate under such circumstances. It can pass certain measures, but that act alone does not constitute legislation. The aim of Parliament should be to make its laws as simple as possible so that the people may understand them, and also as few as possible so that all may know what they are. Our laws, moreover, should be so framed as to effectually accomplish the purpose for which they were enacted. If we have not sufficient time to consider the matters which are submitted for our consideration how can we possibly accomplish the purpose which we have in view? I remember the occasion when an intricate procedure Bill was submitted to this House. It involved questions affecting the legal rights of thousands of people throughout Australia. It was a most difficult measure to understand. I am aware that the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, spent a great deal of time in considering it. I devoted every morning for three or four weeks to its consideration so that I might be in a position to point out its defects. But if Parliament had been sitting upon the extra day now proposed I should have been deprived of any opportunity to gain the knowledge essential to its intelligent discussion. Now, we are asked to sit five days a week up till 11.30 or 12 p.m., and to endure an amount of brain fag which no deliberative assembly should be called upon to undergo. If we assent to this proposal, where is finality to be reached ? Let the Ministry themselves set a good example by attending in their places during the sittings of the House. Where is any other body of educated men and I suppose we ought to be educated, whether we are so or not asked to work for eight or ten hours per day ? Teachers are not called upon to labour for more than five hours daily because it is recognised that the mental strain to which they are subjected during that period is quite sufficient for them to undergo. Then, again, the law courts do not sit for more than five hours' per day. Yet this House takes upon itself to say that no consideration ought to be given to any measure brought before it, because that in effect is what we are doing. We are really saying to the country - " Anything which we do in Parliament does not deserve consideration for a moment. Another 75 individuals picked up from anywhere else would legislate just as well as do we." I am quite convinced that they would legislate just as well if we are to adopt that process of legislation. I distinctly deny the right of any majority to prevent full consideration being given to the numerous problems which at present confront us. We have heard statements to the effect that the Opposition have been responsible for the delay which has occurred.

Mr Piesse

- Hear, hear.

Mr CONROY

- The honorable and learned member for Tasmania would, perhaps, be surprised to learn that he has spoken more frequently than I have done. Whatever delay has taken place lies at the door of the Ministry, and has not been caused by the Opposition. There ought to be more talk from the Opposition than from the Ministerial benches.

Mr McCay

- There is.

Mr CONROY

- There has not been. I repeat that the Ministry themselves are solely responsible for any delay which has occurred. The motion under discussion will prevent honorable members from having one day a week in

which to consider the business which is to be brought before Parliament, and I decline to support it.

<page>7731</page>

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I do not think that the time is opportune to consider how far Ministers are responsible for this motion. We might very well confine our consideration to the question of whether we shall meet on Mondays to facilitate the transaction of public business, and thus enable us to secure an earlier and a longer adjournment than would otherwise be possible. The honorable and learned member for "Werriwa has pointed out the flagrant wrong that would be done to the representatives of New South Wales and South Australia by the adoption of this motion. But I would point out the wrong which the representatives of three other States suffer as a result of having to remain continuously in Melbourne, and of being denied an opportunity of reaching their homes - as can honorable members who live in Sydney and Adelaide - at the end of each week.

Mr Watson

- Even under this proposal the representatives of New South Wales can still have Sunday at home.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- There are other honorable members - all the representatives of Queensland, I believe, but certainly a majority of them - who cannot go home at all. They do not go home. It is the same with honorable members from Western Australia, and to a great extent -with those representing Tasmania. I am not speaking from any selfish considerations, ' because I have never attempted to go home. When I came to Melbourne, I took a house, and made my settled abode here until the business of the Parliament is over. But I am speaking for others, and in justice to them I hope that the Monday sittings will be agreed to, and that we shall be able, by sitting on the extra day, to bring matters to a speedy conclusion.

Mr HUGHES

- I should like to ask the honorable gentleman who has moved this motion whether, as it appears likely to be carried, we are to have a long or a short adjournment over Christmas'? It will make a. good deal of difference in regard to the way .in which I shall vote, whether the adjournment is to be long or short. If we are merely to hurry over the business and then adjourn for two months or six weeks, I do not propose to vote for the motion. I wish to have a short adjournment. If we are not to finish the business before Christmas I do not care what happens. I am ready to stand as long as I can, and to crawl ou£ when I cannot stand any longer; but I do not propose to vote for giving the Government an extra day simply for the purpose of enabling some honorable members to visit their sorrowing relatives and prevent others from carrying on the legitimate business of the. country. . There are so many measures that are so absolutely imperative for the very existence and welfare of the Commonwealth Government - such as the Judicature Bill and the Electoral Bill, that we ought to make an effort to pass them ; and there is no possibility of proceeding with them unless we have a clear understanding that there is to be a short adjournment over Christmas. If we have an adjournment for a month or six weeks we shall not return to our parliamentary duties before the middle of February, and then it will be May or June before there is any prospect of terminating the session. The Government have had plenty of time to make up their minds. Some gentlemen have been for some past trying to discover the opinions of honorable members, and surely the arithmetical problem might have been solved by this time, so that the Government might know precisely how the cat was jumping in this respect.

Mr PAGE

- I am of the same opinion as the honorable member who has just sat down. I should like to have some definite statement from the Government whether we are to have a long or a short adjournment before I cast my vote for the motion. We came here to do -the business of the country, and there is no doubt in my mind that the early part of the session was frittered away. We had some weeks' debate on the address in reply. Nearly every honorable member of the House spoke, and some, not content with that, slept upon it. If we are going to have a long adjournment over Christmas, I intend to vote against the extra sitting day. I fear that the honorable member who took round a petition for a long adjournment was influenced by a sinister motive. He doubtless wished to prolong the session in order to prevent the Queensland members from going home t and taking part in the general election in that State. For that reason alone I wish to know from the Attorney-General whether the Christmas adjournment is to be long or short?

<page>7732</page>

Mr POYNTON

- I also should like to have some information from the Attorney-General. I wish to know whether, if the House agrees to an extra sitting day, it is the intention of the Government to keep us up after eleven o'clock at night? I have a distinct objection to late sittings. If we sit from half -past two until half-past eleven, and rise in time to enable honorable members to catch their last trams, that is a fair thing. As to the Christmas adjournment, I do not care whether it is long or short. The Queensland representatives a little while ago wanted a long adjournment, but evidently they have changed their minds. I am willing to fall in with any arrangement on that subject, but I object to sitting here every night until after the trams and trains have gone, when honorable members are put to the expense of hiring a cab or walking two or three miles.

<page>7733</page>

Mr McDONALD

- I do not agree with what has been said as to the time in the early part of the session having been wasted. I hold the contrary opinion. I do not know of any Parliament that has got through so much work in so short a time. The Bills brought before the House have been very long and contentious, and it has surprised me that they have gone through so quickly. While I agree that it is a good thing at the present time to sit on an extra day, yet, as a rule, it is not a good thing to sit more than three days a week. I do not care who the member is, or what his abilities may be, he cannot give due and honest consideration to the work he is expected to do, if Parliament sits more than three days a week. But on the present occasion, certain legislation is required to be settled as early as possible, and under those circumstances I agree that we ought to sit on Mondays. But I also agree with the honorable member for West Sydney, in wishing to know whether we are to have a long or a short adjournment over Christmas. If we are to have a long adjournment we shall get well into the latter end of the financial year before the session closes. I should like to have an adjournment for about ten days only to get over the holidays, and then I should like Parliament to set to work earnestly to get through the various measures that are urgently required. But if we are to have a six weeks' or two months' adjournment, I certainly object to the extra day's sitting being granted.

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie). I intend to vote for the motion, because we are all anxious to expedite business as much as possible, but I desire to make a few remarks as to the statement that the Opposition are largely to blame for the delay that has occurred in connexion with legislation. It is all very well for honorable members on the Government benches, mostly representing Victorian constituencies, who are able to live at home and attend to their businesses, to ask for longer sittings. But honorable members representing other States have to neglect their homes and their businesses in order to attend to legislation. We have already been here for six months, and have certainly done a good deal of work. It has been said that the additional sitting day has been necessitated by the action of certain members on the opposition side. They have said with considerable unfairness that much of the time that has been devoted to discussion here has been occupied by honorable members of the Opposition. I have taken the trouble to go through Hansard, and I think that some honorable members on the Government side of the House will be inclined to wish that Hansard was burnt when I give them a few particulars of what it shows. I have looked through Hansard up to the 15th inst., and endeavoured to ascertain the number of speeches made by honorable members on both sides of the House, and I have made the interesting discovery that while 1,898 speeches were delivered by free-trade members, there were 3,115 speeches from the Government side. Our average is 57 per honorable member who has spoken, while the average for the Government side amounts to 78. The total average for the Opposition side is only 57, while the average for all members is 69. In view of the criticisms of honorable members opposite, I have also examined reports of second-reading speeches on various measures. I find that the Defence Bill was read a first time on the 5th June last, and although it has been brought before us on several occasions, it is still in committee. There are 222 columns of Hansard devoted to speeches by honorable members on the Government side of the House upon the second reading of that measure, and only 165 columns occupied by speeches delivered by honorable members of the Opposition. The Inter-State Commission Bill has been brought forward on several occasions to fill in time ; and while there are 84 columns occupied by speeches of honorable members on the Government side upon this Bill, there are only 58 columns of speeches delivered by honorable members of the Opposition . In view of the charge that honorable

members of the Opposition had wasted time, I felt it was necessary for some one to come forward and show who has been responsible for the delay. I admit that the flood of eloquence on the Postal Bill was largely developed on this side, because while honorable members on the Government side had delivered speeches upon it occupying 51 columns of Hansard, the speeches delivered by honorable members of the Opposition cover 56 columns. Then we have the Public Service Bill, upon which speeches occupying 158 columns were made from the Ministerial side, while those from the opposition side occupied only 58 columns. The speeches on the Customs Bill delivered from the Government side take up 68 columns, while the speeches upon it from this side of the House occupy only 32 columns. There are 122 columns devoted to speeches from the Government side of the House on the Immigration Restriction Bill and 95 to those from the opposition side. The address in reply was a very important matter, and I admit that honorable members of the Opposition devoted a good deal of time to it. The importance of the matter is illustrated by the Tariff which has since been submitted. I find that the Opposition speeches take up 427 columns, while those from the Government side occupy 341, which is not -a very great difference. If we take the address in reply, the Postal Bill, the Customs Bill, the Defence Bill, the Inter-State Commission Bill, the Public Service Bill, and the Immigration Restriction Bill, we find that while speeches from the Government side upon those various matters occupy 1,046 columns of Hansard, those delivered by the Opposition cover only 891 columns, or a difference in our favour of 155 columns.

Mr Watson

-Is the honorable member going to give us another four hours' speech?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member refers to my speech on the motion of censure. Honorable members know that I spoke at a disadvantage on that occasion. An attempt was made to crush out debate.

Mr Deakin

- No.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- No one rose on the Government side, and, at the last moment, I rose, unprepared as I was, in order to prevent such an important debate being prematurely closed. I may mention that I have spoken 36 times during the session.

Mr McCay

- How many columns?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Not so many as those occupied by the speeches of the honorable member for Bendigo. Every honorable member has a perfect right to speak as long as he pleases. The honorable and learned member for Corinella has spoken 109 times to my 36.

Mr McCay

- The honorable member must have counted interjections as speeches.

<page>7734</page>

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

-I take the figures from the index compiled by the Hansard staff. The honorable and learned member for Corio is on the list with 129 speeches, and the honorable and learned member for Indi has spoken on 174 occasions. I find all through that honorable members of the Opposition have not taken up anything like the time occupied by honorable members on the Government side. No doubt the Opposition have devoted a good deal of time to the motion of censure and the Tariff proposals, and for very good reasons. As a result of the discussion some very important alterations have been made in the Tariff, and I hope that others will yet be made as the outcome of the debate. I rose not for the purpose of opposing this motion, because honorable members of the Opposition are anxious to expedite business with due regard to the interests of the Commonwealth. We gain nothing by remaining in Melbourne week after week. The only reason that actuates us in giving so much attention to these matters is that we feel it is our duty to do so. We have been sent here to represent the people of the Commonwealth, and our object is to bring about alterations in the iniquitous Tariff submitted to us. I think that before the debate on the Tariff proposals is over, we shall find that honorable members opposite have made longer speeches than honorable members of the Opposition have yet felt called upon to make. I am now going to refer to the extraordinary delay that has taken place in dealing with the legislation submitted by the Government.

Night after night Bills have been submitted for our consideration, and the debate upon them has been adjourned after a short discussion. Take the Defence Bill. It is still in committee, and the real blame rests with the Government. The Government should have submitted their Tariff proposals earlier in order to enable us to give them proper consideration before the end of the year. But it is the Government who are responsible for the delay. They have introduced a number of : Bills which they have no serious intention of proceeding with. That is shown by the fact that the Inter-State Commission Bill, the Defence Bill, and other matters submitted to Parliament have not been dealt with seriously. It is clear that the Government are to blame for the . state of public business at the present time. Members on this side have continually asked the Government to expedite the consideration of the Tariff. In connexion with that question, I may mention that in 1892 it took nearly five months to get a modified Tariff through the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Another modification proposed in 1895 took four months to get through. At present we have been only six or seven weeks dealing with this Tariff, which is an entirely new

One. We have before us really two new Tariffs. One is the " perfect" Tariff at first submitted, and which we were informed was going to make every one happy and contented. After a little of the light of day had been thrown upon it, in consequence of the action of members on this side of the House, we found the honorable member for Hume and the right honorable member for Balaclava admitting that the Tariff was one which did not please anybody, and the Government have since been trying to please somebody by making important alterations in it. I hope they will continue, in the interests of the people of the Commonwealth, to make these alterations, and any made in the direction of freetrade will have my support.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member must not discuss the Tariff on this motion.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am only referring to it incidentally. We are all anxious to have the Tariff settled as expeditiously as possible. I have shown that that is what I desire by the fact that I have refrained from speaking at length except upon two or three occasions, when I felt compelled to speak to prevent the question being settled without full consideration and the proper explanation of the various items. Only upon those occasions did I take up any time in discussing the matter, and on other occasions, when other honorable members have submitted arguments which I intended to submit, I have been content to sit calmly by and allow their statements of the arguments to go. I think that is shown by the figures I have collected, which prove that I have spoken only 36 times as compared with honorable members opposite, some of whom, like the honorable and learned member for Corinella, have spoken 109 times and more.

Mr McCay

- The honorable member did not tell us how many columns his speeches occupy.

<page>7735</page>

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I have not taken out that interesting quantity, but I have admitted that on two occasions, in order to prevent the question going without full consideration, I did take up a good deal of time, and I think subsequent events have justified the course I took on those occasions. I have shown that there has been no desire on the part of members on this side of the House to prevent the progress of business. They have not made anything like the number of speeches that have been made by members of. the Government side, nor have they taken up anything like the same number of columns of Hansard. I have no wish to place any obstacle in the way of the Government securing an extra sitting day, because I recognise that it is necessary if proper criticism is to be devoted to the proposals of the Government. We should not, I think, be deterred from properly and fully criticising their proposals by the suggestion that we may have to sit late. So far as I am concerned, if I believed that there was a possibility of the public interests being jeopardized, I should not hesitate to take up all night in what I believe to be legitimate criticism of the Government proposals. We are sent here for the purpose of giving proper consideration to the measures submitted, and we should do all we possibly can -to bring about any alteration which we believe to be in the interests of the people of the Commonwealth. I have no hesitation in voting for the resolution proposed, hut at the same time I reserve to myself the right to fully criticise the proposals of the Government.

Mr. L.E. GROOM (Darling Downs).I do not desire to detain the House, but I wish to say that the honorable

member for Maranoa was mistaken in imputing a sinister motive to an honorable member in connexion with the proposed adjournment for six weeks. I think it is only fair to the honorable member referred to, and who happens to be absent, that I should say that. I admit it is quite possible that the effect of the action proposed might be such as the honorable member for Maranoa suggested. Speaking personally, I entirely agree with what has been said by the honorable member for Maranoa in expressing a hope that the Government will be able to assure us before this motion is passed that we shall have only a very short adjournment, and, if possible, only for two weeks.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I merely rise to make a protest against all-night sittings. I am prepared to come here as early in the morning as the Government may propose, but I am opposed to sitting later than eleven o'clock at night. I think that some consideration ought to be given to members who have professional engagements and businesses to look after and keep together, and it is possible that sitting upon Monday may seriously inconvenience them. I have no personal claim to make in that way, because I am prepared to devote the whole of my time to the consideration of the public business! and will assist the Government in every possible way to secure proper discussion, so that the full light of day may be cast upon every item which ought, in the public interests, to be discussed. I do not think any one can say that I have at any time prolonged debate or occupied the time of the House when I had nothing to say. Unless I feel that I have something to say, I have no desire to speak. I have a grievance against the Government, however, in that they caused me to speak one night very late, indeed. My constitution will allow me to sit as late as any honorable member can do, and I shall be prepared to stop if the Government insist upon sitting later than eleven o'clock, but I shall have no consideration for them after that hour, because I shall -feel that their desire is to force business through in the early hours of the morning, when honorable members are fatigued, and are unable to attend to their duty. In the interests of the electors throughout the Commonwealth, it is our duty, and the duty of the Government, I think, to see that proper discussion takes place, at a time when honorable members are able to discharge their duty.

Mr Salmon

- Night sittings are required ONLY when there is obstruction.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Although I have not been a Member of Parliament before, I claim to have been a student of parliamentary history, second to, perhaps, very few honorable members, and it will be found in studying the history of Parliaments that a Ministry continues the sitting very late when they wish to force measures through. Tariffs are usually forced through a House, and the worst work done by a Parliament is frequently that which is done after twelve o'clock at night. I hope that this House will not sit later than eleven o'clock.

<page>7736</page>

Mr E SOLOMON

- I have no objection to an extra sitting day being taken, but I would ask the Government, in regard to the duration of the Christmas adjournment, to consider the convenience of honorable members from Western Australia and Queensland. It takes a fortnight to make a visit to Western Australia ; therefore an adjournment of less than five or six weeks would .not do us any good. I should be quite satisfied if it were only a fortnight, if the business of the session could be finished early next year. I trust that whatever the decision may be, it will be announced early, so that honorable members may be in a position to make their business arrangements. It takes fourteen or fifteen days before one can get a reply to a letter to Western Australia.

Mr. DEAKIN(Ballarat - Attorney-General). - May I say, in reply to the honorable member for Robertson, that the pro.posa.1 has not been submitted with the idea of taking any such advantage of the committee as he seems to suppose. On the contrary, it will be the desire of the Government for their own sake as well as for that of the House, to which they owe every consideration, not to sit later than can reasonably be required to complete the discussion of public business. The same remark applies to sitting on Friday evenings. We hope that it will not be necessary to prolong that sitting beyond the usual time ; but the intimation was given so that honorable members might not regard it as a fixed rule which could not be broken if the necessity arose. In regard to the adjournment at Christmas, of course the wish of the Government is naturally that it should be for as short a period as possible. There has been a request from

many sides for an extension, but I feel bound to point out that unless the Tariff be disposed of, so far as we can dispose of it at this stage, it would be absolutely necessary to have only the shortest possible adjournment at Christmas. Even if it were disposed of, we should still be able to rest only for a short time, although the same restraint would not be placed upon us. The Government is desirous in this matter, and in every every other, to meet the wishes of honorable members, and I have no doubt that we can arrive at a common agreement, which will, of course, strike as nearly as possible a happy medium between those who desire a long adjournment, and those who prefer a short one. The interest of the Government is the shortest possible adjournment, because that is the interest of public business. While it is impossible to have anything but the shortest adjournment, if we have not finished with the Tariff, there may be a few extra days available if it has been passed.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

TARIFF

In Committee of Ways and Means : -

Consideration resumed from 22nd November (vide page 7726).

Item 11. - Biscuits, per lb., 1l/2d.

Mr KINGSTON

- On further consideration, we are inclined to the idea that a duty of 1d. is sufficient. Therefore, I move - That the words "and on and after the 27th November, 1901, 1d." be added.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- So far as this item is concerned the reduction matters very little one way or the other, because there is practically no importation. We might almost as well put a duty on baker's bread as on biscuits. A very small duty of this kind yields practically no revenue, and it looks farcical to calculate, as the Government have calculated, a revenue of £92 from this source. Perhaps I might be allowed at this stage to make a few remarks, which, I think, would facilitate the transaction of public business. I am just as anxious as are the members of the Government that the Tariff should go through as speedily as possible. It is possible that when we meet from week to week there may be new aspects to discuss, and it is not unreasonable, I think, for the Ministers in charge of the resolution, and for myself, as representing the leader of the Opposition, who will be absent for some time, to be able to say something with regard to the general trend of the business. I feel myself in a very peculiar position with regard to the Tariff. We have passed an item on which there was a considerable struggle. We have been asked by the Government to take as test questions certain votes, and not to repeat, day by day and hour by hour, the same essential arguments. Honorable members will recollect that we had a strong fight upon the question of bacon and hams. We asserted that the proposal of the Government was absolutely prohibitive. I have since worked out figures on the basis of the Government estimates, with results which will probably surprise my honorable friend the Minister for Home Affairs.

Mr McCay

- I rise to a point of order. I ask your ruling, Mr. Chairman, whether the honorable member is in order in discussing the item of bacon and hams, which has already been passed by the committee? We shall never get through the Tariff if we are to discuss matters at large in the way the honorable member for Wentworth is now doing.

Sir William McMillan

- My only desire is to be clear whether the Government understand the exact effect of what we are doing with regard to this and other items. Some of the items awaiting our discussion are in even a greater degree objectionable from the prohibitive point of view, and, therefore, I desire as a matter of fairness and justice to those who are here under the pledges of Ministers' manifestoes---

Mr McCay

- I would ask your ruling, Mr. Chairman, as to whether the honorable member is in order?

Mr CHAIRMAN

- Honorable members are well aware that discussion must be confined to the item before the committee ; the honorable member for Wentworth was not in order in going beyond that.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I shall defer my remarks until we come to the next item, and shall arrange for the publication of the figures I have referred to with reference to this item. I do not care very much, one way or the other; but

the duty is ridiculous, because, according to the Government's own showing, it will produce only £92 in the shape of revenue. On general principles, therefore, it would be better to strike it out altogether.

<page>7737</page>

Mr KIRWAN

- I think the Government should deal with this item in the same way as the proposed duty on animals, because the arguments which apply in the one case have equal force in the other. This will not be a revenue producing duty, and it is not necessary for protective purposes. Its only possible effect can be to enable the manufacturers of biscuits within the Commonwealth to increase their prices. In New South Wales, where the duty on biscuits was only 1/2d. per lb., there were eight biscuit factories- employing 830 hands last year, whilst in Victoria, where the duty was double that levied in New South Wales, there were only four factories, employing 791 hands. In all the States the duties were directed against biscuits imported from neighbouring States rather than against those from abroad, and the position has been so entirely changed by the establishment of Inter-State free-trade as to render a duty absolutely unnecessary. The Hon. F. T. Derham, the managing director for Messrs Swallow and Ariell, when giving evidence before the Victorian Tariff Committee in 1894-5, when the duty on biscuits was 2d. per lb., said - As to our biscuit industry, if you can give us no relief in the duties on any of our raw material, it would be wise to reduce the duties on our own manufactures, at least by one-half. The duty is absurdly high ; it is not wanted, 2d. per lb. I believe we could go almost so far as to ask you to make it free-trade at once, but I think it better to go down to that by steps, and I should ask for one-half.

Thus we find a manufacturer, as far back as 1894, advocating free-trade as regards biscuits. Further on in his evidence, Mr. Derham shows that the imported article was really beaten out of the Victorian market before a duty was imposed. A duty of 1d. per lb. was imposed on biscuits in Victoria in 1866, but Mr. Derham points out that the importations of biscuits into Victoria, which, in 1856, were valued at £34,650, gradually decreased, until, in 1866, they represented only £432. Therefore, it is evident that the imported article was beaten out of the market long before any protective duty was imposed. I intend to move that biscuits be placed on the free list.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I do not attach much importance to this item, but, at the same time, I agree with the honorable member for Kalgoorlie that it would be better to strike it out altogether. It simply gives an opportunity to people to say that a duty prevails when, in fact, they are not affected at all ; and no doubt in many cases advantage is taken of the

Tariff in order to raise prices against the consumer. The estimate of revenue from this source made by the Government shows that there is very little importation of "biscuits, and I ask the Chairman to arrange to first take the vote on the amendment to strike out the item.

Mr KINGSTON

- The honorable member for Wentworth made the remark that advantage might be taken of the opportunity to raise prices, and in this connexion I have some figures which may interest the committee as showing the effect of the different duties in Melbourne and Sydney. In Victoria the duty was 1d. per lb. and in Sydney 1/2d., and according to the usual arguments which are advanced against duties, one would think that the higher prices would obtain in Victoria ; but that is not so. The particulars I have relate to twenty lines of biscuits, in eleven of which the Melbourne prices were under those of Sydney ; in three lines the Melbourne prices were the same as those in Sydney ; and in six lines the Melbourne prices were over those of Sydney. Arrowroot biscuits, coffee biscuits, fancy mixed biscuits, ginger nuts, rice biscuits, and wine biscuits were 6d. per lb. in Sydney, and 5 1/2d. per lb. in Melbourne.

Mr Thomson

- Wholesale or retail?

<page>7738</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- I cannot say precisely, but I should think the prices were retail. Abernethy biscuits were 5 1/4d. per lb. in Sydney, and 5d. per lb. in Melbourne ; captain biscuits, 4 3/4d. per lb. in Sydney, and 5d. per lb. in Melbourne ; cheese biscuits, 6d. per lb. in Sydney, and 4 1/2d. per lb. in Melbourne ; cracknels, 1s. 2d. per lb. in Sydney, and 1s. 2d. per lb. in Melbourne ; currant luncheon biscuits, 6 1/2d. per lb. in Sydney, and 7d. per lb. in Melbourne (in Victoria there was a duty of 1d. per lb. on currants, which were free in New South Wales) ; dessert biscuits were 9 1/4d. per lb. in Sydney, and 9d. per lb. in Melbourne ; lime biscuits, 5 1/2d.

per lb. in Sydney, and 5d. per lb. in Melbourne; macaroons, 1s. 10 1/2d. per lb. in Sydney, and 1s. 10d. per lb. in Melbourne; malt biscuits, 4 3/4d. per lb. in Sydney, and 6d. per lb. in Melbourne; milk biscuits, 5d. per lb. in Sydney, and 5d. per lb. in Melbourne; oatmeal biscuits, 5d. per lb. in Sydney, and 5 1/2d. per lb. in Melbourne; ratafia biscuits, 1s. 10 1/2d. per lb. in Sydney, and 1s. 10 1/2d. per lb. in Melbourne; sultana biscuits, 7d. per lb. in Sydney, and 7 1/2d. per lb. in Melbourne; and water biscuits, 3-Jd. per lb. in Sydney, and 4d. per lb. in Melbourne. The duty will prevent the underselling of foreign goods to the upsetting of the market, and I think the prices quoted are fair enough to all concerned, consumers especially.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Kalgoorlie can gain his object by moving that the amendment be amended by the 'Omission of "Id." per lb. with a view of inserting the word "free."

Amendment (by Mr. Kirwan) proposed -

That the amendment be amended by omitting " Id." with a view to inserting in lieu thereof the word " free."

Mr THOMSON

- The valueless nature of the figures which have been placed before us by the Minister for Trade and Customs is shown by the fact that it is not known whether they are wholesale or retail prices. If they are said to be retail we know that in different shops in the same city different prices prevail, and several prices could be obtained in Melbourne. If they are wholesale prices, then I can tell the committee there are different prices for biscuits manufactured in Sydney. Whose prices are these which have been quoted? I quite agree with the honorable member for Kalgoorlie that the manufacture of biscuits is so well established in Australia that no protection is necessary. Biscuits particularly are an article which cannot be favorably competed with from abroad, when the industry here has reached a well-established stage. They require special packing to send across the Line from Europe or from the United States, and only a few of very exceptional kinds are sent in that way. The industry has the best protection possible, namely, natural protection; and, that being so, the Government ought not to persist in their proposal.

Mr Kirwan

- From Victoria last year 1,000,000 lbs. of biscuits was sent to South Africa.

Mr THOMSON

- The States, particularly Victoria, are competing in this trade with the markets of the world. Biscuits go to the East from these States- and compete with British biscuits, and I hope to see more markets wrested for Australia. There is the danger that prices may be raised under a protective duty of this kind.

Mr KINGSTON

- I can now give a positive assurance that the prices I have quoted are retail. In the one case the quotations are by Anthony Hordern and Sons in reference to Arnott's biscuits, which are manufactured in New South Wales.

Mr Thomson

- Those are the heaviest priced biscuits in Sydney.

Mr KINGSTON

- In the other case the quotations are by the Mutual Store, of Melbourne, and relate particularly to Messrs. Swallow and Ariell's biscuits.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I am glad the Minister for Trade and Customs has seen his way clear to reduce the duty from 1 1/2d. to 1d. per lb., but I cannot concur, in the amendment to abolish the duty altogether. A penny per lb. is very slight protection, but that protection is necessary is- proved by the actual imports into Victoria last year under a duty of 1d. per lb. Last year Victoria imported from the United Kingdom 9,797 lbs. of biscuits, valued at £510, upon which the customs duties collected amounted to £4:0 19s. 5d. This fact shows that, even with a duty of 1d. per lb. operating, there is a possibility of a considerable quantity of biscuits being imported. If that duty were swept away, the local article would have no protection whatever.

<page>7739</page>

Mr MAUGER

- Any one of the arguments which have been advanced against the retention of this duty could be urged with equal force against any proposal submitted by the Government. The contention that our geographical position constitutes a sufficient protection against importation is a theory which has been repeatedly

exploded. As has been pointed out by the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, biscuits have been imported. I understand that some of the manufacturers - one of whom has been named by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie - has stated that a duty of 1d. per lb. is an ample protection. But in this matter we have to consider the worker as well as the manufacturer. I am anxious that the principle of wages boards should be extended to this and other trades. That, however, is impossible, unless in the first instance we insure the home market to our manufacturers. To suppose that if we remit the duty of 1d. per lb. upon biscuits the imports of this article will not increase is contrary to the experience of America, Canada, and of every other country.

I do hope that the Government will adhere to their proposal.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - It has been implied by the previous speaker that once a duty is imposed it can never be remitted. In other words all the talk of the last 30 years to the effect that duties should be imposed simply to give a fillip to the local manufacturer, and to enable him to stand upon his legs squarely, is the veriest claptrap. Here is an article which is almost exactly on the same plane as is the baker's bread. Biscuits are made up of products which we are exporting to the extent of millions of pounds annually. Yet we are told that if we abolish this wretched duty of 1d. per lb. on the natural product of the country, the local manufacturers will be ruined. That is a very fine comment upon all the fine historical clap-trap of protection which has been in vogue in this country, but which the people are at last beginning to see through.

Mr WILKS

- The honorable and learned member for Bendigo spoke in opposition to biscuits being placed upon the free list, and pointed out that 11,000 lbs. were imported into Victoria during the year 1900. I wish to point out that only 10,000 lbs. were imported into New South Wales during the same period. The duty in the latter State was 1d. per lb., as against an impost of 1d. per lb. in the former. Seeing that with a lower duty operating there were 1,000 lbs. less imported into the free-trade country - which has a larger population - than was imported into Victoria, the only inference one can draw is that the duty has no effect whatever upon importation. I would further point out that, in the year 1900, Victoria exported 2,600,000 lbs. of biscuits, and New South Wales 650,000 lbs. The base of the product is flour, of which we are also exporters. Yet, despite the fact that the biscuit manufacturer has a cheap product and a ready command of it, we are asked to give him still further protection. I oppose the retention of this duty.

Mr. HENRY WILLIS (Robertson). I would point out that the Treasurer expects to derive a revenue of less than £100 per annum from this duty. He has shown clearly that there is an importation of biscuits, and that he desires to give the local manufacturers a further measure of protection. The representative of Swallow and Ariell has admitted that, if we take off the duty upon sugar and currants, that firm will be quite willing that the duty on biscuits should be abolished. If the manufacturers have no desire for this further protection, the Government should adopt their advice and allow the article to come in duty free. The Minister for Trade and Customs quoted the prices at which biscuits were sold in New South Wales and Victoria respectively. He quoted the price at which they were sold by Anthony Hordern and Sons. But I would point out that that firm cannot be compared with many other Sydney firms in the matter of groceries. Biscuits of all kinds may be purchased there at from 10 and 15 to 20 per cent. less than from other grocers.

Mr Tudor

- The Minister quoted the Mutual Store, in Melbourne, which charges the highest prices.

<page>7740</page>

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I think it will be satisfactory if the Minister, in quoting retail prices, will refer to the lists of Moran and Cato, in Melbourne, and, say, those of Lassetter and Co., in Sydney. There will not be any dispute at all about the prices of those firms. If he quotes wholesale prices, I would advise him to use the lists of John O'Connell and Co., in New South Wales, or the Trade Review of that State; and the columns of the Age or the Journal of Commerce, in Melbourne. If the Treasurer does that it will be shown that the price of biscuits is increased by the duty levied upon them. Indeed, there is no other object in placing a duty upon biscuits than to increase the price, so as to afford an opportunity to manufacturing firms. The Treasurer has said that the £92 odd is the sum he expects to receive from biscuits imported into the Commonwealth. New South Wales exports between 600,000 lbs. and 700,000 lbs. of biscuits annually,

while Victoria exports more than 2,000,000 lbs. of biscuits. The facts show that while the Commonwealth imports 30,000 lbs. of biscuits, it exports something like 3,000,000 lbs., so that we are really offering a premium to manufacturers. This appears to be the case from the report of the Victorian Royal commission. One of the Victorian manufacturers told the commission that he had no desire whatever for protection, but wished sugar and currants to be imported free. That was the statement of the representative of the large firm of Swallow and Ariell.

Mr SALMON

- The acting leader of the Opposition, in that very unfair and unnecessary jibe at the protectionists in which he has indulged, has Attributed to all protectionists an opinion which was expressed by only a few. The bulk of protectionists have never advanced the argument that protection was required only temporarily. I wish to expose certain of the fallacies of the Opposition. It has been said by way of interjection that we might as well say that flour required a duty, or otherwise it would be imported, and would interfere with the farmer. In New South Wales, where there was no duty on flour during the year 1897, there was imported 1,119,879 centals of flour of the value of £624,000. What I desire to show is that there is a possibility of flour being imported into the Commonwealth. I know perfectly well that a large quantity of flour was imported into New South Wales from California during a time of drought, when wheat was very dear indeed ; and I, as a member of the Victorian Legislature, endeavoured to induce the Government to take the duty off wheat in order that we might get cheap flour for the people.

Sir William McMillan

- A special flour is imported to blend with the flour that is made in New South Wales.

Mr SALMON

- Am I to understand that flour to the extent of 1,000,000 centals a year is imported simply for the purpose of blending? In the year 1898 the flour imported totalled 410,000 centals ; in the next year 918,000 ; and in the following year 217,000. The value varies from £624,000 in the first year mentioned to £217,000 in the second year, £335,000 in the third year, and £8,000 in the fourth. These figures show that, to some extent at any rate, the contention of the acting leader of the Opposition is without foundation. With regard to the particular item of biscuits, surely we are not going to be governed by the utterances of a single manufacturer, and one who, in the words of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, has shown himself always prepared to employ cheap labour, and to get the cheapest material he can. He is a free-trader, and one of the strongest opponents of the Factories and Shops Act. When honorable members realize these facts, they surely will not place very much reliance upon the position this gentleman took up some time anterior to 1895.

Mr Conroy

- What is the name of the particular manufacturer who has asked for the duty ?

Mr SALMON

- The honorable and learned member for Werriwa shows his usual capacity for smelling out dirty things in other people's actions. In the old days there used to be witch smellers, who went round pretending that they could tell a witch by the odour. The honorable and learned member seems to have been associated with some such persons.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I rise to order, on two grounds. In the first place, the honorable member for Laanecoorie is indulging in what he must know are offensive reflections on the honorable and learned member for Werriwa; and, in the next place, what he is saying is entirely irrelevant to the question under discussion. I submit that you, Mr. Chairman, ought not to allow the honorable member to indulge in irrelevant remarks in the way he has been doing.

Mr Kingston

- What is the point of order?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Will the right honor able gentleman allow me to proceed, or will he necessitate my writing to the Age ?

The CHAIRMAN

- Order. The honorable member for Paramatta is now out of order. On the point of order raised by him, I wish to say that honorable members must confine themselves to the item before the Chair. I did not understand that the honorable member for Laanecoorie intended to be in any way offensive to the

honorable and learned member for Werriwa, but if the honorable and learned member thinks that the remarks were offensive, I shall call for their withdrawal.

Mr Conroy

- Surely the honorable member would not think it wrong of me to point out corruption if it existed ?

<page>7741</page>

Mr SALMON

- I resent any imputation that I have been in communication with any interested parties in connexion with the Tariff. I have not, and I would ask the honorable and learned member for Werriwa to say whether he is in the same position. . I can understand the eagerness with which the honorable member for Parramatta comes to his assistance. Arcades Ambo. If honorable members wish to keep this industry they must give it some protection. The cost of transit and other charges which have been referred to ad nauseam during the debate on the Tariff have really very little to do with the question. We have here a native industry which we can maintain, and we can provide everything for the complete article. The committee should pause before taking a step which would result in a considerable loss of industry

Mr A C GROOM

- If there is one industry more than another which should be able to do without protection it certainly is the biscuit industry. The whole of the ingredients used in the manufacture* of biscuits, with the exception of sugar, can be obtained here cheaper than in any other part of the world. Flour, for instance, is cheaper, and we all know that eggs and butter are cheaper here than in any other place, while sugar is cheaper here than in any other part of the world, with the exception of England. The quantity of sugar used, however, is so infinitesimally small that it need not be taken into consideration. In reply to the honorable member for Laanecoorie I would state that the second largest biscuit manufacturer in Victoria assured me some time ago that he did not want a duty on biscuits.

Mr. WILKS(Dalley).- One of the suggestions made by the honorable member for Laanecoorie was that, in the interests of labour, protection was required for the biscuit industry. As a matter of fact, biscuits are produced chiefly by the use of machinery. In all well-appointed factories up-to-date machinery is employed.

Mr CONROY

- This is not a revenue duty, therefore there can be no argument in favour of imposing it on that ground. The return given by the Treasurer shows that he does not expect to receive more than £90 per year in the way of. revenue from this duty. The protectionists have failed to bring forward the names of any manufacturers who ask for the duty, while the names of other manufacturers have been brought forward, who have said that no duty is necessary. In these circumstances I think the amendment moved by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie might well be adopted.

<page>7742</page>

Mr GLYNN

- There is one point to which I wish to refer, in answer to the honorable member for Laanecoorie, in regard to' the increase of importation of flour so far as New South Wales is concerned. South Australia exports very large quantities to New South Wales, amounting to one-third - sometimes, more and sometimes less - of the total importation. Of course that would be entered, as an import into New South Wales, but the = fact is that flour cannot be produced in Broken Hill, and it has to be obtained from, the place from which it can be sent most expeditiously and at the least cost of transit. The comparison of the prices ruling; in Sydney and Melbourne amounts to nothing. When we have an export of over 600,000 lbs. of biscuits from.. New South Wales, and over 2,000,000 lbs. from Victoria, it is not a question of,' a duty or no duty affecting local prices. It is purely a question of quality and taste. Something has been said by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports in regard to declining duties leading to increased importations. The manufacture, of biscuits was commenced in Victoria in 1854, and in 1856 there was an importation into this State of £34,000 worth ; but by 1866 the value of the importation of biscuits, without any duty being imposed during the* whole of the intervening period, had shrunk from £34,000 to £432. The cause of the. reduction was that the State was more suitable for the production of biscuits than were the exporting countries. I can understand why the Government have eased in this matter. They will not go to the full length. . of some of their convictions, but they will come down to Id. That is the Victorian duty. It is not a protective duty, but the Victorians will be able to dispense

with any duty. I believe that in doing this the Ministry will have the support of certain representatives of Victoria, because there are certain classes, of biscuits which the smaller States cannot, produce in competition with New South. Wales and Victoria. They cannot afford to pay £10 per week for an expert to direct, the manufacture of certain classes of biscuits. I am almost certain that whether we have, protection or free-trade in regard to this item the 86 persons employed in the trade in South Australia will disappear, because of the importations from the larger States, where the manufacturers have more effective machinery. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo has referred to the fact that there is still an importation of biscuits into New South Wales. The importation from the United Kingdom, into New South Wales which he mentioned, is really not higher than the importation into South Australia, although there we have only one-fourth of the population. The explanation is that special classes of biscuits are imported into the States where they are least produced. They are least produced in South Australia, because the manufacturers there do not possess the special machinery used in Victoria and New South Wales. The figures relating to the value of importations of biscuits from the United Kingdom to South Australia are a little over £9,000, and those approximate to the figures relating to the importations into New South Wales and Victoria. In the circumstances, I think the case is one for the abolition of the duty, and I am exceedingly sorry that we shall not receive the support of certain honorable members on the Government side.

Question - That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the proposed amendment - put.

The committee divided -

Ayes 29

Noes 22

Majority 7

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment of the amendment negatived.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I move -

That the words and on and after 27th November, 1901, 1/2d. " be added.

The CHAIRMAN

- I am afraid the honorable member cannot move the amendment, because I submitted the last question to the committee in this form - " That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the amendment" and that has been resolved in the affirmative.

Sir William McMillan

- On the point of order, I desire to remind honorable members that this is a difficulty which may occur again. I am sure honorable members generally will admit that the Chairman has accommodated himself to the particular work we are doing. No one desires to take any advantage of any one else, nor is there any desire to do anything which may be obstructive or may be considered continual hair-splitting. The point is that we are now dealing with a commodity in which we are reduced to halfpence, and there, is nothing obstructive in proposing that the duty should be one halfpenny. It is admitted that a duty of 1d. will yield little or no revenue, and under, no circumstances will very much be yielded by this article. It is plain, however, that; we shall get more revenue with a duty of a 1/2d. than with a duty of 1d. After all, we ought not to be slaves to our own standing orders, and I think we might agree to some plan - and there is no reason why it should not be decided upon in connexion with this item - by which we can, carry out the desire of the committee. I. ask the Government to give us an opportunity of doing this.

<page>7743</page>

Mr Watson

- I trust that the Chairman will reconsider the ruling he has just given. It seems to me that the difficulty will crop up continually from now on, in connexion with a great variety of propositions which may be placed before the committee, with? respect to proposed alterations of duties. A more convenient way of dealing with the matter would be to compel the withdrawal of the prior amendment in favour of the amendment which went further. That is a practice which is followed in various Legislatures.

Sir William McMillan

- The Government will be quite willing to do that.

Mr Watson

- I am sure the Government will offer no objection to that, as they only desire to get the opinion of the committee. So long as it is understood that an honorable member who may have given notice of an amendment must give way, pending the decision of another amendment which proposes to go further, no one will suffer. I think it is a mistake that the question should be put in the form that a certain duty stand part of the question when we may have to go back upon that. It would be far better that a mover of the first amendment should give way to an amendment going further, when the amendment first moved can be again considered if the other amendment proposed is not carried. That is done in committee on the Estimates in many States, and it would be a most convenient practice to adopt here.

Mr Kingston

- I would suggest to you, sir, that we should do whatever is necessary for the purpose of getting the decision of the committee on the point which it wants to decide. No doubt your ruling is absolutely correct; but I would suggest that, for the convenience of the committee, you might adopt a general rule to put in each case the amendment which is lowest until something is affirmed. I imagine that we can do that now.

Mr Glynn

- If honorable members had intimated during the debate that they intended to move for a lower duty, it would have given you an opportunity to make a selection between their proposals. It has been the custom in South Australia for honorable members to indicate the rate which they wished to be put in, either at once or in the alternative. As that was not done in connexion with the tobacco duties you were forced to take up the position you did.

The CHAIRMAN

- Honorable members I am sure will acquit me of any attempt to curtail their rights. I am bound by the standing order, which says -

When the proposed amendment is to leave out certain words, the Speaker shall put a question " that the words proposed be left out stand port of the question."

That was the form in which I submitted the question. But honorable members can obtain their wish in another form. The decision of the committee has been given in regard to part of the amendment, that is the omission of the words " one penny." But the whole of the amendment has not yet been submitted from the Chair, and when that question is submitted the committee can negative it, and then any honorable member may move that the duty be 1/2d., or any lower sum. That, I think, would be the most convenient way of keeping within the standing order.

Sir William McMillan

- On this occasion, sir, I would suggest that honorable members should move to add that on and after a certain day the duty should be so much, and that then we should arrange to give way to each other so that the lowest proposal should be taken first.

The CHAIRMAN

- I was going to suggest that course, but if the Government see fit to take it, they can withdraw the amendment for the time being, and allow an honorable member to move that on and after the 27th November the duty be so-and-so.

<page>7744</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- We are prepared to do anything to enable the matter to be fairly decided. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment whilst another is being considered.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (by Mr. Joseph Cook) proposed -

That the words "and on and after 27th November, 1901, 1/2d." be added.

Question put.

The committee divided -

Ayes 23

Noes 28

Majority 5

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Mr. Kingston) agreed to-

That the words "and on and after 27 th November, 1901, 1d. per lb.," be added.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 12 - Blue, laundry, per lb., 2d.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I think I shall be perfectly in order in saying a word or two at this stage with regard to the series of items which are to be brought under the consideration of the committee in this division of the Tariff. I shall take the Government figures as the basis of the statement I have to make. According to the Government figures the duty on blue will have the effect of reducing the imports into Australia by at least 75 per cent. The effect of the duty on cheese will be to reduce imports from abroad by 90 per cent. The impost on candles will reduce the foreign imports by 80 per cent., and in the matter of stearine the duty will be practically prohibitive. I feel that I occupy a very 'difficult and responsible position at the present time. I represent, in the absence of the leader of the Opposition, not only the free-traders in this House, but the free-traders of Australia. We have referred on several occasions to the manifesto of the Prime Minister, and to the particular phrase upon which the policy of the Government in connexion with its Tariff was based, namely, "revenue without destruction." Another of the expressions used by the Prime Minister was "We can have no extreme protection ; we can have no prohibition." Yet, at the very outset of this Tariff - after dealing with the narcotics and stimulants upon which there is not much difference of principle between us - we are brought face to face with items which constitute an absolute repudiation of the principles upon which the Government submitted themselves to the electors.

Mr McCay

- I rise to a point of order. I think it is as well that we should know where we stand. I desire to know whether the honorable member for Wentworth is in order in entering upon a general discussion of the Tariff in connexion with this item ? The honorable member has referred to a number of other items, and to the promises made in the Ministerial manifesto. If the honorable member is to be at liberty to make general observations of this character, I presume that it will be open to all other honorable members to follow the same course?

Sir William McMillan

- On the point of order, I desire to direct attention to the fact that there is great difficulty in dealing with this question in any other way than that which I am adopting. We are dealing with the item now before us and others, either as a matter of protection or as a means of raising revenue. We fully understand that the debates upon all these items more or less reflect the views we hold upon the question of free-trade and protection, and we have now come to a series of duties which are practically prohibitive in their effects. I desire in connexion with the establishment of that proposition to refer to the fact that Parliament was elected on a certain understanding, and that a series of items which appear in this division of the Tariff practically falsify and repudiate the sentiments expressed by the Ministry in their manifesto. I am not saying that the manifesto is repudiated by me, but that the Tariff itself absolutely repudiates the utterance of the Prime Minister. I intend to prove this by quoting certain figures, and if as acting leader of the Opposition I am to have my tongue tied, I shall have to take a course which I shall be very reluctant to follow, but which would give me the fullest liberty of speech.

<page>7745</page>

Mr McColl

- In a discussion of this kind I take it that the acting leader of the Opposition has no more rights or privileges than any other honorable member. He has however claimed the right to go back to the time of the general election, and show that certain members of the Government have been false to their pledges, and that this Tariff is not in accordance with the policy they enunciated. If the honorable member for "Wentworth is allowed to take that course it will be open to every other honorable member to do the same. That would exactly suit the honorable member, because the evident intention is to delay the Tariff.

Sir William McMillan

- Does the honorable member say that I must not appeal to the Government on their own political honour?

Mr McColl

- The honorable member certainly should confine his remarks to the item before the committee.

Mr Hughes

- If the Maitland policy is departed from, as it is apparent it has been in this item, the honorable member is perfectly in order in showing that the Government have been guilty of an act of repudiation. So far as the honorable member draws an illustration from the item of blue, in order to prove that the duty is equivalent to 75 per cent., he cannot be declared out of order when he points to a complete departure from the principles upon which the Government went to the country, on which they were elected, and on which this Tariff was supposed to be framed..

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- If honorable members are strictly held to a particular item, discussion will be stifled. Supposing, on the item of biscuits, an honorable member had discussed sugar, which is an important ingredient, he could not have been declared out of order. I submit that it is perfectly in order to discuss the relations of items, and, moreover, we have a right to consider the political aspect of the Tariff at every stage of the discussion in committee. Where it can be shown that any item, or group of items, bears any relation to the declaration of the Ministers, or to the finances, or to allied industries, an honorable member is not out of order in directing attention to these points. Here the honour of the Ministry is involved, and we have a right to refer to their policy, on which they succeeded in getting a majority at the elections. If it can be shown that any or every item is an abrogation of the principles laid down by Ministers, an honorable member is absolutely in order in pointing out the fact.

Mr Salmon

- By Standing Order 274, which confines the debate to the question under discussion, the acting leader of the Opposition is precluded from referring to any other item than blue.

Sir William McMillan

- I yield that point as to other items, to which I referred only incidentally.

Mr Salmon

- Then nothing remains but for the Chairman to give his ruling. in accordance with the standing order. The acting leader of the Opposition did something which he does not often do when he gave an intimation, or conveyed a veiled threat, that if he were not allowed to proceed, he would take certain steps which would probably prove unpleasant. I trust there was nothing in that threat, because the work which we have before us affects the whole people, who are anxious to see it brought to a completion. If we allow a general discussion, we shall be breaking the compact we ourselves entered into when the Tariff was introduced, and when honorable members freely availed themselves of the opportunity which was afforded of discussing the general question. If we continue the general discussion on each and every item, the debate will be interminable, and we shall be further dislocating the business relations of those engaged in commerce.

Sir William McMillan

- Some honorable members have evidently misunderstood me, and I should like to say a few words in personal explanation. It was in order to avoid debate on every item that I pointed to the fact that this item held the key to a series of the same kind. Without entering on a debate of other items, I simply pointed out that they, like the present item, were prohibitive. No doubt, if we decide this item in a certain way, the Government will have the consideration to give way on those other items.

<page>7746</page>

Mr Wilks

- Standing Order 274 provides that no member shall digress from the subject-matter of any question under discussion, nor anticipate a discussion of any other subject which appears on the notice-paper. That standing order, I submit, has no bearing on the point of order before us. The acting leader of the Opposition was pointing out that the policy of prohibition, as disclosed in the item under discussion, was against the principles advanced by Ministers at Maitland and elsewhere, but he had no intention of discussing all those other items.

The honorable member desires simply to point out that the Ministry have evaded their responsibility.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Wentworth, in discussing the item of blue, now before the committee, incidentally referred to one or two subsequent items in the Tariff. Had the honorable member attempted to deal in detail with those items I should have called his attention to the standing order; but he made only incidental reference to them. The next point on which I am asked to rule is whether an honorable member

has a right to digress from the subject-matter before the committee. Standing Order 274, in my opinion, clearly provides that no honorable member shall digress from the subject matter of the question under discussion ; and the subject-matter is now blue. So far as the policy of the Government, as expressed at Maitland, or anywhere else, is concerned, I should not, according to the usage of Parliament, rule that any incidental reference thereto is a breach of the standing order. But any attempt to enter on a general debate, or to evoke a general debate on the question, would be clearly a breach of Standing Order 274. I have to ask honorable members to confine themselves to the item under discussion. The honorable member for Wentworth will not be in order in going beyond that item.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I do not propose to go beyond it ; but I take it for granted that underlying all these items there is a principle - that this Tariff has been framed on a principle - a principle which practically falsifies and repudiates the policy of the Government, as laid down by the Prime Minister at Maitland. It is not we who repudiate the policy of the Prime Minister ; that has been done by whoever is answerable for this Tariff. I find that in the year 1899, New South Wales imported from the United Kingdom 472, 1 75 lbs. of blue. A duty of 2d. per lb. upon that amount would yield a revenue of £3,934. But the Treasurer estimates that for the whole of Australia only £1,379 will be derived from this source. Out of that amount we may fairly assume that £1,000 will be collected in New South Wales.

Mr McCay

- £542 is the estimated revenue for New South Wales.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- That fact makes my argument the stronger. We find, therefore, that the trade which at 2d. per lb. would represent a revenue of £3,934 is reduced to a value of £542. In other words, the duty practically prohibits importation into New South Wales. I ask honorable members upon the other side who are imbued with any sense of fairness, whether that is " revenue without destruction " ? The whole of this importation, and all the concomitant industries connected with it, is to be wiped out.

Mr Watson

- What are the concomitant industries connected with blue?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- If there is a difference of £10,000,000 between the trade of New South Wales and that of Victoria, does the honorable member mean to say that we can wipe that trade away without interfering with the labour and industry of the country ? It is absurd. I do not believe in the closing of our ports. We can maintain the commerce of the country, and derive all the revenue necessary for the Commonwealth without the imposition of a prohibitive duty. The Minister for Home Affairs stated in his speeches during the recent election campaign that 15 per cent. was a fair duty. Indeed, we have before us a Tariff the principles of which have been repudiated by four Ministers of the Crown. The manifesto of the Prime Minister, the speech of the Minister for Home Affairs, which has been quoted, and the accuracy of which is not denied ; the very moderate speeches of one of the most moderate men in Australia, the present Vice-President of the Executive Council, and the utterances of Sir Philip Fysh, are all in opposition to its general lines. Out of nine Cabinet Ministers four have repudiated the principles upon which the Tariff has been framed. I feel in a very difficult position. I have closely watched the actions of the two right honorable gentlemen opposite, and I am pretty well convinced that if the Treasurer had been left to himself on Friday last he would probably have reduced the duty upon bacon and hams, which was practically prohibitive.

Sir George Turner

- The honorable member has no right to say that.

<page>7747</page>

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I went through that debate without showing the least temper, and without making this charge of repudiation, because I honestly believed that the Government would have given way. Surely if the operation of this duty will reduce the New South Wales imports of blue by one-half, the most grasping protectionist should be satisfied. When I prove - as I can from the figures of the Government - that at least 90 per cent, of the trade must disappear, it is surely time for me to protest, not merely as a matter of ordinary argument, but in order to save Australia from national repudiation. I intend in this case to move that the duty be reduced to 1d. Even then it would be a tremendous embargo upon the import business. At

the same time, as I said before, I am anxious to consider the need for revenue. We have come here to compromise. I claim that on this side of the House we have not attempted to do away with any reasonable duty unless it was inoperative so far as its collection was concerned. We proposed the reduction of the duty of 3d. on bacon and hams only by 1d., on the principle that we believed that revenue must be obtained. As the Government themselves have absolutely allowed that there is scarcely any importation of this article at all - only £1,379 for the whole of Australia - I can reasonably appeal to honorable members on both sides to support the reduction. I would ask the Government to consider it in the same spirit in which I have proposed it. If that is done, it will be a guide to us with regard to other duties that stand upon exactly the same footing. It will show us that the Government are doing the right thing, and that they are carrying out in good faith the declaration of the Prime Minister. Then business can be accelerated. But if this reasonable request is not complied with, all I can say is that while I am not going to countenance any obstruction, or the repetition of speeches, it will be necessary for us to fight this Tariff line by line. I move -

That the words "and on and after 27th November, 1d. per lb." be added.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- We are quite prepared to discuss the question whether this duty shall or shall not be 1d. a lb. ; but I decline to be drawn into debate on the general principle of the Tariff. That has already been discussed ' in a debate extending over three weeks, when the existence of the Government was challenged. It would have been quite within the province of the acting leader of the Opposition, when the first item of the Tariff was called on, to have a general discussion. But we have passed that first item, and therefore the question for discussion now is simply the amount of duty on blue. My honorable friend must not expect that the Government can accept any proposal simply because it comes from him or from any other honorable member opposite. If we think that any proposed alteration is fair and reasonable we have shown our willingness to consider it in a proper spirit. With regard to the contention that this duty will cause a large falling off in the imports to New South Wales, my answer is that , I am glad that that is so, because the result will be to give employment to a large amount of labour in New South Wales. Already one firm, that of Litzner and Co., have shown that this proposed duty has given them a larger output, and enabled them to employ more labour. I find that, leaving out the free-trade State of New South Wales, the duty in all the other States, except Western Australia, was hitherto 2d. per lb. Consequently, we are not 'prepared to say that a duty of 2d. is too high. No argument has yet been brought forward to show that it is too high. We are prepared to consider any argument to that effect, but any mere statement that the duty ought to be reduced to 1d. without showing reasons why the reduction should be made, is one which cannot weigh with us.

Sir William McMillan

- The importations will be reduced by this duty to the extent of 86 per cent.

<page>7748</page>

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- That may be. There may be, and will be, a number of ; articles, the importation of which will cease in consequence of the manufacture of the articles in the country. But when we find that in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania the duty has been 2d., are we to reduce it because by the reduction more may be imported into New South Wales ? Surely my honorable friend will not pretend that we ought to displace labour that is employed at the present time in four States in the preparation of this article because by the duty we shall reduce importations into the State he represents ? If the Government had found, on comparing the rates in the various States, that in some the duty was 1d., and in others 2d., we might have fixed the duty at a 1d. ; but seeing that the duty was 2d. in all the States except New South Wales and Western Australia, we think that 2d. is a fair duty to propose.

Sir William McMillan

- The Treasurer should not forget that New South Wales is a third of the Commonwealth.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Victoria, also, is practically a third of the Commonwealth. There is, also, the great State of Queensland, which, we hope, before many years have passed, will also contain close upon a third of the population of the Commonwealth.

Sir William McMillan

- We want revenue.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The only question we have to decide is what the rate shall be. The point is entirely one for the committee, and the Government are quite prepared to listen to any argument that may be brought forward to show that the proposed rate is too high. If we can see that there is force in the arguments of honorable members opposite, we are not above yielding and confessing that we have made a mistake. Otherwise we shall ask the committee to adhere to the duty proposed.

Mr WILKS

- It ought to be remembered by the committee that a duty of 2d. per lb. on blue amounts to something like 40 or 50 per cent. on the value of the article oversea. That is one reason why the duty should be reduced to 1d. Another is that the higher duty will press heavily on the poorest of the poor, who earn their livelihood by laundry work. Such people usually are either widows or the wives of men who earn very small wages. We find the most wretched conditions existing where wives of workmen are compelled to add to the weekly wage by means of laundry work. This is an impost which falls most harshly upon the poorest of the poor - upon classes which, from humane motives alone, the Government ought to be prepared to protect in the truest sense. The Treasurer admits that he expects to receive a very small amount of revenue from this source ; therefore this tax cannot be defended on the ground that it is revenue producing.

Sir George Turner

- Does the honorable member say that the colonial article is dearer than the imported one ?

Mr WILKS

- If it is not dearer there is no necessity for this impost.

Sir George Turner

- It will enable local manufacturers to make the blue and sell it cheaper.

Mr WILKS

- Messrs. Lewis and Whitty - one of the largest firms of local manufacturers - say they do not require the duty.

Sir George Turner

- There are other manufacturers. We do not want the smaller ones to be knocked out.

Mr WILKS

- We have no reason to expect that this is going to be an exceptional case, and that the impost will not add to the price. We know that imposts do increase prices ; the consumer has to pay, as the Minister for Trade and Customs has said. The right honorable gentleman shakes his head, but he said, elsewhere, that once a duty was brought to bear the consumer had to pay.

Mr McCay

- That was a revenue duty.

Mr WILKS

- This is a revenue duty to a certain extent. I do not know whether the Treasurer, when he states that the Government will be prepared to listen to arguments in support of a reduction, means that they will be guided only by the force of numbers. If he does, then, judging by the last division, we shall have but small chance of obtaining our desires. If he means, on the other hand, that the Government is willing to compromise, and that instead of a 55 per cent. duty--

Sir George Turner

- It is only about 33 per cent.

Mr WILKS

- With 10 per cent. added. Let us assume that it is only a 33 per cent. duty. Have not members of the Government declared that they are in favour of a system of taxation ranging from 15 to 20 per cent? This is 13 per cent. above the maximum, and they stand condemned out of their own mouths. The Minister for Home Affairs has on several occasions denied the statement attributed to him that he believed in 15 per cent. duties ; but we have an affidavit from a Mr. McNamara to the effect that he made that statement to him in reply to a question. Now the honorable gentleman is going "nap" on protection. If we cannot obtain the sympathy of the Treasurer upon the plea of humanity, surely we can obtain his support when we urge that the duty should be reduced for the sake of the integrity of Ministers. They have said that they are not

prepared to adopt prohibitive rates. If a 33 per cent. duty is not a prohibitive rate, we have yet to learn what is. I trust the amendment will be accepted.

<page>7749</page>

Mr McCAY

- As I understand him, the honorable member who is leading the Opposition attacks this duty chiefly on the ground that, if the Treasurer's estimate for the importation of blue into New South Wales be compared with the importation into New South Wales in 1899, it shows a diminution of seven-eighths, and he asks whether this is consonant with the declared policy of revenue without destruction. If the honorable member wants to institute such a comparison, he should do it fairly - he should show what is the estimate not only for New South Wales, as compared with the actual importations in previous years, but what is the estimate for the other States as compared with their respective importations.

Sir William McMillan

- That makes the total worse.

Mr McCAY

- Then I shall give the figures relating to Victoria. Victoria is the proper example to take in this case, because the duty here has been the same as the duty in three of the other five States in the union.

Sir William McMillan

- Is there no question of revenue in this debate ?

<page>7750</page>

Mr McCAY

- Certainly there is a question of revenue in the Tariff, but to say that every item in it is to be a revenue producing one is to twist any declaration made by any Minister at any time into a farcical absurdity. It would be absurd to say that, because every single item in the Tariff will not produce revenue, the Tariff will not produce revenue. The Prime Minister said that he believed in revenue without destruction, but to apply that touchstone to every one of the 500 or 600 items in the Tariff would be farcical. To assume that the right honorable gentleman ' meant what the honorable member professes to make him mean - -that that declaration is to apply to every item in the Tariff, and that every one of those items is to produce some revenue - is to reduce the statement to an absurdity. The acting leader of the Opposition says that this duty does not represent revenue without destruction, because it will destroy - what 1 Did " revenue without destruction " mean " without destruction of revenue," or "revenue without destruction of Australian industries " ? If, adopting the honorable member's own argument, we took the highest revenue producing point, so far as laundry blue is concerned, and so fixed the duty that the maximum amount of duty would be received, that would be revenue with .destruction, and not revenue without destruction. The importations of blue from the United Kingdom into Victoria in 1899 amounted to 77,000 lbs. weight, which, at 2d." per lb., represents about £640 sterling. The Government's estimate of the revenue to be received from the importations of blue into Victoria in a normal year is £416, a reduction of about one-third. That, I think, is by no means an excessive estimate of the reduction, when we realize the increased facilities for trade between the States owing to the abolition of the border duties. It is nothing more than what we might expect of an article of that kind, which is freely manufactured throughout the States. If we take it on that basis we find that the industry is not to be further assisted, but that there is to be destruction of the industry. The theory of the honorable member for Wentworth is that the revenue should be kept up to something like the New" South Wales revenue, and so long as the New South Wales revenue is not destroyed, it does not matter what industries in New South Wales or out of it are destroyed. That is what the honorable and learned member's argument comes to. If, as the honorable member for Wentworth suggests, the importations are to be kept up to something like one-half of the previous importations into New South Wales, that means that the importations into the other States of the Union from abroad must be something like four times as great as they have been in the past, and that certainly means to some extent the destruction of the local industry, because it means a falling off in the sale of the local product. There is only one other matter I desire to refer to, and that is the suggestion of the honorable member for Dalle)', that because this produces revenue, it must therefore be what is known as a "revenue duty." A "revenue duty " isa phrase invented by honorable members who are supposed to be free-traders for the purpose of hiding their change of front. It is a pretty phrase, and, like charity, it covers a multitude of sins on the part of honorable members opposite, who see the inevitable results to which their theory would

lead them. . I do not profess to quote the exact words of the right honorable gentleman who leads the Opposition, but I know that, in effect, he said that he wanted duties on articles that were not locally produced, because we would then be sure of the amount of revenue which would be raised, and there would be no disturbance of revenue by the springing up of local industries.

Mr Poynton

- I wish to ask whether the honorable and learned member for

Corinella is in order in discussing the question of a revenue Tariff and free-trade on this particular item ?

Mr McCay

- On the point of order, I may say I was trying to explain why this duty on laundry blue was not a " revenue duty " in the proper sense of the term, as used by those who prefer to use the expression " revenue duties " instead of free-trade.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN. - I must ask honorable members to adhere to Standing Order No. 274, which says -

No member shall digress from the subject matter of any question under discussion ; nor anticipate the discussion of any other subject which appears on the notice-paper.

Of course a certain amount of latitude is permitted for incidental reference, but in the discussion of this item it seems to me that some honorable members have infringed the rule, and I ask them to assist me in enforcing it.

Mr McCAY

- I only wish to say in conclusion that the choice offered by the honorable member for Wentworth is practically this : - Either the importation into New South Wales is to be kept up to something like half of what it was formerly, in which case the sale of the locally manufactured article must fall very much below its former level, or else we are to follow the example of the other States and keep up the manufacture of the local article to its former level, notwithstanding that in the special case of New South Wales there will necessarily follow a considerable falling off of the imports into that particular State.

<page>7751</page>

Mr HUGHES

- The honorable member for Corinella has put forward .an explanation as to the purport of this .duty which differs from that put forward by the right honorable gentleman in .charge -of the Tariff. The honorable member said that this was a duty that was to bring in some revenue, and that if it did not do that it might still be termed .a " revenue " item. The right , honorable gentleman in charge of the Tariff said distinctly that this item was not included for any such purpose, and it is very obvious that it was not. What it appears necessary to prove, according to the right honorable gentleman, is that this duty is necessary for the protection of the industry. I take it that my honorable and learned friend is right in saying that the ideal of the Ministry is " revenue, without destruction of native industries." If it can be shown that by taking off this duty of 2d. per lb., or reducing it, those manufacturers now engaged in the production of blue will cease to produce the article, or will be materially affected, I will admit that the Government stand upon excellent ground. But if that cannot be proved, I fail to see how they can maintain their position. It appears, according to an interview held with one of the chief manufacturers of blue in Victoria, that the chief result of this duty, so far as the trade is concerned, will be to give the whole market of Australia, or, at any rate, of New South Wales, to Lewis and Whitty . Lewis and Whitty 's blue appears to be selling at 4£d. per lb. in Sydney. The article with which it has had to compete largely was Reckitt's and Keen's blue. It appears that Keen's blue is selling at 6¼d. in New South Wales, and 8£d. in Victoria, which shows that the 2d. per lb. duty is put on to the price, and the consumer has to pay it in Victoria. It is now proposed to impose the duty of 2d. per lb. all round, and the obvious corollary is that the proposition would give the market to the producer, but- it gives him the market without any excuse for the duty. He has the market already, and even in free-trade Sydney he is able to undersell the foreign exporter of blue by 2d. per lb. What will he do with this 2d. per lb. duty ? Obviously he will put it in his pocket. That may be the object of honorable gentlemen opposite, but it is clear that 1d. per lb. would be all that would be necessary to enable the industry to be carried on. How many people does it take to make blue? What labour is employed in sticking on the labels or mixing up the blue ? Any one would imagine that there was an atmosphere murky with the smoke from a million manufactories in which nothing but blue was produced. I suppose that a few women and children, with very few men, make all the blue in Victoria or other places,-

If there is one industry which more than another seems to lend itself to the employment of female labour and child labour, apparently blue-making is that industry. It calls for the exercise of little ingenuity, and very few trade secrets. But there is a process which is known in connexion with the trade, and it is that by which the manufacturer manages to put into his pocket the 2d. of duty on every lb. of blue which he produces. I am given to understand that previous to the imposition of the uniform duty the price of Lewis and Whitty's blue in Victoria was higher than the price of blue in Sydney. What necessity was there for the manufacturers to make that charge? They did it simply because they were able to do so by the exigencies of the market. The Ministers have asked for arguments, not that they want them, but to show they are ready for anything - as, I believe, they are. The honorable member for Dalley supplied them with three arguments; does any man desire more? The honorable and learned member for Corinella supplied another argument inadvertently, but he did his best. Now that they have four arguments, that is not sufficient. I am very certain that they do not want any arguments. They want an excuse, and unless we can supply them with that excuse, we shall not be able to reduce this item by a penny. But just so surely as we are not able to do so, just so surely will it be quite useless for honorable members on the other side to get up and endeavour to persuade us to deal with them fairly and reasonably. They ask for argument, but when it is given they affect to disregard it, not that they can disregard argument, for sensible men as they are could not do such a thing. It is a simulation of indifference which I feel persuaded that they do not feel. I have quoted a paragraph from an interview with the agents of Lewis and Whitty in Sydney, and I can readily understand that the honorable and learned member for Corinella, who represents the intelligence of Victoria, can work himself up into a state of jocular enthusiasm in support of the local manufacturer's blue. When one comes to consider that the agents of this firm in Sydney are positively enthusiastic over the prospect one can readily understand that a representative, not of the firm, but of the people generally here will derive some measure of enthusiasm, even if it be vicarious enthusiasm. What reason is there that we should impose a duty which, on the face of it, gives little or no revenue, which was not imposed for that purpose, and which, so far as we know, is not necessary to the protection of this industry? If it can be shown that it is necessary, then the Government will occupy a fairly firm position, although I entirely agree with the honorable member for Wentworth when he says that to impose a duty which they admit is equal to 33 per cent., but which apparently is higher than that, is an absolute departure from the revenue-producing Tariff which we were led to expect from them. Is an industry threatened here? Absolutely jio, because the local producer of blue is able now, and was able prior to the imposition of the Tariff, to undersell the foreign dealer. What can be clearer than that? He did put on the market at Sydney a blue which he sold at 4d. per lb., and the price at which Keen's blue could be retailed was 6d. per lb. That wants refutation, if it can be afforded. It is now proposed to alter the price of Keen's blue to 8d. per lb., while Lewis and Whitty can sell their blue for 4d. a lb. That is putting the foreign article at a disadvantage of nearly 100 per cent. That is not a revenue producing Tariff - that is nothing but pure prohibition. It appears that the mere handling of cases of blue is a work for which honorable members on the other side feel the most supreme contempt. The man on the ship, the man on the wharf, the man on the trolley, is utterly beneath contempt. They have their eyes on a pallid looking being, working under scarcely tolerable conditions. I am just as much concerned for the man who handles blue as they are for the women or girls who make it. Some explanation will have to be afforded by my right honorable friend how it is that, although this is not a revenue producing item, he imposes such a duty as will put the foreign article at a disadvantage of 100 per cent., when the local article is well able to compete with that article. When a compromise is offered by the honorable member for Wentworth, the Government require some argument. No more argument is necessary than that already adduced. And I shall be very much aggrieved if the Government do not come forward with some offer at least towards a compromise.

<page>7752</page>

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- We might fairly say with the honorable member for Wentworth that this will be a Tariff to destroy revenue. There will be no revenue from this source, because I find, from their price-list, that Lewis and Whitty have comparatively the whole of the trade of New South Wales in blue. We know that there is an immense profit made in blue. No one can visit England without hearing of or seeing the great mansion known as Reckitts' blue. That firm is able to send blue into New South Wales to compete with Lewis and

Whitty's, but they know very well that it can be produced at so low a figure that Lewis and Whitty can drive them out of the other markets of Australia, because think it is admitted that in some of the States Keen's blue, as well as Reckitts', has a monopoly of the local markets. Messrs Lewis and Whitty have a large proportion of the Sydney trade.

Mr Harper

- That is quite a mistake.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- My authority is the circular issued by the firm in which they refer to the large trade they do with New South Wales. Their price list shows that their blue is sold in Sydney for 4£d. per lb., whereas in Melbourne the price is 6Jd. per lb. This shows that the duty of 2d. per lb. is paid by the people, and that the manufacturers have the advantage of something like 55 per cent, protection against the imported article.

Sir George Turner

- Does the honorable member mean to say that the people of New South Wales cannot make blue 1

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I dare say Messrs. Lewis and Whitty will establish a factory there, but that will not make any » difference to the revenue.

Sir George Turner

- The honorable member admits that Messrs Lewis and Whitty give the people of New South Wales a cheaper article than the imported blue.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Their blue is of a different class from the imported article, and the fact remains that so far as Victoria is concerned, they have had the full advantage of a very heavy protective duty. The Treasurer might very well accept the compromise proposed by the honorable member for Wentworth.

Mr CONROY

- If honorable members on this side of the House had their way, they would abolish the duty on blue, but they see no prospect of bringing about that result, and the amendment is directed to reducing the impost as far as possible. One- thing in connexion with this duty seems to have escaped the notice of the committee, namely, that the protection has had the effect of giving Messrs. Lewis and Whitty the sum of £11,800.

Mr Harper

- That is perfectly ridiculous.

Mr CONROY

- Then, if Messrs. Lewis and Whitty have not benefited, as stated, they are not good business men, because the duty on blue has raised the price of their blue to that extent. What have Messrs. Lewis and Whitty done that they should derive these extra profits at the expense of the community! The people of New South Wales will want to know why this particular Victorian firm should receive such a large bonus. There has been no reason advanced why this duty should be imposed. If Messrs. Lewis and Whitty were to come forward and suggest that they would give honorable members half of the money to be derived from the duty in consideration of their voting for the Government proposal, we should know where we stood.

The CHAIRMAN

- Order. I do not think the honorable member is in order in suggesting, even by inuendo, that any manufacturer should offer a bribe to honorable members.

<page>7753</page>

Mr CONROY

- I am simply suggesting that if Messrs. Lewis and Whitty came forward and offered us half the profits they would make out of the duty, we should know how to deal with them. If I am not to suggest that it would be a most improper thing on the part of honorable members to accept a bribe, that would appear to be casting an amount of discredit which even I do not wish to suggest. I should like to see some valid argument advanced why a particular firm should be given this amount of money. Why should we practically guarantee interest to a firm which is supposed to already have a large amount of capital, when farmers, for instance, are not guaranteed against loss by drought or storm ? The large body of people who consume blue ought to have some consideration, and no excuse can be found for raising the price of

the article in the way suggested. If the duty does not increase the price, why is it imposed] And if the duty does increase the price, the effect is to tax the large body of consumers. If Messrs. Lewis and Whitty, without the passing of any law, were to endeavour to compel people to pay this extra money, they might be charged with conspiracy. Instead of doing, that, however, Lewis and Whitty say;- " We will go to the members of the

Federal Parliament, who will stand in with us; some do not quite see what we are at, but we shall be able to persuade them to put this ring fence round the industry." That is not called robbery, because the firm have some very good friends on the Ministerial side, who back them up and enable them to take over £11,000 out of the pockets of the people. No doubt Ministers will expect to be considered--

Mr McColl

- What does the honorable member mean ?

Mr CONROY

- Do Ministers not expect to be considered?

Mr McColl

- That is another dirty insinuation on the part of the honorable member.

Mr CONROY

- Is part of the £11,000, going to the honorable member for Echuca, that he gets so angry ?

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Werriwa must withdraw that imputation against the honorable member for Echuca.

Mr CONROY

- I withdraw when my language becomes unparliamentary; but the honorable member for Echuca interrupted me before I had finished the sentence. What I was going on to say was, that the Ministry would expect to be considered as friends of the people of the Commonwealth.

Mr Harper

- What does the honorable member think was the value of all the blue that was sent to New South Wales?

Mr CONROY

- I calculate that in New South Wales alone the duty would yield £3,900 if the quantity were imported, and I multiply that three times for the whole of the Commonwealth. A man is entitled to ask for his produce exactly what he can get, and if the firm of Lewis and Whitty have not sufficient sense to raise their prices to the level which the duty suggests, then the firm do not deserve to exist. The moment members of the Federal Parliament are approached, and an attempt is made to induce them to put on duties in the interests of a particular class of manufacturers, there is a danger of Parliament going outside its duties ; and whether Parliament does so or not, there is still the reproach on honorable members. How can the Ministry or any one else explain items of this sort ? It may be said that another firm of blue-makers will commence business and bring prices down. But, in any case, what right have we to single out a firm in this way, and allow such profits to be realized. It is time we had some plain speaking on questions of this kind, and that people understood that, although the taking of money out of their pockets in this way cannot be prevented by appeal to the ordinary courts of law, it is none the less robbery - legalized robbery. There can be no excuse for giving local manufacturers an opportunity of exacting the additional amount of money which they will be in a position to exact from the poorer sections of the community. Hitherto some of the States have been in the habit of receiving a certain amount of revenue from this particular source. Under the proposal of the Government that revenue will be absolutely lost to them, and a tax will be imposed in the interests of a particular firm in this city. Whilst I should like to see the impost entirely removed, as I realize that there is no prospect of obtaining its removal, I shall vote for any reduction that may be proposed.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I merely wish to direct the attention of the committee to the fact that the rate of a duty conveys no idea of its effect. In this instance a duty of 33 or 37 per cent. upon blue is, from our point of view, largely prohibitive, and I shall be able to show when we come to discuss another item that a duty of 62 per cent. is equally prohibitive. There is a point at which prohibition takes place, and irrespective of whether the rate beyond that point is doubled or trebled the effect is the same. I, therefore, ask honorable members to endeavour to ascertain to what extent it is really prohibitive. A

large rate upon one article might not be prohibitive, while a smaller rate upon another might be.

Mr MANIFOLD

- I intend to support the amendment. Whilst I am prepared to give a certain amount of protection to the industries of the country, I wish to see that healthy competition from outside which will not only have the effect of reducing the price of goods, but of preventing the establishment of monopolies.

<page>7754</page>

Mr GLYNN

- I am very glad that we are receiving some support from honorable members opposite. I notice that last year the imports into South Australia for home consumption practically all came from the United Kingdom, although in that State there was a duty of 2d. per lb. upon blue. In the same year the New South Wales imports of blue totalled very nearly 700,000 lbs., as against about 40,000 lbs. imported into Victoria. Under Inter-State free-trade, therefore, the Victorian manufacturers will practically be able to exploit the markets of New South Wales.' I believe that there are very few manufacturers of blue in Australia. Indeed, the market could practically be met by one or two factories. The imposition of this duty simply means that we are handing over the additional profit which is represented by the amount of the duty to one or two manufacturers. That is a great mistake in face of the failure of an impost of 2d. per lb. in South Australia to induce competition, and the certainty that one or two men will have the whole of the markets of the Commonwealth to exploit hereafter.

Mr PIESSE

- I do not think that we should increase the cost of articles unless some advantage will accrue to the revenue, or unless those who are swayed by protectionist ideas think that they are assisting an industry. I believe it could be established that Victorian blue has for years past been supplied to Tasmania, where it had to encounter a duty of 2d. per lb. If that be so, there is no need, from a protective stand-point, for the retention of the duty proposed. Under all the circumstances, I think that a lower rate might very well be imposed.

Mr O'MALLEY

->I intend to support the amendment of the honorable member for Wentworth, because I think we ought to give people an opportunity of getting the " blues " as much as they want.

<page>7755</page>

Mr McCOLL

- So far no argument has been advanced to show that the price of blue has been increased by the duty which has hitherto operated. The statements made by honorable members on the other side of the chamber show that the colonial article is sold more cheaply than is the imported article, while it has not been alleged that the quality of the locally manufactured blue is inferior to. that of the imported. The honorable member for Robertson said that the price of blue in Sydney was 4½d. per lb. ; but I would point out that a quotation of that kind is very misleading, although I am thoroughly satisfied that the honorable member would be the last to attempt to deliberately mislead the committee. He did not state whether that was the wholesale or retail price, or what the quality was. I have obtained from a man in a large way of business in Kerang, the prices of the ordinary articles in this Tariff. He quotes Lewis and Whitty's blue at from 4 Jd. to 6d. I find that the price for imported blue in Sydney before the Tariff was, according to Lassetter's list, 7d. per lb., and, since the Tariff, 9d. per lb. The imported blues are selling in Melbourne at from 9d. . to 1s. I find that there are three Victorian manufacturers of blue, namely, Messrs. Blogg Bros., Messrs. Grist, and Messrs. Lewis and Whitty. The blues of Messrs. Blogg Bros, and Messrs. Grist sell at the Mutual Store at 5d., and the blue of Messrs. Lewis and Whitty at 6d. Seeing that the imported blues - those of Keen, Coleman, and Reckitts - are sold in Sydney at a price- higher than that, the facts go to show that the poor, whose cause is. always espoused by certain honorable members for their own purposes, will not- be paying; more for their blue by taking the Australian article. I find that the imports of blue into New South Wales amount to 682,546 lbs., into Queensland to- 143,231 lbs., and into Victoria 82,259 lbs.,, a total of 908,000 lbs., so that I suppose-, we may say that something like 1,000,000- lbs. of blue are imported into the whole Commonwealth., The trouble of the acting" leader of the Opposition seems to be that we are stopping importations. He says - that this duty will reduce the importations by 80 or 90 per cent But if we reduce the importations, the blue will be manufactured in the States. I suppose there must - be something like £60,000 worth of blue used in the Commonwealth. Why can we not make

it here, and find, employment for our people? Why should/ we send out of the country for an' -article of this description? The manufacture of blue is a small industry, but there is no reason why it should not be encouraged. The duty on blue is not a new one in Victoria. There has been a duty of 2d. per lb. on this article all along. Indeed, there has been such a duty in all the States, with the exception of Western Australia, where the duty has been 15 percent., and of New South Wales, where blue has been; imported free. The duty has not been complained of, and although the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, says that a duty of 2d. per lb. has not established the industry in the State which he represents, that may be due to the fact that there is not a sufficiently large population there to support it. But with the extended markets which will be obtained now that local manufacturers can send their products into all the States free of duty, it should be possible to establish such industries. The policy of this Tariff is not only to produce revenue, but to promote industries. It is said that this duty means putting £10,000 or £11,000 into the pockets of one firm. I have shown that there are three firms manufacturing blue in Melbourne.

Mr Conroy

- Is that so? That is the point.

Mr McCOLL

- The honorable and learned member for Werriwa scatters broadcast his insinuations concerning those interested in manufactures in this State. He scarcely gets up to make a speech without imputing motives of personal dishonour. It is unmanly; and the honorable member is earning for himself the character of being a public slanderer.

Mr Conroy

- If the honorable member wants me to call him by his proper name I will do so. He is making personal remarks concerning me that ought not to be allowed. If I have said anything concerning Ministers they ought to be competent to take charge of their own character; but the honorable member must not address me in this personal manner.

The CHAIRMAN

- That is not a point of order.

Mr Mahon

- I ask your ruling, sir, as to whether it is in order for the honorable member for Echuca to accuse the honorable and learned member for Werriwa of using unmanly language, and of acting in an unmanly way

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The CHAIRMAN

- I did not understand the honorable member for Echuca to make any accusation of that kind.

Mr McCOLL

- I certainly did say that the statement made by the honorable and learned member for Werriwa was unmanly.

The CHAIRMAN

- If the honorable and learned member for Werriwa thinks the remark of the honorable member for Echuca offensive, I shall ask the honorable member for Echuca to withdraw it.

Mr Conroy

- I consider it unparliamentary. I do not think that the honorable member for Echuca could be offensive to me, because he has not sufficient sense.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable and learned member must withdraw that statement.

Mr Conroy

- I ask that the honorable member for Echuca shall also be compelled to withdraw the statement he made concerning me.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable and learned member for Werriwa must first withdraw the statement to which have alluded, and I will see that the honorable member for Echuca withdraws.

Mr Conroy

- I withdraw in obedience to your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN

- As the honorable and learned member for Werriwa considers that the statement made by the honorable member for Echuca is offensive, I ask the honorable member to withdraw it.

Mr McCOLL

- I withdraw the remark. Seeing that the duty has been in operation for so many years in four of the States, I think we might continue it. It is evident the laundresses cannot be hurt, because they get the Australian blue cheaper than they could get the imported article.

Mr HARPER

- I have been struck with the variety of the statements made on apparent authority concerning this article. Honorable members say that they have been supplied with figures which convey certain information. In most cases these are admitted not to be figures which they have obtained for themselves. It is scarcely fair to the committee that honorable members should, without inquiry, put these statements forward as being authoritative, and yet take no responsibility in connexion with them. I do not intend to do more than call attention to one or two of these erroneous statements. The honorable member for Robertson stated that a firm called Lewis and Whitty had possession of the Sydney market.

Mr Henry Willis

- Of a large portion of it.

<page>7756</page>

Mr HARPER

- I am content to accept that addition to the statement. Let me call the honorable member's attention to the facts. There are three manufacturers of blue in Victoria, I understand, and the firm of Messrs. Lewis and Whitty is the chief. I find that, so far from this firm having a large proportion of the New South Wales business in their hands, the total importation of New South Wales during 1899 amounted to something like 470,000 lbs., of which the three Victorian manufacturers of blue supplied only 14,766 lbs, of the value of £312.

Mr Henry Willis

- Were not the prices I quoted correct 1

Mr HARPER

- If the honorable member's prices -were not more accurate than the other figures quoted by him, there is not much to be said for them.

Mr Henry Willis

- I want the honorable' member to prove that my prices are not accurate.

Mr HARPER

- I shall not deal with the prices, because I do not propose to make any statement for which I am not prepared to be responsible. I know nothing about the prices; therefore I do not make any statement in regard to them. I understood the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, to say - and I am sure he thoroughly believed the statement which had been made to him - that Victorian blue manufacturers were doing the largest proportion of the business in Tasmania. He argued from that assumed fact that this duty was unnecessary, and that Tasmania would make a large loss in revenue if the duty were imposed. I find, however, that for the same year the total exports of Victorian made blue into Tasmania were 2,467 lbs., of the value of £61.

Mr Piesse

- My figures show that they were something like 32,000 lbs.

Mr HARPER

- That shows that figures used without care are most dangerous. I am reading from the Victorian statistical returns, and the figures I have given pretty well fix the value and cost. The total quantity of blue - including imported blue sent from Victoria to Tasmania in 1899 - was 31,579 lbs.

Mr Piesse

- My figures are for the year -.1900.

Mr HARPER

- This return is dated 1900, but it is for the year 1899, and I quote it because the acting leader of the Opposition, as well as the honorable member for Robertson, referred to the figures for that year. I do not suppose there is any reason to believe that there is any great difference in the figures for the two years.

Mr Piesse

- I had not the figures before me when I spoke.

Mr HARPER

- Probably the figures quoted by the honorable member included the imported as well as the locally manufactured blue sent from Victoria to Tasmania.

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I can assert, from my own personal knowledge, that the Victorian manufacturers have done but little business in the other States. They have had but an infinitesimal portion of the New South Wales business, and the same remark applies to the other States. The acting leader of the Opposition remarked that the porters, carters, and wharf lumpers were not considered. The raw material of this commodity has to be imported, and so far as the mere importation is concerned, I see very little difference between importing raw material and the manufactured article, except that where raw material is imported, the making of the article is placed in the hands of our own people.

Mr PAGE

- It is amusing to hear some honorable members, especially representatives of Victoria, talking about protection. Have they forgotten that they are representatives' of the Commonwealth, and not merely representatives of Victoria ? There are States other than Victoria to be considered.

Mr Kennedy

- Especially in regard to sugar.

<page>7757</page>

Mr PAGE

- I would not care twopence if the duty on sugar were removed tomorrow, nor would my constituents. I would do away with the Customs altogether if I had my way, and support the direct taxation of the honorable member and other holders of large acreages. The supporters of the protectionist policy in Victoria never had a healthy opposition before the constitution of the .Federal Parliament. Now that they have to face some opposition they are wailing for more protection, and I am sorry to see that the Government are giving way to them so much, especially after the far-famed Maitland speech. We have to look after constituents 1,000 miles away from the coast - away in Northern Queensland. They have enough protection to face in the shape of the railway freights which they have to pay on every article they use and consume. They have to pay them even on the cabbages from Victoria. It is a wonder that honorable members for Victoria do not want protection on cabbages ; probably they will ask for it in respect of the few head of cattle imported from New Zealand. I am surprised at the way in which honorable members for Victoria howl about the interests of the manufacturers. What about the consumers ? Are they not to be considered? They appear to be a secondary consideration in the opinion of some honorable members from this State. I would not mind if a duty of 3d. per lb. were placed on laundry blue, because a corresponding reduction could be made in some other directions. There are other things on which a reduction of duty would be acceptable. We can do without blue in Northern Queensland, and Victoria can have its blue manufacturers, so far as we are concerned.

Mr. PIESSE(Tasmania).- I should like to explain that no one has supplied me with figures, and I had not figures in my possession when I spoke. I spoke from knowledge of what I had seen in shops in Tasmania, and from knowledge that the Victorian article was to be had there. I knew also that many householders would not have it, out of some spirit of retaliation against Victoria on account of her action with respect to Tasmanian products. That spirit will, I hope, now altogether disappear, but our Victorian friends must bear in mind that under their protectionist principles they did not approach the people of Tasmania in the best possible way. Still this article is received there and used there.

Mr Harper

- Yes ; £60 worth in a year.

Mr PIESSE

- That may be so, but with the 2d. per lb. duty in its favour it will have the whole market in front of it, and I do not myself think that it should have so much help as that.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be so added - put.

The committee divided -

Ayes 30

Noes 24

Majority 6

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 13. - Broom corn millet. Per cental, 4s.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I rise to ask the committee to place this article on the free-list. The Treasurer is very fond of telling me that upon this, that, and the other article, Tasmania has imposed very heavy duties. I am on the right side now, because Tasmania has always had this item on the free list. Not only Tasmania, but every State in the Commonwealth, except Victoria, has allowed this raw product to come in free, and in Victoria the duty has been the very insignificant one of 10 per cent. ad valorem. How Ministers have conceived it right to impose on this raw material this duty passes my comprehension. I move - .

That the words "and on and after 27th November, 1901, free," be added.

<page>7758</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- I hope that the committee will not on any account consent to strike out the proposed duty. This is a steadily increasing industry, and is deserving of all encouragement. The growth of broom corn millet is considerably indulged in in New South Wales, and in Queensland too, I believe. It has been found that land in those States is very well suited for a production of this character. The product is valuable, and a large amount of labour is employed in the tillage of the land and the preparation of the straw. We find that on account of importations from the United States at different times the success of the industry is threatened, and a duty of this description has been earnestly asked for by persons interested in the tillage of the soil. I venture to think we shall do well in giving encouragement to a very suitable native industry.

Mr Watson

- What does a duty of is. per cental represent ?

Mr KINGSTON

- It does not represent more than 20 or 22 per cent. The amount of the protection is fair and reasonable, and if we want to encourage our agricultural community at all we can fairly extend the encouragement in this direction, where it is particularly asked, where it is a reasonable rate, where the necessity for it has been shown by the experience of the past, and where, owing to the heavy importations, the price of millet has been reduced to an amount which is hardly payable. I trust that we shall not hesitate to do what we can within the duty proposed by the Government, to afford to millet growers the protection which they seek.

Mr WILKS

- In the Hunter River district, in New South Wales, from Maitland down to almost Newcastle, where corn and maize used to be grown, millet has been grown for years. It is also grown on the Paterson River, and on the coastal rivers in the north. It is a thriving and powerful industry there. Those who deal in both imported millet and Australian millet mix the two varieties for broom-making, and find that they have no reason to ask for any protection. If New South Wales grows millet, and does not require assistance, I do not see why the other States should ask for a protective duty.

Mr HUGHES

- I wish to know from the Minister for Trade and Customs how much land in Australia is under cultivation for the growth of broom corn millet. I know that its cultivation has been recommended by the department of New South Wales amongst others. I remember Mr. Campbell saying that very few men had made the experiment, but I learn now that some persons have done so. A gentleman who runs a factory in New South Wales told me that he was unable to get a supply with any regularity, that any shortage he had to import, and that one kind of straw it was necessary to import. It does not appear that this duty is imposed for any other purpose than to placate the farmer. I do not think that very many farmers will grow broom corn millet. If the industry were taken up seriously I should think that 1,000 acres would supply the market. I am afraid, much as I would like to support it, it is one of those duties put on for the purpose of placating the poor unfortunate farmer without helping him.

Mr McCOLL

- The price of broom millet was £16 13s. per ton in 1897, £17 1s. per ton in 1898, and £28 per ton in 1899.

A duty of 4s. percental is not an extreme duty; it is equal to about 20 per cent. ad valorem. This is one of those cases where we can dovetail the raw material into the manufactured article., We can grow millet as well as it can be grown anywhere. I have seen it growing on the King River. It is a fine product; it grows extremely well, and provides a great deal of employment. If we encourage the production of broom millet here, growers will be able to supply the manufacturers, and secure settled prices. Broom millet is essentially a product that can be grown by holders of small plots of good land, and particularly where irrigation can be applied. This duty is not imposed for the purpose of placating the farmer, but in order to encourage a natural industry.

<page>7759</page>

Mr BROWN

- I notice from the information supplied by the Government that Victoria is the only State that has hitherto imposed a duty on this broom millet. I presume that the object of the duty was to protect the producer, and as it only amounted to 10 per cent. there does not appear to be any necessity for imposing the higher duty now proposed. I have visited some of the broom factories in Victoria, and I have found that, notwithstanding the special encouragement offered to local growers, the bulk of the millet used in broom manufacture was imported from either New South Wales or America. The millet grown in Victoria appeared to me to be much coarser than that imported from America or New South Wales, but whilst the American millet was even finer than that grown in New South Wales, I was given to understand that it had the disadvantage of being much more brittle. I was also informed that in addition to the customs duty on broom millet a bonus of some £5 per ton was paid to the Victorian growers, and I should like to know whether it is intended to continue this bonus.

Sir George Turner

- I have no recollection of any bonus ; but all bonuses will practically cease now that the uniform Tariff has been brought into operation.

Mr BROWN

- I should judge, from what I was able to observe, that New South Wales and Queensland are better adapted for the growth of broom millet than is Victoria ; and as broom millet has been grown in New South Wales without any special encouragement, I am inclined to think that the duty now proposed is one of those make-believes that will confer no great benefit on the producer. At any rate a 10 per cent. duty would be ample.

Mr KINGSTON

- Some honorable members have requested further information, and I should like to read an extract from a letter which has been received from Mr. Cunningham, the secretary to the Miller's Forest Progress Committee, on the Hunter River, New South Wales. The letter is dated 6th August, and reads as follows :

-

I am directed by the Miller's Forest Progress Committee to ask you to bring under the notice of the Federal Prime Minister (the Hon. E. Barton) the need of putting a fairly strong tax on millet, or broom corn, as it is sometimes called, when framing the Tariff. My committee are led to this course from the fact that manufacturers have more power to have their interests served in these matters than producers and farmers, and it is certainly to the interest of the former to have the raw material admitted at a low tariff, while the manufactured article pays a high duty. The growing of millet has become a standard industry in the Hunter River district, and it is also extensively grown on all the other northern rivers. In fact, plenty can be grown to supply the whole of Australia. Owing to free-trade here, the importation of American and Italian millet causes extreme fluctuations in the market. Last year, at this time, it was between £35 and £40 a ton. At present it ranges from £10 to £15 owing to manufacturers placing orders in America at the beginning of the season ; and, when these shipments arrived, which cost from £20 to £25 in Sydney, the local millet was arriving on the market, and growers had to accept the low prices previously quoted. We therefore think that a fairly stiff tax would prevent this extreme fluctuation, and give us a steady, reliable market. I may state that growers consider from £20 to £25 a ton a good payable price.

Here we have a man speaking from experience, plainly indicating the mischief which free-trade does, and applying for the relief which we think ought to be granted to the producer as well as to the manufacturer. I have a further letter from the Hunter River, signed by Mr. W. Johnston, who writes most intelligently upon the subject. I think testimony of this description is what we want. It comes from those who have been

engaged in the industry, and who are able to point out the disadvantages attached to their present position. Mr. Johnston says -

For some years past a steadily increasing area of land in New South Wales has been devoted to the growth of the species of millets used in the manufacture of brooms. It is a plant requiring much care and attention, and only the best sort of arable land is used, which gives a return in some instances of as much as 7 cwt. to the acre ; but more usually four or even five acres are required to produce a ton. One result directly beneficial to the country at large arising from its cultivation is the amount of labour it demands. The production of 1 ton will not only create as much occupation in preparing the ground, sowing, cleaning, scarifying, &c., as four or five acres put under, say, maize, but on the millet arriving at maturity, will find employment for two men for very nearly four weeks ere it be ready for the market. The various processes of cutting, drying repeatedly, stripping of the seed, tying, pressing, &c., all which millet has to undergo, cause it to afford more employment to the workman before it leaves the farmer's hands than perhaps anything the latter grows. At the current price of agricultural labour, the grower has to disburse some £10 or £15 in wages before he can dispose of a single ton. Last year, owing to the failure of the American crop, millet brought from £22 to £30 a ton, thus, after recouping the agriculturist for the rent of his land, labour, risk, &c, showing anything but a brilliant margin of profit for the year on the capital invested. Unfortunately, this year, owing to heavy imports from America, the price is quoted as low as £13 to £15, which represents a grave actual loss to the farmers, who, in establishing a new industry requiring so much labour, have in no small measure contributed to the lessening of the grind of competition in other directions.

There are the simple facts. Our land is suitable for this cultivation, and this is an industry which ought to be encouraged, and protected from competition.

Mr PAGE

- Why is it proposed to impose a duty of 4s. per cental, when up to the present time millet has been free of duty in every colony except Victoria, where there was a duty of 10 per cent.?

Mr Brown

- And the other States competed with Victoria, notwithstanding.

<page>7760</page>

Mr PAGE

- The figures of the Minister for Trade and Customs are " faked" again, and his Victorian statistics are wrong. The Minister has not explained, to my satisfaction at least, why he desires that there should be a duty amounting to 20 per cent.

Mr. WILKS(Dalley).- The Minister for Trade and Customs has convicted himself by the communications he has read.

We are told that the acreage under cultivation for millet has been increasing year by year. Miller's Forest is the strongest protectionist centre in New South Wales, and yet it is . admitted that under free-trade there hundreds of acres have been put under cultivation. In spite of that, the Minister is anxious to impose a protective duty equal to 20 per cent. The growers' side of the question has been represented, but the consumers have also to be considered ; and it must further be remembered that millet is the raw material of the manufacturer. If this commodity has been free of duty in all the States, except Victoria, up to the present, the Commonwealth Parliament ought to place it on the free list.

Mr CONROY

- The Ministry have made a departure from their usual policy in proposing to give some protection to growers. I was at a loss to understand the reason for their action until I found that the communications read by the Minister for Trade and Customs come from the representative of 25 or 30 constituents in the electorate of the Prime Minister, who, amidst his multifarious duties, has found time to accede to a request that a protective duty should be put on this commodity. But there are a greater number of people engaged in the manufacture of brooms than in the growing of millet, and while the former have a protection of 25 per cent., the protection in the case of the growers amounts in some cases to as high as 30 per cent, or 40 per. cent. The number of acres under cultivation is only 1,900, and this mostly for seed and not for broom millet, and yet we are asked to impose a tax on the rest of the people of the Commonwealth for the protection of an industry' which hitherto has been able to exist without any duty. The protectionists in this instance are departing from their own principles in interfering with what is the

raw material of the manufacturer, and they ought really to vote with the freetraders, who deprecate the imposition of a duty merely because those interested happen to be within the Prime Minister's electorate. We cannot protect the growers of wheat, maize, or oats, who may cultivate 500 times the quantity of land that is devoted to millet ; and yet we are asked to single out this special industry for favour. Therefore, I am thoroughly in accord with the proposal to place this article upon the free list.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- This duty is one which, in the very nature of things, ought to be swept away. Its imposition can only result in giving an opportunity to the millet-grower to raise the price of the article. It is absolutely absurd to create an artificial price in the market for the sake of the mere handful of people who would be employed in that industry. But if in the millions of acres of land in Australia there are twenty acres which, under somewhat peculiar conditions of soil and climate, will grow some product that could not be grown elsewhere, the Minister for Trade and Customs would apparently impose a duty upon it, and thus raise its price to the consumers. That is not a principle which, is worthy of consideration. In all other States but one, this article has hitherto been admitted absolutely free of duty. If we act upon federal principles that fact ought to settle the whole question. I hope that Ministers will yield to the general consensus of opinion with that grace which would become them under the circumstances.

Mr MAUGER

- The honorable member who has just resumed his seat reasons, on the one hand, that the effect of the duty proposed will be to increase the growth of millet broom to such an extent that there will be a glut in the market, and, on the other hand, that there will be an increase in its price. My experience is that when a glut in the market occurs there is a decrease in the price. The honorable member further argues that very few people will be benefited by the imposition of this duty. That is an argument which is used in regard to one industry after another. The number of people employed in one particular industry may be small, but the aggregate of those employed in small industries is very large.

Sir William McMillan

- Will the abolition of this duty throw anybody out of employment ?

<page>7761</page>

Mr MAUGER

- The duty will enable us to provide employment for a great many, and will give an opportunity to the primary producer, of whom the honorable member so often talks. I admit that millet is the raw material of the broom manufacturers. But seeing that it can, and is being, grown very extensively in the various States, the duty will really not affect them. I suggest that, as this industry in Victoria is under a wages board, the Government should consider the advisability of increasing the rate upon brooms to that which previously existed in this State. I find that last year 99 tons of millet were imported from America, 95 tons from New South Wales, 17 tons from Germany, and 18 tons from Italy, or a total of 229 tons, valued at £8,399. The amount of duty which was collected upon these importations was £839 17s. 11d. I support the proposal of the Government.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I wish to say a word or two on behalf of the blind, by whom this industry is very largely conducted. Only a few nights ago two blind men visited my house, and, when questioned as to their occupation, informed me that they were engaged in the making of millet brooms. Under the Government proposal, these people are to be charged 25 or 30 per cent, upon the raw material, besides having to pay what is equivalent to another 15 per cent. for the carrying of that material to Australia. Therefore, they will have to pay about 40 per cent. upon the raw material, whilst the protection afforded to them amounts only to 25 per cent. The poor farmer of New South Wales has been able to supply not only his own State with millet, but to export it to Victoria and pay the duty upon it. So thriving has he found the business, that the area under cultivation in the Hunter district of New South Wales is rapidly increasing. Positive evidence is, therefore, afforded that the millet farmer does not require protection. The poor blind manufacturer, however, does require it, and, if any one should get it at the hands of a free-trader, it is the blind man. I urge the committee, therefore, to admit the raw material free. But if we are wise we shall strike out the 25 per cent. duty on brooms as well as the 25 per cent. on millet. The price of millet during September was £15 a ton, in October it was selling at something like £20 a ton, and in November - since this duty was imposed - it has been selling at £24 a ton.

Mr KENNEDY

- The last figures quoted by the honorable member for Robertson practically give away the whole position taken up against this proposed duty. Those figures show that before the introduction of the Tariff, millet had risen from £15 a ton to £20 a ton. The honorable member assumes that because of the Tariff millet rose to £24 a ton, but there is nothing to prove that the price would not have gone up to £24 if the Tariff had not been introduced. There is no proof whatever that the imposition of the Tariff was the cause of the rise. To those who say that this industry has been a success in New South Wales, without the aid of a duty, I reply that they have given no proof to the committee to that effect. The Minister for Trade and Customs has read a letter from a district where millet is grown, and this letter shows that owing to the fluctuations of the market, caused chiefly by importations from abroad, the local production has suffered. Had we ourselves produced up to the limit of our own requirements, we should not have had these extreme fluctuations.

Mr McDonald

- If we produced more than we could use, should we not have these fluctuations?

<page>7762</page>

Mr KENNEDY

- When a country reaches the limit of its requirements the tendency is for cultivation to decrease. I am going to show that the industry has not been successfully established in New South Wales. In proof of that I am going to refute some figures quoted by honorable members opposite. They were to the effect that the major portion of the importations into Victoria were of New South Wales growth. What do the records prove? In 1899 there were imported from New South Wales into Victoria 64 tons of millet. The records do not specifically say that it was New South Wales grown, but I will give the State the credit for that. It is referred to as Australasian grown. The importation of millet from New South Wales grown elsewhere than in Australasia was 98 tons, which goes to prove that New South Wales in the year 1899 imported and reexported to Victoria 30 tons more than the export of her own production. But over and above that, in proof of what I have said, I find that out of total imports into Victoria of 321 tons; 15@ tons were imported from the United States of America. In Coghlan the particulars for that commodity are not given. That fact convinces me that New South Wales is not growing, sufficient for her own requirements. . Coghlan gives the value of brooms and brushware imported into New South Wales at £38,000. The total acreage of millet in New- South Wales in 1899 was only 1,600 acres. I shall vote for giving a reasonable amount of assistance to this industry. I do not think 20 per cent. is too much. I feel convinced that ultimately we shall be able to raise the whole amount of this particular article required for the manufacture of brooms in our midst, and that we shall not have to pay one cent more per lb. for the commodity than we pay now. There will likewise be a greater equality in price and not such extreme fluctuations. The growth of millet requiring intense cultivation will give employment to a considerable number of people. It is much better for our people that they should be producing from the soil than that we should have them crowding into the cities. Why do our people crowd into the cities?

Mr Mahon

- Why does the honorable member advocate protection to city industries?

Mr KENNEDY

- Because I know from hard-earned personal experience that there is no worse-paid section of the industrial community in Australia than the farming community, and I do not want to put the city industries in a worse position. If it is possible, I wish to build up a home market for the producers.

Mr Mahon

- The honorable member was complaining of overgrown cities.

Mr KENNEDY

- That is a problem which confronts the whole civilized world. It is not peculiar to free-trade or protective communities. In Australia we have had it in adjoining States under free-trade and protection; we have it in free-trade Great Britain, and in protectionist America.

Mr McDonald

- If the honorable member would vote for putting on a big land tax and the bursting up of large estates, he would do something for the producers.

Mr KENNEDY

- That is all very well, but we want first to get the people on the land, and when we get them there to keep them profitably employed. Our natural conditions for the growing of millet cannot be surpassed. The successful establishment of its cultivation is within the bounds of probability. Surely, under such conditions as we possess, and within two years at the outside, we shall not have these extreme fluctuations in the value of the raw material for the broom-making industry. At the same time this duty will give assistance to the industry. It may, perhaps, at the outset, slightly increase the cost of brooms, but the individual buyer will not find that increase a very severe tax upon him. It will be the means of giving employment to a considerable number of people, and it must be remembered that in addition to millet being used for broom-making, the seed is also used for food, while the oil obtained from it is used largely as a substitute for linseed oil, when procurable at a reasonable rate. I consider that it will be procurable at a reasonable rate under these conditions, and, therefore, I shall support anything like a reasonable duty.

Mr. HUGHES(West Sydney). - I am sure honorable members have listened with interest to the honorable member for Moira. He spoke about a home market for the farmers, and if that could be assured it would be a very good thing. One would have imagined from what the honorable member said, that the cultivation of broom millet was likely to prove an important industry, and lead to a reliable home market for the farmer. I find that the quantity of broom millet used in Victoria last year is said to have been between 6,000 and 7,000 tons. And it appears to me that Victoria used less than that quantity. Assuming, however, that the whole of Australia used broom corn on that basis, it would only give employment to 560 farmers, each cultivating not less than ten acres of millet. The cultivation of less than ten acres each would not provide them with a livelihood. I am not aware of the climatic conditions that limit the cultivation of millet, but I assume it can be grown from the north of New South Wales, at any rate, down to the south of Victoria. No doubt it could be grown as high up as Rockhampton, and probably higher. Practically, then, if the whole of Australia were to use broom millet at the rate I have named, the result would be only to provide employment for 560 farmers throughout the Commonwealth. If this inordinate duty is placed upon broom millet, it will lure a number of men into the cultivation of millet and the first blow will be struck at the unfortunate man who makes brooms. He can derive no possible benefit from the duty, because, if it is true, as the honorable member for Moira has said, that this will only raise the price of broom millet for a time, it will only raise the price of brooms themselves for a time.

Mr Kennedy

- I said so.

<page>7763</page>

Mr HUGHES

- Therefore, if we put a duty on the raw material, we put a duty really on the manufactured article to precisely the same extent. Thus if, in competition, broom millet should fall in price from £24 - which appears to be a good price - to £15 per ton, which is the result of the excessive imports from America and elsewhere, the profits on and the prices of brooms would fall precisely in the same degree. Therefore, there is no protection given to the broom-maker under this proposal. As to the growth of broom millet, it is only a minor industry, and at the outside it is not going to supply that all-present and ever-pressing need for the farmer to find something into which to put his industry, his capital, and his labour, and secure a definite and assured return. If this duty would do that, I am sure honorable members would vote for it. It does not appear to me that it will do anything of the sort.

Mr SALMON

- I must compliment honorable members on the other side upon their consistency. They are freetraders to the backbone, and, although they do speak occasionally in sympathetic terms of the primary producer, they are not prepared to go beyond expressions of sympathy. There has been an attempt, especially in Victoria, to rouse the farmers against the present Government, on the ground that it is not prepared to assist them in any regard, while, on the other hand, it is, taxing everything they use. An attempt has been made to delude the farmer into the belief that he is not going to get anything out of this Tariff, and now a further attempt is being made to prove that assertion by taking away from him the protection which the Government are prepared to give him. The State Government of Victoria agreed to a duty of 10 per cent, being placed upon this product in 1895. It was moved from the then Opposition, and only seven or eight of the staunchest free-traders voted against it, while a large number of honorable members who called themselves freetraders, but who desired to help those who were endeavouring to wring a

subsistence from the soil, voted for it. Though the growth of this broom corn millet has increased, it has not in Victoria increased to anything like proportions which enable it to take possession of the home market. In New South Wales it has maintained the position it occupied some six or eight years ago. It is claimed that it is due to the magnificent climate they enjoy, and the natural advantages they possess, that the farmers of New South Wales have been able to maintain their production of broom-corn millet ; but honorable members opposite, who have told us this, have said nothing as to the social condition of those who are growing the product. They do not tell us that the farmers in New South Wales have made fortunes out of this product, in competing against the outside world, including as it does in this case the black labour of America, because it is in the Southern States of America, and by black labour that the imported broom-corn millet is grown. Honorable members opposite have not told us the condition of the men who have cultivated these 1,600 acres in New South Wales, nor have they said that it is any better than the condition of the negroes in America engaged in the same occupation. They have been subjected to the competition of this inferior class of labour, and have not been able to reap the advantage that they may reap when placed in a better position by the imposition of such a duty as the Government here propose: The amount grown in New South Wales is considerable, but the amount grown in Victoria is nothing like what it ought to be. I regret to state that the Agricultural department in Victoria is far behind that of New South Wales ; but here they offered a bonus in order to encourage the growth of this product, not altogether on account of the finished product, but on account of the value of broom-corn millet as a fodder ; because it produces in some districts no less than three crops from the one sowing. Its value, therefore, to the community at large, as well as to the agriculturist, cannot be over-estimated. Some of the northern portions of Victoria are admirably adapted for the growth of this millet ; but I admit that in New South Wales it can be grown far better than in this State because of the better natural conditions.

Mr McDonald

- It is grown in Queensland also.

Mr SALMON

- I quite agree with the honorable member, and I am glad to say that it can be grown there without black labour; and" if persons engaged in the growth of it there receive sufficient encouragement from this committee, they will be able to compete against that produced by black labour.

Mr McDonald

- They do it now.

<page>7764</page>

Mr SALMON

- Not to anything like the extent they will be encouraged to do, if they receive the protection that is here proposed to be given to them. I would ask honorable members who believe in assisting the primary producer, and who would like not only to help people to go upon the soil, but to keep those upon the soil who are already there, to support this proposal. I may say that the sneer about big estates is happily in Victoria justified only in the past. We have very few large estates here now, and they are gradually being cut up through the action of the Government of the State of Victoria, who have been anxious to encourage people to settle upon the land, and more anxious to keep upon the land those already settled there. The growth of broom-corn millet cannot, except in very favoured localities, become the sole product of any farmer's holding. As has been justly said by the honorable member for West Sydney, it is a minor crop ; but these minor crops frequently keep the farmer from starvation, when he finds that his main crop has been a failure. No honorable member who has had any experience of a rural district would ask a farmer to confine the whole of his attention to one crop, or, as he would put it, " to put all his eggs into one basket." We have here an opportunity of encouraging men to grow a crop which will have a ready sale in a steady home market, and which will add, not only to their wealth, but to the wealth of the community. This cannot be done under a 10 per cent. duty, because a 10 per cent. duty failed to do it in Victoria. I, therefore, think that the Government proposal is a wise one. We are told that those engaged in the industry in New South Wales ask for this protection, and they probably know their own business better than some honorable members on the other side. I trust the committee will agree to the Government proposal.

Mr McDONALD

- Honorable members opposite have been telling us what they would like to do for the farmer ; but I do not

think that this particular duty is going to do a great deal for him, though it may have some effect in one or two small centres. I would like to remind honorable members that to-day we have hundreds of Victorian farmers leaving this paradise of protection and coming up to Queensland, looking for land to settle there. I am very pleased to see them come, as they make good colonists, and are amongst the best farmers we have.

Mr Salmon

- They are the product of protection.

Mr McDONALD

- I may tell the honorable member that they look upon much of this kind of assistance as pure sham. If, instead of trying to assist them in this way, an attempt were made to make the revenue Tariff as low as possible, and force the States into direct taxation, which would break up some of the large landed properties, and give the farmers an opportunity of getting land at a reasonable price, they would then be afforded some assistance. It is the high price of land in Victoria which is forcing out many farmers who were good colonists here, and would have assisted to build up the wealth of the State.

Mr A McLEAN

- Have the farmers suggested to the honorable member that- he should advocate a tax upon their land?

Mr McDONALD

- I am not afraid to go anywhere and advocate a land tax.

The CHAIRMAN

- I trust the honorable member will not attempt to discuss the question of a land tax on the motion before the committee.

<page>7765</page>

Mr McDONALD

- I had no intention of doing so ; but we have been told that this duty is a good thing for the farmers, and I wish to show that it is not, that it is merely a sham, and that there are other and better methods of assisting the farmers. I maintain that I am quite justified in saying that that is the position we ought to take up if we wish to assist the farmers. I deny that this is the best way to assist the farmers, and I say that the best way is to break up the large landed estates, so that farmers may have an opportunity of settling upon their own land. Is it not a well-known fact that if a farmer wishes to get good land in Victoria, he has to pay from £30 to £50 an acre for it ? Where men are compelled to pay such a price for land, it is no wonder that they should need some artificial assistance. If we take a course of action which will give them land at a reasonable price we shall do far more to assist them than we shall do by the imposition of this paltry duty. This industry has never been considered of great importance, even in Victoria, where the duty has been only 10 per cent. ad valorem, while in other States the article has been admitted free. If honorable members on the other side desire to assist the farmers of the Commonwealth, the best thing they can do is to impose direct taxation, and help to break up some of the big estates. Not only in Victoria, but in New South Wales and Queensland, when a farmer wants to secure a bit of land, he has to go hundreds of miles. All the time he is travelling he is passing through some of the most magnificent agricultural lands it is possible to see, and yet he cannot touch the land owing to the high price. Under the circumstances I am beginning to doubt the sincerity of a number of honorable members in wanting to assist the farmers.

Mr A C GROOM

- I desire to ascertain from the Minister for Trade and Customs whether this duty applies to only the seed or to the seed and the straw, because, I understand from the speeches of honorable members, the straw is the most valuable portion of the millet ?

Mr Kingston

- It refers to the straw.

Mr A C GROOM

- Then the duty is very much higher than it appears, because the straw is very heavy and bulky. If the Minister could see his way to reduce the duty by one-half, the committee might be able to pass the item without a division.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I trust that my honorable friends on the Opposition side will let these little items of no importance pass so that we may do some business. There are a few duties which I desire to reduce, but if we are to fight

every item we shall be here for 60 years, and honorable members who are young now will be dead long before we reach the 130th item. I plead with my honorable friends on the other side not to kill themselves by sitting in this chamber during the hot summer, but to allow these little items to go by.

<page>7766</page>

Mr WILKINSON

- I am inclined to think that the proposed duty is rather high, and that the amendment goes to the other extreme. If we were to adopt the old Victorian duty of 10 per cent., we should be doing better. There is no State in the Commonwealth where broom corn millet grows more freely than in Queensland. But although it grows almost wild there, no advantage has been taken of that fact to establish any great industry there. I know that there is not much difficulty in growing the article in Queensland, because I have grown it myself, and it does not need much labour.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be so added - put.

The committee divided -

Ayes..... 21

Noes..... 34

Majority 13

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Sir Edward Braddon) put -

That the words "and on and after 27th November, 1901, 2s.," be added.

The committee divided -

Ayes 25

Noes..... 30

Majority 5

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Mr CONROY

- I think the feeling of the committee ought to be tested as to whether the duty should not be reduced by 1s., seeing that several honorable members have not had an opportunity of expressing their opinion. At least two or three honorable members of the Ministerial side, who voted against a reduction to 2s., must vote for a reduction from 4s. to 3s. Perhaps, the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, would like to express his opinion on that point ; and, the honorable member for Moreton, I believe, favoured a duty of 2s. It is clearly our duty to see that no higher Tariff is imposed than is necessary, and we ought to fight every line when Ministers do not seem disposed to make reductions.

Mr O'MALLEY

- If honorable members of the Opposition fight every item, they cannot expect help from the Government side on items which are of real importance to them. On the other hand, if they do not contest, every item, they may look for some support from this side.

Item agreed to.

Butter and cheese, per lb., 3d.

<page>7767</page>

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Thus item is mixed up in such a way that it is not very easy to divide the commodities ; but I will take it for granted that the duty affects chiefly cheese. There is one point which protectionists ought to consider. Whatever may be our views on the question of free-trade and protection, and whatever may have been the effect of duties several years ago, before these States began to export, the conditions now are absolutely altered. The purposes for which duties were put on have almost been entirely answered from the protectionist point of view. Now that we have Inter-State freetrade, a great many of the arguments in favour of protective duties have disappeared ; and many products, particularly butter, have become matters of export. Under any circumstances the home producer now practically holds the market. Many of the duties which have remained are not operative, and it is not fair to make comparisons between the different States on the basis of the present rate of duties. We have to consider the conditions of Australia at the present time, now that duties have been in operation for several years : and the position is that

many of these products do not require extreme protection. The Ministry have been so little careful to consider this aspect of the question, that in some cases they have taken the highest duties in the different States, and in the other cases they have taken very nearly the highest. This duty of 3d. per lb. on cheese is practically prohibitive, and we must recollect that in dealing with this Tariff as a matter of revenue, we have not merely to consider the State of Victoria, but also a State which contains one-third or more of the population of Australia. Into that State there have been large importations of many of these items of produce, and if there is to be "revenue without destruction," we have to consider, in the face of the present conditions of Australia, what is a reasonable revenue duty which has no chance of destroying industries. I find that into New South Wales from New Zealand and other countries in 1889 there was imported 2,472,520 lbs. of cheese, and taking the duty at '3d. which the Government propose, that means a return of £30,906. According to 'their own estimate, the Government expect to receive from New South Wales on this particular item, £1,876, as against the £30,906 I have mentioned. Thus we have the startling result that by the operation of this Tariff the Government have of set purpose determined to reduce the imports into New South Wales by 94 per cent.

Mr McColl

- That is what we want to do.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Exactly ; and that applies throughout Australia. I ask honorable members who desire to be true to the pledges made before this Parliament met - who believe that we should have " revenue without destruction," and that we cannot or should not have either extreme free-trade or extreme protection - what they think of a duty which on the very figures of the Government practically annihilates imports 1 I do not intend to labour the different items, or to bring forward a lot of detailed knowledge connected with the trade. I simply take my stand on the federal principle of creating an average duty which will be fair to the populations of the Australian States. In the next place I take my stand upon the question "Are we trying to obtain a revenue while at the same time giving incidental protection to the different industries?" It is a farce to talk for one moment about a Tariff giving incidental protection when from the very figures of the Government it is abundantly clear that we are practically placing a prohibitive duty upon these articles. These figures cannot lie. The Government say by the figures which they themselves have produced - "We impose this duty in order to stop every importation into Australia." This is a monstrous state of things. In the view of honorable members who have entered this House with a fair idea of compromise, with the desire to do what is right for United Australia, and with an inclination - such as we have had in New South Wales - to make enormous sacrifices for the sake of union, the present action of the Ministry strikes a severe blow at their own good faith. If this broad line of reasoning does not appeal to the generous instincts of honorable members even upon the other side, my view of the committee and of its desire for compromise and fair play must undergo a very considerable change. I do not move for the omission of the item, although as a freetrader I am opposed to the imposition of any duty upon these articles. The adoption of the rate which I recommend will probably exclude 50 per cent. of the present importations into New South Wales and the other States. In making this compromise I have not abandoned the principles which I espouse,, but those who vote for what is practically a prohibitive duty will be recreant to the professions upon which they came to this House, and upon which the Union was established. I move - That the words "and on and after 27th November, 1901, 11/2d." be added.

<page>7768</page>

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- My honorable friend, with a great deal of earnestness, has proposed a reduction of this duty by one half. He tells us that the proposal of the Government is monstrous. But the figures which he has quoted prove that the existing state of affairs in a continent which ought to produce these articles is monstrous. I find that in 1899 the Commonwealth imported 1,000,000 lbs. of butter from beyond its own limits, 800,000 lbs. of which went into New South Wales. It also imported 2,600,000 lbs. of cheese, of which 2,400,000 went into New South Wales. Honorable members have been told that all that the Government are doing for the producers is a mere sham. Unquestionably, if there is one item in . regard to which we should assist our producers, it is this particular item. Is it not monstrous that a country like ours should be importing such an enormous quantity of butter and cheese ? Can it be urged for one moment that we cannot make cheese good enough to be consumed by any of our Australian people? Those who desire to import rich cheeses

from England and elsewhere should undoubtedly be made to pay duty upon them. I have no sympathy with those who, in regard to these particular lines, will insist upon having the imported article. When we talk about the Tariff raising revenue without the destruction of existing industries, we must deal with it as a whole. It is nonsense to deal with it from the point of view of one particular item. If there are items in regard to which we ought to go as near prohibition as possible, it is those with which we are now dealing. Surely it would be of some benefit to the New South Wales producers to produce the immense quantity of butter and cheese which is at present being imported. The effect of this duty will be that these articles will, to a great extent, be produced within the Commonwealth. Our own people will produce, and our own people will consume them, and thus both producer and consumer will be benefited. We are told that this duty represents an impost of some 60 per cent., but I would point out that some of the cheese imported here is worth 2s. per lb., and the duty in that case amounts only to 12£ per cent. I hope the committee will not consent to any reduction on this particular line.

Mr THOMSON

- We certainly hear the most extraordinary reasons advanced in support of these duties that were ever placed before presumably sensible men. We have just heard the Treasurer urging, as a justification for this duty, that the Commonwealth imported 1,000,000 lbs. of butter, 800,000 lbs. of which went into New South Wales, and 2,600,000 lbs. of cheese, 2,400,000 lbs. of which went into the same State. Was there not a protective duty in Victoria at that time in favour of butter and cheese, and had not that duty been in operation for many years ?

Mr A McLEAN

- It built up a splendid industry - the best industry in the Commonwealth.

Mr THOMSON

- And, with a free market in New South Wales. this splendid industry was unable to enter and occupy the vacant ground. There was Victoria's opportunity for proving the benefit of a protective duty. When New South Wales in certain years suffered from drought, and was not able to supply her own necessities, as she has done for several years past, Victoria had the opportunity of supplying her. Yet butter to the extent of 800,000 lbs. was imported from outside the Commonwealth.

Sir George Turner

- We sent New South Wales a good quantity, all the same.

Mr THOMSON

- But Victoria failed, notwithstanding her protective duty, to take advantage of her opportunity of securing the New South Wales market.

Mr Kingston

- The Commonwealth sent New South Wales six times the quantity of butter that she got elsewhere.

Mr THOMSON

- But still the protective States were short.

Mr Kingston

- And New South Wales got the rest of her butter from another protected colony, New Zealand.

<page>7769</page>

Mr THOMSON

- Was not the Treasurer telling us just now that it was a shameful thing that New South Wales had imported butter to the extent of 800,000 lbs. from outside the Commonwealth ? Was he not saying that it was a shame that New South Wales had dealt with our fellow subjects in New Zealand to that extent, a shame that we were short in our production, when our seasons deprived us of the opportunity of supplying our needs, a shame that we should allow our people to get butter cheaper than we should have got it if there had been a protective duty! Now we are called upon to throw out the products of our fellow colonists of New Zealand. But how careful the Government are of the industries of every State except New South Wales ! How careless they are of the interests of that State ! -Have we not established a large shipping industry there, principally through our interchange 1 Have we not established docks? Have we not erected repairing shops, and are not these employing large numbers of men? Does not the very export of our coal depend on the amount of shipping attracted to our ports ? Yet these important industries are being interfered with ruthlessly, simply for the purpose of supporting what has been the policy of only one State in the Commonwealth. The Treasurer has said that it is a disgrace that we should not put 3d. a

lb. on this product. Yet as the head of a Ministry in Victoria, he never imposed a duty of more than 2d. a lb. on butter. The latter duty is nearer to the proposal of the honorable member for Wentworth than is the proposal of the Government. Yet, the Treasurer says it would be disgraceful if we did not impose a duty of 3d. Again, are not these industries assisted by the mere fact of federation? Credit is never given for that. Federation itself has benefited agriculture and kindred industries. If Victoria is better able to produce butter and cheese because her climate is more regular than ours, and she can give a surer supply, why does she need so large a duty? If 2d. was a sufficient protection in Victoria before federation, the other States cannot obtain in competition with her more than that protection, no matter what is put upon the statute book. If Victoria could maintain a successful industry under lower duties than those proposed in the present Tariff, we cannot give a larger protection than the rate at which it will pay to produce these articles in the most suitable market. Under these circumstances I maintain that if the proposal of the honorable member for Wentworth errs at all, it errs on the side of proposing too high a duty. Certainly the amendment does not warrant the statement of the Treasurer, that it would be a shame if it were accepted and if a duty of 3d. were not imposed.

<page>7770</page>

Mr McCOLL

- It is somewhat extraordinary, when an honest attempt is being made for the first time to give the New South Wales farmers protection, that the strongest opposition should come from that State. The honorable member for North Sydney is very tender about the New Zealand farmer, and does not wish to shut out his productions; but apparently he has very little sympathy indeed for the farmers of his own State. The acting leader of the Opposition seems to imagine that if protective duties are imposed no revenue will come in. How, then, does he account for this extraordinary fact: Out of a total importation of £18,000,000 into Victoria before the Commonwealth was inaugurated; goods to the value of £12,000,000 came in free, and articles to the value of only £6,000,000 were taxable, but, nevertheless, with a protective Tariff, a Customs revenue of from £2,300,000 to £2,500,000 per annum was raised? That fact is sufficient to show that under a protective Tariff a sum equal to what is required can be raised in all the States. We have had duties upon the products of the dairies in the various States, with the exception of New South Wales, to whose position I shall refer presently. In Victoria the duty has been 2d. per lb. on butter, and 3d. per lb. on cheese; in Queensland, 3d. per lb. on butter, and 4d. per lb. on cheese; in South Australia, 2d. per lb. on butter, id. per lb. on cheese; and in Tasmania and Western Australia, 2d. per lb. on butter, and 2d. per lb. on cheese. What has been the result of that protection? I have before me a return of the imports of butter and cheese into the various States of the Commonwealth, for the least three years, from countries entirely outside the Commonwealth. During that period the imports of butter into New South Wales, where there has been no duty, amounted to 1,583,256 lbs. In Queensland, where there was a duty of 3d. per lb., only 76 lbs. of butter were imported. In Victoria, the importations totalled 209,610 lbs.; in South Australia, 38,489 lbs.; and in Western Australia, 159,738 lbs.; while in Tasmania, with a smaller duty, there was an importation of 642,385 lbs. For the last three years there has been a total importation of 2,583,554 lbs. of butter into the six States, and the extraordinary fact is that where the duties have been highest the importations have been lowest. The people have supplied their own wants, and the farmers have had the benefit. Let us now take the figures relating to the importations of cheese for the last three years. In Victoria they were 369,492 lbs-. In New South Wales, which is just as capable of producing good cheese as is Victoria, the farmers have been deprived of an opportunity of producing it, owing to the absence of a duty, and there has been a total importation there of 6,063,932. lbs. In Queensland, where the duty of 4d. per lb. prevailed, there was an importation of only 55,064 lbs. The importations into South Australia totalled 53,822 lbs.; into Western Australia 378,731 lbs., and into Tasmania 181,305 lbs., the total for the six States being 7,102,351 lbs. of cheese and 2,583,554 lbs. of butter. In all, 9,685,905 lbs. of butter and cheese were imported during the period named. Where the duty has been imposed the farmer has reaped the benefit; where there has been no duty he has been robbed of his natural right to produce for his own State. These facts ought to show that the duty we now propose to impose in the interests of the farmer is not a sham one. If a poll were taken of the farmers of New South Wales it would be found that not five per cent, would vote against the imposition of a duty on such items as preserved milk, butter and cheese. These figures relate to the primary producers, about whom the honorable members of the Opposition have had so much to say, and yet when they have an

opportunity of giving them substantial and genuine assistance we find that they oppose the proposal to help them _ with all the vigour they possess.

Sir William Lyne

- When did the Prime Minister say that?

Mr WILKS

- He said it to the House and to the country. The acting leader of the Opposition put it very well when he said that while honorable members of the Opposition are free-traders, we are not prepared to run to extremes on this matter. We ask for a compromise on the Tariff. We find that on butter the highest duty was that of 3d. per lb. imposed in Queensland. In New South Wales butter was on the free list, and in the other States there was a duty of 2d. or 3d. per lb. The acting leader of the Opposition's proposal is to strike the happy medium by reducing the duty from 3d. to 1 1/2d. That is a fair compromise.

Sir George Turner

- Make it 2d. per lb. on butter, and 3d. per lb. on cheese, and end the discussion.

Mr WILKS

- That is very good, but will the Treasurer allow me to proceed? Cheese was on the free list in New South Wales. The highest duty was in Queensland and South Australia, where the tax was 4d. per lb. In Victoria the duty was 3d. per lb., and in the other States it was 2d. per lb. There is no compromise here, but I trust that the Treasurer will come to an agreement with the acting leader of the Opposition to consent to a reduction of the duty. The Treasurer has referred to the import of natural productions from outside as being monstrous. It does seem to be monstrous at first sight; but I should like to point out that the facilities which the people of Australia possess, as well

Mr GLYNN

- I can scarcely see why butter should be protected now. I find that in 1899 five of the States were exporting butter, and that the total surplus for exportation amounted to 54,000,000 lbs.

Sir George Turner

- New South Wales imported some from Egypt.

<page>7771</page>

Mr GLYNN

- I am aware of that, but we are dealing with the Commonwealth, and the conditions of all the exporting States, and not the conditions of one, ought to determine our policy in this regard. The particular State which certain honorable members are so anxious to protect, is one which does not ask for protection. Some honorable members are very kind to New South Wales in this instance, but their gift is refused. We can quite understand their attitude, because this will give an opportunity for the surplus butter of Victoria to be sent on to New -South Wales. So far as cheese is concerned, I find that the total available quantity exported during 1899 by the five exporting States was nearly 5,000,000 lbs. These facts show, I think, that in the case of five out of the six States, there is no occasion for protection in regard to these industries. There has been an enormous development of the dairying industry during the last ten years, principally in butter, but to a large extent also in cheese. If one may take the development in the production of butter for the last ten years as a guide, the idea of protecting the industry seems to be absurd. In 1899 the production of butter in New South Wales totalled in round numbers 284,000 lbs. ; in 1899, it was over 7,000,000 lbs. That development took place without any protection. In Victoria in 1889 the production of butter totalled 505,000 lbs. ; and in 1899 it amounted to 26,000,000 lbs. Why does Victoria require any further protection for her butter industry ? In South Australia the production in 1890 was 11,000 lbs., and in 1899 it was 895,000 lbs.. Still we are told that further protection is required for the butter industry of South Australia. As a matter of fact, if there has been any artificial stimulation of the production of butter, it has been by means of bonuses and not by an import duty. We are now dealing with an import duty, and I think it is positively ludicrous to impose a protective duty on the importation of butter. The answer to the whole thing was supplied by the honorable member for Wentworth, who pointed out that these duties had their significance only in relation to the Inter-State Tariff war, and as that war is at an end, they are absolutely useless. There is, however, a reason why we should not protect cheese. The comparative importation of cheese into New South Wales from New Zealand, which is the only place outside the Commonwealth we need consider, is much greater than into any other State. While South Australia last year imported butter to the value of £34,000 from Victoria, she only imported £246 worth

from New Zealand. I have not the cheese figures for New South Wales, but from what I have heard the quality of the New Zealand article is apparently preferred to that produced in New South Wales.

Sir William Lyne

- We make as good butter as any made in New Zealand.

Mr GLYNN

- If that is so, I remind the honorable gentleman that it is done without any protection, and the interjection destroys the whole of his argument. I am told that the quality of the New Zealand cheese is better than the quality of the Victorian article.

Mr Kennedy

- That is not correct, and the market values in London prove that it is not.

Mr GLYNN

- The honorable member's emphasis cannot add to the truth or falsity of the matter. I may be wrong, but I am told that there is an excellent quality of cheese produced in New South Wales ; and I have no wish to disparage Victoria. If honorable members wish it, I shall make - a comparison with the State of South Australia, where the protection of cheese was about the same as in Victoria.

Sir George Turner

- The duties in South Australia were 2d. per lb. on butter, and 4d. per lb. on cheese.

Mr GLYNN

- The quality of the cheese in South Australia is anything but very fine. After the Ministry, of which the Federal Minister for Trade and Customs was Attorney-General, had imposed a tax upon butter in 1888, I represented the district of Light; and I know that in that district, under the aegis of protection, they tried to start a cheese and butter factory. The effect of the effort was that, reversing the ordinary course of things, the cheese was more remarkable for its putrefaction in its youth rather than in its old age. The taste of the article was absolutely impossible, because the olfactory organ prevented its approach to the mouth.

Sir George Turner

- They do not import much into South Australia.

Mr GLYNN

- I know we protect it pretty heavily and it is not tip-top cheese. What we want to do is to encourage the production of a better class of cheese, and we shall not do that by keeping up a system of protection.

Mr L E GROOM

- I hope the committee will pass the duty as proposed. I desire at this stage to protest against the action of the acting leader of the Opposition, who in respect of every item proposed gets up and says - " This is a matter for compromise. In this matter the right honorable the Prime Minister stated that we were going to have revenue without destruction. The duties upon butter and cheese must be considered in this light. They cannot possibly produce revenue, and they are therefore contrary to the pronouncement in the Maitland manifesto and must be reduced." I take it that the pronouncement of the Prime Minister was that, taking the Tariff as a whole, we were to have revenue without destruction, and we should not take any one particular item, and apply that test to it. My understanding of the Prime Minister's statement was that, taking the Tariff as a whole, the effect resulting would be that we should obtain the requisite revenue for the whole Commonwealth, while at the same time all existing industries throughout the Commonwealth would receive fair and reasonable protection.

Sir William McMillan

- We cannot do that without considering the details.

Mr L E GROOM

- I point out that we can. For instance, tea is in itself a revenue-producing item, but the idea was that items of that description--

<page>7772</page>

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I rise to order, and in the interests of conserving the time of the committee. I submit that the honorable and learned member is not in order in travelling over the whole trend, meaning, and purpose of the Maitland speech, but must confine himself to the question now before the committee.

The CHAIRMAN

- The Maitland speech is not now before the committee, but the item butter and cheese.

Mr L E GROOM

- I submit that the industries affected by this proposal are industries which for their proper establishment require the imposition of a protective duty. The true policy of protection has been applied to them, and in this respect we have to consider that we are legislating for the different States, and that in those States certain policies have been adopted. In Queensland, for instance, the butter and cheese industry was created in two ways, and under what I think the honorable and learned member for Indi would say was a scientific system of protection. In the first place, a duty was put upon the article at a time when, in Queensland, we practically produced no cheese ; and, at the same time, the Government introduced a proper system of scientific instruction, so that those engaged in the industry might be taught proper methods of production. The course followed has been justified, because, throughout the whole of the Darling Downs district - in places like Yangan, outside Warwick, and other places - the people are producing cheese equal in quality to anything that can be produced elsewhere. We want to continue this, and the time is not yet come for the removal of the duty upon either butter or cheese. The whole of the States are now combined in one Commonwealth, and we have not yet arrived at the stage when the local market is entirely supplied by the locally grown article. Until that happens the protection to these industries should be continued. The Agricultural departments of the various States will do their best to increase the value of the protected products, and I hope the Government will be firm in insisting upon the proposal they have made.

Mr. A.C. GROOM (Flinders). The dairying industry of Victoria was certainly not built up by protection. It was built up first of all by the bonus which was given by the Government ten years ago. The bonus and the departmental dairies which went to the various centres to teach the people the art of making butter under the factory system were the means of the industry growing to the extent it has done, and developing an enormous export trade. The Treasurer gave some figures to make out that New South Wales is a large importer of butter. On turning up Coghlan, at page 496 I find that New South Wales did not import any butter in 1899, but exported in that year over 7,000,000 lbs. of butter to the United Kingdom, showing distinctly that any butter which happened to come within her borders was not for her own use, but for export. The surplus amount of butter which was raised in New South Wales in 1899 was 4,500,000 lbs., but she exported to the United Kingdom 7,000,000 lbs., showing a difference of 2,500,000 lbs.; which certainly was imported from some other colony, landed, and re-exported. That, I think, shows where the New Zealand butter went to.

Sir George Turner

- They do not import butter from New Zealand to send it to England.

Mr A C GROOM

- If New South Wales had a surplus of 4,500,000 lbs. of butter in 1899, and exported in that year over 7,000,000 lbs., the difference must have come from some other colony ; and as she imported butter from New Zealand only, it follows that it must have come from that colony. In regard to cheese, Victoria is an exporter to the extent of over 600,000 lbs. a year. Therefore the duty is no good to the Victorian farmer. He does not want a duty of 3d. per lb. ; he would be quite satisfied with one-half that duty, which would be over 25 per cent. ad valorem. I do not think that any import duty should exceed 25 per cent. ad valorem, and therefore I shall vote for the reduction of the duty to 11/2d. per lb.

<page>7773</page>

Mr A McLEAN

- This debate reminds me forcibly of a similar one in the Victorian Parliament some years ago. We had the importers then telling the House that, if we imposed a duty on butter and cheese, or any other products of the farm and dairy, we should send up the prices and kill a valuable trade. What has been the result of the duties then imposed? In Victoria the producers have not only supplied local requirements, but have become very large exporters. The product is cheaper ; the prices are steadier ; and, of course, the producers must necessarily be much better off. New South Wales, which perhaps could produce more than any other under wise legislation, is the only State which has been importing largely.

During the last two or three years she has been a very large importer of the different products of the farm, the orchard, and the dairy, while Victoria has exported £4,400,000 worth of similar products in the same period. If there is one industry eminently suited to the conditions of the Commonwealth it is the dairying industry. What are honorable members afraid of when they quote figures to show that Victoria and some

of the other States are large exporters, and, therefore, as they say, cannot require the duty ? What harm does the duty do ? Does it make the product dearer? Does it injure anybody? Honorable members on the other side, whom I esteem highly as friends, do not represent the interests of the Commonwealth, but only the interests of the importer.

Mr Thomson

- We do not call honorable members opposite manufacturers' agents.

Mr A McLEAN

- Whatever honorable members might call me would not affect me, because I am not interested in any manufactory. I have refrained from speaking on item after item in the hope of saving time ; but it looks as if this wearying reiteration on every little item is indulged in for the sake of wasting time. What progress have we made to-night ? This is certainly a very large industry. I admit that in most branches we can get on with very little duty ; but the duty will certainly encourage the farmer of New South Wales, because when he knows that his home market is secured to him by a reasonable duty, he will go into the industry. The advantage of the duty is that it affords a reasonable guarantee to the farmer that his market will not be swamped, but will be protected at any rate to the amount That encourages him to go in for the production of these commodities. I believe there is no industry within the Commonwealth which has a larger future before it than dairying, if we deal with it in an intelligent manner, and give it reasonable protection. No one can say that the compromise which the Government have suggested means excessive protection. I saw the other day that a shipment of Gippsland butter had sold in London at 114s. per cwt., so that the compromise would mean a duty of about 15 per cent.

Sir George Turner

- 16 per cent.

Sir William' McMillan

- We must take the value here when dealing with an, import duty.

Mr A McLEAN

- The value here is not much below that which I have quoted. I have no doubt that the value is greater in New South Wales, where they import a great deal.

Sir William McMillan

- The markets rule about the same - about 91/2d.

Mr A McLEAN

- It cannot be truthfully asserted that the compromise suggested is excessive. The Government will consent to a reduced duty.

Sir George Turner

- That is, if the compromise is accepted.

Sir William McMillan

- We have to thank the Minister for nothing.

Mr A McLEAN

- It appears that nothing short of free-trade will satisfy the honorable member.

Sir William McMillan

- Will the Government consent to a duty of 2d. per lb. on cheese ?

Sir George Turner

- No.

Mr A McLEAN

- Does the honorable member for Wentworth expect the majority to give way in every matter ?

Sir William McMillan

- The Government have given way in nothing except one item.

Mr A McLEAN

- This is one instance in which the Government offer to give way.

Sir William McMillan

- What the Government suggest is prohibition.

Mr A McLEAN

- If 2d. per lb. will prohibit imports, then imports should be prohibited. When we have fair seasons we can produce a very large surplus for export, and in any season farmers can produce more than is necessary

for our own requirements. Since encouragement was given to the industry in Victoria, I have not known a season in which the farmers did not produce more than was necessary for our own requirements, and it has been the same in the case of wheat and every farming commodity. These commodities were imported until the farmers were guaranteed their own market, since which time there has been no trouble in producing, not only what we require for ourselves, but a large amount for export. I hope honorable members will accept the reasonable compromise suggested, and let us make a little progress.

Sir William McMillan

- The highest possible Tariff has been framed, and yet honorable members talk about our not making progress.

<page>7774</page>

Mr A McLEAN

- I do not think the honorable member will find many to agree with his view that a duty of 2d. per lb. on a commodity worth 1s. or 1s. 2d. per lb. is a very high one. The honorable member, I know, honestly entertains his convictions. It is a case of -

But faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast

To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last.

Mr POYNTON

- I have heard some honorable members say that this is not an important industry, but the tenor of the remarks of the last speaker would seem to show that it is an industry so important that it does not require protection. From speeches on the other side, it would appear that this is an industry which has been built up by protection ; but I disagree entirely with that view. The industry has been built up not by protection, but by a system of bonuses, under which hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent.

Mr A McLEAN

- Bonuses and import duties.

Mr POYNTON

-The industry was built up in New South Wales without either protection or bonuses, and in spite of droughts. Under the Victorian system of bonuses, it paid better to send the butter to London than to New South Wales.

Mr A McLEAN

- Is a bonus not protection?

Mr POYNTON

- We can see the end of a bonus, but there is no end to protection.

Mr A McLEAN

- Does the honorable member approve of bonuses ?

Mr POYNTON

- I approve of them for a limited number of years.

Mr Thomas

- A bonus is as bad as a protective duty, if not worse.

Mr POYNTON

- As I said before, we Can see the end of a bonus. I shall support the amendment for a duty of 11/2d. per lb.

Mr THOMAS

- I am not here as a representative of importers, but as a representative of consumers, who ought to be looked after just as well as are producers.

Sir William Lyne

- But when the effect of a duty is to reduce prices, is the consumer not looked after ?

Mr THOMAS

- Yes ; if a duty does re duce prices. I represent a constituency on the borders of South Australia, where for many years there have been differential rates charged for the carriage of butter to the extent of £4 per ton. Butter from New South Wales, Victoria, or Queensland landed at Port Pirie or Adelaide for Broken Hill had to pay £4 per ton more for carriage than South Australian butter; but even under these circumstances South Australia has not been able to supply the demand of the Broken Hill market. If the Commonwealth cannot produce butter of the very best quality, we should be at perfect liberty to get what we require from

New Zealand or elsewhere, and no duty should be allowed to stand in the way of the consumer. The men at Broken Hill thoroughly earn their money in the mines there, and should be allowed to get the very best that the world can provide. I admit that the people of Australia ought to be able to produce the best kind of butter, but if they cannot do so, their butter is not good enough for the miners at Broken Hill. I want them to get the very best butter that can be procured. I was very pleased to meet in Sydney, some four or five years ago, the representatives of a working man's co-operative organization in England, who had been sent out to ascertain where they could obtain for the working men of England the best articles that were procurable in the world. If they could buy better butter in Denmark than in Australia they would go to Denmark for it, or vice versa.

Mr Kingston

- They would get it where-ever it was cheapest, even though it were obtained from niggers or Chinamen.

Mr THOMAS

- Wherever the best quality could be obtained.

Mr Kingston

- Not the best, but the cheapest.

Mr THOMAS

- The Minister for Trade and Customs stated that we were producing butter good enough for the people, and that if some people had very fastidious tastes and wanted better butter than we could produce, they should be prepared to pay for it. I do not agree with that view at all, but I would rather encourage the tastes of the people and elevate and satisfy them in every possible way.

<page>7775</page>

Mr Kingston

- What is the good of knowing where to obtain the best of everything if you have not the money to buy it ?

Mr. THOMAS.- How is it that the working men of England send all over the world for the best of everything? I would remind the Minister that the wages of the men at Broken Hill are not regulated by the price of butter but by the price of silver and lead. There are some protectionists who believe that protection brings down prices. Up to last Friday I did not hold that view, but on that day I happened to be discussing this matter with a gentleman who pointed out to me very clearly that protection did bring down prices in some cases. He mentioned to me that, some years ago, two manufacturers were producing a certain article in Victoria, and had been operating for some years, with the assistance of a duty on the manufactured article of £4 per ton. One of these manufacturers had been supplied with the raw material by an importer, to whom, owing to the unprofitable nature of the business, he owed £5,000. Just about this time the Victorian Parliament were engaged in revising the Tariff, and it was proposed to do away with the duty of £4 per ton on the manufactured article. The manager for the importer pointed out to him that if the duty were removed he would never get his £5,000 back, and his principal, although, like his manager, a free-trader, agreed with him that the duty must be retained. The manager then suggested that they might induce Parliament to retain the duty by playing on the belief of certain protectionists that protection had the effect of making things cheaper. Mr. Trenwith was referred to as a protectionist who held, this view, and it was agreed between the importer and his manager that they must set him going on that line. The manager then presented to Parliament figures showing that some years before, when there was no protective duty on the manufactured " * article, it was being sold in the Victorian market . .at £18 per ton, but that after the duty was imposed the price had been reduced to £12 per ton. He was also able to show that during the same period the price of the article in Europe had only been reduced to the extent of £1 per ton, and it was, therefore, made abundantly clear that the protective duty in Victoria had resulted in a very considerable reduction in price. The proposal to abolish the duty was abandoned, and the importer secured his end. Of course there ' was a key to this, but it was. npt supplied to the members of the Victorian Parliament. The importer's manager regarded it as their duty to find out what the key was, and he had simply supplied them with the facts of the case in the way best suited to support his own pretensions. The fact was that: there had been two manufacturers of the same article, and that they had been engaged in cut-throat competition, with the result that one had lost £5,000, and the other some £20,000. The . manufacturer, in whose operations the importer was interested, placed himself in communication with his rival, and an agreement was arrived at that immediately the Tariff was passed, they would raise their prices. The result was, that within a fortnight of the passing of the Tariff, the price of

the manufactured article was raised by £1, within a month it was increased by £2 a ton, and in a very short time the manufacturers were receiving the full price. Within two years the importer got his £5,000, and the rival manufacturer cleared off his £20,000. I was quite convinced after hearing this story that protection does sometimes result in reducing prices. If there is an industry which does not require a protective duty, it is surely the butter and cheese industry. We ought to be able to produce those commodities in Australia without 'the help of protection. We are prepared to allow the cow, which I suppose is the raw material of butter and cheese, to come in free. I am not here as the agent of any importer. I have no interest in any importing business.' I wish I had ; I should like to have an interest in something of the kind. But I stand here simply on behalf of the consumer, and I say that the people of this country, with all the opportunities they have, and with all the natural facilities open to them for producing butter and cheese, ought to be able to do so. It is shameful that any farmer should ask for a single penny of protection for such articles. In the name of heaven, if we are to have protection for butter and cheese, why not for wool, and sheep, and cattle 1 I shall vote for the amendment of the acting leader of the Opposition, but I feel inclined to ask him to accept the proposal to reduce the duty to 2d. I do so, because I think the Opposition will be defeated upon the amendment, whereas if we accept the 2d. as a compromise, the effect will be to reduce the proposal of the Government, by knocking off 1d. on butter.

Sir William McMillan

- The Government will not consent to a compromise in the way of a duty of 2d. on both butter and cheese.

<page>7776</page>

Mr THOMAS

- If the Opposition were likely to win, I would urge the honorable member for Wentworth to stick to his proposal ; in fact, I should be in favour of knocking off the 3d. entirely. But, as probably we can win on the proposal to strike off 1d., I think it is worth while to do so.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- The honorable member for Gippsland spoke a good deal about compromise. The proposal of the Treasurer now is to impose a duty of 2d. on butter and 3d. on cheese.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I am not proposing that.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- But I understand that the right honorable gentleman consents to it. Those are the Victorian duties ; but I would point out that such rates are no compromise as between the free-trade State of New South Wales, and the highly protected State of Victoria. It is not compromise to ask New South Wales to accept the Victorian duties. The Treasurer referred to the acting leader of the Opposition as having spoken with earnestness on this question. It is only natural for those who come from New South Wales, and who have been accustomed to obtaining nearly all their goods free of duty, to be scornful when they find that butter and cheese, which are foods of the people, are to be taxed to such an extent, and that these high duties are called compromises. I ask my Victorian friends to look at the facts from that point of view. Personally, I believe that the export of butter from Victoria would have grown up without any bonuses at all. I am willing to admit that the butter bonuses were the only bonuses in Victoria that did any good whatever. But, nevertheless, I believe that the industry would have arisen without them, just as the frozen meat industry has done. I quite agree with the honorable member for Barrier - that if our farmers cannot by their industry and brains produce a food that can be so easily produced in Australia, without the aid of a protective duty, it is a shame to them. I speak as the representative of a large number of farmers. I have shares in two butter factories, and have two brothers engaged in the dairying industry. Therefore, I am entitled to speak on the question. I should prefer to see no duty at all ; but, if there is to be a duty on butter and cheese, I trust that the Minister will see his way to give way on the cheese as well as on the butter item, and let the duty on both be 2d.

Mr WILKINSON

- I hold in my hand some figures from the report of the Registrar-General on agricultural and pastoral industries for the State of Queensland for 1900. It is issued by the Queensland Government. This document shows that the export of butter from New South Wales for the year 1900 amounted to 10,692,000 lbs., whilst Victoria exported 36,237,469 lbs. The value in the former case was £447,982, and the value of the butter exported from Victoria was £1,404,179; or nearly £1,000,000 more. In Victoria the

industry had been stimulated and encouraged by a system of bonuses. Butter came into New South Wales free, whilst in Victoria it had to pay a duty. In Queensland butter also had to pay a duty, and the result has been that Queensland in 1900 produced 8,682,389 lbs. of butter, and of that she exported only 1,389,250 lbs. Most honorable members know that a few years ago we had to pay a much higher price for butter of inferior quality than we now pay for an excellent article. We cannot doubt that the production of a good class of butter has been stimulated by the protective duties which have operated in the past. I find also that the consumption of cheese within the Commonwealth represents, per head of the population, only about one-fifth of the consumption in European countries. We consume a little Over 4 lbs. per head, while in European countries the consumption is between 20 lbs. and 30 lbs. per head. I am convinced that it is to our interests to keep out foreign products in order that local production may be stimulated. I hope that the duties laid down in the schedule will be adhered to, because this is one of the most important industries in the Commonwealth, and one which, if properly encouraged, will assume very large dimensions indeed.

<page>7777</page>

Mr FULLER

- I take exception to the remark of the honorable member for Gippsland that honorable members upon this side of the chamber are merely importers' agents. Because he and a few others have formed themselves into a country party, they apparently imagine that no one represents the farming industries of Australia except themselves. But I would point out that there are a good many honorable members here who represent farming constituencies in New South Wales. No one recognises more than I do that we must meet here with a view to effecting a fair compromise in respect of our fiscal faiths. The honorable member for Wentworth has proposed a reduction in the amount of this duty, and I understand that the Treasurer is prepared to agree to a rate of 2d. per lb. upon butter. If he would also agree to reduce the duty upon cheese to a similar amount, I think he would be making a fair compromise. No one who knows anything at all about the dairying industry will contend that it has been established by protective duties. In New South Wales it has been built up into a magnificent national industry without the aid of any duty whatever. During the time that duties were levied upon butter and cheese in that State, the industry got into such a very low state that the people of the south coast and Camden district, which was the only district in which butter was being produced, had to look to some other means in order to achieve prosperity. Consequently, improved machinery was imported from Denmark, notably the De Laval separator. Then Victoria sent some representatives to ascertain what the people in New South Wales were doing to develop the industry, and upon their return to this State the Victorians began to copy their example. It is erroneously supposed that the butter bonus which was granted in Victoria in order to foster the industry, benefited the Victorian dairy farmers. As a matter of fact it found its way into the pockets of speculators. Indeed I know of three Sydney speculators who purchased Victorian butter, shipped it to England, and pocketed £1,500 profit as a result. The butter industry in Victoria was established by virtue of necessity. I rejoice to know that we have in the dairying industry one of the national industries of Australia, which is destined to be second to none upon this continent. The present administration have remembered the dairy farmers only to tax them. Yet this proposal is put forward to gull them into the belief that the Government are helping the industry in which they are engaged. According to the honorable member for Echuca, the Commonwealth has imported 2,583,554 lbs. of butter within the past three years, principally from New Zealand. But we exported from the Commonwealth during the same period over 53,000,000 lbs. In order to assist our dairy farmers, efficient instructors should be sent out amongst them to educate them in the most scientific methods of production, and proper agents or competent scouts, sent to find the nature of the markets, and the best means of capturing them. We want also a Tariff which will lead to the big ocean steamers coming here with full cargoes, so that we shall be able to send our produce to the old world at the cheapest possible rates, because we have to compete there with Denmark and other countries within a few days' sail of the markets. I think this is a matter on which we should compromise, and I would respectfully submit to the Treasurer that the compromise should be 2d. per lb. on butter, and 2d. per lb. on cheese.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

-I should not have spoken except for the entirely uncalled for remark made by the honorable member for Gippsland that honorable members of the Opposition were importers' agents. I represent as many

farmers ' as that honorable member does, and I think the honorable member for Illawarra represents the largest farming constituency in Australia. Yet we are told that we are representatives of the importers in Sydney. When the suggestion has been made from this side that honorable members behind the Government were the agents of manufacturers, there have been loud cries of. shame, particularly from the honorable member for Echuca, whose soul was vexed within him that any one should dare to make such a suggestion. Surely, if one side may indulge in these personal recriminations, the other side may do so I I resent the imputation that, because the Opposition dares to criticise the imposts proposed by the Government, they are in- the secret pay of the importing ' rings of Australia.

Mr Kingston

- - -The honorable member does not believe that any one suggests that.

<page>7778</page>

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- If honorable members on the Government side do not believe it, why do they make such a suggestion 1 An agent as a rule is in the pay of his principal. I belong to no ring, and do not even know any big importers. I represent hundreds of working farmers, and on Saturday evening last I took the straightforward course of consulting them in regard to this Tariff. I put before them, without comment, the duties on their own products, and read to them also the other duties, without any comments, Then I inquired whether they desired any duties at all upon these articles, or the duties proposed by the Government, and they unanimously decided that they did not want the Government proposals.

Mr Kingston

- Did the honorable member inquire whether they would prefer a land tax 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I did not ask any such idiotic question. We do not put to them the alternative of a land tax, although in Victoria it is suggested that we should. We tell them they can have a very different Tariff from this without a land tax. The honorable member for Gippsland asserted that all that could be said for these farming duties now was that they could do no harm. He can no longer put forward any ringing militant argument for protection, and he sinks back in his seat in a quiet and' languid ' way, and asks what harm can these duties do. Surely we are not here to impose duties for the . sole reason that they will do* no harm t Unless our object is to do some good we have no right to impose them. When we spoke about protection and cheapness, the Minister for Trade and Customs ridiculed the idea, and wanted to know if we meant by cheapness the work done by negroes and Chinese. We have heard from the first about negro labour existing in countries where these protective duties are highest, and that therefore we need protection from it. Honorable members on the Government side must be bankrupt of arguments if they can make no better reply to those which have been put forward from this side of the committee. The only possible competitor with Australia, so far as these products are concerned, is New Zealand, and there negro and Chinese labour do not obtain. We have had some beautiful specimens of compromise on the Tariff. There is the duty on biscuits, for instance. We used to have a duty of Jd. per lb. in New South Wales, as a kind of countervailing duty to the sugar duties, and there was a duty of Id. per lb. in Victoria. The Government have compromised in the matter by adding these together, and fixing, the duty at 1½d. per lb. That is not the old idea of splitting the difference.

Mr Watkins

- What duties prevail in the other States ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am referring only to two States, and I apprehend that, when we get the mean of the duties iri. those two States, we arrive, at a pretty fair view with regard to the whole of the people of the Commonwealth, for the simple reason that these two States represent the bulk of the people of Australia.

Mr Watkins

- But we have to consider the interests of all the States under the Constitution.

<page>7779</page>

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course; and we are doing so. ' We have voted a duty on arrowroot for the benefit of Queensland alone, and we have voted duties for the benefit of Victoria. When, in heaven's name, is New South Wales to be given % show_ under this 'Tariff? It seems to me that it is all sacrifice and surrender so far as she is

concerned. It is that which makes the people of New South Wales so disgusted with the Tariff, and so anxious to obtain a modification of it. The proposal made by the acting leader of the Opposition is a fair one, and if the Ministry are disposed to compromise on this Tariff they will not have the slightest objection to it.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - In order to save time, and as I think there is no chance that on division I shall carry the proposal I have made, although I believe it is a proper proposal, I am now willing to make another proposal. Will the Treasurer agree that the duty shall be reduced to 2d. on each of these items ? That will be a fair thing. I am sure that no honorable members desire that this Tariff should be anything but what it pretends to be, a revenue Tariff with a considerable incidence towards protection. Even if we reduce the duty to 2d. per lb. so far as butter is concerned, it is of course a farce, because we export that article so largely. , We export 53,000,000 lbs. of butter, as against 2,000,000 lbs. imported. It is a farce therefore to talk about a duty of 3d. per lb. on butter, which generally averages 9d. per lb. Under the circumstances, a duty of 33 J per cent, is absurd. Butter is a natural industry, and it was not either the bonus or the import duty that established that industry. The refrigerating machine, which made it possible to make butter all over Australia, and made its export possible, is what has established the industry. I trust there will be no more talk of the avocations of honorable mem- . * bers. I have never mentioned the profession or business of any man in dealing with any public question. As being probably the only importer on this side, I may tell honorable members for their edification that I control a business connected with the produce and dairying industry of this country, and the export of primary products, which amounts to hundreds of thousands more per annum than my importing business. I may also tell them - as this has also been thrown at us - that I control the largest coal mine in Australia, another important primary industry. But I should be willing, if it were hot for the interests of others, to walk out of every business I am connected with, in order to give my time entirely to the affairs of the country. I think we may assume that we are all actuated by patriotic motives, and, so far as a representative Government is concerned, it should represent all the interests of Australia. I ask my right honorable friends if they will give way in this matter. We are going to take a division. I do not say that as a threat, but we must assert ourselves in this case. I ask honorable members who desire fair play to carry out the original compact of compromise made by the different States,' and on which we have been elected to this Parliament. I ask them to assist us, as a matter of fairness, in this proposal. I ask leave now to amend my amendment by substituting 1d. for 11/2d.

Amendment, by leave, amended accordingly

Mr E SOLOMON

- I should like to urge the Government to fall in with the proposal of the honorable member for Wentworth. In this matter, as in many others, the small States have received no consideration whatever. We have imported into Western Australia over 4,800,000 lbs. weight of butter from Victoria alone, on which there is a duty of 2d. per lb. We have also imported hundreds of thousands of pounds of cheese, on which a similar duty is imposed. I ask Ministers to have some consideration for the smaller States, and to accept the proposition now made.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be so added - put.

The committee divided -

Ayes14

Noes..... 22

Majority..... 8

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Item agreed to.

<page>7780</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- The Government] do not propose to ask the committee to sit late to-night, because no doubt many honorable members who have come from considerable distances are tired. . But I am sure that all sides of the House will recognise that it is time we made a little more progress than we have done. It is the intention of the Government to. ask the committee to sit sufficiently late to-morrow night to enable us to dispose of the remaining items in division 4, with the exception of those which we have intimated our

intention to postpone - namely, rice, tea, and starch. I believe that in making this intimation we are simply giving effect to the will of the committee, and no doubt the sooner we address ourselves to the question of getting on with the business, the better it will be. We rely on the assistance of the committee.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT

Christmas Adjournment

Motion (by Mr. Deakin) proposed -

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr PAGE

- In speaking on the motion moved by the Attorney-General this afternoon, I said that the honorable member who ticked off the names of those honorable members who wished for a long adjournment had a sinister motive in keeping the representatives of Queensland from returning in time to take part in the general election there next March. I have found out that the statement was unfounded, and I have much pleasure in withdrawing it.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

<page>7781</page>

23:45:00

House adjourned at 11.45 p.m.