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1901-06-07

HouseofRepresentatives.

Mr. Speaker took the chair at 2 p.m.

PETITION

Mr. Hume Cook presented a petition from Mr. John Robertson, M.A., of Moonee Ponds, praying that steps be taken to investigate the subject of legal tender, with a view to its equitable and safe reform.

Petition received.

PAPER

Mr. Barton laid upon the table

Instructions passed under the Royal sign manual and signet to the Governor-General and

Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth of Australia.

QUESTIONS

STATISTICAL RETURNS

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Seeing that there are a number of motions on the business paper for the production of statistical returns, I should like to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs if he will be good enough to have a compilation made of all obtainable information bearing upon the Tariff question, bringing the statistics as nearly up to date as possible. The statistics which we are using at the present time are the statistics for the year 1899, so that they are almost two years behind time. I think that such a compilation as I ask for would aid honorable members very much in preparing for the consideration of the Treasurer's Budget speech.

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- There is no doubt that the State statistics upon which we are depending at the present time are somewhat in arrears ; but the Government have been in communication with the State Governments with a view to expediting the preparation of later statistics. The Government fully recognise that it is highly desirable that, in dealing with the Tariff, honorable members should have before them all the available statistical information which can be of use to them, and to that end we have had certain statistics collated. I notice that motions are to be moved by various honorable members for the production of statistical returns, and the Government will be very glad if other honorable members who may be thinking of moving similar motions will indicate as soon as possible what they require. Our desire is to supply all the available information at the earliest date possible, and any suggestion which will help us will receive our most favorable consideration.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- A very good form was followed in dealing with statistics when the Convention was sitting.

Mr KINGSTON

- I should be delighted to confer with the honorable member or with any other honorable members on this subject in order to meet their wishes. The sooner we know what honorable members desire, in addition to the information we are preparing, the better it will be for everyone.

THE FEDERAL CAPITAL

<page>814</page>

Mr. POYNTON

I wish to direct the attention of the Prime Minister to Section 125 of the Constitution, which provides that - The seat of Government of the Commonwealth shall be determined by the Parliament, and shall be within territory which shall have been granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth, and shall be vested in and belong to the Commonwealth.

A number of sites in various parts of New South Wales have been offered to the Commonwealth, and probably in each of these sites there is land which is held in fee simple. I therefore ask the right honorable member if anything can be done to get the land placed under offer to the Federal Government prior to the choosing of any site, so that we may not, after having chosen a site, be compelled to pay very dearly for the property which we have to resume.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - All considerations of that kind will come under the careful review of the Government, who are giving special attention to the question of the site of the federal capital.

DISTRIBUTION OF HANSARD

Mr HIGGINS

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

What annual subscription must be paid by persons who desire to procure Hansard regularly, and whether Ministers will take steps to make public the places and modes and terms of obtaining it.

Mr BARTON

- I intend to make the price 3d. per copy, and the cash subscription 4s. per session, and to give publicity to the matters mentioned by the honorable and learned member.

TASMANIAN COMMONWEALTH SERVICE

Mr O'MALLEY

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether it is the intention of the Government to make the salaries of the Tasmanian Federal civil Servants equal to those received by Victorian officers holding similar appointments.

Mr BARTON

-This question is involved in the Public Service Bill, the second reading of which will be moved on Tuesday next, and which will include provisions for dealing with matters of this nature.

IMPERIAL COURT OF APPEAL

Mr ISAACS

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether he has any objection to inform the House -

. What communications have passed between the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments relative to the establishment of an Imperial Court of Appeal.

What instructions (if any) have been given to Mr. Justice Hodges regarding the Conference to be held with reference to the matter.

Mr BARTON

- (1) Communications have taken place on this subject, but as they are confidential, my honorable and learned friend will see that I am not in a position to disclose them at present. (2) Mr. Justice Hodges will represent this Government at the conference, which, it is understood, will be purely consultative. By that I mean that it is expected that, before definite action is taken, there will be further consideration of the subject between the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Dominion and the self-governing States concerned.

STATE IMPORTATIONS

Motion (by Mr. Wilkinson) proposed-

That there be laid before this House a return showing the quantities of the following commodities imported from places beyond the Commonwealth into each of the States now constituting the Australian Commonwealth during the three years ending 31st December, 1900 : -

Maize.

Hay, straw, and chaff.

Potatoes.

Sugar.

Timber (including timber prepared for building purposes, shingles, staves, and empty casks).

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

. - The Government have no objection to this motion ; but I should like to repeat my request that honorable members who desire further information will, at the earliest opportunity, indicate what they require, in order to prevent duplication of work.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PRAYERS

<page>815</page>

Mr KNOX

- I move -

That the standing orders should provide that, upon Mr. Speaker taking the chair, he shall read a prayer. I would like to explain why I have ventured to assume the responsibility of asking the House to consider this motion. Immediately after the Commonwealth elections I wrote to the head of the denomination with which I am associated, the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, asking that body if any steps were being taken unitedly by the churches to secure consideration by Parliament of the need of opening its proceedings by the reading of prayers. I found that the Council of the Churches was taking the necessary action, and subsequently I was invited by the churches to move a motion. That I felt an honour and a privilege, to which I readily assented, and accordingly I gave notice of this motion. I felt that this action might have been properly provided for in the standing orders, but I found that the Government preferred that it should receive a distinct instruction from the House, and I am hopeful that I shall receive the individual support of Ministers. I then interviewed the various churches to get a personal knowledge of what their views were on the subject. The result was that a circular was issued under which the opinions of the heads of the various religious bodies were placed, I believe, in the hands of honorable members. The circular was as follows : -

The Council of Churches in Victoria, deeply impressed with the propriety and necessity of a national recognition of our dependence upon the blessing of Almighty God in our prosperity, desires respectfully to urge upon the members of both Houses of the Federal Parliament that the sittings should be regularly opened with a suitable form of prayer. To show the practical unanimity with which this desire is expressed, we subjoin communications on the subject from representatives of the different churches, and indulge the hope that you will give the matter your most favorable consideration. In making this request, we would deprecate any thought of dictation, our motive being entirely to afford information to our legislators as to the feeling and desire of the Christian public on this question.

The Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia and Tasmania wrote to ' this effect -

I desire, on behalf of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania, to express a very earnest hope that the sessions of the Federal Parliament may be always opened with prayer to Almighty God for His direction and divine blessing. Such a recognition of our dependence upon, and faith in, the Supreme Ruler of the universe is surely a public duty which it is befitting for the Houses of Legislature in a Christian Commonwealth to perform ; a duty the discharge of which will tend to promote a high standard of political responsibility, and to help forward the growth of national righteousness.

Archbishop Carr, of Melbourne, wrote as follows : -

As legislators derive their authority ultimately from the Supreme Lawgiver, and are dependent on Him for the knowledge and counsel and fortitude which are required to " decree justice," it is fitting and highly advantageous that their deliberations should open with a recognition of the dominion of the Almighty and a humble petition for His guidance. I, therefore, earnestly desire that a suitable form of prayer should be prepared and used at the opening of each session of the Commonwealth Parliament.

I shall be prepared to give assistance in drafting or revising such form of prayer as would be acceptable to all who desire the light of Divine wisdom on the deliberations of the people's representatives.

The Right Rev. George Tait, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, wrote in these terms -

I was glad to see on Monday night, as part of the splendid illumination of our Parliament House, the prayer, "God bless our Commonwealth." To this prayer, all the people say "Amen." But one of the channels through which God's blessing comes to a nation is righteous and beneficent laws. It seems fitting, therefore, that when our legislators assemble to frame our laws, they should acknowledge their dependence on Almighty God, and seek His guidance and help. I hope that steps will be taken to insert among the standing orders framed for the guidance of the House, one providing that every sitting should be opened with prayer.

The Rev. A.R. Edgar, President of the Wesleyan Conference, sent the following letter : -

I beg, on behalf of the Wesleyan Methodist Churches of Victoria and Tasmania, to suggest that the ordinary sittings of the Federal Parliament, like those of the Legislative Council of the State of Victoria, be opened with prayer.

The Constitution Act declares that the Commonwealth is undertaken "humbly relying upon the blessing of Almighty God." There was prayer at the opening of the Parliament last Thursday, and prayer at the beginning of each day's session would undoubtedly delight Christian sentiment.

From the Rev. Dr. Bevan, Congregational Church, Collins-street, Melbourne, this letter was received : - I sincerely hope that the Houses of Parliament of Australia will see their way to making arrangement for the opening of their sessions by prayer. We are certainly a Christian State, and the recognition of our dependence upon God, and our need of His guidance and blessing that our national life should be strong and lasting, will be in accordance with the desire and sentiment of the vast majority of our people".

Democratic communities as - for example, America - have shown that this can be done without infringing the religious liberty of any citizens ; and surely the wisdom and moderation of southern legislators and people will not be incapable of doing that which in a striking and simple, fashion shall make plain our relations to the Lord of Nations by whose strength alone they can be established.

I received the following letter from Mr. C. W. Walrond, honorary secretary of the Baptist Union of Victoria :
- -

By direction of the Baptist Union I beg respectfully to forward to you the following resolution, unanimously adopted at the session held at Bendigo this week : - " That the Assembly of the Baptist Union, in session assembled, views with much satisfaction the motion tabled in the Senate, and in the House of Representatives, to have the sittings in both Houses daily opened with prayer, and earnestly hopes and believes that the members will agree thereto."

Other letters representative of the Christian feeling of the people throughout the Commonwealth have been received, and I understand that honorable members have received communications from other organizations and religious bodies to that effect. The practice in the State Parliaments has not been uniform. In New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania no prayer has been read ; but prayers are read in Queensland and Western Australia, and were read in the Legislative Council of Victoria.

Sir Philip Fysh

- And Tasmania.

Mr KNOX

- Although the practice is not uniform in the States, I would venture to claim that we ought to look to a wider area of national interest in other great Federations of the world. We might look to the mother of Parliaments, where, honorable members are aware, prayers are read in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords. Prayers are also read in each House of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada. I may refer to a parallel case with ours. In the United States of America, a prayer is read in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. In those cases the chaplain reads the prayer; but I am one of those who believe that it will be better that the prayer, if honorable members approve of the motion, should be read by the Speaker, not by any denominational or sectarian representative. I wish to mention that an offer came from the Rev. Mr. Hughes, incumbent of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, undertaking to read the prayer daily; but I replied expressing my own individual opinion as I have expressed it to-day. The form of prayer should be entirely unsectarian in character, and refer only to the fundamental truths acknowledged and professed by all Christian people. I believe that no prayer will have more universal acceptance than the Lord's Prayer. What I am anxious to secure is a day by day acknowledgment of our dependence on Almighty God. In our Commonwealth Constitution Act that recognition is recited in noble and memorable words, and at the opening of the Parliament hopeful prayers for Divine assistance were read. I am sure that those prayers found a ready echo through the length and breadth of this Commonwealth, and through the other civilized countries who watched the birth of our nation. I am persuaded that the sense of the vast majority of the people of Australia will be in favour of the step which the motion proposes, and its acceptance by honorable members will be hailed with general satisfaction. This is a subject upon which every honorable member, will have already made up his mind, and I am disposed to believe, from the conversations which I have had with several honorable members on the subject, that it -will be sanctioned by the majority of the House. I earnestly hope that it will have the unanimous approval of honorable members. As delivered by yourself, sir, I am sure that every honorable member is satisfied that the prayer will be read with reverence and propriety. Speaking from my experience of the Legislative Council of Victoria, I can say that the prayer read there at the opening of every sitting was always joined in by all honorable members with fitting decorum and with full attendance. I sincerely confess that I possess no appropriate fitness for the responsible position of submitting this motion to the House. On the contrary, I have a profound sense of my own inefficiency, and the need for Divine guidance in this and the other responsible work which is before me. But in the fullest sense I express the earnest hope that the

resolution may find unanimous acceptance, in order that we may, with due reverence, acknowledge the sovereignty of the Almighty, and our dependence upon Him for guidance in our legislation to the end that it may be wise and liberal legislation, for the good of the whole people, for the advancement and prosperity of humanity, and for the cementing together of the brotherhood of the people of this Commonwealth in fullest loyalty to our King and in fullest loyalty to our God.

<page>817</page>

Mr GLYNN

- I have very much pleasure in seconding the motion which has been so eloquently and effectively proposed by the honorable member for Kooyong. At the same time, I can quite appreciate the motives of the opponents as well as the supporters of a proposal like this. It seems to me that the supporters of the motion think that the manifestation upon a suitable occasion, of the faith which most of us profess in one form or another, at least once a week, should, as coming from a great representative body, not only have a salutary influence upon the daily relations of the members themselves, but be an example to the rising generation whose destinies to an extent we are engaged in moulding. They think that, as on some minor occasions of life, we should solicit the descent of "prevenient grace," and seek regeneration by prayer, a submission to the will of Providence, and an appeal for guidance to His omniscience, should be regarded as an appropriate preface to our daily gropings for light. On the other hand, there are some who, taking a less ideal view of the occasion, think it should be regarded as a purely business one; that the silent prayer of the heart, which is open to all who wish to offer it, might, as the more voluntary, probably prove the more efficacious, and that custom too often tends to lower what should be a fervent aspiration into a cold formality. But, Mr. Speaker, we must take human nature as it is, with its many imperfections; we must deal with ourselves as men, liable, if left alone, to be remiss or to forget - men who require the reminder of some recurring occasion, or the stimulating sense of community of purpose, to keep them to the regular discharge of their higher obligations. As to the possibility of a prayer becoming a mere lifeless formality, the remedy is with ourselves. We can scarcely refuse to do good because we may possibly be tempted to do evil, or make the possibility of a subsequent fall an obstacle to an attempt to rise. A form of prayer such as the Lord's Prayer in the revised version, as published by the University of Oxford, would be one in which all worshippers, whatever may be our differences in the non-essentials of form and method, could readily join, and we may possibly take from its spirit, and the feeling of unity of ultimate aim induced by its repetition in common, a larger measure of charity and of mutual toleration. It may possibly be that many a man, whose faith may be somewhat delicate, may remember, that even the ignorant pagan, who was unable to give form to the object of his hopes, still worshipped where he could not fathom; for on the statue of the Egyptian Isis were inscribed the words - "I am whatever is, whatever was, whatever shall be, and mortal never yet has raised the veil that covers me."

Mr O'MALLEY

- I think the motion should be so amended that only a qualified clergyman of a recognised denomination, paid as a chaplain, should be selected to come to this House and offer the prayer. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am a man of the world, and I have had a lot of experience. I remember that a few years ago a mace was removed from the Parliament House of Victoria, and I remember also that the mace became one of the objects of ridicule of some of Solomon's lilies in this city.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order ! The honorable member is now referring to something which has nothing to do with the subject of this debate.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I desired to point out that that occurrence was one about which we ought to think of in the future. I recognise that our present Speaker is a just and religious man, and I would trust prayers in your hands, sir. But while our Speaker is mortal, and will die, the position is immortal, and will live on.

Mr Mauger

- The present Speaker will not be the last good man.

Mr O'MALLEY

- The Speaker will not be the last good man ; but even the man who took the mace from this House might be elected to the House and become Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order. I do not think the honorable member is in order in discussing the moral or religious tendencies of either the present or a future occupant of the Chair. If the honorable member may attribute to the Speaker good qualities, he may attribute bad qualities, and I think both are highly irregular.

Mr O'MALLEY

-Then how are we to reach the subject? I suppose all of us have been taught to cherish a deep-seated reverence for prayer, but should we retain that reverence if in this House we saw a Speaker with whom we had been on the " spree " the night before, praying for us when we ought to be praying for him? This is a question that is going to affect our future standing as a House. If we are prepared to have this House opened with prayer we certainly ought to be prepared to have a chaplain, and pay him like honest men, and not do it on the cheap. That is the position I take. In the United States they open the House with prayer, but there is a paid chaplain connected with Parliament, and known as the Chaplain of the House. In England, there is a paid chaplain, but there is a recognised State church in England, while there is no recognised State church here, and there is nothing in the Constitution which says that we should have a chaplain, or that we should open the proceedings with prayer I would like to ask the legal members of the House whether it would be really constitutional to have a chaplain and open the House with prayer. If we encroach on the Constitution, may it not be the first breach of which advantage may be taken in future to destroy the liberties of the people? I am thoroughly willing to have the House opened with prayer. I do not give second place to any man in the House in my reverence for prayer and for religion; but I do hope the House will not lend itself to becoming a part of the whole system of veiled hypocrisy which prevails throughout the world.

<page>818</page>

Mr Barton

- I do not know whether the honorable member wishes his suggestion to be put as an amendment.

Mr SPEAKER

- Does the honorable member for Tasmania move an amendment?

Mr KING O'MALLEY

- I beg to move as an amendment -

That the word "he" after the word " prayer " be omitted, with a view to inserting, in lieu thereof, the words "a chaplain appointed for that purpose," that "a" be omitted, and that there be inserted before the word "prayer" the words " the Lord's."

Mr MCDONALD

- I ask your ruling, sir, whether the amendment is in order. The amendment provides for the payment of a chaplain, and should not such a proposal be preceded by a message from the Governor-General?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The amendment does not provide for the payment of a chaplain. It will be competent for a chaplain to be appointed without payment.

Mr Barton

- There will be plenty willing to perform the service gratuitously.

Mr SPEAKER

- On the point of order raised by the honorable member for Kennedy, I may call the attention of honorable members to the fact that this motion is simply a recommendation to the Standing Orders Committee. It will be necessary before the Standing Orders Committee can make any definite provision that some appropriation should be arranged for, but there is no objection whatever on that ground to the motion proceeding in its present form. As to the point raised by the honorable member for South Sydney, it would be quite competent for the House at a later stage to make a further amendment.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - Before the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O' Malley, proposed his amendment, I had been considering whether this motion would not take a more acceptable form to members generally if it provided that the question be referred to the Standing Orders Committee instead of the House practically ordering that committee to prepare a standing order.

Honorable Members. - No, no.

Mr BARTON

- I am not going to move any such amendment ; there is, therefore, no cause for alarm. The amendment which has been put from the Chair precludes me from doing so if I wished, and I had grave doubts whether I should do so at any time. I am not about to oppose the motion, and, so far as the members of the Government are concerned, I am quite sure - and honorable members will agree with me - this ought not to be made a Cabinet question. Therefore, if there are any differences of opinion in the Cabinet on the subject - as to which I have not consulted my colleagues - there will be none the less friendship between its ' members. Although I do not oppose the motion, I have my doubts whether ordinances of this kind do really tend to the improvement of morality and the inculcation of piety. I have my doubts whether, apart from those prayers we say in church, we should not adopt the advice which is given by a very high teacher, who told us to pray in our closet. I recognise, however, that there are very large differences of opinion on the subject. I know that a large number of those who have their doubts as to the propriety of these ordinances are not so offended in their religious susceptibilities if they are carried out, as those would be who demand that ordinances of this kind should be observed if their wishes were not complied with. That being so, I am inclined to give way to the course which is least offensive to the religious susceptibilities of the public, and, therefore, to assent to a proposition of this kind. But I do hope this House, will not ask for the appointment of a chaplain.

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear.

<page>819</page>

Mr BARTON

- I think members generally approved of the course which was taken at the opening of the Federal Parliament, in the reading of the prayers by His Excellency the Governor-General and in His Excellency's swearing in the members of Parliament. That course was taken in order that there might be no religious quarrel on the subject. To appoint a chaplain of any denomination, unless we are so eminently successful as to find a religious chaplain of no denomination, would only go to feed those religious quarrels of which we have had more than enough in the country which ought to have the least of them - Australia. I therefore hope, quite irrespective of the question of salary which the honorable member for Kennedy has raised, that there will be no thought of appointing a chaplain, and that the prayer read will be purely unsectarian, and one acceptable to the feelings and wishes of members of every denomination in the community as well as to honorable members in this House. I believe in the suggestion contained in the amendment, that the prayer should be the Lord's prayer - nothing more and nothing less - a prayer which can be accepted by the Unitarian, and which contains no request of the Almighty which a member of the Hebrew faith could not readily accept. A prayer which is of the broadest, which for that reason appeals in the strongest degree to our common feeling of humanity and our common reverence for our Maker, is the kind of prayer which should be adopted ; and I hope no other prayer will be thought of by the Standing Orders Committee. For, myself, I shall vote for the motion without the amendment.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I follow the Prime Minister in his view, that this is neither a party question nor a Cabinet question, but one upon which every honorable member must vote according to his own conscience. If we can gather anything from the speech of the mover of the resolution, this matter has not been a, question of to-day. A movement has been going on for some time in order to bring about this result. I should have had more hesitation in coming to a decision on this question if it had not been the consequence or- corollary of a movement which was initiated during the sittings of the Federal Convention. Honorable members will recollect that it was the great desire of a large body of our fellow citizens - if not an overwhelming majority - that there should be some recognition of Almighty God in the Constitution. The beginning of our Constitution says -

Whereas the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, & c.

I do think that if this motion is not a necessary corollary, it is at least a reasonable consequence of the introduction into the Constitution of that clause, and whilst I, myself, do not feel very strongly upon it, I think, in view of the strong feeling of the great mass of our fellow countrymen, that we have no reasonable grounds upon which to oppose it.

Mr W H GROOM

- I hope that the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, will not press the amendment. Coming

from Queensland, I may say that in the first session of Parliament, which was held there in 1860, a motion was moved by the late Mr. Henry Jordan, a Nonconformist, that the proceedings of Parliament should be opened by prayer. The prayer suggested then was a prayer for the High Court of Parliament, adapted to the position of the State Parliament of Queensland. That prayer has been read by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and by the President of the Legislative Council from that time up to the present, and has met with universal concurrence. Of course we are aware that no two minds are constituted alike, and that every man has his own opinions with regard to religious matters. In the Parliament of Queensland there are some honorable members with peculiar ideas on the subject, and if they have any objection to the course taken by Parliament, they generally walk outside the Bar of the House whilst the prayer is being read, so that the religious susceptibilities of honorable members are not in any way offended. I agree with what has been suggested by the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, that the Lord's prayer would be an appropriate one with which to open the proceedings of the House. It embraces no religious dogma. It is, as the Prime Minister has observed, one which appeals to the common humanity of all of us.

An Honorable Member. -It is socialistic.

Mr W H GROOM

- It is socialistic, and was drafted by the greatest social reformer that the world has ever known. My principle reason in rising was to ask the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, not to press the amendment for the appointment of a paid chaplain. I am aware that the Speaker of the House of Commons appoints his own chaplain, and that the chaplain continues in office during the Speaker's term. But in England there is a recognised State Church, and a State clergyman is therefore appointed. But the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, must also know that the very fact that a chaplain is so appointed has given very great offence to other denominations, and seeing that we have no recognised State religion we ought not to follow in the footsteps of the mother country. I have sufficient confidence in the people of the Commonwealth, and in their choice of representatives, to believe that the gentleman whom they elect as their Speaker will always be a fit and proper person to read the Lord's prayer.

Mr O'Malley

- In deference to the wishes of honorable members I will withdraw the amendment.

<page>820</page>

Mr POYNTON

- The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, having withdrawn his amendment, I think it is advisable to set out clearly in this motion what the particular prayer should be, and in order to obtain an expression of opinion from honorable members on that point I move -

That, after the word " read," in the second line of the resolution, the words "a prayer" be omitted, with a view to the insertion in their place of the words " The Lord's Prayer."

Mr. V.L. SOLOMON (South Australia).I ask the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Poynton, not to press the amendment. If this matter is to be left to the Standing Orders Committee, I presume that, as it will need the concurrence of the House later on when embodied in a standing order, it will be very much better to leave it to the Standing Orders Committee to present a suitable form of prayer, such as would not be objectionable to any section of the Commonwealth community. That would be very much better than dictating in the resolution the special form of prayer known as The Lord's Prayer. Personally, from my standpoint, I can see no objection to The Lord's Prayer whatever, but at the same time we must consider the view of others who may have a different opinion. I think that the prayer should be such as would be unobjectionable to all sections of the community. I therefore ask the honorable member not to press the amendment, but to leave the motion in the exact form in which it has been proposed by the honorable member for Kooyong.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

STATISTICS RE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Mr KNOX

- I move -

That there be laid before this House a return (to be compiled from the latest available statistics) giving the following information: - (1) A list of the manufacturing industries operating in the several States of the

Commonwealth, distinguishing; as to respective States. (2) The number of factories operating under each industry. (3) The average number of persons employed in each industry, distinguishing as to males and females. (4) The average wages paid to the persons employed in each industry, also distinguishing as to males and females. (5) The rate of Customs or Excise duty by which the several industries are at present protected in each of the States.

I do not desire to take up the time of the House, because the Minister for Trade and Customs has been good enough to say that this information will be supplied. I will, therefore, content myself with simply moving the resolution as it stands.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I think this may be an opportune time for asking the Government in what way they intend to compile their statistics. There is a State statistician in each of the States, and in these matters of manufactures there has always been a difficulty in tabulating the information according to the particular business, which may be called a manufactory. A great deal of these statistics, as a matter of comparison, depend for their value upon their method of compilation, and it would be of great advantage if there were some agreement among the statisticians of the different States as to the basis of these compilations, so that when we made use of them for the sake of argument we would know exactly that they were all compiled on the same basis. I think the information for which the honorable member asks, like a great many other things in the way of statistics, will be very necessary for the intelligent discussion of the Tariff question when it comes up; but all statistics depend for their value on their reliability.

Mr KINGSTON

- I fully recognise what the honorable member says, and we must do the best we can under the circumstances. Statistics are of very little use for the purpose of comparison if not compiled on the same basis. Where there is a difference as regards the basis, we will indicate it in the return.

Sir PHILIP FYSH

- I think it would be well to amend paragraph No. 5 by including the schedule of exemptions from duty, because we encourage our various industries by exempting a very large quantity of raw material. Unless that is included, the object the honorable member has in view is only partly secured. I submit that the exemptions from duty, as scheduled in the various Customs Acts of the States, is of as much importance as the difference between the rates of duty and excise. I intend to move -

That after the word "duty" (line 15) the words "and schedule of exemptions therefrom" be inserted.

Mr. V.L. SOLOMON (South Australia). I have no doubt this return will be very interesting to most honorable members, but I do not think it goes quite far enough. I desire to move an amendment to paragraph 3, which reads - "The average number of persons employed in each industry, distinguishing as to males and females." I want to insert the word "adult," and after the word "females," the words "and male and female children under fourteen years of age," so as to get as full a return as we possibly can.

Sir John Forrest

- What about those from 14 to 21 years of age?

<page>821</page>

Mr V L SOLOMON

- They, I presume, will also be shown.

Sir John Forrest

- They would not be adults.

Mr Glynn

- Say the average number and the age of the persons employed.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I think the honorable member's suggestion will meet the whole case. I will move that, after the word "number," there be inserted the words "and ages." The paragraph will then read - "The average number and ages of persons employed in each industry, distinguishing as to males and females."

Mr Barton

- What the honorable member wants to know is whether boys or men are employed in these places.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Precisely. I want to know whether they are boys, or girls, or adults.

Mr Barton

- The honorable member does not require the ages of these persons?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- No.

Sir William McMillan

- The honorable member wants to know the number of apprentices.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I think I shall have to put the amendment in another form. I will move -

That before the word " males " in paragraphs 3 and 4, there be added the word, " adult," and that at the end of paragraph 3 there be added the words, "and male and female children under 14 and between 14 and 21 respectively."

I will leave it at that. We do not want the number of children at 15 years of age or 16 years of age. If we have the aggregate number of males and females up to 14 years of age, and those between 14 and 21 years of age, and the aggregate number of adult males and females, I think that will be sufficient for all reasonable purposes.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- An amendment will also be necessary in paragraph 4, so as to obtain the same information in regard to the average wages paid.

Mr SPEAKER

- If the House pleases, I will take that as a consequential amendment.

Mr ISAACS

- It strikes me that in the form in which this motion stands it will not be of very much use. The return is to be compiled from the latest available statistics, whatever they are. That is a difficulty in itself, because the latest statistics available do not cover the ground we desire. I am sure we have all experienced very considerable difficulty recently in obtaining from statistics the information we require. To be of any use to us this information must be obtained, as it seems to me, from sources extending over a wider -area than the available statistics. Then there is another consideration. The motion refers to the average number of persons' employed, and the average wages paid. For what period of time is this average to be calculated ?

Mr Poynton

- We want the figures at the time of compiling the returns.

Mr ISAACS

- What is the average number at a particular time? We can have the actual number at a particular time, but the average number must extend over some period.

Sir William McMillan

- Let it be for the latest year.

Mr ISAACS

- But the motion does not say so. It is so indefinite that it cannot be worked out. Some information should also be obtained as to the minimum wage paid in each industry to adults and children respectively. This is necessary, because when the matter comes to be investigated we will find that at the root of many of the troubles we are considering is the question of the minimum wage. I therefore beg to move -

That the following be added to the motion : - 6. The minimum wages paid in each industry to adults and to children respectively.

Mr MAUGER

- In seconding the amendment, I desire to say that I agree with the honorable member for Indi, when he states that it will be exceedingly difficult to collect these statistics on a satisfactory basis. For instance, on the question of wages I find that some firms include the wages paid to managers and foremen, who receive perhaps £10, £8, or £6 per week. By that means they bring up the average very considerably. Others exclude the salaries of such employes. To get at the correct figures it will be necessary to obtain the ages and the average paid in the respective divisions of labour. Unless we have uniformity the return will be of very little value.

Mr SPEAKER

- If this amendment is inserted it will exclude the proposed amendment to paragraph 5, which was

temporarily withdrawn.

Mr ISAACS

- It is immaterial to me in what order my amendment is placed.

<page>822</page>

Mr SPEAKER

- Very well ; I shall put it in this form : - 4a. - The minimum rate of wage paid in each industry to adults and children respectively.

Minister for Home Affairs

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

. - Before the resolution is carried I should like to point out that it will be necessary to have the factories and the classes of employment placed under headings. During a discussion in relation to factories which took place the other night, exception was taken, very justly, I think, to any comparison between the hands employed in each State without designating exactly the divisions of labour in which they were employed. I should like it to be understood that in this return a heading is to be given to each industry.

Mr SPEAKER

- That will be necessary under the motion as it stands.

Amendment agreed to.

Sir PHILIPFYSH (Tasmania).- I beg to move -

That the motion be amended by the insertion sifter the word " duty" in paragraph 5 of the words " and the schedule of exemptions therefrom."

Mr THOMSON

- I would draw the attention of the mover of this motion to the fact that the information which he asks for in division either cannot be given or will be given in such a form as will -be quite misleading to the House. It refers to "the rate of customs or excise duty by which the several industries are at present protected in each of the States." I suppose that what is desired to be arrived at is what are the duties on the articles produced by each of the industries in each State, but the motion will not achieve that result. How can statisticians say, for instance, what are the ingredients of the articles produced by some of these industries? How can they say what is the duty, or by how much a particular article produced by a certain factory is protected? They cannot go into these details, and yet to comply with the motion they will have to do so or else to furnish a misleading return. The only thing that should be asked for is the customs and excise duties, or the customs or excise duties in each of the States on the article manufactured therein.

Sir Philip Fysh

- Is not that information definitely asked for in paragraph 5 of the motion ?

Mr THOMSON

- No. The paragraph to which the honorable member refers reads- -

The rate of customs or excise duty by which the several industries are at present protected in each of the States.

By asking for that information the honorable member for Kooyong asks that the question of how much protection is provided by these duties be entered into.

Mr Kingston

- That can be ascertained by finding out what the customs duties on the manufactured articles are.

Mr THOMSON

- Not necessarily; because, as the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, has pointed out, the degree of protection afforded to an industry depends very much upon the terms upon which the raw materials used in it are admitted - whether they are admitted free or have to pay duty ; and. it will be impossible for the statisticians to ascertain exactly what are the raw materials which are used in the production of certain manufactured articles. I think that it would be better to ask for the information by making the motion read -

The rate of customs or excise duty on the articles in use by such industry in each of the States.

I think that that would carry out the intention of the mover, and, in asking for the information in that way, we do not go into the question of protection at all. If the motion is made to read in that way, the amendment of the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, will be unnecessary. The honorable member is trying to arrive at something which he believes the mover of the motion wants to arrive at; but

if we ask for the rate of the duties of CUSTOMS and excise, and of customs or excise on the articles produced by these industries in each State, we shall get the necessary information.

Sir Philip Fysh

- I think that the statisticians of the various States will know what is wanted.

Mr THOMSON

- If the mover of the motion has no objection, I would suggest that it be amended as I propose.

Mr. KNOX(Kooyong). - I am deeply grateful to honorable members for assisting to make this return of statistical value ; but I do not agree with the view of the honorable member who has just spoken. I think that the motion, as it stands, asks for the information that we want to obtain - that is, the rate of the duties by which each industry in the various States is supported or assisted. If the motion was worded as the honorable member for North Sydney suggests, I think it would tend to defeat the object we have in view.

<page>823</page>

Mr Thomson

- I have no desire to press my suggestion.

Mr. W.H. GROOM (Darling Downs). To my mind the amendment of the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, is more valuable than the suggestion of the honorable member for North Sydney. From the discussion to which we have listened it would appear that only the States of Victoria and New South Wales are concerned in this matter ; we have not heard a word about the other States. Now, in Queensland we have adopted a policy of our own, which is quite distinct from that of any of the other States; a policy which we think is beneficial to our interests, and which, by establishing our industries, has given employment to hundreds and thousands of our population. Under this policy we remitted, in 1896, £50,000 worth of duties, chiefly duties on raw material. If the motion is not amended as the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, has proposed, there will not be a word about this exemption in the return which is being moved for. I have some knowledge of the difficulty of collecting these returns, and I know that in the State of Queensland alone a great many supernumerary clerks will have to be appointed to undertake the work of obtaining this information, because they are now preparing for the meeting of the State Parliament, and if the honorable member thinks that the return will be ready in time to enable this House to use the information in connexion with the discussion on the proposed Tariffs, he will be very much disappointed. If the House had been sitting in January last, and the honorable member had moved for the information then, the return would probably be nearing completion now, and we might have hoped to obtain the information by the end of June or the beginning of July ; but, under present circumstances, I think that a great deal of the information which is being asked for will not reach us before the end of November, by which time I hope the Tariff question will be pretty well settled. In my opinion the amendment of the honorable member for Tasmania (Sir Philip Fysh) meets the difficulty which the honorable member for North Sydney has suggested, far better than his own proposition does, and I hope that the honorable member for Kooyong will accept it.

Mr EWING

- It seems to me that it would be sufficient if paragraph 5 were made to read -

The rate of customs or excise duty in each of the States.

The words " by which the several industries are at present protected" are really surplusage, being merely explanatory of the action of these customs and excise duties, and it seems to me that if honorable members get the information which has been asked for in regard to the rate of these duties, they will be able to draw their own inferences as to their effect quite as well as the statisticians could draw such inferences for them. I think that if the honorable member for Kooyong agrees to the omission of the words to which I refer, it will end the debate. I do not intend to press for their omission ; I make the suggestion for the honorable member's consideration.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON (Tasmania). If I understand the reason which has actuated the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, in moving the amendment, it seems to me that it will not do what he wishes to do, but will to a great extent make the return abortive. If he seeks to show the extent to which the various industries of the States are protected by the exemption of the raw products imported for use in their manufacture, that information should be asked for by adding another paragraph to the motion - "The extent to which the exemptions of duty protect the several industries in the State." The object of the amendment is, I assume, to show the extent to which our manufactures are protected by the admission of

raw products duty free. If that be not the object, I cannot see why the amendment has been moved.
Amendment agreed to.

<page>824</page>

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I had no intention of interfering with this motion ; but, as it seems to me to have developed into an attempt to obtain information which will assist various fiscal doctrines, and as I observe that a number of honorable members are endeavouring to cast the motion in such a form that the facts elicited will be such as they can hereafter use for the purpose of showing us that what they have told us before was true, I propose to add a sixth paragraph to deal with the difference of opinion which has for many years existed between the statisticians of the different colonies. For many years it was the practice of politicians to refer to the number of manufactories in the various States. We used to hear from the Victorian protectionists that the New South Wales freetraders were including every blacksmith's shop under the head of a manufactory. Statisticians got over that difficulty by ascertaining what the horse-power of the different manufactories was. I propose to insert a sixth heading giving the horse-power of the manufactories in existence in the respective States. That will give us some idea of the difference between a blacksmith's shop and a manufactory, which probably gives occupation to 100 or 500 persons. I move -
That the motion be amended by the addition of the following paragraph: - "7. The horse-power of the factories in existence in the respective States."

Mr POYNTON

- I think that if we want to make this return complete, we need not go any further than has been proposed. A return showing the number of factories will not be correct unless it starts on a proper basis - unless it shows the number of hands. If I read this motion aright, it does not in any way stipulate as to what shall constitute a factory. If in one State, one man constitutes a factory, and if in another State four is the minimum number, honorable members can see how delusive the return will be for comparative purposes. I would suggest that this further sub-section be added - "And the minimum number of employes which constitutes a factory in each State be stated."

Mr Kingston

- They will proceed on the same basis.

Mr POYNTON

- If it is understood that the statisticians in preparing the return will distinguish between a factory in a State where four is the minimum and a factory in another State where one man constitutes a factory

Mr Kingston

- They will have to proceed on the same basis.

Mr POYNTON

- If that is so it will be all right. .

Mr. KNOX(Kooyoung). - May I be permitted to explain to the House that the statisticians agreed in 1896 as to what should be regarded as a factory. Their definition of factories is as follows : -

All establishments employing four hands or upwards in the manufacture of articles either for the trade, or for stock, or for individual orders must be returned ; also all establishments with less than four hands, where machinery worked by steam, gas, electric, water, wind, or horse power is used ; as well as all industries of an unusual or interesting character.

Mr. MAUGER(Melbourne Ports).- I am not going to offer any objection to the motion, but I would suggest that it might be possible to get complete data from the information derived from the census. Surely an appeal from the Minister for Trade and Customs to the various States would elicit data far more reliable and uniform than any data based on factory statistics. We all agree that the present system is unsatisfactory. It is not a bit of use compiling the return unless, so far as different States are concerned, it is prepared on the same basis. I would suggest to whoever may compile the information that he should, as far as possible, rely on the census.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. ISAACS(Indi). - In order to make the return as complete and fair as we can, I beg to move -

That the motion be amended by the addition of the following paragraph - "The return to cover the years 1898, 1899, and 1900, separately distinguishing each, and wherever later or more complete information is available from sources other than official statistics, such information shall be given, and the sources

mentioned."

Mr HUME COOK

- I rise to second the amendment. Unless we get reliable information the whole return will be practically valueless. If we get an assurance from the Minister for Customs that the statistics will be arranged on a uniform basis so that they will be really comparable, it will be satisfactory to the House. But if the statistics are to be compiled just as the ordinary statistics are compiled in each State we shall be no further forward than we are by comparing the records of the State statisticians. What we want is to get something which will be really reliable, and based on figures and facts which are compiled in an exactly similar way in each State. If we get that assurance, together with certain specific orders, I think that the information will be of use and will be reliable; without it it will not.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - Without any reflection on my honorable friends who have moved amendments, I do hope that this will be the last one moved on this motion. I take it that the object of the motion is to procure some information that will be placed in the hands of honorable members before they discuss the Tariff.

Mr Isaacs

- We were invited to move amendments.

<page>825</page>

Mr BARTON

- I am not raising an objection, but I want to point this out in case there may be any more amendments. Without naming a day for the introduction of the Tariff - which is a secret so momentous that I am sure I shall not be expected to disclose it - I think I may say that the return to this motion may run a very close, or almost neck and neck, race with the Tariff, and will be last if we have much more added to the motion in the way of research. There is so much to be done under the various heads, so much information to be collected, especially by a Commonwealth which has not yet had time to turn round or look about for a statistician even, which has so many Acts of Parliament to pass before it can take up the Tariff, notwithstanding its eagerness to deal with that question, and it means to deal with it this session - that the position is a difficult one. If with all the work we have on hand we have to make researches of the most laborious character, with the help only of the statistical departments of the various States, which differ in the basis on which they collect their statistics, he would be a fortunate man indeed who could get the information which has already been asked for, before the Tariff is brought in. That is the point I want to emphasize. We shall do all we can to prepare this return in time. We shall not play with it. We shall endeavour to get it and have it in the hands of honorable members. But if it happens that the task is one which cannot be performed in time for the introduction of the Tariff, I want to throw out this note of warning, we shall not hold ourselves responsible. At the same time we shall do everything we can. to meet the views of honorable members.

Amendment agreed to.

Question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Ordered- That there be laid before this House a return (to be compiled from the latest available statistics) giving the following information: -

A list of the manufacturing industries operating in the several States of the Commonwealth distinguishing as to respective States.

The number of factories operating under each industry.

The average number of persons employed in each industry, distinguishing as to adult males and females, all male and female children under fourteen and between 14 and 21 respectively.

The average wages paid to the persons employed in each industry, also distinguishing as to adult males and females, and male and female children under 14 and between 14 and 21 respectively.

The minimum rate of wage paid to adults and to children respectively.

The rate of customs or excise duty and the schedule of exemptions therefrom by which the several industries are at present protected in each of the States.

The horse-power of the factories in existence in the respective States.

The return to cover the years 1808, 1899, and 1900, separately distinguishing each, and wherever later or more complete information is available from sources other than official statistics such information shall

be given and the sources mentioned.

RATE OF WAGE : HOURS OF LABOUR

Mr MAUGER

- I beg to move -

That in the opinion of this House it is the duty of the Government to make provision in all its contracts for the payment of a minimum rate of wage, and for the fixing of a maximum number of hours of labour.

I do not propose to detain the House with any lengthy remarks. Honorable members will know that the principle of a minimum wage has been adopted by the London County Council, a large number of municipal councils all over the world, and the British House of Commons. So far back as 1893, when Mr. Campbell Banuerman - now leader of the Opposition - was a responsible Minister, and was speaking in the name of the Government, he said -

When we say we agree to the proposition contained in the amendment, we mean that the Government should show themselves to be amongst the best employers of labour in the country; that they should be, if I may be permitted the expression, in the first flight of employers. . . I accept in the fullest sense the principle that the terms of Government employment should be beyond reproach. We have ceased to believe in what are known as competition or starvation wages.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - Will my honorable friend pardon me for a moment! This is a motion which it will take some hours to discuss. There is no possibility of the debate upon it being concluded this afternoon. There is upon the notice paper, however, other business sufficient to occupy the remaining time until the House adjourns. May I suggest to my honorable friend that he should allow this motion to stand over, without concluding his speech, so that the remaining business may be concluded before the adjournment. Otherwise, the danger may be that the honorable member may be left without a quorum.

Mr Mauger

- If the Prime Minister will afford me an opportunity of bringing the motion on again upon another occasion, I will consent to a postponement.

Mr BARTON

- There is very little business on the paper for next Friday.

Mr O'Malley

- Oh ! I have a big job on - then.

Mr BARTON

- We might find time at the end of Government business on some' evening to allow the honorable member to continue. He might put his motion on the paper for another Friday.

<page>826</page>

Mr MAUGER

- I am anxious that this question should be settled as soon as possible, but I also desire to suit the convenience of the House. If the Prime Minister promises that I shall have an opportunity of proceeding with it on a later day, I will adopt his suggestion

Debate adjourned.

SUNDAY LABOUR

Mr MAUGER

- I beg to move -

That in the opinion of this House it is the duty of the Government to make such arrangements as will ensure, at least, one day's rest in seven for each of its employes.

Honorable members will perhaps be surprised to learn that there are in the employment of the Commonwealth Government a number of men who have not had one day's rest in seven for years past.

Mr Mahon

- In the employment of the Commonwealth Government?

Mr MAUGER

- Yes.

Mr Mahon

- Does the honorable member say they have not had one day's rest in seven for years past ?

Mr MAUGER

- Yes, and I mean what I say. A young man writes to me -
I have been four years in the employment of the Government, and I have been working every Sunday and all holidays without extra pay, and without any relief whatever.
Surely it is the duty of the Government to see that this condition of things is ended.

Mr Kingston

- This refers to the Customs department.

Mr MAUGER

- Yes.

Mr O'Malley

- It is pure savagery.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Does the honorable member mean to say that this occurs under the Government of Victoria?

Mr MAUGER

- I am sorry to say that it occurs under -other Governments as well, to my personal knowledge.

Sir John Forrest

- No.

Mr MAUGER

- The Minister of Defence shakes his head, and says "No"; but that only shows that he is ignorant of the facts.

Mr. V. L. Solomon. - There is nothing in it,

Mr MAUGER

- Does the honorable member mean to say that the fact that even one lad has had to work for the Government without receiving extra wages, and without one Sunday's rest, has "nothing in it"?

Mr Mahon

- For how long?

Mr MAUGER

- For four years.

Mr Mahon

- Not continuously ?

Mr MAUGER

- Yes, continuously. One man employed in the Government launch is on duty every Sunday and on all holidays.

Sir John Forrest

- Perhaps he is asleep most of the time.

Mr Mahon

- And this in the paradise of the, working man !

Mr MAUGER

- Whether Victoria is the paradise of the working man or not, what I have described occurs in this State.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Cannot the honorable member draw the attention of the Government to specific cases without occupying the time of the House with this motion?

Mr MAUGER

- I think we should lay it down as a principle that this Commonwealth will permit every employee to have at least one day's rest in seven ? I propose the motion without any further comment.

Mr HUME COOK

- I beg to second the motion. I think we should affirm the principle, at the outset, that at least one day's rest in seven shall be given to every employee of the Commonwealth. A practice has grown up in Victoria, at any rate - and here I speak of a State about which I know something - of employing men continuously on Sunday labour. They are not paid extra wages for this work, but they are occasionally given time off. This is a practice which should be deprecated. If Sunday labour is necessary - and I would have as little of it as possible - the men who do it should receive extra pay; and under all circumstances every man should have one day off in seven. That means that in place of working some men at high pressure, a

greater number of men will be employed. For these reasons, I am strongly in favour of the motion, and I hope it will commend itself to the judgment of the Ministry and the House.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I am in sympathy with the object of this motion, and so also, I am sure, are my colleagues in the Government ; but whether it will be desirable to affirm it in its present form, may be another question. I take it that the honorable member for Melbourne Ports does not insist that the one day's rest for employes shall always be on the same day of the week ?

Mr Mauger

- Certainly not.

Mr BARTON

- Because, if that were so, it would be impossible to carry on some of the operations of government. I take it that the honorable member means to provide for one day's rest in seven on the principle that that makes the man better able to do his work ?

Mr Mauger

- Hear, hear.

<page>827</page>

Mr BARTON

- I believe that it really does. At the outset, however, the question is largely a financial one. The Federal Government have taken over three large departments, and may before long have to take over another, viz., Quarantine and Light-houess.

There is a vast number of employes in the Customs and Postal departments. The financial operations of these departments are considerable. Especially is this the case with the Postal department. The Government cannot take upon itself to make this reform as a lightning change. It cannot be clone in an instant. But notwithstanding the question of expense, the Government is ready to make arrangements of the kind desired, as soon as a fair opportunity will admit, if that is what the honorable member means.

Mr MAUGER

- Hear, hear.

Mr BARTON

- If the honorable member will accept an amendment, I shall be prepared to recommend the House to adopt the motion. I beg to move -

That after the word "arrangements" the following words be inserted - "as soon as practicable."

Sir John Forrest

- What about the lighthouse-keepers, who have to work every day?

Mr BARTON

- No doubt they do" What I mean is that as soon as and wherever practicable we will make the change. There is no intention to keep a man without one day's rest per week, and we will carry out this reform as early as we reasonably can. But there cannot be a time fixed within which the Government must make an alteration of so drastic a diameter. I am prepared to act in reason, and with the utmost good faith in this matter, and therefore I have moved the insertion of words which I think will be acceptable to this House.

Mr Piesse

- The amendment will not read as drawn. The words proposed to be inserted should come after the word " make."

Mr BARTON

- It does not matter which way it is done. The wording is not very nice, anyhow.

Mr. HIGGINS(Northern Melbourne).The Prime Minister says it is absolutely impossible to make lightning changes in departmental arrangements so as to secure a seventh day rest for every one. Unfortunately, however, it has come to my knowledge this week that the Postal department has made a lightning change in the other direction, without giving any warning to the persons concerned.

Mr Barton

- I have it from the Postmaster-General that the change referred to has not been made. It was merely a subject suggested for consideration, not emanating from himself; and before he well knew what it was, it was all over the town.

Mr HIGGINS

- I am very glad to hear the Prime Minister say that. I may justify myself to the House by saying that I was informed it was intended to ask the employees who have only worked six days a week hitherto at the telephone exchange, to work seven days a week without extra pay or any allowance whatever. I am glad, indeed, to hear that the Prime Minister has not adopted that system.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr MAHON

- I beg to move as an amendment-

That after the word "employees" there be inserted the words "and that as far as possible no public servant be called upon to work more than 44 hours a week. "

Mr SPEAKER

- I cannot accept that as an amendment to the motion. It raises quite a new issue. Does the honorable member wish to speak to the motion as amended?

Mr MAHON

-No further than to say that I was not aware at the time I proposed the amendment that it raised a new issue. The amendment is certainly an addition, but, at the same time, it seems a necessary corollary to the motion of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports. I merely wish to say, further, that members on this side of the House, as well as myself, are undoubtedly in favour of the motion. We think it eminently a reasonable proposal that Government employees should have at least one day's rest in every seven, and I hope it will be carried out as soon as possible. I am quite sure that the motion will be supported quite as cordially on this side as on the other side of the House.

Question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

STATE IMPORTATIONS

Ordered(on motion by Mr.piesse, Tasmania) -

That there be laid before this House a return showing under the name of each State of the Commonwealth, in respect of sugar, tea, spirits, tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, kerosene, wines, and beer - 1. The quantities and values imported between 31st December last and the 31st May last. And also in separate columns for comparison 2. The same information for the corresponding period of the year 1900 ; and 3, the actual mean of the importations for the corresponding months of the five years' period ending 31st December, 1900.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DUTIES

<page>828</page>

Mr PIESSE

- I beg to move -

That there be laid before this House a return showing under the name of each State in respect of sugar, tea, spirits, tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, kerosene, wines, and beer - 1. The quantities upon which customs and excise duties have been paid for every year of the five years' period ending 31st December, 1900. 2. The actual mean of such quantities per head of the mean population of each State for the same period. 3. The duty value (in one sum) upon an uniform Tariff of such mean quantities for each State separately, and the mean for Australia of the six separate duty values so ascertained.

Honorable members will see this motion, like that just passed by the House, is submitted in order to obtain information, which, I understand, the Prime Minister is willing to afford.

Mr THOMSON

- I would like to draw the attention of honorable members to the fact that no duty is paid on kerosene in New South Wales, and that in consequence the motion, as worded, will not give the honorable member the information he desires. The honorable member desires information as to the quantities of the articles mentioned on which duties are paid in each State, the actual mean of such quantities per head of population, and what a uniform Tariff would yield on the actual mean.

Mr Piesse

- I am quite agreeable to leave kerosene out.

Mr THOMSON

- If what I have stated be the information desired, the honorable member can obtain it by inserting in paragraph 1 the words "and the quantities imported of each article."

Mr Kingston

- If the honorable member takes the quantity entered for home consumption, he will get what he wants.

Mr SPEAKER

- I would suggest that the honorable member insert the words - "The quantities imported duty free."

Mr THOMSON

- I will act on the suggestion of the Minister for Trade and Customs, and ask that the words "and the quantities entered for home consumption" be inserted after the word "paid." Perhaps I had better leave the honorable gentleman to submit an amendment.

Mr KINGSTON

- I take the position to be that goods are entered for home consumption, whether duty be paid or not, and if the motion read - "the quantities entered for home consumption every year of the five years' period,"

Are, the honorable member will get the information he wants. I beg to move -

That the words "upon which customs and excise duties have been paid" be omitted, with a view to the insertion in lieu thereof of the words "entered for home consumption."

Amendment agreed to.

Question, as amended; resolved in the affirmative.

WOMEN VOTERS

Motion (by Mr. G. B. Edwards, South Sydney) proposed -

That there be laid before this House a return showing- (1) The estimated number of women in the States of South Australia and Western Australia who were qualified by age to vote at the recent federal elections in those States. (2) The number who were enrolled. (3) The number who actually recorded their votes at the said elections.

Mr TUDOR

- I beg to move as an amendment -

That in paragraph 1 the words "men and" be inserted after the word "of."

I do so in order that the return may be made as complete as possible. It will then show the number of males on the roll, also the number of females, and the number who recorded their votes.

Amendment agreed to.

Question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

PUBLIC SERVICE

<page>829</page>

Mr HUME COOK

- I beg to move -

That a return for each department of the Commonwealth (Customs, Defence, &c.) be laid before this House, showing - (1) Separately, the number of persons engaged in special, professional, clerical, and non-clerical duties; and the totals under each head; (2) The yearly salaries and wages paid in each division of each department, and the totals; (3) A comparative statement of the maximum and minimum remuneration given in each State for all classes of work of a corresponding character.

I have altered the motion slightly from its original form, for the sufficient reason that it would have entailed much more work than will be necessary if the House agrees to the motion in its present form. My object is to follow on the lines of the Public Service Bill which has just been introduced, and in which civil servants have been classified in four divisions under the headings of special, professional, clerical, and non-clerical. The motion will enable us to get the return asked for in time to discuss it in connexion with the Public Service Bill. To-day the honorable member for Tasmania (Mr. O'Malley) asked a question for the purpose of eliciting certain information. Numbers of honorable members no doubt have been plagued and pestered as to the rates of salary to be paid. The Government doubtless have had the information prepared for themselves, otherwise I do not understand how they could have arrived at any specific salary to be paid throughout the Commonwealth. I only ask that honorable members shall be placed in possession of the same information as the Government must have obtained for themselves in connexion with the Public Service Bill.

Mr. BARTON (Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - May I ask the honorable member to inform the House what is intended by the words "Customs, Defence, &c."? Is it intended to limit the return to Customs and Defence, or what departments does the honorable member wish to be included?

Mr HUME COOK

- I mean the transferred departments. The words " Customs, Defence,&c.," are merely explanatory.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I second the motion, and I want to say right here that the salaries paid in Tasmania, are simply disgraceful.

Mr ISAACS

- I would direct attention to paragraph 3 of the motion, I apprehend that my honorable friend wishes to know the remuneration given by the Government of each State for the particular classes of work mentioned, otherwise the return will cover a very extensive field.

Mr HUME COOK

- Certainly.

Question resolved. in the affirmative.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. -I beg to move -

That the Standing Orders Committee, the Library : Committee, and the House Committee have leave to sit during any adjournment of the House and to confer with the committees of the Senate appointed for similar purposes.

This is the ordinary formal motion, and I wish to limit it to the Standing Orders Committee, the Library Committee, and the House Committee. The Printing Committee in the Senate has not the authority to confer. I had intended to cover the four committees, but under the circumstances I cannot do so.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr CONROY

- I beg to call attention to the fact that the second readings of the Judiciary Bill and of the High Court Procedure Bill are set down for Tuesday next, and that no copies of those Bills have yet been furnished to honorable members.

Mr BARTON

- The second reading of those Bills will not be moved until copies have been distributed. I may tell the honorable member that it is necessary to get Supply as soon as possible, and I believe that the Supply Bill will be ready to be gone on with on Tuesday. If Supply is speedily granted, then the Minister for Home Affairs will move the second reading of the Public Service Bill. In the meantime the other Bills will be put in circulation as rapidly as possible.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

<page>830</page>

15:50:00

House adjourned at 3.50 p.m.