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1901-11-27

House of Representatives

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

PETITIONS

Mr. POYNTON presented a petition from residents of South Australia praying that the retail trade in intoxicants in the Federal Capital should be exclusively owned and carried on by the Commonwealth.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN presented a petition from oyster lessees of New South Wales praying for an increase in the proposed import duty on oysters from 2s. to 3s. per cwt.

Petitions received.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr R EDWARDS

- I ask the permission of the House to make an explanation with reference to a statement made by the honorable member for Maranoa yesterday afternoon during my absence from the House.

Mr SPEAKER

- I might point out that the honorable member for Maranoa subsequently withdrew the statement to which I presume the honorable member for Oxley now refers.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I am quite aware of that, Mr. Speaker, but if the honorable member had been in earnest, he would probably have asked that the statement should not be published in Hansard. The honorable member gained his point by having his statement published in Hansard, and I am quite sure that it will be a very fine instrument for use against the honorable member for Oxley at the next general election. I have been accused by the honorable member of a most dishonorable action.

Mr SPEAKER

- When a remark has been withdrawn, it is not in order for any honorable member to make any further reference to it ; therefore, if the honorable member intends simply to refer to the remark which was withdrawn by the honorable member for Maranoa last evening, he will not be in order.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I would ask the indulgence of the House to enable me to explain what actually took place. As the result of a conversation with two or three other honorable members whose desire was to find out what length of adjournment at Christmas time would be generally acceptable, I undertook to test the feelings of honorable members on both sides of the House. Among others to whom I spoke on the subject was the honorable member for Maranoa, who was agreeable to a six weeks' adjournment; but I must do him the justice of saying that he said if it came to a division he would certainly vote with the Government for a shorter adjournment. I think I have a right to make this explanation. I am quite sure that no other honorable member would think I could act so dishonorably as to do anything that would be calculated to interfere with the elections in Queensland next year. Such a thought never entered my head, and it remained for the honorable member for Maranoa to suggest the idea that it was desired to keep honorable members away from Queensland during the elections in March or April next.

QUESTIONS

MONEY-ORDER OFFICES

Mr MAHON

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

During what hours on week days other than Saturdays, and on Saturdays, are money orders issued in the several States?

What justification exists for closing the money-order offices on the Western Australian gold-fields at 2 p.m. on week days other than Saturdays, and at 11 a.m. on Saturdays?

Whether this limitation of hours is not productive of much public inconvenience, as well as loss of time, to the officials, who are obliged to balance accounts twice, instead of once, daily?

When does the Postmaster-General intend to render uniform those regulations existing in the several States which govern money-order transactions ?

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Minister (without portfolio)

Sir PHILIP FYSH

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

The hours during which money orders are issued in the several States on week days, other than Saturdays, and on Saturdays, are as per schedule attached.

The money-order offices on the Western Australian gold-fields are, it is reported, not closed at 2 p.m. on week days, or at 11 a.m. on Saturdays ; but orders issued after those hours are necessarily delayed until the following day, because they are too late for despatch by the mail trains under the existing train arrangements.

The inconvenience caused is reported to have been trifling.

The Postmaster-General proposes to render uniform the regulations existing in the several States governing money-order transactions when the new regulations are issued.

TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY SURVEYS

Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether he has received any reports with reference to the preliminary railway surveys made between Port Augusta in South Australia and the border of Western Australia, and between that border and Kalgoorlie ; and, if so, whether he intends to lay the reports on the table of this House ?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- No such reports have yet been received.

Mr. S. H. LAMBTON.

Mr McCOLL

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

Is Mr. S. H. Lambton - late Deputy Postmaster-General of New South Wales - now in the employ of the Commonwealth ?

If so, in what capacity is he employed, and what are his duties ?

How long is it intended to employ him ?

What remuneration does he receive ?

Is the remuneration paid in addition to the pension which he receives from the New South Wales Government ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

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

Mr. S.H. Lambton - late Deputy Postmaster-General of New South Wales - is now temporarily employed by the Commonwealth.

He is employed to advise the Postmaster-General, pending legislation, in all matters hitherto dealt with by the Public Service Boards of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, and, if required, in all matters of a similar character in the other States of the Commonwealth.

It is intended to employ him until a commissioner or other authority is provided under the Public Service Act of the Commonwealth.

The remuneration he received is an honorarium of £50 per month.

The remuneration is paid in addition to the pension which he receives from the New South Wales Government.

RECORD OF SOLDIERS' PUNISHMENTS

Mr CHAPMAN

asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice -

If he will endeavour to arrange that a record of all punishments inflicted on men serving in South Africa be sent to the Commonwealth Defence department, whether such men were enlisted in Australia for colonial or Imperial corps ?

If he will arrange that Australian soldiers sentenced to imprisonment in South Africa shall serve their time in Australia, and not in England, and be permitted to write to their Australian relatives ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

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

This will be done in regard to sentences by general court martial. It would not be advisable, or in the

interests of the men, to advertise punishments for minor breaches of discipline.

This department has no information as to any Australians being in prison, but inquiries will be made. It does not seem advisable to ask for special treatment for soldiers belonging to Australia. There is no reason to think that any restriction is placed on writing to relatives and friends.

COMMONWEALTH FLAG

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Mr CHAPMAN

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether the Government has arrived at any decision as to the adoption of a Commonwealth flag ?

If the flag chosen at the recent competition is to be adopted ?

If the Australian flag, when selected, will fly as the national flag on the ships of the auxiliary squadron, and on all Australian forts ?

Mr BARTON

- The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow : - 1 and 2. The Government is submitting for the consideration of the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a flag, the design of which was sent in by five individuals at the recent competition, and between whom the prize of £75 is divided upon the recommendation of the judges. Also another design which met with the approval of the Naval Assessor to the Board of Judges.

I am not yet in a position to give an answer to this question.

PAPER

Sir PHILIP FYSH laid on the table the following paper : -

Information respecting discontinuation of the payment of £2,500 per annum for conveyance of newspapers by rail in New South Wales.

TARIFF

In Committee of Ways and Means : -

Consideration resumed from 26th November(vide page7781).

Item 15. Candles, tapers, and night lights ; solid spirit heaters, including the weight of the immediate containing package ; stearine, paraffine wax, beeswax, and Japanese or vegetable wax ; also lard and refined animal fats, per lb., 11/2d.

(Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

. - In this (item the Government propose to reduce the duty from 11/2d. to 1d., which I think twill meet the case.

Mr KIRWAN

- I think this item ought really to be on the free list, but in a spirit of compromise I would suggest that the duty be reduced to 1/2d. per lb. It will be generally agreed that people who live in the black blocks and those engaged in the mining industry are the chief users of candles. They are not used to any large extent in the cities, where there is an abundance of electric light and gas, but by the people in the country districts and, generally, by the poorer classes of the community. Therefore, a heavy duty of this kind would be unfair in its incidence, as it would fall with undue severity on those who are least able to bear such a tax. Furthermore, a duty of 1 1/2d., or even 1d., would be prohibitive. The experience of Victoria under a duty of 1d. per lb. showed that it was virtually prohibitive. The imports of candles into Victoria in 1900 from outside the Commonwealth amounted to 280,000 lbs.

Mr HUME COOK

- Double that.

Mr KIRWAN

- The importation of candles into New South Wales, where there was no import duty, during the same year amounted to 3,109,123 lbs. I claim that the duty of 1d. per lb. - as statistics show - has been absolutely prohibitive. I should like those honorable members who so frequently talk about the effect of protection upon wages and the labouring classes, to compare the state of the candle industry from a wage-earner's point of view in protected Victoria with that in free-trade New South Wales. I have collected some evidence upon this question, and I think the committee will see that it points decidedly to the advantage of the wage-earner in New South Wales. In this connexion I quote the following passage from

the Age of 11th August, 1896. It is a statement which was made the previous evening at the Trades and Labour Conference by Mr. Wright, who said -

He thought that some one besides the manufacturer was entitled to protection. The candle trade was well protected, but for the worker it was the worst paid industry in the country. The employes worked ten hours per day for a wage of from 25s. to 27s. Old. per week - 3d. to 5 1/2d. an hour. These were the wages paid at Kitchen's candle factory in Victoria.

Mr McColl

- Who is Mr. Wright?

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Mr KIRWAN

- I presume he is a representative of the wage-earners, otherwise he would scarcely have been speaking at the Trades and Labour Conference. I should like to go still further, and read a statement which was made at a meeting of the employes of the soap and candle trade, held in the Trades Hall, Melbourne, last August. The Age of 9th August said-

A meeting of the employes in the soap and candle trade was held in the Trades Hall on Tuesday evening. Mr. Stephen Barker, who presided, pointed out that the soap and candle industry was a protected industry. Long hours and low pay were rampant in the trade," and also boy competition. He understood that there were men working from (6 p.m. to 6 a.m. (night) for 25s. and 30s. per week.

That statement was received with cries of " That is true." I might also mention that some time ago a Royal commission was appointed to inquire into the working of the Factories and Shops Act. This body held meetings in Sydney, and the evidence given before it was published in the Daily Telegraph and the Sydney Morning Herald. In that evidence Mr. Robert W. Upfold, manager of the Sydney Soap and Candle Company, Newcastle, is reported to have said -

Those engaged in the manufacturing portion of the company's business worked nine hours per day excepting Saturdays, when they worked half a day. The wages ranged from 10s. per week for boys to £2 per week for labouring men, and £3, £4 and £4 10s. for other men. Roughly speaking, the company employed two men for every boy it had in its employment.

The report of the Chief Inspector of Factories in Victoria for the year 1900 states that the average wage paid to adult males in this State is 36s. 5d. per week. Yet Mr. Upfold, in his evidence, said that in Sydney the wages for adult males ranged from £2 to £1 10s. per week. These facts indicate how much protection the manufacturers in this particular industry deserve, and I specially recommend them to the consideration of those honorable members who profess to be, and who I believe mean to be, good friends of the wage-earners. In connexion with this item I should also like to refer to stearine, which is an extract from tallow. I believe there are something like eight or nine stearine manufactories throughout the Commonwealth. If the duty proposed by the Government is levied upon stearine and paraffine, the result will be the closing of nearly every candle factory which does not manufacture stearine. That duty will virtually give an absolute monopoly to those who make stearine.

Mr Watson

- Id. per lb. is not a heavy duty.

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Mr KIRWAN

- To my mind it would be prohibitive so far as stearine is concerned. It is commonly -asserted - although I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement - that some time ago a ring was formed amongst the stearine manufacturers in Victoria. They agreed to quote the same price for stearine, and I believe that on one occasion when the candle-makers endeavoured to manufacture a composite candle composed of paraffine wax and stearine, they refused to supply them with stearine. If the committee agree to the imposition of the proposed duty upon stearine, all the candle manufacturers of the Commonwealth who do not manufacture this commodity will be placed absolutely at the mercy of those who do. Consequently there will always be an opportunity presented to the manufacturers to form a ring and charge what prices they choose to rival candle-makers who do not adopt the more elaborate process- of extracting stearine from tallow.. I might also point out that the raw material of stearine,, which is tallow, can be obtained cheaper in Australia than in any other part of the world; At the present time, the- stearine manufacturers enjoy an absolute natural protection,, because it costs 1 2 per cent, to send tallow home, in order that the

stearine may be extracted from it, and 18 per cent., to bring out the stearine itself. This constitutes- a. natural protection- of 30, per cent, in favour of the local producers of stearine. The extraction of this article really requires a very small amount of labour. It costs, I understand something like 10s. per ton,, whereas the moulding of candles costs £3- 10s.. pelton. It is really when the. moulding, process begins that labour is- employed. As regards the duty upon paraffine, which, is. another commodity that is used m. connexion with the manufacture of candles, I think that 1d. per lb. would, constitute a considerably higher impost than that amount would represent in the case of stearine. A duty of 1½d. per lb.,. I calculate, would represent something like 70 percent.; but, of course, 1d. per lb. would not be quite so much. Paraffine is about half the price of stearine, with which it is used largely in the manufacture of candles. I am informed that composite candles are quite as good as are stearine candles. The candle industry will materially suffer if this duty be placed upon paraffine, for the simple reason that it will confer an absolute monopoly upon those who undertake the extraction of stearine.- Hitherto, there has been no duty upon paraffine in New South Wales, Western Australia, and I think, in Tasmania. The imposition of this rate, therefore, will close up all the smaller factories, which do not extract stearine,. and place them absolutely at the mercy of those who do. To my mind, even a duty of 1d. per lb. upon candles- is needlessly, high, from a protective standpoint, and it will certainly be destructive of revenue. A rate of ½d. per lb. would,. I believe, yield more revenue than we> shall derive from a duty of 1d. per- lb. Mr. Kitchen, who, I believe, is one of the largest manufacturers in Victoria, gave some very significant evidence on this point before the Victorian Tariff Commission of 1894. A portion of Mr. Kitchen's evidence reads as follows : -

When you started manufacturing candles, and the duty was put on, did it have the effect of reducing the price to the consumer ? - No ; that came on very gradually.

Did it have the effect of increasing the price ? - I suppose it did to some extent.

In reply to further questions, Mr. Kitchen admitted that but for the duty European makers could and would undersell him so far as the better class of candles used in the mining industry were concerned. As to the lower quality, he asserted that he could make them cheaper than any imported candles, even if there were no duty. That evidence shows that a duty of 1d. per lb. is altogether too high. The Government include in this item such commodities as lard and refined animal fats, and this seems to me very absurd. It would appear that the Government have introduced these items merely to give a certain class the impression that they are receiving some benefit, while, as a matter of fact, the proposed duty is practically a sham. Refined animal fats are neither more nor less than tallow, which is never imported ; and it would be just as reasonable to propose a duty on wool. I understand that some of the Tasmanian manufacturers of candles were very much alarmed at this particular item, and communicated with one of the Ministers, the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh. In reply to a communication sent to the honorable member concerning stearine , the honorable member wrote as follows to Messrs. Miller and Company, of Hobart -

Restearine : I find manufacturers here will supply any quantity at European prices, plus freight and charges to Australia. With what reason, then, can I urge the free importation to the ruin of the local factories ?

I have no doubt that was the information the honorable gentleman received from the manufacturers, but we know what was done before when stearine was refused to the manufacturers of composite candles. There is no guarantee that if we agree to this particular item, the ring, or monopoly, established in Victoria, will not be extended to the whole of the Commonwealth, to the injury of all engaged in the candle industry. Further, the admission of the manufacturers that they can supply any quantity at European prices, plus freight and charges to Australia, shows that no protection is necessary. My suggestion of a duty of 1½d. per lb. will give the manufacturers protection to the extent of 10 per cent, which, at any rate, is as much protection as the letter I have quoted shows these people require. I am informed that South Australian manufacturers of candles successfully competed in New South "Wales for the Broken Hill mining contract, when there was no protection in New South Wales, and that, though South Australian manufacturers had to compete against' the world, their price was less than that quoted for the imported article. Under these circumstances I move -

That the words and on and after the 28th November, 1901, 1½d. per lb." be added.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- The honorable member who has just sat down comes from a State where the duty on candles has been

for many years 2d. per lb., but he does not seem disposed to recognise that the Ministry has made any concession in proposing a reduction from 11/2d. to 1d. per lb.

Mr Kirwan

- Stearine and paraffine wax are free in Western Australia.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- In New South Wales we have had experience of an attempt to establish this industry, under the very moderate Dibbs Tariff, and of the result of the abolition of that protection. In 1891 before the Dibbs duty of 1d. per lb. was imposed, the production of candles in New South Wales amounted to 13,803 cwt. In the year after the imposition of the protective duty, the production sprang up to 29,501 cwt.; in 1893 to 31,341 cwt.; and in 1894 to 42,724 cwt. That was the result of a very moderate protective duty. In 1895, when the Dibbs Tariff was abolished, the production, which had, so to speak, attained high water mark, began to fall off. In that year the production fell to 41,346 cwt.; in 1896 to 33,340 cwt.; in 1897 to 23,555 cwt.; in 1898 to 20,650 cwt.; in 1899 to 23,884 cwt; and in 1900 to 18,513 cwt. The protective duty gave the industry a start, and as I have shown, the production went on in leaps and bounds. But since the abolition of protection the production has been on the down grade. There probably never was a more conspicuous illustration of the potent influence of moderate protection. The duty was gradually reduced to vanishing point, and we see the results of free-trade.

There is no industry which should be considered as native and " to the manner born " so much as this, which is based on raw material most prolific in Australia, and it certainly ought to be sympathetically regarded even by free-traders. I cannot understand the alacrity and enthusiasm with which free-traders urge the total abolition of protective duties, seeing the good results which frequently follow their imposition and the bad results of their abolition.

Sir William Lyne

- When there was a duty of 1½d. per lb. in New South Wales, the price of candles went down in that State.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I am reminded that under the protective duty the selling price in New South Wales was cheaper than that under the free-trade regime.

Mr Thomas

- Of what use, then, was the duty to the manufacturer 1

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Whilst I believe in a protective duty, I see no occasion whatever for any increase of duty in Victoria. During the preliminary debate I drew attention to the fact that it was proposed to increase this duty from 1d. to 1½d. per lb., and I asked for some explanation. I have not heard of any demand for an increase in Victoria, where the result of a duty of 1d. per lb. has been to maintain and steady the market without increasing importations. In 1894, when there was a duty of 2d. per lb. in Victoria, the candles imported into that State amounted to 3,509 cwt., and in 1895 to 2,107 cwt. In 1896, when the duty was reduced to 1½d. per lb., the importation amounted to 3,768 cwt. From 1897 to 1900, although the duty was reduced from 1½d. to 1d. per lb., there was no increase in the 'importation', but rather a falling-off, the importation in the last-mentioned year amounting to only 2,500 cwt. That shows that a duty of 1d. per lb. has been effective in protecting the Victorian industry from unnecessary invasion and swamping by foreign manufacturers. It has been asked why this duty is necessary - why it should not be - abolished. I believe, of course, that this industry is one which, under normal conditions of equality of labour, ought to be able, to fight the whole world. But I ask free-trade members how we can continue to manufacture candles in Victoria or any part of Australia at the current wages here, in competition with the starvation wages paid in other countries. What are the relative wages paid ? In Victoria candlemakers are paid about 5s. 8d. per eight hours' day. Compare that rate with the wages paid in Belgium. There the wages paid for corresponding work are only 3s. per day. In Germany the rates are about the same, while in Italy female candle-makers are paid 10d. per day, and males 2s. 7d. per day. In France a great deal of the work is done by females, who are paid 1s. 9d. per day. How can the honorable member, as a labour representative, expect the workers of Australia to compete against foreign workmen under those circumstances 1

Mr Thomas

- The value of the labour employed in making a pound of candles does not exceed one-sixteenth of a penny.

Mr Kirwan

- Why does not the honorable and learned member for Bendigo tell us what the candle-makers of free-trade New South Wales are paid 1

Sir JOHN QUICK

- If the workers employed in the continental countries were paid the same wages, and were employed under the same conditions as our workmen, I should be willing to vote for the abolition of this duty. But, until their conditions approximate those of our labourers, it would be unfair to break down the barrier against their productions. After all, a rate of 1d. per lb. is not excessive. It merely steadies the market, by preventing large cargoes of cheap candles from being brought in. It is not a prohibitive duty. It does not prevent the introduction of candles of special quality if desired. . There were imported into Victoria last year £5,945 worth of candles, but the importation into New South Wales was £67,469 worth. Those candles should have been made in Australia.

Mr Thomas

- They would be made if our people had sufficient enterprise.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I want to see the candles used in Australia made here by Australian workers, at fair rates of wages, and under fair conditions.

Mr Thomas

- Hear, hear.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I do not want 'to force Australian candle-makers and soapmakers to compete with the sweated and almost servile labour of European countries. On ' that ground I think that the proposals pf the Government .should be supported, and the free-traders, instead of regarding with contempt the concession which has been offered to them, should hail it with satisfaction.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I am glad that the debates of the last day or two have opened the eyes of some people to the real effect of these duties. I said last night that we were entering upon the discussion of a series of proposed duties which are absolutely prohibitive. Knowing what I do of the Prime Minister and of his fiscal creed, I can scarcely believe that he would knowingly agree to such duties. The argument of the honorable and learned member for Bendigo began very reasonably, judged from his stand-point; but we know that in countries not so favorably circumstanced as this, and having a denser population, the result of protection has been to reduce wages to a point at which it is almost impossible for those who receive them to live decently, and Germany is beginning to feel the recoil of her over-production under protection. But I do not want to wander into the general argument. I wish to know from the Prime Minister if it would surprise him to learn that a duty of 11/2d. per lb. upon candles would reduce the importation into New South Wales by 92 percent?

Mr Mauger

- A good thing too.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- No matter how temperate the arguments of honorable members opposite are at the beginning, they always close with the cry - " Let us manufacture all these things in Australia, and shut out the foreigner." Where is the moderate compromise promised in the Government manifesto? As a free-trader, my inclination would be to vote for the excision of a duty like this, because the use of candles enters into so many employments ; but we, on this side of the Chamber, recognise that we have made a bargain. We are ready to accept moderate revenue duties, though, no doubt, all duties have a protective incidence. As we wish to keep our bargain to the letter, we are willing . to agree to the imposition of 1/2d. per lb. upon candles. Even the imposition of 1d. per lb. would reduce the importations of the port of Sydney by about 60 per cent. In 1899 the quantity of candles imported into New South Wales from the United Kingdom and foreign countries was 2,695,000 lbs., which under a duty of 1d. per lb. would return £11,230. Now, the

Government expect to obtain only £1,250, plus whatever extra amount would arise from the reduction by 1/2d. in New South

Wales from the duty which they propose, and for that expectation to be correct there must be a reduction of 60 per cent. upon the present importation. In other words, the proposed duty takes away the bulk of the trade of Sydney except 12 per cent.

Sir George Turner

- It may take away the New South Wales trade with Great Britain and foreign countries, but the importations from adjoining States may be increased.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I have already pointed out the unfair way in which the Government have dealt with the State of New South Wales. That State contains 37 per cent. of the population of Australia, and has hitherto admitted candles duty free, whereas in Victoria a duty of 1d. per lb., and in the other States a duty of 2d. per lb. has been imposed. If in New South Wales there had been a duty of 1/8d. per lb., it would have had to be considered in striking an average for the whole of the States ; but, inasmuch as there is no duty, the Government have taken the average of the duties in the remaining States, and left New South Wales altogether out of consideration. As in New South Wales and Victoria there are two-thirds of the population of Australia, a duty of 1/2d. per lb. would have been a very reasonable compromise. Even the imposition of a duty of 1/2d. per lb. will probably reduce the New South Wales importations by 50 per cent. I have here the second report of the board appointed by His Excellency the Governor in Council in the year 1895. As I said last night, we must not accept even the duties which appear in this comparative statement as a criterion, because many of them were imposed to effect certain purposes, and to set certain industries upon their legs ; they are practically inoperative at the present time, and do not apply as elements of calculation in arriving at an average. The report to which I have referred has rather an interesting passage relating to candles, which reads as follows : -

Very important facts in regard to the price of candles were brought before us. A maker stated that the price of ordinary stearine candles was from 41/4d. to 41/2d. in England, and from 43/4d. to 63/4d. here, but the lowest class in England was superior to the lowest class in Victoria. This is, perhaps, an under-statement of the difference ; but even if the price in Victoria is only, say, 1d. per lb. greater than in England, the fact is very significant, as showing that Victorian makers cannot produce stearine candles at less than 20 per cent. advance on the prices in Europe, although living in a colony where the raw material - tallow - is cheaper than in any market in the world.

Mr HUME COOK

- Wages are higher here than there.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Wages bear a very small relation to the cost of production, and the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, when stating that wages were so much higher here than in the old country, in fairness ought to have stated in what proportion the wages entered into the question of this manufacture. Now I would ask honorable members to listen further to the report of the board, from which I have been quoting. These are not my words, but those of Victorians -

We recognise that candle making is a natural industry in Victoria, where tallow is one of our principal products ; but we are at a loss to understand why candles should be dearer here than elsewhere, and why the public should be asked to carry any burden in support of an industry which is carried on under peculiarly advantageous circumstances. We further fail to see why any duty at all should be necessary to support a well-established business against the competition of foreign makers, who are handicapped already by having to pay the freight on their tallow to Europe and back again in the form of candles. The present duty is almost prohibitive, only 495,638 lbs. having been imported in 1894, and the importations have been fast declining.

Sir George Turner

- How much was the duty then?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- It was 1d.

Sir George Turner

- No, it was 2d. The board recommended a reduction to 1d., and we made it 1d.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- And 1d. duty has had the same prohibitive effect as the 2d. duty. The report proceeds -

The evidence further shows that candles are cheaper in Sydney than in Melbourne. The persons who affirmed this were certainly not disinterested, but, without trusting entirely to the statements made, we think the fact was established. It was said that a description of candles sold in Sydney to the public at 4d. per lb. is in Melbourne sold at 6d. per lb., and that there is, therefore, a difference in price of 2d. per lb. in favour of the purchaser in New South Wales ; this is, however, denied by the local makers.

Mr Mauger

- Was there not a minority report protesting against the port from which the honorable member has just read?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- There may be, but there are some people, as there are some honorable members on the other side of the House, who would object to anything.

If we protest that a duty is prohibitive, all that the honorable member for Melbourne Ports says is - " A jolly good thing, too " ; and that is all the consideration we get from the honorable member under the compact between us. I should like to know from the Prime Minister now what he considers is a reasonable compromise. If I can prove by figures that a duty of 1d. per lb. is prohibitive, and will have the effect of enormously reducing the importations into New South Wales, I suppose he will allow that some consideration should be shown to that State. The duty proposed by the Government will reduce the imports into New South Wales by about 88 per cent. The whole of the revenue expected from this duty is £1,250, and surely if a duty is imposed which will reduce the importations into Sydney by 50 per cent., it should form a reasonable compromise, from the point of view of the Prime Minister. I do not say that it is a fair thing at all, but if we are to deal with this Tariff with the double object of obtaining revenue and affording incidental protection, surely I have a right to ask the Prime Minister to keep to the pledges he has made. If a duty of 1/2d. reduces the importations into New South Wales, the one free-trade State of Australia, to the extent of 50 per cent., surely that should be sufficient to carry out the compact between us ; firstly, to give a fillip to a protected industry ; and secondly, to return a certain amount of revenue. I do not think the Prime Minister has thoroughly grasped the exact effect of some of these duties. Under the Government proposal, the ad valorem duty will amount to only 23 per cent., and that to some honorable members may, on the face of it, seem to be reasonable. But we should always consider the duty in relation to the article itself. I understand that there is 1d. per lb. difference between the price of New Zealand bacon and of bacon produced in the Commonwealth, and a duty of 2d. per lb. on that article would practically prohibit the importation of anything from beyond the States.

Mr Watson

- The honorable member has stated that only £1,250 would be derived from a duty of 1d. per lb. on candles ; but that amount was estimated by the Treasurer to be produced by a duty of 1 1/2d. per lb.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Yes ; I was in error. Under the reduced duty, as now proposed, there would be an increase in the revenue ; but, even with the lower impost, there will be a falling off in the importations into New South Wales of from 60 to 70 per cent., because, as the duty is increased, its prohibitory or protective effect is enlarged. In other words, we cannot apply any regular arithmetical rule to these reductions. If we started with a 1/4d. duty, we should keep out a certain amount of importations ; if we fixed the duty at 1/2d., we should probably keep out more than double the quantity - perhaps four times as much ; and, if we raised the duty to 3/4d., we should probably keep out double that amount again. So that I think I am perfectly within the mark in saying that the duty, even at 1d., would, on the calculations of the Treasurer, reduce the importations by probably 70 per cent. The reduction of the duty will not make the difference that the honorable member for Bland apparently expects, because we are now at the prohibitive point, and as long as we keep there, or above that point, the amount of the duty makes very little difference. I say that a duty of 1d. is the prohibitive point, and that a duty must be reduced considerably beneath its prohibitive point in order to produce revenue.

Mr Kingston

- Was the duty that was imposed by Sir Henry Parkes prohibitive?

Mr Barton

- The honorable member collected the duty of 1d. per lb. on candles during the whole of the time he was a Minister in the Parkes Government.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- We had a majority of only four in the House when that Ministry was in office, and I never knew yet of a Ministry with a majority of only four that had the courage to attempt to alter the fiscal policy of the country. It must be remembered that the Tariff of New South Wales grew up without any scientific arrangement whatever. When the Government wanted a little money they clapped a duty on this, that, or the other article, with the result that the Tariff became so incongruous that in some instances duties were levied on raw materials whilst the manufactured article went free. Moreover, a duty which might have been a good revenue duty twenty years ago would to-day be absolutely prohibitive.

Mr Barton

- And yet candles are cheaper now.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- If my honorable friends suppose that I am going to be led into a free-trade and protectionist controversy, they are much mistaken. We are willing to meet the Government in imposing duties that will raise revenue, and at the same time have a protective incidence, but we are not agreeable to impose duties that will be practically prohibitive. Our compact was that we should have neither extreme protection nor extreme freetrade; and if there is one item in this Tariff in which a duty of a halfpenny represents the utmost extent to which we can go in the way of compromise, it is that which we are now discussing. If the Government do not agree to this compromise, they are practically repudiating the unmistakable language of the Prime Minister, who said that we could not have extreme protection any more than we could have extreme free-trade. Considering that in New South Wales this article was previously admitted free, that in "Victoria the duty upon it was 1d. per lb., and that in the other States it was subjected only to small revenue duties, I repeat that 1½d. per lb. is a fair compromise upon a purely federal basis. A rate of 1d. per lb. reaches very nearly the prohibitive point, and unless we wish to create a state of affairs in which we shall absolutely shut out the importation of candles and deprive ourselves entirely of revenue, we are bound to accept the proposal of the honorable member for Kalgoorlie.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- The best way to blow away some of this cloud will be to read from the State Tariffs of Australia the duties which have hitherto been operating. The duty in New South Wales has been nonexistent since the Reid Tariff. Under the Parkes Tariff, it was either 1d. or 1½d. per lb. Perhaps, as the honorable member for Wentworth administered the duty, he will tell me which it was.

Sir William McMillan

- I cannot recollect.

Mr BARTON

- That accounts for some of the honorable member's arguments. In Victoria, the duty which formerly operated was 1d. per lb, whilst in Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia it was 2d. per lb.

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Mr Kingston

- And in Western Australia to-day they charge 2d. per lb.

Mr BARTON

- I am reminded that in Western Australia to-day they can and do charge a duty of 2d. per lb.- upon candles coming from the rest of Australia, so that the honorable member for Kalgoorlie has nothing to gain for the miners in that State by protesting against the imposition of this duty. The honorable member for Wentworth has expressed regret at my absence in Sydney yesterday, but his regret did not deter him from attacking me in that absence. I am obliged to him for his chivalrous reference to-day, which contrasts very ill with his action of yesterday.

Sir William McMillan

- Why delay business?

Mr BARTON

- If any honorable member of the Opposition is absent from the House for five minutes when we make some reference to him, a tremendous hubbub is created. I have no objection to being attacked in my absence, because under any circumstances there will always be those who are ready, to" choose my absence as a convenient stage for attack. I am ready to meet all these attacks and to have my absence made the subject of comment, irrespective of whether I am in Sydney or engaged in some other part of this building. There is no other honorable member who has so many calls upon his time as I have. Every one must know that the duties of the Prime Minister require him to be absent sometimes, and it often occurs that it is absolutely necessary for me to be out of the chamber in order that the business of the country may be carried on. I leave that matter now, and also my reference to the honorable member for Wentworth, whom I do not wish to regard as other than a friend, and who, I am sure, would not make any harsh reference to me, unless in the heat of debate, when we are sometimes carried further than we wish to be. Of course it is a convenient thing to select phrases from the utterances of an opponent, and an inconvenient thing to take the broad sense of those utterances, and abide by them. The broad sense of my utterance at Maitland was that we were about to encounter an enormous difficulty in adjusting in some reasonable fashion six different Tariffs to a common Tariff; that we should find great differences, which, unless the task had necessarily to be performed, would be regarded as almost impossible of adjustment. In performing our task, I said that we had to look at the pre-existing duties, and endeavour to arrive at some reasonable line of accommodation between them. When I stated that we were in favour of revenue without destruction, I uniformly said, in all my speeches, that a majority of the members of the Ministry were protectionists, and that revenue without destruction meant a continuance of protection. I did not say that once, but I said it during the whole course of my speeches, extending through the entire campaign. That is the fair part of the reference, which we cannot get any of my honorable friends opposite to remember. They will not give one credit for having said in their entirety the things which one did say. Let us assume that their memories are short - shorter upon this question than upon any other. They seize hold of every little phrase which can be used to discredit an opponent, whilst their honest loss of memory prohibits them from learning the truth of what was meant. It is time that I made some protest against tactics of this kind. When honorable members charge me with being unfair, I ask them what they think of the spirit of fairness which dictates comments of that sort ? Iri no speech which I made in propounding the policy of revenue without destruction will it be found that I picked out petty items for the purpose of discriminating between them, because I knew that the task before the Government would render that impossible. I endeavoured rather to lay down some broad line to which we should as far as possible adhere.

Mr Conroy

- On a point of order, I should like to know to what item the Prime Minister is addressing himself 1

Mr BARTON

- I am answering the remarks of the leader of the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN

- The question before the Chair is the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie. The leader of the Opposition dealt with some remarks which were made last evening, and the Prime Minister is not out of order in replying to them. In accordance with parliamentary practice, a certain privilege is at all times given, with the concurrence of the whole committee, to the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition.

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Mr BARTON

- I was remarking that it seems to be convenient for some honorable members to select atoms from my speeches without reference to the context by which those atoms- are controlled. It could never be said with reference to any speech that I was dealing directly with any paltry item of this kind, or that I did so when I stated that the Tariff would have to accommodate the pre-existing state of affairs in the various States to the new conditions of federation. Whilst making it perfectly clear that we should not allow industries to be destroyed, and that we should not be deterred from imposing a duty upon any article from a consideration of the fact that it would be protective in its incidence, I nevertheless pointed to the fact that the difficulty before us was the adjustment of preexisting conditions, by which alone a successful

Tariff could be made for all Australia. We knew full well that our task could be accomplished only at the cost of exciting resentment and opposition in every State. One expected what has followed. One anticipated that the States which had not been accustomed to look outside their own borders would complain when they found duties adjusted in a measure different from that to which they had previously been accustomed. In Victoria it might reasonably be urged that the duties are too low ; whilst in New South Wales we might expect to hear that they are too high. But the point to remember is that we cannot have common duties without having duties which are lower than those to which the people have been accustomed in one State, and higher than those which they have been called upon to bear in others. We have endeavoured to strike a mean of duty which will not destroy industries, and which will be lower than the extremes which have prevailed. A duty on candles of 1½d. per lb. is lower than the extremes which have hitherto prevailed in four of the six States of the union. It is only higher than the rate which has operated in Victoria. The reduced duty to which the Government are willing to agree represents the lowest duty that has been operative in any State. How, then, can it be regarded as prohibitive? The honorable member for Wentworth was himself Treasurer of the Parkes Administration from 1889 to 1891, when a precisely similar duty was operating in New South Wales. That was after the memorable election in which the late Sir Henry Parkes declared that he had nailed the free-trade flag to the mast, and when he came back from the country with a majority such as could have swept away any duty of this kind if it had not been considered a revenue duty. But although the present leader of the Opposition was a powerful member of the free-trade party in the New South Wales Parliament from 1887 to 1889, and was Treasurer of that State for the two succeeding years, no action was taken to abolish the impost. On the contrary, both he and the party to which he belongs were instrumental in the preservation of this duty for a period of four years. How, then, can he say that such a duty means absolute destruction of revenue? Has he forgotten that every external duty which we propose is accompanied with a measure of free-trade, which nobody thought of in those days, and which nobody could possibly have given to Australia ? Is it necessary to remind him that this Tariff has set more than half of the external imports into Australia, absolutely free? I beg leave to doubt his statement that the duty of 1½d. per lb. upon candles would reduce the imports of Sydney by 92½ per cent. The honorable member for Kalgoorlie said that a duty of £d. per lb. represented 10 percent. If that be so, the rate proposed by the Government is equivalent to 20 per cent. How can the honorable member contend, therefore, that, with all the markets of Australia open, a duty of 20 per cent, upon an article of this kind is prohibition ? Is there any one who does not see that, with the altered conditions of trade, many matters will move in a different way from that in which they have moved before ; and that, because there is a very much wider market to capture, competition will be relatively keener ? Is it not reasonable to suppose that competition will be keener with a market of 4,000,000 to supply than it was when we had one of only 1,333,000 in New South Wales or one of 1,250,000 in Victoria ?

Mr Thomson

- The foreign exporter had the market before.

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Mr BARTON

- The foreign exporter had not the market in the same measure. The foreign exporter had much of the market of New South Wales, but the border duties between the States impeded the movements of his trade, and the removal of these duties will make it easier for him to extend his operations in the competition which will follow. If that is so, the duty, which is the same as that in operation in one of the centres before this Tariff was introduced, is not likely to operate so strongly against the importer as that which existed before, simply because his operations are more facilitated. "Whatever honorable members may think of this argument - which however, is borne out by the facts of trade - it remains that this is a 20 per cent, duty, and that that has been described as prohibitive. Since when did such a duty begin to be prohibitive ? How can it be a prohibitive duty in regard to the entire market of Australia, offering as it does so many more openings for the capture of trade than could possibly be afforded when the States were split up, and each of them surrounded by a "ring fence." The excuse of the honorable member for Wentworth for not having taken off this duty, and for treating it as a free-trade duty under a free-trade Tariff, is that the Ministry to which he belonged had a majority of only four. Of course, we are all subject to differences of opinion, but I remember very well that when we came back from the general election in

New South Wales in 1889, it was the contention of the party to which I belonged that the Government had a majority of only three or four, whereas the other side, which included the honorable member for Wentworth, always made out, both in their parliamentary and their press utterances, that they had an overwhelming majority. At any rate the Ministry, remained in office . for two years, and there was no proposal on any high project which the Government could not carry, whether their majority was four or more. The fact was that the Ministry, whether from the accommodating conduct of the Opposition or otherwise, enjoyed a very serene run of office, until a certain opportunity occurred for the right honorable leader of the Opposition - who now leads the honorable member for Wentworth - to turn out of office the majority which he had been supporting.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I want, in the first place, to make an explanation, in fairness to myself and to my attitude towards the Prime Minister. I did not know until the beginning of this week that the right honorable gentleman was not returning to Melbourne until today. Some honorable members, to whom I spoke in regard to the trend of business in the House, knew that I had intended to write a letter to the Prime Minister on Tuesday morning, asking him to be good enough to be in his place when the order of the day for going into Committee of Ways and Means was called on, as I intended to make some personal observations. Yesterday, which was the only time when I could do this, I asked the Attorney-General to request the Minister for Home Affairs to be in his place ; and it was only as a matter of absolute necessity that I made the remarks yesterday in the absence of the Prime Minister. As to reflecting on his being out of the House, I think the right honorable gentleman knows well enough that a comment on the absence of an honorable member conveys no reflection.

Mr Barton

- I do not accuse the honorable member of making any reflection in that connexion.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Had this been an ordinary matter, or one which could be brought up on a motion for an adjournment of the House, I should have awaited the arrival of the Prime Minister. I do not think it is one of my defects that, if I have a charge to make, I am afraid to face .the person to be charged. We had passed a duty on bacon which I considered prohibitive, and there were other duties following it which, in my opinion were also prohibitive. In view of these proposed duties, the Prime Minister will allow that in the position I occupy I could . not abstain from . saying what I did say until some of those duties had been passed. To have done so would have been absolutely a dereliction of duty. I am sorry that the main point of my argument has been missed by the Prime Minister. Several of the events to which he has referred are absolutely irrelevant. What on earth has the condition of a Tariff six or seven years ago to do with deciding what is fair play now to New South Wales or any other State? Supposing I had never been in the New South Wales Ministry or Parliament, and the Prime Minister had urged as an argument that in 1889, when a certain person was Treasurer, there was, in New South Wales, a ' duty of 1d. per lb. on candles. That would have been an absolutely irrelevant argument. We must take the position of New South Wales to-day, after a period of complete free-trade for six - or seven years. So far as my personal explanation is concerned, I have to say that we could not have changed the Tariff at that time owing to the small majority we had in Parliament. On the other points the Prime Minister has simply' repeated what I consider a very unfair process in dealing with this item. He instances Western Australia, Victoria, , and the other States as having charged a certain duty on this commodity, and points to the fact that the Commonwealth Government propose to impose only a duty of 1d. He ignores the fact that the one State of New South Wales has 37 per cent. of the population of Australia, and surely ought to receive consideration. I absolutely object to this question being regarded from a purely prohibitive or extreme protectionist point of view. The Prime Minister knows as well as any man that the glory of New South Wales is its great commercial position ; and while we are willing to yield a certain amount of that position as the sacrifice we are paying for federation, we do not want to yield it all. I am glad the Prime Minister is now present, and that the Ministry have made a movement in the direction we desire. I hope for the sake of the rapid discussion of the Tariff - of which I am pretty well sick and tired - the two right honorable gentlemen in charge of it, instead of allowing us to exhaust ourselves to the extreme as we did last night, will be willing to consider arguments when they are submitted, and to make concessions when the absolute effects of duties have been clearly proved.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The honorable member wants the Government to concede everything, and to accept his proposals every time.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- This is very much like the business of a Dutch auction, where the article is put up at a figure which is never expected to be realized, and, as in a deal between Chinamen, 1s. is asked and 6d. offered.

Sir George Turner

- That is not holding out an inducement to reduce the rates.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- But it is a very good illustration of the position. As a final word, I would say that if we take the different items one by one, in the comparative estimate supplied by the Treasurer - to whom I give credit for affording us all the information in his power - and if we consider that New South Wales has 37 per cent. of the population, and strike a fair average, we shall find that in nine cases out of ten these duties are practically fixed at the maximum. That is not fair, and in view of the discussion which has taken place, I ask the Ministry to reconsider the position, and to come down with concessions, and so save, a great deal of time.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I earnestly hope that there is no conspiracy between the Government and the acting leader of the Opposition to delay the business of the country. My desire is to reduce the duty on stearine and paraffine wax to 1/2d., but to keep the duty on candles at 1d. per lb. There are a lot of small manufacturers, virtually workmen, who carry on this industry in Tasmania, and I do not desire that they should be subject to dictation from a few large candle manufacturers, who might form a ring to "burst up" these little men. I think it is criminal to reduce any item, but under such circumstances as I have indicated, I think a reduction is justifiable.

The CHAIRMAN

- One means by which the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, could attain his end, would be to put the amendment of the honorable member for Kalgoorlie, as coming in after the word "package," which would leave it open to the honorable member for Tasmania to submit the amendment he desired. A second way would be to dispose of the amendment of the honorable member for Kalgoorlie, and then add a further amendment, discriminating between the items. I shall adopt the first course.

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Mr WILKS

- Honorable members opposite have stated that they intend to support the duty upon candles, because they believe that it has encouraged a useful industry, and proved itself of great advantage to the States which have hitherto been protected. . The Prime Minister touched upon the history of the candle duty in New South Wales, but a fuller survey of that history will prove, even to the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, that the effect of the duty has not been, as protectionists are so fond of urging, to establish the industry, and to enable it to stand alone, but rather the reverse. In 1871, Sir James Martin imposed a tax of 1d. per lb. upon candles, for the specific purpose of building up the candle-making industry, and that duty remained in force until 1886, when the Dibbs Ministry increased it to 1 1/2d. per lb. About twelve months later, the Parkes Administration reduced the duty to 1d. per lb., and it remained at 1d. per lb. until the Dibbs Ministry in 1892 proposed a duty of 2d. per lb. Strangely enough, the honorable member for Eden-Monaro, who is whip to the present Administration, was the only member of the New South Wales Parliament who was able to effect a reduction in the Dibbs Tariff, and he, although a protectionist, moved and carried, in the interests of the miners, a reduction of the proposed duty upon candles from 2d. to 1 1/2d. per lb. That duty remained in force until 1895, when a diminishing scale proposed by the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney came into force, and gradually got rid of it altogether. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo points to the fact that the candle industry in New South Wales is in a languid condition as an evidence of the failure of free-trade there, but it is a much stronger evidence of the fact that protective duties will not strengthen an industry sufficiently to enable it ultimately to stand alone, and that once imposed they must continue for ever. But the honorable and learned member, and the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, made a great deal of the low wages paid to candle-makers in foreign countries, and spoke of the proposed duty being

necessary to keep out their productions, and to compensate the manufacturers for the higher rates of wages which they have to pay here. I would inform those honorable members, however, that one man can turn out 280 lbs. of finished candles per diem, and the original proposal of the Government to impose 1½d. per lb. upon candles therefore is equivalent to an impost of 3,5s. per diem upon the exertions of one worker.

Sir John Quick

- Is there no other process in candle-making than that of moulding?

Mr WILKS

- 280 lbs. is the weight of the finished product which represents one man's labour in the industry per diem. The weight of candles which a man can mould in eight hours is 1,300 lbs. If there is any place in the world where the candle making industry should be able to thrive without protection, it is Australia, because here candle manufacturers can obtain unlimited supplies of tallow on the spot, and more cheaply than it can be bought in any other part of the world. To say that candle-making is an industry in which small men can start is absurd, because it is the large men who combine soap-making with candle-making who succeed. These soap and candle manufacturers raise and lower the price of their candles to those who purchase from them, according as the purchasers do or do not take their soap. But we on this side -are willing to agree to a compromise in the matter. The Prime Minister told the committee that the Government in framing the Tariff have taken the extreme rates and struck a mean ; but this is the only item upon which they have done so. In regard to butter, they took the highest duty in force in any State. In New South Wales, candles are upon the free list, while in Victoria the duty has been 1d. per lb., and in the other States 2d. per lb., so that what they, now propose is the Victorian duty. All through it is the Victorian duties which have been adopted before those of any of the other States. Now the honorable member for Kalgoorlie moves that the duty be reduced to 1d. per lb.

Mr Watson

- But in Western Australia it has been 2d. per lb.

Mr WILKS

- The leader of the labour party never attempted to impose a duty upon candles when he was in the New South Wales Legislature. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports seems to see in the candle-making industry a great wage producing industry; but the reports of Victorian inspectors and the statements of his own friends in the Trades Hall here show the wretched condition of those employed in candle-making in Victoria. Are we then to sanction the imposition of a duty which at 1½d. per lb. is equal to an impost of 35s., and at 1d. per lb. of £1 3s. 4d. per diem upon one man's labour? There are hundreds of thousands of people who will be called upon to pay this duty in the interests of manufacturers whose operations are of no particular concern to the Commonwealth, and who should be able to stand on their feet without assistance. I think that a duty of 1d. per lb. would be a reasonable compromise.

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Mr KINGSTON

- Figures are evidently not the strong point of honorable members on the other side, and the way in which they reject all consideration for the smaller States, and assume that there are only two States, namely Victoria and New South Wales, is something extraordinary. We have also been reminded that New South Wales has 37 per cent, of the entire population of the Commonwealth, but I wish honorable members would recollect that there must be 63 per cent, of the population otherwise to be accounted for, and that that 63 per cent, is almost double the 37 per cent, located in New South Wales. Supposing that we assume that New South Wales has one-third of the population, Victoria one-third, and the other States the remaining third. The duty on candles in New South Wales was nothing, in Victoria it was 1d. per lb., and in the other States 2d. per lb. Adding 1d. and 2d. together, we have 3d., and dividing the 3d. by three we arrive at an average, of 1d. per lb., which is the exact compromise the Government propose. I should like to say one word with reference to the extraordinary position in which the honorable member finds himself, as a representative of Western Australia. That State imposes a duty of 2d. per lb. on candles.

Mr Kirwan

- That duty has to be reduced to the extent of 20 per cent, per annum.

Mr KINGSTON

- Western Australia levies a duty of 2d. on every lb. of Australian candles, which we seek to introduce

within her boundaries, and she has levied 2d. per lb: on all candles coming from foreign parts. The-duty we propose is only 1d. per lb. Western Australia, for the protection of her local industries, and for the purpose of revenue, will be collecting this 2d. per lb. on candles introduced into the State, and yet the honorable member for Kalgoorlie would take away from us the right which his own State has enjoyed, and which she will continue to exercise under the provisions of the Constitution. The matter has only to be stated in order to show the difficult position in which the honorable member stands.

Mr Kirwan

- The duty on candles in Western Australia will not last for ever.

Mr KINGSTON

- Before Western Australia objects to our levying 1d. per lb. upon candles which are imported, let her at least abandon the right which she has, and which she exercises, of taxing every lb. of candles she receives to the extent of 2d.

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Mr THOMAS

- I am very pleased that the Ministry have agreed to reduce the duty to 1d. per lb., because if they had not done so, I suppose they would have succeeded in passing the duty as originally proposed. At the same time I should have liked to see the 1d. duty removed, because there is no doubt that it will make candles dearer within the Commonwealth. If the duty of 1d. had been continued, it would have involved an extra outlay in the Proprietary mine alone of £1,000 a year for candles. And if a duty of 1d. per lb. is levied on* candles, the extra cost will amount to £750 per annum - that is, if they have to pay the duty. We are told that the duty on candles reduces the price of the article, but if that is so, it seems remarkably strange that in South Australia, where they have a duty of 2d. per lb. upon candles, the locally manufactured article costs from 1d. to 2d. per lb. more than is charged for similar candles when they are exported to Broken Hill. I recently travelled from Broken Hill with a man who was actually taking to Adelaide 1 lb. of Bui-ford's candles, because he could buy them at 2d. per lb. cheaper in Broken Hill than in Adelaide. I rose particularly for the purpose of throwing out a challenge to the honorable and learned member for Bendigo. The honorable and learned member wonders how I, as a labour representative, can advocate that candles should be allowed to come in free of duty, seeing that there is a great difference between the wages paid in Australia and elsewhere. I favour the reduction of duties on everything, because I am an advocate of direct taxation, but I will deviate from my principles to a certain extent if the honorable and learned member for Bendigo can show us what is the actual cost of the labour in the production of candles. I am prepared to vote for the imposition of a duty which shall be equivalent to the total cost of the labour involved in producing 1 lb. of candles - not merely the difference between the cost of labour here and in Belgium or Italy, but the total outlay for wages. I think the duty ought to be removed altogether, except that I agree that, if the candle manufacturer has * to pay a heavy duty upon the machinery employed in his operations, he should be protected to the extent to which that duty places him at a disadvantage compared with outside competitors. I should like to see all the candles we require manufactured here, because I recognise that, having the raw material here, the manufacture of candles ought to be regarded as a natural industry, and that we ought to be able to produce them here more cheaply than they are produced in Belgium, or elsewhere. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo has quoted some figures to show that the manufacture of candles in New South Wales has declined owing to the want of protection. No doubt the local manufacturers there would be placed at a disadvantage if they had not the same up-to-date machinery as their competitors abroad. Furthermore, I admit that in Victoria and South Australia the manufacturers have had the advantage of a protective duty far more than equivalent to the difference between the cost of labour in those States and its cost in other parts of the world. The manufacturers in South Australia must have been making an enormous profit out of candles sold in their own State if they could afford to send their goods to Broken Hill, and sell them cheaper than in the local market. I have no objection to the people of South Australia doing this - I should not mind if they gave us our candles free. If the manufacturers of the Commonwealth had the latest machinery and the best appliances, and were allowed to obtain their equipment at the same price as their competitors on the Continent, they should be able, with the raw material on the spot, to manufacture candles as cheaply as they could be imported. Candles are very largely used in connexion with the mining industry, and the cheaper we can get our candles the better it is for that industry, and oil that

ground, and for the other reasons I have stated, I should like to see the duty struck out altogether.

Mr HUME COOK

- The honorable member for the Barrier is the kind of free-trader that I appreciate, as he says he is against all kinds of duties, and would obtain revenue by means of direct taxation. His position is perfectly plain, and widely differs from that taken up by some other honorable members, who, whilst professing to be free-traders, would levy customs duties "on articles coming into the Commonwealth. The honorable member seems to imagine that every duty, necessarily increases the price of the article which receives the benefit of the duty, but it is a singular thing that no honorable member has yet proved that candles are dearer in Victoria than in New South Wales.

Mr Thomas

- They are dearer in South Australia.

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Mr HUME COOK

- It has been proved by the honorable member for Wentworth that candles are somewhat dearer in Australia than in Great Britain, and there are very good reasons why they should be. The honorable member for the Barrier has said that, if a duty of 1d. per lb. is imposed upon candles, the people engaged on the Proprietary mine at Broken Hill will have to pay £750 more per annum for candles. In the next breath the honorable member told us that the manufacturers had been able to supply the Broken Hill people with candles from South Australia as cheaply as they could be supplied from New South Wales and elsewhere. One of the reasons why that is so is that the South Australian Government make very considerable concessions upon their railways. Articles sent through that State to Broken Hill are carried at very much cheaper rates than they would be if sent through New South Wales to Broken Hill.

Manufacturers are, not slow to seize advantages of that kind, and to compete against the imported article. The honorable member for Wentworth suggested that we ought to take facts as they are to-day, and not as they were a few years ago. What are the facts to-day in respect of New South Wales? Last year that State imported 3,000,000 lbs. of candles. Those who profess protectionist principles, say that almost every pound of those candles ought to have been manufactured within the Commonwealth. If this is an industry which is natural to the country, if tallow and the other articles which are used by the manufacturer of candles can be so easily and cheaply procured, why is it that New South Wales imported 3,000,000 lbs. of candles last year? According to the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, when there was a duty upon candles operating in New South Wales, the candle factories were constantly upon the increase, but when that duty was removed the contrary was the result. I was interested in reading a statement made by Mr. A. W. Gilles, the chairman of the Sydney Soap and Candle Company, and I should like an answer to the allegations which it contains. Speaking upon this question that gentleman said - The bulk of their extensive plant and buildings, representing at the main factory £65,000, had been lying idle since the last instalment of the duty on candles was taken off. The company has a stearine factory and plant, but owing to having to manipulate tallow and compete against Antwerp-made candles and stearine and American manufactured paraffine wax, sold in large quantities here at under 2d. per lb., the plant has been lying idle.

He then goes on to say that in anticipation of the Federal Tariff the company had uncovered the idle machinery, and at the close of the half-year ended 30th September last, had doubled the previous half-year's output. If it is true, as alleged, that the natural protection which this industry enjoys is sufficient to induce the establishment of manufactories, why is it that 3,000,000 lbs. of candles were imported into New South Wales last year, as against 400,000 lbs. into Victoria, where a duty of 1d. per lb. was in force? Of course, it is said that the wages do not amount to the difference of the 1d. per lb. for which we are asking. I do not suppose that they do; but is it not a fact that wages in connexion with this industry are higher upon the average in Australia than they are upon the continent or in Italy? I think it is. Is it not a fact that the interest upon capital outlay in Australia is higher than it is upon the continent and in Italy? It is also a fair argument to say that freights and charges from point to point in Australia are heavier than they are in many cases from the continent to Australia itself. The argument about the natural protection conferred by freights and charges is, to a very large extent, absurd. It costs a great deal more to send a ton of candles from Victoria to Queensland than it does to bring a ton of candles from Antwerp to Melbourne or Sydney. When we consider the extra amount involved in freight and charges, in the capital

outlay, in interest, and in the cost of labour, all of which are indisputable, there is very good ground indeed, for asking for this impost of 1d. per lb. Last year Queensland imported from Belgium and Holland 165,588 lbs. of candles, and there the rate was 2d. per lb. I say, therefore, that a rate of 1d. per lb. is by no means prohibitive. If all the alleged facts of the honorable member for Kalgoorlie are as incorrect as is his statement regarding the imports of candles into Victoria, his whole case goes by the board. He said that 200,000 lbs. of candles were imported into Victoria, whereas, according to the Customs figures, there were 433,000 lbs. imported. Of that quantity, 187,535 lbs. came from Germany, and 115,922 lbs. from Belgium. Seeing that nearly 500,000 lbs. of candles were imported into Victoria, where a duty of 1d. per lb. was operating, how can it be argued that this duty is prohibitive? If we take the figures which are available, we find that in most of the States 2d. per lb. was formerly levied upon candles. The Government proposal is to reduce it to 1d. per lb. all round. Therefore, in three of the States, the importer will be 50 per cent, better off upon a fighting basis than he was previously in regard to home-made candles. In these three States the importer has now an advantage of 1d. per lb. difference. What we require is to maintain the duty of 1d., in order that manufacturers in Australia may come into fair competition with the importer. The consumer and not the importer will then get the benefit, because of the friction between them. The argument of the honorable member for Dalley, that the man who makes 280 lbs. of candles per day derives a benefit of 35s. for the manufacturer, whereas the workman only receives 6s. 8d., is absurd upon the face of it. Everybody knows that the competition between the manufacturer and the importer takes away nearly the whole of that 35s. - certainly a large portion of it - and that it does not find its way into the pockets of the manufacturer. The fact is that when the importer has to come into competition with the local manufacturer, he has to bring down his prices. When he has not to face such competition he retains his price, and is just as ready to form a ring as is any one else. I do not deny the manufacturer a legitimate profit upon his business, and I do not suppose that even the most rabid freetrader expects him to carry on at a loss. But if we compare the profits of the manufacturer with those of the importer, we begin to see which of the two businesses pays the best. I ask the honorable and learned member for Werriwa who are the men who occupy the mansions in Toorak, and the fashionable parts of the city of Melbourne? Are they the manufacturers or the importers? We know too well who can ride in their carriages, and who it is that, owing to the severe competition of these men, is not enabled to make enormous profits. I do not know what are the profits upon the candle-making industry. The consumer apart, my chief concern is that the men employed in that industry shall secure a certain amount of protection, and that their wages shall not be reduced. It is quite true that for the most part the wages paid in this industry are not so high as they are in some other protected industries in the Commonwealth. At the same time it is not true that the operatives are receiving only 4s. 6d. per day. The wages paid to adult males in Victoria are something like 36s. 5d. per week. The average is 35s. Considering that the industry is not a skilled one, that rate of wages, although small, is much better than is paid upon the Continent. In Italy, according to the figures supplied by the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, the workmen receive only 2s. 5d. per day. I am given to understand upon fairly good authority that small as are the wages paid upon the Continent and in Italy, there is a proposal on foot by certain gentlemen to establish a factory upon a somewhat large scale in Japan, in order that the cheap labour of that country may be utilized, if possible, to dominate and control the markets of the East, including that of Australia. It is alleged that amongst the chief promoters of this scheme are some prominent free-traders of one of the States. They are very like some importers here who have already sent to Japan samples of pottery made in Victoria, who have had pottery made up there, and are importing it in order to undersell the local manufacturer. These matters are of such importance to protectionists that they insist upon the retention of this duty. Indeed, I think that the original proposal of the Government should have been adhered to. No mention has been made of the fact that paraffine wax is one of the commodities which, enters very largely into competition with the stearine industry. Paraffine wax is, I understand, a by-product of kerosene. To make a difference between the duty imposed upon this article and that upon stearine, is merely to give a bonus to the American Standard Oil Trust, and the other people who are engaged in producing kerosene. What we ought to do is to make the duty upon all these articles exactly the same. If we fail, to do that, I am afraid that the immense capital already invested in the stearine industry in the various States - amounting to something like £500,000 in ten factories - may possibly be lost. We have, therefore, to resist not only a reduction of the duty on candles, but also a

reduction of that on paraffine wax. Unless the two duties are equal, the industry in Australia will not flourish as it should.

Mr. Hume Cook

Mr MAUGER

- I am sorry the honorable member for Barrier is not present, (because a proposition he made seems to me simply ridiculous. The amount of labour in a lb. of candles ' is exceedingly difficult to gauge. For moulding alone, labour costs about 1d. per lb., I am told ; and when we consider the proportion of other work connected with candle-making, the cost must run considerably over 2d. per lb. All the money laid out in the purchase of material and in wages in connexion with this important industry is spent in Australia, and we have not only this industry, but other dependent industries. Something like 20,000 tons of tallow, valued at £500,000, are annually bought from the butchers and graziers of Australia. That tallow is melted and divided by chemicals into stearine , glycerine, and other component parts of candles, and each of these parts has to be treated separately in different buildings 'before they reach a marketable condition. Something like £500,000 has been invested in buildings and plant, and as steady and regular employment is given to over 2,000 hands in Victoria alone, surely this is an industry of very considerable importance. The amount paid in wages is about £200,000 per annum, and amongst those who are indirectly employed are chemists, engineers, stokers, fitters, carpenters, and coopers, all of whom are paid the ruling rates of wages, and working under conditions as good as can be found in any other industry in Australia. The moment the candle industry started in New South Wales the price of candles went down from 9d. to 6d. per lb. : but when the duty was taken off, the price went up, and has been kept up ever since. That proves conclusively that internal competition not only provides work and openings for investment, but is a benefit to the consumer.

Mr CONROY

- The amount of capital invested in this industry has been stated to be £500,000 ; but according to the Statistical Register of Victoria, the first year in which the invested capital reached £100,000 in Victoria was in 1898, while in 1899 the amount was £105,000.

Mr HUME COOK

- The £500,000 is for the whole Commonwealth.

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Mr CONROY

- In Victoria- and that was" the place mentioned - the only year during the last eleven years in which the capital invested touched £100,000 was 1892. If there is no duty imposed in New South Wales, that is proof no duty is necessary. If the establishment of the industry in Victoria is to be attributed to protection, that in New South Wales may be fairly attributed to free-trade. But neither is the case, the truth being that this is one of the natural productions of the country ; and the industry was bound to be created, quite regardless of fiscal conditions. We are bound, in this instance, to take soap and candles together ; and we find that there are 43 factories in New South Wales, as- against 22 in Victoria. From a free-trader's point of view that is very good, but it ought also to be good from the protectionist point of view, because the more men we have who are their own [masters, the better it is for those concerned.

Mr Mauger

- Invariably the conditions of trade are worse where the employers are small men.

Mr CONROY

- At all events, the workers of New South Wales are not so directly subject to the will or control "of one man or set of men. In spite of the- extra protection in Victoria, we find in that State only 87 more men engaged than in New South Wales, the numbers employed being 351 in New South Wales, and 438 in Victoria. The manufacture of soap in Victoria has been some 136,000 cwt., as' against 147,000 cwt. in New South Wales, though it is true that the manufacture of candles is much larger in Victoria than in the adjoining State, the figures being 46,000 cwt. and 19,000 cwt. respectively. The total value of the plant in Victoria is only £105,000, as against £123,000 in the mother State.

Mr Mauger

- I was estimating the value of buildings also.

Mr CONROY

- But buildings may be used for a hundred purposes. The figures and* facts I have stated dispose of any shred of argument in favour of fixing the duty at the figure desired by some honorable members from Victoria. The Ministry ask us to consider ourselves as Australians, but the next moment they base their calculations, not on the population of Australia, but on the number of the States. We were told that the Ministry had to frame the Tariff in consideration of the revenue interests of the various States ; but if there is one thing of which we may be sure, it is that there will be displacement of labour in the smaller manufactures of Tasmania, Western Australia, and South Australia. It is said that the Victorian manufacturers cannot continue without a duty ; but I ask, how will they be able to compete with the New South Wales product even with a duty against the outside world ?

Mr Kennedy

- On the honorable and learned member's own showing, the New South Wales industry is diminishing.

Mr CONROY

- So far from that being the case, the number of hands employed increased last year by 80 or 90. Victoria at the present time has 50 fewer nien employed in the industry than she had two years ago. The fact is ' that fluctuations occur in both States, and, no doubt, a reduction in the number of hands employed may be accounted for by the operation, of the wages boards and Factory Acts in weeding out unprofitable employes, or by the introduction of labour-saving machinery. But will any one say that the consumers of Australia are not to be considered in this matter? Are not our great farming and mining populations to be considered ? It is the primary producers, who cannot be assisted by the imposition of duties upon their products, who have mainly to bear the burden of this taxation. It has been said that the importation of candles into New South Wales is larger than that into Victoria, but, even if there were no duty in Victoria, that would be so, because; whereas one-half of the population of Victoria is congregated in the cities of Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo, and Geelong, which are lighted with gas and electricity, the New South Wales population is larger, and is scattered over a much greater area of country, so that its consumption is greater. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports and for Bourke told us that a duty does not . make candles dearer, but, on' the contrary, makes them cheaper.

Mr HUME COOK

- Ultimately. "

Mr CONROY

- If that is So, and the rate of wages depends on the price of the product of the labour for which the wages are paid, how do those honorable gentlemen dare to support a duty upon candles'?

Mr HUME COOK

- I did not say that the price of an article governs the rate of wages paid to those engaged in producing it.

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Mr CONROY

- If a manufacturer cannot get a reasonable price for his product - though no one has defined what a reasonable price is - how can he pay a reasonable wage 1 It has been stated that the wages paid in Victoria amount to something like 36s. per week, but, according to the Victorian Statistical Register for 1899, they come to 31s. 6d. per week. Even supposing that they were higher than the wages paid in New South Wales - and they are not - it must be remembered that, except upon meat and upon flour - and for a time even meat was taxed - the Victorian workmen had to pay a duty of from 20 to 25 per cent, upon everything consumed. The duty would, no doubt, make a difference of from 2s. 6d. to 3s. in the £1, or probably 5s. 6d. per week in the spending power of a man's wages. If a man received £2 a week, and the spending power of his wages was 10s. less than that of a man receiving 30s. a week, he would be no better off. So that, even where wages in Victoria and New South Wales have been about equal, it must be remembered that the New South Wales worker has been able to get 4s. or 5s. in the£1 worth more for what he spent than the Victorian workman. No reason has been shown for the imposition of the proposed duty, and we know that New South Wales has been able to manufacture candles without a duty. Of course, certain manufacturers may be prepared to ask for a duty, but we have no reason for giving them one. If I asked the committee for £10,000 or £12,000 a year, and engaged to maintain 50 or 100 servants at £2 per week, I should be laughed at ; but if I called my establishment a factory, and my servants factory hands, honorable gentlemen would be found to say that I should be furnished with the money, in order to give occupation to those whom I employed. I should like to see candles placed upon the free list, but as I

doubt that we could carry such a proposal, I shall vote to reduce the duty to hd. per lb.

Mr TUDOR

- The honorable and learned member for Werriwa has told us that there are 43 candle factories in New South Wales, and, presumably, these are all soap and candle factories; at any rate, in the statistics they are classed together. The production of those factories in 1899 was 2,675,000 lbs. Now, according to the estimate of the honorable member for Dalley, who stated that the equivalent of one man's labour in the industry was 2S0 lbs. of candles a day, 32 men could have manufactured the whole of those candles, working 300 days in the year. But, although we are told that this is a primary industry, the New South Wales manufacturers use very little tallow, inasmuch as in that year they imported 2,326,822 lbs. of paraffine wax, which came chiefly from the United States, and 419,553 lbs. of stearine, which came chiefly from Belgium. The honorable and learned member for Werriwa stated that Victoria, used a smaller quantity of candles than was used in New South Wales, because her population is congregated in a few large cities where other light is available, but as a matter of fact the difference between the consumption of the two States is only 10- per cent. With regard to the employment; afforded by the industry in the two States,. I may point out that the honorable and learned member omitted to mention that,, whereas 43 females are employed in the soap and candle factories in New South Wales, only four are employed in the Victorian factories, although in other cases he has not forgotten to emphasize the fact that, a Victorian industry employed more females than a New South Wales industry. He stated, too, that the average wage paid was 31s. per week, but, according to the report of the Inspector of Shops and Factories for the year 1900, out of 410 persons employed in soap and candle works in Victoria, 301 were males over 21 years of age, and the average wage paid to them was £1 17s. 3d. a week. Twenty-three boys, aged about sixteen, earned on the average 14s. 6d. per week, and 'others up to the age of twenty averaged from £1 to 22s. 6d. per week. According to the Statistical Register of New South Wales the wages of candle moulders in that State averaged 18s. 9d. per week.

Mr Batchelor

- That is the same rate of pay as is given in Belgium - about 3s. per day.

Mr TUDOR

- Yes. The average rate of wage of general hands employed in soap and candle works was £1 lis. 3d. ; boys averaged 8s. 9d. ; labellers, 8s. 6d. ; and packers, £1 9s. per week. Comparing these wages with the Victorian average of £1 17s. 3d. per week we can see a marked difference.

Sir William McMillan

- Is it fair to strike an average, including the boys' wages..

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Mr TUDOR

- If I were to strike an average, including, the 7s. for boys, up to the £1 9s. which packers receive in New South Wales, the average wage in New-

South Wales would be less than £1 per week. I have, however, mentioned the actual wages paid to boys and men in each case. I am anxious that the manufacture of candles, being a primary industry, should be so protected as to enable our manufacturers to compete against foreigners, who receive wages down to as low as 2s. per day. With reference to the figures quoted by the honorable member for Dalley, who stated that a man could make 260 lbs. of candles per day, I would like to point out that in Victoria we have to manufacture the candles from the start, whilst in New South Wales they import the stearine and paraffine wax, and they have only to amalgamate it and then mould the candles. In New South Wales the candle-makers take in hand the material when it is about three-parts manufactured, whereas, the whole of the initial processes have to be performed in the Victorian factories. I am credibly informed that there are more hands employed in the soap and candle works in Victoria than are set down in the statistics. Manufacturers have not been compelled under a heavy penalty to furnish returns of their employes, but they are now being asked to give particulars which will enable the Chief Inspector of Factories to compile reliable figures relating to their industry. These returns from which I have been quoting do not include the wages paid to foremen, proprietors, and general managers, but it is shown that the average wage paid to the workers employed in the Victorian factories is £1 17s. 3d. per week. There is no man more anxious than I am to obtain fair conditions for the workers, and I have already been able to do something in that direction. If we give the manufacturers protection through . the Custom-house we can protect the

employes through the wages boards ; but if we do not protect the manufacturers it is useless for the wages, boards to attempt to prescribe regulations with which it may be impossible to comply.

Mr GLYNN

- I find that the average cost of stearine candles, f.o.b., at European ports for the last five years was 33/4d. per lb. I believe the cost at present is 41/2d. or 43/4d. per lb., but these prices are exceptional. If we take the average price over a period of five years I think we may get some fair idea of the extent to which the candle industry is protected without the imposition of duties.

The cost of freight on candles from England is 3/4d. per lb., and the freight on tallow from Australia to England is five-sixteenths of a penny per lb.

Mr Mauger

- Surely not.

Mr. GLYNN. - I have this information from a very good authority.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member's authority must be a very bad one.

Mr GLYNN

- The figures I have quoted have been supplied to me by an expert - a Victorian who is a large importer of candles. According to these figures the natural protection afforded to local manufacturers is 1d. and 1-16th on an average price of 33/4d. per lb., and that seems to me to place the producers in a very good position even under a free-trade Tariff. On the top of this natural protection the members of the Opposition are willing to impose a duty of 1/2d. per lb. If we look at the statistics of South Australia we find that that State exported to New South Wales 581,000 lbs. of candles, of which 326,000 lbs. were of local production. In that State they manufacture more largely in proportion to the population than in other States, and according to the experience gained there, the industry ought to be able to stand alone without any protective duties. These candles were exported to the open market of New South Wales, and the figures indicate that the local producer could hold his own in open competition with the manufacturers of England.

Mr Kennedy

- In connexion with the railway to Broken Hill, a preference is given to South Australian goods over those imported.

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Mr GLYNN

- It is only recently that preferential rates have been established on the railway lines in reference to some particular articles. New South Wales was practically a free market, and the South Australian manufacturer is open to free competition with those abroad. Although they have had the advantage of an import duty of 2d. per lb. on candles in South Australia, the number of hands employed in the soap and candle making industry in that State increased from 104 in 1875 to only 189 hands in 1899. This is but a small gain to be placed to the credit of protection, when it is considered that the population during that time increased to the extent of 60,000. With regard to prices, I find from the Sydney Trade Review of the 30th June, 1900, and the Melbourne Journal of Commerce of the 3rd July, 1900, that for the D.R.J. brand of candles the price in New South Wales was 51/2d.; in Victoria, with a duty of 1d. per lb., 61/2d.; and in South Australia, with a duty of 2d., 71/2d. Thus the difference in price between the various States was exactly proportionate to the duties levied upon the article. The result was that in Victoria it cost £1,182 to buy candles, which could be purchased in New South Wales for £1,000. I shall strongly support the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie.

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Monaro

Mr CHAPMAN

.- The honorable member for Dalley must have been hard pressed for arguments when he proceeded to dig up a good deal of ancient history in connexion with New South Wales. Unfortunately the honorable member forgot to arm himself with all the facts. He quoted from a debate on the Customs Bill in the New South Wales Parliament on the 29th January, 1892, a division took place upon that debate. What are the facts of that division ? The free-trade party up to that period were running the New South Wales Parliament, and had imposed a duty upon candles. Of course they called many of the duties which they

levied revenue duties, but we have to thank them for the little protection which we did obtain at different times in that State. The result of the imposition of the duty upon candles was that factories sprang into existence, and employment was given to our people whilst the price of the article was not increased to the consumer. Then the Dibbs Government displaced the freetrade party. They proposed an impost of 2d. per lb. upon candles. When they did so the leader of the Opposition said -

Coming from flights of oratory to facts, I ask, how much is 2d. per lb. on candles as an ad valorem duty ? It is at least 40 per cent. on the value of the article. It would require a lot of eloquence to justify such a duty.

He goes on further to say that he is quite prepared to give 20 per cent. To-day the Government are only asking for a duty of 19 per cent. Then I moved that the duty should be 1½d. per lb. In doing so I said - In my opinion the effect of an extra 1d. per lb. on candles will be to cause a temporary rise in the price, whereas the addition of 1½d. per lb. would cause the price to remain at what it was, while it would permit of candles being made in the country.

Both the honorable member for Wentworth and the honorable member for Macquarie voted for my proposition, which was carried. As an immediate result a great deal of employment was given, the number of factories increased, the rate of wages advanced, and the price of candles was not enhanced. Notwithstanding all the claptrap which has been indulged in, I say that any working man will admit that it is better to have a regular wage at £2 per week than to receive £2 10s. for one week and be idle the next. Since the period mentioned I have closely watched this industry, because I was accused of reducing the duty in the interests of the miners. After a certain period had elapsed the freetrade party returned to power and raised a wild shriek in favour of the remission of these duties. I give the honorable member for Wentworth credit for having raised a warning cry upon that occasion. The duties, however, were remitted. When the first instalment of this particular duty was taken off, the hands employed in the largest factory were called together, and informed by the proprietors that they would either have to reduce their wages or close the factory. Accordingly the men agreed to a reduction in their wages. When the second instalment of the duty was taken off, the employees were again called together, and the proprietors informed them that they could not carry on operations any longer. That is the history of one of the largest candle factories in New South Wales. The honorable and learned member for Werriwa has asked why this duty should be imposed, when in New South Wales the manufacturers have been able to carry on without the aid of any duty. The honorable member for Dalley has said that the factory I have just referred to is now open. When did it open? It opened immediately after this Tariff was submitted. Did the proprietors treat the men unfairly ? Did they not say that they would employ them again at the highest rate of wages that had previously been paid ? Why have not honorable members of the Opposition attempted to prove that the imposition of this duty will lower wages ? None of them have attempted to do that, neither have they endeavoured to demonstrate that it will raise the cost of the article to the consumer. Does the honorable member for Wentworth oppose this tax in the hope that candles will continue to be imported from foreign countries? He must know who makes them. Most of the candles imported are made from palm oil, and the men employed in the manufacture of that oil are black. The Argus to-day points out that the producer of candles in South Australia 'can do without the aid of any duty. If so, where is the necessity for this desperate attempt at compromise? Honorable members upon the opposite side of the House "say - " Let us divide the duty, in order to strike an average." If we adopt the course suggested, we find that the total amount of duty levied in the various States was 9d. If we divide that by the number of States, namely, six, we get an average duty of 1½d. per lb., which is higher than the rate proposed by the Government. The honorable member for the Barrier talks about the necessity of giving labour a chance. I want him to show how the imposition of this duty can have any other effect than that of providing employment for the people. This question affects the wharf labourers, the men who make the packets for the candles, and a host of other people. Is it not better for the farmer to sell his tallow in the home market than to send it across the sea ' to be manufactured ? These articles are handled half-a-dozen times, and labour is employed in a variety of ways. The honorable and learned member for Werriwa stated that £105,000 was the amount of capital invested in these factories. As a refutation of. that statement, I may mention that one factory alone at Newcastle has already expended £165,000 upon its works. I merely wish to show that my action in 1892 was to make the duty lower than that which was proposed, because I thought it would have the effect of giving employment to the people at a decent rate of wage without increasing the

cost of candles to the consumer. I am quite consistent in voting for a reduction of the duty to 1d. per lb. Honorable members opposite have acted very indiscreetly in dragging up the debate which took place in the New South Wales Parliament. I would recommend them to read the advice given by the leader of the Opposition upon that occasion when he pointed out that -

Instead of taking up the time of honorable members for ten minutes by dividing on each item, I shall counsel that that course be not followed, except on some very important items.

The right honorable member for East Sydney went on to point out the utter waste of time in battling over little items, and counselled his party to assist in making reasonable progress, and not to fight the Tariff line by line.

Mr Poynton

- Honorable members' opposite are doing all the talking.

Mr CHAPMAN

- I rarely occupy the time of the committee, and not many honorable members would take any notice of the bilious interjection which has just been made. I shall vote for the reduction with the greatest possible pleasure. I believe that the Government have done right in reducing the duty upon this item to 1d. per lb., and the action of honorable members opposite shows how useless it is to attempt to make any reasonable compromise with them. If honorable members like to make this question a test of physical endurance, they will find that we are quite prepared to meet them.

Mr POYNTON

- We have had a sort of curtain lecture from the honorable member for Eden-Monaro, but if we could see the pages of Ronsard for this afternoon, we should find them filled with speeches, not from this side, but from the Government side. Such speeches as that delivered by the Government whip are very likely to prolong this debate. I object to a protective duty on candles, because I know as a fact that the South Australian article is now, and has been for some years past, sold in other States at a considerably reduced price compared with that charged in the State of production. Every individual in South Australia is paying for the export of these candles, and when an industry can afford to sell beyond the territory at a less cost than in the territory, some of the protection should be taken away. South Australian manufacturers have obtained a contract to supply the Broken Hill mines with candles in competition with the outside world, at a price of 5d. per lb., while the wholesale price which is charged to grocers in Adelaide is nearly 1d. per lb. more. That is not a proper condition of things in an industry which has hitherto been protected to an extent of 2d. per lb.

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Mr BROWN

- This is a duty which presses heavily on the primary producer, seeing that candles enter largely into the home consumption of farmers and graziers. No doubt the consumption is less in this direction than in previous years,

Owing to the introduction of kerosene and other illuminants; also candles are required very largely in mining, more particularly in gold-mining. I am pleased to learn that the Government have reduced their proposal by a halfpenny, and in this connexion I would like to say that some eight or ten days ago I noticed a quiet intimation in the Melbourne Age that this reduction should be made. On the 19th November, in the commercial columns of that newspaper, this statement appeared -

There is a general impression that increasing the duty to 1½d. per lb. is a mistake. Local manufacturers do not want the extra ½d. per lb. protection, being content with a 1d., whilst the higher rate would block the revenue, as there will be no inducement to ship to Australia.

Then, in to-day's issue of the Age, I find the following -

There seems to be a general impression that 1d. duty will give full protection to the local producer.

In the Age newspaper, which is an exponent of protectionist views, we find the opinion expressed that a duty of 1d. is sufficient to give the protection required by the manufacturers, and a quiet intimation on behalf of the manufacturers is given that it would be just as well to remove the extra halfpenny proposed.

In yesterday's issue of the same newspaper there is an interesting and able letter on this subject containing a great deal of information which I believe to be accurate. This letter is commended, by the commercial editor of the Age as "worthy of consideration." It reads as follows: -

To the Commercial Editor of the Age.

Sir, -It is proposed in the Tariff, to be under discussion to-morrow, that the duty on candles shall be fixed at lid. per lb. throughout Australia. As the principal consumers of candles are the country residents and the mining population, it is a right thing to ask whether so heavy a duty should be placed on this necessary article. The average price of imported candles for the past five years has been under 4d. per lb. f.o.b. European ports, and as a ton weight of candles measures nearly two tons for freight, they are a costly article to import. Shipping charges, freight, insurance, and exchange increase- the cost of candles imported into Australia by fully 3/4d. per lb. above the price charged by European manufacturers f.o.b. at European port of Shipment. Tallow, the principal item employed in the manufacture of candles, is one of the natural products of Australia, and is not only used in Australia, but is a valuable item in the total of Australian exports. It costs the exporter of tallow five-sixteenths of 1d. per lb. to send it from Australian ports to Europe, and by this amount is the Australian manufacturer able to obtain his supplies of tallow cheaper than his European competitor. With an export transit charge on tallow of five-sixteenths of 1d. per lb. , and an import transit charge on candles of 3/4d per lb., both borne by the foreign manufacturer, a natural protection of 1.1-16d per lb. already prevails in favour of the Australian manufacturer. Australian manufacturers have shown that when they want to they can compete successfully with foreign manufacturers in markets equally open to each of them. It is customary for the Broken Hill mines to call for tenders for their supply of candles for twelve months at a time. The last competitive tender was called in July, 1900, and the South Australian manufacturers were successful, tendering for the supply at a price equal to 4.87d. at the mine, against the lowest importer's tender, equivalent to 5.21d. at the mine. If the South Australian manufacturer could do that in open competition with all the world, surely Australian manufacturers do not need a duty over and beyond their margin of export transit charges on tallow and import transit charges on candles. - Yours, &c, Exporter.

Mr McCay

- Assuming the figures to be correct, does the honorable member agree with the views expressed in the letter ?

Mr BROWN

- I do very largely.

Mr McCay

- What part does the honorable member not agree with ?

Mr BROWN

- I believe there is considerable natural protection given to the local manufacturer, and that it is the consumer who in the long run has to pay the duty. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo asks for the measure of protection proposed, in order to prevent competition from the low-wage countries of Belgium, Germany, and Italy ; but, while he quoted the wages which are paid in continental countries, there was one point on which he did not give us information. If those countries were free-trade countries there might be some force in the honorable member's argument, from his stand-point, but they are highly protected countries.

Mr Batchelor

- New South Wales is a free-trade country, and the wages paid there appear to be about the same as those paid in Belgium.

Mr BROWN

- That is not correct.

Mr Tudor

- It is correct according to Coghlan.

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Mr BROWN

- If the wages and conditions in those protectionist countries were as the honorable gentleman described them, it would seem that the adoption of protection here would not improve our conditions. With regard to wages, a Mr. Wright, who claimed to speak with some authority, in addressing a trades and labour conference in Melbourne in 1896, gave the wages of Victorian candle employes as from 25s. to 27s. 6d. per week.

Mr Tudor

- He never worked in a candle factory in his life.

Mr BROWN

- But it does not follow that his information is incorrect, and from the fact that he addressed a trades and labour conference, he must be taken to have spoken with authority. The Chief Inspector of Factories, in his report for 1900, stated that the average wage paid to an adult male in Victoria was 36s. 5d. per week, but in Sydney the Newcastle manager of the Sydney Soap and Candle Works, in evidence which he gave before a committee, and which was published in the Sydney Morning Herald of 15th July last, gave the wages of adults there as averaging from £2 to £4 10s. a week.

Mr Watkins

- Why does the honorable member quote a labour representative in the one case, and an employer in the other ?

Mr BROWN

- The gentleman whose statement I have quoted is a large employer of labour, and knows what he is talking about, and I do not see why he should make an incorrect statement. Of course, if his statement is incorrect, honorable members will be able to give the true facts. I think it can be readily shown that more revenue would be obtained from a duty of 1/2d. per lb. than from the duty of 1d. per lb. which the Government are now willing to accept, because the latter duty is nearly prohibitive. Furthermore, by imposing a duty of 1/2d. per lb., those interested in the primary industries of the country - the farming and mining population - would be greatly benefited. It has also been pointed out that the same duty is proposed upon stearine and paraffine wax, which are practically raw materials to the candle manufacturers, as upon candles, the finished product of the industry. If that is agreed to, the result will be that large manufacturers, who have sufficient money at their disposal to undertake the whole process of preparing these articles for manufacture, will have the smaller manufacturers, who will have to import them, at their mercy. It has been suggested that we should endeavour to exclude paraffine wax from our markets, because it is a product of foreign and perhaps black labour, and competes with stearine, which is a natural product of the country. But those who are acquainted with the climatic conditions of the warmer parts of Australia know that paraffine candles cannot be used there in the summer months. I remember that some years ago, paraffine candles were placed upon the New South Wales market at a lower rate than stearine candles, and were therefore largely purchased. But, after the experience of a summer, buyers went back to stearine candles, because they found the paraffine candles quite useless. I am prepared to vote for a fair revenue duty upon candles, and to distinguish between the finished product, and what is practically the raw material of the manufacturer.

Mr A C GROOM

- In my opinion, the duty upon candles should be as low as possible. The argument of those who are in favour of highly protective duties is that they reduce the cost to the consumer of the article upon which they are imposed. To show that that is not so, I will read a letter which I have received from a merchant who is in rather a big way of business in Gippsland. He says -

In speaking of candles, I was informed only this week by the representative of one of the largest local manufacturers, that there had been a conference held in Melbourne recently of representatives of all the principal manufacturers in the different States, with the object of advancing prices all round by 3/4d. to 1d. per lb.

Mr Mauger

- That is not true.

Mr A C GROOM

- He continues-

This is ostensibly put on oil account of the high price of tallow, but in reality to take advantage of the increased duty proposed.

Mr McCay

- Is the price of tallow higher than it has been?

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Mr A C GROOM

- The price of tallow has not risen since these duties we're proposed. Before the announcement of the Tariff, on the 8th October last, the price of imported candles in New South Wales, where there was no duty, was from 5 1/4d. to 5 3/4 d. per lb., according to the brand ; in Victoria, where there was a duty of 1d.

per lb., from 61/4d. to 63/4d per lb. ; in Queensland, where there was a duty of 2d. per lb., from 71/2d. to 73/4d. per lb. ; and in South Australia, where there was a duty of 2d. per lb., from 71/4d. to 73/4d. per lb. Those figures show that the consumers really pay the duty. I find by reference to Messrs. Wilkinson and Co.'s monthly price list that imported Schiedam candles are sold in Adelaide at 73/4d. per lb. I quoted them at from 71/4d. to 73/4 d. per lb. I see also that the prices of colonial candles range as low as 51/2d. for the cheaper sorts up to as high as 63/8d. for the better class of candles. Bedroom candles are quoted in boxes of 24 lbs., at 73/4 d. per lb. In the Broken Hill contract, the price given for local candles is 4.087d. per lb., which shows that the unfortunate consumer is being made to pay a great deal more than is absolutely necessary in order to secure a profit to the manufacturer.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member would not quote the price under a contract in comparison with that which has to be paid by the general consumer.

Mr A C GROOM

- I only quote the price to show that it pays the manufacturer to sell at a much lower rate than that which is paid by the ordinary consumer. I have a letter from a gentleman who has had considerable experience as to the effect of protective duties, and who writes as follows : -

I am one who has always taken a keen interest in the Tariff and its effects upon the general consumer, and that is my only excuse for writing you on this subject. Having conducted a general store-keeping business for over twenty years, and studied the operation of various duties, I think I may lay claim to have a fair knowledge of their operation. X may say that all my experience has proved that high duties, whether imposed for revenue or protection purposes, are a great mistake. A high duty for revenue purposes nearly always defeats the object aimed at, as it lessens the consumption of the article, even if it is silk, woollen, or cotton, while if it is imposed for protective purposes it is offering a premium to the manufacturers to rob the consumer, particularly in any article where a large amount of capital is required to embark in its manufacture, such, for instance, as candles, wax vestas, or tobacco.

The candle manufacturing industry has had protection for the last 30 years, and is still crying out for more ; but if moderate protection does not afford sufficient assistance, the sooner the industry fails the better.

Mr KIRWAN

- I wish to refer to the remarks of the Minister for Trade and Customs with regard to my position, which were simply an echo of what was stated previously by the Prime Minister. Both the right honorable gentlemen seemed to consider that I occupied a rather peculiar position as a representative of Western Australia - which levies a duty of 2d. per lb. on candles - in proposing to reduce the Commonwealth duty to 1/2d. per lb. Both the right honorable gentlemen, however, failed to mention one or two things that have a very important bearing upon my position. They omitted to state that as far as Western Australia is concerned, the arrangement for the collection of duties on goods coming from the other States was one under which the duty would diminish at the rate of 20 percent. per annum for the next five years, and would then be abolished altogether, whilst the Tariff which we are now considering may continue in force for many years after that date. Moreover, I do not think there is any honorable member in this House who would be prepared to stand by every legislative act in his particular State. The greater part of the legislation of Western Australia is, in my opinion, a blot upon the legislation of Australia, and some of it would be a blot upon the legislation of any part of the British Empire. I regard the duty on candles as altogether too high, and the fact that a wrong has been done in one particular State affords no reason why it should be extended to the whole of the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister and the Minister for Trade and Customs were apparently ignorant that candles are largely manufactured in Western Australia, and that the raw materials are admitted absolutely free. I am proposing that the duty be reduced to 1/2d. not only upon candles, but upon paraffine wax and stearine - and I desire to point out that paraffine wax and stearine, as well as tallow, are admitted free of duty into Western Australia. The importations of candles into Western Australia last year were valued at only £3,000, whereas the stearine imported was valued at £27,000, and the paraffine wax at £1,911. Therefore I claim that there is nothing whatever inconsistent in my position in advocating a lower duty in connexion with the item which is now under our consideration. I am very sorry that the remarks of the Minister should have implied that members of this House represented one State instead of considering the interests of the whole of the Commonwealth and the great mass of the consumers. It is the poorer people and the pioneers of the back blocks, and not the

people of the cities, who will suffer the greatest hardship through the operation of a heavy duty upon candles, and in moving my amendment I claim that I am representing the great mass of the consumers of the Commonwealth rather than the interests of a few candle manufacturers in Melbourne or Sydney.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- A great many statements have been made by Ministers and their followers to the effect that the duty proposed by the Government is necessary, for the protection not only of the candle manufacturers but of the workmen employed in their factories. We are told also that this is a duty which will not increase prices to the consumer, but that as a matter of fact the protection afforded to candles has resulted in a reduction of prices. These two propositions, however, are entirely inconsistent. If it is necessary to increase the profit of the manufacturer, that can only be done by increasing the price to the consumer. The Government have admitted this, because they have told us that the moment the duty on candles was abolished in New South Wales the State ceased to make candles. On the other hand, the honorable member for Eden-Monaro told us that the duty proposed would not increase the price of candles to the consumer. Of course we all know that the honorable member is prepared to get up at any time and say anything at all for the purpose of supporting the Ministry.

Mr O'Malley

- If he is convinced in his own mind.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course the honorable member is convinced ; no one is expressing a doubt about his conviction. The strange feature is that he is convinced about anything concerning which the Ministry require him to be convinced. . The honorable member told us a different tale under different circumstances. He quoted from Hansard to-night to show what was his position in New South Wales. But, as usual, he quoted only a small portion of his speech upon the occasion in question. He altogether omitted a few sentences which would have put a very different complexion upon his arguments. For instance, he said -

Any one who knows anything about the candle industry in New South Wales is aware that it has flourished fairly well with the protection afforded by the duty of 1d. per lb.

To-day he tells us that although he is going to vote with the Government to reduce the duty upon this item to 1d. per lb., it will be with no sort of pleasure that he does so. Within two minutes afterwards the honorable member said he was going to vote for the duty with the greatest possible pleasure. At the time he made the speech which has been referred to in the New South Wales Parliament, the honorable member represented the miners of Braidwood. He does so still in his federal capacity. He was always very anxious about the state of the miners in his constituency, and night after night we were wont to hear his stentorian voice ringing through the legislative halls of New South Wales about the hardships of the miner's life. . He was ever foremost in his endeavours to lighten the burden of their taxation, and to give them ease in their conditions of life. Yet when we propose to lighten their burdens and their darkness, too, by imposing a lower duty upon candles than is contemplated by the Government, we find the honorable member one of our sturdiest opponents. In the New South Wales Parliament, what did the honorable member say upon the occasion referred to ? At that time he was one of the fiercest opponents of the Ministry in regard to duties which he said would inflict great hardships upon the mining industry. He said - Notwithstanding the arguments of the Colonial Treasurer, I maintain that the increased duty will increase the price of candles.

We are told to-day that candles will be cheaper when the duty is increased.

Mr Chapman

- Did the honorable member agree with me then ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes.

Mr Chapman

- Then I must have been wrong.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I agreed with the honorable member then, and I agree now that an increase in the duty imposed will enhance the price of this article to the consumer. I agreed with the honorable member when he sought to make the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales believe that the consumer had to pay the duty all the

time. That is my position now. But it is not the honorable member's position. He finds himself behind a Government which is imposing a higher duty upon candles, and, as a good loyal "Whip" he must needs follow them, even to the extent of eating the words which he used on a former occasion.

Mr Chapman

- There is nothing like sticking to one's party.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- If that is the sole reason for the honorable member's action to-night, I say that he has not scrupled to get away from his former position in order to stick to his party. I am sorry to know that his idea of the Federal Parliament is that he must do anything for the sake of sticking to his party.

Mr Chapman

- The honorable member cannot be accused of doing that.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I did not interject while the honorable member was rolling out his opinion in stentorian tones, and talking as though he actually believed what he was saying, although he now tells us candidly that he supports the proposal of the Government only because he has to stick to his party.

Mr Chapman

- I never said anything of the kind.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member deny the accuracy of my statement?

Mr Chapman

- I rise to a point of order. Is the honorable member for Parramatta in order in persisting that I stated I intended to give my vote in favour of the Government proposal because I wanted to stick to my party.

What I did say was--

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I object to the honorable member making a personal explanation till I am done. There is no point of order in what he says.

Mr Chapman

- I wish to take the ruling of the chairman as to whether the honorable member is in order in repeating that I said the reason which actuated me in voting as I intend to vote was that I wished to stick to my party, when I have given that statement an emphatic denial?

The CHAIRMAN

- The rule of Parliament is that when a statement is attributed by one honorable member to another, and denied by that honorable member, the denial must be accepted.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am perfectly aware of that rule, and deny that I have as yet transgressed it. I deny also the right of the honorable member for Eden-Monaro to interrupt me, when I am speaking, with a frivolous point of order.

Mr Chapman

- I ask your ruling, sir, as to whether, after I have taken a point of order, and you have ruled upon it, the honorable member is in order in stating that I have taken a frivolous point of order ?

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Parramatta is not in order in saying that any honorable member has taken a frivolous point of order.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I withdraw the serious charge. But at any rate the honorable member will not deny that he gave as a reason for voting against the reduction of this duty the fact that he was supporting the Government.

Mr Chapman

- I will ask the Chairman whether the honorable member is not disobeying the ruling of the Chair ? I have denied the accuracy of a certain statement. The honorable member has been called to order, and now he repeats that statement.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I submit that I am doing nothing of the kind. The honorable member told the committee, when I pointed out the two attitudes which he has taken up with regard to the duty upon candles, that there was nothing

like sticking to the Government.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Eden-Monaro has denied the statement attributed to him, and the honorable member for Parramatta is well aware that, according to parliamentary practice, that denial must be accepted.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I accept the denial in the parliamentary sense. The facts will be in Hansard and honorable members when they read them will know just what the denial of the honorable member amounts to. There was no one louder in protest than he in the New South Wales Parliament when any proposal was made for increasing the price of candles to the mining community. But now that he is Government whip, and is complacently following the Ministry, he sings a different tune from that which he was aforetime wont to sing in regard to these very same items. We have been told by the honorable and learned member for Bendigo that we must perforce have a duty upon candles if our candle-makers are to compete with those abroad. The honorable and learned member quoted the wages paid to candle-makers in other countries. He told us that in Belgium they earned 3s. 8d. per day ; in Italy, 2s. 7d., whilst the female candle-maker there received a wage of 10d and the French candle-makers, who were mostly females, obtained 1s. 9d. He argued that, because of these low wages we could not produce candles here unless we had a duty to compensate for the difference in the cost of labour. I should like to point out to the honorable and learned member that in the first place the cost of labour employed in the production of candles is infinitesimal. We have been told to-day, upon the best authority, that a man can turn out 280 lbs. per day without the aid of machinery ; and when it comes to the mere matter of moulding the candles, he can turn out 1,300 lbs. per day. I should like to ask him, considering that the production per man is so enormous, what difference the labour-cost per day can make when spread over the huge quantity of candles which a man makes. According to the honorable member for Dalley, the cost of making candles is less than £d. per lb. Surely the honorable and learned member for Bendigo will not suggest that £d. per lb. is an insuperable obstacle in the production of candles here as compared with foreign countries ? I do not stay to point out that the low rate of wages paid abroad may be directly attributable to protection. That would, however, be a fitting reply. It has been shown that where there are high protective duties in foreign countries, miserable wage rates invariably prevail ; and I am afraid that if we let protection do its perfect work in this young land of ours, we shall inevitably come to the same low labour standard. The honorable member for Canobolas has shown unmistakably that, by reason of our geographical position, the natural protection is equivalent to 1 1-1 6d. per lb., which covers more than four times the total labour cost. We send our tallow abroad, and get it back in the shape of candles, and yet it is said we cannot compete, owing to the difference in the wage rates. There must be some further reason. We have been told that the moment the duty was taken off in New South Wales the candle works were closed ; but that was simply because the manufacturers of "Victoria, by charging their own people a higher rate than they had any right to charge, were able to compete in the New South Wales market.

Mr Watson

- Only 800,000 lbs. of candles were imported into New South Wales from all Australia, out of a total importation of 4,000,000 lbs.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- When this duty was taken off, candles were cheaper, and always have been cheaper, in Sydney than in Melbourne ; and it is undoubted that the price, through all the history of candle-making in New South Wales, has been increased by the amount of the duty imposed. We are told that the duty is to be a compromise as between the States ; but if the Government ever make a reduction, the duty which they are prepared to accept is invariably the largest one. If the Government propose a high duty with the intention of conceding something in committee, they deserve no credit for their concessions ; and in no sense, up to the present, have the conditions of New South Wales been considered.

Sir William Lyne

- What about iron ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We have not considered iron yet. Candles is about the only item in which some relief might be given to

the great 'mining industry. Almost the only raw material of the miner left untaxed consists of his labour and his brains ; and I appeal to the committee to have some regard to the great primary producers of this continent. In consideration of the burdens the miner is asked to bear by reason of this Tariff, he should be given some relief in connexion with the light which illuminates his cottage, and enables him to do his work.

Mr WATKINS

- There are one or two little points which require clearing up. I am opposed to comparing rates of wages or trade as between the States, because such comparisons are unfair. While honorable members have quoted the wages paid in Victoria from a labour stand-point, they have been careful to quote New South Wales wages from the employers' stand point ; and though there may be no desire to be unfair, there is always a difference as between the two quotations. It has been stated accurately that under a free-trade Government this industry was established in New South Wales with a duty of 1d. per lb. That duty was subsequently increased to 1½d. per lb., and the industry progressed until the Reid Government came into power and removed the protection. On the removal of the duties the importation of candles did not increase to the same extent as did the importation of stearine , though there was an increase in the importation of the former. In the year 1899, 2,689,000 lbs. of candles were imported into New South Wales, and the importation in 1900 jumped up to 4,083,000 lbs., showing that, as the duty was taken off, importation increased. The same remark applies to paraffine wax and stearine , the latter of which I look on as almost as much a manufactured article as candles.

Mr Conroy

- Surely the stearine is the raw material of the candle manufacturer 1

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Mr WATKINS

- Stearine was taxed in the same way as candles, because it was regarded as candles without the wick. In 1899 there was imported into New South Wales 500,000 lbs. of Stearine from Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium, under the duty of 1½d. per lb., which prevailed for at least half the year; and when- the duty was abolished 672,000 lbs. were imported from the same countries.

Mr Conroy

- One hundred extra men were employed in the industry.

Mr WATKINS

- So far as stearine is concerned, the honorable member is absolutely incorrect. The removal of the duty resulted in the stearine machines being covered up and left idle. They were lying idle until a month or two ago, when, in anticipation of the imposition of this duty, they were used again. Before that, the cheap stearine of Germany was imported, and the only work done in New South Wales was the moulding of the candles. There is a vast difference between the amount of work given by the moulding of candles and the amount of work given by the stearine industry, which is the basis of many other industries. It has been said that our manufacturers are given ample protection- in the cost of the carriage of tallow from Australia to England and the bringing back of candles. But it must be remembered that the Belgium and German candles which are imported are made from stearine , which is the product not of Australian tallow, but- of African palm oil, which is produced by negro labour. By encouraging the stearine industry here, we encourage a number of other industries - the preparation of various oils, of glycerine, and of other articles of commerce. I ask honorable members if it is unfair to place a duty of 1d. per lb. upon candles to compel the local manufacturer to use thousands of tons of tallow of Australian production 1 Without entering into the question of whether protection reduces or increases prices, I say that when the importers had a complete monopoly of the New South Wales market they did not lower the prices to the consumer. It was only when local producers began to sell their products that prices were reduced. Comparing the price-list issued by Lassetter and Company before the announcement of this Tariff with that issued by them after its announcement, I find that the price quoted for an inferior candle before the Tariff was announced was 1½d. per lb., while the price quoted for the better quality used by miners was 7d. per lb. The charges for Victorian candles, however, were much less than that. Locally produced stearine candles are as good for mining purposes as imported candles. .

Mr Conroy

- Then what is the need of the duty ?

Mr WATKINS

- To prevent the flooding of our markets with the surplus productions of other places. The acting leader of the Opposition, the other night, when speaking upon the duty upon ham and bacon, asked the Government to compromise upon the average of the duties in force in the various States. In this instance they have done so. They now propose to go even lower than the average duty by fixing the rate at 1d. per lb., and yet we are told that it is not a compromise.

Mr Thomson

- Not according to the population.

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Mr WATKINS

- Honorable gentlemen make their calculations, according to States or according to population, just as it suits them. But even upon population, 1d. per lb. would be less than the average duty. I would point out, too, that the manufacturers who receive the protection of 1d. per lb. upon candles will have to pay the same rate of duty upon the articles which they import in connexion with their industry. While a duty of 1d. per lb. might suffice under ordinary conditions, how can it be said that a duty of 1d. per lb. is an unfair duty when the raw material of the industry is taxed to the same extent? In my opinion, the manufacture of paraffine within the Commonwealth is an industry which should be encouraged. Paraffine is a by-product of kerosene oil, and is practically a manufactured article. Hitherto, those who have made paraffine candles out here have done practically little more than the moulding of the candles. It must be admitted that there is an ample supply of kerosene for the production of paraffine within the Commonwealth. I can understand that those who manufacture paraffine candles would prefer to get their paraffine wax from the big oil trusts of America, because, no doubt, they could get it more cheaply there than from a local producer; but I do not wish a local industry to be ruined for the sake of a big foreign trust in New South Wales, the candle industry boomed under a duty of 1d. per lb. The honorable member for Dalley said that the manufacturers took the whole of the duty; but in New South Wales events showed that when the duty was removed, many of the employees were discharged, and I am given to understand that since the duty has been imposed again, the wages of all employed in the industry have been increased by, on the average, 10 per cent. If there is one duty upon the list which will give an impetus to the use of our natural productions, and the development of useful industries, it is the duty upon candles, and I hope that the committee will accept the proposals of the Government.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The honorable and learned member for Bendigo seemed to argue that the rate of wages entered so largely into the manufacture of candles that it was impossible for our manufacturers to compete with those of European countries without the protection of a high duty. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports was even more venturesome, and he stated that the value of the labour employed in the industry was equal to 11/2d. per lb. I have a letter here from a gentleman who says -

As a practical manufacturer, I have worked contract at moulding candles in Tasmania and New South Wales at 1/2d. per lb., and have supplied for this labour, boxes, paper, and everything connected with same. My opinion is that the actual labour costs under 1/8d. per lb.

This is the statement of a gentleman who is willing to take a contract to-morrow on the terms he mentions, and it tends to show that undue importance has been attached to the element of labour in the cost of producing candles.

Mr HUME COOK

- Does that contract apply to stearine or wax candles?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- To any kind the honorable member likes.

Mr HUME COOK

- There is a great deal of difference - that is just where the honorable member makes a mistake.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- The honorable member for the Barrier has challenged my statements founded on the continental rate of wages, and the honorable member for Wentworth has also called into question the soundness of my conclusions. In both cases the honorable members have based their arguments on the assumption that the cost of making candles is limited to the operation of moulding; but that is not so. I have received

information from an expert who says that the principal labour is involved, not in the moulding, but in the preparation of the stearine, of which the candles are composed - in fact, that nine-tenths of the labour is connected with the preparation of stearine. This stearine is made by the same type of workmen as those who mould the candles, except that the stearine makers are paid at higher rates of wages. The cost of the material for the manufacture of a ton of candles in Victoria is £40, whilst the labour employed costs £6 10s. As compared with this, the labour in Germany costs about £2 per ton. It is the labour employed in Australia that we desire to protect by imposing a duty of 1d. per lb.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It has been clearly demonstrated throughout this debate that the consumer pays the duty, and I think we are now all agreed upon that. I have before me a statement which appeared in the Argus, in which it was pointed out that in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland the prices of candles vary strictly in keeping with the amount of duty imposed on the article. I represent the people who will be called upon to pay this duty; and inasmuch as it will fall upon those who are distributed throughout the country districts as distinguished from those who are gathered together in the large centres of population, I regard its incidence as distinctly unfair, and as tending towards class legislation. It has been pointed out by the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, that the candle manufacturers of South Australia are able to supply candles to the Broken Hill mining companies in successful competition with foreign rivals, and I do not think, from what I know of the circumstances of the industry and those engaged in it in South Australia, that they need any protection. We have been told that the workmen engaged in our candle factories are in receipt of good wages as compared with those in foreign countries who have to work at starvation rates. In the Argus of 9th August, 1900, the following report appears -

A meeting of the employees in the soap and candle trade was held in the Trades Hall on Tuesday evening. . . . Mr. Stephen Barker, who presided, pointed out that the soap and candle industry was a protected industry. Long hours and low pay were rampant in their trade, and also boy competition. He understood that there were men -working from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. (night) for 20s. and 30s. per week. (Applause, and " That is true. ")

Although this industry has been well protected we find the persons engaged in it poorly paid, and those who represent labour in this House should vote in favour of taking a tax off the working man.

Mr PAGE

- It has been stated that some honorable members have a brief from the importers, whilst others are briefed by the manufacturers, but I have a brief from the consumers, who are paying me £400 a year to look after their interests, and I am going to do it. I do not see why the consumer should have to pay an extra 1d. per lb. for his candles for the benefit of a few manufacturers. The people who live in the remote country districts, at distances ranging from 100 up to 1,000 miles from the big cities, will have to pay this duty, and the disadvantage at which they are placed in having to pay freight upon the supplies conveyed to them is a sufficient handicap without imposing heavy taxes upon them in the form of customs duties. No one has answered the statement of the honorable member for Dalley that one man can make . 260 lbs. of candles in a day. At 1d. per lb. that amounts to a profit of £1 1s. 8d., which goes into the pockets of the manufacturer from the labour of one man for one day. Why do not the Government say straight out that they are going to give a few thousands a year to the manufacturers in the shape of a bonus, because that is what it means. A duty of 1d. per lb. would be equivalent to a profit of 5s. 5d. . to the manufacturer on one man's work for a day, and assuming that the wages paid in Victoria are 6s. per day, as compared with 2s. per day in Belgium, the Victorian manufacturer would still have an advantage of 1s. 5d. on every man's .work, in addition to the natural protection given by the cost of bringing the goods from Europe to Australia. It is all very well for the representatives of Victoria to cry out for protection. We do not want protection in the back blocks of Queensland. Our product, wool, has to compete in the open markets of the world, and we get no benefit from protection, but are required to pay very heavy duties upon everything we consume. I do not mind a little protection, but I object to imposts -which will only have the effect of benefiting the importer or manufacturer at the cost of the general community.' I do not care twopence about protection. The* fact of the matter is that the whole onus of this tax will fall upon the consumer, and therefore I shall vote for its entire abolition.

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Mr PIESSE

- There is no doubt that in considering this matter the Government have had to face a very difficult position. But although they may have striven in every case to do what is just, I am afraid they have not succeeded. Under the duty which prevailed in Tasmania, a revenue of £1,248 was received last year. The Treasurer, under his proposal, expects to derive a revenue of £188 from that State, so that there is an estimated loss of £1,060. In other words about 85 per cent, of the imports of candles into Tasmania is to go to promote Inter-State free-trade. The candles will be produced within the Commonwealth and sent to Tasmania, but they will not be manufactured in that State. I think the Government are demanding too great a sacrifice from Tasmania for the purpose of promoting industries outside of that State. I am glad to know that they have modified their original proposal, and will be content to accept a duty of 1d. per lb. But I doubt whether that proposal goes far enough. I think they ought to meet not only the case of Tasmania but that of New South Wales, by making a further concession. If they allowed the rate to stand at 1d. per lb., they would be giving a preference of £7 per ton to the local manufacturer. The honorable member for Wentworth made out a very strong case when he showed what a large portion of the trade of New South Wales would be excluded by the proposal of the Government. In fairness to the position of that State I think we should endeavour to effect a further compromise. The first proposal of the Ministry practically involved the taking away of the whole of the import trade of Tasmania for the purpose of benefiting Inter-State manufacturers, but in those proposals are also involved, I very much fear, the destruction of the local factories. Of course it may be urged that the industries of Tasmania are small, but it should be borne in mind that relatively they are as important to that State as are the industries which exist in other States, to those States. If the duty upon paraffine wax is the same as that which is imposed upon candles there is no likelihood of the manufacture of candles being carried on in Tasmania. The original proposal of the Government meant that upon paraffine wax, which is the raw material used in the production of candles, the duty to be charged was double that levied upon the finished article. Surely that fact must have escaped the attention of Ministers. I should like to know if they still adhere to their proposal to place the same duty upon paraffine wax as upon candles. It has been said that a great deal is involved in the manufacture of stearine, and the honorable member for Bendigo gave us some particulars under this heading. I have some facts, however, which do not quite fit in with those given by him to the committee. A Sydney manufacturer of stearine writes -

It has been contended that in the conversion of tallow into stearine a good deal of labour is employed, but this is not correct. Two or three men and boys under the control of the technical head are all that is needed, but the real expense for manual labour comes in afterwards in the moulding room, where cutting, polishing packing, labelling, box making, &c, &c, is carried on; while the cost of converting tallow into stearine will benefit the labourer to the extent of 10s. per ton, moulding into candles will cost £3 10s. per ton, and of course this labour is the same whether paraffine or stearine is used.

Mr Watkins

- The man who wrote that admitted that he is employing only five hands.

Mr PIESSE

- A great deal has been made of the value of this industry to the primary producer; but we find that the exports of tallow from New South Wales represents a value of about £500,000 per annum. There can thus be very little advantage conferred upon the producers of tallow by the establishment of a few candle-makers in their midst. Looking at all the facts I trust that the ultimate conclusion arrived at will be to meet the case fairly by reducing the duty to 3/4d. per lb., which I think is a fair compromise. As regards the raw material I hope that a further concession will be made, as otherwise the whole of the small industries of Tasmania will be swept out of existence. I understand that there are seven or eight stearine factories in Australia. If we are going to encourage industries, it is evidently to our advantage to encourage as many as possible, and not to allow any monopoly to be established, by which the whole of any particular industry might be controlled by a few. I trust, therefore, that the duty upon the raw material will be less than that which is imposed upon the finished article.

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Mr McDONALD

- I think that the committee ought to come to a division upon this question. If we do not, something serious may happen. There are a number of gentlemen within the precincts of this House who are interested in

the candle industry, and from the excited manner in which they are running about, there is not the slightest doubt but that something serious will happen if we do not soon arrive at a decision. A good deal has been said about the interests of the manufacturer, but I would point out that we have to consider some one else in regard to this matter ? In the far north of Queensland the duty on candles constitutes a very serious tax upon the mining industry. In Charters Towers there is a population of 26,000, and every tax which we impose upon the mining industry is a detriment to the progress of that field. Even the city of Melbourne would probably have been a very small place to-day, if it had not been for the early gold discoveries in Victoria. The more mining centres that are opened up within the Commonwealth the better. They will be the means of attracting population, and of contributing generally to the prosperity of the community. I think that the reduction of the duty proposed to 1/2d. per lb. would be a fair compromise. It has been urged that the preparation of the materials used for the moulding of candles constitutes the heavy expenditure. But I would point out that that line of reasoning is absolutely ridiculous, inasmuch as there is no finality to it. Certainly the raw materials which are used in the manufacture of candles can be obtained in Australia as cheaply as they can be secured elsewhere. Under these circumstances, a duty of 1/2d. per lb. is sufficient to enable manufacturers to make a reasonable profit and pay decent wages. When honorable members are inundated with literature, and button-holed by people who tell them what a magnificent industry this is, and how its establishment is in the interests of the working men, I regard the proceeding with a great deal of suspicion. Industries are not started for the benefit of the working men, and if a manufacturer cannot make a profit out of those he employs, he does not keep them five minutes. Some people do not value their employees more than, or as much as, they do their horses, because horses have to be fed? and kept in a good marketable condition, which is not necessary in the case of workmen. It is necessary at times to look these facts fairly and squarely in the face.

Mr. JOSEPHCOOK (Parramatta).The honorable and learned member for Bendigo has told us, evidently on good authority - I suppose the information was given to him by makers of candles - that the cost of the labour is less than 3/4 d. per lb., and that is corroborated to some extent by the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, who says that the cost of converting stearine into candles is about 3/8d., or a little less than 1/2d. per lb. The great argument we have heard to-night is that our labour cannot compete with the rest of the world; but here we of the Opposition are proposing a duty which will more than counterbalance, not the difference between the cost of our labour and some other labour, but the total labour cost. Surely that is enough protection from the labour stand-point. There is nothing so fallacious as the statement which is constantly made that protection is needed to make up the difference in wages, especially in an industry like this, in which one man can turn out such a vast quantity of the product.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I would like to know who pays the land and income taxes of the country, and helps to support the unemployed ?

Sir Edward Braddon

- Not the candlemaker.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I take it that stearine is produced from fat bullocks, which are raised by those who pay the land and income taxes ; and yet it is proposed to allow the free importation of stearine , manufactured by people who never contribute -one penny to the Government of the country. I do not propose to allow these people to use our markets when they do not contribute either by rental or taxation ; and this presents a good opportunity of making manufacturers abroad pay something for the support of the Government. Whoever pays the taxation afterwards, the importer from abroad has to pay at the Custom-house ; and had I been in any doubt on this point, I should have been converted to my present opinion by the arguments of the Opposition.

Sir Edward Braddon

- The honorable member is proposing to tax our own people.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- When there was a. duty of 1d. per lb. in New South

Wales, candles were as cheap in that State as they ever have been-; indeed, if we compare the New South Wales market under the Dibbs Tariff with the market under free-trade, it will be seen that the. prices are practically the same.

Mr.FULLER (Illawarra).- The honorable member for Gwydir has given us the finest old tory speech that was ever delivered in this Chamber. He acknowledges - and, no doubt, the opinion is shared by a large number of honorable members on the Ministerial side - that he advocates this taxation, which will bear hardly on the miner, the farmer, and every working man from one end of the Commonwealth to the other, in order that he may escape payment of the land and income taxes. We now see the good old conservatives side by side in their desire to put the whole of the burden on the working men of this country.

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Mr KENNEDY

- The small contributions to this debate by the honorable and learned member for Illawarra play right up to the gallery, but they do not touch the question at issue. Because one honorable member on this side supports the proposal of the Government for a particular reason, the honorable member at once makes the assertion that that is the reason which actuates all honorable members behind the Government. That, however, is not altogether the reason I support the proposed duty. We must all admit that no individual in Australia or any other country enters into an industry, or makes an investment, from purely philanthropic motives ; and it is only human to have an eye to self. The real question is whether this is an industry which by the imposition of this duty can be developed here, and give employment to our own people, without unduly increasing the cost to the consumer. It is not for me to recount the many instances in Victoria where industries have been successfully established by a protective duty without increasing the cost. The illustration given by the honorable member for Dalley proves not only that that may be accomplished, but that a lower rate of duty would increase the cost to the consumer without establishing the industry. The honorable member for Canobolas to-night doubted Coghlan, and I should not be surprised, in view of what we have heard, if honorable members doubted even their own statements.

During the years a duty of 1d. per lb. was imposed in New South Wales, the manufacturers did not produce sufficient for the requirements of that State, and the natural consequence was that the consumer paid every penny of the duty. But as soon as the duty was raised to 1 1/2d. per lb., the manufacturers approximated, and would have eventually reached, to the limit of their own markets, and have become exporters, as has been the case in other States where industries have been established under a higher rate of protection. Before that point was reached, however, the conditions changed in New South Wales, and the duty was repealed by instalments extending over a period of years. During the gradual process of repeal, the total output of candles was reduced by about 2,500,000 lbs., and the equivalent was imported, with the result that the public paid whatever rate of duty existed in the meantime, and people were thrown out of employment, or put in competition with those engaged in other pursuits. I ask those who talk so much about primary production, and are so anxious to benefit the primary producers, if it is not by diversifying the field of employment that we can best assist our people. It is not fair to speak of the treatment afforded to any one industry as though it were the only industry which is being considered, and it must not be forgotten, too, that every industry is dependent upon every other industry, and that the producing industries are dependent upon the manufacturing industries. Those who talk about a duty being ineffective in any State should have thought of the fact before they agreed to federation, with its accompaniment of InterState free-trade. Now that we have federated we must consider the interests of the Commonwealth as a whole. To my mind it is possible to successfully establish the candle-manufacturing industry in the Commonwealth by the imposition of an import duty of 1d. per lb., and to manufacture our own requirements without increasing the price of the locally-made article. It is not in the camp of the shearer, the bush man, or the prospector that candles are chiefly to be found ; it is the great mining community, and to a more limited extent the householders, who are the chief consumers of candles ; and I say that we can establish the candle-manufacturing industry in Australia without putting a cent of taxation upon them. In Victoria we supply to the miners a locally-made candle which is as good and as cheap as, if not cheaper than, the imported candle, and it is beyond question that in New South Wales candles were lower under the import duty of 1 1/2d. per lb. than at any other period.

Mr Thomson

- The price of candles has been low only when the price of tallow has been low.

Mr KENNEDY

- On the average the price of tallow was about the same between 1891 and 1896 as between 1896 and 1901.

Mr Thomson

- The price of candles has gone up since the imposition of this duty.

Mr KENNEDY

- Yes ; because so far it has operated only as a revenue duty. Over a considerable area of the Commonwealth, however, there has been a reduction in the rate of duty, but I venture to assert that manufacturers will be able to hold their own because of the larger market which they will have by reason of InterState free-trade. Some honorable members have expressed the fear that the imposition of a duty upon stearine will lead to the combination of manufacturers of stearine against small candle manufacturers who may have to buy it, but, inasmuch as the capital necessary to lay down a suitable plant for its manufacture is comparatively small, the probability is that there will always be sufficient competition to prevent that happening. The value of the plant in the 22 Victorian soap, candle, and stearine factories has been put down at £105,000. An undue rate of interest being earned, will prevent a monopoly being created, where such a small amount of capital is required for the manufacture of the article.

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Mr THOMAS

- I threw out the challenge to the honorable and learned member for Bendigo that I would vote for a duty equal to the price of the labour employed in making 1 lb. of candles, and as by the figures supplied to him by the candle manufacturers he has shown it to be $3\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb., though I regard that as rather high, I shall be willing to vote for a duty of that amount if he will move it. Otherwise, of course, I shall vote for the amendment now before the committee.

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

The committee divided -

Ayes 26

Noes 33

Majority 7

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Mr. Kirwan) put -

That the words "lid., and on and after 28th November, 1901, $3\frac{3}{4}$ d.," be inserted after the word " package."

The committee divided -

Ayes 27

Noes 32

Majority ... 5

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, has already shown conclusively that the imposition of the duty of 1d. per lb. on stearine and paraffine wax will have the effect of destroying the candle manufacturing industries of Tasmania and other places, in addition to involving the loss of revenue to that State which will already have resulted from the operation of this Tariff. It is not only the small manufacturers of Tasmania, but also those of Victoria and New South Wales, who are protesting against the imposition of a duty on paraffine, wax and stearine . This duty can only operate to the benefit of the few large manufacturers of these particular products, and it is only fair to the small manufacturers that they should receive some consideration. A duty of 1d. per lb. on paraffine wax would be equivalent to $46\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. ad valorem, and on stearine to $26\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. Paraffine wax and stearine are the raw materials which, under a proper system of customs taxation, should be permitted to come in free, and I can only hope that the committee will agree to my proposal, which will have the effect of placing them on the free list. I move -

That the words "stearine, paraffine wax," be omitted.

Mr CONROY

- I hope the committee will agree to the amendment. The cost of the labour involved in converting tallow into stearine is only 10s. per ton as compared with £3 10s., the cost of converting stearine into candles. I was very glad to hear the remarks of the honorable member for Tasmania, because they threw some light upon the reasons for the existence of 43 small manufacturers in New South Wales as against 22 in Victoria. The small manufacturers should certainly be allowed to obtain their raw material duty free.

Mr Mauger

- Let them get it here.

Mr CONROY

- There is no reason why they should be forced to obtain their materials from any particular manufacturer. If the cost of the raw material is increased it will have the effect of closing up a large number of small manufactories just as effectively as if a law were passed with that specific object. If we look at the returns for the last ten years we shall find that the number of men employed in the manufacture of soap and candles in Victoria has only increased by seven, despite the heavy protective duty of 1d. per lb. which the industry has enjoyed, whilst in free-trade New South Wales the number has increased from 194 to 351. That increase has undoubtedly been due to the fact that stearine and paraffine are both upon the free list. Question - That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the item - put.

The committee divided -

Ayes ... Noes . .

Majority 22 u 2

37 22

15

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Mr. Kingston) proposed -

That the words " and on and after 28th November, 1901, 1d.," be added to the duty "candles, per lb., 1st d."

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I think that we can now arrive at a reasonable compromise in regard to the duty upon stearine, which is the raw material used in the manufacture of candles. The committee have already agreed to an impost of 1d. per lb. upon candles, and having regard to the fact that stearine is the raw material employed in their manufacture, I ask honorable members opposite to agree to a reduction of the duty upon this article to £d. per lb. I therefore move* -

That the amendment be amended by adding the words "except stearine and paraffine wax, 1d."

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

The committee divided -

Ayes Noes

Majority

24 35

11

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment of the amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Mr. Kingston) agreed to-

That the words "and on and after 28th November, 1901, 1d." be added.

Motion (by Mr. Kingston) put -

That the item, as amended, be agreed to.

The committee divided -

Ayes ... Noes

Majority

34 19

15

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 16. Cocoa Beans, per lb. Id.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Honorable members will recollect that the Government propose to- alter the next item of cocoa and chocolate, and as cocoa beans are the raw material of that particular industry, and this duty was proposed for revenue purposes only, we propose to withdraw the item.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I must congratulate the Treasurer on his consistency. On the last item the Opposition endeavoured to have imposed a moderate duty leaving a certain amount of revenue duty on the raw material for candle making. Now by a peculiar concurrence of circumstances which no logic or reason can explain, but which we all understand,, the Treasurer, the moment the button- is touched and the political magnetism is moved, gives way, even in his revenue duty. At any rate, it is something on which to congratulate ourselves that, through any intervention, we have a return to the true principles of a financial policy.

Item negatived.

Item 17. Cocoa and chocolate ground, or in any way manufactured, or with milk or other substance, cocoa butter, caramel and caramel butter; confectioner}', n. e. i. , including bon-bons, and mixed packets of confectionery containing trinkets (gross weight), sugar candy, cachous, and fruits crystallized or candied, per lb. 2d., and 15 per cent, ad valorem.

Mr THOMSON

- I desire to draw the attention of the Minister in charge to a word which needs clearer definition. In connexion with caramel and caramel butter, my attention has been called to the fact that burnt sugar, which is sometimes called caramel sugar, has always come in as "sugar other"; it is merely a colouring matter used by cordial-makers and brewers. I am informed that a demand has been made for a duty of 2d. per lb., and 15 per cent, ad valorem on the article I have mentioned, as caramel confectionery, and it is evident that what is meant in this item is the American confectionery, which is made from caramel butter or paste. If that is not the intention I would point out the absurdity of proposing to charge caramel colouring as if it were caramel confectionery. It has hitherto been recognised as one of the colouring matters which, under the Tariff, are to be subject to a duty of 20 per cent. This caramel colouring matter is merely burnt sugar, and is not suitable for use in confectionery for any purposes other than those for which ordinary sugar can be used. Therefore people would not be likely to go to the expense of using this caramel as a substitute for sugar. It has always paid the higher sugar duty ; and it would be, therefore, absurd to place upon it such an excessive impost as 2d. per lb. The difficulty might be overcome by inserting the word " confectionery " after the word " caramel."

Sir George Turner

- I understand that caramel is used in the manufacture of cocoa and chocolate.

Mr THOMSON

- The caramel or burnt sugar to which I am referring is used only for colouring purposes, and in previous Tariffs it has been recognised as " other sugar." It is the caramel butter that is used in the manufacture of cocoa and chocolate.

Mr Kingston

- This refers to caramel crystals.

Mr THOMSON

- At a later stage I shall move that " confectionery," or some other word, which will serve to distinguish colouring caramel from confectionery caramel be inserted.

Mr WATSON

- The amendment I have already indicated will not prevent the honorable member for North Sydney from moving his amendment later on. I propose to deal only with cocoa and chocolate and cognate productions, and will leave caramel and caramel butter, which I understand are distinct from cocoa and chocolate preparations, to be dealt with in common with confectionery. In view of the fact that we have already agreed, at the suggestion of the Government, to the elimination of the duty on cocoa beans, a duty of 1d. per lb. on the finished product, in the shape of prepared cocoa-or-chocolate, ought to be sufficient for all protective purposes, and reasonably productive from a revenue stand-point. We have to consider by how much we are likely to increase the cost of an article, the consumption of which it is

desirable to encourage. These articles have been admitted into New South Wales free in the past, and a duty of 1d. per lb. would be sufficient to impose upon them now.

Sir George Turner

- I have already said that we will take off the 15 per cent., which amounts to more than 1d. per lb.

Mr WATSON

- I do not think that is sufficient. Of course, it is very 'difficult to distinguish between confectionery chocolate and cocoa, and the articles similarly named which are used in the preparation of beverages.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- That is the reason we have put them all together.-

Mr WATSON

- It is because of that difficulty that I propose to reduce the duty all round. I move-

That the words "2d. and 15 per cent, ad valorem, and on and after 28th November, 1901, 1d.," be inserted after the words "cocoa butter."

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Mr MAUGER

- I am sorry that the honorable member for 'Bland has suggested a reduction of the duty on cocoa and chocolate. Cocoa is very largely made in Victoria to the advantage of those employed in the industry, and to the decided benefit of the consumer. Previously the duty was 3d. per lb., and in some of the other States it was as high as 4d. per lb. In Victoria, Cadbury's cocoa has been selling at the rate of 2s. 9d. per lb., or 2s. 6d. in bond, whereas Parsons' Victorian cocoa is sold for 2s. 2d. per lb. The local article, which is quite as good as that which is imported, should be encouraged, but if the duty is reduced in the way suggested the factories will be shut, and the consumers placed at a great disadvantage. In the interests of the people who have invested their money in the industry, of the workmen engaged in it, and of the consumers, I hope that the Government proposal will be carried.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I cannot see my way to accept the proposal of the honorable member for Bland. It would be almost impossible to distinguish between what would be called cocoa and chocolate, at 1d. per lb. duty, and cocoa and chocolate confectionery, which would be liable to a duty of 2d. per lb. There would be continual disputes in the department with regard to the meaning of the terms. I find that the duty we propose is- equivalent to 12 J per cent, on cocoa and chocolate, whilst the confectionery duty amounts to 25 percent. With regard to the articles which have been referred to as being to some extent raw material, I am prepared to reduce the duty on cocoa butter, caramel, and caramel paste to 1d. With regard to cocoa, I am afraid I cannot agree to the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. The rate now proposed amounts, as I have said, to 1 2 J per cent, ad valorem, and the duty which was previously levied was far higher. We at first proposed a duty of 2d. per lb., with 15 per cent; ad valorem, making, it- equivalent to 3d. per lb. on most of the items, but levying a higher duty upon the better class and higher-priced cocoa and chocolate. As Victoria levied a duty of 3d., Queensland 4d., South Australia 3d., and Tasmania 4d., it will be seen that we are not proposing a higher "rate than has been charged in some of the States.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - If my right honorable friend had tried to frame this Tariff on reasonably scientific lines, we might have been able to agree with him in his present proposal, but when he insists upon levying the highest duties on the necessities of life, the only way in which we can equalize matters to the consumer is by reducing such duties as that now proposed. Perhaps a slight reduction in the duty will produce more revenue than would be derived under the higher rate, and 'on all the principles of compromise, and in view of the revenue likely to be derived, we are perfectly justified in asking the Ministry to reduce their proposals by one-half.

Mr. WATSON (Bland).- I wish to keep cocoa and chocolate as far as possible separate from confectionery.. Confectionery is more in the nature of a luxury than is cocoa, and for that reason it should be kept distinct.

Question - That the words- proposed. & be inserted, be so inserted - put.

The committee divided.

33 22

11

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AYES

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NOES

Majority

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the affirmative. Amendment agreed to.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- As the committee have decided that the duty upon cocoa butter shall be fixed at 1d. per lb., it is right that we should impose a similar rate upon caramel and caramel butter. It is also necessary to insert after the word "caramel," the words "caramel paste." I therefore move -

That the words "caramel paste" be inserted after the word "caramel."

Amendment agreed to. Amendment (by Sir George Tubnee) agreed to -

That the words - "2d. and 15 per cent, ad valorem and on and after the 28th November, 1901, 1d.," be inserted after the words "caramel butter."

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- It will be necessary for the committee to amend the duty which has been imposed upon confectionery, so as to make it 2d., instead of 2d. per lb. and 15 percent, ad valorem. I therefore move -

That the words - "and on and after the 28th November, 1901, 2d.," be added to the duty "confectionery, n.e.i., including bon-bons- and mixed packets of confectionery containing trinkets (gross weight), sugar, sugar candy, cachous, and fruits, crystallized or candied . . . per lb., 2d. and 15 per cent, ad valorem."

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - When I tell my right honorable friend that we shall not object to this item, I am sure he will weep tears of joy. I could not, however, allow the item to pass without giving him an opportunity of saying something with regard to our magnanimity.

Amendment agreed to.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 18. Coffee and Chicory, viz. : - Raw, per lb., 3d.

Kiln dried, roasted, or ground, and in liquid form, or with milk or other substance, per. lb., 3d.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - After cocoa beans have been allowed to go free, the Treasurer will consider I am acting with that magnanimity to which I referred, when I propose that the duty on the raw material of chicory and coffee be reduced from 3d. to 1d. I cannot understand how a protectionist Government can think of charging such an enormous duty as 3d. on chicory and coffee in the raw state. We are getting to a sort of impasse so far as principle is concerned in this Tariff. On second consideration, I will show my moderation by proposing that the duty on the raw material be 2d.; and I think the Government might fall in with the suggestion. We want some kind of principle running throughout the Tariff, and a duty of 3d. is against the principles which have been operating in committee. I move -

That the words "and on and after the 28th

November, 1901, 2d." be added to the duty, "coffee and chicory, viz. : - Raw, per lb., 3d."

Mr MCDONALD

- Before the question is put, I should like to ask whether it is competent to insert after the word "raw" the words "or in parchment"?

The CHAIRMAN

- It will be necessary before that can be done for the honorable member for Wentworth to withdraw his amendment.

Mr KINGSTON

- I understand that the honorable member wishes to meet the desires of the people in Queensland, who, I am glad to say, produce a considerable quantity of coffee, and with whom this industry has considerable prospects. The better way of accomplishing the honorable member's object would be to strike out the word "raw," and insert in lieu thereof the word "unhulled." I trust the honorable member for Wentworth will not press his amendment. This duty is not simply a revenue duty. It has the effect of raising revenue, no doubt; but it is incidentally protective, and in that respect differs from the duty on tea. The figures I have shown that nearly 40 per cent, of the coffee locally consumed in Queensland is locally produced. In

1900 the coffee produced amounted to 102,134 lbs., . and the net import to 148,509 lbs. It would be a great mistake if we did not do what we could for the purpose of giving a fair opportunity to this industry ; and the Government must at least resist the amendment submitted by the honorable member for Wentworth.

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Mr BAMFORD

- It was arranged last night or the night before, that the most extreme proposal in regard to any item should be decided first ; and as I intend to move that the duty on raw coffee be 4d. per lb., I ask the honorable member for Wentworth to withdraw his amendment. Amendment, by leave, withdrawn. Mr. BAMFORD (Herbert)! - I move - That the words " and on and after 2Sth November, 1901, 4d. " be added to the duty, " Coffee and chicory, viz., raw per lb., 3d."

This valuable industry in Queensland has made considerable progress in a very short time, and as honorable members on both sides have expressed a desire to foster the primary producers, an occasion is thus offered of carrying their wishes into effect. Previous to 1895, no locally-grown coffee was put on the market, but from that time a great deal has been sold. This coffee is grown almost entirely by white labour, and the growers say that they can conduct the industry profitably with a little assistance, such as the Queensland Government previously gave them. The "largest grower cultivates only 80 acres, so that this is a small man's industry, which is entitled to much more consideration than is any enterprise of large syndicates or foreign 'capitalists. There are 200 growers in Queensland, cultivating 700 acres, the :greater portion of which is in bearing. Last year the total crop was valued at many thousands of pounds, and the yield per acre "3s estimated at from 10 to 20 cwt., the price being about £56 per ton in parchment, and £112 per ton clean. I hope this committee will give to this industry some assistance.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I support & amp; ha amendment submitted by the honorable member for Herbert. With the aid of the .-duty imposed by the Queensland Government, coffee has been grown very largely in that State during the last few years. Coffee is grown not only in North Queensland, but in South Queensland, and the following particulars have been forwarded to me by some of the growers -

The importance of the industry may be gathered from the fact that, although only in its infancy, the production of coffee in Queensland has already grown to over 40 per cent, of the consumption of the State, the figures for the year 1000 reading: - Production, 102,134 lbs. ; net imports, 148,50!) lbs. ; consumption, 250,643 lbs. There is no doubt that the growth of the industry would have been considerably greater, but that growers , have been waiting for the Federal Customs Tariff before extending their operations ; so, should the Tariff be sufficiently favorable, the coffee-growers of Queensland will in a few years be able to supply the whole of the common wealth with coffee grown entirely without the aid of any alien coloured labour.

J hope the committee will see its way to support the amendment.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - On each of the several occasions on which I have referred to New South Wales, I have said that we were willing to agree to a moderate compromise. I do not want honorable members who come from Queensland to accuse me of inconsistency, when J contend that .it would not be fair, in connexion with a product of this kind, to impose an extreme duty which will handicap the whole of Australia. According to the principle of compromise on which we are proceeding, a product which has a good chance, owing to the soil and climate of any particular State, should receive consideration ; but when we have proposed an extreme duty of this kind, which is even ldv more than that desired by the Government, it means a practical sacrifice - a prohibitive duty for a product which has reached only a certain stage in one State. If this duty is regarded as an ad valorem impost, it appears as one of the most tremendous proposals that lias been made by any honorable member up to the present time. Honorable members from Queensland must see that they are going beyond the point of reason in asking that the whole of the Commonwealth should pay a very heavy duty in order that a few agriculturists in their State may carry on an industry in which they have been engaged. I shall vote against any such proposal.

Mr Bamford

- I may point out to the honorable member for Wentworth that the duty in Queensland has been 4d. per lb., and that there is nothing of an extraordinary nature in my proposal.

Mr L E GROOM

- I hope the acting leader of the Opposition will not oppose this proposal. On his own showing, in view of the fact that we have not by any means overtaken the local consumption, this will be a purely revenue duty for a very long time to come, and therefore should receive the support of the honorable member. As a matter of fact, it will produce revenue for some time to come, and also encourage an industry for which Queensland is eminently adapted.- Some encouragement should be given to the industries which flourish in the tropical parts of Queensland, and which can be engaged in by white labourers. Coffee growing can be carried on in the extreme northern parts of the State, and down to within a short distance of Brisbane. Some of the best coffees produced in Queensland have been grown within 50 or 60 miles of Brisbane. At a recent meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Thurlow, who is no mean authority on the subject of the coffee industry, said -

Coffee was being grown in Queensland which was equal to anything in the world. The old duty in Queensland had been 4d., the new duty was 3d. on raws, and he moved in favour of the old duty being retained. The other colonies could not grow coffee, and we could. The matter of 1d. difference in the pound might mean the death-blow to the industry in Queensland.

Mr. Campbell, who could also speak with authority on this subject, said that the industry had gained a good strong foothold, and that all it wanted was adequate encouragement.

Mr CONROY

- It is a great pity that an increase of this kind should be proposed, and it ought to be perfectly clear to the honorable member for Herbert that he is asking all the people of the Commonwealth to submit to a heavy tax for the encouragement of a few agriculturists who cultivate only 700 acres. The duty amounts to an ad valorem impost of 40 per cent., and it is unfair that the whole of the people of the Commonwealth should be asked to pay any such duty.

Mr WILKINSON

- In view of the fear which has been expressed that much of our tropical land in Queensland will go out of cultivation owing to certain legislation which has been passed in this Chamber, honorable members ought to show special consideration to any industry which can be carried on there by means of white labour. The industry of coffee-growing has obtained a permanent foothold in Queensland, and white men engaged on the plantations are paid at the rate of 30s. per week with rations. Fully 46 per cent. of the local requirements in the way of coffee are now being supplied by the locally grown article, and if the industry receives a fair amount of encouragement, the time will soon arrive when not only the requirements of Queensland, but those of the whole Commonwealth, will be met. In the meantime the consumers of the Commonwealth will no doubt have to pay a heavier tax; but would it not be worth their while to do so in order to establish a sound industry, at which white men can find profitable employment?" I hope the amendment will be carried.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- I desire to enter my protest against this proposal, because I think it will take us into a dangerous path. The coffee-growing industry in Queensland is a small one, but the principle upon which the increase of duty is proposed is one which, if applied in this instance, must be extended to a variety of other industries. We shall have proposals to encourage the growth of cotton in Queensland, and similar requests from those engaged in the cultivation of other products who will have equal claims to our consideration, and the burdens sought to be placed upon us will become absolutely unbearable. If there is to be protection at all I should be very glad to extend it to those who are engaged in healthy occupations connected with primary industries, because I think we should do everything we can to encourage our people to follow outdoor employments rather than to crowd into factories, where even under the best of circumstances the conditions must be unhealthy. I do not think, however, that any increase is justified in the case now under consideration, and I shall vote against the proposal as a ridiculous and dangerous one.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney).- The protection asked for in this case is enormous. The cost of coffee ranges from 6d. to 1s. per lb., and the duty would therefore range from 33 to 66 per cent. That would be an enormous protection to give to the product of any agricultural crop, and we must put a limit upon this kind of protection. I should be very glad indeed to see the coffee industry flourish in Queensland, but I believe it will make progress with the assistance of a lower duty than that now suggested. If these heavy

duties are to be demanded in all cases where there is a prospect of establishing an industry, the burdens placed upon the people of the Commonwealth will be so great that they will not be able to bear them.

Mr KINGSTON

- The idea of the Government is to encourage, amongst other things, the growth of coffee in Queensland or in any other part of the Commonwealth. I was somewhat interested to notice the observations of the honorable member for North Sydney as to the percentage of duty which was represented by the proposal of the honorable member for Herbert.. If I recollect aright, he was one of those who voted for a duty of 3d. per lb. on tea in connexion with the proposals of the leader of the Opposition in New South Wales.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We cannot grow tea.

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Mr KINGSTON

- There are two reasons which justify the imposition of duties. One of these is that revenue may be produced, and the other that protection may be afforded. Duties may also be proposed with a view to accomplishing both objects. If a duty of £45 per cent, on an article which cannot be produced here can be upheld on the ground that it will produce revenue, a duty which will not only produce revenue, but will also afford protection to a local product, can be even more abundantly justified. I think it will be best to adhere to the Government proposal in this matter. We assure Queensland of our heartiest sympathy. That State has shown what its capacity is by producing about 50 per cent, of the coffee required to meet local needs, and I hope it will be able to do more. I should not be at all sorry if we could provide greater encouragement than we are now proposing.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- I have already pointed out that- this proposal goes too far. The Minister for Trade and Customs says that this is a revenue producing and a protective duty. But in so far as a duty is productive of revenue it- is not- protective, and vice versa. How any man can get up and make a statement of that sort is to me inexplicable. Why should people be mulcted in a heavier duty upon coffee than that which is imposed upon tea? The proposal for an increased rate comes with very bad grace from a member of the labour party, because the greater number of the consumers of coffee belong to the working classes. It is upon them that this extra tax will fall.

Mr McCAY

- I would point out that last year there were about 2,225,000 lbs. of coffee used in the Commonwealth, all of which, with the exception of a few thousand lbs., was imported from abroad. Consequently this duty is, to all intents and purposes a revenue and not a protective duty. Nor can it be protective in its incidence for many years to come. I am glad to find that some honorable members opposite are just as opposed to revenue duties as to protective duties. But, if the revenue duties are to disappear equally with the protective duties, where is the revenue ultimately to come from? We have never yet been able to get a frank statement upon this point. I have as strong a dislike to purely revenue duties as any man can have, but the necessities of the Commonwealth force me to support some of them, but I do not intend to vote for the increased duty now proposed?

Amendment negatived.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I now move -

That the words " and on and after 25th November, 1901, 2d., " be added to the duty, " coffee and chicory, viz., raw, per lb., 3d."

I do not think there is any great principle involved in this, but considering that such a small quantity of coffee is grown in Australia, even a duty of 2d. per lb. will add considerably to the price of the article. As a matter of degree, I think that 2d. per lb. is as high as we ought to go for revenue purposes in connexion with an article which enters into such general consumption.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney). - I should be perfectly willing to vote for a duty of 3d. per lb. upon tea or coffee if - the Tariff contained only a few items, and the taxation in its incidence resembled that under the New South Wales Tariff. But when we are imposing duties upon articles of general consumption, we ought to fix as moderate a rate as possible. For that reason I cannot support as high a duty upon coffee under a Tariff of this sort as I would countenance under a Tariff covering very few items indeed, and under which the incidence of taxation was more equitable.

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Mr KINGSTON

- It seems to me that the representatives of Queensland have made out a fairly good case for the encouragement of this industry. I regret that the Government could not meet- them in regard to an increase, but I hope that' our proposal, which certainly has not been subjected to any particularly severe criticism, will be adopted, and that we shall at least, allow the people of th'e northern districts to have the advantage which we desire.

Sir- WILLIAMMcMILLAN' (Wentworth). - I. would point out that in New South Wales, "Victoria, and Western Australia, raw coffee was previously ad^ mitted free, in South Australia the duty upon it was 3d. per lb., whilst in Tasmania it was 2d. per lb. In "New. South Wales we have 1,300,000 people, and in Victoria 1,100,000, so that, if we take into account the whole population of the Commonwealth, 2d. per lb would 'be a very high average, because two thirds of the population of Australia have hitherto admitted this article free. If we were to work out the average, I think we would find that it would probably be £d. per lb. We are actually giving away 1d. more than the average duty which prevailed in the whole of Australia ; and surely, on federal principles, if we double that duty for the advantage of the State of Queensland in connexion with this particular product, we shall be doing everything that common sense and reason can demand. I cannot understand upon what principles the Ministry have decided upon the duty they propose. They find that a duty of 4d. is imposed by about 600,000 people out of about 4,000,000, and they bring down their proposal by 1d., so that they might say that, 4d. being the maximum duty, they might possibly have adopted that. I say that we are now doubling what would be a fair average duty, and no more should be expected.

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Mr KINGSTON

- The answer to the honorable gentleman is plain, that where the article could be produced it was protected, and where it could not be produced it was not. But even where it could not be produced, and the raw material allowed to come in free, a duty was imposed on a manufactured article. I say that it is our duty in this connexion to have regard to the interests of all, and the interest and care of Queensland is as much the duty of federated Australia as the interest and care of any other State. This is an industry native to that soil and climate, and it deserves protection. When they have made out a reasonable case it is not a fair thing to say that, because some of the States, not having the same reason for protecting the industry, did not protect it, it should not be protected.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- I shall, as I have said, support the proposal for a reduction to 2d., but in answer to the Minister for Trade and Customs, I desire to point out that the whole production of coffee by Queensland amounts to only 102,000 lbs., while something like 2,225,000 lbs. were imported into the Commonwealth, so that there is one twenty-second part of the amount required produced in Queensland. As there are 700 acres only under cultivation now it will take over 15,000 acres devoted exclusively to the production of coffee to produce the amount required by the Commonwealth. To bring that area into bearing would require not less than five years, and if the Minister for Trade and Customs is sound in his contention, he should postpone the operation of this tax for that period. We should expect the honorable members ' for Moreton and Herbert, who object to people being taxed, to bring forward a proposal that at the end of five years the duty should be 4d. or 3d. per lb. I point out again that this is a duty which will certainly fall upon the workers, as out of 4,000,000 people we shall have 3,000,000 upon whom this tax will fall. One very grave objection to the imposition of a duty upon coffee is that it is a non-intoxicating drink, and its consumption tends to prevent a larger consumption of intoxicants.

Question - that the words proposed to be added, be so added - put.

The committee divided -

Ayes Noes

Majority

16 23

Question so resolved in the negative. Amendment negatived.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I think the proposed duty upon the manufactured article is a very extreme one, and one upon which the Ministry might well give way.

Sir George Turner

- No.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- A duty of 4d. would be equal to 25 per cent, ad valorem ; but as the Minister will not give way it is of no use to go to the trouble of dividing.

Mr CONROY

- I desire to record my protest against the imposition of this duty.

Item agreed to.

Item 19 - Eggs per dozen, 6d.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). - I can quite imagine that 'everybody must have been astonished when it was announced that the Ministry seriously propose to levy a duty on eggs. The ridiculous nature of the proposal is shown by the small amount of revenue which the duty is estimated to yield. I think the item should be omitted.

Items agreed to.

Item 20 - Fish, fresh, namely oysters, per cwt. "2s.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - This item is absolutely unpardonable. The revenue to be collected from a duty on oysters from the whole of the Commonwealth is estimated at £270. In Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania, no duty has been imposed, and in Western Australia a duty of 15 per cent. The only possible result of the imposition of a duty would be to prevent a few oysters coming from New Zealand. We have carried our prohibitory measures against New Zealand far enough. I do not wish to divide the committee, but I would appeal to my right honorable friend not to load the Tariff for the sake of a revenue of £270.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I do not see that this is an item which can justify a long debate and a division. While I am desirous of sticking to the Tariff in all essentials, I still believe, seeing the course which matters have taken, that if we can turn away' wrath with a soft word here and there - we have tried to do so several times and failed - we should make another effort on this item.

Item negatived.

Item 21. Fruits and Vegetables, viz.: - Fruits, dried, viz. : -

Currants, per lb., 2d.

Raisins and other, including peel and ginger preserved (not in liquid), per lb., 3d. Vegetables dried or concentrated, ad valorem, 20 per cent. . Fruits and vegetables, n.e.i. (preserved in liquid, or partly preserved, or pulped) - Half -pints and smaller sizes, per dozen, 9d. Pints and over half-pints, per dozen, 1s. (id. Quarts and over pints, per dozen, 3s. Exceeding a quart, per gallon, 1s. Fruits and vegetables, n.e.i. per cwt, 2s.

Mr THOMSON

- A duty of 3d. per lb. on raisins is a very considerable one in proportion to the value of the article considered either as a revenue or as a protective duty. A duty of 2d. per lb. would probably yield as much revenue as a duty of 3d. per lb. If the duty is fixed at 3d. per lb. to protect any particular locality, it is objectionable on the ground of the extreme percentage which is demanded. A duty of 2d. per lb. on currants is considered sufficient for whatever purpose it is imposed. I think that raisins are produced quite as easily' as, if not more easily than, currants in these States. Therefore, a duty of 2d. per lb. will be quite as efficient for protective purposes, and practically' as efficient for revenue purposes as a duty of 3d. per lb., and certainly it is a sufficient charge to the consumers. I move-

That the words " and on and after the 28th of November, 1901, 2d.," be added to the duty on "Raisins . . . per lb. 3d."

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The duty on raisins per lb. has been 2d. in New South Wales and Tasmania, and 3d. in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia. The average is, therefore, in favour of a duty of 3d per lb. Raisins are more valuable than currants.' We thought it fair in regard to an . article like currants, which are consumed in large quantity by' the poor, to make the duty 2d. per lb but certainly there is no reason why we should reduce the duty' of 3d. on raisins. The duty of 2d. on currants is about 50 per cent, ad valorem, and the duty upon raisins is between 50 and 60 per cent, ad valorem. This duty is protective

to some parts of the States, and it brings in a considerable amount of revenue. I think that the duty on currants and the duty on raisins compare very favorablj*.

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Mr PIESSE

- The item of raisins includes other dried fruits, and I think that 3d. per lb. is rather a high duty to impose on dates.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). - I think that the Ministry ought to consent to reduce the duty on raisins to 2d. per lb., but if the feeling of the committee is against me I shall not press for a division.

Amendment negatived.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - We must divide on the item - " Vegetables, dried or concentrated," if the Ministry cannot see their way to agree to a reduction of duty. These articles enter, into such general consumption that a duty ought not to be imposed on them. We ought to consider the needs of the miners in distant places. I am advised that no question of protection or revenue is involved, but that it would be really a hardship to impose a duty on articles which are used in those parts of Australia where men cannot get the comforts of civilized life. I believe that this duty will have a very appreciable effect on the cost of these vegetables. I observe that, while in New South Wales they have been admitted free, they have been subject to a duty of 3d. per lb., or 20 per cent, in Victoria, 25 per cent, in Queensland, 2d. per lb. in South Australia, 20 per cent, in Tasmania, and 10 per cent, in Western Australia. I move - That the words "mid on and after the 28th of November, 1901, 10 per cent.," be added to the duty on " Vegetables, dried or concentrated, Ml valorem, 20 per cent."

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). - I support the amendment. These dried vegetables are chiefly used in the back-blocks and mining townships, where they are practically the only vegetables that the people can get. I am sure that the Minister for Defence well knows how extremely useful they are. Unfortunately when he was, doing the great bulk of his exploring work - for which he has never received the recognition to which his services entitle him - he had to go without such foods ; but probably his own experience enables him to say how valuable dried vegetables are to-day in Western Australia. The duty only affects people in the back-blocks. Therefore, the Minister might very well consider the desirability of accepting a reduction of 10 per cent. If there were any hope of including dried vegetables in the free list I should support a proposal to that effect.

Mr BATCHELOR

- I trust that the committee will not accept the amendment. Surely we can produce our own concentrated vegetables. We ought to be able to provide an output for our surplus products in this way. I remember on one occasion at Oodnadatta eating dried vegetables that came from Hamburg, in Germany, It seems to me to be absurd that we should have to import vegetables when we have such an immense surplus produced in Australia.

Mr BAMFORD

- I hope that the Minister will accept the amendment. I know perfectly well, as has been pointed out by the honorable member for Werriwa, that in the outside districts this concentrated food is a blessing. What has been said by the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Batchelor, is beside the mark ; because," although there is an abundance of vegetable food produced in the Commonwealth, there appears to be no attempt to put it ' upon the market in a concentrated form. A duty of 10 per cent, would be ample upon an article which is really a necessity in the outposts of civilization.

Mr Crouch

- Yet there was a duty in Queensland.

Mr PAGE

- As representing a back-blocks constituency, I can indorse every word that has been uttered by the honorable member for Werriwa. The only chance we have of getting any vegetable food nine months out of the twelve is by consuming preserved vegetables. The least the Minister can do is to adopt the amendment.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I wish that some honorable members could have gone through some of the experiences I had upon the gold-fields of Western Australia a few years ago. If they had done so, I do not think there would be any

question as to how they would vote upon this subject. They would be fighting to put dried vegetables upon the free list. From my point of view, it is taxing this article too much even to impose a duty of 10 per cent. I admit that things on the gold-fields in Western Australia are not as bad now as they were formerly, because we have got the train there now. But for four or five years among a population of 40,000 or 60,000 people, there were none who could get fresh vegetables. They could get nothing but these preserved vegetables - "tinned dog," as they used to call them. Vegetables are an absolute necessity of life. At the present time there are in the back-blocks of Western Australia large numbers of people who can get nothing but preserved vegetables.

Sir George Turner

- Where are they imported from ?

Mr KIRWAN

- They come mostly from Great Britain and foreign places. We should consider the interests of these people, who endure great hardships and suffer discomforts for the sake of opening up our back country, and not the interests of a few Chinese who grow vegetables in the eastern States. The honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Batchelor, has spoken about preserving vegetables in Australia. But a large number of the vegetable growers in the eastern States are nothing but Chinese. I suppose the idea of the honorable member would be to enable the Chinese to preserve those vegetables which they do not sell to their customers. . For their sake thousands of men in the back-blocks are to have the cost of this necessary of life considerably increased. I sincerely hope that the committee will favour the amendment of the honorable member for Wentworth.

Mr HARPER

- There can be no doubt that these concentrated or desiccated vegetables are an absolute necessity in Western Australia. But I can assure honorable members that at the time the honorable member for Kalgoorlie has spoken of, when large quantities of vegetables were consumed on the goldfields, a great proportion of them came from Tasmania and Victoria. I do not think that we require to send to Germany or anywhere else for vegetables, or to learn the mode of preserving them. They are preserved simply by being dried and desiccated. When it is desired to use preserved vegetables, water is added, and they absorb the moisture, and become something like what they were in their original form. We can produce them admirably in this country, and I think this small duty will stimulate their production.

Mr Page

- Does the honorable member regard 20 per cent, as a small duty %

Mr HARPER

- Yes. Having regard to the low price of the article, there is a very small margin. The whole production is a matter of labour. The true way to enable them to be obtained at a low price is to encourage local production.

Mr. KIRWAN(Kalgoorlie).- I understand the honorable member for Mernda to say that a large quantity of preserved vegetables used in Western Australia come from the eastern States. According to the Statistical Register, however, the exact quantity imported into Western Australia from Great Britain and foreign countries in 1899 amounted to £12,305 in* value, while the importations from Australasia, which included New Zealand, represented £4,016 in value. In reality the quantity imported from Great Britain and foreign countries is three "times as great as that imported from Australasia. Consequently if the duty be imposed we shall have to pay it in Western Australia, notwithstanding any Inter-State free-trade that may exist subsequently.

Mr FISHER

- In reply to an interjection made by the honorable member for Corio that there was a 25 per cent, duty imposed on this article in Queensland, I wish to say that the fiscal faith of the various Premiers of Queensland was apparently such that whenever there was any want of revenue they slapped on 25 per cent., especially when the duty affected the producing interests and pioneers.

Mr Kingston

- They had a drag-net of 25 per cent.

Mr FISHER

- The revenue duties were so high in Queensland that I have no doubt the Federal Government have found the greatest difficulty in providing a decent equivalent in revenue under their proposals,

notwithstanding that Queensland had three free-trade Premiers in succession. I respectfully ask the Government to accept a reduction of the duty to 10 per cent.

Sir George Turner

- I am ready to reduce it to 15 per cent. I think that would be a fair duty.

Mr FISHER

- The honorable member for Mernda has said that there is very little labour involved in the making of preserved vegetables. If it costs very little to dry and desiccate them, surely 10 per cent, should be a sufficient duty to cover it.

Sir William McMillan

- Which probably means 12£ per cent, when the article gets to the consumer.

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Mr FISHER

- I am not going to press the matter, but I think that if the pioneers are able to obtain this article cheaply it will be to their advantage. If it be provided for them as cheaply as possible no one will be injured, nor will the revenue suffer. In the words used by the honorable member for Ballarat yesterday, the pioneers ought to get everything possible to make their lives happy.

Mr E SOLOMON

- In addition to the figures just quoted by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie, I wish to point out that the duty paid in Western Australia in- respect. of preserved vegetables amounted during the year' named to £1,641 4s. A sum of £45 18s. was paid in respect of the duty on fresh vegetables from Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, and Singapore. The Government might very well give way and agree to a 10 per cent, duty. The people who use preserved vegetables reside 300 or 400 miles away from settled districts, and if they are to be kept in health, it is necessary that they should be supplied with vegetables.

Mr BROWN

- I think the Government might see its way clear to meet the suggestion made by the acting leader of the Opposition. The fact that when it is a question between the use of preserved vegetables and fresh vegetables, the preserved article is not in it, should appeal very strongly to the Government. Preserved vegetables are used by the pioneers who are opening up our continent either in the direction of mining development, or in the extension of grazing or agricultural pursuits in the interior. If honorable members only knew what it means to be in the wilds of Australia for a long period without the possibility of obtaining other than preserved vegetables, or if they had had any experience of what is known out there as the "Barcoo," they would extend some consideration to these hardy pioneers. Any concession to them - even if it were to the extent of making this article free - would be but a very small recognition of the great debt. that the more favoured portion of the community owe to them.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I fail to see why Australia should not be able to produce all the vegetables that are required locally, whether fresh or concentrated, and I do not see why one State should not help another by taking products from it. I believe that if a reasonable amount of duty were imposed, preserved vegetables would be produced here instead of being imported from France and Great Britain. Under these circumstances we proposed what we thought was a fair duty. When it was pointed out that this might to some extent prejudicially affect people in the back blocks, I offered what I think is a fair compromise. We proposed a duty of 20 per cent., the acting leader of the Opposition suggested that it should be 10 per cent., and I offered to agree to it being fixed at 15 per cent. We cannot understand the meaning of a compromise to be that the acting leader of the Opposition is to propose what he likes, and the Government are to accept his proposals on every occasion. That may be my honorable friend's idea of a compromise, but it is not mine. I have offered to reduce the duty to 15 per cent., and if honorable member's are not content to accept that, we had better go to a division.

Mr FOWLER

- I have had some experience of the advantage which miners and others derive from having an abundant supply of preserved vegetables. The vegetables preserved in Australia are in many respects superior to those which come from other countries, and the vegetables can be produced here even more cheaply than elsewhere. Taking these facts into consideration, I would urge the Ministry to consider whether it is really worth while to impose a heavy duty upon an article which has every possible opportunity of making

its way in the markets of the Commonwealth without any duty at all.

Mr Kingston

- Is that the reason why Western Australia taxes fresh fruit to the extent of 15 per cent. ?

Mr FOWLER

- The Minister for Trade and Customs is particularly unfortunate in his references to the Western Australian Tariff. If he had had our experience with regard to the incidence of the Western Australian Tariff, and knew the circumstances under which it was framed, he would be the last to refer to it in the way he has done.

Mr Kingston

- They keep up the Tariff against us at any rate.

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Mr FOWLER

- I can assure the honorable member that if the people of Western Australia had the power, they would make very short work of the sliding scale. If honorable members who do not understand the position were to take the trouble to acquaint themselves with the existing electoral conditions in Western Australia they would soon see how it is that the sliding scale can be maintained against the wish of the great majority of the people. I think a duty of 10 per cent, on preserved vegetables would be ample. .

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

The committee divided Ayes Noes

18 20

Majority

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Mr. Conroy) proposed -

That the words "and on and after 28th November, 1901, 12J per cent." be added to the duty "Vegetables, dried or concentrated ad valorem 20 percent."

Sir AVILLIAM McMILLAN

- I quite agree with the honorable and learned member for Werriwa, and it was to some extent at my persuasion that he did not move for the omission of the item. I know that the honorable and learned member somewhat compromised his principles in acceding to my request, but I would ask him not to force a division now, because it would be practically the same as the last, and would only take up the time of the committee.

Mr CONROY

- I want a division, because I would like the position of three or four honorable members, who profess to be friends of the pioneers, to be made known to the country. But, as it seems to be the wish of the committee that I should not proceed, I beg leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (by Sir George Turner) agreed to -

That the words "and on and after 28th November, 1901, 15 per cent." be added to the duty on "Vegetables, dried or concentrated, ad valorem 20 per cent. "

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Although we on this side feel that the remaining duties in this item are rather high, it is not easy to strike the exact medium. We do not propose, therefore, to interfere with the Government proposals except in one respect ; and in order to save time, I might be allowed to deal with the remainder of the items in a general way. The proposed duty of 2s. per cental on ordinary fruit comes as a shock to me.

Mr Watson

- Does that duty include bananas 1

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Yes. When I heard in Sydney that the Tariff proposed to shut out Fiji bananas, it appeared to me a very extreme measure. We cannot, after all, by protection bring the soil of another country to Australia. But there is a further reason why we ought to deal tenderly with the products of Fiji. Largely through the enterprise and energy of the Victorian people, a commerce has been built up with Fiji and the islands of

the Pacific. Although a great deal of the trade is done with Sydney, I do my Victorian friends the credit of saying that that trade received great impetus from ship-owners and others in Victoria. There is that going on in connexion with the Pacific which has some significance for us in Australia at the present time. There is a movement by which it is desired to create a federation in the Pacific, and to take away from us the trade of those islands. I am not now talking about a conspiracy, or anything of the kind. I am speaking of the well-known sentiments of Mr. Seddon, a- Minister of the Crown in New Zealand, and of others who are now making an attempt to draw closer the ties between New Zealand and Fiji and other islands. "We are now considering a Tariff in which we treat New Zealand as a foreign country, and we are, therefore, creating the very element which may make New Zealand more desirous than ever to bring about this combination in the Pacific. I hold as a matter of statesmanship, if I may use the word, that there could not be a greater calamity to the British Empire than the creation of another federation in the Pacific. If we had two federations in this part of the world, instead of one federation embracing the whole of the Pacific, which I hope yet to see, difficulties might be created which in the future would have disastrous results to the Empire. As I have said, we ought to deal tenderly with the Pacific trade, and I propose to the Minister for Trade and Customs that he should either take fruit out of the category of dutiable products, or, at any rate, exempt Fiji bananas, which are really of a different class from any other. No duty will enable us to grow Fiji bananas, which form one of the most wholesome and nutritious of foods, and are extensively used by children. We are willing to allow the items under the heading of fruit and vegetables to pass, and then it would be reasonable to ask for an adjournment, seeing that the subsequent items deal with an entirely new class of products. On the subject of grain many honorable members who have gone home possess special knowledge, which would be of great assistance to the committee.

Mr THOMSON

- I desire to emphasize what has been said by the honorable member for Wentworth as to the care we ought to exercise in the face of the views which have been expressed already as to the policy to be pursued in the Pacific. The honorable member has already alluded to the fact that New Zealand is desirous of establishing a Pacific Islands federation. That colony is willing to enter into reciprocal arrangements with the islands of the Pacific, and if we, on our part, are not prepared to be reciprocal, but are determined to tax anything which may come from there, especially cheap articles like fruit and maize, we shall simply drive one portion of the Pacific into the hands of New Zealand. I would point out that the future of the New Hebrides is to some extent involved in this question. The one thing that prevents those islands from being annexed by

France is the steam service running between them and Australia, and the trade which that service creates. If we tax the fruit coming into the Commonwealth from the New Hebrides, whilst France allows it to enter New Caledonia free, the result may be disastrous. The steam service with those islands has been built up at a very great cost. I know that the people who established it lost £20,000 by so doing. Even at the present time it is as much as it can do to pay its way. It has been conducted as much upon national as upon trading grounds, and if it be stopped the French will soon establish their claim to the New Hebrides on the ground of their trade. There will thus be very little hope of retaining these islands to Great Britain.

Mr Kingston

- Then the honorable member would argue in favour of allowing; Fijian sugar to come in free ?

Mr THOMSON

- The Minister does not look at this matter from a practical standpoint. The practical position is that Fijian sugar is not imported with general lines of steamers to New South Wales. The Colonial Sugar Company have a steamer of their own which carries their sugar, and do not provide freight for other lines. Fruit from the New Hebrides, and to some extent maize from those islands, together with copra, are practically all that the steam service to which I have referred carries.

Mr Kingston

- Is the maize to come in free too ?

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Mr THOMSON

- What harm would result if it did come in free ? As a matter of fact, the maize from the islands does not compete with Australian maize. It is so full of moisture, that it is only suited to certain purposes. If we

deprive these steamers of their trade our action must result in the cutting off of communication from the islands. For fourteen or fifteen years I was one of those who endeavoured to keep the New Hebrides from falling into the hands of the French. So far we have succeeded, and I do not believe that the Minister for Trade and Customs considers, that these islands should pass into the possession of the French, or that we should have another federation in the Pacific with New Zealand. If, for very small reasons, we overlook larger questions affecting our interests we shall accomplish what we do not wish to bring about.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I do not think it can be urged that we ought to allow all fresh fruit from these islands to come in free. In Queensland bananas are grown to a large extent, and I believe also upon Thursday Island. We have to consider our own Commonwealth, and it naturally follows that if we admit bananas, free we must extend the same concession to other articles of produce from these islands. I am aware that 2s. per cental is a pretty high duty, and I am prepared to reduce the amount to 1s., if the Opposition will agree to it.

Sir William McMillan

- Fiji and Queensland bananas differ as greatly as potatoes and carrots.

Mr BAMFORD

- I am sorry to hear the Treasurer speak in that way. The honorable member for Wentworth has put it that Queensland bananas are not of the same value as the Fijian article. But in this connexion I would point out that 390,000 bunches of bananas were imported into New South Wales from Queensland during 1899, as against 270,000 bunches imported from Fiji, the respective values of these importations being £34,000 and £17,000. These facts show that the value of the Queensland banana is very much in excess of that of the Fijian. There were 330,000 bushels imported into Victoria from Queensland, while the importations from Fiji into Victoria during the same period were only 4 bushels. Honorable members have spoken of Victoria and New South Wales as though they were the only States in the Commonwealth, but these figures show the value of this trade, not only to Queensland, but to the Commonwealth. I trust the Minister will permit the duty to remain at 2s. in the interest of people who are doing good work. I am sorry that there are not representatives of shipping interests present from whom we might get a vote, because this is a trade which largely affects the shipping interests, and secures the employment of a great many men in connexion with shipping. I should like to point out that this is a primary industry, and that, after all, the duty proposed is a very small one indeed.

Mr HARPER

- I think there is great force in what was said by the honorable member for North Sydney, with regard to bananas coming from New Hebrides. The retention of those islands has been made possible by the exertions made to open up trade with them from Australia. It is being done by people who have spent their money without expectation of getting any return, because their primary object has been to secure the islands, and the best means for securing them is to keep up steam communication between them and Australia. It has been a great struggle, and bananas form almost the only cargo which those steamers bring from the islands. If the banana trade from the island ceases, the line of steamers running will not pay, and will probably cease running altogether. That is an aspect of the question which the committee should consider apart from the duty.

Mr PAGE

- This is patriotism with a vengeance. When a duty does not affect Victoria it may go, but when it does affect Victoria they must have the protection afforded. If this were a Victorian industry, we should hear that with the abolition of the duty it would be ruined; but because the industry is not in Victoria, it does not matter. If there is going to be protection, let us in Queensland have a share of it. So far as quality is concerned, the Queensland banana is the best in the world, and if it were not a good article it would not have been introduced in such large quantities into the free ports of New South Wales. The argument of the honorable member for Mernda is that we are to sacrifice Queensland for a line of steamers running between the New Hebrides and Australia. I hope that the duty of 2s. per cental will be insisted upon.

Sir William McMillan

- I think our principles are very mixed. I am afraid that when a proposal comes up for an import duty, on the principle we have generally adopted of revenue with incidental protection, some of our honorable friends have a leaning one way or another, as the matter is one that affects their own or some other State.

Mr Page

- If we did not look after our State, who would ? The honorable gentleman would soon wipe us out.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- That is not a fair statement, because no man is more consistent in his principles, without any regard to his own State, than I am.

Mr Kingston

- No man has referred more to his own 'State.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Naturally, as it is the one State that has had no duty, and if this Tariff had been drafted on a principle of justice or equity, I should not have had to refer to New South Wales so often. Everyone knows that I was- a federalist first and a New South Welshman afterwards. I hold that the union should have been accomplished at any price, even if we the fullest protection the Ministry would have given us. This is a most perishable article of human food, and we know the delays which occur in connexion with the Customs. Bananas brought from the islands and arriving upon Saturday, may be left spoiling for two or three days before they are permitted to be landed. This is a barbarous duty, and one which should not appear upon any Tariff. In connexion with this article the competition is not with the world, but with islands with which we do a very large trade. How can we expect to continue this trade if we take nothing from the people of these islands. I am not in a position to say whether or not it is true, but I am told that this duty is practically enough to keep out the Fiji bananas. If honorable members are in this matter prepared to carry out the protection urged by the Minister for Trade and Customs, on the narrow principle which he carries to extremes, then they must be prepared to lose the trade of these islands. What then will become of all our demonstrations in favour of British influence in the Pacific? What good will these islands be to us if we do not trade with them ? Are we going to keep them under the shadow of British and Australian influence, and permit everybody else but ourselves to do business with them ? The thing is absurd on the face of it.

Amendment (by Mr. Conroy) negatived -

That the words "and on and after the 28th November, 1901, per dozen, Od." be added to the duty on "fruits and vegetables, n.e.i..... half-pints and smaller sizes, per dozen, 9d."

Amendment (by Sir William McMillan,) proposed -

That the duty "fruits and vegetables, n.e.i., per cental, 2s." be omitted.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney). - I may tell the honorable member for Maranoa that I am quite aware that excellent bananas are grown in Queensland. The honorable member for Herbert has given the best possible reason why there is no occasion to impose a duty to protect them against the Fiji bananas, when he has shown that they hold entirely the market of Victoria, and have a large share of the market of New South Wales on equal terms as to duty or no duty with the Island bananas.

Mr Bamford

- Then the duties make no difference ?

Mr THOMSON

- How could it make a difference in favour of one or the other, when the duty, if any, paid on the Fiji bananas under the State Tariff was exactly the same as that paid on the Queensland bananas.

Mr Bamford

- Why not let it remain 1

Mr THOMSON

- Does the honorable member wish an excise duty to be imposed on the Queensland banana, and thus equalize the new conditions ? He has given the best possible reason why no injury can be done to Queensland by allowing the continuance of the equality which has existed under the State Tariffs. I do not wish in any way to injure Queensland, which does the trade now to a large extent. Why should we for that smaller portion which comes from the islands impose a duty, when, by maintaining that trade, we shall maintain our connexion with the islands and influence in them? As to whether a duty of 1s. a cental will seriously affect that trade, I may tell the Minister for Trade and Customs that the bananas from the islands do not net to the shippers more than 2s. a cental.

Mr Kingston

- What is the gross price in Sydney?

Mr THOMSON

- It is from 1s. to 2s. a bunch, and I should think that a good-sized bunch would weigh half a central. (Committee counted.) I think I have shown that no real injury will accrue to Queensland, because she is doing a large proportion of the trade now under equal conditions, and does not need special conditions ; whilst there will be a great deal of injury done to our trade with the islands by the imposition of this duty. If even a duty of 1s. per cental is imposed, I do not think it will have the effect of preventing the injury to the trade which I and others fear. Certainly I trust that the proposal of the honorable member for Wentworth" will find support from the committee.

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Mr BROWN

- I hope that the Government will see their way to grant this concession, very largely for the reasons put forward by the acting leader of the Opposition and other honorable members who have spoken of the desirability of continuing the trade which the Australian States already have with Fiji. It is desirable to maintain our trade with the islands, which already has had invested in it a considerable sum of money, and much enterprise on the part of enterprising people, notably in New South Wales and Victoria. A steam service has been established between Australia and Fiji and the South Sea Islands. I am credibly informed that if this duty is passed and continues in force, it will mean the total annihilation of that trade and service. (Committee counted.) I was credibly informed in Sydney the other day that it is customary for the vessels trading with Fiji to carry cargo which is valued at from £700 to £900 each trip, and it costs something like £400 to prosecute that trip. On the last occasion when the vessel returned the amount of goods carried was estimated as being under £200. It can readily be seen that such a big falling off as that cannot be maintained for any considerable length of time. I was also informed in Sydney that the Fiji banana, which was a large item of consumption previously, was practically not to be obtained at present in the Sydney market. There is also considerable friction as to the way in which the tax is collected. I was informed that a contract was lately let to some Sydney gentleman under which bananas were acquired at 6d. per bunch on the plantations at Fiji. But the result of the imposition of this duty was that that contract was cancelled, because the people who entered into it found they could not profitably carry out their undertaking. They have therefore forfeited whatever money they had put into it. The Government might be reasonable in this matter, and instead of charging practically 9d. per bunch on bananas which cost 6d. per bunch on the plantations, might reduce the duty to something lower. If the duty were brought down to 3d. a bunch it would be within reason. In the interests of British dominion in the South Pacific, and in the interests of the trade of Australia with the islands, it is very unwise to charge so high a duty as this.

Mr TUDOR

- I am rather surprised to hear members of the committee making statements which show that they forget that Queensland is one of the States of the Commonwealth, and arguing that the citizens of Fiji should receive as much consideration as those within our own borders with regard to this matter. I believe in endeavouring to keep the trade, within our own borders, although I may be called a little Australian for expressing such an opinion. We ought to give Queensland the preference. The quantity of Queensland bananas imported into New South Wales shows that they must be as good as those from Fiji.

Mr Poynton

- Is the honorable member aware that the price of bananas has already gone up in consequence of this Tariff?

Mr TUDOR

- I am surprised to hear that, in view of the fact that this Tariff imposes a duty of 2s. per cental, while under the Victorian Tariff there was a duty of 9d. per bushel on bananas.

Sir William McMillan

- The merchants may have taken advantage of the Tariff.

Mr TUDOR

- Yes ; just as they have in other matters. I trust that the duty originally proposed by the Government will be retained, for the State of Queensland is able to produce sufficient bananas practically to supply the wants of the Commonwealth.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- I think I am right in saying that there was no duty on bananas under the Victorian Tariff. An effort was

made to impose a duty when the Tariff was before the State Parliament on the last occasion, but it was rejected.

Sir George Turner

- That is so. It was rejected in order to assist Queensland.

Mr Tudor

- The statistical register shows that there was a duty of 9d. per bushel.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- That is a mistake. The honorable member for Maranoa has fallen away from grace very quickly, lot many hours ago he gave us a breezy speech in favour of free-trade,, and said that Queensland would have nothing whatever to do with protection. Now that his State is to be touched on a very small matter we find him making a demand for protection

Mr Page

- If I did not stick up for my own State the Victorian representatives would not help it.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- I was a little doubtful about the honorable member's statement, because I had heard something about Queensland timber. No doubt, later on, the honorable member for Maranoa will advocate the imposition of a duty on timber required for butter boxes.

Mr Page

- The honorable member is not going to make a protectionist of me

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Mr WINTER COOKE

- I certainly shall not try to do so. Bananas are largely used by the less well-to-do portion of the community, and this proposal is carrying protection to the extreme. Apparently Queensland has been, able to import bananas into free-trade New South Wales in opposition to the Fijian importations. We are asked to help an industry already fairly strong in Queensland to the probable injury of the whole Commonwealth. The Minister for Customs is adamant in regard to protection. Instead of the Prime Minister giving us the Maitland speech, it should have been delivered by that right- honorable gentleman. Then the people of Australia would have known what was to happen. I appeal, however, to the Treasurer, as a former Premier of Victoria,- where it was decided to allow bananas to come in free, to allow bananas to enter the Commonwealth free of duty.

Mr KINGSTON

- If the honorable member will reflect for a moment, he will come to the conclusion that it is a very different thing for a State which does not produce bananas to permit them to come in free, and for an aggregation of States constituting a Commonwealth - and including a State which does produce them - to adopt a similar policy. Where there is something to protect, protect it, but if we cannot produce it we should allow the article to come in free. That is one reason why we object to the revenue duties which are so much favoured by the Opposition, and which are levied on things we cannot produce here in order to get the money required and, necessarily, raise prices. I venture to consider that we shall not raise the price of bananas by this proposal. The Treasurer has stated that we are willing to reduce- the duty to 1s. per cental, and I think that is reasonable enough. It means about one-eighth of a 1d. per lb., and bananas are pretty satisfying at the price. This differs a great deal from some of the proposals of the free-trade party in connexion with matters which they would make the subject of revenue duties. The point that strikes me most forcibly is that if we are going to have a protectionist incidence in connexion with our Tariff, we should allow it to operate fairly in regard to all the States. It seems to me to be simply monstrous to say that as regards one particular State the principle which underlies the Tariff should be rejected, and no provision made for the special product of that State simply because it is one amongst so many, and because it is suggested also that if we made that provision it might interfere with our trade with the islands of the Pacific. Where is this going to stop ? The suggestion now is that we should allow bananas to come in free and stop at that. Then there is the suggestion which has something to do with maize. Maize is to come next, and be treated similarly.

Sir William McMillan

- Who said so?

Mr KINGSTON

- This item was referred to as being equally with maize a subject of trade with the islands, which was worthy of preservation. If we are going to allow bananas to come in free, to the exclusion of the wish of Queensland, then we shall have to do the same with regard to maize, to the exclusion of the wish of Queensland, and the wishes of those who make a good deal out of maize in New South Wales. We should look further. What is the chief product of these islands 1 Sugar produced by coolie labour. I put it to honorable members that the mere suggestion that for this purpose we are to turn a deaf ear to the wishes of the Queensland banana-grower will land us shortly in this position -. That we should adopt a similar attitude towards the maize -grower, and finally with regard to the sugar produced in these islands. In such circumstances, a closer business relation between the islands and Australia would be very dearly bought.

Sir William McMillan

- What is the fixed duty of ls. per cental equivalent to in the shape of an ad valorem duty ?

Mr KINGSTON

- About 40 per cent.

Mr Watson

- That is too much.

Mr KINGSTON

- It is not equal to the rate which some honorable members are willing to impose upon tea. The duty now proposed will have the effect of encouraging a further growth of bananas in Queensland without raising the price to the consumer. Queensland is able to do a good deal more than she does at present in the way of supplying bananas, and we should be fair and not allow any special reasons to influence us to select Queensland for exclusion from the benefits which we are extending to others.

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Mr FOWLER

- The Minister for Trade and Customs has stated that the principle of protection ought to operate equally with regard to all the States. I should very much like to know in what way the protectionist policy is likely to operate beneficially towards Western Australia.

Mr Kingston

- It is not 'operating at all, because Western Australia is taxing our products and we are not taxing hers. .

Mr FOWLER

- I have already dealt with that point. The Minister for Trade and Customs will- be- very clever indeed if he can discover what benefit Western Australia is likely to derive. Queensland is securing a full share of the favours which are being granted under the protectionist policy of the Government. We have given her a good deal of consideration with regard to arrowroot, and also in connexion with coffee. We are making considerable sacrifices in reference to sugar, and now she claims a monopoly in connexion with the production of the banana. It is about time that we asked our Queensland friends whether they are not doing so well out of this Tariff that they can afford to concede something to the consumers in other parts of Australia ? Queensland will not lose very much of her trade, whether we place a duty on bananas or not. She has practically a monopoly at present, and the trade is not to any great extent interfered, with by the shipments from Fiji. Bananas are essentially a poor man's fruit, and constitute a very important article of food for the poorer classes "in the summer time. The Government* would be wise if they abandoned the proposed duty.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- We have heard a good many speeches in favour of Queensland grown bananas, and the honorable member for Yarra, and others, have spoken in sympathetic terms of the banana-growers of Queensland. I should like to know, however, what proportion of the bananas produced in Queensland are grown by white people. Is it not the fact that 70 or 80 per cent, of the Queensland bananas are grown by Chinese 1

Mr Tudor

- What percentage is grown by white men in Fiji 1

Mr L E GROOM

- We are going to exclude the Chinese.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Is the honorable member for Yarra going to support the Chinese banana-growers in the same way that

the Chinese tobacco-growers of Victoria have been supported ? The Prime Minister has spoken in glowing terms about the importance of bringing about friendly relations with the Islands, but now it is proposed to shut out the products of these Islands. I think it is distinctly improper that matters of the utmost importance to the people of the Commonwealth should be discussed, at this- late hour, and in such- a thin House.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. McDonald). - I would remind, the honorable member that the item before the committee is " Fruit and Vegetables."

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- To put myself in order, I move -

That the consideration of the duty on "Fruits and vegetables, n.e.i..... percental, 2s." be postponed.

I have taken no part in the debate to-night, contenting myself with recording my vote ; but when I see an attempt made to proceed with business- at this- unreasonable hour, with a sparse attendance of members, who must be too tired to properly consider the question before us, I think it is time to protest. The discussion on the question of candles, which, occupied a considerable time, was general on both sides, and no one can assert that any stone-walling tactics have been resorted to. All-night sittings are by no means desirable, because, as a rule, they give rise to displays of bad temper and much unpleasantness. An attempt is- now being made to tax the food of the poorer people in order to assist Queensland banana-growers, the larger pro- portion of whom are Chinamen. We ought to insist on having a sufficient number of members present to consider such a subject, and to cast their votes in a way that is for the benefit of the Commonwealth. I believe that fully one-half of the members have gone home, and it is not fair to allow the small number now present to impose taxation of this character. We have now been continuously at work for nearly twelve hours, and surely that ought to be considered a reasonable day's work. We have seen an attempt made- in Victoria to foster the tobacco industry by a bonus of 3d. per lb. on exported leaf, and we know that most of that bonus has been paid indirectly to Chinamen. When we see a similar attempt made in regard to Chinese growers of bananas in Queensland some protest ought to be made, in order that the subject may be properly and fairly discussed. I do not think that there is even a quorum present now.

Mr Kennedy

- It is a wonder that anybody is left to listen to the repetition.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It would seem that when honorable member's of the Opposition seek to protect the interests of the public, they are to have insulting remarks hurled at them. I claim as much right as the honorable member for Moira to express my opinion.

Mr Kennedy

- What I object to is the repetition.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- In what have I repeated myself 1 Victorian members may be accustomed to this iniquitous system of protection, but we from New South Wales are not. I did not rise for the purpose of delaying business, but merely to enter my strong protest against the unconstitutional action of the Government in attempting to proceed with business at a time when honorable members are absolutely unfit to efficiently discharge their legislative functions, and when the committee could have been counted out had it not been for the action 'of the Opposition.

Mr Mauger

- The Government are trying to push the business of the country through. .

Mr Conroy

- Like thieves at night, stealing from the people. (Committee counted.)

Mr KENNEDY

- I 'wish to draw attention to a remark which was made by the honorable and learned member for Werriwa, and to ask if it is permissible for him to use such an expression even by interjection.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I rise to a point of order. In view of. the fact that other business, namely, the withdrawal of my motion, has proceeded since the remark in question was made, I take it that the honorable member for Moira

cannot now refer to it.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN. - I would point out that the motion was never put from the Chair. Moreover the honorable member for Macquarie does not know of what the honorable member for Moira is going to complain, and until we hear him we cannot tell what his point of order is.

Mr Kennedy

- The remark to which I intended to draw attention was made by the honorable and learned member for Werriwa, who stated that the committee were like thieves by night stealing from the people.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN.- If the honorable- and learned member for Werriwa made that remark he was certainly not in order. But I would point out that at the time the expression was used it was the duty of the honorable member for Moira to move that the words be taken down. I did not hear them used. If they were used they were certainly very objectionable, and should be withdrawn.

Mr KENNEDY

- I took the earliest possible opportunity of directing attention to the matter. The words*- in question were used immediately after attention had been called to the state of the House. But having brought the matter under notice I do not desire to press my point any further. I wish, however, to make a personal explanation regarding the objection taken by the honorable member for Macquarie to a remark which I made during the course of his ^ speech. When he complained of the conditions under which the business of the committee was being conducted, I interjected that it was not surprising there was nobody present to listen to useless repetition. I did not intend my remark to give any offence, but I venture to say that to-night I have heard the same arguments repeated a dozen times. When the honorable member for Macquarie says that the Victorian members may well view the proceedings with equanimity, because they are in a position to attend to their own private business, my reply is that there are a number of representatives of this State who are in the same position as honorable members of other States, and who cannot get to their homes at the end of each week. Regarding the protest which has been made against proceeding with business at the present juncture, may I remind honorable members that every one knew on Tuesday evening that an attempt was to be made to make some progress to-night ?

Mr Watson

- I rise to order. I ask whether the honorable member for Moira would not be more in order if he confined himself to a discussion of the item before the committee.

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Mr KENNEDY

- I confess that I did to some extent follow the bad example set by honorable members opposite. It does, appear absurd to suggest that Australia is not able to supply sufficient green fruit and vegetables for its own requirements. As to the statement that bananas are grown solely by Chinese in Queensland at the present time, that may be so, but it must be remembered that we are making an attempt to make even Queensland white, and if bananas are to be grown in the future they must be grown to a considerable extent by white labour. I shall support the proposal of the Government.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- I am one of those who view with very great disfavour this proposed duty of 2s. per cental upon fruit and vegetables, not otherwise included. I find that under the guise of protection the Ministry seek to impose a duty which amounts to at least 100 per cent, upon many articles of consumption under this head- The banana is one of the finest fruits we have in Australia. It is to be had at times when few other fruits are in the market, and it is largely used by children. A great portion of the trade -with Fiji seems to have been interrupted, -and a blow is aimed at the trade with a great island in the Pacific, which it is the hope of many persons may be incorporated in the Commonwealth. When it is proposed, at the whim of the Minister for Trade and Customs, to impose on bananas a duty which amounts to over 100 per cent, ad valorem,, or to 2d. or 3d. per bunch, we may well ask, what we are coming to ? We are asked to place this trade with Fiji under a disability, by imposing a trumpery duty which is entirely beneath the dignity of the Commonwealth to levy. The banana is one of the few fruits which the great body of the people can always purchase at a moderate rate. The Minister for Trade and Customs remarked -That possibly oranges or other fruit of that sort might come in, and that he wished to stop their importation. He has not given any information in regard to this item, except that it is his will and pleasure that a duty of 2s. per cental be imposed. . It would considerably increase the cost of the fruit. It has been stated that the great bulk of the Queensland bananas are grown by Chinese. Until that

statement was made, I hardly understood the eagerness of the Minister to impose the duty. But the moment it was explained that a number of his Chinese friends were in the business, I quite understood why he was so eager to put something into their pockets.

Question - That the duty on " Fruits and vegetables n.e.i to - put.

The committee divided. per cental 2s." - be agreed

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AYES

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NOES

Majority

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the affirmative. Amendment negatived. Amendment (by Sir William McMillan) put

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That the words "and on and after 28th November, 1001, 6d." be added to the duty on

"Fruitsandvegetablesn.e.i. . . . percental 2s."

The committee divided.

13 23

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AYES

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NOES

Majority

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - Do I understand that the Government are willing to reduce this duty by onehalf?

Sir George Turner

- Not now.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- My right honorable friend consented to do so during the evening, but now, owing to some perturbation of mind, he proposes to revert to the original iniquity. Does he not intend to keep the compact that he made?

The reason suggested for the reduction was that, even if the duty were reduced by one-half, it would still amount to 40 per cent., and surely that is enough ? The Ministry were agreeable to that, but surely it was perfectly fair to test the committee by asking for the rescission of the item. If the Minister is acting in the public interest he will not give way to any chagrin. I do not wish to be forced to do so, but if the Treasurer will not keep his compact I shall have to move that the item be reduced to 1s. per cental.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- My honorable friend will certainly have to do so. In conducting all business in committee the Government is frequently tempted to expedite the work by giving way to some extent. But it is a new meaning to give to the word " compact " to say that when a Minister with that object in view makes an offer which is absolutely refused we are to be held to have broken the compact, because after the refusal to accept it we decline to keep the offer open. Early in the evening, in order to push on with the business, I offered a compromise of 15 per cent., as against 10 per cent., in regard to a duty of 20 per cent. That was refused, and an attempt was made to secure the lower rate. Once the compact is broken, any offer made by a Minister is at an end. When I make an offer I expect it to be either accepted or rejected. If it is accepted that ends the matter ; if it is rejected, then it is entirely a question for the committee to say what duty shall be imposed. The committee have refused to reduce this duty, but it is quite competent for the honorable

member for Wentworth to move further in the matter, and for the committee to decide what action shall be taken. I want it to be understood once and for all that an offer 'is to be accepted, or there is to be an end to it. After the experience I have had to-night in trying to compromise, I do not intend to again offer terms on this Tariff.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I do not think the Treasurer is . acting consistently with our previous proceedings. He proposed to reduce the duty on candles by id. Does he mean to say, after all the debate which has taken place that because everything did not happen according to his own sweet ideas, he is going to go back upon himself, and say "No"?

Sir George Turner

- That is a very different thing.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The withdrawal was a very different thing, when the right honorable gentleman knew that he would probably be defeated. Is the word of Ministers of the Crown to be taken ? -I do not consider for one moment that my right honorable friend and myself are haggling over this matter. This is not a matter of private arrangement between my right honorable friend and myself. This is a matter which affects the interests of the country, and surely we are still a deliberative assembly ? I hope we are not so hidebound that when a certain amount of argument is used, none of us can be convinced, or persuaded to go beyond our party feelings. Argument was used here, and I hope my right honorable friend felt the force of it. It did not come entirely from the Opposition, but from all parts of " the chamber. As the result of that argument, he agreed to reduce this item by one-half.

Sir George Turner

- I did not agree, and will not have those words put into, my mouth.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- When that agreement was made-

Sir George Turner

- No agreement was made.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The Minister for Trade and Customs said in answer to a question that this was a duty of about 40 per cent. In reply to that the honorable member for Bland said it was a very high duty, and I believe he thought of moving that the duty be reduced to 6d. Surely we were debating the matter on the basis of the arrangement made by the Treasurer, and the Minister for Trade and Customs. Do those right honorable gentlemen mean to say that because something happens to perturb their feelings, because some honorable member has prolonged the debate un^ duly in .their- opinion, they are going to turn round on their arrangement ?

Sir George Turner

- No arrangement was made.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- If they are going to do that,, it would be better foi: Ministers to make no arrangement. I am not responsible for any delay in taking this vote. Why should we be made targets for the feelings of Ministers in charge of this measure ? If the Treasurer does not accept my amendment now it will be a breach of faith, and a breach of the compact made between him and this side of the committee.

Mr WATSON

- I trust that the Treasurer will not be too much put out over this matter.

Sir George Turner

- I am not put out, but if I make a fair offer it must either be accepted or rejected.

Mr WATSON

- The point at issue seems to be whether Ministers would be justified in accepting a certain amount of duty. That is a matter which concerns the whole of the consumers of Australia, and not only the few honorable members who happen to be on the Opposition or any other benches. I am sure the Treasurer would not have made the offer, unless he thought it was in the interests of the people, and it is just as much, in their interests now as it was a short time ago. I trust the Government will still see the wisdom of agreeing to a- reduction of, the duty. Mr. MCDONALD, (Kennedy). - The position taken up by the

Treasurer -is not very creditable to the committee. The right honorable gentleman led honorable members to understand that he was prepared to accept a compromise. Now he has withdrawn his offer, and the whole country is to be penalized because some honorable members were not prepared to immediately accept the compromise suggested. The position taken up by , the right honorable gentleman seems to me to be absolutely unjustifiable. ,

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney).- I am very much surprised at the attitude taken by the Treasurer, because he should not have made the offer to accept a reduction of the duty, unless he believed it to be in the interest of the public generally, and he should now stand to his original offer. The offer of the right honorable gentleman was not made to members on the Opposition side, but to the- country, and he has no right to withdraw his offer simply because it was not accepted at once

The CHAIRMAN

- I must ask honorable members to confine themselves to the subject that is before the committee.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- I strongly object to the withdrawal of the offer made the Treasurer.

The CHAIRMAN

- That matter must not be discussed. The question before the committee is not whether the- Treasurer should keep or disregard a promise, but as. to the duty to be levied on fruit.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I contend that, it is « quite competent for honorable members to criticise the statement made by the Treasurer on the item now under discussion.

Sir AVILLTAM McMILLAN

- I do not think the Treasurer is doing himself justice in this matter, and I would like to call his attention to the facts of the case. The offer of the Treasurer was made in the first instance because he was apparently impressed by the statement that the duty as Originally proposed would be equivalent to the total value of the article, and I would ask him to adhere to his offer as a fair compromise on the merits of the case.

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Mr Conroy

- I would ask your ruling as to the point of order.

Hie CHAIRMAN.- No point of order has been raised. I intimated that I should require honorable members to confine themselves to the item before the Chair, and I would direct attention to Standing Order 274, which I now ask honorable members to comply with.

Mr Conroy

- I presume the Treasurer made his promise because he conceived it to be in the public interest, and he should keep it.

The CHAIRMAN

- I must ask the honorable member not to contravene my ruling.

Mr Conroy

- I dissent from your ruling, Mr. Chairman, in deciding that the statement of the Treasurer, that he would accept a reduction of 1s. per cental, cannot be commented on in dismissing the item.

The CHAIRMAN

- I did not rule, nor do I rule now, that statements made by the Treasurer should not be commented on in an ordinary way. But while casual references can be made to the statement of the Treasurer, I cannot allow, in the form of a general debate on the conduct of the Minister, or as to whether he should or should not keep a promise, any digression from the subject before the Chair.

Mr. WATSON (Bland).- I would suggest that it would be more convenient if dissent from the Chairman's ruling had not to be put into writing. The reason for requiring in New South Wales the terms of the dissent to be written is that there the question is submitted to the Speaker, but in this case the ruling is appealed from to the committee, who ought to be aware of the circumstances.

The CHAIRMAN

- According to the standing orders the dissent must be written, though the honorable- member dissenting need not give reasons unless he thinks proper. I am quite prepared to accept a written notice of mere dissent, as the committee are in possession of the facts and- can- decide at once. I would ask the honorable member for Werriwa whether he proposes to dissent.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- I do not dissent from the terms of the ruling as now stated, and I do not propose to press the motion.

Mr R HARPER

- I feel that when the Treasurer made his- offer tonight, he was adopting a conciliatory course in order to save time, but I would remind the acting leader of the'Opposition that when

The CHAIRMAN

- I must ask the honorable member to leave that phase of the question, and confine himself to the item.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- It has been stated on the authority of the Treasurer, supported by the Minister for Trade and Customs, that this duty is over 40'per cent., and that seems too high to put on a commodity of this kind. If the public interest demands only, a duty of ls., which is the opinion of the Treasurer, why should this committee vote for any higher impost t The chief bananas aimed at are those which come from Fiji, but not very long ago the, honorable member for Corio submitted ,a motion to the effect that we should nwiex the Pacific Islands in view of the possibilities of trade.

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Mr POYNTON

- The Government are, in my opinion, making, a serious blunder in this matter. When the Treasurer made the statement which has been referred to, I am sure he felt convinced that the amount then mentioned was the proper one. That was not a concession to individuals, but a grant given, on the merits of the question, to consumers generally. I urge the Government to agree to the amendment before the Chair, because such a step would conduce to progress of business.

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

The committee divided. an offer is made in good faith-

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AYES

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NOES

Majority

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Sir William McMillan) proposed -

That the words " Special exemption. On and after 28th November, bananas," be added to the duty "fruits and vegetables, n.e.i., per central, 2s."

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

The committee divided. Ayes Noes

14 23

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AYES

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NOES

Majority

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative. Amendment negatived. Mr. WATSON (Bland). - I move - That the words "Bananas, on and after 28th

November, 1901, per cental 6d.," be added to the item.

Mr Crouch

- Make it ls.

Mr WATSON

- I am willing to do that if the Government will accept it as a compromise. The. question just decided was whether the duty should- be ls. per cental on all other fruits and vegetables, not elsewhere included. The

question now is whether bananas, apart from other fruits and vegetables, shall be allowed to come in at a duty lower than 2s. per -cental. The effect of the Government proposal would be that in certain seasons bananas would not be available for those who desired them in the southern States.. It seems to me to be a most unreasonable thing to impose a duty of 80 per cent. Is there any other commodity in regard to which any honorable member would dare to say we should fix a protective duty of 80 or 100 percent.? If honorable members act in accordance with what they have been doing from the first, they will impose a reasonable duty, and not agree to impose a duty of 80 per cent., in order to protect some growers of* bananas in Queensland, who, I am informed, are mostly Chinamen.

Mr Page

- Whose fault is that?

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Mr WATSON

- I am surprised that the honorable member, who has been advocating free-trade from the first, is prepared now to vote for a duty of 80 per cent, because Queensland is affected. I do not quarrel with him for doing it, but I think he is most inconsistent. The honorable member and others who would vote with him in the imposition of such a duty on a commodity grown by Chinamen are not prepared to support a duty of 20 per cent, on some articles produced by white men. A duty of 20 per cent., which 6d. per cental represents, would be an efficient protection even for the Chinamen engaged in this industry. It cannot be imagined that in order to secure success for the cultivation of a semi-tropical fruit in a semitropical climate a duty of 80 per cent, is required, especially when for the most part the bananas from Fiji do not come here at the same season as those from Queensland.

Mr McCAY

- Personally, so far as this duty is concerned, I agree neither with the honorable member for Bland nor with the Government. I feel still that on the whole ls., would be the proper duty to impose on bananas. In none of these matters, to my mind, is it a question of absolute good or absolute evil. After all, these are largely matters of opinion. In matters of opinion, wherever two parties hold strongly different views, something has very often to be conceded. I cannot be charged with being willing to harass the Government, but I would ask them to agree to the duty on bananas being fixed at ls. per cental. If they will agree to that, I shall ask the honorable member for Bland to save the committee from one division by consenting to this compromise. I. shall vote for a duty of ls. per cental whenever it is proposed.

Mr BATCHELOR

- I think the Government were perfectly justified in the division which they took recently on this item, but at the same time on the question of bananas alone, apart from other "fruits and vegetables," I join with the honorable and learned member for Corinella in asking the Government to agree to a reduction of the duty to ls. per cental, which I think will be quite sufficient.

Mr HUME COOK

- The question dealt with last was whether there should be a duty of ls. on all fruits and vegetables, " not elsewhere included." But as to bananas, I think we are all agreed that ls. per cental is sufficient, and I also join in asking the Government to agree to that proposal.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- -The Government have no objection to the duty on bananas being fixed at ls.-

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney).- Now that the Treasurer has made that concession, I wish to say that I would not have entered upon any discussion of the duty so far as its protective character was concerned. My reason for desiring that bananas should be relieved from duty was one connected with the injury that might be done to the banana trade, which very largely assists in maintaining a splendid steam service between the South Sea Islands and Australian ports. I believe that a duty of even ls. per cental will operate very largely against the continuance of the banana trade of the islands, because the shippers hardly ever net more than 2s. per cental for the fruit, and the addition of ls. to the cost of sending bananas to Australia will have a very serious effect.

Mr. WATSON(Bland). - I ask permission to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion (by Mr. Watson) proposed -

That the words "Bananas, on and after 28th November, 1D01, per cental ls.," be added to the item.

Mr. PAGE(Maranao). - The honorable member for Bland has accused me of an inconsistency, but I would point out that there is not much consistency in his action in desiring to bring the product of the black man's labour into competition with the bananas grown in Queensland.

Mr FISHER

- Honorable members are under a wrong impression when they suppose that the whole of the Queensland bananas are grown by Chinamen.

Mr McDonald

- Fully two-thirds of, the Queensland bananas are grown by' Chinamen.

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Mr FISHER

- Even though only one-third of the Queensland bananas are grown by white men, those white men should receive every consideration and encouragement. The party to which I belong are not in favour of Chinamen, and if by any legislative process we can reduce the number of Chinamen employed in any industry, we shall ' do everything in our power to bring that result about.

Amendment agreed to.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - I think that we might very well ask the Government to consent to an adjournment now. I have many duties to attend to, which cannot possibly be discharged while Parliament is sitting, because my continuous presence in the chamber is necessary. We should carry on our business on common-sense principles, and we cannot be expected to be assembled here at half-past two this afternoon in a fit state to transact the business of the country if we are to have no sleep in the meantime. "We have gone through about 30 items, and we are now entering upon an entirely new class of duties - the agricultural portion of division i. There is not much more than a quorum in the chamber, and in the interests of decency I would ask the Government to consent to an adjournment. I have failed to receive from the Government that consideration to which, as leader of the Opposition, I think I am fairly entitled, and I would ask Ministers not to continue to place me in an unfair and unreasonable position.

Mr KINGSTON

- We shall do more justice to ourselves, to those who sent us here in general, and to the business community in particular, who are anxiously awaiting the result of our deliberations in connexion with the Tariff, if we show our determination to get on with the work as fast as we fairly can. Up to the present there has been much more time occupied in the discussion of the various items than has ever marked the passage of a Tariff through any Parliament in the States. We feel that business must be proceeded with, and after having given fair notice of our intention to ask honorable members to sit late, we must ask the committee to continue its deliberations until we have made more progress.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - I think that we should at once decide as to what is a decent way of conducting the business of the country. We cannot be expected to sit on here until all hours, and meet again this afternoon. I -think it is a perfect farce, and that the public .cannot think well of us if we attempt to do it. We have made better progress during to-day than on any previous occasion, and if the Government make ordinary allowance for the necessities of a critical opposition in dealing with very important matters such as those contained in the Tariff, they must admit that there has been no unnecessary delay or obstruction. Fully half the time spent to-day has been taken up by speakers from the Government side of the House, and I think the Government, in refusing to adjourn now, are making a very poor return for the courtesy and magnanimity with which I have treated them.

Mr PIESSE

- I think the Ministers might listen to the personal appeal of the acting leader of the Opposition, who occupies a position of great responsibility, and who has been uniformly courteous and considerate in his attitude towards them. However anxious Ministers may be to push on with the Tariff, I trust - they will see their way to meet the honorable member's request.

Mr. FISHER(Wide Bay). - I should like to meet the convenience of other honorable members, but, as we have sat on to a most .inconvenient hour, I do not see why we should adjourn, and pave the . way for -those honorable members who, after lecturing us in the early part of the evening, have now gone home, and will attend the next sitting prepared to lecture us again, with the assurance that they will be reported in the daily newspapers. Practically the whole of the Parliament is represented, either by those honorable

members who are present or by those who have paired. As a matter of fact, every member of the House has been represented on some of the divisions that have taken place. I admit that the acting leader of the Opposition occupies a very responsible and trying position, but the same remarks apply to the Ministers who are conducting the business of the committee, and who, although they must be suffering great inconvenience, are prepared to go on with the Tariff, which they believe- to be for the benefit of the Commonwealth.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - It is curious that because certain honorable members choose to absent themselves we should be asked to go on with the business, without considering our own position or our own weariness. The very opposite is the conclusion which should be drawn, because it is we who have been working, and who deserve consideration. What I want to avoid is this insane way of conducting public business ; but I shall not again ask for an adjournment. In these all-night sittings we are starting a precedent which has brought other Legislatures in Australia into absolute contempt. In those Houses, important legislation has been passed in the early hours of the morning, when men have been half-asleep, and when no proper attention could be paid to the business. Here we find democratic members who talk about liberty, but who are the last men to give that liberty.

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The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member is not in order in making reflections on honorable members.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Then I move -

That 'the Chairman do now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

After one all-night -sitting, when I was not present, this Chamber proceeded to the consideration of the Tariff, which represents about £9,000,000 of revenue, and of which we have passed items representing probably £3,500,000. We are not dealing with a local Tariff, but with the foundation of the fiscal law and industrial' relations of Australia for probably the next twenty or 30 years. I have said that I will not be a party to anything that could be construed into obstruction. Honorable members on both sides of the House have, I believe, spoken at unreasonable length, but I have used my influence to prevent any unnecessary speaking on the opposition side, and to assist Ministers to have the business properly conducted. There has, however, been nothing approaching obstruction since the discussion of the Tariff started; and I ask honorable members to say whether the discussion on each of the items has not been replete with a great deal of useful information.

Mr Barton

- Which everybody knew before.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- That is absolutely absurd. With all the different businesses and experiences of honorable members, there still remain hundreds of trades and avocations of which we personally are absolutely ignorant, and the effect of the Tariff on those trades has to be studied. We have got through more business to-night than in any similar period of time previously since the Tariff has been under consideration. Without any regard to the- conditions of things, the Ministry express their determination to force through the whole of this division of the Tariff, and that is a most unreasonable position to take up. This is a deliberative assembly, and we have a right to let the country know _ our views on all important questions. There has been no excuse for Ministers carrying on the debate beyond the ordinary hour, and if they continue to do so they are using the power of a brute majority to overcome the views and the deliberations of a minority, which, in all countries under British rule, is by courtesy called His Majesty's Opposition. One objection to the conduct of this business is that we have two Ministers in charge of the Tariff, and we never know who is responsible, or to whom to appeal. If I appeal to the Treasurer there is a whispered conversation with the Minister for Trade and 'Customs, and I know that on several occasions the latter has overruled the former.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member knows nothing of the sort. That is an absolute fabrication.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The Ministers, by the alterations to which they have consented, have shown either that there have been

miscalculations, or that they could not have hoped to carry certain items. All through this sitting there has been on this side the utmost desire to compromise and deal fairly with Ministers ; and it is unfair to my position and conduct, as leader, not to agree to a reasonable and courteous request to adjourn at a certain hour. It used to be the case in parliamentary government that the business of the House was a matter of the convenience of members ; but nowadays it seems that when a Government gets a majority the rule is to have no consideration whatever for the minority. Honorable members who are perfectly satisfied to agree to a Tariff which the Ministry have made as high and as prohibitive as possible, have nothing to do . but to sit fast and let the measure be passed ; but we have a difficult duty to perform in the face of the whole of Australia. We have to criticise every item of the Tariff, and it is not for Ministers to tell us to what extent we shall go in that criticism. We are not responsible to Ministers, but to our constituents and the people of Australia ; -and the Government, when there has been no obstruction of any kind, have no right to tell us that we must sit until the small hours, when we are physically and mentally weary. That is not fair to our position as the guardians of, at least, a large minority of the people of Australia, I do not ask for an adjournment because we have reached four o'clock in the morning, but because it is now proposed to enter on a new set of duties of a different character from those with which we have been dealing. On this new set of duties there are a number of honorable members, now absent, who are authorities and weighty debaters, and whether those honorable members ought to be here or not, I want the fullest criticism from a deliberative assembly. I am not going to be forced into debating these questions at this hour, because no good result will follow such a procedure. If the Ministry are determined to continue the discussion, then good-bye to all friendly feeling, which I have tried as much as any man to make possible. This is the first time in my public career of twelve or fifteen years that I have had to make an ad misericordiam appeal to ministers on my own personal responsibility and instincts of what is right, to adjourn at four o'clock in the morning, after there has been fair discussion. Even admitting for a moment that four hours may have been wasted, from half-past two in the afternoon until twelve o'clock at night is a reasonable time to give to the discussion of public affairs. I agreed to the extra sitting day asked for by the Government, and to every proposal that has been made for facilitating the public business, and this is a most unfair return that is offered. Because one or two members may have gone beyond the bounds of legitimate debate, it is not right that a whole party should be punished, and I, as acting leader of the Opposition, put in this unfortunate position. The Government must take the responsibility, if they go on with the work now.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - We have listened < for a quarter of an hour to a speech which seems to come from an angry leader of an angry party. The speech comes from one of those who could not be content without debating for three weeks a motion condemning this Tariff. It comes from one of those who a week ago deliberately made an arrangement to assist the Government to pass this Tariff through the House before Christmas. An adjournment was granted on a certain night on the promise of the Opposition to assist in giving extra days for work. Since that time the manner in which this debate has been conducted, and the extent to which it has been prolonged by the acting leader of the Opposition and those who support him, has been such as to render it impossible to get the Tariff through in the time mentioned. Whether intentionally or not, that is actually a breach of faith, and, under the circumstances, what resource have the Government in order to carry on the business of the country, except to conduct the debate at hours which otherwise they would be most reluctant to adopt 1 The Government have been forced into this position. We could not in justice to the country , and ourselves say that we had made arrangements with the Opposition to carry on the business in such a way that the Tariff could be passed before Christmas, and adjourn every night after getting through two or three items out of a total 130. Every honorable member, whichever side of the chamber he sits on, must, if he confesses what he feels, acknowledge that the manner of proceeding I have described would be a defeat of the promise that was made. The offer was made by the acting leader of the Opposition, and accepted by his party.

Mr Conroy

- That is not true, and the Prime Minister knows it.

Mr BARTON

- I shall leave the Chairman to deal with that interjection.

The CHAIRMAN

- I call upon the honorable member to withdraw and apologize.

Mr Conroy

- I withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN

- And apologize. '

Mr Conroy

- I withdraw; but at the time I challenged the Prime Minister, and said I would not agree to the arrangement.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Werriwa has been guilty of a breach of the standing orders, and I ask him to withdraw and apologize.

Mr Conroy

- I apologize to the Chair.

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Mr BARTON

- To apologize to the Chair is to apologize to the committee. The acting leader of the Opposition promised to give the Government his assistance, and whatever may have been said by the honorable member for Werriwa, it is impossible to take his utterance as representing the spirit and good faith of the Opposition. That spirit and good faith are contained in the utterances of the acting leader of the Opposition, unless his party dissent from his utterances ; and it would be impossible to say that the utterances of any honorable member, however distinguished - even of the honorable member for Werriwa - countervail those of the leader. The acting leader of the Opposition spoke for his party, who tacitly acquiesced in the statement he made. Is it not clear that this compact cannot be carried out owing to the proceedings of the Opposition? That justifies us, not in taking a very strong course, but in asking the committee to act in such a way that some attempt may be made to carry out the agreement which was then entered into, but from which those who made it now drawback.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I told the Prime Minister that I would do everything in my power to get the Tariff passed through the committee by Christmas ; that everything that it was possible to do, without curtailing legitimate debate on every item of the Tariff, would be done by me. That promise has been carried out to the letter. I do not mean to say that we have been such an infallible assembly that time has not been wasted ; but looking at the matter broadly, honorably, and fairly, as between man and man, that undertaking has been carried out up to the present time. It is absolutely unfair for the Prime Minister to accuse me or the Opposition generally of having failed in carrying out that compact in a broad and liberal sense. I have the habit of being candid, even at the expense of my own friends, and if I found that honorable members on this side of the committee were not carrying out the compact, I should be the first man to turn upon my own friends, and tell them that if they were not going to adhere to the arrangement, they must get some one else to lead them. Between man and man, and allowing liberally for the idiosyncrasies of certain honorable members whom- it is impossible for leaders to control, that compact has been carried out, and no charge of breach of faith can be made against me or those sitting behind me.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney).- I do not appeal to the Ministry for an adjournment, because I do not care how long they continue this sitting. But I do object to the responsibility for this long sitting being placed upon the shoulders of the Opposition. The Prime Minister has said that a certain understanding was arrived at between him and the acting leader of the Opposition, and that the Opposition were parties to that understanding. I have no objection to being considered a party to it. I certainly have desired to assist the Ministry in passing their measures as soon as possible, or at any rate to assist them to put the Tariff through the the committee before Christmas. Ministers themselves, however, have availed themselves of the opportunity to make speeches of considerable length, and evidencing considerable bitterness, with the result that they have brought forth rejoinders and created debate. The honorable member for Macquarie has shown already that the debates during this session have been carried on to a greater extent from the Government than from the opposition side.

Mr HUME COOK

- There are more honorable members on this side.

Mr THOMSON

- But the honorable member showed that, taking the average number of times upon which honorable members had spoken, and the average length of speeches, the Government had the majority. The Ministry ought to be able to prove the contrary before they attempt to throw on the Opposition the responsibility for any delay.

Mr McCay

- The speeches on both sides have been about equal during this debate.

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Mr THOMSON

- Then why throw all the responsibility on the Opposition I shall show what has been the result of our discussion of these items. If this Tariff received the consideration it was supposed to Have received, and should have received at the hands of the Government, they have submitted to alterations which are not justifiable. If the alterations which have been made are justifiable, then the Tariff was brought down in a very ill-considered manner. The discussion on* the Tariff has been amply justified. Some of the amendments which have been made came from the Ministerial side, and some from this side of the committee. We have come to the end of 21 items. _ Out of that number two have been postponed, namely, glucose and sugar, leaving nineteen which have been dealt with. Of the nineteen, the duty on opium has been raised 10s. per lb.; the duty on tobacco has been reduced 3d. per lb., and the difference between the excise and import duty is to be reduced 3d. per lb., giving approximately £50,000 to the revenue. That was surely a matter of importance, and the alteration was arrived at only after debate. The duty on cigars has been raised 9d. per lb., the Minister admitting that he had made a mistake in putting a fixed duty of 5s. 6d. into the Tariff, in view of the fact that he was raising the duty on the leaf 6d. per lb. The item, " live animals " was struck out, as the result of suggestions made as much from the Government as from this side of the committee ; while the alterations in regard to the duty on cigars were made as the result of suggestions from the Government side. The" duty on biscuits has been reduced ½d. per lb. ; on blue, 1d. per lb. ; and on candles, £d. per lb. The item cocoa beans has been struck out, and the duty on cocoa and chocolate has been reduced by 1d. per lb. Another item, " fresh fish," has been struck but, while "fruits and vegetables " have been altered in two items. Thus, in eleven out of the nineteen items that we have considered, the necessity for alterations has been forced on the sense of the committee.

Mr Crouch

- Not one of the amendments came from the Opposition.

Mr THOMSON

- Who supported the raising of the duty on opium ? Was it not supported by honorable members on both sides ?

Mr Crouch

- It was not the result of an opposition amendment. The honorable member would support anything against the Government.

Mr THOMSON

- That is not the question. Did not the alteration in tobacco come from this side ?

Mr Crouch

- It was made at the suggestion of the honorable member for Bland.

Mr THOMSON

- I suggested it in my speech on the motion of censure.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member moved for a reduction of 6d., but did not get it.

Mr THOMSON

- On the censure motion I suggested the difference of 9d. between the excise and import duties on tobacco. What is the good of disputing that? The proposal for the striking out of the item relating to live animals came from this side, as well as the suggestion for the reduction of the duty on blue. The Ministry came down with proposals to reduce the duty on biscuits and candles, while the amendments made in regard to cocoa beans, cocoa, and chocolate were suggested by the honorable member for Bland. 'The

alteration in the item " fish " was made at the suggestion of the honorable member for Wentworth, and I think that remark applies also to the two alterations relating to fruits and vegetables. How much truth then is there in the interjection made by the honorable and learned member for Corio?

Mr Crouch

- According to the honorable member's own statement, every word is true.

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Mr THOMSON

- I shall leave that to the committee to decide. As the Ministry have found it necessary to have their Tariff corrected to the extent I have shown, partly as the result of the debates in committee, and partly as the result of the time afforded for further reflection on their part, they should not endeavour to throw the responsibility of any delay on the shoulders of the Opposition. I do not say that a Ministry could be expected not to make mistakes in a Tariff, but in view of what I have shown, the Government should not say that the Opposition have been dealing with a perfect piece of machinery. The promise made by the honorable member for Wentworth that he would, as far as possible, assist the Ministry in pushing on with the Tariff, has been faithfully kept. I am, perhaps, better able to speak in regard to that fact than any member of the Ministry. I know that the honorable member has not only expressed a desire to avoid lengthy debate, but that he has urged among his own supporters that, as far as possible, they should limit the time occupied in speech-making, and divide their proposals so as not to have too many speeches on the one item. I do not ask for any adjournment, but the attitude of the Government does not offer any encouragement to those who have been refraining from making speeches in their desire to expedite the business. If the Ministry choose to go on further, I shall offer no objection, but I shall not feel deterred from debating any item which I think ought to be debated.

Mr. FISHER(Wide Bay).- All this is very interesting. I do not think any one desires to prevent the honorable member for North Sydney or any other honorable member from debating the Tariff as long as he thinks he has anything of value to place before this committee. But although his little homily was interesting, I do not see how it bears on the question before the committee. There are honorable members, other than the honorable member for North Sydney, who have refrained from speaking for weeks together, in their desire to expedite the business. I suppose that I have not occupied the attention of honorable members for an hour and a quarter altogether during this session, and I claim my right to suggest that we should proceed with our business in the most business-like way. There are two means by which a Government may push on business. One is to provide a set of standing orders, and use a majority to close debate, when the Government think sufficient discussion has taken place; the other way is to give sufficient time for honorable member's to express their views in full. The Government are proceeding on the better lines. They are providing the necessary sitting time for every honorable member to express his detailed views.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- And we readily assent to that being done.

Mr FISHER

- I am pleased to hear that. It would probably be in accordance with the wishes of some honorable members if the settlement of the Tariff were indefinitely delayed, because they might hope that new circumstances would arise to induce us to come round to their way of thinking. It has been claimed that we have made better progress during the present sitting than on any previous occasion, and if that be true no better reason could be advanced in support of the Government method of procedure. Ample opportunity has been given for discussion, and I strongly support the policy of the Government in sitting day and night, if necessary, so that we may get on with the business. The majority of the labour members are in attendance here, whereas a large number of the members of the Opposition are in bed. It cannot be denied that in the votes on the divisions, and in the pairs, the whole strength of Parliament has been represented.

Mr Chapman

- Thirty-seven members voted and 36 paired on the last division.

Mr FISHER

- I am not a thick and thin supporter of the Government, but I shall give them every assistance when I see that they are making a determined effort to get on with the business.

Mr. McCAY(Corinella). - I would suggest that the leader of the Opposition should withdraw his motion, which, I think, he moved on the spur of the moment. No one knows better than the honorable member that a motion such as he has proposed carries with it a very large number of important consequences. Members on opposite sides of the chamber have blamed each other for the delays which have occurred, but perhaps neither side is quite free from reproach. Most honorable members have made up their minds on the bulk of the items, and we might very reasonably agree to follow such a course as will result in substantial progress.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I shall not willingly go on with the 22 y 2 business at five o'clock in the morning. Throughout my political life I have raised my voice against this sort of procedure, which is a travesty of parliamentary government. Honorable members who are present need not consider those who are absent, but they should have some regard for themselves, and I consider that unless we adjourn very soon we shall be utterly unfit to take up our work again at half-past two this afternoon. As far as I am concerned, I shall not consent to any further business being done at our present sitting.

Mr KINGSTON

- The acting leader of the Opposition has spoken with his usual frankness, and I appreciate it. I should be very sorry to say anything that would disturb the present harmony, but when the honorable member says that he will not go on with the business, I must tell him that the Government will insist, if they have the power, upon business being done before this committee rises.

Mr. WINTERCOOKE (Wannon).I would appeal to the common sense of the Ministers in charge of the business, not to proceed to extremes. Ministers are asking us to go on with what they call the business of the country, but I would ask them how it is possible for us to give proper attention to the interests of the community if we are to be asked to sit on for such long hours as we are now doing? If we do go on with any business we shall most likely do it very badly, and we shall not be fit to take up our work again at the usual hour of meeting this afternoon. It is an outrage upon the people of Australia that we should attempt to do any work at all after sitting for such a long time. A very unfair charge has been made against the leader of the Opposition, for I can bear out what has been said by the honorable member for North Sydney as to the influence which he has exerted in order to shorten the debate and facilitate the progress of the work which the committee has before it.

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Mr MCDONALD

- No doubt there has been a great deal of useless talk, but the Minister, for Trade and Customs is taking the worst course any Minister could pursue if he wants to induce honorable members to push on with the business. The Minister for Trade and Customs must not come before us in a blustering way, and tell us that he insists upon doing this or that. I am willing to give Ministers every possible support in pushing on with the business. I do not think that we have made so much progress as we should have done, but the Treasurer himself has been largely to blame for the delay this evening, owing to the attitude he assumed in connexion with the proposed reduction of the duty on bananas, and the position taken up by the Minister for Trade and Customs is not calculated to improve the temper of honorable members. If we are to do business the Government would be wise to grant an adjournment now, so that the good temper of honorable members may be restored.

Mr. BROWN(Canobolas).- The Government is largely responsible for the way in which the business* of the committee is conducted, and I would strongly counsel Ministers not to push their demands too far. This should be a deliberative assembly and not a mere voting machine; but to insist on prolonging the sittings in this way is one means of bringing about the latter undesirable result. We have practically two sitting days in front of us this week, and I do not see how, if we carry on this debate much longer, we have any chance of doing justice to the work which will face us this afternoon. The Government would best conserve the good temper of the committee by adjourning now, and I hope that the Federal Government will not, by means of these all-night sittings, give rise to undesirable and discreditable scenes such as have occurred elsewhere. There are those who think we should disregard physical fatigue in order to get a certain number of items through, but if honorable members are compelled to do without rest and sleep, they cannot do justice to their constituents. I admit a great deal of the talk might have been done without, but we are here for the purpose of convincing each other, and giving reasons for

our votes to the people of Australia.

Mr. FOWLER(Perth).- This time will not be altogether wasted if we can come to a better understanding as to pushing on the work we are here to do. I feel sympathy with the Government in their desire to get this important business through, but they have been rather sanguine as to the rate of speed which might reasonably be expected, seeing that for the first time the representatives of six different States have come together to discuss this most important matter. If the Government had shown a little more patience, the rate of progress might have been steadily accelerated, and, taking into consideration the methods employed in the Parliament of the old country, any obstruction in the course of this debate has been of a very mild type, and might have been overcome by the exercise of a little patience. It would be advisable to adjourn now, because we are not in a state of mind which would make it advantageous to revert to the discussion of the Tariff.

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie). - I deeply regret that the Prime Minister, on what was almost his first appearance in the chamber to-night, should devote ten minutes to condemning the attitude of the acting leader of the Opposition, and grossly misrepresenting what that honorable member stated some time ago. What the honorable the leader of the Opposition did say was that he was anxious, as we all are, to close the discussion on the Tariff. To those of us who come from distant States, it is no personal benefit to remain in Melbourne longer than is necessary for the purpose of discussing the Tariff ; and the number of speeches delivered by various honorable members show a greater desire on the part of the Opposition than on the part, of honorable members on the other side to expedite business. Honorable members sitting behind the Ministry have on several occasions been put up, in order to keep a debate going until eleven o'clock, because the Government had no more legitimate business to go on with, and the Defence Bill, the Inter-State Bill, and other measures have for similar reasons been introduced as stopgaps. Honorable members of the Opposition have, so far as was consistent with their duty to their constituents, refrained from discussing those measures, and now, when a matter of real importance is before the country, and when an attempt is made by the Government to violate their express pledges, we are asked to close the debate without proper discussion. On Tuesday night the House unanimously assented to an additional sitting day, and the return given by the Government is not a fair one. Most of the items dealt with to-night were very important, affecting the mining, agricultural, and working classes throughout the Commonwealth. Attempts are made to place high and oppressive taxes on the people of the country, and members of the Opposition cannot be blamed for taking a strong stand against the iniquitous duties proposed. The number of speeches delivered show that so far as to-night is concerned, the debate has been pretty equal on both sides, and it ill becomes the Prime Minister to endeavour to put the Opposition in a false position before the country. I deprecate the introduction of personal matters into this debate. I wish simply to deal with the right honorable gentleman as the Prime Minister, and with his criticism upon the action of the Opposition. I have taken the trouble to read the remarks made by the acting leader of the Opposition when this supposed understanding was arrived at. The honorable member said he admitted that it would be a good thing if we could expedite the consideration of the Tariff, and that so far as he could induce honorable members on this side of the committee to act with him, he would endeavour to assist in getting the Tariff through before Christmas. But he went on to say that he wished it to be distinctly understood that the Opposition reserved to itself the fight to discuss freely every item on the Tariff if it were considered necessary to do so.

Mr Thomson

- The acting leader of the Opposition has done as much with honorable members on this side of the chamber as Ministers have been able to do with their own supporters.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Yes. We had a meeting of the Opposition to-day, and the opinion generally expressed by honorable members was that we should expedite the passage of the Tariff through the committee, consistently with our responsibility to the Commonwealth. We gain nothing by unduly prolonging this debate, and we have shown our desire to expedite public business by the way in which we have debated the second reading of Bills brought before the House. . I quite understand why the Prime Minister and the Treasurer have taken up this stand to-night. I anticipated something of the kind, and that an attempt would be made to fasten the responsibility . for it upon us after reading a leader in the Age, which misrepresented every one - as it usually does - except the representatives of Victoria. I do not complain of criticism in the newspapers ; but

they should make an effort to furnish true accounts of the events of the day. I feel that there is no justification whatever for the attack made upon the Opposition by the Prime Minister. I took no part in the debate during this sitting until two o'clock this morning, although I had as much information on the subjects discussed as any honorable member, and might have devoted the whole night to the placing of important facts before the committee. I do not wish to unnecessarily prolong the consideration of the Tariff ; but I. t am not going to sit down quietly and listen to a scandalous and unwarrantable attack, upon the Opposition. I hope the Government will even now see their way clear to* prevent the continuation of the debate,, which I think from my parliamentary ex- - perience, extending over nearly twenty years - can result, in the present circumstances, in very little credit to the Government or the Parliament. Allnight sittings do not conduce to that good feeling which should prevail amongst honorable members in the first Parliament of the Commonwealth. Iny view of the spectacle which we see around, us of about a dozen honorable members' sleeping on the benches, I would ask whether this is the proper time for dealing with matters affecting the whole of the people of the Commonwealth. I hope the Government will see the wisdom of deferring the further discussion of the Tariff" this morning, and allowing an adjournment to take place until half-past two p.m.. If they do not, we shall have another batch of honorable members coming down by-and-by to take possession, and I do not know what will be the result. In fairness: to Parliament, to the business of the Commonwealth, and to themselves, the Government should hesitate before committing an act which may not redound to theircredit.

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Mr KIRWAN

- As one' who is particularly interested in seeing the Tariff passed through committee as early as possible, I hope the Government wilt agree to an adjournment at this hour. I a.u very anxious that the Tariff should pass through the committee before Christmas, for the simple reason that I desire to return to my own State at Christmas. I am prepared to sit at all reasonable hours, and I think it would be well for the Government to agree to the House meeting in the forenoon, instead of indulging in all-night sittings. The honorable member for Wide Bay said that we ought to deal with the Tariff in a business-like way. It seems to me that to keep honorable members sitting up all night does not lead to that result. ' Little business is disposed of. The condition of honorable members as they recline on the benches shows that they are unfit to proceed with business at this stage. In the opinion of many people the Tariff is the most important matter with which we have t to deal. A great many of the elections were fought on this question, and it should not be rushed through the committee with undue haste. I have always been opposed strongly to anything in the nature of obstruction. I am just as strongly opposed to any attempt to rush business through a committee which is not fit to transact it. That, I think, is the worse evil. In the circumstances the Government ought to be fairly well pleased with the progress made with the Tariff. It has been better than the progress made with the machinery Bills earlier in the session, when honorable members of the Opposition sat silent for weeks, while honorable members on the Government side were really engaged in the work of drafting the Bills in committee. The Tariff affects the whole Commonwealth, and, endeavouring as we are to reconcile the conditions of the six: States, it is necessary that we should give the matter the fullest and the best possible consideration. I wish to bear out what has been said already in regard to the promise made by the acting leader of the Opposition. He urged publicly that nothing whatever should be done in the nature of obstruction, and I know that he has interviewed several honorable members privately, and urged that as far as possible they should curtail their speeches, and not attempt to embarrass the Government. I think that the references made to him by the Prime Minister and to the Opposition generally were most unfair.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- The fact that, although there is a quorum of members in the chamber there is certainly not a quorum of honorable members awake is sufficient in itself to show that no really good work can bo carried on during a sitting like this. We are no longer a deliberative assembly but a mere voting machine for the purpose of carrying out the proposals of the Government. So long as I am a member of a deliberative assembly I shall never consent to allow any proposals to be disposed of without proper discussion. Honorable members cannot do justice to themselves or to the matters under discussion when they are bodily and mentally tired. . Any attempt to keep the House sitting for such long hours can only tend to disorder, and. the action of the Ministry in this direction has been the real cause of all the disorder that has taken place in this chamber. The Government are entirely to blame, and the whole discredit must

rest with them. Nearly all the scenes of disorder, and the recriminatory passages which have occurred, have taken place after three o'clock in the morning. The Ministry have been largely responsible for the delay which has taken place in the consideration of the Tariff. They have obtruded business before the House which might very well have been deferred until after the Tariff had been disposed of, and the present emergency has been brought about by their attempts to perform too much work in the one session. It has been urged by Ministers that the session has been so long that we- must try and bring it to a close as soon as possible. I cordially assent to that proposition, but we are not going to be browbeaten by the Prime Minister into rushing .business through. in indecent haste, or transacting it under circumstances which are entirely unfavorable to the performance of good work. The action of the Ministry in trying to prolong these sittings is inexcusable. Late sittings are especially trying to the tempers of honorable members, and a very striking instance of this is afforded by the Treasurer, who could scarcely have been in his right mind, when after having agreed to reduce a duty he withdrew his offer owing to what appeared to be a feeling of mere personal pique. These continuous sittings deprive honorable members of opportunities for acquiring the information which, is necessary to enable them to bring an intelligent judgment to bear upon the matters presented to them for discussion. It is necessary in dealing with a Tariff to prepare numbers of statistics, and to apply, to the various proposals which are brought forward the teachings of political economy, regarding which some honorable members 'appear to be in need of instruction, li without the worry of Parliament, Ministers, in framing-the Tariff, fell into so many mistakes as have been disclosed in the first nineteen items, what number' of mistakes may we expect to find throughout ? The conduct of Ministers, in keeping us sitting here at this hour, and in unnecessarily delaying business, is highly reprehensible.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I would like to make a short personal explanation, because I feel to a certain extent personally aggrieved in reference to the trend of matters this morning. When I left the chamber for dinner at twenty-five minutes past six o'clock last night, when the discussion was proceeding on the item of candles, I remarked to the Minister for Trade and Customs that I supposed a vote* would not be taken until after the adjournment ; and I returned with the full expectation of seeing a vote taken then. I think Ministers are somewhat to blame for throughout the evening never intimating that they thought the debate had gone sufficiently far. I cannot hold myself responsible for honorable members speaking, and I believe that on inquiry the honours will be found divided in regard to the length of the remarks made. I should be sorry to see the closure applied, but it is quite reasonable when a certain number of hours have transpired that Ministers should intimate that, in. their opinion, the discussion has continued long enough; but up to twelve o'clock at night there was no intimation to that effect. At the Opposition caucus to-day I begged honorable members not to repeat themselves, and to allow two or three speakers to voice the opinions of the party ; and I personally refrained from speaking on most of the items. The mistake Ministers made was in announcing their determination to complete the consideration of all the items in this division of the Tariff. If they had done that at an early hour yesterday afternoon they ought to have insisted on divisions being taken ; but, after occupying the whole of the time on these few items, they now ask honorable members to deal with 30 more. In asking leave to withdraw my motion, I desire to say that I am willing, so far as my personality goes. - and I think I can pledge honorable members on this side of the chamber - to do everything to facilitate business and prevent obstruction, or undue repetition. I deplore this useless waste of time, and I think it would be far better to adjourn now until half-past two o'clock this afternoon.

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Mr FULLER

- Honorable members on this side of the chamber are entitled to protest against what has been said as to obstructive tactics on the part of the

Opposition. It has been said by the acting leader of the Opposition that there will be no obstruction on our part ; but we cannot make any hard and fast compact, which would have the effect of preventing discussion to the fullest extent on every item. Had members of the Opposition exercised their right of speech in the same proportion as have members on the Ministerial side, we should not have made so much progress as we have with the Tariff. It was remarkable that the Government whip should take on himself to lecture honorable members, seeing that he knows as well as anybody that the people of New South Wales are up in arms against the Tariff, which is drawn on the highest protectionist lines, and

against which all freetraders or revenue Tariffists must protest as inimical to the best Interests of New South Wales and the Commonwealth: Did we not do so, we should be faithless to the trust imposed in us by the electors. Mining and other industries are taxed to the highest degree in the interests of a few manufacturing firms in the big centres of population. I am here as the representative of what the honorable member for Melbourne Ports satirically refers to as the primary industries of Australia ; and these are the industries which ought to receive first consideration at the hands of this or any other Government. The Tariff can be of no possible benefit to the wool industry, or to coal mining, gold mining, or dairying. All that is done is to benefit a few industries in Victoria, which, after 25 or 30 years of protection, ought to be able to stand alone, especially when the markets of the Commonwealth are now open to them. I challenge the Minister for Trade and Customs to show that this Tariff will benefit primary industries in any shape or form. By their proposals in regard to the duty on candles the Government are compelling, not only the coal miners in New South Wales, but the gold miners in Victoria and other parts of Australia, to pay more than they ought to be required to pay for this article. A good deal has been said about the way in which this debate has been conducted. I am one of those who have spoken very little. The return read by the honorable member for Macquarie bears out that statement, while on the other hand the honorable and learned member for Corinella has spoken on more than a hundred occasions. Nevertheless, he is one of those who come forward on every occasion and complain of waste of time on the part of the Opposition.

Sir John Forrest

- What is the honorable and learned member doing now ?

Mr FULLER

- I am certain that the Minister for Defence will not accuse me of wasting time. A number of honorable members of the Opposition have done very little in that respect, but if we are going to be lectured by the Government whip, we shall show how we can waste, or fill in time, or do anything in that line which will suit us as a party. We intend to fight for what we believe to be the best interests of the Commonwealth. Let honorable members on the Government side who are so satisfied with their policy, attempt to address a meeting in the city of Sydney to-morrow. They addressed a meeting in Melbourne, but I do not think it was the success they anticipated it would be. When ' we were coming down from Sydney the other evening we witnessed a great spectacle ; the Minister for Home Affairs being cheered by twenty people who gathered on the railway station. There has been no obstruction in regard to the Tariff so far as the Opposition is concerned. If we had exerted our rights according to parliamentary practice, then, instead of being at the present stage in the consideration of the Tariff, we should not be beyond one or two items. We believe that it will be to the best interests of .the whole community to settle the Tariff as soon as possible, and our desire is to see that it is framed as nearly as possible upon freetrade lines.

Mr. KENNEDY(Moira).- With that peace of mind which comes to us in the early hours of morning, I rise to express my gratitude to the honorable and learned member for Werriwa for the self-restraint which he has exercised during this sitting. It appears to me that members of the Opposition have placed themselves in a somewhat illogical position. At four o'clock they set up to demonstrate that, owing to sheer physical exhaustion, the committee was not fit to deal with the items in the Tariff which have been before them for the hist seven weeks, and yet they are using this motion for the sole purpose of making more second-reading speeches upon their fiscal views. I think the honorable and learned member for Illawarra will agree with me when I say that if honorable members will refer to Hansard they will find that the speech he has just delivered was practically a repetition of his speech on the motion of censure. He has also given us another splendid illustration of the tactics adopted in another Parliament. He tells us that he is going to give the committee a taste of those tactics if the principles which he holds do not find the support of a majority in this Parliament, and that he is going to use all the forms of parliamentary procedure to delay the business of the committee.

Mr Conroy

- Those were not my words. I pointed out that I had spoken only for a few minutes on all the items of the Tariff with which we have dealt.

Mr KENNEDY

- I have had Some little experience of parliamentary procedure, and know that an Opposition will never admit that they do anything to obstruct business ; they always blame the other side. I am certainly not in

the counsels of the Government in regard to the attitude they propose to pursue in order to expedite the business of the committee. Had I anything to do with the control of business, I should keep honorable members here until they became hungry. Those who are making such strong pleas to be allowed to get back to their business, must recognise that they are not the only honorable members who have to depend upon their private interests for a livelihood. My sympathies are with those who come from other States, and have to leave their homes and their business in order to attend this Parliament. During the discussion on the motion of censure what did we hear 1 The leader of the Opposition said they were going to educate the poor benighted protectionists of Victoria, and bring them into the light of free-trade. We on this side of the House listened to him quietly, and then we were accused of being concerned in a conspiracy of silence. Now, when their own threadbare fallacy - cooked in the figure factory of their street - has been refuted, they change their vantage ground, and say, forsooth - "We shall discredit by every means in our power the Government that is pledged to place upon the statute-book the promises they have given to the Commonwealth in support of their principles."

Mr Fuller

- We only want to hear what the electors of Australia have to say.

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Mr KENNEDY

- The electors of Australia have returned a majority to sit behind the Government.

Mr Fuller

- They were returned under false pretences.

Mr KENNEDY

- The Government are on the Treasury benches with the support of those who sit behind them. If their principles are not in accordance with those of the majority of this committee, my place is on the opposition side. While my views are in accordance with those of the majority, I expect the Government which I am supporting to give effect to them.

Mr Fuller

- The Government have gone behind the pledges given to the country by the Prime Minister.

Mr KENNEDY

- We have heard that before. I am here to carry out the pledges that I gave to my constituents.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is this stone-walling?

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Mr KENNEDY

- It is said by the Opposition that we have been guilty of obstructionist tactics ; and I am not going to sit in silence under such a taunt. I am not going to be deterred from speaking by the Opposition, or even by the Government. I do not take up the time of the committee unless I think I have something to put before honorable members. It may be said that I am stone-walling ; I rose, however, to show that from my stand-point it was always the policy of the Opposition to put the blame on the Government if possible. The motion -moved by the honorable member for Wentworth. and which he now proposes to withdraw, is a most palpable blind. It affords sufficient evidence, if evidence were wanting, of the absurdity of the position which he takes up. Taking all these things into consideration, the blame for the waste of time this morning must rest entirely with the Opposition. I give the Government every credit for sitting tight with a view to completing the business before the committee. They have not used the votes behind them for the purpose of forcing business through without proper discussion, and I would not support them in any such attempt. But they have adopted a perfectly legitimate course in bringing as much pressure to bear as possible upon honorable members, to induce them to expedite the passing of the Tariff.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta). We have just listened to a tirade of abuse from the honorable member for Moira, who has charged the Opposition with having wasted the time of the committee in connexion with the discussion on the Tariff. I find, however, on an examination of the debate on the item of candles, that fourteen speeches were made by Government supporters, as compared with only seven or eight delivered by members of the Opposition. The honorable member for Moira also referred to the New South Wales Parliament, and said that we were giving a specimen of the tactics pursued over there, but I would recommend the honorable member before making disparaging remarks about other State Parliaments to

look at the Parliament from which he came, and to reflect upon the stone-walling obstructive tactics that have been pursued there from time to time. If the Government wish to carry the Tariff through, they will have to curb the loquacity of honorable members on their own side of the House, and make them understand that it is their business to support the Government, and to leave to the Opposition the special duty of criticising the Government measures, with a view to making them representative of the real intentions and purposes of Parliament. (Committee counted.) The idea of the Opposition was to proceed to a division on the question of candles shortly after tea last night, but honorable members on the Government side of the chamber rose for the purpose of repeating and emphasizing their former speeches, and no fewer than three Ministers found it necessary to address themselves to the subject of the proposed duty. The Prime Minister spoke for half-an-hour, and the Minister for Trade and Customs and the Treasurer also made several speeches, and now the Opposition is asked to take the whole of the responsibility for the waste of time that has occurred. It is a matter for special complaint that the Prime Minister, who is seldom in the chamber should come here, and not only lecture honorable members, but threaten them, and accuse them of breaking compacts without any sufficient reason. We are justified in debating every item of the Tariff, and whatever Ministers may say, every important item is going to be debated. We believe honestly and sincerely that the Government have broken faith with the people of Australia, and it is our duty to use every means in our power to make this a revenue Tariff with slight incidental protection. That was the policy placed before the people by Ministers generally ; and, according to the Melbourne Age, even the honorable member for Moira advocated a Tariff not exceeding 15 per cent.

Mr Kennedy

- If that is so stated in the newspapers, I have been misrepresented.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The free-trade vote of New South Wales is responsible for half-a-dozen supporters of the Government, and the free-trade senator lowest on the poll in that State had tens of thousands more than the protectionist senator highest on the poll was able to obtain.- I believe that if a referendum were taken to-morrow there would be an unmistakeable pronouncement for free-trade - or, at any rate, for a moderate revenue Tariff. It has been remarked that if this Parliament had been sitting in Sydney there would have been an entirely different complexion on the Tariff ; and we can imagine what the state of Victorians, under such circumstances, would be if they found their Tariff ignored absolutely in favour of the New South Wales fiscal policy. When, during the whole of this debate, has the mind of any honorable member on the other side of this chamber given any consideration to the New South Wales Tariff?

Mr Piesse

- I gave some attention to it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I only wish that the members from New South Wales on the Ministerial side would also bestow a ' little attention in the same direction. The Government are endeavouring to fasten upon the people a Tariff which they know would not be approved by them, if they could be consulted. Apart from that, however, I say that there has been no undue obstruction by the Opposition during this sitting. I am told that the Prime Minister has made a most rude and defiant speech, in which he accused the acting leader of the Opposition of breaking the compact arrived at. If there has been any breach of the compact, it has been due to the garrulous way in which honorable members on the Government side addressed themselves to the Tariff last night.

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Mr WILKS

- I am astounded to hear the charge of obstruction levelled against the Opposition. No better judge of obstructionist tactics could be found than you, Mr. Chairman, and the surprise which you show in your face satisfies me that you believe that the charge is absolutely baseless. In fighting for your principles in the New South Wales Legislature, you came to be regarded as the beau-ideal of an obstructionist, and I can quite understand how you regard this charge which has been levelled against the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition has no desire to indulge in obstructive tactics. We are all desirous of bringing the session to a speedy conclusion, for, while we are pleased to meet each other when travelling to and fro in the train, many of the representatives from neighbouring States run the risk of contracting the disease

known as oscillitis, which is brought about by excessive travelling in trains. The study of oscillitis, which affects the nerves, is a most interesting one, but I do not wish to pursue the subject further. Most honorable members of the Opposition live beyond Victoria, and therefore they have good reasons to prompt them to expedite the business of the session. We are seeking to act solely in the interests of the Commonwealth, and to mould a Tariff which will be a guiding star to the rest of the world.

(Committeecounted.) The fact that it is necessary to call attention to the state of the committee should satisfy Ministers as to the desirability of an adjournment. Most honorable members of the Opposition come from New South Wales, where all these items of food are on the free list, and is it not surprising that the Government should have such a docile Opposition to deal with ? Great battles have been fought and won by the freetraders in New South Wales, and the advances of the free-traders there have been resisted by the Minister for Home Affairs'. To show that there is no political animosity on my part, I would say, in passing, that since the question of federation came before the people of Australia, New South Wales has had no greater defender of her rights than the honorable gentleman. You will probably remember, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister for Home Affairs, when in the New South Wales State Legislature, exhibited a power of obstruction in the highest degree for many years. The Minister for Trade and Customs comes from a State where he exercised a somewhat despotic power, and was able to keep up the protectionist policy. No doubt he anticipated that the Tariff over which he had spent weeks and months would be resisted mostly by the advanced protectionists of Victoria, but in the early stages of the Tariff discussion he appeared to be surprised to find that honorable members from the mother State opposed it. I think that he must know that the views that we hold in regard to fiscal freedom amount almost to a religion, and the mildness of the debate on the Tariff must really occasion him much surprise. It is not to be supposed that the leader of the Opposition would have taken the extreme step of moving the Chairman out of the chair unless he considered he had some very good reason for doing so. The action of the Opposition all through has been consistent with a desire to promote the progress of public business, and the fact that the committee were able last night to pass items representing revenue to the extent of £250,000 is sufficient proof that no obstructive tactics were resorted to. The Opposition have been carrying out what they call a policy of compromise, but I call it a policy of sacrifice, and I informed the acting leader of the Opposition that I considered his action in regard to the Government proposals amounted to a surrender of his free-trade principles. I do not like to betray the secrets of the Opposition, but after that statement on my part, the Minister for Trade and Customs may be able to understand more clearly the selfcontrol which has been exercised by honorable members on this side, who were not prepared to make even the sacrifices which the acting leader of the Opposition has shown himself ready to submit to. The honorable member for Wentworth has been anxious to obtain revenue, and to help the Ministry, so that the session might be brought to an early close, and it is only with the assistance of the Opposition that such a large number of duties have been passed. The present situation has been brought about by the political gluttony of the Ministry, who have wished to place as many enactments as possible on record, and at the same time to pass a Tariff. That may have been a very laudable ambition on their part, but I question the political expediency of their action. If the consideration of the Tariff could be postponed until after the Christmas adjournment, and the Government could bring down a new Tariff Bill, after carefully considering all the items and remodelling them to meet the necessities of the case, the time would be well 'spent, and the Ministry would be well repaid for their trouble. The members of the Opposition, whilst they are desirous of submitting every matter to the fullest discussion, have been anxious to help the Ministry, and have been doing the work of the Government supporters. As has been pointed out by the honourable member for Macquarie, Ministerial supporters have occupied twice as much of the space in Hansard, and twice as much of the time of the House as members of the Opposition have done. (Committeecounted.) I wish to direct attention to the treatment which is being accorded to those who advocate free-trade principles. This morning the Age affirms that the allnight sitting to which we have been subjected is due to "more free-trade blocking." Only a day or two ago the same journal described certain honorable members on this side of the House as " political, larrikins." I am sure that the leader of the Opposition would never have submitted the motion under discussion had he not been compelled « to do so by some strong action on the Ministerial side. During the adjournment I inquired of a reliable Ministerial supporter whether or not this motion was moved prior to the speech by the leader of the Government. I was informed that it was submitted prior to the delivery of that speech. But upon

looking at the daily newspapers, and' upon further inquiries, I find that the very reverse was the case. These facts conclusively prove that the Ministerial side are not in a fit condition to proceed with the despatch of public business. It cannot be urged that the Opposition have occupied much time. They have not resorted to "stone- walling" tactics - which, by the way, were not unknown even in the days of Aristotle. In those days there were men, like the honorable member for Parramatta, who used to resort to the practice of "stone-walling" in the Areopagus. In this connexion, Aristotle says that an intelligent minority should not be crucified by a brutal majority. I appeal to the Government to agree to the motion.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - It is time now that we understood what we are going to do. For the position of affairs this morning the Opposition are in no sense to blame. Yesterday afternoon at half-past two we started a' discussion on candles. Reviewing an ordinary Tariff in a State Parliament, it would not have been unreasonable to take up the whole of the afternoon and evening on that one item. We discussed the item from half-past two until half-past six, and the right honorable gentleman in charge of the business never made the slightest intimation that the discussion should cease. I expected and wished that a vote should be taken on the item immediately after the tea hour, and I told Ministers so. To my great surprise when I came back the discussion had been revived, and I may honestly say that, up to nine o'clock last night, there was as much talking on one side as the other. I took very little part in it myself, and up to that time members of the Ministry did not show any inclination to shorten the debate. When we took a vote upon the item of candles, we were quietly informed by the Ministry that they intended to go right through the whole of this section, dealing with agricultural products and groceries. I did not believe that. I took it that we should be guided by circumstances, and then, about one or two o'clock in the morning, we reached a natural division in the division agricultural products and groceries. We had dealt with the items up to fruit and vegetables, and we had then to deal with the very big division of grain, pulse, hay, chaff, and so on. I thought it was a reasonable thing to stop there. We must recollect that although we have dealt with only seven large items, "they are divided into about 30 sub-items, each of which was open to debate, and upon each of which a great deal of explanation had to be made ; and I say that more progress had been made up to that time than during any previous sitting on the Tariff. The Ministry then refused to adjourn, though I pleaded for an adjournment upon one or two occasions. I wish it to be understood that at three-thirty a.m. the state of the committee was humiliating, not to say disgusting. More than half the members of the House had gone home, or were asleep, and I pleaded that the committee was absolutely incapable of doing business properly. There was, however, no consideration extended. Under the circumstances, I want honorable members to put themselves in my position. Was I to say that we should go on when we knew the House was not in a position to go on ? I said, perhaps warmly, that we should not go on, because the committee was not fit to deliberate. I hold that nothing but the most extreme provocation, or the most extreme urgency of public business, could have necessitated such a move as has been made. It has been made after we had freely and courteously allowed the Government a large amount of time for going on with their business. In agreeing to the Government proposal, I said I could not pledge myself for honorable members who I knew were strongly against the Tariff, but that I would do anything I could to facilitate business. I now say that in the early part of yesterday evening, and I hope the press will record it throughout the country, I was told that the Government intended to sit through the night and to go on with all the business they could. They may have said that they intended to go to only a certain point, but they made it an impossible point, which they could not reach even by sitting all night. There may have been too much talking on both sides last night, but there was no obstructive speaking. I reviewed the position calmly to make it clear that I was not prejudiced, and I say that what has occurred has been a mistake on the part of Ministers. One of the greatest difficulties in connexion with mistakes made by Ministers or anybody else is that those who make them will not withdraw from their false position. The Treasurer had been very much perturbed by an unfortunate incident that occurred. The right honorable gentleman made a proposal of compromise upon a certain item, and an attempt was made to get a lower rate fixed than the compromise he offered or to have the item knocked out altogether. That was a perfectly legitimate action on the part of the Opposition, but the right honorable gentleman then said that as his proposal was not taken straight out, he would not make it again. I am not criticising the right honorable gentleman's action now, but I suggest that the incident caused him to be disinclined to consider any fair proposal. We were asked at four o'clock this morning to go on with most important business. I again pleaded for an adjournment, and pointed out that

even though there might have been unnecessary talk, we had made up for it by sitting for four hours longer than the extreme hour at which a sitting of the House should terminate. Whether the Treasurer or his colleague, the Minister for Trade and Customs, is most to blame, I do not know. I suggest that this divided responsibility is one of the most difficult things we have to meet, and it would be far better if the whole of the work upon this Tariff were in the hands of one responsible Minister, so that we might know with whom we had to deal. I have given the history of the whole affair, and I wish to know, in all fairness, on behalf of the Opposition, what my right honorable friend proposes to do with regard to the business of the committee?

Sir GEORGETURNER (Balaclava). I am not aware of any want of consideration shown by my honorable colleagues or myself to the honorable gentleman leading the Opposition. I do know that on several occasions when requests for an adjournment have been made from the opposite side at a comparatively early hour in the evening, the debate has been adjourned, and honorable members have been allowed to resume their speeches on the following day with the result that they have taken advantage of the concession to simply repeat what they had spoken about for an hour, or a couple of hours, the night before. It must be remembered that we debated the question of the Tariff for a very long time on the address in" reply. We spent over three weeks on the censure motion, and honorable members affirmed by a considerable majority that the Tariff was one which ought to be considered in detail. Instead of considering it in detail now, many honorable members have been talking at large on protection and free-trade.

Sir William McMillan

- Would it not be better to keep to last night's proceedings 1

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- There is more to be considered than the proceedings of last night, which were only the culmination of what has happened before. On the previous evening an intimation was given by the Minister for Trade and Customs, who is in charge of this Tariff, that we intended to sit late on the following day for the purpose of getting on with business. We have not made the progress that the people expect us to make. We know it is a matter of the utmost importance and of vital interest to a large number of people, and especially to the mercantile community that this work should be done. Business cannot be transacted, and I am informed that merchants are unwilling to give goods to retail dealers, except from hand to mouth, because they do not know what position they will be in. The honorable gentleman leading the Opposition agreed to render all the assistance possible to have the Tariff dealt with by this House before Christmas ; but all the items have been discussed at very great length, and the same figures have been quoted time after time by members opposite.

With regard to the question of candles, there was a very long discussion, in which I admit members on both sides took part. If we had attempted to stop discussion on this side, we know what would have been said by honorable members opposite, and when honorable members on this side expressed their opinions, as they have a perfect right to do, we were told that we were helping to "stone-wall," that the Government had some object in view, and desired the debate to continue because they were not ready to take a division.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That happened last Friday, and the right honorable gentleman knew it. One or two members talked two or three times.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- There is no foundation for that statement. There has been no attempt on our part to get honorable members on this side to enter into any discussion. The honorable member for Wentworth has referred to the state of the committee last night as disgusting. I regret very much that that expression is to go forth as the deliberate statement of the acting leader of the Opposition. I am afraid that it will not raise us in the opinion of the people. My honorable friend also said that it was humiliating. In my Parliamentary life I have never felt more humiliated than I was by last night's proceedings. If much more of that sort of thing were done I could not remain here and help in doing it. My honorable friend said, perhaps in a spirit of pique, that we should not go on. If the acting leader of the Opposition is to take the conduct of business out of our hands there is only one course to pursue.

Sir William McMillan

- I repeatedly asked for an adjournment.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- My honorable friend did ask for an adjournment, but the Government had intimated long before that they intended to proceed until a reasonable amount of work had been done. We could have gone on last night until perhaps two or three o'clock and dealt with a reasonable number of items, but we were not allowed to do so. I hope that, for the honour of the House and the conduct of public business, the scenes we witnessed last night and early this morning will not be repeated. Whatever our quarrels may be, we have no justification for following out the practice which my honorable friend practically admits now was deliberately adopted last night in order to block business. He said that I was perturbed by an unfortunate incident which happened last night. Some persons have peculiar ideas of the meaning of "compromise." My honorable friend, I am afraid, thinks a compromise is for the Government to give whatever he asks for. On one occasion last night, when we had imposed a duty of 20 per cent., he suggested that it should be 10 per cent. I tried, in order to expedite outwork, to compromise the matter and make the duty 15 per cent., but that offer was absolutely refused. To show that I had no ill-feeling, after the Government had succeeded in a division I immediately said I was prepared to fix the duty at 15 per cent.

Sir William McMillan

- We were within our rights.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- That may be; but it has taught me a lesson. Again, when the item of bananas was reached, I tried to meet the wishes of honorable members by offering to reduce the duty from 2s. per cental to 1s. That offer was absolutely refused, and division after division was taken. My honorable friend refers to a compact. It takes two persons to make a compact. I made an offer which I thought a very fair one, but it was absolutely refused, and I took it for granted that there was an end of that matter. It is a most extraordinary state of affairs that the Ministers in charge of the business are to make certain offers, and then, after a fight extending for hour after hour, they are still to go on with what they suggested as a means of meeting the difficulty. I do not understand that as compromise. The spirit of compromise is that the Government are prepared to go a certain way to meet objections, but their opponents must also be prepared to go a certain way to meet the Government. I showed my anxiety to compromise, and what was the result? Whatever alterations were made we were taunted by honorable members with having had almost every item of our Tariff altered. Surely honorable members will realize that that is not the way' to get the Government to come a step forward to meet their objections. With regard to this incident I consider that I took the proper course; and, if it should recur, I would act in the same way. I believe that we could have dealt with several of the items during the night. I did not desire to be stiff backed; I wished to meet any reasonable objection, and to do the best I could to expedite the passing of the Tariff at the earliest possible date, but my offers were always rejected. When that offer which was made honestly was rejected, I felt that I was bound to revert to my original position and stand by the Tariff. We regret the length of time which has been occupied in a discussion which everybody must admit has been absolutely useless. We have no course open but to ask honorable members to proceed. We do not wish to curtail their rights to deal with, any items. I can quite understand 'that many of them are important, and require to be discussed in a fairly full manner. I trust that after the long discussion on general matters they will now settle down to details and attempt to do the work which we have been sent here to do.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I do not allow that we have failed to meet the Treasurer where there has been any attempt at compromise. There was no compromise offered to us on the item of fresh fruits and vegetables, although we made an honest struggle with regard to the fruit from the islands. There was a proposal about the duty on bananas, and the right honorable gentleman agreed to reduce it by one-half, but we pointed out that that meant nearly a prohibition. It has not been out of any spirit of antagonism that we have refused any proposition from the other side. It has been done because our calculations showed that the duty was not sufficiently low to be revenue-producing. There was another phase which operated on me very strongly, and I think it ought to operate on honorable members. We were asked to deal with some of the most important items when it was almost impossible to keep a quorum. Does it reflect any honour or credit upon us to pass item after item of the most important kind

when there is not a quorum ? It is not decent to have the bell ringing for a quorum when we are considering items of large importance. The conduct of honorable members last night was scandalous. The moment a quorum was formed they cleared out, and at times the debate was carried on with not more than fifteen honorable members present. The Treasurer talks about my telling the truth about the state of the committee, but 'I reply that, when several honorable members were lying asleep on the benches, when there was scarcely a quorum at any time, when the whole proceeding was reduced to a farce, both sides ought to have co-operated. I am not at all sure but that at one time if honorable members on this side had liked to walk out they might have snatched a victory.

Mr Chapman

- They tried it on half-a-dozen times.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- We did not try to do anything of the kind until we were absolutely refused an adjournment. The Treasurer says I made a direct threat to the Government that we should not go on. I did not make that threat until I had been refused an adjournment at least three times.

Sir William Lyne

- What right had the honorable member to an adjournment 1

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- We should have no rights at all if the honorable gentleman had a majority at his back and could force anything, for there is no man here who has so little regard for the rights of minorities as he has. I have the reputation of this party at stake. There is a rumour that the Government, thinking to put us in the wrong, intend to carry on this sitting for an indefinite period. I never felt more certain of my position than I do to-day. I have spoken to some of the most moderate and level-headed men on this side, and I am perfectly satisfied with the position I am in. If we had had one responsible Minister in charge of the Tariff, the progress of business would have been immensely facilitated. The present is an unfortunate arrangement. How can the Minister for Trade and Customs pick up all the intricacies of trade and commerce in a few months? It would be as reasonable to ask me to know the rules of law or to cross-examine a witness. There would have been no difficulty if the Treasurer and myself had been able to deal with each other. I did everything I could last night to prevent the committee from getting into this impasse. If the Government think that through the press, or in any other way, it will go forth to the country that we have brought about this unfortunate state of affairs, they will be circulating an absolutely incorrect view of the situation. I put upon them the whole responsibility, and if anything should occur this morning detrimental to the good government of the House or to the despatch of business they, and they alone, must be responsible.

Mr RONALD

- Having heard the reply of the .acting leader of the Opposition, I rise to ask what qualification he intends to make of his statement that* the committee was in a disgusting state, incapable of carrying on business, and presented a humiliating spectacle.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - When honorable members are lying along the benches asleep, and others are sleeping and snoring in their seats, and the whole committee is demoralized as it was, I think I am justified in saying that it is a disgusting sight.

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Mr Ronald

- It is abusive language to say it was disgusting.

Mr. WATSON(Bland). - I do not blame the Government for endeavouring to get a number of items put through at one sitting, because I think most persons will admit, that so far on the details, we have not done anything like a fair thing. I welcome criticism on every item because I admit that on one or two details I have changed my. opinion after debate. But I think that the same results could be achieved with much less talk. The Government were in error yesterday in setting the committee an almost impossible task to do. - If at the previous sitting they had indicated their intention to get through with, say, a dozen items on the Tariff, or a reasonable number, it would have been an inducement to some honorable members to curtail their speeches and to get away at a reasonable hour. But to ask us to pass 40 items at a sitting is asking us to do too much. It must also be admitted that yesterday afternoon honorable members on the Government side took as great a part in the debate as did honorable members on the

Opposition side, one or two of them speaking two or three times, and some of them debating items at great length. The Government ought to be able to keep their own supporters in hand, and if they set a reasonable task, say a dozen items to be dealt with at each sitting, they would find a general willingness on all sides to help them to a reasonable degree. I do not think that so far they can complain of the treatment they have received as regards the debating of the items. Every one has been fairly good-tempered. It has been only a question of speaking a little too long, and of the Government not setting a reasonable ' task, encouraging greater discussion than, was necessary.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney).- As one who has remained here through the whole of the sitting, and is desirous that the business shall be got on with as quickly as possible, I would point out to the Treasurer that there must be clean hands on the Government side of the chamber if there are to be attacks on the Opposition for wasting time. Hansard shows that on occasions previous to this there has been at least an equal amount of discussion from the Government side to that from the opposition side of the chamber. Even in the' present debate the Government supporters have spoken at least as frequently as have the members sitting in opposition.

Mr HUME COOK

- That does not hold good now.

Mr THOMSON

- It cannot be said that there has been any obstruction on the part of the Opposition. We all agree that the business might have been got through more quickly than it has been, and also that some blame attaches to members on each side of the House for not getting on with the business faster. I can only say that I am sure the majority of the members on this side, just as much as those on the Government side, have directed their criticism, not with the object of creating debate, but of attaining some definite result. If that has been done without honorable members unnecessarily lengthening their remarks - and that has been the case with the majority on both sides - there can be no implication of an intention to obstruct. What has been the cause of this difficulty? As the Treasurer has admitted there had been discussion on the item of candles. Many honorable members did not speak upon the item. I did not myself. But considerable discussion certainly took place, and the Treasurer admits that it took place from both sides. That is a fair admission. Then the committee went through other items with fair rapidity. If the candle item had not taken so long there would have been no cause' for complaint.

Sir William McMillan

- We took five items without debate.

Mr THOMSON

- I know that it had been intended to move for reductions, but the amendments were withheld for the sake of getting on with the business. But later on an attack was made upon the Opposition by the Prime Minister. It was a very violent attack, which insinuated a deliberate breach of faith on the part of the honorable member for Wentworth, and on the part of other honorable members sitting in opposition. That attack was very unjust.

Mr HUME COOK

- It was very unjust to insinuate that the Prime Minister had gone away from his Maitland speech.

Mr THOMSON

- Surely a passing remark of that sort should not have so affected the Prime Minister as to cause him to attack us as he did, in saying that there had been absolute breach of faith in not carrying out our previously expressed desire to terminate the discussion on the Tariff before Christmas. The attack upon the honorable member for Wentworth was, to my own knowledge, absolutely unfounded and unjustifiable, because both in the chamber and in private caucus, the acting leader of the Opposition had expressed the desire that every assistance should be given in the transaction of business so that the Tariff might be passed through the House before Christmas. Naturally, an unjustifiable attack of that sort alienates the sympathies of those on the opposition side who are trying to get the business proceeded with in the time named. What is the use of our trying to assist the Government if the Prime Minister makes a violent and unjustifiable attack upon the Opposition for not carrying out their previous promises 1 It is the Prime Minister himself who has caused the difficulty. The honorable member for Wentworth then moved the Chairman out of the chair, and there was justification for that. I agree with what has been said by the honorable member for Bland, that if the Government would name a reasonable number of items,

according to their importance, for each day, business would be facilitated.

Sir George Turner

- We had thought of doing that, but we do not know how long a particular item would take to discuss ; and if we said that we would not take more than a certain number of items, the debate might terminate sooner than was expected, and some honorable members might go away in expectation that other items would not be taken.

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Mr THOMSON

- The Government can judge what is a reasonable amount of work to do in a day, and if they get that done they ought to be satisfied. If they do what the honorable member for Bland has suggested - and I agree with him - then the great majority of honorable members on both sides would assist the Government in doing the work. Some discussion is sure to take place on certain items. Apart from the question of free-trade' and protection, which we have fought out on the motion of censure, there are items which affect particular districts and the interests of States in various ways. Such discussion I am sure the Government would not object to so long as there was an intention to finish business before Christmas. But we cannot do that if the committee is to be set an impossible task such as that named by the Minister for Trade and Customs. I am certain that if the Government adopted the suggestion of the honorable member for Bland, a great majority of honorable members on both sides would assist them.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I know all about the honorable member !

Mr THOMSON

- That is an insinuation which the Minister for Home Affairs has no right to make. He has had an experience of me in this chamber and in another Parliament during the seven years I was there. The honorable gentleman knows that when I sat behind the Ministry in New South Wales, as I did for five years, I did not speak more than once a month. Why 1 Because we had a majority to carry out the views which I favoured. That is the position of the Ministerial supporters now.

Mr Watson

- The honorable member was always reasonable in opposition.

Mr THOMSON

-I have tried to shorten my remarks in the course of this debate as much as possible, and I have hardly ever spoken in second-reading debates, because I did not desire to occupy time. It is only when we have come to the business stage in committee that I have felt compelled to speak frequently, in order to effect certain alterations which I felt were justified. Yet the Minister for Home Affairs, whom I have always treated fairly, insinuates that he " knows all about " me, as though I had simply been desirous of obstructing. Nothing of the sort ! I am sure that the

Treasurer will take a more, charitable view, and agree that the insinuation is unjustified.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - It is important, in view of the attitude of the Government, that I should remind honorable members, especially those from Victoria, that a Tariff of this kind is absolutely new to the Sydney representatives. We have to study this Tariff as a perfectly new thing - at least, I know that I have. We have all received an enormous mass of literature with regard to it, and I have tried conscientiously, day after day, to master the details. If we are going to sit here all hours of the night, we shall not be able to utilize our mornings in studying the Tariff. I confess that I have now got to the end of my notes. I have studied the duties carefully. I have been taking every morning from half-past nine till the time when the House met in investigating papers, making calculations, and conscientiously trying to grasp the details of the Tariff. It is all very well to say that we have been progressing slowly, -and to talk about sitting day and night. But honorable members are only beginning to grasp the meaning of this Tariff, and we have just as much right to consideration and time as have the Executive Government in respect to the transaction of their business. I am quite willing to do all I can, sitting from half-past two until twelve at night ; and business conducted on those lines will give us an opportunity for consideration of the business which is coming on every afternoon. That is only reasonable. But it is impossible for us to get through this Tariff, working day and night, and to do justice to it. It must not be forgotten that such an elaborate Tariff as this is entirely new to us.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta). - I also express my regret at what has occurred. No doubt there has

been a little too much talk on both sides, and that the honorable member for Bland, the honorable member for North Sydney, the acting leader -of the Opposition, and the Treasurer, as well as others, have talked a little too much.

Sir George Turner

- I say very little when I have to speak.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- While I have been sitting here, hour after hour, saying nothing - listening and regretting the talk that has been going on - I could not but feel that most of the talking has come from the other side of the chamber, although there have been members on this side who have also talked a little too much. We are now told by the Government that we have no right to talk after they have intimated to us what their intentions are.

That is -the extraordinary doctrine laid down by the

Treasurer a few minutes ago. The Government set the committee an impossible task when they declared their intention of getting through the most extensive division in the whole Tariff, It was a monstrous proposition on the face of it, an unfair one, and one that they must have known there was not the remotest possibility of accomplishing. If the Government call the discussion which has taken place obstruction, they have an extraordinary idea of parliamentary government. I take exception to the action of the Prime Minister, who comes into the chamber, and, after making violent attacks, leaves it again.

Mr HUME COOK

- On public business.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We know all about the public business which he does. The honorable member for Bourke should tell that to some one outside who does not know. We know better. We know from experience that no Prime Minister in any Parliament has ever been so little in the chamber as has the present Prime Minister during this session.

Mr HUME COOK

- For very good reasons which he gave.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member will allow me to have my own opinion as to whether the reasons are good. When honorable members on this side make replies to speeches delivered by Government supporters, they are told that they are obstructing public business. No Government has ever been treated with more consideration by this House than the present Government has been. It has been shown incontestably that the talking has been done from their own side, and that if the Government had kept control over their own supporters, business would have been expedited. But honorable members opposite wish to talk all the time. They wish to be always in the lime-light - and then take themselves off to their virtuous couches, expecting us to sit here like sausage machines turning out legislation. That is not my idea of doing the business of the country. Honorable members know that the committee cannot be expected to be capable of consecutive thought upon a matter of business like this Tariff, after sitting in a stuffy chamber like this during the long hours of the night. They cannot apply themselves to the task with the vigour of intellect that should be devoted to so important a matter. I do not know what the Treasurer alludes to in his reference to humiliation. I did not happen to be in the chamber when the Prime Minister made what I am told was a very rude and violent speech. The moment it was delivered the right honorable gentleman "hooked it" out of the chamber - I suppose to get ready to deliver us another lecture later on. It would be better if the right honorable gentleman would set us an example. Example is always better than precept, as the old maxim says. The Treasurer in his remarks began just like the Age leader of the day before yesterday - Tuesday last. If he had been in the Age office and helped to write the article he could not have followed it more closely. He spoke just as though he had memorized that article ; he repeated it statement for statement.

Sir George Turner

- I never read it, and I never go into the Age office.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am glad to get the admission that the Treasurer never reads the leaders in the Age.

Sir George Turner

- No ; I read the news, but not the leaders.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What ! The Treasurer never reads the leaders of the Age ! Then how has he been able to exist in Victorian politics for so long ? He knows that the leaders of the Age are the mental pabulum which Victorian politicians constantly have to take in order to survive. The moment they decline to take that pabulum they succumb. How is it that the right honorable gentleman, who has the most absolute contempt for the leaders in the 'Age, has acquired such a prominent position in the politics of the State ? I wish that some other Victorian politicians would declare that they will not be dominated by the journal in question.

Mr Thomas

- Are not the free-traders of New South Wales dominated by the Baily Telegraph 1

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member is very impartial in his interjections. In point of fact, he is a regular yes-noer. The Treasurer says that Opposition members have a very poor idea .of compromise. That is precisely the view -which we take of the Ministry. We maintain that there has been no genuine spirit of compromise displayed either in the framing of the Tariff or in its conduct through this House. Can the Treasurer tell me of a single protective duty formerly operating in Victoria which has been remitted 1

Sir George Turner

- I know that the duties have been cut down very largely.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- One or two may have been cut down just a little, but not a single protective duty has been taken off the list.

Mr Thomas

- Why should a protectionist Government remit duties ? .

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Why, then, should the Government talk about compromise ? If they will frankly avow that they intend to push a protective Tariff through the House without making any concession to a free-trade State like New South Wales, I can understand their position. But they have repeatedly declared that the Tariff was to be a' compromise. I am satisfied, however, that by the time it gets through committee the Victorian Tariff will remain practically intact. That is striking evidence of the spirit of compromise evinced by the Government, who seem to have considered only the industries of Victoria. We have a very different idea of compromise. The whole continent is being compelled to surrender itself to the protectionist Tariff of Victoria.

Mr Thomas

- That speaks well for Victoria.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It speaks well for Victoria, but it is unfortunate for New South Wales. The latter is the only State which has not a single Minister in the Cabinet to speak up for- ic. The Prime Minister declared that he intended to form a composite Cabinet, but he did no such thing. We have two protectionists to represent New South Wales, but those honorable gentlemen totally misrepresent it. They have nothing in common with the fiscal belief of its people. Consequently a greater obligation rests upon the representatives of New South Wales to voice in this House the opinions of its people. The two Ministers in question have endeavoured their utmost in this Tariff to violate the feelings and opinions of the electors who returned them.

Mr Thomas

- Is not a protectionist Government in power in New South Wales at the present time?

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member, who is a free-trader, so far- as Broken Hill is concerned, is constantly interrupting those who are endeavouring to do justice to their constituents. My 22 z 2 reply to him is that when New South Wales was polled as a State, 20,000 more votes were recorded in favour of the lowest freetrader than were cast for the highest protectionist candidate. Yet, in spite of such an unmistakable

demonstration in favour of fiscal freedom, and owing to the grouping of the electorates, eleven honorable members have been returned by that State who vote against the free-traders and in favour of the Victorian Tariff. During the whole of his political life the Minister for Home Affairs has consistently told the people of New South Wales that they ought to adopt the Victorian Tariff. It is the function of an Opposition to voice as strenuously as may be the feelings and opinions of the minority for the time being. In the matter of this Tariff, we are able to say that we represent not the minority, but the vast majority of the people of the Commonwealth, and we have a right to protest against its being fastened upon the country through the long watches of the night, when it is impossible that it can receive the intelligent consideration it deserves. It is a most difficult task to frame a Tariff for six States in which there are conflicting interests, and though it took Ministers six months to put the Tariff into a form for submission to the House, they now want honorable members to put it through in six days. Let the honorable Treasurer be reasonable, and he shall find that the Opposition will give him only frank and full criticism, and perhaps less of that than he gets from his own side. I consider it was a perfectly flagrant thing for the Prime Minister to come here last night and speak of a compact not having been kept, in view of the way in which the items have been debated by honorable members opposite. On the opposition side, we are always ready for a compromise Tariff. We recognise the conflicting vested interests of the different States, and that we cannot have all we desire, but honorable members from New South Wales do say that their State appears to be the only State left out of consideration, and they have tried to do here what, to their eternal disgrace, the Prime Minister and the Secretary for Home Affairs neglected to do in the Cabinet.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- I feel it incumbent upon me to show that there has not been the waste of time complained of. Assuming that two members from each State holding opposite views addressed themselves to the Tariff, and a quarter of an hour - would not be too much to allow each member on each item, no less than three hours would be occupied in the discussion of any one item. Instead, therefore, of there having been a waste of time, I find that the committee has been working much more expeditiously than was thought. I objected to the motion for an additional sitting day, on the ground that if this was to be a deliberative assembly honorable members required more time for the consideration of matters to be discussed than would be given if we were asked to sit every day of the week. We are now being asked to sit night and day in order that items may be forced through without any discussion whatever, and the Treasurer pretends to think this should be done. In Victoria he, himself, on a mere question of reduction of a Tariff had to sit for five months, and yet, with such experience in the State he comes forward and says that we must put through 41 items at a sitting. I defy him or any one else to show that even in Victoria so many items have ever been passed at one sitting. Last night there was no useless obstruction. At half-past three o'clock the honorable member for Wentworth suggested an adjournment, and it was not until after four o'clock - that is after we had been sitting continuously for thirteen hours - that he rose to move the Chairman out of the chair. I was not considerably surprised that his motion was not accepted at once, because we know that the Ministry are under orders. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports has told us that nobody ever dreams of entering political life in Victoria without consulting a Mr. David Syme. He happens to control a paper with a large circulation, and it is possible that many honorable members are not aware_ of his reputation in regard to political matters, and unwittingly accept .the dictation of an irresponsible individual who, sheltered under a pseudonym, browbeats and blackguards all politicians who do not agree with him. I do not understand why Victorian politicians have such a very great reverence for- him. So far as I can judge, whatever influence he had is steadily disappearing, and it must now be a very small quantity. I believe that the notice of the House will yet be drawn to a case where confidential papers, relating to New Guinea, were handed over to this newspaper. When such a thing occurs, we may well accept the statement that the politicians here and their followers are ruled entirely by the newspaper. I trust that an inquiry will be made, and that we shall learn on what authority a Minister, simply because this newspaper happens to support the Government, handed over official documents which ought not to have been allowed to go outside his department, and which might have been lost. One of the signs of the strong influence of Mr. Syme on the Ministry was the appearance of two leaders in his newspaper pointing out that the House ought to sit until three o'clock, from seventeen to eighteen hours a day. The Ministry at once became bold and strong in their determination to sit things out, and announced the very next day their intention in those remarkable tones which become firm only when they know that they have a big majority - tones which, when the leader of the labour party gets up and speaks to them, at

once become so obsequious and humble that even the very leader they address must feel a certain amount of contempt for them, because it is then " Yes, Mr. Watson," and " Yes, Mr. Watson " until the House can hardly avoid laughing at the sorry spectacle of a Ministry bowing down so obsequiously. It is then that the boasted determination of the Ministry fades into thin air, and we find them mildly entreating Mr. Watson - "Yes, Mr. Watson, would you mind stepping into our room, Mr. Watson, while we explain matters, Mr. Watson."

Mr Mahon

- Is the honorable member in order, sir, in referring to an honorable member, except by the name of his constituency ?

The CHAIRMAN

- If the honorable member for Werriwa is alluding to the honorable member for Bland, he must not use his surname.

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Mr CONROY

- I did not say whether it was the honorable member for Bland. I was narrating a scene which I think must take place fairly often. I cannot help contrasting the yielding spirit Ministers exhibit on such occasions with their resolutions on any occasion when they know that they have a solid majority at their back. If honorable members were present at the interviews with Mr. Watson, they would see the spectacle of a Ministry controlled by an individual, and unable to determine what they would do here until they had consulted him.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member has made it clear that he is referring to the honorable member for Bland, and I must ask him to conform to the rule of the House.

Mr Conroy

- Even supposing that I am, Ministers would not address him in private conversation as the honorable member for Bland, but as "Mr. Watson." I am not referring to any conversation which has taken place in the chamber. We had a fine spectacle here this morning. The Treasurer said - " I am not going to listen to any proposition of the sort. You would not accept any compromise from me, and now you can go without it." Two minutes after we had this announcement from the raging Treasurer, who has determined to bear down all opposition, the honorable member for Bland rose, and in the mildest tone said - " I think the Treasurer is not right in the course he is adopting," and at once the bold and fierce Minister became so humble as to say - "Would the honorable member for Bland mind stating that clearly again, as it was not heard." The observation was repeated, and even the Minister for Trade and Customs, so far from wearing that defiant look he sometimes exhibits, tried to smile very courteously at the honorable member suggesting that 'he would be only too ready to meet any proposal whatever from that source. We see a deference exhibited towards this honorable member that must have been very displeasing to the Government supporters who are not able to extract from Ministers such smiling consideration, or cringing, if I might be allowed to use the term. It is painful to witness these spectacles. One almost hopes that the honorable member for Bland will not say anything in opposition to the Ministerial proposals, so that we may not witness such spectacles on the floor of this chamber. The second day after the newspaper I was referring to had told Ministers that they must sit all night, and bear down opposition, and keep going for at least seventeen or nineteen hours a day, we find them humbly following the direction, so that they are now between two masters, Mr. Syme and the honorable member for Bland. I do not know whom they cringe to most, but it is time that they made up their minds, and tried to decide something for themselves. (Committee counted!) The Chairman left the chair, and

I asked for Mr. Speaker's ruling. Standing Order 233 says - If notice be taken or it appears upon a division in committee that a quorum of members is not present, the Chairman shall leave the chair of the committee and shall inform the Speaker thereof, but make no further report.

Then the next standing order says -

If a quorum of members be present when the House is counted by the Speaker the House shall again resolve itself into the committee of the whole.

Sir William McMillan

- I would ask the honorable and learned member not to press the point of order now, although it is a

proper one.

Mr Conroy

- I hold that the Chairman is bound to report to the Speaker. Therefore I shall have to ask that the matter be reported.

Sir William McMillan

- I think it is perhaps as well that attention should be drawn to the matter, but I would ask the honorable and learned member not to persist.

Mr Conroy

- Perhaps the practice adopted by the Chairman is quite in accordance with the rules of ordinary debate, and would conduce to the transaction of business. I raised the point in the best possible spirit, but I will not ask that the matter be reported.

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The CHAIRMAN

- I had anticipated that something of this kind would arise, so I may as well give a ruling at once. The honorable and learned member has referred to Standing Order 233, which has been found not to work in practice as it was anticipated would be the case. I endeavoured to obtain the concurrence of the committee a few evenings since to allow me the privilege that every other Chairman has in every Parliament of the States, and in the British House, of Commons - that is, to summon a quorum by ringing the bells. The honorable and learned member for Werriwa refused concurrence on that occasion. I then, in order to conserve the time of the committee and the time of the public, studied the standing orders, with the view to satisfy myself whether, attention having been called to the want of a quorum, the standing orders permitted me to ascertain whether that was the case, and I also endeavoured to ascertain whether, after I had ascertained that there was not a quorum present at that particular time, and had sent for the Speaker, if in the interval before the Speaker arrived, I was able to report a quorum, I might resume the chair, and allow the proceedings to be resumed. That was the conclusion to which I came. I now rule, therefore, that I have the power to allow the proceedings to be resumed. If a quorum is present before the Speaker arrives in the chamber I rule that I can resume the chair of the committee, and that the committee can proceed with business. I may say that in that opinion I am fortified by the opinion of Mr. Speaker himself.

Mr Conroy

- I must dissent from your ruling, because the standing orders do not provide, as far as I can see, for proceedings in committee being resumed before the absence of a quorum has been reported to Mr. Speaker.

The CHAIRMAN

- If the honorable and learned member intends to dissent from my ruling he must do so in the proper way by handing in his objection in writing.

Mr Conroy

- I beg to hand in the following protest against your ruling : -

I beg to dissent from the ruling of Mr. Chairman, that after his attention has been drawn to the fact that a quorum of members is not present, and the Chairman has left the chair, he can, without reference to Mr. Speaker, again resume the chair.

The CHAIRMAN

- The protest of the honorable member is not quite correct. I did not leave the chair. I was careful not to do so.

Mr Conroy

- You went to the side of the chair.

The CHAIRMAN

- When the honorable and learned member called attention to the state of the committee, I sent for Mr. Speaker, but I was careful not to leave the chair. Before the arrival of Mr. Speaker I ascertained by a count that there was a sufficient number of honorable members present, and I then resumed my seat.

The question before the committee now is -

That the committee dissent from the ruling of the Chairman.

Mr Conroy

- The point I wish to bring before the committee is that notice had been drawn to the fact that there was not a quorum present: The Chairman announced that there was not a quorum, and sent for Mr. Speaker. I hold that as soon as he found ' that there was not a quorum present, it was immaterial whether he left the chair or not, because, through the absence of a quorum, the chair became vacant for all practical purposes. The moment the Chairman announced that there was not a quorum, the chair was 'vacant, and the committee proceedings could be resumed only after the Speaker had been called to the chair. That must be the case, because when there is no quorum present there is no one in authority, and it is not until the Speaker comes in, and the House is formed, that the business in committee can be resumed.

Mr Mahon

- It is always unpleasant for honorable members -to support any motion reflecting upon a decision by the Chairman or Speaker, because, our presiding officer being elected by the free will of honorable members, we ought to endeavour to assist him as far as we can in coming to right decisions. Therefore, I much regret that it appears to me that Standing Order 233 leaves the committee no option on this occasion but to dissent from the Chairman's ruling. I think that is absolutely clear. I would point out that Standing Order 233 provides -

If notice be taken, or it appears upon a division in committee, that a quorum of members is not present, the Chairman shall leave the chair of the committee, and shall inform the Speaker thereof, but make no further report.

So that whether Mr. Chanter was out of the chair or in it makes no practical difference, because the standing order in question lays down that he shall leave the chair. On notice being taken that no quorum is present, it is the duty of the Chairman to quit the chair. However reluctant honorable members may be to dissent from the Chairman's decision, it is important that we should obey the rules which are laid down for our guidance. If the committee dissent from the decision which has been given, I am sure they will agree that the Chairman's mistake was perfectly excusable, considering the number of hours during which he has been in continuous occupation of the chair.

Mr Deakin

- If the Chairman satisfies himself before he has completed his notice that there is a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum, business should at once be proceeded with. That interpretation is as literally correct as is the other, and has the advantage of being a reasonable interpretation.

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Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- It appears to me from Standing Order 33 that it is optional with the Chairman ' whether he shall leave the chair or not. Certainly that order must be read in conjunction with Standing Order 233.

Mr Hughes

- The contention of the Attorney-General really is that when the Chairman's attention is called to the fact that a quorum is not present he can take notice of it only by rising and counting. When I called attention to the state of the House the Chairman rose and counted the number of honorable members in the chamber. There was no quorum present at the time I called attention to the matter, nor when the Chairman had finished counting. In such circumstances it was certainly the business of the Chairman, under Standing Order 233, to leave the chair and report to the Speaker. According to Standing Order 34 there can be no doubt' as to the Chairman's duty in this respect. That standing order states - When the attention of the Speaker or of the Chairman of Committees has been called to the fact that there is not a quorum of members present, no member shall leave the chamber until the House has been counted by the Speaker.

That shows conclusively enough that the Chairman cannot count the House at all. The Speaker must do that. Then under Standing Order 233, if notice be taken that a quorum of members is not present - and of course it can only be taken at the instance of a?i honorable member - the Chairman must inform the Speaker. He cannot wait for a minute to 'allow of a quorum being formed. If he can wait for a minute, why not for an hour? Obviously that is not the intention of the standing order.

Sir William Lyne

- The honorable member forgets that in New South Wales the Chairman first rings for a quorum.

Mr Hughes

- That is not provided for here. In any case the Chairman had found that there was less than a quorum

present, and consequently it was his duty to report the matter to the Speaker.

Mr Wilks

- I am inclined to agree with the Attorney-General. The honorable member for West Sydney has contended that the Chairman has no power to summon a quorum, and yet is to report to the Speaker that there is no quorum present. How can he make such a report without counting? Standing Order No. 33 provides -

If any member shall take notice, or if the Chairman of Committees, on notice being taken by an 'j' member, shall report to the Speaker that a quorum of members is not present, the Speaker, standing up in his place, shall count the House ; and if a quorum be not present in two minutes, he shall adjourn the House till the next sitting day.

How is the Chairman of Committees to make any report that a quorum is not present unless he has the power of counting the House? It is clearly the intention of the standing order that the Chairman should have that power, otherwise we should have the Speaker running in and out of the chamber every time a statement that there was not a quorum present was made by any honorable member, and for whatever purpose the statement might be made. I take it that the Chairman does not leave the chair until he finds that it is necessary for him to report the absence of a quorum, and he cannot make such a report unless he has the power to count the committee. I take it that it is our duty to uphold the Chairman in a reasonable interpretation of the standing order, and I shall support the ruling he has given.

The CHAIRMAN

- With the concurrence of the committee, I should like to make a statement which I hope will make the matter clear before the committee votes. I draw now, as I have always done, a clear distinction in my duties. I do not claim, nor have I any intention of claiming, the right to set the bells ringing to summon a quorum, but from the rule referred to by the honorable member for Dalley, -taken in conjunction with Rule 233 and other "following rules, I have satisfied myself that the responsibility is cast upon me before reporting to the Speaker to ascertain for myself that there is not a quorum present. Standing Order 33 says -

Or if the Chairman of Committees, on notice being taken by an honorable member, shall report to the Speaker that a quorum of members is not present - and it appears to me that the standing order which has already been referred to by the honorable member for Dalley gives the Chairman a discretionary power to ascertain for himself whether a quorum is present. It must be clear that it would be a ridiculous thing if, when the whole of the members of the committee are present and an honorable member calls attention to the state of the committee for purposes of his own, the Chairman should be required to leave the chair and report no quorum to the Speaker.

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Mr Conroy

- That is not contended.

The CHAIRMAN

- I have contended for no other power than this - that, on a member taking notice that a quorum is not present, it is my duty, before I report to the Speaker, to ascertain whether a quorum is present or not, and if before the Speaker arrives I find that a quorum is present, the committee should resume its proceedings. I have not presumed to give a ruling founded upon a strict interpretation Of the standing orders. My object has been to conserve the public time and the interest of every member of the committee, and if I were to strictly interpret every one of the standing orders, honorable members would find some of them very irksome indeed. I have no desire to render them irksome, but, on the contrary, to interpret them in such a way as to conduct the proceedings as smoothly as possible. I have, therefore, ruled that I have a discretionary power in regard to reporting to the Speaker when notice is taken of the absence of a quorum if I ascertain that a quorum is present the committee should resume its proceedings.

Mr Conroy

- It appears to me that the words of the standing order are perfectly clear, and whether the Chairman sits in the chair or not is not the point. If notice is taken, the standing order says that the Chairman shall leave the chair of the committee, and the words are clearly imperative. Upon notice being taken the Chairman reports to the Speaker, and his power then ceases, and it is the Speaker who counts the House. It may be unfortunate that the standing order is so worded, and, personally, I think that the Chairman should

have the power to call for a quorum of the committee. My contention, however, is that the standing order does not provide for that, and when notice is taken of no quorum, until the Speaker reports that a quorum is present it is not competent for the Chairman of Committees to resume the chair.

Mr Hughes

- I rise to a point of order. I take it that the Chairman's ruling is final, or it is not, and if it is final we should get on with business.

The CHAIRMAN

- The business before the committee is a motion dissenting from my ruling. The honorable member for Werriwa moved the motion of dissent, and is now replying to the debate.

Sir William McMillan

- Really the question at issue is whether, after notice has been taken of the want of a quorum, the chairman requires, under a broad interpretation of the standing orders, to send for the Speaker and report to him, notwithstanding the fact that two or three members may, in the meantime, have come in and formed a quorum. I do not intend to enter into the controversy, but it seems to me that is the point.

Mr Conroy

- I contend that when notice is taken, the moment the Chairman has counted the committee he must leave the chair and report to the Speaker.

Mr O'Malley

- I raise the point of order that the honorable member for Werriwa has no right of reply in committee.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Tasmania is correct. As members in committee have the right to speak more than once, it cannot be said that an honorable member has a right of reply.

Mr Conroy

- I think authority should be given to the Chairman to ring the bells to call honorable members to form a quorum. There should be a definite time allowed, and then, if the Chairman finds that there is not a quorum present, he should report the matter to the Speaker ; but, under our standing orders, that power is not given to the Chairman, and he must report to the Speaker the absence of a quorum. I do not wish to press the point, and am willing to withdraw my motion dissenting from the ruling of the Chair.

Mr O'Malley

- It strikes me that no matter what our rules and standing orders are, the Chairman is supposed to be an intelligent man, who will use common sense in conducting the business of the committee.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I rise to a point of order. A distinct motion has been moved, and the honorable member for Werriwa, who moved it, has, after replying to debate, asked permission to withdraw the motion. I think it should be decided whether that motion is to be withdrawn before we enter upon further discussion.

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Mr O'Malley

- I have not finished yet. There is a great deal of talk about the Speaker not being in the chair, but the Speaker is in the chair, and in the United States it has been ruled that there is a quorum in the House so long as there is a member in the House. According to my reading of the standing orders, there is a quorum present so long as the requisite number of honorable members are within the building. No matter what the standing orders say, we ought to let the Chairman have some discretion in keeping the House going according to the common sense of the age.

Mr HUGHES

- I strongly object to any honorable members attempting to teach the committee what it must do. What can it do, except that which is prescribed in the standing orders! Let the ruling of the Chairman be referred to Mr. Speaker, so that the point at issue may be settled. The Government ought to take upon themselves the duty of proceeding in this matter.

Mr McCay

- I do not quite understand whether the honorable and learned member for Werriwa considers that the Chairman has a right to count the committee at all, or that he must take the word of an honorable member that there is not a quorum.

Mr Conroy

- I certainly think that he is entitled to count and see himself.

Mr McCay

- If the Chairman is entitled to count, what rule prevents him from continuing to count, until Mr. Speaker arrives ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It must be remembered that occasionally it is some time before the Speaker can arrive in the chamber. Suppose that during the interregnum any disorder should arise, who is to maintain effective order within the chamber ? I hold that the Chairman has effective occupation of the chair until the arrival of Mr. Speaker, when, of course he must surrender the control to the higher authority.

Mr Conroy

- I asked leave to withdraw my motion ; but it is perfectly clear to me, on my reading of the standing order, that my contention is absolutely correct. As the rules have not provided for the case, it would be far better not to prolong the discussion on the point. I do not wish it to be thought for a moment that I am taking sides.

Mr McCay

- I withdraw my objection.

Mr Page

- I rise to object to the withdrawal of the motion. During the night I was pulled up for using the word "obstruction," but what has been carried on here for the last six hours 1

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I think that when- the honorable and learned member for Werriwa drew your attention, sir, to the fact that there was not a quorum present, you were bound under the rules to take notice of that fact, and to report to Mr. Speaker. I regret that we have had to pursue the subject so far, but on the technical point I shall be obliged to vote for the motion.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am sorry that any honorable members should have objected to the withdrawal of the motion. Although I think that your ruling was wrong, sir, still we ought not to take up so much time in debating the point.

Mr Page

- I withdraw my objection.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

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Mr HUGHES

- One of the reasons I have given for the Chairman leaving the chair is a reason which should occur to every sensible man. The committee has been sitting - and I take credit "to myself that I have not - since half-past two o'clock yesterday afternoon. This is no way to conduct public business. We are asked to give attention to the details of the Tariff, when it is a physical impossibility for us to do so. Last night the Government set the committee an almost impossible task - to complete all the items of a division in one evening. I think that reference to Mansard will prove that the time of the committee was wasted up to at least midnight, chiefly by Government supporters. The Government acted in a most asinine way during the evening, saying that they would not agree to an amendment, and then after their offer of compromise was rejected, refusing finally to agree to anything but the duty.. They are not here to placate individuals, but to do justice to the country at large. Apparently it is in their mind that they can do precisely what they like, that with their ironclad ranks, which obey them with the precision of a machine gun, they can run the business through in one evening ? The country demands that that close attention which its nature deserves should be given to the Tariff. It practically stands condemned by no one so thoroughly as by Ministers. An honorable member called attention this morning to the fact that from day to day they do not know their own mind, that somebody else has to determine for them. .It is nothing more or less than a scandal that from day to day we do not know what the Government intend to do. If they would only come down and say that we must put through fourteen or twenty items before the committee rises we should know what we had to do, and if we wasted time in the early part of the sitting. that would be our fault. Sometimes the passing of two items is a day's work, and now they propose to get through 50 items for a change. They propose to do a thing which cannot be justified by any appeal to reason or justice. They propose to exhaust our strength, and then to force through a Tariff, which no one knows better than

themselves, is reprehensible. Every morning honorable members receive cataracts of communications from all sorts and conditions of men. How are we to know from day to day what effect those cataracts will have on the Government? We read in the Tariff that the Government propose to tax coffee 3d. per lb. ; eggs, 6d. per dozen ; fruit, 2d. a lb. ; but we do not know whether to-morrow the duty will be 3d. or 1d. or ½d. We wait from day to day for the dribblets of wisdom which come from the two Ministers to whom the Government have given over the control of the Tariff. These two Ministers consult each other, and by an extraordinary process they derive from each other what neither can derive from himself - common sense. They glean information from their alert lieutenant, the honorable member for Eden-Monaro, and then they save the situation by a right-about-face. This is not responsible government ; it is government by two persons who are practically responsible to no authority under heaven. Do they consider the views of the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, as to whether the duty on currants shall be 2d. or anything else ? They never ask his opinion. One would have thought that a Government of sensible men would have told the committee day by day what -amount of work they expected to get done. Then honorable members would have come prepared to do that amount of work, knowing that they could not possibly get home until it was done. But this Government are trying to shove through their wretched abortion of a Tariff in the small hours of the morning when honorable members are too weary to discuss it. Look at the chamber now. Honorable members are recumbent, worn out, exhausted, ' powerless ! Even the church, as represented by the honorable member for Southern Melbourne, is appalled at the prospect. The devil himself would turn his back upon such a sight as this chamber now presents. Where is the country party ? It is reduced to one zealous member, the honorable member for Moira. The Government are simply making an attempt to wear us out, and to obtain by a side wind what they have neither the courage, nor the ability, nor the intention to do openly. ' Where is the Government ? More than half of it is away, asleep. The honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, is on duty, but the Government have no use for his services. I have no doubt that he has thousands of ideas which, if crystallized -in this Tariff, would cause it to blossom out as " a thing of beauty " and " a joy for ever." But the Government will not let him give expression to his ideas. They do not intend to convey their intentions to any one. And for an excellent reason. They have no intentions, but expect to get whatever they can with as little trouble as possible. Where is the " rarer atmosphere " to which we were to attain as soon as the Federal Parliament was established ? I think the Chairman ought to leave the chair until the Government say precisely what they intend to do. Do they think we shall permit them to postpone such items as tea and kerosene until they can get a vote convenient to themselves? The Government must think that the Opposition are deprived of their senses if they expect us to meet this prospect with equanimity. How are we to give to the items the consideration which they deserve ? The Treasurer may go to the expert who sits behind the bar, and obtain every information he desires, but private members have no such resource open to them. We have only the statistical information which is at the command of any citizen of the Commonwealth.

Sir George Turner

- Any honorable member can get exactly the same information from the official if he cares to ask for it.

Mr HUGHES

- No doubt he can get that part of the information which suits the Government.

Sir George Turner

- They can- get all the information they ask the officer for, and I am sure they can trust him to give them honest information.

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Mr HUGHES

- Are the officers of the Treasurer's department- likely to give us that information which will prove the right honorable gentleman's case to be rotten? Are we to assume that they will supply us with facts to prove our case ? Is it likely ? Do we not know that every man holds up his head to find out which way the wind is blowing. When he finds the wind blowing upon one cheek he is under no misapprehension as to its direction. So it is, naturally, with the officers of the Minister's department.

Sir George Turner

- I am perfectly certain that the officer will give every member of this committee honest and true information in answer to any question that is sent to him.

Mr HUGHES

- I am sure that the right honorable gentleman does not think that I suppose that the officer would give us wrong information ; but there is a way of giving information. There is a way of leaving out facts, which may be perfectly justifiable, but which would place us at a disadvantage. We have a right to independent information and investigation. There is an official view of matters and a manufacturers' view, and a consumers' view. All these views should be open to us. If the Government will take my advice, they will come down every day and announce a certain number of items which they expect to get through. Then every man will know what has to be done, and he will be aware that if he wastes time it will mean sitting till the early hours of the morning. That is the proper way of conducting public business.

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie).I should not have arisen but for the ' misrepresentations made concerning members of the Opposition in connexion with the cause of the present debate. I have consulted Hansard to find out exactly what did take place. First, the duty on candles was proposed. We, on this side, thought it necessary to enter a protest against increasing the cost of the light of the people. We pointed out that in country districts, where there is no electricity and no gas, this duty would be a heavy handicap, and, therefore, we felt it to be necessary to take up a strong stand against the proposal. An amendment was moved by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie, in a good tempered speech Which did not take up much time. The speech occupies about four and three-quarter columns of Hansard. He was followed by ' honorable members from both sides of the House. Thirteen Ministerial supporters and fourteen members of the Opposition spoke upon that question. There were no long speeches delivered. The longest was that by the honorable member for Wentworth, who had to state his reasons why a reduction should take place. But even the speech of that honorable member occupies only six and a quarter columns of Hansard. Indeed, the total speeches contributed to that debate occupy only 52 columns, which is less than the space devoted to one speech delivered some time ago by an honorable member on the Government side of the House, who filled 81 columns of Hansard. Immediately a decision was arrived at - the voting being 33 to 26 - the honorable member for Kalgoorlie submitted another amendment for a further reduction. The amendment was not debated by the Opposition. Then, the right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, moved in the direction of placing paraffine wax and beeswax upon the free list. Only two honorable members debated that amendment, and their speeches do not occupy one column of Hansard. An amendment was subsequent!)' moved by the honorable member for Wentworth, upon which there was no debate. Then a further amendment was submitted by the Minister for Trade and Customs, which the Opposition did not debate. The Treasurer afterwards proposed to omit the duty upon cocoa beans, and his proposal was debated by the honorable member for Wentworth, whose speech occupies a quarter of a column in Hansard- There was no' further debate, and the item was omitted. Upon the item "cocoa and chocolate," five speeches were delivered, three of which came from the Government side of the House. A division was taken upon that item, which resulted in a victory for the Government by 33 votes to 22. Upon " fresh fish " a suggestion was made by the acting leader of the Opposition, upon which there was virtually no debate. The honorable member for North Sydney then moved a reduction in the duty upon raisins, but the proposal was scarcely debated at all. The discussion upon dried vegetables occupies five columns of Hansard. Only twelve members took part in that debate. A further reduction was moved by the honorable and learned member for Werriwa, but in order to save time his amendment was withdrawn. A proposal was afterwards submitted by the honorable member for Wentworth, having reference to the duties upon fruits, and the whole of the discussion is contained in twelve or thirteen columns of Hansard. The debate upon the amendment of the honorable ; member for Bland to reduce the duty- upon fruit and vegetables to 1s. per cental is contained in one and a half columns of Hansard. Then the duty upon bananas was dealt with, and had the Opposition been influenced by a desire to obstruct the progress of business, certainly that item gave them ample opportunity for so doing. Nevertheless, they did not debate it at all. At about four a.m. the acting leader of the Opposition suggested an adjournment. The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, supported it, and after three or four speeches had been delivered, the Minister for Trade and Customs replied, stating that he could not consent to the proposal. The honorable member for Wentworth attempted to discuss the reply of the Minister, when the Chairman very properly ruled him out of order. Then the honorable member, in order to discuss the question, moved the Chairman out of the chair. The

Prime Minister thereupon entered the chamber, and made an uncalled-for attack upon honorable members of the Opposition. He sought to prove that we had wasted time, whereas it is patent to any unprejudiced observer that there has been no attempt at obstruction. At one period during the night, out of the 22 members present twelve were asleep. They were quite incapable of giving an intelligent vote upon any question submitted to them. -I could have understood the action of the Government if any evidence had been forthcoming in support of the Prime Minister's statement that the Opposition had been guilty of obstruction. But I have shown clearly that the items which engaged attention were not discussed even at the length which their importance merited. Indeed, only yesterday the Opposition, as a party, the members of which are anxious to close the session - if they can do so consistently with the faithful discharge of their duty to the Commonwealth - agreed that there should be no attempt made to "stone-wall" the Tariff. Because we have to a limited extent, by fair discussion, sought to protect the interests of the people of the Commonwealth, we have been charged by the Prime Minister with obstruction. When the Government submitted their resolution for 'an extra sitting day, I was able to show by a reference to Hansard that members on this side were not guilty of taking up time 'unnecessarily. We have felt it especially to be our duty to take strong measures to prevent the iniquitous proposals of the Government being carried into effect on account of the deception practised upon the . people by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Home Affairs. The acting leader of the Opposition has asked for an adjournment in order that important items may be fairly discussed. No one can accuse the honorable gentleman of being a party to obstruction, but I think he has not been met fairly by the Government. He has not been informed as to their intentions with regard to certain duties, or as to how long they intended that we should sit. Members of the Government have to that extent ignored the honorable gentleman's position entirely, and so long as they thought they would be able to secure certain votes, they have been satisfied. When honorable members consider the important measures dealt with in the earlier stages of the session, I think it must be admitted that the Opposition have shown wonderful moderation. In my own case I cannot be accused of taking up time last night in debating these items. I did not rise to speak at all until two o'clock this morning. I joined with the honorable member for Wentworth in suggesting that the speeches should be as brief as possible, and I point out that we have got through this sitting a number of important items respecting taxation to the extent of £250,000. Let honorable members read Hansard, and they will see against whom the charge of obstruction last evening should be made. I resent the 'charge of obstruction made by the Prime Minister, and I can account for it only by the fact that we successfully resisted 'what we considered to be unfair proposals. He replied to the speech of the honorable member for Wentworth, but in doing so he attacked the Opposition for obstructing business, and referred to the debate which took place in his absence. He who seldom comes into the House and takes part in our deliberations, has made a statement which cannot be supported by any evidence. It seems to me that he desired by some means or other to fasten* upon the Opposition the odium of having been engaged in "stone-walling" tactics. He came into the chamber with that object in view. He expected that the Opposition would oppose the motion for an additional sitting on Monday, and he was disappointed when he heard, that we joined with the Government in the desire to facilitate the conduct of business. Last evening most of us gave a further proof of that desire by abstaining from taking part in the debate, and advising an early decision on several items. The Prime Minister was annoyed with us because we took this reasonable course, and, therefore, he came into the chamber to-day, and very unfairly criticised us, and pointed out that we were to blame. All this bad feeling has been caused by the unreasonable action of the Government in making an uncalled for attack on the Opposition. According to Hansard, there is no warrant whatever for the charge which has been levelled against the Opposition. The record shows that the obstruction, if any, occurred on the other side, and that the Opposition have used every possible endeavour to facilitate dealing with the items with a due regard for fair discussion in the interests of the people.

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Mr THOMAS

- I cannot quite understand the tactics of the Opposition during the last four or five hours. I recognise that it is necessary to discuss each item as fully as possible. Last evening at 11 o'clock I went home, and probably this evening at 11 o'clock I shall go home' again. If any honorable members are foolish enough to stay here all night instead of going home to sleep, that is their look out. Although I believe most fully in

discussing the details of the Tariff, I think it is a perfect waste of time to spend four or five hours in discussing a motion to report progress. Every honorable member, I take it, wishes the House to adjourn a little before Christmas, but if we waste our time in this way some of the most important items in the Tariff will be rushed through as we approach the holidays, simply because honorable members will be weary. I hoped that the committee would have done some business in my absence last night. While I intend to vote with the Opposition on every proposal to reduce a duty, still I intend to help the Government on every occasion to carry on the business.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I regret that the honorable member for the Barrier was not present this morning when I made my explanation, and gave a resume of the whole of the events of the previous evening to justify the position which I had taken up. I wish to intimate that before the adjournment for lunch, I was anxious to ask leave to withdraw the motion, so that we might adjourn and re assemble at half-past two o'clock - the usual hour of meeting - to carry on business in the ordinary way.

Mr. BAMFORD (Herbert). - There was a remark made in this chamber this morning, of which I took no particular notice at the time. Since then I have thought it a duty to myself to join with the honorable member for Southern Melbourne in taking exception to certain statements made by the acting leader of the Opposition. Having been caught literally " napping," and the fact having been noticed in one of the daily papers, I think that in justice to myself I ought to make some reference to the remarks of the honorable member for Wentworth. I take very strong exception to the statement that the condition of members at the time of which I speak was humiliating and disgusting. Under the soporific influence of speeches from the honorable member for Macquarie and the honorable member for Werriwa, perhaps it was hardly to be wondered at that I was not in such an active state as I should otherwise have been. Out of consideration for the feelings of honorable members I hope that the acting leader of the Opposition will withdraw his expressions of this morning. He has been so habitually courteous that I think he will see his way clear to accede to this request.

Mr. POYNTON (South. Australia). Some 24 hours have elapsed since I came to this House. We have been sitting continuously ever since. I can endure with patience the inconvenience of being kept out of bed, and can submit to a good many things in debate. But when the honorable member for the Barrier, who left the House early last evening, and who enjoyed a good night's rest, returns and lectures honorable members for not passing items in the Tariff whilst he was sleeping, I am a bit ruffled. The statements of the honorable member were quite in keeping with the attack of the Prime Minister last night, which was responsible for a good deal of the delay that has occurred. The right honorable gentleman ' was only a short time in the House yesterday, but during that time he gave honorable members a lecture which was utterly unwarranted. In support of my statement, I may mention that on Wednesday morning the Opposition in caucus decided to assist the Government in passing this Tariff before Christmas. It was further arranged that certain honorable members were to speak upon particular items concerning which they felt strongly, and that no honorable member was to rise in his place two or three times. In other words, there was to be judicious criticism, and an effort to reduce the duty upon some of the items, but it was clearly understood that there was to be no "stone-walling." I can well understand the representatives of New South Wales exhibiting a little more heat in connexion with this matter than do the representatives of other States. When one considers that the New South Wales Tariff contained only about 49 articles, as against something like 1,000 articles upon which taxation is levied under this Tariff, it will be seen that there is some justification for their feeling strongly upon this question. Had the Government shown a little more judgment last night, honorable members would have reassembled to-day fresh for their work. But the proposal of the Government to deal with one-third of the Tariff in a single sitting was a most unreasonable one. Of course, I am aware that they would like to see the Opposition members sit here like dumb cattle, and allow the Tariff to go through unchallenged. I can assure them that when the committee come to deal with items in which I am interested, I shall not be deterred from debating them, and, if necessary to achieve my purpose, I shall not hesitate to take even twenty divisions.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I wish to make a statement concerning a breach of faith on the part of the Government with myself and other honorable members. When the Attorney-General asked for an extra day's sitting, I said that I was prepared to attend whenever necessary, but I declined to push business through in the early hours of the morning in the presence of a thin House. The Attorney-General stated that the Government would do

nothing of the kind. The facts are upon recoi'd in Hansard. Upon the strength of his statement I arranged for two pairs. One pair was made on Tuesday for Wednesday. On coming to the House to-day I was astonished to find that honorable members had been sitting all night. Had I known that such a course was contemplated, I should have been present to take my part in the debate. The action of the Government is a deliberate breach of faith.

Mr Harper

- I was paired with the honorable member, and I did not vote.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable member was present, but I am quite sure that he did not vote, as he was paired with me. I understood that he was to be out of town, and I left the chamber late last evening. Had I known- that the honorable member would have put in an appearance at a later stage, I should have been present. I protest against the action of the Government in face of the deliberate assurance of the Attorney-General-- Mr Deakin

- The honorable member has appealed to Hansard, and I also am quite content to leave it to that record.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I would refer honorable members to Hansard if they are interested in my statement.- At any rate, the assurance unconsciously given by the Attorney-General deceived me.

Mr. .WINTERCOOKE (Wannon).- I think that the honorable member for Robertson is under a misapprehension. The Attorney-General was very careful to avoid committing himself to a promise that there . would not be late sittings. My recollection is that he declined to give any pledge. Concerning what took place last night, I would remind the committee that before the acting leader of the Opposition asked for an adjournment, many honorable members were lolling about in various parts of the chamber. The honorable member for Herbert, for example, has admitted that he was asleep during a division. I refer to this fact because I hold that it is impossible to properly transact the business of the country under such conditions. We had been sitting continuously from half-past two o'clock on Wednesday afternoon until four o'clock on the following morning. There had been considerable discussion upon both sides of the committee. We did not dispose of the business very rapidly, but no more blame attached to one side than to the other. We were asked to put through the whole of division IV., which contains something like 40 items, at one sitting. The total number of items in the Tariff is 138. Therefore we were asked to do an unreasonable amount of work, and that in face'of the promise of the acting leader of the Opposition to assist the Government in disposing of the Tariff before Christmas. The action taken by the Opposition last evening was thoroughly justified. It is the only course which could have been pursued consistently with the safeguarding of the public interests.

Mr. HARPER(Mernda). - I wish to remove any misapprehension that may exist in the mind of the honorable member for Robertson. In the pair-book the honorable member is entered as having paired with me for the whole of the 27th inst. I returned to the chamber about midnight, and finding that the honorable member was not present, I carried out the pair, although new circumstances had arisen.

Mr E SOLOMON

- I considered it to be my duty last night to countenance what was done by the acting leader of the Opposition, and I consider it my duty as well as the duty of every member, when matters of importance are likely to arise, to be in their places. Pairing is, I think, a great mistake, unless under special circumstances, because matters which are not anticipated arise, and if. a member is not present, he is not doing justice to his constituents. It was very unreasonable of the Prime Minister to try to force debate on matters of the utmost' moment at three or four o'clock in the morning, when members were tired out and lying in the chamber in all directions, not only to 6ne State, but to the whole of the Commonwealth. The next item on the Tariff is one which more than any other affects the masses of the people who have to be protected from over taxation ; and, though I do not countenance anything in the nature of " stone-walling," I think the leader of the Opposition was perfectly right in the course he took.

Mr. KENNEDY(Moira).- These proceedings are somewhat novel to me, but I hope we shall take to heart the object-lesson which has been afforded. When I hear it repeated that members of the House are this morning in an unfit condition to attend to public business, I wonder what in the name of common sense keeps them listening each to the other talking such an immense amount of inane drivel ! I suppose that

the Government and the Opposition are both quite able at all times to justify their actions, -and with the responsibility of either I have nothing to do ; my responsibility is personal to my constituents and the Commonwealth.

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Mr SALMON

- As one who has had the benefit of a good night's sleep I must express my regret that the acting leader of the Opposition has seen fit to take his present action. I paired at the request of a member. of the Opposition who had previously obliged me,, but I should not have done so had I known the turn affairs, would take. The Government have proved that they are prepared to lead the House, and will not submit to the dictates of any party, more especially the . dictates of the Opposition. I am proud to be associated with a Government who have the backbone, spirit, and virility to insist on public business being conducted, and to resist obstruction of an organized nature. We have been told this morning of a meeting, but we have not heard all that occurred at that secret gathering, and it may be responsible for what we are witnessing now. I regret the delay of public business, but I am satisfied good will result, and that the country will come to a right decision regarding the tactics exhibited by those who are fighting a hopeless cause.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - The honorable member for Laanecoorie, who was not here last night, has probably got his- information from some prejudiced individual on his own side. The honorable member never does anything but approve of the actions of the Government, and he affords another instance of the absolute impossibility, with rare exceptions, of getting, under party government, an unprejudiced view of the proceedings from one who thinks he ought to stick to his party. I must express my regret if anything I said proved offensive to the honorable, member for Herbert, but I was actuated by a desire to see this House what it ought to be in the eyes of the people of the country ; and it was not, I thought, a seemly thing to attempt legislation when honorable H>embers in the small hours of the morning were lying all over the benches asleep. There were two things which reminded me of the worst days of our provincial Parliaments. Many members were asleep, and the bell was continually ringing for the purpose of enabling a committee to be formed ; and considering that this is our first Parliament, and that we are now engaged upon its greatest work, it was not fair to the people of Australia that only 25 out of 75 members should be present. I felt keenly for the honour of Parliament, .and was pained that we should be placed in that position. If I have, under the stress of circumstances, used any language which honorable members think unreasonable, as a matter of parliamentary procedure I wish to withdraw them. The honorable member for laanecoorie has given us a castigation for our obstruction ; but I wish to state that we were' the victims of a gross breach of faith on the part of the Government. Against the wish of many honorable members on this side of the House, I agreed to the extra sitting day proposed by the Government, on the understanding that it would not be necessary, if reasonable progress were made, to sit later than midnight. Yet on the very first night after the passing of that resolution, we found that there was a conspiracy on the part of the Government, to dispose of about 40 items on the Tariff, affecting some of the most important interests in the country, and on the consideration of which the committee might very well have spent two or three days. That is my justification for the action we took. There was no obstruction last night up to six o'clock, but we were ready to go to a division on the candle duty, when the debate was re-opened after tea by supporters of the Government, and continued until half-past nine o'clock. Considering the importance of that item, that was not an unreasonable time to spend in its discussion, but after that the Government had arranged to put through an utterly unreasonable programme. , From that time onwards till half-past three this morning there was nob a single complaint on the part of Ministers as to obstruction by members of the Opposition. An objection was made to one division as being unnecessary, but Ministers know that I did all that I could to facilitate business in connexion with these divisions, and with a view to disposing of the fruit items I actually allowed six lines to pass without any discussion whatever. We then came to a point in the Tariff, where, if we shad proceeded, we should have opened up one of the most important branches connected with the agricultural interests of the Commonwealth. At half-past three, up to which time there had been no obstruction - and I challenge the Government on that point - I asked, in the most courteous language, for an adjournment. I found, however, that it was useless to appeal to the Government, who turned a deaf ear to all my claims to be recognised as acting leader of the Opposition, and to be treated with a small

amount of consideration. The Government were determined to go on, and I then, after three unavailing applications for an adjournment, declared that the Government should not go on. That is the charge against me, and the Government ask how they could allow any one to take the business out of their hands. This House is not made up of Government supporters only, and on all the principles of common sense, I was perfectly justified after the House had sat continuously for so many hours in asking for an adjournment. With only 25 members out of 75 present, and with some of the most important items of the Tariff to be considered, I had a right to use every constitutional means to prevent the business of the country being done until a proper hour of the day. I was met with that kind of obstinacy which recommends itself to no reasonable, intelligent man. I was met by "two obstinates," and it would have been better for the conduct of the business if only one Minister instead of two had been in charge of the Tariff. I have looked back at last night's proceedings in a thoroughly unprejudiced way, and I say unhesitatingly that my conduct was perfectly justified, and that there was not that consideration shown to me and to the other members of the Opposition to which we were entitled. I now ask leave to withdraw the motion.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- We have again had from the acting leader of the Opposition a long address, repeating in almost exactly the same words as he used this morning the arguments he then put before the committee. I simply wish to say, in reply to the honorable member, that last night he deliberately declared that he would block Government business, and he will have to take the responsibility of that action.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta), We are perfectly willing to take the responsibility of our action, and we shall on future occasions, when we are similarly treated by the Government, mete out like treatment to them. We are not going to surrender all our rights and privileges, and meekly submit to whatever the Government desire. The Government apparently regarded it sufficient for them to announce their intention to do certain things, in order to claim immediate obedience from honorable members; but those who sit with me on this side of the House are not made of that sort of stuff. We are perfectly justified in protesting against the Government programme, because the delay in the transaction of Government business was in no way due to any fault of ours, as by far the greater amount of time has been occupied by Government supporters. That particularly applies to the debate upon the candle duties. Members of the Opposition are perfectly prepared to take all the responsibility that properly rests upon them, and to justify themselves to the country, but they are not going to accept the blame for all the faults of the Government, and those who are upholding them in their present action. Honorable members who are sitting behind the Government have in many cases departed from their election pledges, and a notable case is that of the honorable member for Moira, who pledged himself to his constituents that he would seek to enact a 15 per cent. Tariff

Mr Kennedy

- That is incorrect.

Mr. JOSEPH COOK. - The honorable member is reported in the Age of the 22nd February last to have stated that -

He was a follower of Mr. Barton, the best Prime Minister that could have been selected. He was an advocate of 15 per cent, protective duties.

Mr- Kennedy.- I never used those words. Such an expression of opinion would belie my whole history in public and private life.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Did the honorable member deny the statement contained in the Age 1

Mr Kennedy

- I never had it brought under my notice before.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This Tariff outrages most of the pledges that were given to the electors, and we are justified in making every effort to modify it.

Mr. KENNEDY(Moira).- I am glad that the report quoted by the honorable member for Parramatta has been brought under my notice. It is the first time I have been reported in the metropolitan or provincial press as supporting 15 per cent, as a maximum rate of duty. I say here, publicly, as I have said on every

platform, that that is not my view. I have never given expression to any such opinion, and it is well known throughout the length and breadth of my constituency that I have always sat in Parliament as a protectionist, and have refused to be bound to any particular rate - even to a 25 per cent. duty. Having given this denial, I trust that the statement will not be repeated.

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Mr SKENE

- As one of those who left this House at eleven o'clock last night, I should not have presumed to speak, but for the fact that I feel somewhat of a culprit. Some doubt having been cast upon the truth of the arrangement entered into by the Opposition, I wish to confirm the statement that a compact was made that certain members of that party should deal with certain Tariff matters in which they were chiefly interested, and that other honorable members should refrain from discussing those items. I paired with the honorable member for Echuca for his convenience, but at the same time I intimated to the leader of the Opposition that I wished to speak upon the item "grain and pulse." Before leaving the chamber last evening, I inquired if there was any chance of that item being reached, and found there was apparently not the slightest prospect. I understand, however, that it was reached about four o'clock this morning. Had I anticipated that it would be reached, I certainly should not have gone home. When I left the chamber the committee were still engaged in discussing the first item which had engaged their attention in the afternoon. Up till that time nothing in the nature of obstruction had taken place, although there certainly was a good deal of useless discussion upon both sides. The item, "Grain and pulse," is one upon which I expressed a wish to speak, and if that fact had anything to do with the course taken by the acting leader of the Opposition, I am very sorry for it. I hope, however, that that is not so.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Item 22, Grain and Pulse, n.e.i., per cental, ls. 6d.

Mr. SKENE (Grampians).- This is a matter affecting the agricultural community, which I largely represent, and it is one to which I have given a considerable amount of attention. Seeing that the Tariff will be very highly protective, I think it would be well if something could be done for the farmer. If we must have protection, there should be protection all round. At the same time I do not feel that this duty will be of any advantage to the farmer. There are many objections to it upon grounds which may not have occurred to honorable members. I attach very much greater importance to any relief which can be given to the agricultural community through the Customs than I do to any aid which can be afforded them by means of protective duties. It is true that the duty imposed has raised the prices in Victoria once or twice during the past fourteen or fifteen years. Twice within that period the duty seems to have become operative. The first time was in 1889. The price of wheat at the Stawell railway station in 1888 was 3s. per bushel, as against 3s. 6d. in Melbourne. The following year it rose to 5s. 4½d. per bushel, which would be equivalent to something like 5s. 10½d. in Melbourne. In 1890 it was 3s. 5d.; in 1891, 3s. 7d.; in 1892, 2s. 5½d.; in 1893, 3s. 4d.; in 1894, ls. lid.; and in 1896 it took a jump to 4s. 6d. The duty then became operative again. These figures of course represent the value of wheat at the time I sold, and I cannot say whether I had the advantage of the best market. The great objection to this duty is that when it becomes operative the struggling man does not get the benefit of it. He has to sell his wheat almost immediately after he harvests it. Thus speculators get all the advantage. Whether a man obtains a good or a bad crop depends, probably, in an erratic year upon some very trifling circumstance. His crop may be sown at a time when one shower would make all the difference between a good yield and a bad one. There might be a good crop upon one side of a fence, whilst upon the other side the yield might not exceed 3 bushels to the acre. I would point out that those who do not succeed in getting a crop have to pay a higher price for whatever they buy during the whole of the succeeding year. I remember that I once let a paddock containing a couple of thousand acres upon shares. Some of the men settled there secured an excellent return, whilst others had to be supplied with seed in order to enable them to put in a crop for the next year. That is a terrible condition of affairs, and one which cannot be obviated by a duty of this kind. In this connexion I do not think of the consumers so much as the weaker wheat producers. The consumers have all the advantage of the cheap years, when the farmers are doing fairly well, and are obtaining a return which keeps them going. On one or two occasions the farmers have tried to co-operate in such a way as to enable them to ship their surplus produce, and to sell, with the full value of the duty added; but the attempt has always failed. It was once suggested to me that it would pay the farmers to burn their surplus

wheat, and thus obtain a higher price. That, such a thing could be suggested, to my mind, shows the great evil of a protective duty. I do not think that there actually was a shortage in the year 1859, when the duty became operative, but speculative people believed that there was a shortage, and prices rose accordingly. At that time I was giving my manager, in addition to a salary, 10 per cent, on the net profits, up to £1 per acre, and 20 per cent, upon the net profits above that amount. When the price advanced to 5s. 4d. per bushel, he advised me to sell, but, believing there would be a shortage, I held. The result was that I paid him his percentage upon the 5s. 4d. per bushel, and sold at 4s. 10d. shortly afterwards, showing that he was right in questioning the estimate for the year. I mention this to show that, in that year, there really was not a shortage, although the duty became operative through, speculation. Under the operation of the duty proposed, which represents about 10s. a bushel, it would be easy, when there is only a small surplus, to so manipulate the market that the farmer would derive very little benefit. While attempts to form wheat rings have failed in America it would be easy on occasions for skilful Australian capitalists to form such combination successfully with our smaller market and such a duty as this. The other point upon which I wish to speak has reference to oats. Tasmania may look forward to being able to send some of her oats here, and may thus come into competition with New Zealand. If we can protect Tasmania, it would be a fair thing to do so. But if we impose a duty upon oats to protect that State against New Zealand, we shall probably inflict great hardship upon the people of New South Wales, who have been in the habit of importing large quantities of New Zealand oats, to save their stock in times of drought. To my mind, a remission of the imposts upon farming implements and necessities of life would benefit the agriculturists much more than would this duty. I ask the Minister for Trade and Customs if he will postpone this item until the committee have dealt with the other items affecting the farmers ?

Mr Kingston

- I am afraid we cannot do that.

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Mr SKENE

- In that case, I move -

That the words "and on and after 29th November, 1901, free " be added.

Mr A McLEAN

- I admire the consistency and courage of the honorable member for the Grampians", who believes firmly in the policy of free-trade, and cannot see any merit in the application of protection to any industry. But the farmers might well say Et tu, Brute! because the honorable member is the last from whom they should look for opposition to a duty intended for their benefit. The honorable member admits that twice since its imposition the duty has been operative, though he seems to think that the farmer did not get the benefit. It is possible that some farmers may have sold before the prices rose, but if in seasons of drought prices are raised through the operation of the duty, the great bulk of the farmers must necessarily benefit. Since the duty was imposed "Victoria has become a large exporter of wheat, the farmers relying on the home, market, and not hesitating to produce largely. So long as we are exporting, the farmer does not derive any benefit from the duty, because prices are necessarily regulated by those ruling in the market; but he knows that if he is unfortunate enough to experience a season of drought and scarcity, when he gets no more, perhaps, than one-third or half a crop, the duty will become operative, and prevent his having to compete with the outside world. I am not insensible to the interests of the consumer, but if the farmer takes the risk of cultivating in all seasons, and provides cheap food nine years out of ten, it is only fair and reasonable that in the tenth year the consumer should compensate him with a little higher price.

Mr Poynton

- Supposing it happens to be seed wheat that is required ?

Mr A McLEAN

- The duty is fair in any case ; and I venture to say that if the honorable member were producing seed wheat himself, and raised only 5 bushels instead of 10 or 12 bushels, he would expect to be paid a higher price for the smaller quantity. Victoria, as well as . Tasmania, has to compete with New Zealand in connexion with oats, especially in times of scarcity. Victoria imports from New Zealand large quantities of oats and horse feed.

Sir William Lyne

- And so does New South Wales.

Mr A McLEAN

- We should all be glad to welcome New Zealand into the Commonwealth, but so long as she remains isolated 23 a 2 we must treat her as we treat other outside' countries. Our duty is to legislate for the benefit of our own people, and 'the small duty proposed ought to meet with the acceptance of honorable members on this side. The duty cannot raise prices, except in times of scarcity, when it is only reasonable that the public should, to some extent, come to the producers' relief. The year- 1896, when the duty was last operative, was? one of scarcity all over the States, and in ' New ! South Wales the farmer was compelled to submit to a price very much lower than that ruling in Victoria. In other years, however, the Victorian consumers probably got their wheat more cheaply than did the consumers in New South Wales.

Mr Watson

- As a rule wheat is 3d. per bushel cheaper in Victoria.

Mr A McLEAN

- That is owing to the surplus quantity we have for export. I sincerely hope the committee will adopt the proposed duty.

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Mr GLYNN

- The honorable member for the Grampians has shown that there is not the slightest necessity for this duty. Having regard to the commodities comprehended in the item, Australia may be said to be an exporting rather than an importing country. The honorable member for Gippsland justifies the proposed duty on the ground that in times of scarcity it increases prices to the farmer. But it is in the times of scarcity that prices automatically rise, and the only reason we import oats from New Zealand at such periods is that the local price is in excess of the New Zealand price, plus freight and insurance. The honorable member for Gippsland, however, desires to make the prices even higher, and I fail to see that the compensation of the farmer in times of scarcity should be made the basis for this duty. In 1900, New South Wales exported in round numbers 2,750,000 bushels and imported only 84,000. bushels, while in Victoria the importation of wheat was 35,000 centals, and the exportation 3,000,000 centals. There is no necessity for protection, seeing that these States are exporting on an average three years out of four ; and in considering the justification or otherwise of the duty we must deal with the average year. As to barley, Victoria exports to the extent of 9,000 centals, and does not import, whereas New South Wales is an importer to the extent of 51,000 bushels.; Last year Tasmania produced enough bats to meet the consumption of all the States. There is a large exportation of oats from Tasmania at the present time to South Africa, and that interferes with the capacity of the State to meet the demands of the Commonwealth ; but when the abnormal market in South Africa is no longer available, Tasmania will be able to meet all our demands. The export of oats from Tasmania in 1900 amounted to -395,000 bushels.

Mr Watson

- That would not be enough -to meet the requirements of New South Wales alone.

Mr GLYNN

- I have it on excellent authority that it is more than sufficient to meet the needs of the entire Commonwealth, seeing that the States themselves produce, and that Tasmania meets only local scarcities. As a matter of fact, we ought to encourage importation in years of scarcity. I know that the price of New Zealand oats goes up enormously in South Australia in the years oi scarcity, and even New Zealand hay costs as much as £6 and £7 per ton ; surely we do not want the duty to become operative in years of extraordinary scarcity. In regard to maize, I believe that as yet the production in the States does not reach the consumption, but this is comparatively a small item and does not require stimulation by means of a duty. When the local needs are greater than the local production, there is a natural protection of freight and insurance to encourage farmers to extend the industry, if it be one which, after expansion, is likely to become productive. The local production of peas and beans is, I believe, quite equal to the local consumption, and lentils and buck-wheat are of very small importance in relation to the policy of a duty. The honorable member for the Grampians, who follows the dual occupation of squatter and farmer, and is an authority as the representative of a protectionist State, contends that grain and pulse ought to be free, and I suggest that a compromise might be arrived at by making the duty 1s., which would approximate to the duty I intend to propose on the subsequent item.

Mr. WATSON(Bland). - In regard to the statement made by the honorable and learned member for South

Australia, that Tasmania, with a surplus production of , oats of 395,000 bushels, can supply the deficiency in any of the States, I would like to point out that the nett importation of oats into New South Wales in 1889, after allowing for 112,000 bushels as re-exported, amounted to 1,700,000 bushels. In addition there was imported a considerable quantity of oatmeal ' and other products from various parts of the world. This duty will apply to barley, oats, maize, and a few pulse products, and we are entitled to encourage our own people in respect to these items. With regard to wheat, there will be a continual importation of red Manitoba wheat, for mixing purposes, unless we have some such duty.

Sir George Turner

- They have already started growing it in New South Wales.

Mr WATSON

- Yes; they have recently started growing Manitoba wheat in the Monaro country, but the yield is not so great as in the case of ordinary wheat, and, moreover, that kind of grain can be grown only in cold climates.

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Mr McCOLL

- I was somewhat surprised at a motion of this kind coming from an honorable member representing a farming district. The honorable member did not, when he was before the electors, say that he was in favour of the admission of all grain free of duty. 'The larger class of farmers who, like the honorable member, are mainly dependent upon grazing, are for the most part free-traders, but the smaller farmers sire nearly all supporters of a protective policy, and desire these duties to remain on. I think the duties are too low. Whilst we cannot do much good to the farmers by means of the Tariff, we should certainly, when we have an opportunity, encourage them, and protect them against outside competition. It has been stated that we can benefit the farmer by reducing the duty on agricultural implements, but a reduction of 5 per cent, or 7£ per cent, will not have a cheapening effect, because it will do away with the inside competition against the imported implements which now tends to keep down prices. In Victoria last year there were imported 55,381 rentals of oats, and very little else in the way of grain, but New South Wales received from places beyond its own borders, 32,885 rentals of barley, 393,877 rentals of oats, 233,664 rentals of maize, and 50,545 rentals of wheat. Altogether the value of these products was nearly £200,000. The honorable member for Riverina states that he has seen invoices for enormous importations of. grain from America, and if we are to help our primary industries we should not take away the whole of the advantages that may be derived from protective duties. I hope the committee will pass the duties now proposed, and that they will increase the duty on malting barley to 2s. per cental.

Mr. HENRYWILLIS (Robertson).The honorable member for Gippsland stated that if the farmers derived advantage from protection even for one year in ten, we should impose the duty on grains But, in considering this question, we have to take into account the circumstances of the various States. Victoria is a large exporting State, and the farmers would very rarely derive any advantage from the duty owing to a shortage in the wheat crop. It is the same in South Australia, where the average yield is very low. In New South Wales and Western .Australia, where they have comparatively large yields, they are still importing grain, and it' is the farmers in those States who would probably derive benefit from a protective duty in rare cases of drought, while the smaller farmers in the northern parts of South Australia, where they obtain only small yields, would not secure any advantage. We shall not be justified in putting on a duty which will give an advantage to those farmers who almost invariably obtain high yields, whilst it will not give any relief to the agriculturists who most need it.

Mr L E GROOM

- I thi uk the duty on malting barley should be raised. Queensland has not reached the stage of producing sufficient grain to meet its own requirements, and the duty proposed by the Government as regards making barley is not sufficient. It is much lower than the duty which has been in force in' Queensland for some time past. I do not propose that the whole of the grain duties should be raised, but at a later stage I shall endeavour to induce the committee to increase the duty on malting barley to 2s. per cental, as the rate now proposed is practically a reduction of 50 per cent, upon the duty which has hitherto prevailed in Queensland. In 189S only 1 ,953 acres of land were under crop for barley for malting in Queensland, and the product was 26,917 bushels. In 1900 the area under cultivation of barley had increased to 6,302 acres, and the yield was 107,910 bushels. According to the returns for 1899 we. imported into the whole

of the Commonwealth 183,442 bushels of malting barley, and no less than 693,526 bushels of malt. That shows that there is a very great focal market for malting barley. We should give encouragement to farmers to grow it. In 1891 only 737 bushels of barley were malted in Queensland, but by 1900 the quantity had been increased to 72,730- bushels. That progress has been made- under a higher duty than is now proposed* by the Government. Agricultural settlement is extending very rapidly in Queensland, and it is desirable to give the fullest encouragement to the pioneer farmers who are bringing the land under cultivation, and doing great and good work for the Commonwealth. There is a particularly good future before the Queensland farmer in connexion with malting barley.

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Mr A C GROOM

- As long as protection remains the policy of the Commonwealth the farmer is certainly entitled to any assistance we can give him, and the duties we are now discussing seem to be about the only ones which offer him any real benefit. So far as the rest of the Tariff is concerned any protection which is nominally offered to the farmer is a sham, but the duties proposed on grain and pulse may do him some good, and, therefore, I shall support them. Regarding wheat, I do not contend that the duty can be of very much use except, perhaps, once in ten years but the duties on other grain will protect the farmer against importations of maize, oats, and to some extent, barley. As the duties are small compared with those which were in operation under the Victorian Tariff I hope the committee will agree to them.

Mr. HUGHES (West Sydney).- The honorable member for Gippsland stated that in nine years out of ten the farmer sold his wheat cheaper under a protectionist Tariff than without one, and that, therefore, he was entitled to any advantage that he might derive in the tenth year. According to that the farmer would be better off without protection than with it. I have taken the trouble to look up the prices of wheat in Sydney and Melbourne as quoted in the Melbourne Age and the Sydney Morning Herald on various dates in 1899, and the figures are as follows :-

On the last-mentioned date the selling price of wheat in London was 32s. per quarter. It is clear from these figures that the Tariff did not benefit the farmer in Melbourne during the year 1899. Practically prices have remained constant, fluctuating only with slight variations of supply and demand. The honorable member for Gippsland seems to have quite overlooked the fact that it is now proposed to give to the farmer the whole of the markets of Australia, and, therefore, his arguments as to the results of droughts fall to the ground. A drought rarely occurs in all the States at the same time, and the effect of putting a duty on wheat will be to give the advantage of the increased price to the farmers in the States where they have bounteous crops, whilst droughts are being experienced in other States'. If the honorable member can show me that it is necessary to impose a duty of 1s. 6d. per cental, in order to encourage the growth of wheat, I shall be very glad to support this proposal, because I agree that the farmer, above all other men, stands in need of encouragement. But in New South Wales the cultivation of wheat has progressed very well without the aid of any duty whatever. Taking the statistics from 1861 to 1899, I find that there has been an increase in that State of the land under wheat cultivation of 5-9, as against 5-4 in Victoria. I am quite free to admit that every credit is due to Victoria for the vigorous manner in which she has prosecuted the most important of all industries, namely, that of agriculture. But I would point out that New South Wales in 1891 produced 3,963,000 bushels of wheat, as against 1 3, 6 29,000 bushels grown in Victoria. Within eight years the former State had increased its production to 13,604,000 bushels, as against Victoria's 15,207,000 bushels. In other words, the free-trade State had increased its production by 350 per cent., whilst Victoria, during the same period, had increased hers by only 1 4 per cent. I merely rose to point out that the duty proposed is not required. Whilst we shall never be a serious competitor with the United States or Russia, yet with each cheapening of freight to Europe we shall become a keener competitor than we are at present. To tell the farmers that 1s. 6d. per cental upon wheat will encourage them is to tell them what they know to be absolutely untrue. I trust the Government will not pose as levying this duty in order to benefit the farmers. It will certainly produce no revenue, and I hope the Ministry will see their way to remit it.

Mr KINGSTON

- The Government think that the farmers are entitled to protection. In the unprotected States we know that considerable importation has been going on, the profits of which might very well go into the pockets of our own producers. I would point out that in 1899 New South Wales imported 932,000 bushels out of a total of

1,152,000 rentals imported into the whole of Australia. I think, therefore, that this item is sufficiently important to deserve consideration. The rates we propose are not at all excessive, being rather below the average of those which have obtained in the different States. The Government, therefore, ask the committee to affirm our proposal.

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Mr WILKINSON

- I was pleased to hear the honorable member for West Sydney admit that if this duty is imposed it will benefit the farmer who has a prolific crop in one part of the Commonwealth, and who sends that crop to some other part where the harvest has not been so good. I have seen the time when we have had to make up the scarcity in maize by obtaining supplies from New Caledonia and California. Our desire ought to be to encourage a peasant proprietary - the settlement of small holders upon the land; where every man may sit beneath his own vine and fig tree, none daring to make him afraid. I know from experience - and I was one of the pioneers in a scrub district of Queensland - that any price below 2s. 3d. or 2s. 6d. per bushel for maize is not remunerative to the producer. In California I am aware that there are farms which are worked by barrack labour, and we must all for this duty is to make it possible to tax oatmeal and other products, and I am informed that with a marketable value of £12 a ton for oatmeal, we propose to impose taxation amounting to £9 per ton.

Mr Watson

- We shall cut that down if we can.

Mr WILKS

- If the forces of the labour leader are as well organized as they were last night, we may regard the reduction of the duty as assured. There is no doubt that this duty is proposed, not for the sake of revenue, but for the sake of protection; and as to the lamentation about the small profits of large holdings, the impost will only have the effect of draining the pockets of the general community for the benefit of their owners.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- It seems peculiar that long speeches in the farmers' interests are generally made by representatives of ultra free-trade constituencies. We never hear any reference to the fact that in all the countries where protection prevails, the area of agricultural land increases with the population. When protection disappeared in England the area of land under cultivation immediately diminished; and it is only within the last twelve months that New South Wales has been able to produce enough for her own consumption. When I first entered Parliament, Victoria had under cultivation - twice the area that New South Wales had, and it was not until the Dibbs Tariff came into operation that there was a big rush, accounting for an additional 200,000 acres.

Mr Wilks

- How long did the Dibbs Tariff last?

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Mr CRUICKSHANK

- Probably only two years, and then we began the scheme of opening up the farming districts with a system of light railways. The farmer wants cheap machinery and light railways, and would like to have the home market. Farmers in Dubbo, Wagga, and thereabouts, complain bitterly that railway rates are so arranged that Sydney millers can send up flour to those towns at the same rate at which flour can be sent down to recognise that where a man is able to employ 100 hands he can feed them much more cheaply per head than can the man who employs only one hand. They have the most up-to-date machinery upon these farms, while in many places in the Commonwealth men have to clear dense scrub, plant with the hoe, and hump the crop off in bags on their backs, and in order to maintain prices in their home market the foreigners send their surplus supplies elsewhere. We hear a deal about the settlement of the people on the land, but as soon as we get them there we make it their grave instead of their happy home. I represent one of the largest maize-growing districts in Australia. We have a belt of country in Queensland which will grow maize equal to any in the world if we can only induce the people to settle there. But I have seen the hardships of life there. I have known men who have gone out with hearts like lions, and who have died in their efforts to achieve success. Some one else has then come along, bought up the small farms, and converted them into large estates. That is not a healthy condition of affairs. If we searched

the Moreton district from one end to the other we should not find a freetrade farmer in it. Why ? Because they have been subjected to competition with foreign countries, and their experience has been a bitter one. I hope that the committee will unanimously resolve, to retain the duty upon grain.

Mr. WILKS(Dalley).- When the honorable member who has just resumed his seat pleads for the farmers he ought to remember that there is another aspect of the case to be considered. In New South Wales the importation of wheat in the year 1900 was 84,000 bushels. That State supplied her own local market, and was able to export 2,600,000 bushels, whereas Victoria, where a duty operated, was able to export only 3,000,000 bushels. I speak from the consumers' stand-point, and as the representative of a large number of people engaged in mechanical pursuits in and around Sydney. These people do not ask for protection for themselves, and yet I am invited to agree to a tax on their food supplies in order to keep farming, which, after all, is a matter of speculation and investment, in full operation. Many of the arguments from the other 'side of the House lose their force in the light of experience in the State which I represent. The only reason the city. Farmers first look to the market of the local town, and next to the larger market of the country in which they live, and after that they turn their attention to export, because it is the English market which controls prices throughout the world. During some of the years to which the honorable member for West Sydney referred, New South Wales was not producing, sufficient for her own people, and the price was practically regulated by the steamer freights between Adelaide or Melbourne and Sydney. Very often the surplus produce of a particular State is sold more cheaply abroad than in the local market, and the Victorian and South Australian produce was sold at the same price as that of Sydney. No doubt under this Tariff the prices in the States will be the same.

Mr Henry Willis

- This duty will give no particular advantage.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- It will meet the feeling of producers generally that they ought to have the home market, and, as a producer, I have no objection to the duty.

Sir William McMillan

- Surely men have sufficient "intelligence to see that a non-effective duty on an article which they export is a disadvantage when it results in their furniture and other necessities being highly rated ?

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I hope that, we do not propose to highly rate other commodities. The item under discussion deals with a natural Australian product, and the duty, while not unduly raising prices, will stimulate production, and prove of benefit to the country generally.

Mr. POYNTON(South Australia).- Honorable members are looking too much at the conditions which prevailed before the Commonwealth was established. Except in New South Wales, a duty was imposed in all the s'urrounding States, though I can hardly realize any period in Australia when it should be necessary to import wheat. That remark does not apply to the same extent to barley, maize, or oats, because I believe that from New Zealand, New Guinea, and other places not far off, there is a possibility of both barley and maize coming here. In my opinion, if that produce is imported it ought to pay a certain amount of revenue duty, and the duty proposed is not very high as compared with those hitherto imposed by the States. We had a drought in the northern part of South Australia, where, from hundreds of thousands of acres which had been tilled for two or three years, hardly a bushel was taken. The scarcity naturally caused high rates, and the duty of 2s. still further forced prices up; and the unfortunate farmer who wanted seed wheat, which had to be purchased with borrowed money, was compelled to pay for one bushel as much as he has since received for two-and-a-half bushels. When a duty operates in that way there are two sides to the question ; and against countries which, like New Zealand, grow large quantities of wheat, it is fair to have what may be termed a revenue duty. A duty of 1s. means practically 20 per cent, or over, and that ought to be enough for all practical purposes. I understand that the honorable member for the Grampians does not intend to press his amendment.

Mr Skene

- I do not see the slightest chance of carrying it.

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Mr POYNTON

- I shall vote for a duty of 1s., but could not possibly support the entire abolition of the impost.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (by Mr. Glynn) proposed -

That the words "and on and after 29th November, 1901, ls." be added.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - On this side we propose to deal with the item according to the original compact of "revenue without destruction." Many of the duties which are now used for the purpose of comparison were originally imposed when the industries were in their infancy, or when there was large InterState competition. We are now entering into the Commonwealth, and, as we largely export, the duty under ordinary circumstances does not operate, though there is a difference, no doubt, in regard to oats, and, probably, maize. While farmers apparently get some consideration, The duty really does them no good at all, and I, therefore, support the proposal to make the impost ls. I wish honorable members to look at the altered conditions under Inter-State freetrade, and to consider that the duties will become inoperative from a protectionist point of view. If it is desired to obtain revenue, ls. per cental is the very highest point to which we ought to go.

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

17

AYES

31

NOES

Majority 14

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment (by Mr. I. E. Gkooji) proposed -

That the words "except malting barley, the duty on which shall, on and after 29th November, be 2s. per cental," be added.

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Sir William mcmillan

- i think we should have some expression of opinion from the Government with reference to these duties. No information has been afforded us, and the committee will not be justified in increasing the proposal of the Government unless some very good reason is advanced. A duty of ls. 6d. all round certainly ought to be the maximum, because the increased amount now proposed by the honorable member for Darling Downs would amount to a 50 per cent, advalorem impost.

M.v.KINGSTON". - i trust the honorable and learned member for Darling Downs will withdraw his amendment, at least for the present. The information at present at our disposal does not seem to point to the necessity for making an alteration. According to the import statistics of Queensland ' for 1900, the only importation of malting barley was 20 bushels, valued at £4, from New South Wales. That gives an average value of 4s. per bushel. On the other hand there were 23,000 bushels of ordinary barley imported into Queensland, valued at £3,476, or roughly speaking 3s. per bushel. Although there is undoubtedly a difference in value between ordinary barley and malting barley, possibly to the extent of one-third, the figures do not show the necessity for any departure from the uniform charge we propose. Under the circumstances I would ask the honorable and learned member to withdraw his amendment. If after looking into the whole matter we come to the conclusion that we ought to adopt a different course we shall not hesitate to advise the committee accordingly.

Mr. KENNEDY(Moira).- I would join in asking the honorable member to withdraw the amendment, but at the same time I should like the Minister for Trade and Customs to look into this matter. Malting barley can be grown in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia to great advantage.

Mr. L.E. GROOM (Darling Downs).I ask leave to withdraw my amendment, and at the same time I would join in the request of the honorable member for Moira.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Item 23 :-

Grain and Pulse, prepared or manufactured, viz. : - Oatmeal, Rolled Oats, Groats, Wheatmeal, Pearl Bailey, Scotch Barley, Maizena, Corn Flour .. per lb., ld.

Bran, Pollard, and Sharps, per cental, ls. N.E.l..... per cental, 2s. 6d.

Mr. GLYNN(South Australia).- There are several articles included in this item which ought to be dealt with separately. | With regard to oatmeal and rolled oats I should prefer to adopt the South Australian duty of £2 per ton, but in deference to the views expressed by other honorable members I propose to reduce the duty to 1d. The value of oatmeal at present is about £15 per ton, but the average price is £12 per ton. A duty of 1d. per lb. would be equal to about 75 per cent, ad valorem, or £9 6s. 8d. per ton. In New South Wales and Western Australia oatmeal and rolled oats have previously been admitted free; in South Australia they have been subject to a duty of £2 per ton, in Queensland £4 per ton, and in Tasmania 1d. per lb., which is equal to £4 1s. 3d. per ton; and in Victoria 9s. per cental, which is equivalent to £10 1s. 7d. per ton. Therefore The Government are really asking The committee to adopt The Victorian rate. With regard to the revenue-producing power of the respective duties, taking 1898 as a normal year, I find that the revenue derived in Victoria from oatmeal at 9s. per cental was £680, whereas in South Australia, with a duty of £2 per ton, the revenue amounted to £2,043. Allowing for the difference in population the revenue produced by the South Australian duty would have amounted to £6,000 as against £680 derived in Victoria. The Tasmanian rate is practically that which I suggest, and it returned a revenue of only £10. In Queensland, with a rate of £4 per ton, however, the revenue was nearly £3,000 ; but I believe that Queensland does not produce oats. Those figures demonstrate that we should not put a burdensome tax upon an article which is a food of almost universal consumption. I move -
That the words " and on and after 29th November, 1901, ½d." be added to the duty "Oatmeal, rolled oats per lb. 1d."

Mr. WATSON(Bland). - I hope that the Government will accept the amendment. The crushing of oats to make oatmeal and rolled oats is not a very expensive process, and, with the duty which the Government propose, a manufacturer, even if he imported his oats, and paid 30s. per ton duty upon them, would have an advantage of about £7 10s; per ton, which I think is altogether too much. I think that a margin of about £3 per ton would be ample.

Mr. POYNTON(South Australia).- In South Australia we used to have a duty of 2s. per cental upon oatmeal and rolled oats, but, when this Tariff was announced, the price of the 7-lb. bag was increased from 1s. 2d. and 1s. 3d. to 1s. 8d. and 1s. 9d. It is estimated that the proposed duty will mean a tax of 26s. a year to an average family, at a consumption of 7 lbs. a week, which I do not think is extravagant for five children and two adults. The cooperative stores in Adelaide obtain their supplies of this article largely from Mount Gambier, and when the prices were increased the shareholders complained ; but it was shown that the prices had been raised by the manufacturers in consequence of the Tariff, which quite contradicts a favorite statement of protectionists that consumers do not pay the duties. A duty of ½d. per lb. will give a protection of £4 13s. 4d. per ton to The manufacturer, and I think that that should be sufficient for him.

Mr KINGSTON

- The Government think that a good case has been made out for the proposed reduction, and therefore we propose to agree to the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HUGHES(West Sydney).- I wish to know if the Government are prepared to adjust the anomaly in the Tariff to which I have directed their attention - the exclusion of patent groats and patent barley from the list of infants' foods ?

Mr Kingston

- That has been done.

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Mr HUGHES

- AVith regard to the proposed duty of 1d. upon groats, it has been represented to me that groats are oats after the husks have been removed, and form the raw material of manufacturers >of oatmeal and rolled oats. There are, I believe, two firms in Victoria and one in New South Wales which have the expensive machinery necessary for removing the husks and preparing the groats for then' manufacture into oatmeal and other articles. These firms, if the proposed duty is imposed, will have a monopoly of the trade, to the serious injury, if not to the exclusion, of other firms which do not possess the machinery to which I refer, and whose business is simply the making of groats into oatmeal, rolled oats, and other articles of food. I move -

That the words "and on and after 29th November, 1901, 1d." be added to the duty "groats per lb. 1d."

Mr. HARPER(Mernda).- The honorable member for West Sydney has fallen into a mistake in believing that the term "groats," as used here, means what are known in the trade as kiln-dried hulled oats, which are, as he says, the raw material of the manufacturer of oatmeal and other foods. These kiln-dried hulled oats as " grain, not elsewhere included," will have to pay a duty of 2s. 6d. per cental, which is a great deal less than \d. per lb. What is meant by the word "groats," as used in the item are patent groats, a preparation which is made up and packed in tins, and is worth 5d. or 6d. per lb.

Mr. HUGHES(West Sydney).- If the term " groats " means patent groats, I ask the Minister why it is not removed to the list of infants' foods, in accordance with the promise which he gave to me ?

Mr KINGSTON

- The special preparations to which the honorable member drew my attention have been removed to the list of infants' and invalids' foods ; but the groats dealt with in this item is an article of general consumption. I hope that the committee will retain the duty at 1d. per lb. I understand that groats is worth at least 4-d. per lb., and under the circumstances, therefore, we are only maintaining a fair proportion. I am sorry that anything has been said to reflect upon the information which we are able to obtain from each other. 'It is of great advantage that we should have in this House gentlemen of special knowledge - manufacturers and importers alike - and I trust that the time will never come, when, if they are appealed to, there will be any doubt as to the truthfulness of the information which they supply.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn. Amendment (by Mr. Poynton) agreed to-

That the words " and on and after the 29th November, .1901, ^d." be inserted after the word " wheatmeal."

Amendment (by Mr. Poynton) proposed -

That the words "and on and after the 29th November, 1901, Ad." be inserted after the words "pearl barley and Scotch barley."

Mr. GLYNN(South Australia).- I wish to point out that the average market price of pearl barley is £10 per ton. Consequently, 1d. per lb. represents 90 per cent. aci valorem, or a specific tax of £9 6s. 8d. per ton. I think, therefore, that there is good ground for a remission.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment (by Mr. Watson) proposed -

That the words "and on and after 29th November, 1901, id." be inserted after the words " maizena and corn Hour."

I have bought locally-produced maizena for 2-Jd. per lb. In New South Wales there are two fairly big firms, who are conducting a successful business without the aid of any duty. The position I take is that if either of these manufacturers are enabled to increase their price by even -jd. per lb., it will mean a substantial extra profit to them. On the wholesale price in New South Wales, prior to the introduction of this Tariff, £d. per lb. would represent over 20 per cent., which I think is a very reasonable duty to suggest.

Mr R EDWARDS

- As corn flour is largely produced within the Commonwealth, I hope that the Ministry will adhere to the duty of 1d. per lb.

Mr. HARPER(Mernda).- I am not interested in this article in the least degree, but I know a great deal about it. It is pre-eminently a manufacture of Queensland and New South Wales. The American maizena, which comes into the market, has a reputation for which the public have to pay. The wholesale price of that maizena is 4d. or 5d. per lb., and the local corn flour has been pressed down by inferior qualities imported in bulk from America to about 2£d. per lb., which is an absolutely . unremunerative price to the New South Wales manufacturer. Seeing that a number of factories have been established in the various States, I think that 1d. per lb. is the least rate which we should impose upon this article, if we are to give the manufacturers reasonable encouragement.

Sir William McMillan

- Does not the honorable member think that that duty approaches prohibition ?

Mr HARPER

-,! do not think so. It is a curious fact that people will insist upon buying the imported article, which has acquired a reputation, irrespective of whether it is dear or cheap. Whether this duty be imposed or not, American corn flour will still be used throughout the States ; consequently the duty will be a

revenue-producing one.

Mr. POYNTON(South Australia).- I. would point out that the wholesale rate of Brown and Poison's corn flour in 40-lb. and 80-lb. bags was 2£d. per lb. in Adelaide last month. The American article was exactly the same price. This month's price list by Wilkinson and Co. shows that the exact amount of proposed Commonwealth duty has been added to the price to the wholesale buyers. Upon an article which only costs 2\$d. per lb., a duty of -Jd. per lb. is quite sufficient.

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Mr KINGSTON

- I understand that the price of the colonial article is much lower than that of the American product, which has held the market in Victoria. I have my information from the very best source, and I hold in my hand the Mutual Store catalogue. Duryea's maizena, and, I am informed, Brown and Poison's maizena are sold at 9d. per lb. packet, which, taking 2d. for duty, and 2d. for profit, leaves the price at od. ; and the Victorian importations from the United States work out at 4^d. It will be seen, therefore, that the duty of Id. does not mean more than 20 or 25 per cent.. The duty was 2d. per lb. in Victoria and Queensland, and Id. per lb. in Tasmania; and under all the circumstances the proposal of the Government is a reasonable one.

Mr. PIESSE(Tasmania).- The committee having accepted a duty of £d. on oatmeal, the same rate ought to be sufficient for maizena.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Maizena is the more valuable, being worth 4d. or 5d., as against 1-Jd.

Mr. McCOLL(Echuca). - A duty of Id. per lb. on this commodity means a less percentage than a duty of £d. on oatmeal. According to quotations which have been handed to me, the price asked from grocers for Duryea's maizena, before the Tariff was introduced, was 8d., but is now 7d. The Mutual Store are selling this maizena at 9d.

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

27 24

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AYES

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NOES

Majority

AYES

NOES

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. A.C. GROOM (Flinders).- The revenue from " bran, pollard, and sharps, per cental, ls." will be absolutely nil, and this duty ought to be struck out.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- In view of the reductions which we have already made, the line "n.e.i., 2s. Od." ought to be struck out.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - There is no desire to divide the committee unnecessarily on consequential duties, although I do not agree with the principles on which this Tariff is being framed.

Item agreed to.

Item 24. - Hay and chaff, per cwt. ls.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - I have taken the trouble to look into this item, and I find that, like others we have passed, the proposed duty is really a farce. Under free-trade in New South Wales, 4,704 cwt., representing £694, was imported in 1899, and the proposed duty would mean 34 per cent. The occasions on which there are large importations of hay are just those when it would be right for the Government to abolish the duty. There might be a great drought, in which case such a step would ' be highly desirable ; but, under ordinary circumstances, there is no importation, and we ought not to have on the Tariff duties which are practically inoperative.

Mr. FULLER(Illawarra). - I agree with what has been said by the acting leader of the Opposition. The only times in which the duty would be operative would be those of drought, when those engaged in the

dairying industry in New South Wales have had to import hay and chaff from New Zealand in order to provide feed for their cattle.

Question - That the item be agreed to put. The committee divided.

30 21

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AYES

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NOES

Majority

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the affirmative. Item agreed to.

Item 25. - Honey, jams, and jellies, also preserved ginger and liquid - including the weight of liquid - per lb., 2d. .

Mr MAHON

- I move -

That the words "and on and after 29th November, 1901, 15 per cent, ad valorem" be added.

I am led to take this action by the fact that in Western Australia substantially the whole of the honey consumed is imported from the eastern States, and the duty will be almost inoperative so far as foreign imports are concerned. Now, as to jams and preserves, the Western Australian Tariff provides for a 15 per cent. duty.

Despite that fact, nearly the whole of the jams used in that State come from the eastern States. Out of a total importation of 44,043 cases last year, 37,963 cases came from Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania, and only 6,080 cases came from foreign countries. The colonial jams have therefore, in free competition, driven the British and foreign products out of the Western Australian market. I have a letter here from an authority on this subject, who says -

The Western Australian experience in the jam industry shows that years ago comparatively little else than English jam was sold. To-day, however, Tasmanian, Victorian, and other Australian jams hold the market to the total exclusion of the English jams, and have beaten them in fair competition, with the same revenue duties against them. The Western Australian demand is for the best quality of jams only.

It is not necessary to say very much in support of the amendment. The duty proposed by the Government is equivalent to 40 per cent, and as the cost of bringing imported jams into our markets would make a difference of at least 7 per cent, in favour of the local manufacturer, the lower duty I propose ought to be ample. In regard to the States generally, the protection under a 15 per cent, duty with the natural protection of 7 per cent, added, will in reality be 22 per cent., while in the Western Australian market the jams from the eastern States would be at an advantage compared with foreign jams only to the extent of the natural protection afforded to them. The preference in their favour will, however, increase year by year, as the duties levied on Inter-State products in Western Australia are decreased by 20 per cent, per annum. As a duty of 15 per cent, affords ample protection to the local manufacturer, there can be no good object in imposing a higher duty, because the only effect will be to increase the cost to the consumer, and add to the profits of the manufacturer. Jams and jellies are very largely consumed by miners and prospectors and others engaged in pioneering work, who receive no benefit whatever from the operation of the Tariff, . and we must extend some consideration to this class of people when we are fixing these duties.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- The honorable member for Coolgardie appears not to fully understand the bearing of this duty upon the Western

Australian trade. The Government have postponed the consideration of the sugar duties, so that we are under a disadvantage in dealing with other duties upon articles manufactured partly from sugar, because we c'o not know what the committee will ultimately decide as to the sugar duties. Speaking- on behalf of a number of jam manufacturers, I say that we should be quite satisfied without a duty upon jam, provided that no duties were imposed upon the raw materials of our industry, such as fruit and sugar ; but if there is

to be a duty of JE6 a ton upon sugar, without a duty upon jam, it will be impossible for us to compete with the English manufacturer, who is able to take advantage of the bounty-fed sugars produced on the continent. As the honorable member has pointed out, hitherto our jams have been very successful, and have been sent to South Africa and elsewhere, but we have been under some disadvantage. In the Commonwealth markets we shall have no drawback at all, and although after a heated discussion we managed to secure a system of sliding drawbacks in regard to Western Australia, so long as that State continues to impose duties upon our jams, they will eventually be discontinued, and if the duty were reduced as low as 15 per cent., honorable members will see that the sugar imported in jam would be able to come in at a lower duty than that which would have to be paid on sugar alone. The small amount of revenue which it is estimated that the proposed duty will give, shows that this is not really a protective duty, only some £2,000 being expected from jams, jellies, and honey, and a good deal of honey is imported from New Zealand. If the honorable member would withdraw his amendment, I should be prepared to suggest that the duty be made 1d. per lb. That, I believe, would compensate for the duty which we have to pay upon the sugar we use. Not only have the jam manufacturers to pay duty upon the sugar they use; they have to pay duty also upon the timber required for packing cases, the paper, and many other things which they require. Even upon fruit pulp we have to pay a much heavier duty than has hitherto been levied by the States, and the importation of strawberry pulp, which is not produced in the Commonwealth, is practically prohibited by the large duty that is imposed upon it. .

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- No doubt the jam-manufacturing industry is a very large one, especially in Tasmania, and I think that the day is not far distant when Tasmania manufacturers - will supply the Commonwealth with a very large quantity of jam. As has been pointed out, there will probably be a heavy duty on sugar, which is largely used in the manufacture of jam, and in dealing with this item we must assume that no refunds can be made. In my opinion, the proposal of the Government is a very fair compromise between the rates which have hitherto prevailed in the States. The jam making industry is a very large one, and I do not think it is advisable to remove the duty upon jam, and allow foreign products to come into our markets to compete with the locally manufactured article.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I consider that the duty should not be reduced. Tasmania is able to supply the Commonwealth with jam, and in a few years will be able to supply the whole world. The operations of jam factories ramify through the fruit growing districts just as the operations of the creameries and butter factories extend throughout the dairying districts of the States, and the industry is of immense importance to the primary producers. Unfortunately, however, at present the prices are so low that they can hardly live, and we want to do something to sweeten their position.

Mr MAHON

- With the permission of the committee I should like to withdraw my amendment, with a view to substitute another proposal.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment by Mr. Mahon proposed -

That the words "and on and after the 29th November, 1901, 1d." be added.

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Mr MAUGER

- In connexion with this trade, which is a very large one in Victoria, a wages board has just been established. If we reduce the duty we shall not only injure the industry, but lower the wages of a large number who are at present engaged in profitable work.

Mr. MAHON(Coolgardie). - In reply to the honorable member I would point out that a reduction of the duty could not possibly injure those engaged in the industry, for the reason that there are practically no jellies or jams imported into the Commonwealth. I admit that the sugar duty complicates the matter very considerably. But on the quantity of sugar which enters into a tin of jam there will be at least £d. to the advantage of the manufacturer. I understand that about half a tin of jam is composed of sugar. If that be so, less than £d. would represent the duty upon the sugar. Whilst an allowance must be made upon sugar which enters into the composition of this commodity, I think that 1d. per lb. will constitute a very fair compromise. My proposal will not affect the wages of the employes in any way, and the honorable

member for Melbourne Ports has merely raised another boggy.

Mr MANIFOLD

- A duty of 1d. per lb. on jam seems to me to be quite sufficient protection. I agree with the previous speaker, that this is a question which affects the whole of the working population of the Commonwealth ; by imposing a duty of 1d. per lb. upon jams, we shall not be robbing the local manufacturers of their market, and we shall be assisting, in the production of a better article for general consumption.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I would point out that there are 291,732 lbs. of jams and jellies imported into New South Wales, representing a value of £5,900. The present proposal of the Government will reduce the importations into New South Wales by 68 per cent., and the duty itself is 40 per cent. Surely we can allow this industry to stand upon a 20 per cent. basis of protection. At the present time we are sending away large quantities of jams to South Africa from New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania. Under all the circumstances 40 per cent. represents almost a prohibitive duty. I regret very much the remarks which have been made from time to time by certain honorable members like the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, to the effect that they desire to absolutely shut out almost every article which is now imported. It is to me inexplicable that the honorable member should represent Melbourne Ports when he is apparently imbued with a desire to close those ports.

Sir George Turner

- If the honorable member will suggest 1½d. per lb., I will agree to it.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Very well, I will take that as a compromise if the honorable member for Coolgardie consents.

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Mr Mahon

- I accept the amendment.

Amendment amended accordingly.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- As far as one can judge, the import of jams into the Commonwealth is very small. In fact, we are large exporters, and the protection given at the present time represents more than 20 per cent. I admit that the matter is complicated by reason of the duty upon the raw material, which is sugar. Had it not been for that I should have proposed that the duty be remitted. Two-thirds of a 1d. is about the amount of discouragement which this industry receives at the present time,' and under the circumstances a duty of 1d. per lb. is sufficiently high;

Mr. WILKS(Dalley).- I fully recognise that the compromise which has been arranged will be acceptable to the committee. At the same time I cannot but express my regret that the duty has not been reduced to 1d. per lb. or lower.

Mr. MAUGER(Melbourne Ports).The honorable member for Wentworth is continually taunting me with being inconsistent, because I represent Melbourne Ports. Apparently he does not know that that constituency embraces perhaps the largest industrial centre in Australia. It is true that I have previously stated that every article which could be profitably manufactured in Australia should be manufactured here ; and I have consistently adhered to that position. I am sorry that the Government have yielded upon this matter. I think they should have a word or two with their supporters before continually giving way upon what are essentially protective duties.

Mr. G.B. EDWARDS (South Sydney). - I do not think that this duty is required by the trade. If a division be taken, I shall not vote upon this and the following item, because I am interested in the manufacture of these articles. But personally, I think that 1d. per lb. is quite sufficient > protection. As manufacturers, we should prefer to have the duty taken off the raw material.

Mr. BATCHELOR(South Australia).I agree with the honorable member for Melbourne Ports that the Government are somewhat too ready, perhaps, to make compromises in regard to protective duties. I do not think that a duty of 1½d. per lb. will constitute a sufficient protection to the manufacturers of jam. As a matter of fact, there will not be very much jam imported into the Commonwealth under any circumstances. The fact that we have largely increased the price of sugar, and of some other raw materials which are used in its manufacture, makes it necessary that we should give some protection to the local manufacturers, in order that we may place them upon an equality with foreign competitors.

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Mr CROUCH

- I am sorry that the Treasurer has agreed to a reduction of this impost. I feel that it is our duty to the small fruit-growers whom I represent to retain the rate of 2d. per lb. In Victoria, the duty upon jam before the introduction of this Tariff was 3d. per lb. In South Australia a similar rate existed, whilst in Queensland and Tasmania the duty was 2d. Yet despite these duties, there were £33,000 worth of jam imported into the Commonwealth from places beyond its borders in 1898. New South Wales "imported during the same year 'from places inside the Commonwealth £16,000 worth, and from outside of it £19,742 worth. South Australia imported 1,791 lbs. from outside the Commonwealth, and Tasmania, which is a fruit-growing country, only 105 lbs. Queensland, in spite of the duty of 2d., imported from inside the Commonwealth "2,220 lbs., "and from outside, 33,365 lbs. These figures should make us pause and consider whether the Premier is bound by his partial acceptance of the proposed compromise, or whether he should divide the committee on the full duty, as proposed.

Mr. RONALD(Southern Melbourne).I hope the Government will adhere to their first proposal which carries out the principle of " revenue without destruction." A reduction of the duty would mean destruction to a large number of small factories. It has been seen that a duty of 2d. does not prevent the import trade in jam, and a reduced duty would give still greater advantages to the foreigner. A duty of 2d. cannot raise the price to the consumer, because this is an industry into which people with small means can readily enter.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- It is a little surprising that honorable members who have no acquaintance with this business, should set their judgment against that of an honorable member who, in combination with other gentlemen, is probably the largest manufacturer of jam in Australia, and who, owing to his connexion with the industry, very properly declines to vote. Tasmania exports 3,250,000 lbs. of jam; New South Wales, 750,000 lbs.; Victoria, 3,400,000 lbs. ; and South Australia, 1,000,000 lbs. ; but the exports from Queensland are very slight. There is an export trade as between the States of 8,000,000 lbs., and the total quantity which comes from outside is not one-tenth of that. Considering the large exports, a duty cannot raise the price ; that can be done only by the formation of combinations or trusts. The large outside trade shows that the industry can be carried on without any duty whatever, though I am willing to consent to the imposition of 1d. per lb. In my opinion, a slightly lower rate would, perhaps, result in double the amount of revenue estimated by the Government.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK(Gwydir).- I do not think producers desire a Tariff which will cut off competition altogether. We get a better article by so arranging the Tariff that consumers are not confined absolutely to local productions, and if a good article cannot be made with a 20 per cent, duty, the industry ought to be left alone. I am awaiting information as to the effect the sugar excise will have on jam production, and if it can be shown that a duty of 1½d. 'will be better for the revenue, I shall support such a proposal.

Amendment agreed to.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 26. - Hops, per lb., (id.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - I should like some information on this subject from honorable members with special knowledge. I see that the cost price of hops is 9d. or 9½d. per lb., and that while there is no duty in New South Wales, there 'is a duty of 8d. in Queensland and Victoria respectively, and 6d. in South Australia, though, curiously enough, in Tasmania, which I thought was the home of hops, the duty is only 3d. My opinion is that most of the heavy duties of Victoria were previously imposed as practically prohibitive, and do not now represent the position so far as reasonable duties are concerned, even from a protective point of view. Such duties ought not to be taken as the average for the Commonwealth. So far as I can see the proposal of the Government means a duty of very nearly 75 per cent, but- I should like some further information, because it is almost impossible for honorable members who have no practical experience to understand the position from the figures which are placed before them.

Mr. A.McLEAN (Gippsland).- To persons not familiar with the industry the duty may appear large, but it must be remembered that in Queensland, and in "Victoria, a duty of 8d. per lb. is charged, and I have received communications from a number of growers protesting against any reduction of that figure. Some years ago, when hops were bringing from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per lb., the industry was very prosperous, but of late years prices, notwithstanding the duty, have fallen so low that growers have difficulty in malting ends meet. This is a valuable industry so far as providing light and healthful labour is concerned, and it enables

many invalids and aged people to earn fair remuneration . Apparently the duty has not kept prices up, because I have known hops sold at a price as low as 5d. per lb. I should like to see the Government propose a duty of 8d. ; at any rate, I protest against any reduction below 6d. Pretty nearly all the States are suited for, the production of hops, but a great many substitutes are made, and sometimes the real article is a drug in the market; even when the production is not at all large.

Mr. O'MALLEY(Tasmania).- I trust the duty on hops will not be reduced. In my opinion protection, patriotism, and progress are the hope of this country.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - The duty seems to me excessive, but that may matter very little, because the whole trade will no doubt very shortly be with Australia. At the same time it is a pity to have duties at a higher rate than is effective, because that will in a few years render the Tariff ridiculous.

Mr. MAHON(Coolgardie). - As usual I find that Victoria and New South Wales are apparently the only States affected by the duty ; but, as a matter of fact, it will be ' seen from the Statistical Register of Western Australia that that State is very considerably interested. The duty in Western Australia is only 4d. per lb., so that this Tariff proposes an increase of about 50 per cent, upon the duty hitherto levied in that State. The brewers of Western Australia have already been penalized quite sufficiently by being called upon by recent legislation to pay a licence-fee 23 b of £25 per annum. The effect of the duty will be to increase the price of the hops which are used in the manufacture of the poor man's beer. If these duties are to be imposed on every hand, there will be very little left of any of the primary industries of Western Australia.

An Honorable Member. - Does the honorable member ball brewing a primary industry ?

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Mr MAHON

- Undoubtedly it is ; because it converts the natural products of the soil into a saleable article. The Western Australian brewers have been in the habit of getting the best hops obtainable. In 1900 they imported 134,563 lbs. of hops from Great Britain and foreign countries, and 183,257 lbs. from the Australian States, or a total of 305,389 lbs., valued at £5,089 16s. 6d. That is a very considerable item, and an increase of 50 per cent, in the amount of the duty will be a serious additional burden. Most of the breweries of Western Australia are very small concerns, and are located in remote parts of the gold-fields, where the people find it better to manufacture their own beer than to have it brought to them from the coast. Those who are engaged in opening up the country are being taxed in every conceivable way,, and no compensation is being offered to them under the Tariff. If protection is a good thing it ought to be applied all round, but under the Government system some persons are being largely benefited, whilst others are getting nothing. That is not statesmanship, and I doubt if it is even common honesty. I do not wish to move any amendment but I appeal to the committee to reduce the duty, or otherwise its effect will be to induce the brewers to abstain from importing foreign hops, -and to use an inferior article. If the brewers had been able to brew good beer with Australian hops hitherto, they would not have used the higher-priced foreign article, and the immediate result of the high duty will be to cause the quality of the beer to deteriorate. The honorable member for Gippsland has shown that the Victorian hop-growers, even with a duty of 8d. per lb. to protect them, have not been able to do much good for themselves, and therefore they are not likely to derive much benefit from a duty of 6d. per lb.

Item agreed to.

Item 27. - Limejuice and other fruit juices, and fruit syrups (non-spirituous) per gallon, 1s.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I see that according to the statistical Register, limejuice is valued at about 1s. 2^d. per gallon.

Sir George Turner

- It is worth about 1s. 6d. per gallon.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Surely there must be some mistake, as there cannot be any necessity to impose a duty equal to 66 per cent, ad valorem. Whilst I recognise the protective incidence of the Tariff, I do not wish to see an absolutely ridiculous rate of duty imposed.

Mr. HARPER(Mernda). - Limejuice is imported chiefly from the South Seas. It is brought here in a crude condition, and, after being refined, is worth from 2s. to 3s. per gallon. West Indian limejuice, which is also imported here, is very much dearer.

Mr. O'MALLEY(Tasmania).- I believe large quantities of limejuice come from Italy and Buenos Ayres, and, as Australia is a great lime-producing country, I cannot understand the opposition to the duty.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- I recognise this as a purely revenue -duty, but, even viewed in that light, it seems to me to be rather excessive. Limejuice is a very desirable article of consumption in hot climates, and its use should be encouraged. It does not enter into competition to any great extent with any of our local products, but a lot of deleterious concoctions composed of citric acid and water and a little oil of limes masquerade as limejuice, to the detriment of the legitimate article, and these spurious compounds ought, if possible, to be prevented from going into consumption. I am afraid that the effect of placing an excessive duty on limejuice will be to encourage the sale of locally made chemical concoctions, and -I think it would be to the benefit of the consumers generally if the item were reduced.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- In 1899, 10,666 gallons of limejuice were imported into New South Wales from New Zealand, but this, of course, came from the South Sea Islands. The pure limejuice is very much diluted before it enters into consumption in the ordinary way, but if it can be obtained of good quality it is one of the most wholesome beverages for children and others in hot climates. We cannot produce it in Australia at present, and it is an article the use of which should be encouraged. In addition to the quantity previously mentioned as coming from the South Sea Islands, New South Wales imported from the United Kingdom 5,369 gallons of limejuice. Having regard to the maximum price of limejuice, I think a duty of 9d. would be a fair thing. It is desirable that we should encourage our trade with the South Sea Islands, and that we should also offer every facility for passing into consumption a good article, instead of the abominable concoctions that are to be found in some of the shops under the name of limejuice. I move -

That the words " and on and after 29th November, 1901, 9d.," be added.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK(Gwydir).- I happen to represent a district where the heat is sometimes very excessive, and where the working people suffer a good deal from scurvy. They find it almost necessary -to drink limejuice, which is one of the best beverages they can possibly have. On some of the stations in the drought-stricken districts where scurvy is very bad, we used to send two bottles of limejuice to each man, with his month's- rations. Limejuice is supplied in those districts more as a medicine than anything else, and I think that the duty should be reduced.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- Under the various State Tariffs the duties on limejuice have been as follow : - New South Wales- free, Victoria 3£d., Queensland 4d., South. Australia 2d., Tasmania 3d., and Western. Australia 3d. I think, therefore, that we are now being asked to raise the duty to altogether too high a figure. If . the Minister makes a comparison upon, the real value of limejuice, he will see that the highest State duties upon it have not reached 4d. per gallon, and, therefore, the Government proposal is exceedingly high. I should like the honorable member for Wentworth to withdraw his amendment, so that I may move the reduction of the proposed duty to 6d. per gallon.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I should like to point out to the honorable member that I have already committed myself to support a reduction to 9d. per gallon, which I understand the Treasurer is willing to accept. Perhaps, if I had had the information which the honorable and learned member has just given to the committee, I should have been inclined to insist upon a reduction to 6d. per gallon. I do not think, however, that a reduction to 6d. per gallon would be agreed to by the committee.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). Notwithstanding the statement of the honorable member for Wentworth, I still feel inclined to press my proposal. A duty of 6d. per gallon would be from 2d. to 3d. more than has hitherto been levied by the States.

Mr Piesse

- What is the value of limejuice per gallon ?

Mr CONROY

- It is imported at from 1s. 5d. to 1s. 9d. per gallon and you can buy a 2-gallon keg wholesale at from 4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. per keg. Those who live in the dry back-country are to be taxed on vegetables, and now it is proposed that they shall be heavily taxed on a most valuable anti-scorbutic.

Mr. SALMON(Laanecoorie). - I would point out for the guidance of honorable members that, according to the price-list of the Mutual Stores, pure Montserrat limejuice is sold retail at 3s. per reputed quart, or 18s. a gallon, the price for pint bottles being 1s. 8d. The price of West Indian limejuice, in bottles, is quoted at

ls. fid., and that of South Sea limejuice at ls.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- But limejuice is imported in bulk at about ls. 6d. per gallon.

Mr Watson

- That is crude limejuice

Mr SALMON

- I think we may take it for granted that the value of limejuice is anything up to 10s. per gallon. It seems to me that some honorable members have confused the syrups and cordials, which contain only a small quantity of real limejuice, with pure limejuice.

Mr. WATSON(Bland). - Honorable members must not run away with the idea that -because Montserrat limejuice, which is extensively advertised, is sold retail at a high price it is invoiced for Customs purposes at anything like that price. If my recollection is correct, absolutely pure "West Indian limejuice can be obtained in Melbourne or Sydney in bond at about 2s. 6d. per gallon.

Mr McColl

- The value of the limejuice imported into New South Wales from beyond the Commonwealth seems to be, according to official figures, from 2s. 93. to 2s. 10d. per gallon.

Amendment agreed to. Item, as amended, agreed to Item 28. - Linseed, per cental 2s. 23 bz

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - According to the New South Wales Statistical Register, the duty proposed upon this article is equal to about ls. per cwt.

Sir George Turner

- On an ad valorem basis the duty upon linseed is 17 per cent., upon linseed meal 25 per cent., and upon linseed cake 17 per cent.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- Hitherto in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia linseed has been upon the free list, while the duty in Tasmania is 1d. per lb., and in Western Australia about ls. a cental. I think that ls. per cental is quite high enough, and I therefore move -

That the words "and on and after the 29th November, 1901, percental ls. " be added.

Amendment negatived.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I wish to exempt from duty linseed imported for making linseed oil under departmental by-laws. The duty upon linseed oil is 6d., and a duty of 2s. per cental upon linseed will give a protection of about 9d. per gallon. Linseed can be produced in the Commonwealth. I therefore move -

That the words "Special exemption. - Linseed for making linseed oil under departmental bylaws " be added to the item.

Amendment agreed to. Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 29. - Linseed meal, per cental 4s.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The committee have already decided to put a 2s. per cental duty upon linseed, which is the raw material for linseed meal. We therefore ask that a duty of 4s. per cental should be placed upon the finished article. Linseed cake and oil-cake are made out of the refuse ; so that upon them we have fixed a duty of ls. percental. That, I think, is perfectly fair.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I have consistently supported all revenue duties ; but the rate upon this article' certainly cannot be claimed to be- revenue-producing. Hitherto, linseed cake and oil cake have both been free in every State of the Commonwealth save two. They were free even under the heavy Tasmanian Tariff. As no revenue will be derived from either this item or the next, I think that it would be common sense to strike them out.

Item agreed to.

Items HO. - Linseed cake and oil cake, per cental ls.

- Liquorice, viz. - crude, per lb. 1d. ' , , other, per lb. 2d.

- Macaroni and vermicelli, per lb.

1d.

Agreed to.

Item 33. - Malt, including granulated, maize, and rice malts, per cental (is.

Mr GLYNN

- I wish to call attention to a recent report in connexion with the brewing of beer in South Australia. During an examination of the quality of the beer, it was pointed out that malt was practically a vanishing constituent. I suggest that, altogether apart from the question of free-trade and protection, we might encourage the brewing of beer from the more wholesome constituents, namely, malt or hops. There is a law in Germany which prevents the brewing of beer except from barley malt, hops, and yeast, and providing that it must be without the addition of any other substance. From the South Australian report regarding the declining use of malt, I find that in 1896 there were 3,097,635 gallons of beer which paid excise, whilst 40,625 bushels of malt and 250,235 lbs. of hops were imported. In 1900 the quantity of liquor brewed in that State had advanced to 3,164,150 gallons, but the imports of malt, instead of being at a correspondingly higher rate, had shrunk to 10,923 bushels, while the quantity of hops imported was only 191,258 lbs. The report also points out that the statistics do not indicate a proportionately greater use of sugar in the brewing of the beer, so that possibly some substance which does not result in the production of as good an article is being substituted for malt, hops, and even the inferior constituent of sugar. I suggest that these facts might be taken into consideration when fixing the excise upon beer. I do not know whether the Minister for Trade and Customs might not distinguish between the beer brewed from such constituents as hops and malt, and that made of substances which are deleterious. It might be possible to fix a higher excise upon one than upon the other.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I find that the whole of the revenue which it is estimated to be derived from malt is £6,000, of which New South Wales will contribute £3,000. I also find that in 1899 the value of malt imported into New South Wales from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States represented £108,000. It does seem rather curious, upon the face of it, that with £108,000 worth of foreign imports coming into New South Wales, we should obtain a revenue of only £3,000. The proposed duty represents 42 per cent, ad valorem, It seems to me, therefore, that it is to all intents and purposes prohibitive.

Mr KINGSTON

- I only wish to say in reply to the question raised by the honorable and learned member for South Australia, that the report referred to was that of a Customs officer. I called for that report on account of the intelligence which had reached us regarding the impurities of the beer in England. The document was forwarded to the South Australian Government, so that they should be at liberty to take what action they deemed desirable. I believe that in Victoria it has been attempted to draw a distinction in the past between the excise paid upon beer according to the materials from which it was produced, but without success. However, we shall have an opportunity of considering that matter at a later stage.

Item agreed to.

Item 34. - "Malt extract, non-spirituous . . . per lb., 2d."

Agreed to..

Item 35. - "Matches and vestas, viz. - For each 100 matches or part thereof - Wax, per gross, ls. ; Wood or other, per gross, 15d."

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I must ask the Treasurer to come to some compromise in connexion with the duty upon this item. To levy a prohibitive rate upon matches, seems to me very unfair to the general consumer. I doubt whether it would make very much difference in the price if we reduced this duty by one-half. The rate which has hitherto operated amounts to 50 per cent., and the import expenses represent an additional 15 per cent. The industry thus enjoys a protection of 65 per cent. I think that is going a little too far. This is essentially a revenue-producing article. On the other hand, it is not the sort of manufacture that we need to cultivate. It is a very unhealthy one. When honorable members visited various factories here, we saw men working under conditions which would put the kanaka in the shade. Seeing that, this is one of the lines which goes into such universal consumption, I ask the Government, from a revenue point of view, to accede to my request and reduce the duty by one-half in each case.

Treasurer

Sir GEOEGE TURNER

- It is estimated that these duties will return a revenue of £34,500 a year. I deliberately imposed a higher

amount, because I believe that we shall derive far more revenue from it than would be yielded if we reduced the rate by one-half. This duty was originally imposed in Victoria as a purely revenue duty, and for many years it was so. Latterly, however, an industry in matches has been established in Victoria. It is, perhaps, a matter for regret that such an industry - which is a very unhealthy one - has been established. But seeing that it is in our midst, I think that a large proportion of the wax matches will in future be made within the Commonwealth, and that we shall therefore lose a considerable amount of revenue. If we reduce the duty we shall certainly diminish the amount which would otherwise be derived through the customs. With regard to wooden matches, they can well afford to pay the duty, on account of the advertisement which appears upon the boxes. I understand that that advertisement is of more value than are the boxes themselves. I have looked into this matter very carefully with the view of ascertaining which was the better way of securing the largest possible amount of revenue. I came to the conclusion, after consideration and consultation with my colleagues and officers, that a larger amount of revenue would be obtained by putting on the higher rate, and under the circumstances we advise the committee to adopt the Government's proposal.

Mr WATSON

- On a former occasion I urged that this was an extremely undesirable industry to foster in the Commonwealth ; and the effect of a very high duty will be to encourage the establishment of other firms.

Sir George Turner

- All the matches, I am afraid, will continue to be supplied from the one place, whether the duty be 6d. or 1s.

Mr WATSON

- Anxious as I am that revenue should be raised, I fancy we might get the money at too great a cost if the result were the extension of the match industry in Australia.

Sir George Turner

- I should like to consider the advisability of imposing an excise duty, and obtaining revenue in that way.

Mr WATSON

- I might be prepared to agree to a proposal of that kind.

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Mr TUDOR

- The honorable member for Wentworth has suggested that men are working in Victoria under conditions which he does not consider desirable, and in justice to the firm which is engaged in match-making, I should like to point out that this does not refer to that firm, as the honorable member for Wentworth now admits ; and I should also like to point out that, although the dangers of this- industry are thoroughly recognised, the Chief Inspector of Factories in Melbourne, in his report dated the 11th December, 1900, expresses the entire satisfaction of his department with the arrangements for the conduct of the match factory at Richmond, and adds that no case of illness attributable to the process has ever been brought under his notice. The Victorian Statistical Register shows that the amount of duty paid on wax matches in 1894, instead of being £14,500, was £12,954 2s. In 1895 there were 161,854 gross of wax matches imported into Victoria under the duty of 1s. per gross. Of that number, 78,000 were from Belgium, 55,000 from Italy, and nearly 23,000 from Germany, or altogether 155,000 gross from foreign countries. If we have to use the products of dangerous industries, it is better to have the manufactory here so that we may regulate the conditions of the employment and give a fair chance of long life to those engaged, or on the other hand, we ought to abolish the industry altogether. There is a match factory in New Zealand, and a printed circular which has been issued, shows that the health of the employees there has not been affected.

Mr. BATCHELOR(South Australia).I am a protectionist, but not to the extent of establishing match factories in which the young -manhood and womanhood of these States will be given unhealthy and dangerous employment. The necessity for special supervision proves this to be an undesirable industry, and I shall not vote for any duty which might tend to the extension of the present business or the establishment of others. The imposition of a low duty would by creating competition outside, prevent the establishment' of the industry here.

Sir George Turner

- I am afraid not, and so far as I know the only effect of lowering the duty will be the loss of revenue.

Mr BATCHELOR

- My opinion is that a low duty would mean increased revenue. There are no special circumstances in Australia which enable us to produce either wax or wooden matches more cheaply than do other countries. I believe the factory referred to is all that it has been represented to be.

Sir George Turner

- The proprietors, I understand, do all they can to promote health, but the occupation is still unhealthy.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- After the intimation from the Treasurer as to the imposition of an excise duty, I would suggest that the consideration of this item be postponed until we are in possession of full information on the subject.

Sir George Turner

- I have no objection.

Mr McCOLL

- I should be very glad if the importation and making of wax matches were prohibited. Wax matches are a fruitful source of bush fires, and when the heavy duty was put on - in Victoria it was with the object of stopping their importation, wooden safety matches being at that time admitted duty free. The result, however, was the establishment of this factory which has prospered to a certain extent.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I do not agree with the suggestion that there should be an excise duty. I have received favorable reports as to the management of this match factory, but it is an industry I am not inclined to encourage. I regard this as a case for a moderate duty for revenue purposes.

Mr WILKS

- Locally made wax matches are just as dangerous so far as bush fires are concerned, as are imported matches. A prominent protectionist like the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Batchelor, regards this as an unhealthy industry, which is not worth supporting. This affords a splendid example of an industry forced into existence at the expense of the community.

Sir George Turner

- Matches are cheap enough now.

Mr WILKS

- In the report of the Victorian Tariff Board I find the following : -

If the local maker succeeds in obtaining command of the market, the loss to the revenue will be about £12,000 per year, and the tax, intended to be prohibitive, will be of less value than formerly.

In 1894 Victoria received £13,000 from the duty on matches, but in 1899 the amount derived from this source was only £3,000, showing a decrease of £10,000. That is the amount which the people of Victoria have had to pay for the establishment of the match industry. The manager of Bell's factory, in his evidence before the Tariff Board in 1895, stated that the girls employed in his factory earned, on the average, 10s. per week ; so that no inducement is offered to the most ardent protectionists to ask for a high duty for the purpose of encouraging the industry. I trust that the Treasurer will look at this matter from a revenue stand-point, and realize that by reducing the duty he will improve the prospect of deriving a large amount of revenue.

Mr POYNTON

- A duty has been levied upon matches in Victoria for some years past, and although it was imposed as a revenue duty, it has utterly failed in that respect. For the three years before 1894, the revenue derived from matches averaged £14,500 per annum, but in 1900 it had fallen to £2,950 under the influence of the duties. The inspector of factories, reporting in 1901, said that there were employed in the matchmaking industry eight males at an average wage of 18s. 8d. per week, and 41 females at an average wage of 14s. lid. per week. The industry is an unhealthy one and the wages paid are low, and we should not only abstain from encouraging the industry, but absolutely prohibit the importation of wax matches into the Commonwealth.

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Sir George Turner

- I would suggest to the honorable member that it would be better to allow the matter to stand over until I can bring forward some other scheme.

Item postponed.

Item 36 - Meats, fish, poultry, and game, viz. : - Fresh, or preserved by cold process, per lb, Id.
Potted or concentrated, including extracts of, and Caviare, ad valorem, 20 per cent.
Preserved in tins or other air-tight vessels, including the weight of contents ; also sausage casings, per lb., 2d. N.E.I., per cwt., 5s.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I move - That the word " smoked " be inserted after the word "fresh." line 2.

I propose this amendment because otherwise smoked fish, which includes many delicacies, will come under the low rate of 5s. per cwt., elsewhere provided for.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr A PATERSON

- I think I understand the meaning of a revenue duty, and the object of imposing a prohibitive or a protective duty is also clear, but I cannot conceive what purpose can be served by the proposed duty on meat's, fish, poultry and game " fresh, smoked, or preserved by cold process." The proposal appears to me to be a piece of undiluted hypocrisy intended to delude the farmer. In 1899 Australia exported 130,000,000 lbs. of frozen beef and mutton, and it is preposterous to impose any duty upon such a commodity. I do not see any object to be gained by imposing a duty on fish. There is no place on earth where' meat can be grown so cheaply as in Australia. During this month prime hind-quarters of beef have been sold in London at 3d. and 3Jd. per lb.; and it is absurd to expect that we shall have any importations of frozen meat from any part of the world between now and the day of judgment. I move -

That the words "and on and after 29th

November, 1901, free" be added to the duty " fresh, smoked, or preserved by cold process per lb. Id."

-Mr. McCOLL (Echuca).- The honorable member for Capricornia has given us a sample of the utterly inconclusive arguments which are sometimes used by free-traders. He says in effect that, because we export a large amount of frozen beef and mutton, we ought not to encourage people to embark upon the industry of preserving meat. We have the raw material at hand in abundance, and the meat preserving industry might very well assume large proportions. This is an industry which not only assists the primary producer, but affords employment to a number of tradesmen, such as carpenters and tinsmiths, and we should therefore foster it in every possible way.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I certainly must ask the committee to agree to this item. The duties under this heading will yield £100,000 in revenue, because they will apply to all importations of meats, fish, poultry, and game. A considerable quantity of meat and fish, "fresh, smoked, or preserved by cold process," is brought here from New Zealand and other places, and we expect to derive £1,500 per annum from the line which is under immediate discussion. The other lines would be far more productive. All delicacies, such as frozen salmon, ought to bear a fair duty.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member for Echuca has referred in a contemptuous manner to the arguments of the honorable member for Capricornia ; but the facts which were brought forward by that honorable gentleman were indisputable, and tended to show that with our unrivalled natural resources there was no necessity for any protective or other duty. The honorable member for Capricornia pointed out that we can grow meat more cheaply in Australia than in any other part of the world, and as we have also an ample fish supply, there is not the slightest excuse for imposing a duty of any kind. The honorable member for Echuca did not adduce any arguments in "support of his statements, and the deduction to be drawn from the facts stated by the honorable member for Capricornia are quite opposite to the conclusions at which the honorable member for Echuca seems to have arrived. The Treasurer regards preserved fish as a delicacy, but I venture to say that it. is. the commonest article of diet in many parts of Australia, and particularly among miners and others.

Sir George Turner

- I was referring to salmon. I did not say that all fish .was a delicacy.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- There is no necessity for any duty on fish or meat, whether it is preserved by hot or cold pro- . cess. As to poultry, last year the free-trade fowls of New South Wales were so prolific that we were able to send no less than 100,000 couples to London.

Mr Kingston

- The fowls in New South Wales became so distressed that the people had to import Chinese eggs.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We imported Chinese eggs, and were able to turn them into poultry and export it to compete with the pauper hens of London. Our resources here in the way of food stuffs are so abundant that we ought to be ashamed to impose a protective duty of this kind. I could understand honorable members arguing in favour of a protective duty by reason of some disadvantage under which we might labour, . but in view of our unrivalled resources no sound reason can be advanced for imposing such a duty.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I- think that the amendment is a very reasonable one, and I hope that the Government will accept it. They gave way. last night upon the proposed duty upon oysters, and this is a similar duty. It seems to me to be barbarous to put a tax upon the produce of the sea, or indeed upon any natural product. I am anxious that the

Tariff, when completed, shall be a work of art, stamped by the genius of the two great minds who have framed it, and, therefore, I do not wish to see it disfigured by duties of this kind.

Sir George Turner

- The articles to which the honorable member refers have been dutiable in all the States, with the exception of New South Wales.

Mr THOMAS

- I shall be quite willing to vote for the duty upon fresh meat and fish, and for the duty upon preserved meats, if the Treasurer will make an exemption in favour of tinned fish.

Sir George Turner

- I cannot do that, because we expect to obtain a revenue of over £90,000 from that duty.

Mr THOMAS

- Fresh fish and meat> and potted meats, are articles chiefly used by people who can afford to pay a high price for them, but tinned fish is- an article that is used by the poorer classes of the community, and especially by those in the interior. We cannot produce tinned salmon,' or other tinned fish, to any extent, and therefore the duty will give no protection to any industry.

Mr THOMSON

- To my mind the proposed duty upon frozen meat is absolutely useless, because no frozen meat will ever be imported. x Mr. Thomas. - If that is so, the duty cannot do any harm.

Mr THOMSON

- We do not want unnecessary duties upon the schedule, because they may operate in a time of scarcity and want.

Mr. A. PATERSON (Capricornia). AVith the permission of the committee, I I should like to withdraw my amendment, and to move another amendment exempting only frozen meat.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (by Mr. A. Paterson). agreed to -

That the words ' 1 Special exemption, frozen meat," be added to the item.

Mr. WATSON (Bland). - I should like the Government to consider the possibility of reducing the proposed duty upon fish, preserved in tins. This duty can give no protection to any industry, because the article is one which we cannot produce,, and it will materially increase the price of. a commodity which is largely consumed by the poorer classes of the community. In. my opinion, it should be reduced by at least one-half.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- This is a. large revenue producing duty, and, although I should like to strike out all such duties, we cannot afford to do so. The duty we propose is that which now exists in most of the States, and is anticipated to produce a very large amount of revenue. According to the calculations of experts, we expect to obtain from the duty upon, meats, fish, poultry, and game preserved in tins - £35,000 from New .South Wales,. £29,000 from Victoria, £12,000 from Queensland, £9,000 from South Australia, £4,000 from Tasmania, and £8,000 from. Western Australia, or £97,000 in all, and nearly the whole of this revenue will be obtained from tinned fish. Perhaps, when the customs returns for this month and the early part of December come to hand, I may be justified in asking the committee to reduce some of the larger

revenue producing items, but I am not prepared to do so just now. I confess I should be very glad to do that if I could. But grave responsibilities, which I shall place before the committee when dealing with the larger items, await us in the near future. In the meantime I cannot consent to the reduction of any of these large revenue-producing duties.

Mr KIRWAN

- The only objection which the Treasurer raises to the suggestion of the honorable member for Bland is that its adoption would result in a loss of revenue. The right honorable gentleman says he expects to receive about £97,000 from this particular item. But the loss which would be sustained by a reduction of this duty would not amount to anything like that sum. It is very doubtful to my mind whether it would result in any loss.

Sir George Turner

- I think it would amount to about half of the £97,000.

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Mr KIRWAN

- That would mean a loss of £48,000. If the Treasurer wishes, to obtain that amount, surely he can tax some one else in preference to the people who endure the hardships of the backblocks. Whenever prospectors go out back to open up new 'country, they carry with them a large supply of tinned meat. Western Australia, in particular, is a very large consumer of this commodity. The figures show that the importation of preserved meat into that State from foreign countries was 119,200 lbs., valued at £2,838. The imports from the Australian States amount to 3,100,000 lbs., valued at £68,000. These figures prove that this duty is altogether unnecessary from a protective point of view. Queensland alone last year exported 17,767,608 lbs., and New South Wales 11,966,000 lbs. The duty which has hitherto operated in Western Australia is ½d. per lb. The proposal of the Government is to increase that amount to 2d. per lb., thus permitting of the possibility of a combination being formed to raise the price to the consumers. The duty upon tinned fish in Western Australia is 1d. per lb. The Treasurer stated that this article of diet was not used to any great extent in the back blocks. But the importation of pickled and preserved fish into Western Australia from Great Britain and foreign countries amounts to 1,200,000 lbs., valued at £22,000; while the importations from the Australian States represent 365,000 lbs. This tax would fall purely upon the country classes, it represents a duty of over 50 per cent. In this connexion I should like to quote the wholesale prices from the lists of John Connell and Co., and Joseph Richards. From these I find that in Melbourne, on 1st September of the present year, with a duty of 2d. per lb. operating, the price of fresh herrings per dozen 1 lb. tins, Aberdeen flats, was 6s.; and in Sydney upon the same day, where no duty was operative, the price was 4s. 1½d. But immediately after the introduction of the Tariff, the price in Sydney was raised to 5s. 9d. The price of Aberdeen tails in Melbourne on 1st September last, when the 2d. duty was charged, was 6s.; whereas upon the same day in Sydney it was 3s. 10d. But as soon as the Tariff was submitted, the Sydney price rose to 5s. 6d. The price of fresh herrings in sauce in Melbourne on 1st September of this year was 8s. 6d. per dozen 1-lb. tins when a 2d. duty was being collected, as against 6s. 6d. in Sydney, where no duty was charged. But as soon as this Tariff was imposed, the price in Sydney increased to 8s. per dozen. I would like to see "tinned dog" placed on the free list, or a duty of 1d. per lb. imposed upon it, but there seems no hope of getting that. To my mind, a duty of 1d. per lb. would constitute a very fair compromise. I especially appeal to the Minister for Trade and Customs, who in the past did good service for those whom I represent, and whose sympathies; I am sure, are with me upon this matter, to agree to the reduction suggested.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I have already said that my sympathies are with honorable members who desire a reduction of this duty. If they will allow the item to pass, I will do my best to meet them when I am in possession of further information. If, however, I find that I cannot do so, I will give them an opportunity of testing the feeling of the committee upon the question of whether the duty should be 1d. or 2d. If there is one item upon which I should be glad to give way it is this one.

Mr. THOMAS(Barrier).- I think that the matter should be pressed now. I therefore move -

That The words "and on and after the 20th. November, 1901, 1d." be added to the duty "Meats, fish, poultry, and game, viz.: - preserved in tins or other air-tight vessels, including the weight of contents; also

sausage easing, per lb., 2d."

The Treasurer simply objects to any reduction of this item on the ground that he is likely to lose revenue. But I would point out that this is a duty which is not paid by the foreigner. Consequently, if the people of Australia do not pay it, they will have it in their pockets, and can be reached in some other way.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- I think the honorable member for Barrier might reasonably, consider the suggestion put forward by the Treasurer. We cannot then be in any worse position than if we take a division now, and may possibly be in a very much better one.

Mr. KIRWAN(Kalgoorlie).- I join in asking the honorable member for the Barrier to withdraw his amendment. I am perfectly certain that The case for a reduction of this duty is so strong that when it is inquired into we shall get all that we want.

Mr. THOMAS(Barrier).- Under the circumstances, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney). - I would like to draw the attention of the Treasurer to the words "including the weight of contents," and to suggest that the duty should be payable " on the full weight of all the contents of tins and vessels." In my opinion, the Treasurer's estimate of loss by reducing this duty is too high. The quantity of tinned fish consumed largely depends on the relation of its cost to the cost of other food, and I am afraid that a duty of 2d. will result in considerable reduction of import and revenue.

Item agreed to.

Item 37. - Milk, preserved, per lb., Hd.

Mr KINGSTON

- It would facilitate business if the consideration of this item were postponed until to-morrow.

Item postponed.

Item 38. - Mustard seed, per lb., 2d.

Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

- I understand that the relation between this duty and the duty of 4d. per lb. on mustard is not what it ought to be, seeing that it takes 2 lbs. of mustard seed to make. 1 lb. of mustard. I move -

That the words "and on and after 29th November, 1901, Id." be added.

Mr KINGSTON

- I am prepared to accept the amendment to make the duty on mustard seed Id., but not to reduce the duty on mustard.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- I should like to move that the item he omitted, with the view of subsequently reducing the duty on mustard from 4d. to 2d. per lb. The duty as proposed seems to me absolutely exorbitant. If the amendment of the honorable member for South Australia be adopted it will place a few mustard manufacturers in the Commonwealth in an exceedingly favorable position, considering that there will be a differential duty of 3d. per lb. in favour of those who add the cornflour or other ingredients necessary to provide a commercial mustard.

Sir LANGDONBONYTHON (South Australia). - The duties in the several States are as follow : - New South Wales, both seed and mustard free ; Victoria, £d. per lb. on seed and 2d. per lb. on the mustard ; Queensland, 25 per cent, on the seed and 3d. per lb. on the mustard ; South Australia, seed free and 3d. per lb. on the mustard ; Tasmania, 20 per cent, on seed and 3d. per lb. on the mustard ; West Australia, both seed and mustard 15 per cent. ; in Canada, seed free and 25 per cent, on the mustard.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - I should like to feel sure that in the case of the amendment of the honorable member' for South Australia failing, we are not precluded from moving that the duty on the seed be 1/2d., and that the duty on mustard be 2d.

The CHAIRMAN

- It will be necessary for the honorable member for South Australia, Sir Langdon Bonython, to withdraw his amendment if that of the honorable member for Bland is to be submitted.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- On reconsideration I think it would be well not to persist with my amendment in order that the suggestion of the acting leader of the Opposition may be put to a vote.

Amendment by (Sir William McMillan) proposed -

That the words, "and on and after the 29th November, 1901, id." be added.

Mr KINGSTON

- It is hardly worth while dividing the committee on this point, and I suggest that the mustard seed be admitted free, and the duty on mustard be 2d.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Under the circumstances, I beg leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (by Mr. Kingston) agreed to-

That the words, " and on and after 29th November, 1901, free," be added.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 39. - Mustard, per lb., 4d.

Amendment (by Mr. Kingston) agreed to-

That the words, "and on and after 29th November, 1901, 2d." be added.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 40. -

Nuts - Edible, viz. :-r-Cocoanuts, whole, per cwt., ls.; n.e.i., whole or prepared, including cocoanuts, prepared, per lb., 2d. Special, JSxempl,ion . - Copra.

Agreed to.

Item 41.-

Oilman's stores, n.e.i., including infants' and invalids' foods (special preparations of), culinary essences, non-spirituous, soap dyes, condition foods, and other preparations used in the household whether otherwise exempted or not - when in packages for retail sale, ad valorem, 20 per cent.

Exemptions.

Annatto, liquid and solid Isinglass

Rennet liquid, in packages of not less than half-a-pint.

Mr KINGSTON

- I move--

That the words, lines 1 and 2, " including infants' and invalids' foods (special preparations of) " be omitted.

The object of this amendment is to transfer these foods to the free list.

Amendment agreed to.

Sir William McMillan

- 20 per cent, is a very high duty, and I should like to know the character of the goods upon which it is to be imposed.

Mr KINGSTON

- These are such goods as are to be obtained at grocers' shops, -being" preparations used in the household, when they are packed up for retail sale.

Mr THOMSON

- Then they will be free if they are not packed for retail sale.

Mr Kingston

- That is so. a

Mr THOMSON

- This seems the most extraordinary proposal, because it ' imposes a duty on- oilmen's stores "whether otherwise exempted or not."

Sir George Turner

- That is if they are in packages. If in bulk they will be exempted.

Mr THOMSON

- Does that mean that all oilmen's stores are to be admitted free if they are not in packages for retail sale ?

Mr Kingston

- Yes, unless they are specifically mentioned somewhere else.

Mr THOMSON

- There are none mentioned elsewhere, unless in some chance item. I understand oilmen's stores as a class are dealt with in this item, and that all oilmen's stores are-free, no matter what luxuries they may be

if they are not in packages for retail sale 1

Sir George Turner

- Yes.

Mr THOMSON

- If this distinction is made between goods that are brought in in bulk and those packed in packages for retail sale, the goods will be brought in in bulk or in large packages and repacked within the Commonwealth in parcels suitable for retail sale. I object to any such distinction, because it will practically compel people to bring their goods here and repack them, and the revenue will suffer in consequence. I move -

That the words "and on and after 29th November, 1901, 15 per cent.," be added.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I hope the committee will not interfere with this item, because we expect to derive £18,000 from it. Most of the articles are included in other items of the Tariff. This item includes farinaceous foods, essences (non-spirituous), various powders, soap dyes, and a number of other articles.

Mr Batchelor

- But the Government may lose the revenue if the articles are brought in in bulk.

Mr Thomson

- Yes, and if the Treasurer will agree to strike out the words "when in packages for retail sale," I shall withdraw my amendment.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I am prepared to meet the honorable member.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (by Sir George Turner) agreed to -

That the words "when in packages for retail sale," be omitted.

Amendment (by Mr. Kingston) agreed to-

That the words "special exemption, infants' and invalids' foods (special preparations of)" be added to the item.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Items -

- Onions, per cwt., ls.

- Peel, drained' or preserved in brine, acid, or water, including the weight of liquid, per lb. , ld.

- Pickles, Sauces, Chutneys, Olives, and

Capers -

Quarter-pints and smaller sizes, per dozen, Od.

Half-pints and over quarter pints, per dozen, ls.

Pints and over half-pints, per dozen, 2s. Quarts and over pints, per dozen, 4s. Exceeding a quart, per gallon, ls. 4d.

Agreed to.

Item 45. - Potatoes, per cwt., ls. Mr. THOMAS (Barrier). - In my opinion, the committee should negative this item. I see no necessity for this duty. Surely there are no potatoes imported into the Commonwealth at ordinary times ! The only occasion on which such a thing would happen would be in time of drought, when we should get our potatoes as cheaply as possible.

Sir George Turner

- The duty will apply to potatoes that arrive here at seasons different from those in which our own crops come in.

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Mr THOMAS

- Does the Treasurer mean to say that the Commonwealth cannot provide itself with potatoes ?

Sir George Turner

- Not at all seasons.

Mr THOMAS

- Then let us get them from somewhere else, without the payment of any duty. Why should we not have good potatoes all the year round ? Not long ago, in South Australia, where they had a duty of 2s. per-

bushel on wheat, a very bad season was experienced, and wheat had to be imported to provide seed for the farmers. Notwithstanding the appeals that were made to Parliament to remove the duty, the full amount had to be paid on every bushel of wheat which was imported. If we required potatoes here at any such time of scarcity, we should not subject the imported article to a heavy duty. Sir Gkoro Turner. - Potatoes might be introduced here at any time to compete with our local produce.

Mr THOMAS

- I do not think that any cause of complaint is likely to arise on that score. I have seen potatoes so plentiful in a district near Yass that people could go into the paddocks and take as many as they wanted without payment. In an ordinary season there cannot be any competition affecting 'potatoes as far as the Commonwealth is concerned, and in a bad season we ought to admit them free. Just fancy the Warrnambool people requiring a duty on potatoes !

Mr WILKS

- I support what has been said by the honorable member for Barrier. It is a well-known fact that in a bad season in Victoria Tasmanian potatoes did enter and undersell local productions. For the sake of a revenue of £3,500 per annum the Treasurer is going to impose a duty of 20s. a ton on potatoes, 'which will injuriously affect a State that has hitherto imported them free. It is not likely that a bad season will come more than once in ten years, and even then in a large territory like Australia the drought is not likely to be universal. Therefore, I trust that the Treasurer will be, generous and give way on this item.

Mr PIESSE

- Why should honorable members ask for this item to be struck out when they have passed onions 1 For the sake of consistency we should leave ' a duty upon "potatoes.

Item agreed to.

Item 46 (Rice) postponed.

Item 47. - Sago and tapioca, per cental, 4s.

Mr MCCOLL

- I think that sago and tapioca should come-in free. They are used as food by the poor, and we do not produce them in Australia.

Mr. BATCHELOR(South Australia.)I move -

That the words "on and after November 29, 1900- 2s." be -added.

It must be remembered that sago and tapioca are the food of children of the poor. We do not grow them in Australia, and no principle of protection is involved in the duty.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Of course, if we put a duty on something which no one uses, we shall get a very great amount of revenue from it ! We have to impose duties on things which people consume. This duty amounts to less than £d. per lb., and it will bring in a revenue of £13,700. Surely £d. per lb. duty is not too much. In all probability the consumer would not pay any less if the item were reduced.

Amendment negatived.

Item agreed to. progress reported.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BARTON(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - I move -

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until tomorrow at 11 a.m.

I think that this slight respite will be agreeable to honorable members after the long sitting which is now coming to a conclusion. The Government, however, in determining how long the sitting will last, must be guided by the rate of progress made with the business before honorable members.

Mr THOMAS

- I am quite agreeable to the proposal to meet at 11 a.m. instead of half-past 10. But if, by meeting at 10.30 a.m., we shall be able to get away by the evening trains, I think it would be better to meet earlier. After this week the Government will no doubt expect us to be here almost every day right up to Christmas, and I, for one, shall be quite prepared to sit six days in the week ; but I wish to get home to-morrow night.

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Mr FISHER

- Honorable members will be glad to do what they can to enable the New South Wales representatives to

return home to-morrow afternoon j and if the sitting does not conclude in time for them to catch their train, they will no doubt be able to obtain pairs. As they have been able to go home every week during the session, they ought to find it easy to understand the desire -of other honorable members who have been kept here all the time to finish the session as soon as possible.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

Military Commandant. Motion by (Mr. Barton.) proposed - That the House do now adjourn.

Mr WILKS

- Has the Prime Minister received official confirmation of the reported acceptance by Major-General Hutton of the position of Commandant of our military forces, and if so, what are the conditions of that acceptance?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - There have been press statements that Major-General Hutton has been appointed Commandment of our military forces, but I cannot say at present that they are with foundation, because I am still without communications. These must reach me within a day or jjwo, and I hope they will settle the matter.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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23:17:00

House adjourned at 11.17 p.m. (Thursday).