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1901-06-05

HouseofRepresentatives.

Mr. Speaker took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address in Reply

Debate resumed from the 4th June (vide page 634) upon motion by Mr. W. H. Groom : -

That the following Address, in reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General, be agreed to by this House : -

May it please Your Excellency : -

We, the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the gracious speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Upon which Mr. Joseph Cook had moved, by way of amendment -

That the following words be added to the proposed Address : - " We desire, however, to inform Your Excellency that in our opinion the proposals of the speech regarding the question of what has been termed ' a white ' Australia are inadequate, and not in accord with the views of the majority of the Australian people."

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Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

- It was not my intention to take part in this debate, nor do I now intend to occupy many minutes ; but I have been tempted . to join in the discussion by the remark made by the right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, ..that the debate would be historical, as being the first to take place in this branch of the Federal Parliament. There are two matters to which I should like to refer at the outset. In the first place, as a South Australian, I would very heartily congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to the chair. Some honorable members who have alluded to your election have taken counsel with hope ; but the honorable members who come from South Australia have taken counsel with experience, and they will be surprised if you do not bring to your exalted office distinguished ability, sound judgment, and unfailing industry, and if you do not set an example of fairness and firmness which your successors will do well to imitate. I have smiled at the references which have been made to supposed physical weakness' on your part. We in South Australia have made no such discovery. If ability to do the work of two ordinary men is a sign of physical weakness, then, sir, I admit that you are physically weak, but not otherwise. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my pleasure and satisfaction at the tone and character of the debate upon the adoption of the Address in Reply. If we may judge from what has already taken place, it seems to me that Australia has every reason to congratulate itself upon the men it has selected to represent it in this Chamber. We have heard some very eloquent and some very able speeches. I am certain of this, that, if the right thing is not done in any particular matter, it will not be as the result of an inadequate statement of the case on either side. I think that the speech of the Governor General is a fairly satisfactory document. Of course I do not agree with its statements in every particular, but I recognise the difficulties of the position which Ministers occupy, and I can promise them my loyal support- of course, with the usual qualification. The Ministry are a strong team, and I am especially glad to see my right honorable friend, Mr. Kingston, occupying the position of Minister for Trade and Customs. That office is just now a very onerous one, and I am quite sure that the right honorable gentleman will spare no pains to make himself the master of the situation, nor will he lack zeal to do in every particular that which he believes to be best for the Commonwealth of Australia. The speech says that -

Bills for the firm restriction of the immigration of Asiatics, and for the diminution and gradual abolition of the introduction of labour from the South Sea Islands, will be laid before you.

I take that statement to be a declaration in favour of a white Australia, and a white Australia will have my hearty support. I am pleased to see that the Government promise legislation to create a uniform franchise for the whole of Australia. I am glad indeed to know that this is their intention, because it means that eventually the franchise for the Commonwealth will be that prevailing to-day in the State from which I come. It must be a satisfaction to everybody to know that it is now possible to have . federal legislation

upon the subject of quarantine. The necessity for such legislation has been particularly emphasized during the past fortnight. In this connexion there is just one point which I should like to mention. It seems to me that South Australia has not had that justice done to her which she ought to have had. The Adelaide authorities have in a measure been blamed for the recent outbreak of smallpox, but I should like to bring under the attention of the House the fact that it was an Adelaide medical man - Dr. Lawrence - who decided that the case of sickness on board the Ormuz was really a case of small-pox. His decision led to the people on board being sent into quarantine, and probably thus averted what might have been a serious disaster to Australia.

Estimates of expenditure will be submitted to you in due course, and will be economical.

So says the speech of the Governor-General. I come here, having pledged myself to do all that I can to prevent wasteful expenditure, and it is my intention to give effect to that pledge to the utmost of my ability.

Turning to another part of the speech I read : -

A proposal made by the Government of South Australia for the surrender by that State and the acceptance by the Commonwealth of the Northern Territory is under careful consideration.

The people of South Australia are glad to know that this matter is under consideration, but they will be still better pleased when they learn that 'the Government have decided to take over the Territory. They feel that they have already made sufficient sacrifices, and that they ought now to be relieved of the burden which the control of the Northern Territory has imposed upon them. Of course, some one may say that the burden was self-sought, and that South Australia only wants to get out of it because she has discovered that she made a bad bargain. We admit this ; but I do not see that the admission can in any way help those who oppose the taking over of the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth, and I say that on this ground: Had South Australia chosen, there is no reason at all why she should have a debt to-day in regard to the Northern Territory, nor need there have been any annual deficiency in respect to its administration. It would have been possible for South Australia to have acted in such a way that no debt would have accumulated, but then she would have been acting without any regard to the interests of the other States of Australia. Indifferent to her own individual interests, she has maintained a white Australia so far as the Territory is concerned, and it seems to me that she is

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therefore entitled to consideration at the hands of the Government.. I am certain that the request of South Australia in this matter will be backed up by the public opinion of the Commonwealth. I might elaborately prove my contention that South Australia need not have been in the position in which she stands to-day ; but I shall content myself with one quotation from a statement made by Senator Playford, who for years was the South Australian Agent General in London. This is what the honorable gentleman said : -

When I was in England as Agent-General a number of leading financiers came to me, and said - " We are willing to take over the whole of the Northern Territory, to pay the whole expense you have been put to in connexion with it, to pay you for your railways, your jetties, your Government buildings, and for the loss of revenue you have sustained during a certain number of years ;" amounting in all to close on £3,000,000. I said to them - "What are the terms?" Their reply was - " The terms are an absolute sale, with the right to do what we like with the Territory. We will form a Chartered Company to deal with it." I said in reply - " What about coloured labour ?" The answer was - " We are to deal only with the Imperial Government. You are to sell it to us, and we will deal with the home Government as to the conditions." This offer was sent out. The South Australian Government refused it, not only on the ground that it would be injurious to South Australia to have an influx of alien races into the Northern Territory, but injurious to the whole of Australia.

I should like to emphasize those last words, because it appears to me that they clearly state the position of South Australia in the past in relation to the Northern Territory. There is another point which I should like to mention, and that is that South Australia's relation to the Territory in the future will not be what it has been hitherto. To-day her hands are tied, and she will only be able to do that which is permitted by the laws of the Commonwealth. She will not be able to rid herself of the financial liability by handing the Territory over to an uncontrolled chartered company as she could have done years ago. As honorable members are aware, I have given notice of the following questions : -

Do covering sections 6 and 8 of the Commonwealth Act, in the opinion of the Government, alter the pre-existing provisional title of South Australia to the Northern Territory ?

If not, the Northern Territory being held under revocable Royal Letters Patent, and therefore liable to resumption by the Crown and direct administration by the Colonial Office, do the Government consider it expedient that any part of Australia should be without autonomous rights constitutionally secured ?

Have the Government received any assurance that, in the event of the Commonwealth not taking over the Northern Territory, South Australia will not move the Crown to be relieved of its present obligations?

Have the Government considered the special liability to Imperial criticism or veto of federal legislation applied to a part of Australia not fully conveyed to the Commonwealth or any State ?

These questions were framed in order to obtain from the Attorney-General a legal opinion upon the various points therein referred to, but the conductors of the Melbourne Argus, in an article which they were good enough to publish upon these questions, an article for which they have my thanks, and I feel sure the thanks of the people of South Australia, for directing attention to a matter of such great importance to us - seem to think that these questions cover an aggressive form of argument, and that in fact I am training a gun on Parliament. Nothing was further from my thoughts. Although I occupy a seat near the Minister for Defence, who has unmistakable military instincts, and some of the characteristics of Oliver Cromwell, I am essentially a man of peace ; and not for worlds would I threaten Parliament. All I want to do is to bring before honorable members, in as emphatic a way as I can, the position of the Northern Territory, and its actual relation to South Australia. In 1863 the Northern Territory was annexed to South Australia by Royal Letters Patent. Those letters contained a distinct condition that they might be altered or revoked at any time. In 1883 the Government of which Sir John Bray was the head applied to the Colonial Office to have the Territory absolutely annexed to South Australia. They made the further suggestion that the name of South Australia should be changed into Central Australia. But the request was refused. The Colonial Office stated that, in years to come, it was more than possible that a large population would gather in the Northern Territory, and that in that event the interests of the people there might not be identical with those of the people in the southern portion of the colony. Under such circumstances, it might be desirable to create a new colony. " But," said the Colonial Office, " that possibility seems to be in the far future, and whenever the Territory is taken from South Australia it will carry with it any debt which may be fairly chargeable to it." That is the position. It seems to me that the title to the Territory is in no way changed by the passing of the Commonwealth Act. Of course, I say this with all deference to the Attorney-General and the other legal members of the Ministry ; but my opinion is that the title to the Territory to-day is precisely the same as that which existed before the passing of the Commonwealth Act. What is that title ? It is to be found in the Letters Patent. What is there to prevent South Australia from asking the Imperial authorities to take back the Territory ? But South Australia does not want to do that. The proof that such is the fact is to be found in the policy adopted by that State in the past. She might have asked the Crown to revoke the Letters Patent, and take back the Territory ; but she did not, because she had no wish whatever to see a Crown colony created in Australia. To-day the position is different. South Australia now asks to be relieved of the burden because federation has been brought about, and there is a Commonwealth Government in existence. South Australia thinks that the Commonwealth Government ought to accept the responsibility of the Northern Territory, and personally I do not see why the Government should hesitate to take it over. Surely the explanation is not to be found in the debt, which does not amount to 2d. per acre on the total area. Then amongst the assets there is a railway, which cost considerably over £1,000,000. There is another reason why the Territory should be taken over by the Commonwealth Government ; and to this, it appears to me, there can be no reply. I was glad to see that the Melbourne Argus, in the article to which I have already referred, pointed out that the Territory is at once both the most exposed and the most defenceless portion of the continent. Australia cannot allow that condition of things to continue. It is absolutely necessary that we should provide defences for the Northern Territory. I dare say many honorable members will be much surprised when I tell them that some years ago a conference was held at which it was determined that Albany, Thursday Island, and Port Darwin should be fortified. Whilst Albany and Thursday Island have been fortified, nothing whatever has been done at Port Darwin in spite of the fact, as the Argus well put it, that the Territory is a temptation to the Asiatic peoples and is practically defenceless against them. There are three things that ought to be done in the interests of the Commonwealth. The first is that the Government should take over the Northern Territory ; the next is that Port Darwin should be properly fortified ; and the third is to do what my honorable friend Mr. "V. L. Solomon so well advocated last week, namely, construct

a railway from Pine Creek to Oodnadatta. Suppose the Northern Territory were invaded by Asiatics, what would be our position ? We should certainly be in a very awkward if not in an absolutely helpless situation. But with a railway going right across the continent, as I suggest, we should have- nothing to fear - we should be able to defend our northern shores. I now turn to the matter which in this debate has received the most attention. I refer to the fiscal issue. I do not intend to travel over all the ground which has been made so familiar by the speeches already delivered, but I will, in as few words as possible, state my position. I am neither an importer nor a manufacturer, and am therefore entirely disinterested. Like many other honorable members on both sides of this House, I wish to advocate that which I believe will be best for the Commonwealth of Australia. In the past I have taken it for granted that it would be unwise for our people to confine themselves to what are known as raw products, and I have also supposed that history taught that no nation which did that ever became great. Taking these tilings for granted, I am an advocate of moderate protection. I use the term moderate protection with deliberation. I do not advocate, and never have advocated, extreme protection. Under such a system monopolies may grow up, and then the public would suffer. J. know that under free-trade importers' rings are possible, and I have yet to learn that they are formed in the interests of the community. I advocate a policy of moderate protection, because I believe that under such a system the manufacturer acts as a check on the importer, and the importer as a check on the manufacturer. A system of reasonable protection is, it appears to me, the proper national policy for the Commonwealth to adopt, especially as Inter-State free-trade will soon prevail throughout Australia. I remember reading some years ago, in the Pall Mall Gazette, a very interesting article, the writer of which had visited one of the great exhibitions held in London, and had been much impressed by the exhibits of wool. This writer stated that before long there would be great changes in the trade of England. Raw products, he said, would not always be sent to the old country, there to be converted into manufactured articles and re-exported. The day was coming, he affirmed, when wool would be manufactured in the countries where it was grown, and Australia, being a great wool-producing country, was destined to be the centre of a great woollen industry. I have asked myself the question - Is this desirable and should we assist in the fulfilment of the prophecy of the writer in the Pall Mall Gazette ? Just recently I returned from a visit to England. A gentleman travelling by the same steamer asked me what I thought would be the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth. I replied that I believed it would be a policy of moderate protection. He said - " I am very sorry for that." I asked, "Why?" "Well," he* said, " I am the representative of a great English firm of manufacturers. We do a large trade with Australia, and we are determined to retain it. We should prefer to manufacture our goods in our factories in England and ship them out to Australia;., but I am being sent out to watch the course of events, and if Australia decides upon a policy of protection, then my instructions are to proceed at once to open a manufactory within the Commonwealth." Mr. Speaker, there can surely be no question as to. which would be the more advantageous¹, for Australia. I am not going elaborately into the question of England and free-trade. Of this I am satisfied - that when England adopted the policy of freetrade the decision was a wise one. I am not at all sure that the day will not come when the United States will be a free-trade country. But when that time arrives, the rulers of that country will have satisfied themselves that they are the masters of the markets of the world. It should be remembered that. Australia's position to-day is not that of England 60 years ago. As the honorable . member for Bendigo and the honorable member for Mernda have said, there are many thoughtful men in England who to-day are. losing their faith in the doctrines of the.. Manchester school, and are doubting whether- the policy of free-trade is of universal application.

Mr Conroy

- Name one economist in any country of the world.

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Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

- I am, now talking of public men. The honorable member for Bendigo has quoted 'from the London Times. I will supplement his quotations. Recently the Times stated that free-trade was made for England - not England for free-trade. How significant ! A few months ago I attended a great banquet in London in connexion with the Congress of Chambers of Commerce throughout the British Empire. Lord Selborne was in the chair, and in the course of his speech he stated that England had too long worshipped the fetish of free-trade. Ten years ago no chairman would have dared to utter such a statement at such a

gathering. But my point, Mr. Speaker, is not to prove that protection would be a wise policy for England. I simply wish to ask whether it would not be mere prudence on our part to pause before we adopt at the birth of this new nation a policy which is just now discredited at home by unselfish and patriotic men ? I also ask whether in this matter the other great nations of the world are the fools some people would have us believe ? Personally I am disposed to agree with Mr. Chamberlain that England does not possess a monopoly of business shrewdness and commercial aptitude. Whilst I say this I would like it to be distinctly understood that I am not a Little Englander. I believe in England and in the British Empire ; and I sincerely hope that this Federal Parliament will not only strive to advance the well-being of Australia, but to conserve the interests of the British Empire.

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Mr MANIFOLD

- I should not have addressed the House during this debate except for a remark made by the honourable member for Werriwa, who spoke last night on the question of defence. The honourable member expressed the hope that the Government of the Commonwealth would have nothing to do with what he called the trappings of militarism, and that Parliament would not increase the expenditure upon defence. He practically referred to what is generally known and frequently advocated as a standing army. I contend that it is necessary in the interests of the States of Australia to put our defences upon a proper footing. In pursuance of our principle of excluding the alien races from Australia, we may lead the mother country into complications, and we ought not only to be ready to defend our own shores, but should be ready when occasion offers to give that help to Great Britain which may at any time be necessary. I am a firm believer in citizen soldiery, but I hold that it is absolutely necessary that we should have a solid increase in our permanent forces. As to the forces stationed in the State of Victoria, the commandants at various times have referred to the very small number of permanent men engaged, in our defences, and I contend it is impossible for a militiaman or an artillery man to become effective in using the big guns which are necessary in defending our ports. Men must devote their whole life to a matter of this kind. One of the officers of the Defence department of Victoria told me the other day that one of the head gunners had left, and that it would take probably five years to effectively fill the vacancy. That should not be. There should be an increase in the permanent forces, and it is absolutely necessary our militia force should be put on a better basis than at present. That will mean increased expense - but a slight increase should be made, and the militia should be better paid. The volunteers - and I refer particularly to the volunteers of Victoria - should be able to draw their effective allowance in an easier manner than in the past. Another matter is that the guns used by the field artillery to-day in Victoria are absolutely useless. I am not aware whether the guns in the other States are in the same condition ; but I believe it would be nothing less than absolute murder to ask the field artillery of Victoria with the guns which they have at the present time to fight an enemy. It is, I believe, almost impossible to fire full charges when a royal salute is necessary, and what would be the effect if the men were asked to defend the country with such weapons ? I hope that when the Minister of Defence brings forward his proposals he will submit a better scheme than that at present in existence, and that the Defence department will be better organized. Not only should the permanent forces be increased but the militia should be better paid. One matter which affects the whole of Australia is the encouragement of cadets. We have to-day in Victoria a large number of cadets, but when those boys leave school they ought not to be lost sight of. No doubt we have senior cadets, but as they grow up they should be encouraged to maintain their connexion with the defence force, because in encouraging cadets we are preserving the interests of the Commonwealth. We are growing into a nation, and we may in future be asked to defend our shores ; and by encouraging the boys of to-day we shall have a splendid force at hand ready to fight for us when necessity arises. I know that in connexion with the Boer war in South Africa it has been contended that no training is necessary. It has been stated that citizen soldiers can fight, perhaps, as some persons would say, better than trained soldiers ; but who, I ask, were the men who used the Boer artillery ? Were they citizen soldiers ? Were they men who put in one day a week using guns, or who attended encampment for four or five days of the year ? Nothing of the kind. No doubt these men were citizens of the South African Republic, but they were trained artillerymen. It is necessary that we should have an efficient number of men ready for the defence of our harbours. Another matter I should like to refer to is that of quarantine, and I trust the Government in this connexion will introduce a measure as speedily as possible. This is a matter which affects the whole of

Australia. I do not want to cast any slight on the men who passed in the present small-pox cases ; nothing of the kind. No doubt they did their duty, but we want regulations for the whole of Australia, in order that such diseases may not be allowed to come amongst us. I am in favour of a white Australia, and no one could advocate that more strongly than I ; but I would like to ask gentlemen who have been talking so much about free-trade in the past, what free- trade means. Does it not mean freetrade in goods, and, if so, would it not mean free-trade in labour 1 Would they restrict kanakas from entering the country, and not allow Asiatics to come in, while at the same time they would allow the free importation of goods made by those races elsewhere ? Free-traders would stop our manufacturers from using this cheap labour, but, at the same time, they do not wish to stop the produce of that cheap labour from entering the country.

Mr Conroy

- I wish they would send £100,000,000 worth of goods into the country.

Mr MANIFOLD

- I do not see how manufacturers of Australia can compete against manufacturers of other countries, who pay wages such as are paid to Chinamen. It is only a matter of time when, if we allow goods to come in from China and other poorer paid Asiatic nations, our manufacturers, if they study their own interests, will shift their manufactories to those countries, instead of employing labour in Australia.

Mr Mauger

- That is going on in England now to a great extent.

Mr MANIFOLD

- What we want to do is to encourage the employment of our own people, and we have been told that we ought to encourage them by settling them on the land. I am afraid, however, that the land is not big enough to employ everybody, and, as there must be an outlet, I hope the time will come when we shall be able to make the whole of the goods we require within the Commonwealth of Australia.

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Mr PATERSON

- For eight or nine days I have sat absorbed in silent admiration of the many interesting speeches which have been made in the course of this debate, and I confess I would much prefer to retain that respectful posture, but I feel it my duty to my constituents that I should speak out my convictions in this place, desiring also to do so in testimony of my profound appreciation of the high honour and privilege of addressing this House. ' In the speech of His Excellency many very important questions are referred to, but supreme to my mind at the present moment is the question of how we are to deal with black labour ; and I shall confine my brief remarks on this subject to one department of black labour, viz., the kanakas. The settlement of this question is infinitely more important to the welfare of Australia than even the great fiscal issue. Viewed from the planter's standpoint it may be only a question of pounds shillings and' pence, but viewed from the stand-point of United Australia, it is a question involving the purity of the race - freedom from foreign diseases, contamination, and consequent degradation. I can quite understand the apathy on this question in the south, but if there were 8,000 kanakas working in the district of Riverina, one can imagine what a howl of indignation would be raised against the traffic. No Government would be able to resist the voice of the people in demanding the expulsion of the coloured workers. It was a black day for Queensland when the Government there conceived the idea of fostering the sugar industry by authorizing and encouraging the importation of kanakas, and it will be a white day for United Australia when the doom of that traffic is sealed by practical and effective legislation.

The main argument used for the retention of the blacks is that without them sugar cannot possibly be grown, but the last Royal commission in Queensland on this question agreed that it was proved the sugar could be grown by white labour only south of Townsville. At the present day there are many white settlers growing cane around Cairns, ' and a very prominent sugar refiner stated publicly more than once that if the sugar industry had a £5. protective duty it could do without black labour altogether. It may be said that it is an anomaly for a free-trader to support protection, but this matter of the sugar industry stands on altogether a different footing ; and I would rather see the most perfect and ideal fiscal scheme shattered into a thousand fragments than have a continuance of this wretched black labour. I am a patriotic Australian first and a freetrader afterwards ; and I must say I listened with considerable surprise to the remarks of the honorable member who has just sat down, when he spoke of free-traders supporting black labour. The honorable member for Moreton also, I think, stated that he could not understand how a

free-trader could vote for a white Australia. Those views appear to me somewhat incomprehensible. To begin with, black labour is not free, but is practically slave labour, and no free-trader can stand up and support any thing of a compulsory nature like that. When I say the trade is practical slavery, I do not mean to say it is a slavery by armed force ; but it is slavery by insidious contract, by which the helpless are entrapped -and kidnapped into bargains they do not understand. If the conditions under which this traffic is carried on are considered, it is seen at once there is no voluntariness in the matter at all. The planters agree to give the kanakas a bountiful supply of food suitable for them ; but it is cheap food, consisting of plenty of rice, pumpkins, bananas, and a little beef, and the planters are kind to them in providing medicine, while the services of a doctor are supplied when required. . Nor do the planters deny to the kanakas the consolation of religion. They are carried to Queensland, the land of their confinement and slavery, in beautiful ships, and are conveyed back again to the islands quite safely. But they have to work under very onerous and serious conditions which have been pointed out by more than one speaker. But, although I do not believe altogether in the extremely harrowing descriptions that we have heard of the nature of their employment, yet there is no doubt at all that sugar cultivation is very hard work. I am not aware that it is generally known that for this hard work the kanakas are paid the amazing and extravagant remuneration of 4£d. per day. Now, I call that protection, and the vilest form of protection to be found in the whole world. The second argument used in favour of the retention of black labour is that if we dispense with it, we shall throw thousands of white men out of employment. I wish to say here that some very gross exaggerations have been indulged regarding this aspect of the case, and I was delighted to hear the honorable member for Kennedy sweep away one of them having reference to the numbers of white men who would be tin-own out of employment by the abolition of black labour. As the honorable member said, the exact number, according to the most recent statistics, is 3,962 instead of the 22,550 and other ridiculous numbers that have been mentioned. The amount of capital invested in this great industry has also been considerably exaggerated. Some authorities have put it down at £5,000,000, others at £7,000,000, and still others have estimated it as high as £10,000,000. I am in a position to tell the House that according, to the same Government return, the total amount invested by the planters - and this includes the Government advances on plant - in plant and machinery, land, and buildings, is under £2,750,000, the exact figures being £2,714,122.

Mr W H GROOM

- I have figures to disprove that.

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Mr PATERSON

- These figures are to be found in the last return issued by the Queensland Government; and surely the amount mentioned is not such an alarming one to contemplate. Only the other day I noticed that a well-known pastoral company had applied to the court for authority to write down their capital by some millions, and yet people seem to get along somehow. The question we have to consider is, whether we will permit this black labour to continue, or whether we are determined to get rid of it. From my own personal experience, and from that of men who have been engaged in sugar-growing in the northern districts, I can say that the industry can be carried on without the employment of black labour. The great difficulty which the planters are confronted with is to get their sons to undertake this hard work, because the latter naturally want to get away into the big cities in order to participate in the amusements to be found there. But all the planters I have spoken to affirm that there is no physical difficulty in the matter. Even if it could be proved that we cannot carry on the industry without a certain loss of cultivation, I say it is still better, a thousand times, to dispense with black labour, and to convert these dark plantations into smiling fields cultivated by free and white labour. But whilst I speak in this way about black labour, I am not going to support the amendment of the honorable member for Parramatta, because I do not think that it is judicious. I do not think the honorable member is quite loyal, to the leader of the Opposition ; and, moreover, I do not believe in a " teasing " Opposition. I believe in a down-right, square, honest Opposition at all times. With regard to the fiscal question, I was very much interested in the speech of the honorable member for Echuca. As a business man I delight in figures. I have been accustomed to handling figures - and large figures, too - all my life, and a political speech without statistics appears to me to very much resemble a fish without bones, or a glass of soda without effervescence. If I may be pardoned for doing so, I will take the liberty of quoting some of the remarks contained in that speech. The honorable member

for Echuca said -

In the year 1890! the internal trade of the United States was £3,311,000,000, of Great Britain £1,884,000,000, of Germany, £1,501,000,000, and of France £1,324,000,000, and it will be seen that the free State occupies the second place. Now, I can quite sympathize with the honorable member's anxiety not to cast any slur on the land of his birth. The honorable member had said he did not wish to point to facts which might be thought to drag England down from her exalted position, but that he felt compelled to do so. Now, I may say that the comparison instituted is not a fair one, and I, therefore, propose to assist the honorable member in restoring England to her exalted position by instituting a comparison on the basis of population. On that basis the figures speak to quite a different tune. They show the following results : - Germany, £28 1 2s. per head ; France, £34 7s. ; United States, £45 10s. 10d.; and effete, decaying, moribund, England, £47 6s. per head !

Mr MAUGER

- Will the honorable member tell us how that is distributed ?

Mr PATERSON

- I wish to explain, for the benefit of honorable members, that I am always a little deaf when the weather is moist, so that if they wish me to hear they will have to speak in a very loud tone indeed. The honorable member for Echuca, in speaking of the imports and exports of Great Britain, said that the imports for 1897 amounted to £451,000,000, whilst the exports were only £294,000,000, thus showing a surplus of imports representing about £217,000,000. His remarks on this point were as follows : -

It is understood generally by politicians and economists that a country which is importing more than it exports is living on its capital, and is going to the bad.

I dispute that in toto. It is just the other way about. What does Mulhall say ? In the third column of a table, showing the progress of the world's trade and dealing with the trade of France, that writer says : -

Whilst the trade of the world is rapidly increasing, that of France is stationary, having increased only 1 per cent, in ten years.

I invite honorable members to mark what follows : -

Imports have declined £10,000,000, whilst exports have risen £14,000,000 in the same interval.

Mulhall therefore takes an entirely different view from the honorable member for Echuca, and I certainly agree with Mulhall.

Mr Mauger

- Can the honorable member tell the House whether France was paying off her indebtedness during a particular portion of that period ?

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Mr PATERSON

- I will come to that presently. All the 'wealthy and prosperous countries of the world, with one unique exception, have a great excess of imports over exports, thus evidencing their great wealth. Mulhall mentions, on page 360, that France has a surplus of £16,000,000 of imports over exports, , whilst thrifty Holland has £24,000,000 and Germany £40,000,000. I have no desire to make the comparison a tedious one by giving further figures ; but I may mention that there are also imports over exports credited to Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, and Singapore. In some other countries the imports and exports are about equal - such countries, for example, as Canada and Australia. But the countries whose exports exceed imports are not the rich countries we would imagine from the speech of the honorable member for Echuca, but countries which are loaded with debt. Those countries include Russia, Austria, Spain, Egypt, and, to a small extent, Australia and Cape Colony. As the Minister of Customs stated,, these surpluses are no doubt used to payoff the interest on the debt. I am not going to blink the fact that we have an extraordinary state of things in regard to the United States of America.

Mr A McLEAN

- Does the honorable member consider that the man who buys more than he sells, or who spends more than he earns, is making money ?

Mr PATERSON

- I shall answer the honorable member's question directly. The exports of the United States exceed its imports by £18,000,000. This is a great puzzle to free-traders ; but I think that a reasonable explanation is that the United States have become an enormously rich country, and that their people are able to

va,vest money in other countries. Americans own an immense amount of property in England, and have sunk a great deal of money in commercial ventures there; and to-day the finest commercial buildings in Sydney and Melbourne are buildings which have been put up with American money. I believe that that fact largely accounts for this singular state of things. With regard to the interjection, of the honorable member for Gippsland, I would point out that if the arguments of the honorable member for Echuca were applied to ordinary business concerns, they would lead us to a very strange position. Applying them to ordinary business matters, and supposing a meeting of merchants to take place in which they were discussing their commercial affairs; if one merchant said - "I have sent £1,000 worth of goods abroad as a speculation, but I have only received £900 as the result of my venture," a protectionist, being present, would say - "You must be doing first rate. You are getting £900." If a second merchant said - "I have sent abroad £1,000 worth of goods, and have received in return only £.700," the protectionist would say - "Why, you will be a rich man directly;" and if the third merchant said - "I have sent away £1,000 worth of goods, but, unhappily, they have gone to the bottom of the ocean uninsured," the protectionist would say - "Bless me, you will be as rich as Rothschild." These arguments are absurd.

Honorable Mem-bees. - Hear, hear.

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Mr PATERSON

- I hope honorable members will not take advantage of an untried politician by cheering ironically. I appeal to their sense of fairness, and to their common sense as business men. I do not profess to be a great politician, or a great theorist, but I have a practical acquaintance with figures. Another table given by Mulhall to show the progress of the world's trade from 1720 to 1859, with the details of which I will not trouble honorable members, points out that the increase of trade in all countries, both free-trade and protective, has been enormous; and I wish to draw the attention of honorable members to the following significant note:-

The greatest relative increase was in the decade between 1850 and 1860, viz., 50 percent., that period being contemporaneous with the introduction of free-trade.

The honorable member for Echuca said -

I believe in moderate, reasonable, and discriminating protection.

To describe my position, I would use exactly the same adjectives, but a different substantive. I am a moderate, reasonable, and discriminating revenue tariffist, and I believe that in the end the two terms will amount to pretty much the same thing. The honorable member says further:-

The average percentage of all, taking the total value of imports and revenue collected, is 1.14 per cent.; but deducting the exports of all goods other than Victorian, and taking the net revenue for the year, we find that the Victorian Tariff is 14.4 per cent., as against the average of all Australia of 18.1 per cent.

The Melbourne Age of the 1st June says that this average should be 10-8 per cent. I confess that that statement surprised me very much. In Queensland we have been accustomed to consider the Victorian Tariff most oppressive; and when a Victorian proposes to charge such a limited duty as 10 per cent, or 11 per cent., the position seems to me exceedingly hopeful. I can assure the House that if the proposed Tariff is framed upon such liberal lines as those, and if we are asked to vote only for duties, which will provide the necessary revenue, and will not exceed 14.4 per cent., with a., very large free list, I do not think there will be much opposition from this side of the House.

Mr Glynn

- That is an average on the whole of the imports less stimulants and narcotics, not the dutiable imports.

Mr PATERSON

- I think we ought to have a free list somewhat similar to, that now in force in Victoria, and that no duties should exceed 15 per cent. If any industry requires more than import duties of 15 per cent., in addition to the protection afforded by the shipping expenses, insurance, and other risks, which have to be borne by the imported article, not much consideration should be given to it. It would be a reflection upon the enterprise and intelligence of Australians if any manufacturer made a poor mouth, and came to Parliament for further protection, when there was an import duty of 15 per cent, upon the articles which he was engaged in manufacturing. I shall resist any attempt to impose a higher duty than 15 per cent., though I cannot see how the necessary revenue can be raised by imposing much lower duties. One remark made by the honorable member for Echuca, both New South Wales and Victorian

representatives will agree with. It is this :-

I can only tell our friends from New South Wales that if Victorians had had control of that State for the last twenty years, instead of the men who have been there, it would have been in a very different position from what it is in at the present time.

I thoroughly agree with the honorable member in saying that. There is only one other matter to which I should like to refer, and that is the choosing of a site for the federal capital. A good deal has been said on this subject, and I am not qualified to express an opinion upon any of the proposed sites; but I hope that honorable members will not be led away by glowing reports, and will not choose a site merely because, of the facilities it affords for shooting, fishing, and other field sports. We do not want to be out of the world. We do not want to be located in the Never Never country. We want to be within the bounds of civilization, so that we can have access to other human beings; and I hope that out of consideration for the thin-blooded members who come from hot districts, the situation of the capital will not be at a particularly high altitude. We do not want to be quite so near to Heaven as 3,000 feet above the sea level would bring us.

Sir William Lyne

- We shall be able to find a site which will exactly meet the honorable member's requirements.

Mr PATERSON

- The main consideration is that the site chosen shall be convenient. I do not think that questions of sport should be considered by the wise and sagacious members of this House.

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Mr KENNEDY

- In rising to address myself to the question before the House, I desire to say that, for obvious reasons, the remarks I have to offer will be very brief. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness from an educational point of view to honorable members who have already spoken. The variety of opinions which has been expressed from all parts of the Chamber confronts me with a very serious responsibility. Statements have been made from every stand-point in regard to the different questions at issue, and sheaves of statistics have been hurled upon the House to prove those statements, each set of statistics conflicting with the other set. Having read some of the speeches which have been made, and having listened patiently to others, it seems to me that the Opposition are in need of a battle cry, and, so to speak, at a loss for a battle ground upon which to test the strength of the two parties in the House. The leader of the Opposition almost declared that the Government had taken his policy; that they had hauled down the flag of protection, and had become revenue tariffists. But some of his most able lieutenants have stated that they sit on the opposition side of the Chamber because the Government, having departed from the lines of policy laid down in the speech made by the Prime Minister at Maitland, now advocate pure and undiluted protection. The ardent free-trader, as we have known him in his native habitat, says it is not the duty of this Parliament to raise all the necessary money from Customs taxation. He believes that at the outside £6,000,000 is all that should be raised by means of Customs and Excise. But those gentlemen do not say definitely how this Parliament should raise the difference between what is absolutely necessary and the £6,000,000. They do not explain whether that unenviable task should be handed over to the respective States. Complaints have been made as to the ambiguity of the Governor-General's speech, yet an amendment has been moved which for ambiguity may safely be given the bun. It may be said generally with regard to speeches from the Throne that they are specimens of magnificent ambiguity. But they profess to deal only with questions in the abstract. It is not expected that details of a Government policy will be supplied in such a document. The only important issue as to which there is any conflict of opinion is the fiscal policy which must eventually be laid before Parliament. As to what is the policy of the Government on that question, I do not think there can be any doubt in the mind of any reasonable man. As I understand the position laid down by the Prime Minister in his address at Maitland, revenue must be the first consideration of the Government in their Tariff, and the right honorable gentleman would obtain that revenue with the least possible disturbance of industrial conditions. I had the pleasure of hearing the Prime Minister address an audience in the Town Hall, Melbourne, and those were exactly the terms he used. They are also the terms used in the Governor-General's speech. A bill of fare traversing such a variety of subjects and involving so many issues could reasonably be expected from a Ministry confronting the first Federal Parliament; but no man who has had any experience of politics imagines for

one moment that the whole of that programme will be disposed of in one session. Only the most urgent matters can be dealt with, because we must realize that the whole of the machinery necessary for performing the functions devolving upon the Federal Parliament must be brought into existence during the first session. The question of ways and means is also a question to which attention must be paid in this first session. All parties in the Commonwealth are agreed that no time should be lost in giving effect to a uniform Tariff. As to what that Tariff should be, the reader or listener to the speeches which have been delivered in this House would be left in some doubt. Some of the comparisons made are beside the question. Honorable members opposite have attempted to compare things that are utterly unlike. We have frequently heard charges made as to the backward position of Victoria and her enormous loss of population during the last eight or nine years ; but any one taking an intelligent interest in Australian affairs cannot for a moment attribute that loss to the fiscal policy of Victoria. Any one looking at the situation in even a casual manner must surely remember that we had a royal spree in Victoria at the latter end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. We had to sober up after that spree. We got into the position of believing that we could become wealthy and prosperous by buying a piece of land one day and selling it at a profit the next, or by building houses in which there was no one to live, whilst neglecting our material resources. It was only after pursuing that policy for a few years until it nearly brought us to the verge of ruin that we realized the true position. But as soon as we did that the situation changed, and no one who examines the position of Victoria to-day can have any doubt as to her stability. When it is realized that the earnings of our railways have increased during the last six years by something over £600,000 per annum, notwithstanding concessions made equivalent to £50,000 during the last year, it will be seen that our position is thoroughly stable. Those who attribute the present condition of New South Wales entirely to her freetrade policy must surely have overlooked the fact that free-trade has not been in existence in New South Wales for more than five or six years at the utmost. Even during that limited period she has not had absolute free-trade. Indeed, she has not absolute free-trade now, and nothing approaching it. It is begging the whole question to say that the position of New South Wales to-day is solely the result of free-trade. I may be permitted to say, as one who has been resident in Victoria for a good many years, that I am delighted that New South Wales is in a flourishing condition. It is for the benefit of the Commonwealth as a whole that all the States should prosper. But we must not lose sight of the fact that Victoria has been a considerable factor in the development of New South Wales. With all due respect to those representing that State, I say that if we are allowed to go on in our quiet way the day is not far distant when Victoria will own New South Wales.

Sir William Lyne

- The people of Vicare coming over as fast as they can.

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Mr KENNEDY

- Yes ; New South Wales is getting as many of our people as she can, but I am sorry to say that the New South Wales Government in the past has not treated the settlers in the remote districts as well as they should be treated. It was the Victorian farmers who first helped New South Wales to grow enough wheat for her own requirements. Victorians have to a great extent developed her mines. As an honorable member said last night - go where you will throughout Australia, you will find Victorian enterprise. I was rather struck by a remark by the honorable member for Canobolas, who twitted the Victorian people with having committed almost a crime in not keeping the whole of their 120,000 boys and finding employment for them in Victorian factories during the last 12 years. But there is a limit to the numbers of pairs of boots and suits of clothes that people can wear out in a year, just as there is a limit to the number of luncheons one can eat in a day, or the number of bottles of champagne one can drink. That is the answer to the honourable member's remark.. With restricted markets we could not find work for the whole of our growing population in our factories ; and they have overflowed into the other portions of Australia. I am glad to see that they get fair treatment in some of those States. I am one of those who admit that grave responsibilities rest upon this Parliament, but when we realize the difficulties that were surmounted by those who were instrumental in achieving federation, surely we may conclude that whatever obstacles may present themselves to this Parliament will be met and overcome. They will be met in no carping spirit. AVe are not going to allow the rivalries and jealousies that have existed in the past, or the fact of a little stream or an imaginary line dividing two States, to stand between us any longer ; nor are we going to

allow our predilections for any particular shibboleth to keep us asunder. We are here to set such considerations aside. I am amongst those who lay it down as a fundamental principle that it is the first duty of a nation to conserve the best interests of its people ; and whatever will tend to develop the interests of Australia, and give remunerative and profitable employment to its people, will have my support. From my own personal and practical experience, I have never known that object achieved through, freetrade. Honorable members opposite talk about being revenue tariffists. It is sometimes difficult to know what is meant by that term. There is a distinction between its use in Victoria and in New South Wales. As we know the revenue tariffist in Victoria, he is a gentleman who would not impose a revenue duty on any article, except such as cannot be produced within the State. I do not adhere to that doctrine at all. I would discriminate, and where it is possible by the imposition of a duty to favour industries that can be established within our own borders I would do so. The honorable member for Werriwa told the House last night that it is impossible to establish compulsory arbitration by law. If I understood the honorable member aright, he is a representative of labour. Let me, in the interests of labour, remind the honorable member of what is transpiring at the present time in a sister State of the British community. The passage I will quote refers to compulsory arbitration in New Zealand. It is as follows : -

The principal points of the law are, first, procedure for voluntary arbitration with no publicity and no investigation if the parties can thus settle their difficulties among themselves, but if they cannot the law shows its other face. If their differences are irreconcilable by themselves, the parties must arbitrate if either of them so elects. Fight they shall not if either wants arbitration. The compulsion of the law is three-fold : compulsory publicity, compulsory reference to a disinterested party, and compulsory obedience to the law's awards.

Mr Conroy

- The compulsory reference can be made, I admit.

Mr KENNEDY

- What I am quoting describes the operation of the law in New Zealand, and it has been in force for six years past.

Mr Conroy

- No case has arisen under that law yet.

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Mr KENNEDY

- I will tell the honorable member about that later on. The writer I am quoting proceeds : -

The State has no powers to intervene in any dispute even for inquiry of its own motion. Those concerned sue and are sued as in other courts..... Only working men who organize and register under the arbitration law are subject to it. Compulsory arbitration is therefore, after all, voluntary arbitration so far as the working men at least are concerned, for the Act cannot be invoked by or against any working men who are not organized into a trades union. * * * *

* * On both the Board of Conciliation and the Court of Arbitration employers and employees are represented equally by men of their own choice. The presiding officer of the Court of Arbitration is a Judge of the Supreme Court of the colony. This procedure guarantees that throughout the entire investigation both sides should be represented by men of their own class, familiar with all the circumstances of their calling. Experts can be called in to represent both sides and to act as members of the boards or the court. Lawyers are not allowed to appear for either disputant except by the consent of both sides.

I do not know why exception is taken to the lawyers, except perhaps that the experience of those concerned is something like that of people in other parts of the Commonwealth. The extract continues : -

The only country in the world where there have been no strikes or lock-outs for five years is the only country in the world that has a compulsory arbitration law. That country is New Zealand, and New Zealand is to-day not only more prosperous than it has ever been before, but, so far as my observation goes, is the most prosperous country in the world. Not even a New Zealand advocate of compulsory arbitration would claim that its prosperity was due to compulsory arbitration, but the prosperity certainly has falsified all the predictions that disaster would follow.

I give these extracts for the honorable member's edification, in order that he may make an effort to keep

abreast of what is best for labour. There are many other conditions which affect labour, and we have had an instance in Victoria. Reference has been made by honorable members in different parts of the House to the abuse of sweating. We have known sweating in Victoria; and it has not been denied that sweating does exist, and can be brought into existence under a protective policy. But the same remark applies to free-trade ; we know that sweating is quite rampant under a free-trade policy. ' It is no discredit to Victoria, who has given effect to a protective policy, that she has also given effect to factory laws for the protection of the worker. So far as my information goes, in none & of the other States of the Commonwealth has any effort been made to protect the workers in the same direction as in Victoria. Of course there may be difficulties in the future under a uniform Tariff, when an attempt is made to protect workers from the rapacity of employers, seeing that the same conditions do not prevail in the other States. But it is to be hoped that we shall all get into line as to what is best for the people of the whole of Australia. It is peculiar to the position that it is not the average employer - we have in Victoria as reputable a class of employers as are to be found in the world - but it is the greedy and exceptional employers for whom we have to legislate, and we know from the reports of inspectors, and from the evidence of manufacturers and employes, that the law has operated to the best interests of all. I find my voice will not stand, and as I do not want to subject the House to an infliction, or overtax my strength, I will refer to only one or two points as briefly as possible. I wish more particularly to refer to some statements made by honorable members, and also to the difficult position in which honorable members sometimes find themselves, in relying on what they look to as authorities for guidance. The honorable member for Riverina made some comments as to the relative value of wheat in Sydney and- Melbourne as ports of shipment, and his statement as to the price cannot be challenged, because I think it is admitted by all parties that there is a difference of about twopence a bushel as between the two places. In to-day's Argus I find the price of wheat quoted in Sydney, as a port of shipment, at 2s. 7 Ad., and in Melbourne, as a port of shipment, at 2s. 9|-d., and in dealing with the causes which bring about that result we find very conflicting opinions. In the leading columns of the Argus this morning we have it stated that the facilities for shipment in Sydney are not so great or so good and are more expensive than at the port of Melbourne, and that consequently there is this difference in price. It is an extraordinary condition of affairs, and one in which wheat growers are naturally interested, more particularly the wheat growers in the district represented by the honorable member for Riverina. The statement of this morning in the Argus, to which we look for light and guidance when it speaks authoritatively on questions of fact, is : -

But wheat export expenses are heavier in Sydney than here, and naturally so, for the time being. We have been exporting in Victoria for a long term of years, and we are organised accordingly, and charges have been considerably brought down.

That would naturally be expected to be a fair statement of the facts, and I take it as such. But what do we find stated by another and quite as reliable and competent an authority, who is interested, and is actually shipping from both ports I refer to the report of an interview with Mr. R. J. Fairbairn, of the Co-operative Wholesale Society of Manchester, which is published in this morning's Argus. Referring to a shipment he is sending home to the old country, on commission, from the farmers of Riverina, Mr. Fairbairn, who is a man in the trade and should know what he is talking about, says : -

We are taking the wheat direct from the farmers, and the greater part of it comes from the Jerilderie district. Sydney is a cheaper port of shipment for us than Melbourne.

Mr Watson

- In the case of the Cooperative Company buying, as they do, direct from the farmer, the railway charges come into consideration, and the New South Wales railway charges for wheat are lower than the charges on the Melbourne side.

Mr KENNEDY

- I am stating, as correctly as I can, the facts as they present themselves to my mind, and I am desirous of ascertaining the true cause of the disparity in values. We hear different reasons given, but none of them, so far as I can form an opinion, are correct or true reasons, seeing that any of them can be so easily met.

Mr Thomson

- Does the honorable member think an English wheat buyer would give more for the same quality' of wheat in Melbourne than in Sydney, free on board.

Mr KENNEDY

- The fact cannot be denied that there is a difference of 2d. per bushel in the price at the two places.

Mr Thomson

- That may be, but the quality has to be considered:

Mr KENNEDY

- It is exactly the same quality of wheat.

Mr Thomson

- 'Who says so 1

Mr KENNEDY

- I say so, and with some knowledge, because I am growing wheat in a district in which the shipments are.

Mr Thomson

- No English wheat buyer would give 2d. per bushel more in Melbourne, free on board, than in Sydney.

Mr KENNEDY

- Mr. Fairbairn, in the course of the interview, goes on to say : -

Here the wheat would have to go to Williamstown, and, though the accommodation for shipping' is not particularly good in Sydney, it is better than here. I was surprised not to find better.

The point I want to draw particular attention to is that two authorities, both speaking in the interests of the public, are in conflict on a pure question of fact. How, then, are we to get guidance, if the authorities that are in some instances quoted in the House are 100 years old ? The fact remains that there is this discrepancy in values in favour of the vendor of wheat in Melbourne, notwithstanding the reiterated statement that greater facilities for shipment obtain in the free-trade port.

Sir William McMillan. - How does the honorable member account for the same man operating in both markets 1 He would not operate in one market if the price were different in another 1

Mr KENNEDY

- Certainly a man will operate in both markets, and the honorable member would operate in two markets, always giving his business first consideration. It has been contended that protective duties have no incidence whatever upon the value of wheat after a certain point in production has been reached. We all admit that, and there is no attempt to deny it. But I would refer to other items on the list of agricultural products, and ask those gentlemen, who proclaim so loudly the advantages of agriculture under free-trade, where the particular advantage comes in in those instances.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Will the honorable member tell us how it is that wheat is 2d. per bushel more in Melbourne?

Mr KENNEDY

- I will tell the honorable member the funny part of it, and it will tickle him as a free-trader. The vendor of wheat in Victoria gets that 2d. to put in his pocket, and the consumer of wheat in Victoria practically pays no more for his flour, because flour is quoted at exactly the same price in Sydney as in Melbourne. In New South Wales the grower loses that 2d., and the statement cannot be refuted.

Sir William McMillan

- It is a funny answer.

Mr KENNEDY

- It is a peculiar position, and as I would only be too glad to know the cause, I have referred to it, in order that the cause may be elicited. I have not been able to elicit it, but the fact remains that there is this difference in values, with flour quoted at exactly the same price, being £6 5s. in both places. Let me give honorable members a few more little items. New South Wales cannot grow potatoes enough for the consumption of that State, and is importing potatoes at £4 a ton, while the consumer in Victoria is getting the same class of potatoes at £3 15s.

Mr Poynton

- Where does New South Wales import from - from foreign powers ?

Mr KENNEDY

- New South Wales imports from Tasmania, and I do not take any objection to you importing from Tasmania or anywhere else, but when you put that forward as an advantage for freetrade

Mr SPEAKER

- Will the honorable member address the Chair 1

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Mr KENNEDY

- I regret having been called aside by an interjection. I know it is disorderly to address an honorable member directly, but one must pay a little attention at times to gentlemen who interject. Potatoes are imported at the present time into New South Wales from Tasmania ; but, when we are told what a paradise a freetrade country is for agriculturists, we naturally think that New South Wales should be able to produce sufficient for her requirements. The same thing applies to chaff, sufficient of which cannot be grown in New South waleS for the requirements of the State, although there is an unlimited area. We send chaff over from Victoria and are delighted to have the market ; it is an immense advantage to our people ; but when honorable members proclaim the advantages the agriculturists have in New South Wales, I ask how is it he has got to pay for certain produce a higher rate, plus the cost of shipment from Victoria ? We heard last night from an honorable member, who appeared to know no better, concerning the loss Melbourne is said to suffer because there is a stock tax at the border. It is to be hoped that this gentleman's education will be advanced by contact with minds that may have moved a little further forward than his seems to have done. The stock tax in Victoria is no impediment whatever on stock coming into the State for shipment or transshipment. I might tell that honorable member, who referred to the deplorable effect of the tax on Melbourne, that the people in Riverina, who, it is alleged, would send .their stock here, have one of the most magnificent chilling, freezing, and canning establishments in Australia ; but the doors of that establishment have been practically closed for the last two years. That is why there is not an export trade in Victoria to-day. It is not because the duties have hampered or restricted the trade in the slightest degree, but simply because thej7 have had no stock in Riverina. As to the honorable member's concern at the increased price of meat to the Victorian consumer, let me .tell him, as one who knows, that the Victorians have always enough money to pay for any increased cost there may be, and have never objected to pay it.

An Honorable Member. - They buy 76 lbs. of meat per head less than do the people of New South Wales.

Mr KENNEDY

- It does not seem to have agreed with them very much, although they do, perhaps, eat more meat on the average. One honorable member has stated that a number of residents in New South Wales, abutting on the Victorian border, are protectionists from a spirit of retaliation. I have a higher opinion of the people living in New South Wales than to credit them with having adopted any particular policy in a spirit of retaliation. I know, as a matter of fact, that they have been educated up to the advantages of a protective policy, and I will tell the House why. In this connexion my opinion is confirmed by a report obtained by the Government of New South Wales some few years ago upon the relative values of land on either side of the Murray River. This statement applies to any land one may select on either side of the Murray, from Albury to Echuca, and I think that is a good stretch of country. I am here to say, without fear of successful refutation, that land on the Victorian side of the river has a higher producing value, by 15 per- cent, or 20 per cent., than has that of New South Wales - land of exactly the same quality, possessing the same improvements, and situated the same distance from a railway, which, of course, provides facilities for getting to market. Why is this so ? Do honorable members opposite want the reply ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We know.

Mr KENNEDY

- Why is it?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Because .the farmers on the one side are restricted in their exports, and on the other side they are not.

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Mr KENNEDY

- It is because the farmers on the one side have their home market conserved to them, whilst the farmers on the other side are in competition with the world. Let me tell the honorable" member that wheat can be landed in Sydney from San Francisco cheaper than it can be landed there from the Murrumbidgee. Would it not be fair to put the farmers on an equality 1 Some honorable members talk about freedom of trade, but let the farmers be placed under equal conditions at the start, and let them have freedom of trade afterwards. Until the conditions are equal, freedom of trade is . impossible. Indeed, I would ask what

rights any man has excepting those conferred by his fellow men. It is our duty to conserve as far as possible the interests of our own people. Honorable members have heard the leader of the Opposition proclaiming to the House the unfortunate position occupied by the Victorian farmer by reason of his implements and his necessities, of life being taxed - of the extraordinary taxation to which he was subjected on account of the cursed protective duties. Let me give honorable members who are of a similar way of thinking a little more information, because I recognise that as soon as we get the Tariff Bill submitted, we shall not be dealing with this question in the abstract, but will be more within brick-throwing distance of each other. Regarding the undue taxation to which it is asserted the Victorian farmer is subjected on account of a protective duty upon agricultural implements, I unhesitatingly affirm that owing to that very duty he gets his implements cheaper than he would under absolute free-trade.

Mr Conroy

- How, then, can the New South Wales farmer pay higher wages 1

Mr KENNEDY

- I will give a little information to the honorable member which he can confirm later on. The honorable member will have an opportunity of refuting it when the Tariff Bill is introduced. In Victoria there are about 1,000 adults employed in the manufacture of agricultural implements. That industry has a duty of 15 per cent., and not only are the requirements of the agricultural community met as far as the implements manufactured here are concerned, but we find Victorian manufacturers exploiting New South Wales and selling the same class of implements for exactly the same price that the Victorian farmer pays for them.

Mr Poynton

- For so much less.

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Mr KENNEDY

-I say that that is not so. I challenge the fullest investigation, and the Victorian manufacturers challenge the fullest investigation also. I am in a position to speak as one who has purchased on both sides of the river from the same firm. The truth of my statement cannot be denied, and the advantages which the Victorian manufacturer gets are that he has an industry established in this State, and that there are 1,000 men employed in that industry who would not be so employed were it not for the protective duty imposed in the first instance. I do not propose to take up further time, although there are a few other fairy tales to which I would like to give attention. My state of health, however, precludes my doing so. It is refreshing to hear an honorable member like the honorable member for Capricornia say that he is prepared to have all his fiscal ideas shattered in order to preserve the purity of the race. I think that is a sentiment which will be echoed throughout this Chamber.

The preservation of the race is a subject which appeals to all patriots, and no one will attempt to gainsay the merits of that issue. Notwithstanding the impetuosity of the honorable member for Parramatta, who wants to get a little amendment supported on grounds which, to say the least of them, are very vague and shadowy, I am prepared to support the programme of the Government, believing that they will at the earliest possible moment give the House an opportunity of voicing its opinion on this question. There is no challenging the fact that wherever we have Asiatics in numbers amidst a white people, diffuse whatever educational influences we may amongst them, we can never educate them up to the level of the white. Do what we will, the Asiatics will always demoralize and degrade a certain portion of our own population, and when we cannot force people resident amongst us up to our own standard of living, I say that we should rigorously exclude them. Any proposition in that direction will have my hearty support. "Until the Government show some symptoms of disinclination to deal with this question, I am prepared to rely on the assurances which they have already given. On nearly every other item in their programme I am in complete sympathy with them, but until they have been tested by the Bills which they introduce, and until we know what they are in substance as well as in the abstract, I am prepared to give them my hearty adhesion.

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie).I must apologise for speaking at this late period of the debate. I would not have done so were it not for certain statements which have been made reflecting on the Government of which I was a member in New South Wales. Several honorable members, including the honorable member for Mernda, have alleged that that Government was untrue to its trust by mismanaging affairs, and by being dishonest to the people in dealing with loans and the finances of the State. The honorable

member for Mernda took occasion to refer to a report by a Royal commission which inquired into the financing of the Reid Government. I presume the honorable member did not know how that commission was appointed, and who constituted it. Nevertheless he took occasion to refer to the report of the commission in a way which in a measure reflected upon the Reid

Administration. Perhaps I may be pardoned for referring to the causes which brought about that inquiry. It was evidently the desire of protectionist honorable members in the New South Wales Legislature to show the people of New South Wales that the policy of free-trade and direct taxation which the Reid Government was instrumental in establishing in the State had been a failure. In order to do that they selected a body of commissioners to report on the system of keeping the public accounts adopted by the Reid Government. I am glad to find in this House an honorable member who took part in the debate in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales when the matter was discussed by the honorable member for East Sydney. At that time the present Minister for Internal Affairs was the head of the Administration. That Administration appointed at least two members of the commission who had previously expressed their opinion- against the system of accounts adopted by the Reid Government. Notwithstanding the protest made by the honorable member for East Sydney, the Government persisted in putting these two partisans on the commission.

Sir William Lyne

- The honorable member for East Sydney nominated both Mr. French and Mr. Dibbs.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- He was anxious to have a fair commission, but at the time one gentleman's name was mentioned he was not aware that that gentleman had already expressed an opinion against the system of accounts adopted by the Reid Government. I appeal to the honorable member for North Sydney to say whether Mr. Dibbs did- not x inform him some months prior to his appointment to that commission that he was opposed to the system and thought the honorable member for East Sydney wrong in the method adopted.

Mr Thomson

- Hear, hear.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Yet the Government had the audacity to place the investigation into the system of bookkeeping adopted by the Reid Government in the hands of a commission of that kind. I do not know whether any honorable member would like to be tried by two men who had already said that he was guilty of the offence with which he was charged. It is only fair that these facts should be known. I may be pardoned for pointing out that even according to the report of this commission the accounts were kept in accordance with the decision of Parliament. I will read an extract from the report bearing upon this point. The commissioners say -

We recognise that the accounts as they were submitted after the change of system to what has been termed the cash basis conform to the programme sanctioned by Parliament, and embodied in the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1895 and the Treasury Bills Deficiency Act in the same year.

Now the commissioners themselves admit, although they disapproved of the system of the Reid Government, that the accounts were kept in conformity with a decision of Parliament, and I submit that it was not for the commissioners to say that Parliament was wrong. Parliament was the superior authority.

Mr Harper

- I never said anything to the contrary.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- No, but the honorable member endeavoured to show that the free-trade Government of New South Wales had administered the finances of the State in such a way as to conceal the real state of affairs.

Mr Harper

- I did not say that at all.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member said that the Reid Government had juggled with their accounts.

Mr Harper

- I did not use that term.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I understood the honorable member for Mernda to refer to the New South Wales system of accounts as having been adopted by the leader of the Opposition in order, to bolster up his freetrade policy.

Mr Harper

- I did not say that.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I know that that statement has been made during this debate, and the honorable member referred to the matter.

Mr Harper

- I did not make the statement which the honorable member attributes to me.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I accept the honorable member's denial. The report of the commission was that the Reid Government had a substantial surplus at the close of the four years of its administration, and that statement is borne out by the condition of affairs in New South Wales to-day. The present Government of New South Wales, although they have gone from one end of the country to the other condemning the policy of freetrade and direct taxation, have not had the courage to propose the imposition of a protective Tariff, because they know that if they did so they would be driven from office. For two years this so-called protective Government have made no attempt to alter the New South Wales Tariff, and have been content to live under the financial arrangements made by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr Chapman

- They pledged themselves not to make any alteration of the Tariff.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Of course they did ; but at the same time they endeavoured to' mislead the people of the country. They wanted to show that free-trade had been a failure, and they tried to do that by getting a report from a one-sided Royal commission.

Sir William Lyne

- Does the honorable member attribute anything wrong to the members of the commission ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

-Was it a right thing to appoint to inquire into an important matter, affecting the finances of the country - which should be a non-party question - two men who had already expressed strong opinions in regard to the system of accounts which had been adopted by the Reid Government 1

Mr Watson

-What does it matter now, anyhow 1

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It may not matter much ; but I do not think it is fair for honorable members to try and show that the finances of New South Wales were used to bolster up the free-trade policy.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That was done by quoting only part of the report of "the commission.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Yes ; instead of giving the substance of the whole report. The commission reported that for the four years during which our accounts were kept under the system authorized by Parliament, the Reid Government had a substantial surplus.

Sir William Lyne

- By issuing Treasurybills.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- When we took office thehonorablemember'sGovernmenthad left us as a legacy a deficiency of £1,200,000. They had gone to the electors, and had been defeated at the polls for having mismanaged the affairs of the country; and when we came into office we had to make up the deficiency just as every free-trade Government in New South Wales has had to make up the deficiency of the protectionist Government which they succeeded. In New South Wales protection has always been intro- , duced behind the backs of tike people, and, whenever the electors have had an opportunity to express their opinion through the ballot-boxes, they have ousted the protectionist Government from office.

Mr Chanter

- That is a fairy tale.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- No protectionist Government has ever held office in New South Wales by the voice of the people.

Mr Chapman

- Did not the Reid Government spend the money which had been saved by its predecessors?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The present New South Wales Government have been living on the financial arrangements of its predecessors for two years past, and the State Premier was able to point out only last Monday that his 'accounts are in a very satisfactory condition. I refer to these matters to discountenance the statements which have been made to discredit the financial system of the leader of the Opposition. He remitted £800,000 of annual Customs revenue, and introduced direct taxation ; and his policy has been a most successful one.

Sir William Lyne

- There is still a duty of £3 per ton on sugar.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Before the Reid Government took office the duty was £5 per ton.

Mr Chapman

- Why did not that Government sweep the whole duty away ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It was being gradually removed. We took off £2 per ton, and I think that was a good instalment towards the introduction of freetrade. The remaining duty was left on for revenue purposes. I think that honorable members will admit that in New South Wales we have the freest Tariff in the world.

Mr Kingston

- Is not the honorable member forgetting the United Kingdom 1

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- No. The New South Wales Tariff is freer than that of any other country in the world, and the present protective Government admit that revenue is coming in in a most satisfactory way, so that, although their expenditure has been increased by several hundred thousand pounds, they have still a substantial surplus. Another matter to which reference has been made during the debate, and to which therefore I feel it my duty to refer, is the loan expenditure of the States of New South Wales and Victoria. I think that I shall be able to show that the figures which have been given regarding the loan expenditure of Victoria are misleading.

Sir William McMillan

- All figures require explanation.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- In New South Wales the Government borrow money, not only for the construction of railways and other public works, but also to pay for sewerage and water supply works, and the whole of this borrowing is charged to the Government Loan Account. In Victoria, however, some of these items of expenditure are not charged to the general Loan Account of the Government.

Mr Higgins

- Quite right, too.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- That may be so ; but I want to make a fair comparison between the loan expenditure of the two States.

Mr Chapman

- Did not the Reid Government pay for the painting of the park railings out of loan money ?

Sir William Lyne

- Yes ; and for the shifting of sand, too.

Mr Chapman

- What about the bull which the honorable member for Bathurst purchased out of loan money ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will deal with that matter presently.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Victorian Department of Agriculture has copied the administration of the honorable member for Bathurst.

Mr SPEAKER

- I take no notice of interjections to the honorable member who is addressing the Chair so long as they do not interfere unduly with the current of his remarks ; but I cannot allow this cross-firing from one honorable member to another. It is quite impossible for the gentlemen who are engaged in reporting our proceedings to do their work correctly while these interjections are going on.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I do not object to this by-play, and, no doubt, we shall have more of it before I sit down. According to Coghlan - and a number of honorable members who have spoken from the Government side of the Chamber have quoted that authority - the State and local government debts of New South Wales at the end of the financial year 1899-1900 was £50 per head ; whilst the indebtedness of Victoria was £5 25s. per head. Coghlan points out that the money borrowed by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is charged to that body and not to the State Government, whereas the money borrowed to carry out the works which are under the control of the Sydney Board of Water Supply, and Sewerage is charged to the Government account. In the same way, money borrowed by the Melbourne Harbor Trust is not charged to the Government loan account, whereas money borrowed to carry out harbor improvements in Sydney is charged to the Government loan account. ;

Mr Deakin

- The Melbourne Harbor Trust has not borrowed any money for years.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was first established until 1891 ; but it has already borrowed nearly £5,000,000. Honorable members have stated that, while New South Wales has been expending about £2,000,000 of loan money per annum, Victoria has expended only a few hundred thousands of loan money' per annum ; but that is not a fair statement of the position. In 1891 the money borrowed by the Government of New South Wales for their own purposes amounted to £52,950,733, and for local governing bodies £1,500,000. In 1899 the Government debt amounted to £65,332,993, and the debt of the local governing bodies to £2,736,703 ; the total amount borrowed for Government works during that period of ten years being £12,382,260, and for works carried out by local governing bodies £1,236,703 ; or £13,618,963 altogether. But in regard to Victoria, honorable members have been quoting only the amount charged to Government loans.

Mr Chanter

- Is the Sydney municipal debt charged to the general debt of the State?

Mr Conroy

- All the New South Wales municipal debts are charged to it.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am putting the figures for the two States on the same basis. In Victoria, up to 1891, the Government had borrowed £41,623,897, while £2,009,844 had been borrowed by local governing bodies. In 1899, the Government debt had increased to £49,324,885, and the debt of the local governing bodies to £11,209,844. Therefore, the borrowing of Victoria during the ten years for which I am making a comparison amounted to £5,685,988, for purely Government works, and to £9,200,000 for works carried out by local government bodies ; or a total of £14,885,988, as compared with the total of £13,618,963 borrowed in New South Wales for the same period. Why do not honorable members opposite put the case fairly, and state that the people of Victoria have borrowed in the way of Government loans and loans to municipalities, boards of works, and other local governing bodies, more money than has been borrowed during the same period by the people of New South Wales, and should thus have been able to give more employment?

Mr Mahon

- Still Victoria could not keep its population.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, which was established in 1891, has borrowed £4,500,000, while the Melbourne Harbor Trust has borrowed about £2,000,000.

Mr Harper

- In what period?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Since 1891.. The Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company also borrowed very largely.

Mr Deakin

- Since 1891?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I do not know about that, but before that date the company had borrowed to "the amount of £1,600,000 altogether. It matters not whether they borrowed since 1891 or not. I am endeavouring to show that the total expenditure of loan money in Victoria, taking Government loans and loans of local bodies, is more per head of the-population than is the amount in New South Wales. I have Mr. Coghlan's book here, and he bears out my statement.

Mr A McLEAN

- The honorable member says Mr. Coghlan is misleading. "Mr. SYDNEY SMITH.- I have never said Mr. Coghlan is misleading. He is one of the ablest statisticians we have in Australia. I believe he endeavours to be fair to all sides. I know that some arguments derived from his statistics can be quoted against our side, but I say - " Let them be quoted." Mr. Coghlan points out on page 635 -

In order to estimate the total State and municipal indebtedness, the municipal loans, as well as those guaranteed by the Government, must be added.

I thought it my duty to mention these facts in order to get rid of the charge made against the Reid Administration of bolstering up a free-trade Tariff on a false basis.

Mr Harper

- No such charge was made.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I have seen it reported in Hansard from several speakers during this debate. They endeavoured to show that free-trade in New South Wales had failed, and that, in order to make it appear successful, the honorable member for

East Sydney had found it necessary to bolster it up by putting the accounts on a wrong basis.

Mr Harper

- No.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I have shown that a commission, two members of which had given an opinion against the system of accounts before they were appointed, admitted that the Reid Ministry carried out their financial policy in accordance with an Act of Parliament. Now, my honorable friend, the Minister for Defence, is in a similar position to myself in regard to the Constitution, except that I was charged wrongfully, whilst he was charged correctly. I heard my right honorable friend make the statement as to what he was going to do with the Constitution if the Western Australia railway scheme was not carried out. The Prime Minister went to my electorate, Bathurst, and made all sorts of statements in order to bring about my defeat.

Mr Chapman

- The honorable member himself pulled the long bow pretty well.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I had to do it. I had to show up the Prime Minister in his true colours. He endeavoured to make out that because I, in common with many others in New South Wales, had the courage of my opinions in explaining my objections to the first Commonwealth Bill, I was an anti-federalist. Yet, as I am entitled to remind the House, I was a member of Sir Henry Parkes' Government, and a colleague of the honorable member for Wentworth, when the first practical step was taken to bring about federation in Australia. We endeavoured to bring about federation because we believed it to be a good thing, and I still believe it. But the case was very different when we came to consider the details of the measure that was to accomplish federation ; and I maintain that it was a fair thing for public men to express their opinions frankly at that time. I had always been in favour of majority rule. I was in favour of better provision being made in connexion with the territory of the various States, and was strongly opposed to the Braddon blot clause. Even the honorable member for Wentworth, who took a different side to myself on the question, now

admits that the Braddon clause is very dangerous, and will cause a lot of trouble in the future. Because I had the courage to express these views before my constituents at Bathurst, the Prime Minister came to my constituency and endeavoured to secure my defeat. I was aware that the people of Bathurst were strongly in favour of the Commonwealth Bill. Seventy-five per cent, of them voted for it without any amendment in it at all. They were loyal to the cause of federation all through. I told my colleagues in the Government that my attitude would probably cost me my seat. But I took up that position because I thought that before we accepted the Constitution certain amendments should be made. My constituents told me that if I persisted in that course of action my defeat for Bathurst was certain ; but I do not value a seat in any Legislature unless I can advocate that which I honestly believe to be the right policy. Therefore I determined to adhere to my opinion. The Prime Minister at Bathurst endeavoured to show that there would be a positive danger to the Constitution if I were elected even to the State Parliament. He did that although I voted as a member of the State Parliament for the final compromise which gave us the present Commonwealth Bill. What did the Prime Minister say at Bathurst? He made this statement - But it was not consistency to forget the attempts made by those to ruin the Constitution, which they, as advocates, had tried to build up. It was not consistency to assist in the elevation of a man who had tried to down that Constitution.

He said that of me. He further said -

He wanted to point out the facts of the situation to them, and the dishonesty of conviction of men who would turn upon him in the way indicated, and seek to stab him with his deadliest enemy..

I was no enemy to the right honorable gentleman, because I would never allow State politics or Commonwealth politics to interfere with my private relations with honorable members.

Sir John Forrest

- The Prime Minister was speaking politically.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Possibly, but it seems to me his remarks went further than that. The right honorable member went to a degree that I was very sorry to find in a man who has become the first Federal Prime Minister of this country. But if there was a danger in electing me, who voted for the compromise, what about the position of my right honorable friend opposite, the Minister for Defence, who got into Parliament as a friend of the Commonwealth

Constitution ? He went all round the country speaking in favour of the Commonwealth Bill, though in his heart he was a deadly enemy to it unless he could get his transcontinental railway. What about the danger to the Constitution when the right honorable gentleman said a few evenings ago that if he could not get that railway he would " burst up the show " 1

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member is putting an exaggerated construction on my words.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I understood the right honorable gentleman to make the statement to which I have alluded. The Prime Minister during this debate has also contradicted a statement which I have time after time made with regard to his utterances when he was endeavouring to induce -the people of New South Wales to accept the Braddon blot provision. We all pointed out the difficulty in regard to that provision, but what did the Prime Minister do ? He said the other evening that he had been misrepresented.

Mr Deakin

- He was referring, I think, to what occurred at the last election, not at the time of the referendum.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am showing how the Prime Minister endeavoured to deceive the people of this country by not giving them the true state of affairs. At Sydney the right honorable gentleman delivered an oration upon the Commonwealth Bill. We all admit that he can make a flowery speech, but there is nothing in his speeches and their effect does not last. The Prime Minister is thus reported in the Sydney Morning Herald.

Mr SPEAKER

- Does the honorable member intend to connect this point with the debate ? I do not yet see what it has to do with the subject.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am endeavouring to show what was the position of the Prime Minister in regard to the Tariff. He said the

other day that it would be necessary to have a Tariff of £8,500,000. I am endeavouring to show that the right honorable gentleman did not make that statement when appealing to the people of New South Wales.

Mr Deakin

- Does the honorable member mean at the time of the referendum?

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Yes. The Prime Minister then said -

I find that in these very same figures, the latest figures they give, that is to say the Customs revenue raised by all the colonies (the five colonies) during 1893-4-5, when it was averaged for the three years, comes to £5,115,000, which is more than a million more than would be required to be raised in order to get free of the trouble of Sir E.. Braddon's blot.

Then, again, the Prime Minister is reported in the Sydney Daily Telegraph as follows : -

The average Customs revenue of the three years 1892-3-4 was £5,115,000, whereas the Federal Tariff would be £5,000,000. Who, then, could say, with the Convention, that meant . a protective Tariff? There would be, no doubt, a battle over free-trade and protection on federation, but there must be a fair field and no favour. He himself was going to support a protectionist Tariff, and some of his friends in the Convention would support a free-trade Tariff. He wanted to prove that the Constitution did not necessarily mean a protective Tariff, but it left the nation free, and let the best side win. The millions given as the added cost of federation were pure invention.

The added cost would, he said, be £250,000 or £300,000. I think every one will admit that the Australian Star, of Sydney, is not a supporter of the free-trade party in New South Wales, and in that paper we read

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He denied that the Federal Tariff would have of necessity to be a protectionist one, because there was no occasion to raise more than £4,000,000.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What I object to in some of our public men is that, in order to gain their ends, they go round the country and endeavour to mislead the people by telling them that which is not in accordance with fact. The Premier is either wrong now, or must have been wrong then. He now tells us it will be necessary to . raise about £8,000,000 in order to get over the " Braddon blot" trouble. Why, when he was asking the people of New South Wales to accept the Bill, and seeking to defeat me because I pointed out the danger of the clause, did he not have the courage and fairness to point out the case as he now presents it? It is a wrong position for a man to take up, and one not becoming a gentleman who occupies such a position as does the Premier.

Mr Chapman

-^ What did the honorable and learned member for East Sydney say about the " Braddon blot " ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member can quote the honorable and learned member for East Sydney, and I will quote the Premier. I will give my honorable friend another quotation.

Mr Crouch

- What has this to do with the present position ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I did not interrupt the honorable member when he was speaking, and I ask the same fair play. I am endeavouring on the first occasion I have had the privilege of addressing honorable members to put my side of the case, and I will leave honorable members to judge whether I have good grounds for my present statements. I make those statements in no personal sense, because I have no personal feeling whatever against any member of the Government, or any one in the House, on matters of this kind. I am endeavouring to put my case fairly, and I say that I do not think it is a right thing for a man, occupying the position the Premier then, did, to go round the country misrepresenting facts. What did the Premier do for federation when he was the Attorney-General for New South Wales ?

Mr SPEAKER

- I really do not see what this has to do with the question under discussion. I hope the honorable member will confine himself to the Address in Reply.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I was only replying to an interjection, because I felt it my duty to incidentally refer to the matter, which I think I could make relevant if I wished to do so, but I have no desire to weary the House with matters of the kind. I did not intend to refer to this subject, and would not even have hinted it, but for the interjections of my honorable friends opposite. This debate has largely developed into one on the rival policies of free-trade and protection ; but, before I deal with that question, I would like to refer to that part of the speech delivered by His Excellency in which reference is made to the defences. The member for Corio expressed the opinion that we have no right whatever to pay such a large sum as we do now to assist the Home Government in maintaining- the defences of the empire.

Mr Crouch

- I did not say that.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I understood the honorable member to say so.

Mr Crouch

- What I said was, that if we spent the money, we should have some say in the policy that brought about the expenditure.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member, as a loyalist, will admit that we expend very little in comparison with the great advantage we derive in having such a great power as Britain to defend us. I look upon the small amount we contribute as a mere insurance, and as money well spent ; and I think it ill becomes an honorable member, in an important Parliament like this, to take exception to such a small amount being expended in so worthy a cause. If there is any danger at all, it is our duty to give every penny we have at our disposal in order to defend the empire, because if the empire goes down, we fall too. It is to be regretted that the Government took over the defences until they were prepared to administer them in a proper way. What power has my honorable friend opposite to administer the defences of the Commonwealth ?

Sir John Forrest

- We have all the power we ever will have.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I think my honorable friend will find he has no power. He has taken over the defences with a lot of responsibility before there is an Act of Parliament to enable him to maintain them in a proper and efficient way.

Sir John Forrest

- The Acts are all in force.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My honorable friend will find he will have some difficulty. The matter ought to be dealt with in a proper way, and a special Act passed dealing with the whole question.

Sir John Forrest

- So there will be.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I admit there will be, but I think that, before the honorable member took over the defences, he ought to have been sure of his ground, and have had the matter dealt with in something like a business way. I have taken a deep interest in agriculture all my life, and have been connected with both the farming and pastoral industries for many years, and I regret that more attention has not been given in the Governor-General's speech to the producing interests. The Government are dealing with a number of interests of great importance, but I do not think there are any more important than these two producing interests. The Government ought to consider whether it would not be wise - though I do not advocate additional Ministers, and I think the matter could easily be arranged with the number of Ministers in the Cabinet - to give one of the Ministers charge of agricultural matters. There are a number of other interests in a similar position. In Queensland, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of cattle have been lost through tick fever. The question may be thought little of by some honorable members, but - if they had had any experience of Queensland, and of the great losses which have been occasioned to the pastoralists of that country, they would admit this is a very important question, deserving every

consideration at the hands of the Government. I happened to be on a Royal commission- appointed to deal with agricultural questions, and I had as Minister of Agriculture in New South Wales to deal with them for many years, and I can, therefore, speak with authority ; but this is only one of many other matters which might be taken up by the Federal Government. There are at present seven different establishments which have control of matters in connexion with cattle 'diseases, and, of course, this means large additional expense. The same may be said in regard to diseases in fruit and other branches of the industry. The whole of these matters might, with the concurrence of the States, be under one inquiry department established by the Commonwealth. Instead of having seven or eight agencies carrying out one work, very often in an incomplete way, one agency or investigation department could carry it on to the benefit of the whole of the States more efficiently and more economically. The Federal Government would be in a better position to spend money in perfecting arrangements. I merely make the suggestion, therefore, that something may be done in regard to agricultural matters ' by the Federal Government.

Mr Deakin

- The point has already been considered.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I hope the Government will not only consider it, but will give effect to the suggestion I have made, and they may rest assured that, so far as one person can help them, I shall be only too glad to do what I can, because there can be no more worthy object than that of assisting the producer. During the debate we have had figures to show the prosperity of one State as compared with the other, and the question of population has been referred to over and over again. Although some honorable members have questioned Coghill's figures, they will admit that the population of New South Wales has increased rapidly, while that of Victoria has decreased.

Mr Deakin

- What about the other States 1

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will come to that presently.

Mr Harper

- The population of . Victoria has not decreased.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It has not increased in the same proportion as has the population of New South Wales.

Mr Harper

- That is right as applied to the last ten years.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The population has decreased, inasmuch as the departures have been more than the arrivals. From 1861 to 1899 the population of New South Wales increased by 1,000,000, while the population of Victoria increased by 400,000, so that the population of New South Wales in that period increased by 600,000 more than that of Victoria. From 1891 to 1899 New South Wales gained the excess of 230,000 in population, while Victoria gained only 23,000; even little Tasmania gained 36,000. From 1861 to 1899 New South Wales gained by the excess of arrivals over departures 349,000, while Victoria gained 10,000.

Mr Higgins

- Does the honorable member include Broken Hill ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I believe the figures include Broken Hill, but I will refer to that place presently.

Mr O'Malley

- The population of Broken Hill is South Australian.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It must be admitted that South Australia received a large amount of the benefit from the discovery of silver in New South Wales.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member was afraid South Australia would take Broken Hill?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- New South Wales will retain the benefit she now derives although I feel that if the honorable member

had had his way in the Federal Bill our parting with Broken Hill might have eventuated. The South Australian people had their eye on Broken Hill, but the Bill was so altered as to make it impossible that they could take it. New South Wales productions in 1899 amounted to £38,579,000, and the Victorian productions to only £30,800,000 ; so that New South Wales in that year produced more by £7,800,000 than Victoria.

Mr Chanter

- All pastoral products.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Surely, pastoral, mining, and agricultural industries benefit the whole country by their development. Why do honorable members continually decry one industry after another ? We have to build up this country by the development of all our industries. Notwithstanding that New South Wales produced more last year than Victoria to the extent of nearly £8,000,000, it is only fair to point out that certain productions would have amounted to a great deal more had it not been for a great drought, by which we lost no less than 25,000,000 sheep. In the same period Victoria gained both in sheep and cattle. Let us take another estimate. In 1871, the New South Wales production was £15,371,000, whilst that of Victoria was £19,260,000. In that year, therefore, Victoria produced £3,889,000 more than did New South Wales. In 1899 New South Wales produced £38,579,000 as against £30,870,000 by Victoria ; so that whilst Victoria produced £3,889,000 more than New South Wales in 1871, the latter State has since overtaken the former, and at the present time is producing nearly £8,000,000 more than Victoria. Since 1871, New South Wales has gained £23,000,000, as against Victoria's £11,000,000. As evidence that some of my honorable friends opposite are unaware of the true condition of affairs existing in New South Wales, I may point to the want of knowledge exhibited by one distinguished honorable member in this House when speaking to his constituents in Victoria during the federal campaign. I refer to the honorable member for Indi, and I am sorry he is not present. The honorable and learned member, when addressing his constituents, and contrasting the production and development of New South Wales with that of Victoria, said that the New South Wales politicians, including the honorable member for East Sydney and others, were continually referring to the great increase in production and the great strides made in population by New South Wales as compared with Victoria ; but the honorable member concluded his remarks by saying- .

Whilst these free-traders are continually pointing to statistics to show the rapid advance of New South Wales over Victoria, they forget to point out, at the same time, that New South Wales was a protectionist country till 1896.

Mr Poynton

- That is what they say to-day.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Why", honorable members have only to look at the Tariff, and they will see that New South Wales has always been a free-trade State, except when protection has been sneaked in by traitors to the country. The Prime Minister was returned by East Sydney, a free-trade constituency, as a federalist, and he could not have been so returned had he not advocated federation, and at the same time undertaken to sink the fiscal issue. He told Sir George Dibbs that he would have nothing to do with the fiscal question, and he was a supporter of the Parkes Government up till the very night of their defeat.

Mr Chapman

- Why does not the honorable member quote Sir Henry Parkes' speech in favour of protection ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My honorable friend will have plenty of opportunities to address the House. It is too bad of him to try and draw me from my argument in this fashion. I repeat that the Prime Minister told the people of East Sydney that he was going to sink the fiscal issue, and he was elected on that understanding. He went into Parliament and sat on the Government side of the House. He said he would have nothing whatever to do with Sir George Dibbs, and deprecated the introduction of the fiscal question. Yet the right honorable gentleman moved the adjournment of the debate which caused the defeat of the Government upon the Coal Mines Regulation Act. He was supporting the Government up to that occasion. I fought for the principle of eight hours for coalminers, and I never turn back upon a principle. I am prepared to surrender

my position - as I have done repeatedly - rather than go back upon my principles. The Government were defeated in 1891-

Mr SPEAKER

- Order ! Does the honorable member think that an election which took place in one of the States in 1891 has anything to do with our debates ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Yes, sir, because I am endeavouring to show the opinions of public men on the question of free-trade versus protection. Honorable members have been quoting authorities in all parts of the world, and surely I may be pardoned for quoting the utterances of the Prime Minister, the leader of the federation movement, upon this question. Honorable members are in a position to reply to me.

Mr SPEAKER

- If the honorable member will connect ' his remarks with the present issue he will be in order.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I shall endeavour to do so, and, indeed, I always do so. The Prime Minister claimed to be a federalist first, and he said that to introduce the fiscal issue meant throwing back the accomplishment of federation for years. He was a supporter of our Government up to the very night of our defeat. Within a week he had joined the Government of Sir George Dibbs as Attorney-General.

Mr Hughes

- He was a good all-round man.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- No doubt he was a good all-round man. Within a few weeks of that time the honorable gentleman brought forward a protective Tariff against the will of the people, and that Tariff remained operative whilst the Dibbs Government were in office, because the people had not an opportunity of expressing themselves upon it. But immediately the Government were forced to the country the people relegated its members once more to private life.

Mr Chapman

- The Reid Ministry came in then and continued the protective Tariff.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- We came into office and brought forward our free-trade Tariff with direct taxation. Preceding Governments had been preaching about direct taxation for years, but they were always afraid of the big interests when it came to the final struggle. It remained for the Reid Government to bring forward the policy I have indicated. We . abolished duties amounting to £800,000 a year, and brought forward a free-trade Tariff with direct taxation. The Legislative Assembly of New South Wales supported that Tariff, but the Legislative Council, a conservative body-

Mr Kingston

- No.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am stating what I know to be the facts. The Legislative Council rejected our proposals, although we had been only a few months from the people. What did we do? We did not shelter ourselves behind the Legislative Council, and say - " That Chamber has thrown out our policy," acting in the same way as the Prime Minister when putting protection on the people behind their backs. No. We dissolved the Parliament, and appealed to the people as to whether we were to have a free-trade Tariff and direct taxation. We got an overwhelming majority in our favour.

Mr Chapman

- That Government said they would clear the fossils out of the Legislative Council, but they did not do it.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- We introduced our Tariff and direct taxation, yet my honorable friends on the opposite side of the House have been trying to make the people of "Victoria believe that New South Wales has always been a protectionist country. I have referred to the speech of the honorable and learned member for Indi upon this point, and I can refer to others. I wish to say that we adopted a free-trade policy, and that on only two occasions was a protective Tariff in force in New South Wales, and then it was imposed behind the backs of the people. On both those occasions the Government which introduced the protective Tariff when

forced to go before the people were defeated by a large majority.

Mr Chapman

- What about that little tax on sugar ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I did not put any tax on sugar, but I was a member of the Government that took £2 a ton duty off sugar. Then again, my friend, the honorable member for Echuca, says - "Never mind about the employment of men." That reference by the honorable member was made in reply to a statement that "Victoria was losing her male population, and that the women were becoming the breadwinners in place of the men. The honorable member for Echuca asked what that had to do with the fiscal question. What do we find in regard to Victoria? I am not speaking in any jealous way of the State, because I recognise that we are all one people now, and, we all want to make this Federation the success which we hope it will be. I am merely endeavouring to show the fallacy of protection in the hope that Victoria will become converted to free-trade, which, I believe, she will. I find that New South Wales has 3,000 more males employed in factories than has Victoria, but that Victoria has 7,900 more women so employed.

Mr McCay

- That includes 3,000 men employed in the smelting works, does it not?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- That illustrates the way my honorable friends act. They do not seem to be concerned about the great mining industry, although there is not a more important industry in the colony. The honorable member ought to be glad to do all that he can to advance that industry, seeing that no country has more reason to feel grateful to it than has Victoria, who has practically built up her prosperity upon mining, and not upon protection.

Mr McCay

- We do not call them factories here !

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- They are put on the same footing in the statistics, and I think it only fair to class the men engaged in smelting operations as employed in an important industry.

Mr Deakin

- But not to class them as affected by the Tariff one way or the other.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- They will be affected very largely by the Tariff. If we put a very high Tariff on their machinery they will be materially affected. My honorable friend knows very well that a large quantity of machinery is imported for smelting purposes. If we put a big duty on that machinery we handicap the great mining industry of the country. New South Wales has 10,700 more males employed at the present time than she employed in 1885, whereas the number in Victoria has increased by only 2,500. Victoria in 1899 had 5,000 less males employed than she had in 1889, although, of course, she has 4,700 more women employed. The value of the plant in New South Wales is about £1,000,000 more than the value of the plant in Victoria. I mention these facts to show that the fiscal policy operating in Victoria has resulted in the exodus of the male population. It has driven them out of the country, and, of course, New South Wales is always glad to receive them. We are all of one blood. I hope honorable members will not think that I am speaking in disparaging terms of the Victorian people, because I recognise that they are as good as are the people of any other State.

Mr Harper

- A good deal better.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

-Possibly they are. At all events, they make good colonists, wherever they go. There are in my electorate a good many farmers who have come from Victoria, and I am glad to say that they are all free-traders.

Sir John Quick

- I am sorry to hear it.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am not, because they helped to put me into my present position. I think that my honorable friends, in quoting figures to show why this change has come about, have been hardly consistent. Part of the male

population of Victoria has journeyed to New South Wales and Western Australia, and I ask why, if those people found it profitable to emigrate, the people of New South Wales have not done the same? But population has not been leaving New South Wales. -" Mr. O'malley. - New South Wales people come to Tasmania.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- That is only once a year, for a holiday. The fact is that the population of New South Wales is increasing, while a great many people have been leaving Victoria to go to other States. Of course, we are glad to receive them in New South Wales, and I am sure they are glad to receive them in Western Australia; but I do not think that it is a good thing for Victoria that they should leave their own State. I remember reading in one of the Victorian newspapers that the population of a State is the best guide to its productiveness.

Mr A McLEAN

- That is, the density, of population.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will refer to the density of population when I come to deal with what Great Britain has done. The trade of New South Wales amounted to 34,000,000 in 1881, and to £54,000,000 in 1899, an increase of £20,000,000; while the trade of Victoria in 1881 was £33,000,000, and in 1899 £36,000,000, an increase of only £3,000,000; so the trade of New South Wales has increased during these years beyond that of Victoria to the extent of £17,000,000. The exports of New South Wales in 1881 amounted to £16,000,000, and the Victorian exports of that year were -about the same; but, in 1899, the exports of New >South Wales had increased to £28,000,000, while the exports of Victoria had increased to only £18,000,000.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- That is taking into account the £10,000,000 worth of wool exported from New South Wales.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My honorable friend has no right to disparage the wool industry. I do not know where he would have been if it had not been for that industry.

Sir William Lyne

- The honorable member is interested in cattle, and they do not produce wool.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- He is interested in the wool industry as well, and there are a good many sheep farmers in his constituency. Let me now give honorable members some figures in regard to Savings Banks and Building Societies' deposits. During the last ten years the depositors in such institutions in Victoria have increased by 75,000, while in New South Wales they have increased by 112,000, a difference of 47,000. During the same period the amount deposited has increased in Victoria by £3,300,000, and in New South Wales by £4,600,000; so that in ten years we have gained 47,000 depositors and £1,300,000 of deposits more than Victoria has gained. I do not say that these figures are a sound guide for the formation of an opinion regarding the relative merits of free-trade- and protection, because it is possible that in both colonies very many people may have found a more profitable investment for their capital than is offered by the institutions to which I refer; I deal with the matter only because honorable members, and especially the honorable member for Riverina and the honorable member for Mernda, have quoted these figures to prove that a protective policy has great advantages over a freetrade policy. The amount at the credit of each depositor in New South Wales is £38 12s. 10d., while the amount at the credit of each depositor in Victoria is £24 6s. 3d.; so that each New South Wales depositor has £14 5s. 10d. more to his credit than a Victorian depositor.

Sir William Lyne

- How many depositors are there in New South Wales, and how many in Victoria?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- There are more depositors in Victoria than there are in New South Wales; but, as I have just stated, I do not regard these figures as furnishing any sound ground for the formation of an opinion as to the relative merits of free-trade or protection. In 1891 there was £7,000,000 more in all the banks of Victoria than there was in all the banks of New South Wales, but to-day our general bank deposits exceed those of Victoria by £3,500,000. I admit that the financial crisis- of 1893 had a good deal to do with reducing the deposits in Victorian banks; but New South Wales was afflicted by the same crisis, though the stability of

our institutions enabled us to tide over our difficulties more easily. In the same way, I might show what immense strides have been made by the shipping of New South Wales in comparison with the progress of the Victorian shipping.

Mr Chapman

- And what about the coal industry 1

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will come to that presently. Honorable members" opposite are constantly stating that the people of New South Wales have built up their apparent prosperity by selling large areas of Crown lands. I admit that we have sold a large area of our Crown lands, but I find that we have sold only 15 per cent, of our territory, while Victoria has sold about 25 per cent, of her territory.

Sir William Lyne

- But we have obtained about £20,000,000 more from land revenue.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Honorable members forget that Victoria has obtained over £200,000,000 from her gold mines. Mr.

Deakin. - The State did not get that money. .

Sir John Forrest

- How much has New South Wales got from her coal ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Although the State did not get the £200,000,000 to which I refer, it was distributed among the people of Victoria, and in the same way the £20,000,000 of land revenue to which the Minister for Internal Affairs refers was distributed by the State amongst the people of New South Wales. In reply to the interjection of the Minister for Defence about our coal, I will compare the mineral Output of Victoria with that of New South Wales. It must be remembered, in regard to our output of silver, that £25,000,000 of it came from Broken Hill, so that the people of New South Wales have got very little advantage from it, most of it having gone to South Australia.

Mr Kingston

- But New South Wales must take credit for it.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will give New South Wales credit for it. I find that Victoria has obtained £131,000,000 more -for her mineral output than New South Wales has obtained for her output of coal, copper, silver, gold, and all other minerals. The total amount received by New South Wales for her mineral output is £126,000,000, while the mineral output of Victoria has been worth £257,000,000, of which amount £210,000,000 has been the output of her gold mines. So that Victoria has obtained £131,000,000 more for her minerals than New South Wales has obtained.

Mr A McLEAN

- That is the money which has gone to develop New South Wales and Queensland.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- If Victorians brought any of it over to New South Wales, they probably found that they could expend it there profitably, and they did not want to come back to Victoria.

Mr Chapman

- They could not get back, unless they walked back.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member was very glad to be able to ask the people of New South Wales to 'send him here as their representative, so that he should be the last to disparage that State.

Mr Chapman

- Does not the honorable member think that New South Wales could have received more benefit from the Broken Hill mines if she had had a decent Tariff?

Mr Mahon

- Or if the mines had been shifted down to Braidwood.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- If a few of us had not prevented the Federal Constitution from being accepted as originally proposed, by insisting on certain amendments, Broken Hill would not have been, left in New South Wales at all. But the

Constitution having now been accepted, I hope that all of us, including the Minister for Defence, will stand loyally by it, and try to make Australia as prosperous as we all hope it will be. Before leaving the subject of mining, I may be permitted to quote the remarks of a strong protectionist. I am sorry to learn that, while in New South Wales and Western Australia the gold and silver miners are chiefly free-traders, in Victoria a good many of them are protectionists.

Sir John Forrest

- They will change.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- They may all change under federation. The goldminers and others will see the fallacy of the arguments of the protectionists, and will realize that they have been hoodwinked for years. We are now all Australians, and are all working for the best policy.

Sir William Lyne

-Was not the honorable member a protectionist once?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I never was.

Sir William Lyne

- I think I remember the honorable member making . a protectionist speech.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable gentleman never heard me make a protectionist speech, and never knew me to vote for a protectionist policy in my life. If I had done such a thing I would not be above owning it. A man has a right to give expression to his views, and, if he sees good reason for altering them, he is perfectly at liberty to do so. I do not see why, if a. man sees that the opinions he has held in the past are wrong, he should be so headstrong as not to admit his error. But I ask, again, how you can benefit the miner by a system of protection ? Are you going to give him any more for his gold, or pay him more for his labour ? How can he be benefited when you charge him more for his clothing, his food, his candles, and all the necessaries of his life and occupation 1 Let me tell the House what the honorable and learned member for Indi said with regard to protection and the miner.

Mr Watson

- Perhaps the honorable member would put a tax on the miner's tea?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I believe that the honorable member who interrupts voted for a tax on tea.

Mr Watson

- No, I never did.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I was not in' Parliament when the tax on tea was imposed. The honorable and learned member for Indi, speaking on the Tariff question in the Victorian Parliament some years ago, said : - And the miner, how is he on a level with the worker in town? He has a weight round his neck. We are told that the miners patriotically stood by protection in the past. Are we to whip the willing horse to death ? Is protection to go on for ever to an unlimited extent - right on, as we are told, to prohibition ? Are we never to stop taxing the miner? He is the man who goes through the most arduous labour, the most dangerous pursuits, to win the wealth of the. country. And what does he get in return for it ? A promise that more burdens shall be laid upon him. His pick is weighted with taxation, every article he wears is weighted with taxation, and when he goes home every article in his house, even his knife and fork, is taxed.

That is the opinion of a strong protectionist in regard to the miners. I think those are very strong reasons against any protectionist Tariff in favour of the capitalist as against the miner. I am hopeful, I believe on good grounds, that when the whole of the facts are put fairly before the miners of this country, when it is shown to them as it has been shown to the miners of- New South Wales and Western Australia, and as it will be shown to the miners of Queensland, that the arguments are all in favour of a freetrade Tariff, and that they cannot gain anything whatever from protection, they will not consent to stand by a high Tariff in order to help other industries.

Mr Conroy

- Not other industries, but capitalists in other industries.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Yes ; that is, the owners of the industries whom protection benefits. My honorable friend the Attorney-General also made a statement at the time when the Shields Government in Victoria proposed a higher Tariff. It was in the year 1892. The honorable gentleman said : -

The problem was : Why these mills were not the success which, according to his theory, they ought to be, and why they needed this continually increasing measure of protection. That was a question he was utterly unable to answer.

The woollen factories came to Parliament with petitions for an increase of duties. The present Attorney-General pointed out that they had had protection for 22 years, and yet had gained nothing by it. He asked_ them how it was they had failed. In New South Wales some of our woollen factories are flourishing without any protection. The Parramatta Tweed Mills the other day declared a dividend of 6 per cent., and they make as good cloth as is produced anywhere in Australia, without a pennyworth of protection. The trouble with some of our factories formerly was that they did not keep up to date with their machinery.

Sir John Forrest

- They could not afford it, I suppose.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The factories cannot afford to get behindhand in machinery. If they do they must go under. A large boot factory in Sydney some time ago gave notice to some hundreds of employes, dispensing with their Services on account of the introduction of new machinery. But the manufacturer rightly pointed out that while they were discharging hands at that time, they would, owing to the new machinery, increase their output, and so give greater employment later on. At the time this machinery was introduced the industry Was tottering, but the result of the introduction of new machinery was that the output was enormously increased. In New South Wales to-day, without any protection whatever - without any duty of 2s. 6d. or 3s. a pair on imported boots - in spite of the competition of Victoria as well as of other countries, our manufactories are turning out more boots than are those of Victoria.

Mr Deakin

- That is all a mistake.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am quoting Mr. Coghlan.

Mr Deakin

- Our woollen mills are doing splendidly now, with new machinery.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- But does the honorable gentleman want the whole of the taxpayers of this country to be taxed because the woollen mills will not keep up to date with their machinery ? Is it a fair thing to tax the people 25 per cent, or 30 per cent, to enable woollen mills to keep going with out of date machinery ? Let me finish the quotation from the speech of the Attorney-General. He said : -

He would vote for an increased duty with reluctance, in miler to give the mills a last chance of establishing themselves.

After nearly 22 years of protection, that was the pitiful appeal that was made in regard to one of the great industries of Victoria.

Mr Deakin

- It is all right now, and the mills are busy and prosperous.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Honorable members opposite have talked about the agriculturists. I claim to know a little bit about agriculture, and I have no hesitation in saying that the farmers of the different States are at last alive to the facts. As pointed out by the Prime Minister on one occasion in speaking on the Commonwealth Bill, with intercolonial free-trade we may have the farmers turning towards free-trade. My right honorable friend was a true prophet in that matter.

Mr Barton

- The only difference is that the farmers have not done so.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Take my own case. I stood for a constituency in which there are four protectionist seats for the State Parliament. Two of the representatives are Ministers of the Crown - one the Colonial Treasurer, and the other the Minister for Lands. Three of those members took my opponent all round the electorate. Yet I won the seat.

Mr KING O'MALLEY

- It was due to the honorable member's personal qualities.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I do not claim any credit personally, but I give the people of the constituency credit for having the intelligence to read and master the various reasons which have been assigned for and against the proposed protectionist policy.

Mr Barton

- The result was that the people would not have the honorable member's party, but preferred us.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My right honorable friend went to them to ask them to vote against me, and they told him they did not want him. The people said they would rather trust me than a man who had told them that a Tariff producing £4,500,000 would be sufficient for the Commonwealth.

Mr Barton

- I never said that.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I have quoted the reports of the speech from the Sydney Morning Herald, the Daily Telegraph, the Evening News, and the Star. The right honorable gentleman never contradicted the statement at a time when the people could hear the contradiction.

Mr Barton

- Will the honorable member, as a matter of courtesy, allow me to explain now?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will.

Mr Barton

- The explanation is as follows : - In making my speech upon the Address in Reply, a fortnight ago, I stated that if I endeavoured to overtake all the misstatements made with regard to me I should have to work more than 24 hours a day. What I said on occasions of all kinds was, that if the Commonwealth simply had regard to its own obligations, and not those of the States in addition, a Tariff producing £4,500,000 would be sufficient, and more than sufficient, for the Commonwealth ; but I also said at the same time that if we had regard to the necessity of making sufficient returns of revenue to the States, such an amount would never be sufficient, and could not be expected to be. That is what I said ; and honorable members who, time after time, have endeavoured to put a different complexion on my statement ought to know that it applied to a state of things which had been supposed, but which never could exist under the Constitution.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I want to be fair to the right honorable gentleman, and do not wish to make any misrepresentations. I say that in a speech delivered at the Sydney Town Hall, at Ashfield, and several other places, the Prime Minister said, according to the report in the Star, which is not a free-trade journal, that the Tariff need not necessarily be a protectionist Tariff, because there was no necessity to raise more than £4,000,000 to get over the Braddon blot.

Mr BARTON

- I never said that without a qualification. Perhaps the honorable member will either accept my assurance or say that he does not.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- If the right honorable gentleman says -he did not make that statement I accept his assurance.

Mr Barton

- I say that it is a portion of what I said, but that the whole context shows that it was never in my mind to say that £4,500,000 would meet the needs of the Commonwealth and of the States.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The right honorable gentleman says now that it is impossible to have a free-trade Tariff. But what did he tell the people of New South

Wales ? He said, according to the report of the Sydney Morning Herald : -

He, himself, was going to support a protectionist Tariff', and some of his friends in the Convention would support a free-trade Tariff. He wanted to prove that the Constitution did not necessarily mean a protectionist Tariff, but it left the nation free and let the best side win. The millions given as the added cost of federation were pure invention.

Mr Barton

- Hear, hear, and if the honorable member will allow me-

Honorable Members. - Oh, oh.

Mr Barton

- The honorable member has challenged me. I have said several, times since that although it was perfectly and constitutionally possible to have either a freetrade or a protective Tariff under the Constitution, the circumstances of the States required a Tariff which must raise a certain revenue, and which must make certain returns to the Commonwealth States. It is all part of the same stream of misrepresentation which my honorable friend has unwittingly adopted.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My friend is hardly fair to me in making such a statement. I have made quotations from four journals.

Mr Barton

- I said " unwittingly " adopted.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I understood the honorable member to say something else. All I say is that it is a pity, in view of the great issues at stake, that the honorable member, when previously challenged on this matter and when before the people, did not make the explanation he has made now. It is a pity he did not tell the people what he tells them now, viz., that the " Braddon blot" means a protective Tariff. Had he done so the free-traders of New South Wales would not have been found marching on to his platform, as they did in 1898, to defeat me, but would have been found marching on the same platform as myself, determined not to endanger free-trade. All we want is a fair field and no favour. We believe that free-trade is a sound and good policy for Australia, and we are prepared to endeavour to show that it is to the interest of Australia to have a free-trade Tariff. We are quite willing to leave this matter to the judgment of the people of Australia to say whether they agree with us or not. I know very well that if the honorable member had made the statement he has made to-night, when speaking at Bathurst on the occasion of my defeat, a very different result would; have followed. He wanted to show the people that in all this talk about protection - which he now says is imperative - I was endeavouring to make an alteration which was not for the benefit of Australia, and that I was trying to hit from behind the hedge, whereas the member for Wentworth - who was in the Cabinet with me in 1890 when federation was first given practical life - and others of my colleagues, know that I was a strong advocate for federation both in the Cabinet and outside, the only difference being that I believed that certain provisions of a more democratic nature should be embodied in the Bill. I say that advisedly, and not in order to pander to anybody. I then said I did not believe in a three fifths majority but in a majority vote, and that the " Braddon blot " was placing us in an unfair position. I said I was prepared to trust the people of Australia even with an unwritten Constitution, but that I did not want Australia's hands tied in such a "way that what was right and just could not be obtained. Hence the reason why I advocated the amendments. All those gentlemen who have pointed out that we were enemies to the federal Tariff, immediately after they were defeated came on to our platform, and advocated every one of the amendments we had advocated, and tried to make it appear we were the enemies of federation. I think I have shown pretty clearly that all through my career I have been a strong federalist and voted for federation, the only difference between me and other federalists being that I wanted certain amendments. When the final compromise was brought forward during the absence of the Premier in England, and when I represented Canterbury, I was one of those who loyally supported that coin promise, because I thought it useless to fight over the small matter connected with the appeal.

Mr O'Malley

- The honorable member was converted.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I was never converted against my opinions, which were ' always in favor of federation with amendments ; it was the honorable members who opposed me in 1898 who were converted to my opinions.- I have heard a good many honorable members during this debate say that Great Britain established her industries under a protective Tariff, which had been in force for 200 years, and I have heard to my sorrow some honorable members speak in very disparaging terms of the old country.

Honorable Members. - No.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Honorable members have endeavoured to make out that England is not able to hold her own with other nations, and I think that is speaking in disparaging terms. But our people have shown that they do not fear competition. Honorable members say that England built up her prosperity under protection.

Mr A McLEAN

- Did not the honorable member's Government put a condition in a contract that material must be produced in New South Wales?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will deal with that matter present; but I never was a party to a contract of the kind.

Mr A McLEAN

- I think it was the honorable member's Government.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- At present I want honorable members to look at history a little further back, and I will not be drawn off the track by the interjection.

Mr Mahon

- The honorable member for Gippsland was the gentleman who proposed or advocated the stock tax in Victoria.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- And I daresay that accounts for the unfortunate people here being called upon to pay so much extra for everything they require. I remember only a few weeks ago, when a deputation waited on one of the Ministers of the State of Victoria - though I read the report in New South Wales, and it may not be correct - and when the workers asked for a concession, saying they could not afford to get even a little butter, the Minister told them it would not do them much harm, as he had had to do without butter for three months at a time. That was poor consolation for the workers. But my friends have pointed out that England was in a prosperous condition after 200 years of protection. If they will take the trouble to look up some of the old records in 1838, and gather the opinion of men like Gladstone - who, I have no hesitation in saying, was one of the greatest men who ever sat in the Parliaments of the old country - of Peel, Bright, Cobden, O'Connell, and other men of eminence at that time, they will find all these great intellects strongly advocating a freetrade Tariff.

Mr Kingston

- Gladstone in 1838?

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- In 1842, and in 1846 he was kept out of Parliament by the monopolist protectionists who had charge of one of the constituencies, because he had the audacity to advocate a free-trade Tariff for the workers of England. Peel, as honorable members know, was one of the strongest protectionists in England at that day, and every position and appointment he had in public affairs was due to the protectionist party. He was strongly urged to adopt freetrade and abolish the corn laws, and though, he resisted for a long time, he found the condition of the masses of England such that his heart was moved, and he could not resist the strong appeal made on behalf of the starving people. But he was slow to move. At that time there were, I think, 1,100 articles taxed through the Customs in England, and Peel put forward his first instalment of free-trade by taking off £4,000,000 of duties, with the result that, in two years exports increased by £7,000,000; and the condition of the people was improved. Then Peel came down with a freetrade Tariff, and honorable members might read with benefit his closing remarks on free-trade and protection. He pointed out that every position he had had in life had been obtained from the protectionists who were sitting behind him, and he felt that he could not expect any such assistance from the

free-traders who were then cheering him, but he said the cause was such a good one, and the condition of the people was such that he could not resist any longer. Although, as he truthfully predicted, freetrade would possibly mean his ' severance from party ties, and the loss of his great position as Prime Minister of England, all this he would sacrifice in the interests of the masses of the people. He brought in a free-trade Tariff, with the result that the day the Bill was sanctioned the protectionists, who never forgave him, ejected him from office for helping the masses. I will read extracts from the report of the Royal Commission of Land Inquiry, who at Carlisle reported to the effect that one-fourth of the population were in a state bordering on starvation, and absolutely certain to die of famine unless relieved by extraordinary exertion. That was in 1842. And again we read in a speech by Macauley at Edinburgh, in 1845 : - That everywhere were found haggard faces ; that politicians who had never been thought alarmists began to tremble for the very foundations of society. First the mills were put on short time. Then they ceased to work at all. Then went to pledge the scanty property of the artisan ; first his little luxuries, then his comforts, then his necessities.

Then again I find in the report of the Land Inquiry Commission something with regard to the condition of the labourers. That document states : -

It would be impossible to describe the privations which they and their families endure. It will be seen in evidence that in many districts their only food is potato and their only beverage water, that their cabins are seldom a protection against the weather, and that a bed or blanket is a rare luxury.

Honorable members who talk about the employment of children should read the report of the mines inquiry which sat in England in 1838. There they will see that little children, seven years of age, were called upon to labour in the coal mines of England. Let honorable members study -the concessions that have been . made to the labouring classes in England since' 1842 and they will find that nearly all those concessions have been made under a free-trade policy. The report of the committee of the United States Senate on education and labour, the chairman being a protectionist, shows that they had to listen to tales of misery and distress among American labourers rivalling in pathos any ever told of the pauper labourers of Europe. That is the report of the Royal commission which investigated this matter in 1838, after England had enjoyed protection for 200 years, according to some honorable members opposite. I could point out an extraordinary similarity between two countries - America and England. We all admit that America is a wealthy country ; but I do not admit that the formation of a large number of trusts, such as exist in America at the present time, or that the large amount of money amassed by a few individuals, is any evidence of the prosperity of that country. Mr. Peck, the New York Commissioner, speaking of the female occupants of the tenement houses, says : -

No words of mine can convey to the public any adequate conception of the truly awful condition of thousands of these suffering people. I plead for the little ones. In these days of legislative interference, when the shield of the State protects the dumb beast from the merciless blows of his driver, when the over-worked horse is remembered and released from his work, it would seem pitiable if childhood's want of leisure for rest of body and education of mind should be denied them.

On pages 174-9 he says : -

In a word, the European workman is a mechanic still, whilst the American workman has ceased to be a mechanic, and has become a machine.

Mr O'Malley

- When was that ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- In 1883.

Mr O'Malley

- But look at the condition of the country now !

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Surely to goodness about 60 or 70 years of protection ought to have brought about a better state of affairs than is shown by these reports. . The Minister for Defence tells us that protection is to be the panacea for all evils.

Mr Glynn

- Why, 150,000miners struck for higher wages in America the other day.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am coming to that presently.

Mr O'Malley

- What about the strike in New South Wales ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I will also come to that presently. I will deal with them all in good time, because to me, freetrade is an all-important question.

Mr O'Malley

- I am just as strong the other way.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It is because I feel that the success of this young nation is dependent upon the issue that will be put before honorable members in a few weeks' time that, even at the risk of wearying the House, I feel that it is a duty I owe to my . constituents and to the people, of Australia to give my opinion and to assign reasons for the faith that is in me. I will now come nearer home - I believe that Mr. Reid was Minister for Defence in Victoria under a protectionist Government.

Mr Crouch

- He is the only freetrader left in Victoria.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- At the time to which I refer he was a member of a protectionist Government, and I think the honorable member for Corio will admit that he is a good man. I believe that while Mr. Reid was Minister for Defence he visited America. And what did he say of this great country of which honorable members talk so much 1 The United States, it must be recollected, has 3,500,000 square miles of territory as against 120,000 square miles in Great Britain. Of course, I admit that the United States is a great country, and it possesses a great population.

Mr O'Malley

- And a great policy.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- No. I say that the policy is wrong. It has built up more rich men, such as Carnegie and others, than has that of any other- country.

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Mr O'Malley

- I wish we had some Carnegies in Australia.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Mr. Carnegie is doing a great deal more than are his fellow millionaires - lie is spending his money in a very laudable way. Mr. Reid, speaking in Melbourne in 1894, said -

In the great and wealthy continent of America the struggle for life was ten times more terrible than was the case in Victoria. Every man who had anything of the "spirit of a man must feel for those who, through no fault of their own had to struggle - and. struggle hard - to get food for themselves and their families.

Therefore, any man with a heart in him must have been moved by the sight he witnessed in Washington when Coxey's army appeared in the Capitol. These men, with their hungry, helpless appearance made a great impression upon his heart.

Mr O'Malley

- That was during Cleveland's free-trade POLiCy !

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It is no use the honorable member talking about freetrade at that time. The honorable member knows very well that America has had protection for years, and in 1882 Cleveland was not in power. The condition of affairs which I have described was brought about by the policy of protection.

Sir William McMillan

- Cleveland did very little to the Tariff.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- If honorable members will study the American Tariff they will find that very little of a practical nature was done by Cleveland. The honorable member for Gwydir has said that wool goes for nothing, and a lot of honorable members opposite have said the same thing. All through this debate they have been disparaging one of our great industries, viz., our wool-producing industry.

Mr Crouch

- The honorable member is wool-gathering.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My honorable friend has been wool-gathering for years, and I am afraid he will continue in that occupation for the rest of his life, judging by the speech he made the other night. I am merely quoting facts to show the great similarity that existed between Great Britain under a protectionist policy and America under a protectionist policy. The distress that prevailed in England at the time of which I am speaking was pretty well on all fours with the distress which prevails in many of the States of America. Let us turn our eyes to the strikes that are continually occurring in the United States, for higher wages. In one of these strikes the other day I believe that a lot of working men were called upon to take the place of the strikers, and the employers did all they could to prevent the possibility of the men who were clamouring for increased wages getting their case looked into. England did not benefit at all by her protective system, although some honorable members say that she is sure to revert to it.

Mr O'Malley

- It is a certainty within 20 years.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I dare say my honorable friend will affirm that he is a better authority than is Mr. Chamberlain, who said :
-

Protection is impossible, even if it were m-ise ; and it would be unwise if it were possible.

Lord Salisbury said : -

Protection is dead, and cannot be revived.

Mr O'Malley

- What does the Times say ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am reading what the two greatest statesmen in England say.

Mr O'Malley

- But the Times bosses those two men ! It says that protection was made for England, but that England was not made for protection.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I was speaking to a prominent member of the House of Commons the other day in connexion with the Irish constituencies, and he said it was impossible for any man in Ireland to advocate a protectionist policy and be returned to Parliament. The people of Ireland have had to undergo such sufferings under protection that they would not support any advocate of that fiscal system. I ask the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley - if he thinks that protection is sure to be adopted in England - to quote the name of one great man who advocates in the House of Commons a protectionist policy.

Mr O'Malley

- Lord Salisbury is a protectionist.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Lord Salisbury says that " protection is dead, and cannot be revived."

Mr Barton

- Lord Salisbury said, not once, but more than once, that the time had arrived when Great Britain should consider whether she should not exercise her power in excluding certain foreign products.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- But there was such a loud cry raised by the people in regard to that statement that Lord Salisbury quickly dropped it.

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Mr O'Malley

- Abraham Lincoln was a bigger man than Lord Salisbury, and he
I was a protectionist."

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am not going into that question at the present time. My attention has been drawn to a paragraph which appeared in an American journal not long since, wherein it is stated that 150,000 men and women in New York receive less than 2s. 6d. per day, that some of the women there work as many as eleven and

sixteen hours a day, and that in one year 82,000 families were forcibly ejected from their homes because they were unable to pay their rents. Mr Bryan, who was lately a candidate for the Presidency, referring to the causes which brought about his defeat, pointed out that it would have paid a certain Meat Trust to give away one-third of its profits in order to secure that end, because when the McKinley Tariff was assured they were able by raising the price of their meat to the consumers to increase their profits by £39,000,000.

Sir John Quick

- Could not that happen in a free-trade country ?

Sir William McMillan

- No, because there would be no duty on meat in a freetrade country.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Honorable members are continually quoting statistics to show that there is a danger of our markets being inundated with foreign productions j but a reference to statistics will prove' that a State like New South Wales gains some millions of pounds a year by the interchange of her products with a foreign country like Germany. No farmer in Australia can- be benefited by protection.

Mr Wilkinson

- The Queensland sugar growers can be benefited by protection.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I contend that protection does not benefit the producer at all, though protectionists are continually stumping- the country trying to delude farmers into the belief that a protective Tariff would help them.

Mr Mauger

- And evidently the farmers have accepted that belief, because they always return protectionists to represent them in the State Parliaments.

Mr.SYDNEYSMITH.--The constituency which I represent is largely composed of miners and farmers ; and, although it embraces four State electorates, all of which are. represented by protectionists, and these representatives worked to secure the return of a protectionist to the Federal Parliament, the free-traders scored a victory in each State electorate. The farmers say - " We used to hear protectionists talk to us about the unfairness of allowing the produce of Victoria to come into New South Wales to compete with our produce, while we -were debarred from sending our produce to Victoria. But, now that we are to have intercolonial free-trade, protection will not benefit us."

Mr Bamford

- What about the Californian apples which are imported into Sydney ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- We produce 7,000,000 bushels of wheat more than we require for our own consumption. In the same way, our output of dairy produce is more than is required for the home market. In my opinion, our butter industry in time will not be second even to our wheat industry ; and I see no reason why it cannot capture the English market just as the Denmark butter has done.

Mr Mauger

- But Denmark is not a free-trade country.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Denmark established her butter industry by giving State - attention to agriculture, as I have always advocated that our Governments should do,, and by sending competent men to see that her productions were properly placed on the English market. It is only by following her lead in that matter that we can defeat the rings which exist in the home markets ; and I do not think that our farmers have hitherto had fair play in this regard. Although, as I have pointed out, a large number of our farmers were in the past urged to vote for protection in order to retaliate upon Victoria, now that we are going to have intercolonial free-trade they find that the position is very greatly changed. The scales have fallen from their- eyes, and they realize that free-trade must benefit them. I ask honorable members how can protection benefit a community which is overproducing? Will it help our farmers to close our ports, and prevent vessels from coming here ? If no interchange of trade is allowed, what will they do with their surplus produce.

Mr Kennedy

- We can ship produce from Melbourne as cheaply as they can ship it from Sydney.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- But if we put a wall round Australia, it would not help our farmers, who must find a market for their surplus production in Great Britain. The price of wheat in this country is now ruled by the Mark-lane prices. The honorable member for Moira stated this evening that there is a difference of 2d. a bushel between the price of wheat in Melbourne and the price of wheat in Sydney. The difference in price may arise from the fact that the conveniences of transit are less in Sydney than they are in Melbourne. At any rate, he cannot say that it is due to protection. He knows, for instance, that in Sydney wool has to be carted from the railway station to the various wool stores . and wharfs, and that of course increases the cost of handling. In the same way, the cost of handling wheat may be greater in Sydney than in Melbourne, and that may increase the price.

Mr Kennedy

- I understand that the values which have been given are store values in each case.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- That may be so ; but the difference cannot be due to protection.

Mr Chanter

- Why is flour the same price in both States ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- That question does not bear upon the point at all. My honorable Mend cannot show that protection will enable our farmers to get higher prices for their wheat or for their dairy produce.

Mr Kennedy

- It is a peculiar thing that the price of dairy produce is higher in Melbourne than it is in Sydney.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My honorable friend must admit that, as we have a surplus of dairy produce and of wheat, we must sell that surplus at whatever prices we can get. for it in the English markets. If we had no markets in England for our surplus production, the price received by the producers for whatever they sold locally would be very much reduced, because of the increased competition. It is against common sense to argue that a farmer who is over-producing can be benefited by protection, because he must depend upon outside markets to get rid of his surplus production. Instead of benefiting the farmer, protection increases the cost of the drapery, hats, boots, agricultural machinery, and other things which he has to buy.

Mr Mauger

- Boots are cheaper here than in New South Wales.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I know that they are not, because I have bought boots here. If protection, does not increase the price of these articles, why do the manufacturers ask for it ? Honorable members say - " Do not let this country be flooded with the pauper-made goods of other countries."

They say - " Do not allow these goods to come in from countries where they have low wages, and where the workmen are compelled to remain at their employment for very long hours." Where do these goods come from ? What countries do honorable members refer to ? Is it not a fact that the countries in which the longest hours are worked and the lowest wages paid are protectionist countries ? If protection has been such a splendid thing for them, how is it that they have so many paupers in those countries ?

Mr Mauger

- It is not so.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Honorable members opposite have to admit the fact.

Mr Mauger

- We do not admit it.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What are my honorable friends afraid of? In view of the fact that in Australia we have a natural protection in the way of distance, freight, and so forth, what more do they want ?

Mr Kennedy

- What we want is to develop our home industries.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I have shown that the home industries of New South Wales have increased more than those of Victoria,

and that our population has increased to a greater extent also. Increasing the population is a natural industry, is it not ? It ought to be, at any rate. Victoria should look after her population. That is one of the most important things a country can look after.

Mr. Kennedy. - We are not sorry for our people who have gone to New South Wales ; they are doing very well there.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Honorable members must admit that protection of the kind I have described cannot possibly do any good. Now, Mr. Speaker, the other night the honorable member for Bendigo took the trouble to refer to a certain authority against free-trade. It was almost the only authority to which he did refer. If protection is such a splendid thing, why do not honorable members opposite give us a number of authorities to show that it has done so much good ?

Mr Mauger

- Does the honorable member think that if his authorities were writing now, fifty or sixty years later, they would write as they did ?

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I cannot say what they would do fifty or sixty years after they wrote. I cannot answer puzzles of that kind. I can only give testimony based upon the experience of the past. The honorable member for Bendigo quoted John Stuart Mill as an authority in favour of protection. I really cannot understand my honorable friend quoting that economist, because all through his book John Stuart Mill exposes the fallacies of protection.

Mr Barton

- He was in favour of protection in young countries. In a recent book written by Mr. G. W. Smalley, one of the most brilliant journalists in America, formerly the representative of the New York Tribune, and now the Washington correspondent of the Times, he shows that Mill stated in conversation that he had changed his views in regard to free-trade during the latter part of his life.

Mr SPEAKER

- The Prime Minister has already spoken.

Mr Barton

- I thought my honorable friend wanted to hear Mill's opinion.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am very glad to hear my right honorable friend's view upon this question. I will read John Stuart Mill's opinion, merely remarking that, if he expressed different views in the same book, I am afraid we cannot place much reliance upon his opinion. He says : -

We will begin by passing in review various false theories which have from time to time formed the ground of acts of government, - more or less economically injurious..... Of these false theories the most notable is the doctrine Of protection to native industries. To prohibit importation or impose duties which prevent it is to render the labour and capital of the country less efficient in production than they would otherwise be, and compel a waste of the difference between labour and capital necessary for the home production of the commodity, and that which is required for producing the things with which it can be purchased from abroad. The amount of natural loss thus occasioned is measured by the excess of the price at which the commodity is produced over that at which it could be imported. The most effective of their fallacies is the specious plea of employing our own countrymen and our national industry instead of feeding and supporting the industry of foreigners. Regarded as a general theory, the protectionist doctrine finds support, in some particular cases, from considerations which, when really in point, involve greater interests than mere saving of labour : the interests of national interests, of national defence.

Then the passage quoted by the honorable member for Bendigo comes in, but I need not read it again now. It only goes to show that Mill was not in favour of protection, which lie looked upon as a fallacy. My honorable friends opposite are, of course, at liberty to hold a different opinion on this subject from that which I hold, but I have now shown, from my point of view, the fallacies of protection as exhibited in America and in England prior to 1840. I point also to the fact that Victoria has made little progress under protection, although the system has taken millions of pounds out of the pockets of the consumers. Even the honorable and learned member for Indi and the Attorney-General have had to admit that it has failed

to a great extent, although they do not understand the failure. We, as free-traders, understand the causes, and knew very well that it would fail. I was reading an article the other day which referred to the condition of England after 50 years of free-trade as compared with her position before the free-trade era.

Mr Mauger

- Does the honorable member mean her agricultural condition?

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- We have to take a country according to its circumstances. Some countries are suitable for agriculture and others for manufactures. It is very amusing to hear my honorable friends opposite admitting indirectly that New South Wales has progressed to a greater extent than Victoria, although the former State has adopted a free-trade policy. They are continually saying that the reason is that New South Wales has about four times the extent of territory that Victoria possesses. Yet in the same breath they refer to the prosperity of the United States of America as compared with England, although the United States have a territory of 3,500,000 square miles, whereas Great Britain has 120,000 square miles. I have ' taken the trouble to compare the progress of Great Britain under 50 years of free-trade. What do I find 1 In population Great Britain has increased by 13,500,000. Her commerce, imports and exports, has increased by £646,000,000. Her tonnage of shipping has increased by 6,000,000. Her coal mining industry has increased by 225,000,000 tons. The textile goods manufactured have increased in value by £83,000,000 sterling. Her wealth has increased by £7,300,000,000. Her national revenue has increased by £64,000,000. Her customs duties have been reduced from 1,021 articles in 1840, to about 26 articles at the present time; and she has reduced customs duties from 41 per cent, in 1837, to less than 5 per cent, in 1900. Her banking power has increased by £873,000,000. Her banking clearing-house accounts paid in have increased by £5,523,000,000. Her hardware trade has increased by £74,000,000. Letters passing through the Post-office daily have increased by 7,300,000, and newspapers by 7,800,000. The number of persons able to read and write have increased by 15,400,000. School children have increased by 4,074,000. Dwelling-houses of the value of over £20 per annum have increased by 6 SI, 000. Then look at the death-rate. I may be asked how this affects the question of free-trade and protection. The answer is that the people under free-trade are better housed, better fed, and better clothed than under protection ; and therefore the death-rate of Great Britain has decreased by four per 1,000. Good consumption has increased in the case of meat by 34 lbs. per head of the population, by 96 lbs. of wheat, 50 lbs. of sugar, and 51 ozs. of tea. Then as to paupers. I heard my honorable friend the Attorney-General the other night say there were 2,000,000 paupers in Great Britain.

Mr Mauger

- He said there were 2,000,000 on the verge of starvation.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- He said nothing of the kind.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I believe the honorable gentleman is reported as saying that there are 2,000,000 paupers in Great Britain at the present time.

Mr Barton

- I think lie said people technically called "paupers," using a statistician's phrase.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I have taken the trouble to get the number of paupers in the year 1800 under a system of protection. According to Mulhall there were then 1,300,000 paupers out of a population of 27,000,000, whereas at the present time there are less than 1,000,000 paupers in England, although the population has been increased by 13,500,000.

Mr Kingston

- Does not Mulhall show that the pauper rate of England is four times that of France ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I do not think Mulhall says that. If my right honorable friend will look up the statistics, I think he will find reasons given in regard to the pauper rate in the two countries.

Mr Kingston

- Mulhall says that the pauper rate is 2 '8 in England, -4 in Russia, 7 in Germany, and -8 in Austria.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I hope my right honorable friend does not recommend for Australia a policy such as they have in Russia
1

Mr Chapman

- That is the policy the honorable member is fighting for.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am fighting for the policy which has made England the greatest country under the sun. An honorable member has handed Hansard containing the remark of the Attorney-General to which I alluded just now, and I find that the gentleman is reported as saying that there are 2,000,000 paupers in England. If, however, the honorable gentleman says that he did not intend to convey that meaning I accept his explanation at once. But the facts go to show that the British people are not so badly off as the Attorney-General wished us to believe. If the right honorable gentleman goes back to the dark ages of protection, he will find that 50 in every 1,000 of the people were then paupers. I call them the dark ages, because it is the opinion not of myself alone, but of the greatest men who ever sat in the British Parliament, that the days of protection were the dark ages of England.

Mr Kingston

- Are not 30 per cent, of" the people over 65 years of age paupers in England ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Nothing of the kind. I have quoted the progress made by Great Britain - a country, if I remember correctly, not half the size of France - under 50 years of free-trade.. I showed that although her population had. increased by 13,000,000, the number of' paupers decreased by over 300,000.

Mr Kingston

- Yet the number is four times what it is in a protectionist State.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Then my honorable friends say that the manufacturing' industries of England are going down, but as an illustration to the opposite effect I will take the cotton industry. There is not a pound of raw material produced in England, most of it coming from America and India, and we find that, although the manufacturers in England have to import the raw material, out of £101,000,000 of trade in cotton goods, the little country has a monopoly of over £66,000,000. That shows what can be done by people under a policy of free-trade.

An Honorable Member.- - England does more trade in manufactured cotton than America, which has the raw material.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- America, with all the raw material, has only about 6 per cent, of the trade. I have another extract from an article in the Age of 22nd

April, 1901. Honorable members are continually saying that the condition of the British workman is' worse than it was many years ago.

An Honorable Member. - No honorable member said that.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- My honorable friends opposite want to make out that England owes all her prosperity to protection.

Honorable Members. - No, no.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am glad my friends now go back on that statement, because all through- New' South Wales, protectionists were continually pouring into the ears of the people statements to the effect that England built up her prosperity under protection.

Mr Mauger

- - Built up her industries..

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- And" to build up her industries means, I suppose, to build up her prosperity ?

Mr Mauger

- Not always.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- To a large extent it does ; at any rate, building up the industries must be a material help in bringing about the prosperity . of the country. The Age, in the article mentioned, says -
And the outlook for the future is anything but reassuring. The cost of the production of all descriptions of manufactured goods has largely increased of late in the United Kingdom, owing to the advance of the wages that have ' to be paid to workers and- to the amelioration in labour conditions resulting from recent legislation. To what extent these latter have influenced the cost of production may be gathered from the report issued by the labour department of the Board of Trade, which says - "The net result of the changes in wages of all classes of workpeople in 1899 was an aggregate rise of wages of no less than £115,000 per week, compared with £95,000 in 1898, and £45,000 in 1897. . . . Great, however as was the rise of wages in 1899, it has been considerably exceeded in the eight months of 1900 which have already elapsed (October, 1900). The change recorded during this period may have affected nearly a million individuals, and have resulted in a net increase of more than £1.50,000 a week, by far the greatest rise recorded in any similar period." When allowance is made for the shorter hours of labour in addition to the increased wages, it will be readily understood that the difficulties of the manufacturers of Great Britain in their competition with the protected foreigner have been materially increased. The important point is - What steps should be taken to meet the crisis ?

All that goes to show that under a free-trade Tariff - and everybody must admit England is a free-trade country - the condition of the workers has really improved. That is also borne out by Thomas Burt Webb, and other great leaders of the labour movement in England, who point out that the working men there owe their prosperity, their increase in wages, and their shorter hours of employment, to the wise policy adopted by her statesmen in establishing a free-trade Tariff.

Mr Kennedy

- The article the honorable member has quoted states that the cost of production has been increased by factory legislation and trades unionism, and questions what effect it will have on manufactures.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I . am only pointing out this to show that during the last four years - as against the argument of our friends opposite, who want to induce miners and agricultural and other labourers to believe that England is going down, and that her workmen are being paid less than workmen in protective foreign countries - according to the protectionists' own journal and to Board of Trade reports, England pays more wages, and her workmen have shorter hours than have workmen in protective countries.

Mr Kennedy

- That is not so ; look at the United States. That is just the question asked in the extract quoted.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I have quoted figures which I defy any one to contradict. They are from Mulhall,, the greatest statistician we have, and it will be found the comparison I have made as to the 50 years of free-trade in England is substantially correct.

Mr Kennedy

- -I do not question the honorable member's statement in regard to the progress of Great Britain.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- But our friends are continually trying to make it appear that England is going down.

Mr Mauger

- No honorable member has tried to do so.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I think many protectionists do that when they get before their constituents. As to the wealth of England, I have taken the trouble to get a balance-sheet from Mulhall of that country's financial position. From this we find that the assets are : Suez Canal shares, £27,000,000 ; Exchequer balances, £9,000,000 ; and value of all property, £11,806,000,000; and the liabilities are: National debt £635,000,000- this has been increased on account of the war -local debts of towns, £296,000,000 ; war loans, part of which is for the war in the Transvaal, estimated at £100,000,000 ; showing a balance of £10,811,000,000. In other words the financial position of England is such that she could pay the national debt of every country on the face of the world twice over, and then have a substantial surplus. Honorable members may think those figures startling, but they will be found to be correct, because I have taken the trouble to go through Mulhall and

ascertain the national debt of every country.

Mr Mauger

- That shows the national debts of the other countries are very small.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Those national debts come to about £5,000,000,000. I do not know whether the honorable member calls that "small." I am only showing what free-trade has done for England. Protectionists are continually referring to the size of New South Wales as compared with "Victoria, and pointing to that as a substantial reason why the former State has progressed over the latter. I have taken the trouble to compare the progress of the seven great powers, and I find that England has an area of 121,000 square miles ; France, 204,000 ; Germany, 211,000 ; Russia, 8,660,000; Italy, 111,000; Austria, 241,000; and the United States, 3,582,000 square miles. The trade of England amounts to £8 15, 000, 000, or as much as the trade of the United States and France put together ; that is to say, the trade of 121,000 square miles of country is as much as the trade of 3,582,000 square miles and France put together. With the exception of the United States, England has more wealth than have the whole of the seven great powers altogether. Of course the United States has a large territory, and naturally-

Mr Higgins

- So has New South Wales a large territory.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am stating this to account for the small difference in the wealth. The difference as between 3,582,000 square miles, and 121,000 square miles of country is marvellous as compared with the difference between New South Wales and Victoria. England, with her colonies, has control of an area equal to one half of the area held by all the great powers referred to, while her population is equal to one-half of theirs. Take the area of England and her dependencies and colonies, and it will be seen that she has control of one quarter of the whole of the surface of the globe, and that her population is one quarter the whole of the population of the world. A policy that has built up England in such a way - that has increased her power and her wealth, and brought about a better condition of affairs for workmen, by increasing wages and reducing the hours of work, while providing better homes and giving them more and better food - a policy that has increased prosperity and has done so much for England, should be good enough for United Australia. I hope that when the Tariff proposals are brought down for consideration, honorable members will not lose sight of the great advance made by England under her magnificent system of free-trade. The honorable member for Newcastle the other day referred to the case of the miners, and pointed out that it would be a great advantage for them to have protection, but the honorable member will find that the coal miners in Britain are better paid than are the miners in any part of the world.

Mr Watkins

- Better than in New South Wales?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- New South Wales is a free-trade country, and I am talking of protectionist countries.

Mr Mauger

- Are the miners there paid better than in Victoria ?

Sir John Forrest

- Or better than in Western Australia ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- If the honorable members will take the protectionist countries of America, Germany, France, or Austria they will find that the coal miners of England are paid a higher rate of wages and work under better conditions, both as regards inspection and provision for safety, and also as to hours of employment, than do the miners of any of the countries' mentioned.

Mr Watkins

- Is the honorable member aware that in one of the States of America they have an eight hours law for coal miners ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member knows very well that in very few of our own coal mines do the men work more than eight hours. No one has been a stronger advocate of eight hours for the coal miners than I have been. In the honorable member's district can he point to one mine in which the coal miners work more

than eight hours ?

Mr Watkins

- Yes.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- In most cases I think the honorable member will admit that they do not work more than eight hours.

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Sir John Forrest

- What wages do they get in England for hewing 1

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The wages in England amount to 40s. weekly, in America to 23s., in Prance and Germany to 20s., and in Austria to 15s. I think these figures show that our coal miners are paid about 17s. a week more than they get in America, and JE1 a week more than they receive in Prance and Germany.

An Honorable Member. - How do the figures come out as between England and New South Wales?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I am not a perfect encyclopedia I have endeavoured to make myself conversant with the advancement made in every country to which my honorable friends have referred in their endeavour to show the advantages of a protectionist policy, but I have failed to see that they can advance any instance where these old-established protectionist countries can show a better condition of affairs than prevail in old England.

An Honorable Member. - Oh !

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It is' wonderful to witness the way in which our friends try to bring ridicule on the prosperity of England ! One would think from the way my honorable friend speaks that there was no ground for believing that England has progressed.

Mr McCay

- We do not differ from the honorable member's facts, but from the inferences he draws from them !

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I cannot understand any honorable member reasoning that free-trade has not been beneficial to England. Wherever the test is applied it will be found that no nation has made more progress than has England under free-trade. I trust that when the Tariff question is considered by this Federal Parliament every consideration will be given to the experience of England and to the disastrous results that have fallen upon the workers under a protectionist policy in America. If that is done, my firm conviction is that honorable members will see the wisdom of adopting a policy as nearly free-trade as is possible under the present Federal Constitution. I admit the many difficulties we have to contend against, but my aim will be to secure the lowest Tariff possible - a Tariff that will produce revenue without bringing about the iniquitous system of protection, which has been tried for 30 years in Victoria with such disastrous results to Victorian workers.

Mr Mauger

- That is the reason the Victorian workmen cling to it, perhaps ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I think the honorable member will admit that if any one had come and talked free-trade in Victoria a few years ago he would have had very little chance of obtaining many votes: I am glad to see that, through the advocacy of the Melbourne Argus, and other agencies, many people are beginning at last to see the wisdom of giving more attention to this all important fiscal question. One of the great evidences of the alteration that has been brought about by the attitude adopted by the Argus and other powerful advocates of the free-trade policy is to be found in the fact that Mr. Robert Reid, one of the freetrade candidates, polled, I believe, in the whole State of Victoria about 50,000 votes.

Mr Mauger

- And he said that he would not interfere with our industries, and would support a protective Tariff.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I think the honorable member will admit that Mr. Reid said nothing of the kind.

Mr Mauger

- I beg the honorable member's pardon. It is in one of his addresses.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Mr. - Robert Reid has always been a free-trader. Then, again, the honorable member for Kooyong represents a very large constituency in the neighbourhood of Melbourne, and I think he will admit that he is a freetrader. That honorable member told his constituents he was a free-trader, and he knows it would be the best thing for Victoria. He advocated that policy, and the Victorian people returned him to the present Parliament to endeavour to bring it about.

Mr Knox

- Not to dislocate all existing conditions !

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member told the people of the great advantages of free-trade.

Mr Crouch

- He was a free-trader till half-past five to-night !

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member for Kooyong was firmer in his convictions regarding free-trade after he had heard the honorable member for Corio's speech. I believe the honorable member for Corio tried several times to induce the protectionists of Victoria to return him to Parliament, but he failed to secure election until his most . recent attempt. The honorable member happened to be returned on the present occasion, by some accident possibly; but, in any case, we are only too glad to listen to his views. "From his point of view the honorable member is perfectly right in advocating a system of protection. We have a right to deal with this subject in a gentlemanly way, without any display of bitterness, and to fight our battles fairly and honorably, without resort to any mean tactics, of which I am sure no honorable member will be guilty. We are all actuated by a desire to advance the best interests of Australia. My honorable friends think that they are doing so by advocating protection, but honorable members on this side of the House think the desired result can be achieved only by adopting the policy that has made England so great and powerful. I regret that I have been called upon to speak at such length on this important question; but it is a matter to which I have given much attention for many years past, and one upon which I feel strongly'. There is just one other subject to which I desire to refer very briefly. During this debate reference has been made to the question of the employment of kanaka labour. Upon this matter I spoke with no uncertain voice during the recent election campaign, as indeed I have spoken for many years past. I have always been opposed to kanaka labour. I say that . an industry that cannot succeed without the employment of kanaka labour -to the exclusion of our 'own people - as is the case at the present time in Queensland - ought not to exist at all. I will not be a party, therefore, to sanction the introduction of any more kanakas to assist the sugar industry in Queensland.

Mr Barton

- Would the honorable member have a customs duty on sugar in Queensland 1

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- When the right honorable gentleman submits the Tariff Bill to this House, I shall be prepared to deal with that matter.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member must surely have made up his mind?

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Have my honorable friends in the Government yet made up their minds 1 We have been waiting a considerable time to hear their views, but they merely say in effect - " Keep quiet, and we will let you know later on." I think the desire of the Ministry is to learn the opinions of honorable members before they submit a Tariff. I agree that it is a right course for them to adopt, because if they were to announce their policy in connexion with various commodities, it would enable speculators and merchants to buy largely, and thus seriously interfere with any revenue that might otherwise be raised. Therefore, I do not blame my honorable friends for keeping dark on this occasion. I believe that the opinions expressed by many honorable members, not only in regard to the fiscal question, will have the effect of inducing the Government to bring down a Tariff on a much more moderate scale than they would have submitted had the recent elections resulted differently. I apologize for speaking at such length ; but the importance of the

question affecting as it does so largely the best interests of Australia, is, I think, a sufficient warrant for my having taken up the time of the House. Later on I hope we shall have an opportunity of dealing with this matter in a way that will be beneficial to the Commonwealth.

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

The House divided.

7

AYES

49

NOES

Majority 42

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN REPLY

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I move -

That the address be presented to His Excellency the Governor-General by Mr. Speaker and the members of the House.

The Governor-General has not yet returned from Sydney ; but I will communicate with him by telegraph, and intimate to the House the date upon which he is prepared to receive you, Mr. Speaker, and the members of the House.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

SUPPLY

Resolved(on motion by Sir George Turner) -

That this House will to-morrow resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

WAYS AND MEANS

Resolved(on motion by Sir George Turner) -

That this House will to-morrow resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the ways and means for raising the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

QUESTIONS

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY

Mr G B EDWARDS

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether he will cause steps to be taken to secure for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library a collection of literature bearing upon the history of Australia, and to store the same pending the erection of the Commonwealth capital, seeing that such a collection would require some years to complete ?

Mr BARTON

- It is intended to appoint a committee of librarians and other experts, with instructions to submit a scheme for the formation of a parliamentary library and their attention will be drawn to the necessity of securing as part of the library such a collection as the honorable member indicates.

QUEENSLAND COLOURED LABOUR COMMISSION'S REPORT

Mr HIGGINS

asked the Prime Minister, ' upon notice -

Whether he can obtain for and distribute among the members of the House the report of the Queensland Commission of 1889 as to coloured labour ?

Mr BARTON

- A small supply of the report in question has been received from the Queensland Government, together with copies of the Pacific Islands Acts, with amendments and regulations thereunder, also Dr. Maxwell's report of the 30th January, 1900. The supply being somewhat limited, it will not be possible to make a wide distribution of these papers, but they will be available to members on loan upon application.

VICTORIAN FACTORIES REPORTS

Mr HIGGINS

asked the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice -

Whether he can obtain for and distribute among the members of this House the reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories for 1896 and 1899 ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I find that there are very few copies of the reports obtainable, but I am trying to make arrangements to obtain some, and will then have them circulated.

Mr HIGGINS

- They are wanted for the purposes of a motion standing in my name.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I will have the matter attended to as soon as possible.

NEW GUINEA AND ADJACENT ISLANDS

Mr W H GROOM

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether, in view of the recent terrible loss of life and scenes of cannibalism in that portion of the Island of New Guinea under a British Protectorate, it is the intention of the Government to obtain from the Imperial Government more enlarged power for the Commonwealth to deal with natives of the adjacent islands on the Australian coast, and for the protection, of the missionaries and others now engaged in extending civilization and Christianity in the Island of New Guinea ?

Mr BARTON

- The Government will give consideration to this important matter.

GEEELONG GARRISON ARTILLERY

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Mr CROUCH

asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice -

Why the Geelong Garrison Artillery is refused a breech-loading gun for drill purposes ?

Whether he regards a muzzle-loading gun as sufficient to use in training modern artillerymen?

Whether there has not been at the Ballarat Juvenile Exhibition, for the past four months, a breech-loading gun such as the Geelong Artillery require ; and whether he will direct that this gun be sent to the Geelong Orderly-room?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- -The answer to the first question is that there is no gun available. The answer to the second is: Certainly not ; but it is better than nothing. As to the third question, there is a 4-7 quids-firing gun at Ballarat, which is not suitable for orderly-room drill.

MAIL CONTRACTS

Mr MAUGER

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

Whether he will, before entering into any fresh contract for the conveyance of mails, cause full inquiries to be made as to the hours worked, and the conditions under which in ships, coaches, & o. , the employes of the contracting firms are engaged, with a view to inserting in all fresh contracts effectual clauses for the protection of the employes? said- If I may be permitted to say so, I have received an intimation that some men engaged by contracting firms carrying mails are working something like 100 hours a week.

Minister (without portfolio)

Sir PHILIP FYSH

- It is not the present practice in any of the States to make inquiries of this nature. The only clause bearing upon the matter is one in the general conditions in connexion with the contracts for inland mail services in New South Wales, which provides that contractors are not expected to work their drivers for more than eight hours per day on the average. The matter is under consideration.

CIRCULATION OF HANSARD

Mr A C GROOM

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether he will cause copies of Hansard to be sent free to all the public libraries throughout the Commonwealth ?

Mr BARTON

- Copies of Hansard will be sent to all the libraries from which applications are received.

SALARIES OF VICTORIAN POSTAL EMPLOYEES

Sir JOHN QUICK

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

When the letter carriers, porters, pillar clearers and postal assistants employed in Victoria will receive the salaries to which they are entitled under section 19 of the Victorian Public Service Act No. 1721?

Sir PHILIP Fysh

- The matter of determining the salaries to which letter carriers employed in Victoria are entitled under section 19 of the Victorian Public Service Act No. 1721, was referred to the Public Service Board of Victoria, and it is understood that the Board is dealing with the question. As soon "as a decision is arrived at the salaries will be paid.

PROPOSED TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY

Mr KIRWAN

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

When the examination of the country intervening between the rail way systems of South and Western Australia, together with the other inquiries now in progress concerning the proposed transcontinental railway, are likely to be completed and the result available to members of this House ; also if the Eight Honorable the Prime Minister will urge those who are making the investigations to complete them as soon as possible, so that the necessary data may be available early this session ?

Mr BARTON

- I am informed by the Governments of South Australia and Western Australia that survey parties are now engaged in the examination of the country between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie, and that the reports of these parties are expected to be available in about six months.

TRADE WITH NEW CALEDONIA

Sir JOHN QUICK

asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice -

Whether it is true that in the Island of New Caledonia Australian traders and contractors suffer from discriminations and disabilities imposed in favour of French goods and French citizens ; and whether, in consideration of the fact that French citizens enjoy in Australia the "most favoured nations" equality of treatment, he will endeavour to obtain similar treatment for Australians in the French Island?

Mr KINGSTON

- The action of the Government will depend on the result of inquiries into the true position of the matter. Those inquiries are now being made.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

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Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

asked the Attorney-General, upon notice -

Do covering sections 6 and. 8 of the Commonwealth Act, in the opinion of the Government, alter the pre-existing provisional title of South Australia to the Northern Territory ?

If not, the Northern Territory being held under revocable Royal Letters Patent, and therefore liable to resumption by the Crown and direct administration by the Colonial Office, do the Government consider it expedient that any part of Australia should be without autonomous rights constitutionally secured ?

Have the Government received any assurance that, in the event of the Commonwealth not taking over the Northern Territory, South Australia will not move the Crown to be relieved of its present obligations ?

Have the Government considered the special liability to Imperial criticism or veto of the federal legislation applied to a part of Australia not fully conveyed to the Commonwealth or any State ?

Mr DEAKIN

- I will ask the honorable member to excuse me from replying to the questions he has put in their categorical form. I assure him that after the representations made by the Government of South Australia in this matter, the subject will receive very earnest consideration at the hands of the Government, who

recognise the importance of the questions involved, and their directly federal bearing.

PACIFIC CABLE SCHEME

Sir JOHN QUICK

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

. Is it true that the agreement recently made by the Government of New South Wales with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, by which concessions were made to the company in consideration of an immediate reduction in the cable rates operative in New South Wales, has not been acquiesced, in by the Imperial Government or by the other Governments, parties to the Pacific "Cable scheme?

Is it considered that such scheme is likely to prejudice the Pacific Cable scheme ?

If not, will the Commonwealth Government take steps to procure for Victoria the reduced cable rates enjoyed by New South Wales ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

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

Yes.

Yes ; the following is the opinion of the Pacific Cable Board, as embodied in a resolution passed by that body on the 25th February, 1901: -

That the agreement entered into with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company by the Government of New South Wales is prejudicial to the Pacific cable.

This is answered by the reply to No. 2.

STATES RAILWAY ASSOCIATIONS

Mr KIRWAN

asked the Prime Minister, upon notice -

Whether the Government are aware that the railway associations of all the Australian States are desirous of having all the railway employes brought within the scope of the proposed Federal Arbitration and Conciliation Act ?

Whether the Bill now in preparation for Conciliation and Arbitration will be framed with due regard to the wish of the associations ?

Mr BARTON

- This matter is being considered in connexion with the preparation of the Bill.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOLDFIELDS LETTER CARRIERS

Mr MAHON

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

Whether the Honorable the Postmaster-General has received a petition, intrusted, to his subordinate officer at Perth, from the letter carriers employed on the gold-fields of Western Australia, praying to be put on the same footing, in respect to gold-fields allowance, as the other officers of the Postal Department stationed on the gold-fields of Western Australia ? .

If so, what- action does the Postmaster-General intend to take respecting the petition ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

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

Yes.

The Postmaster-General has approved of the allowance asked for, subject to future readjustment of salaries and allowances by the Public Service Board of the Commonwealth.

OFFICES OF PROFIT UNDER THE CROWN

Mr CROUCH

asked the Attorney General, upon notice -

Whether, in his opinion, the acceptance of salary as a member of the State Parliament does not constitute an office of profit under the Crown under section 44, sub-section (4), of the Constitution Act, and so make him incapable of being chosen as a member of the Federal Parliament?

If he will consider the advisability of providing in the new Electoral Act for a section to prohibit members who still retain their State seats and salary from submitting themselves to be chosen as members of the Federal Parliament ?

Mr DEAKIN

- I think it will be undesirable to reply to the first question. It is a matter of legal opinion. As to the second

question, the advisability will be considered.

SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION FACTORY

Mr CHANTER

asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice -

Whether it is his intention to make speedy provision for the establishment of a small arms and ammunition factory to supply the requirements of the Commonwealth ?

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- I beg to state that the matter is under consideration, but nothing definite has yet been decided.

HOLIDAYS OF POST-OFFICE DAILY PAID LABOURERS

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

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

If he will issue instructions that when compulsory holidays are gazetted, the daily-paid labourers in the Post-office employ shall be paid their wages in the same manner as the regular staff are now paid their salary for such holidays?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

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

Yes ; the Postmaster-General will issue instructions that when the daily-paid labourers in the Post-office employ are compelled to observe holidays they shall be paid their wages for those days.

TELEGRAPH RATES FOR PRESS MESSAGES

Mr MAHON

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

Whether the Honorable the Postmaster-General has considered the request of the conference of newspaper proprietors held in Sydney last year that an uniform rate be established for the transmission of press messages throughout the Commonwealth?

Whether, in view of the necessity of the people of the remoter States being fully informed of the proceedings of the Commonwealth Parliament and Executive, he will reduce the cost of Inter-State press messages dealing with federal business, so as to place the newspapers of the other States on the same footing as those newspapers of Victoria which receive similar information by telegram ?

Sir PHILIP FYSH

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

Yes.

The honorable the Postmaster-General will deal with this matter when making his recommendations respecting rates for the transmission of telegraph messages generally. This cannot be done until there has been legislation, as at present the rates are necessarily determined by the laws and regulations of the several States of the Commonwealth.

DAYS AND HOURS OF MEETING

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I beg to move -

That, unless otherwise ordered, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday in each week during the present session be the days on which this House shall meet for the despatch of business ; and that half-past two o'clock be the hour of meeting on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and that two o'clock be the hour of meeting on Friday.

Honorable members will observe that this motion contains the words " unless otherwise ordered." I move it in that form so that the House may from time to time alter its procedure as it thinks fit.

Mr WATSON

- I would suggest to the Prime Minister the propriety of the House meeting earlier than two o'clock on Fridays. I do not object to the hour of half-past two for Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. At one time I was under the impression that a greater amount of work could be got out of airy Legislative Chamber by an earlier hour of meeting, but I have now come to the conclusion that a more reasonable time is that fixed, viz., half-past two, for ordinary sitting days. But I understand that it is suggested that we should adjourn somewhere about four o'clock on Fridays, and that would leave only about two hours in

which to dispose of motions or private members' Bills, should there be &ny. I think we might very well agree to meet not later than half-past ten on that day. I suggest that to the Prime Minister with the view of giving us some reasonable time in which to deal with matters of great importance which will come before the House on Fridays.

Mr. G.B. EDWARDS (South Sydney).AVE certainly shall not have time enough in which to do our business on Fridays between two o'clock and four. It would be ridiculous to suppose that it will be sufficient. But at the same time I think we might meet at some other hour than half-past ten, which seems rather too early. If we met at twelve o'clock it would perhaps be more convenient to honorable members.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I desire to support the suggestion of the honorable member for Bland, that the sittings on Fridays should be a little longer than two hours. Otherwise the danger will be that there will not be sufficient time in which to dispose of the business that will come before the House, and members coming from a distance may be disposed to leave in view of the possibility of not much business being done on a particular Friday. If honorable members are to remain in Melbourne on Fridays, those who come from a distance should be provided with more than two hours' work. Therefore, I think we should meet at eleven or twelve o'clock.

Mr. W.H. GROOM (Darling Downs). I hope consideration will be given to the position of members who come from distant States. It is impossible for us to go home on Fridays. My experience goes to show that two hours will not be sufficient for doing much business on Friday afternoons. We have found in the Queensland Parliament that sitting on Thursdays from four o'clock to six is utterly inadequate to allow private members to do their business. The practice has resulted in unpleasantness between Ministers and their friends and members on the opposition benches, simply because some honorable member has perhaps talked against time in order to defeat a most desirable motion. AVE know that Ministers have important departmental business to attend to. Perhaps important telegrams may be received from all parts of the Commonwealth, and require immediate attention. To ask Ministers to come here at half-past ten o'clock in the morning might, therefore, be very inconvenient. Suppose we hit upon some compromise. AVE might meet at eleven or half-past on Fridays, sit until one, then adjourn for an hour, and go on again at two o'clock. If some honorable members like to go away, at four o'clock, well and good, but I do not see why others should not remain and go on with their business. Some honorable members come from very long distances. The honorable member for Capricornia has to come 1,600 miles. He is here to attend to business, and should receive some consideration from honorable members. He should not be kept here in a state of idleness. We have come here to work, and are prepared to sit until any reasonable hour to deal with business.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- It might have been well if the Prime Minister, in making this motion, had intimated to honorable members whether he intended the House to rise at four o'clock on Fridays. Of course, it goes without saying that, if the House is to rise at that hour, it will allow some honorable members from other States to go home; but it is absurd to sit at two o'clock and spend only two hours on business. ' The question as to when we should adjourn on Fridays is a serious one. I quite sympathize with honorable members from distant States who cannot get home. On the other hand, there must be a certain amount of consideration for those who can get home. It would be intolerable if, after a certain number of members had left for their homes on Fridays, the House should proceed even with private members' business in their absence. It might be well for the right honorable gentleman to intimate what he considers to be the true policy in regard to the length of the sittings on Fridays. I suppose the Premier knows the opinion of the majority, and if it be decided that the House shall rise at four o'clock, we ought to meet not later than eleven in the morning. That consideration might, I think, be asked from honorable members who reside in Victoria, seeing that the hour of half-past two was fixed largely out of consideration for them, and also, of course, for the work of the Executive Government.' I would suggest that eleven o'clock be the hour of meeting on Friday, if it be understood that we adjourn at four o'clock, and I think that in regard to that there ought to be an understanding, and that the hour should not be left an open question.

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- The observations of honorable members during the last few minutes have had special reference to Friday sittings, but I would' rather see the sittings of the other days begin at three o'clock sharp instead of

half-past two. Business men, whether in Victoria or any other State, desire time to attend to business up to three o'clock, and the last half-hour between two o'clock and three is the most precious of the whole 24 hours to men who come from a distant State. I ask the Premier to consider whether we should not meet at three o'clock and sit until eleven or twelve o'clock at night, or even until one, two, or three o'clock in the morning.

The Hon. A. McLean. - The honorable member is a night-bird.

Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON. - I am always a working bird.

The Hon. A. McLean. - It is generally bad work that is done at a late hour.

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Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON. - That depends on when the honorable member was born. As to the Friday sittings, why should we adjust our hours to suit the starting of the trains? Why should not the trains be started to suit honorable members who want to go to Adelaide or Sydney, and who are the only members, excepting those who reside in the State of Victoria, who can enjoy going home at all? Why not meet on Friday at the ordinary hour and sit until the usual hour of adjournment, and then let honorable members go to Sydney or

Adelaide by train? Surely the State Governments would meet us in this matter.

Mr Barton

- They will not delay the express for us.

Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON. - Representatives of Queensland cannot get to their homes, or, if they did go, they would have only time to get a cup of tea and start back again.

Sir John Forrest

- They are not so badly off as the "Western Australian" representatives.

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

-past seven

Or eight o'clock at night.

Mr MCDONALD

- Most members are, I suppose, like myself, prepared to give every consideration to those who can conveniently get home, but still it is not a fair thing to ask representatives to come to Melbourne from a distance and sit a much longer period during the year than they would if the business were conducted through the whole of Friday. I do not see why we should regulate the proceedings of the Chamber to suit any business men. They are elected and paid so much a year to come here and do the business of the Commonwealth, and if they are not prepared to do that, their proper course is to send in their resignations and let others come who are prepared. We have no right to regulate our hours of sitting by the starting of the trains, or by the convenience of a certain number of business people. If the latter choose to come into federal politics, or any other politics, they should take that matter into consideration beforehand.

Questions of State, in my opinion, are of far greater importance than the business of private individuals, and I hope that we will not be guided in fixing the sittings of the House merely by the convenience of those who have their own private business to attend to. I do not wish to be in any way selfish, and I am quite willing to make allowance for those who can get to their homes; but, under the circumstances, I think we ought to meet at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, so that we shall have at least a four hours' sitting on Fridays.

Mr THOMSON

- In reply to the honorable member who has just resumed his seat, I, as one of those who can reach home if there be an adjournment on Friday, object to take that advantage as a matter of concession or favour. The honorable member for Kennedy would lead one to believe that Parliament should sit from early on Monday morning until late on Saturday night.

Mr McDonald

- The honorable member is quite mistaken. .

Mr THOMSON

- The honorable member says that we are paid to be here to perform our Legislative duties, and that

consequently there should be no break whatever.

Mr McDonald

- No, that is quite wrong.

Mr THOMSON

- Then I mistook the honorable member, and drew a wrong inference from what he said.

Mr McDonald

- I think three days quite sufficient for any Assembly to sit if honorable members will only do justice to the legislation they want to enact.

Mr THOMSON

- I was just going to say the same thing. The Legislature cannot be expected to do justice to its business if between sittings there is no time for the consideration and study of the measures submitted to it.

Mr Deakin

- 'And their preparation too.

Mr THOMSON

- Of course, we have also the Administration to consider. The members of the Government have to prepare measures and attend to the departments. There can be only a limited time in any one week in which a Legislature can effectively and properly sit. Then the question is how to arrange that time so as to best suit the convenience of honorable members, and I am sure we are all at one on that point. I quite agree with what has been said by the honorable member for Bland that it would be desirable to have an earlier sitting on Friday, when private members' business is likely to come on, seeing that it is proposed to sit only two hours after the luncheon interval. If we try to suit the convenience of all, we shall be doing no harm to the business of the country, and shall be of some assistance to representatives and, therefore, I support the suggestion, namely that the sitting should commence at eleven o'clock on Friday, on the understanding that there is to be an adjournment at four o'clock.

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Mr KENNEDY

- I support the proposal to give a little more time for private members' business. This is purely a question of the best means of meeting the convenience of all parties, and from my experience I feel that when it is definitely known that the business on Friday is to be restricted to that of private members, there is a possibility of its being blocked completely. I would suggest, therefore, that the Houses meet at say eleven o'clock, with an arrangement that no fresh business be taken after four o'clock. That will afford the possibility of the business "before the Chamber being completed, and honorable members could easily arrange to leave, knowing that no fresh business could come on in their absence.

Mr KIRWAN

- To us who come from Western Australia, it is rather amusing to hear honorable members discussing whether the business shall begin at half -past two or three o'clock, in order to suit individual convenience I hope honorable members do not forget that we who come from the West devote not merely half hours but months to our Parliamentary work away from our business and homes. I am prepared, as a Western Australian representative, to support any proposition that will tend to prolong the daily sitting, so that we may get through the work as quickly as possible. Some regard will have to be paid to members who are able to get home each week, but it is to be hoped that the majority will not forget the members who are making the biggest sacrifices. Some one has suggested meeting at half -past ten o'clock, and I would strongly support any proposition to meet every day at eleven o'clock, because the earlier we meet the sooner we shall get through our business. The more days occupied during the week the shorter the session will be, and the more convenient it will be to members of the distant States. I trust honorable members will have some consideration for the position in which we are placed, and will try to facilitate the business, so that we may all get back to our various States as soon as possible.

Mr HARPER

- I understand that when the Premier inserted the words " until otherwise ordered," it was with the object of ascertaining, by experience, what time was necessary for private members to attend to their own business, and of altering the regulation if found necessary. That seems a reasonable proposal which, I think, we might accept. I can supplement what the honorable member for North Sydney said just now. Honorable members from other States seem to think the whole work of legislators is to sit in Parliament,

when as a matter of fact, if honorable members do their duty and understand the business that comes before the house, they will find they will have to occupy hours of their time outside of Parliament. Then Ministers must have time in which to conduct their departments and prepare measures. We cannot gain time by continuous sittings, but we may lose time, and, instead of shortening the session, we may lengthen it. A considerable experience of the Legislative Assembly of this State has confirmed me in the opinion that very long sittings are a mistake, and are so much time wasted. If the meeting be too early, very often a quorum cannot be obtained, and members coming in one by one, the business is retarded. It is desirable to have measures properly prepared and presented by the Government. The part that belongs to honorable members is to thoroughly understand the business which has been submitted, and then possibly they may be able to put their views before the House much more concisely than they would do without preparation, when they would probably express their views at great length and without any point whatever. I think we might reasonably meet the views of honorable members by meeting earlier ' in the day if necessary, and I can see no objection to passing an order such as is proposed by the Right Honorable the Prime Minister. If, after the experience of a week or two, we find it necessary to alter the hour of meeting on Friday, we can meet earlier.

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Mr O'MALLEY

- I would like to ask the right honorable the leader of the Government if it is not possible to limit the duration of speeches? If we take the speeches that have been made in this Chamber lately as a criterion of what is to continue, we shall find that one honorable member will talk the whole Friday out, and my business will never come on. I consider that, as a private member for the great State of Tasmania, I am entitled to at least a little of the time of the House to present to honorable members the necessities of the democracy of that country. All I ask is that private members shall be treated with as much consideration in the Federal Parliament as they receive in the State Parliament of South Australia. In that State we used to have Wednesdays set apart for private members' business. Why cannot the Prime Minister give us a day when honorable members will be here? On Fridays honorable members will have left the city, and we shall be unable to get a quorum. The unfortunate part is that perhaps my friend, the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Solomon, will remain, and I know that he would occupy the whole afternoon himself if he were opposing one of my measures. I would suggest to the Prime Minister that private members should be treated fairly, because if we are not we may get nasty.

Mr. BARTON(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - In reply to the observations that have been made, I should like to remark that the honorable member for Mernda is quite right in saying that the words "unless otherwise ordered " were inserted at the head of the order so as to enable the House to remain masters of their own business, and to make arrangements for the despatch of business as occasion requires. As regards the present motion, I say that, if it is found by sitting at two o'clock, that the business of the House, whether public or private, cannot be successfully carried on, Ministers will be perfectly ready to propose a morning sitting on Fridays. It has been properly suggested by the honorable member for Mernda also, that some experience should be gained of the present proposal, which, I think, meets the views of a large number of honorable members, so that we may see how it works. Of course, there are some honorable members coming from a long distance who naturally think that the major consideration should be given to them because they cannot get away from here, but then again there are others who come from a shorter distance, who may think that the largest part of the consideration should be given to them. I think it is a case for consideration all round, and that, I think, can be obtained by meeting at two o'clock in the afternoon, and then, if we find that the dangers pointed out by honorable members flow from the adoption of that course, I shall be the first to propose a morning sitting.

Sir William McMillan

- Do the Government propose to adjourn at four o'clock?

Mr BARTON

- I do not propose to close at four o'clock. We can meet and try the temper of the House, and then if we find it will be an advantage we can try the morning sittings. I want the Honorable member for Kalgoorlie to see the position of the Ministry and of the public if we have morning as well as afternoon sittings. In the first place, the work of the departments has to be carried on, and if we are going to sit at eleven o'clock on Fridays, Ministers cannot perform the duties of administration. The result must be that the departments

will have to be administered by the Under-Secretaries, and thus we will have administration by bureaucracy. In addition to the working of the departments there are Cabinet and Executive meetings which have to be held. Ministers have also to receive deputations from honorable members when they come to express their grievances or to receive them on a friendly visit. In addition to all that, the House has to find time for select committees, of which, no doubt, there will in time be plenty. I think, therefore, that the honorable member for Kalgoorlie will recognise that it would be too much to ask Ministers and honorable members generally to sit at eleven o'clock in the morning. An exception may be made on Friday on account of the peculiar nature of the case, and I will promise honorable members to propose a morning sitting should any inconvenience arise from the arrangement I now propose.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resolved (on motion by Mr. Barton) -

That unless otherwise ordered on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week during the present session Government business shall take precedence of all other business.

That unless otherwise ordered on Friday in each week during the present session, private members' business shall take precedence of all other business, and shall be called on in the following order, viz.:-

On one Friday -

Notices of Motion

Orders of the Day.

On the alternate Friday -

Orders of the Day.

Notices of Motion

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Resolved (on motion by Mr. Barton) -

That Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, Mr. W. H. Groom, Mr. A. McLean, Mr. G. H. Reid, Mr. V. L. Solomon, and Mr. McDonald, be members of the Standing Orders Committee; five to be the quorum.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

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Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That Mr. Speaker, Sir J. Langdon Bonython, Sir Edward Braddon, Mr. I. A. Isaacs, Mr. T. Macdonald-Paterson, Mr. Bruce Smith, and Mr. W. G. Spence be members of the Library Committee; five to be the quorum.

Mr WINTER COOKE

- Of course, I have no objection to the names mentioned, but I should be glad if the Right Honorable the Prime Minister were in a position to inform the House who is to undertake the management of the Library. Is it to be managed only by this committee, or is it to be managed by Members of the State Parliament as well? In the past the State Legislature has voted every year a certain sum of money for the Library, but is it likely that the State Parliament will continue to vote money for the purchase of books for the Library if that Parliament loses all jurisdiction over it? I do not know whether the Prime Minister is in a position to inform the House as to any agreement which may have been made in this matter.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- It is among the matters that have been arranged between the Government of Victoria and the Government of the Commonwealth, that the Library Committee of this House shall manage the Library, as far as possible in the same manner as it has been customary to manage it. That will not prevent the proper management of the Library from being carried out.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

HOUSE COMMITTEE

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That Mr. Speaker, Mr. A. Fisher, Mr. P. M. Glynn, Sir Malcolm McEacharn, Sir William McMillan, Mr. F. W. Piesse, and Mr. C. C. Salmon be members of the House Committee; five to be the quorum.

Mr MAUGER

- I would like to take this opportunity of drawing attention to the very precarious condition of the back part

of these premises. Frequently in the State Parliament this has been done, and I am afraid that unless improvements are speedily effected, the result may be very serious. The fire appliances are inadequate, and the whole structure is of such material that a conflagration would sweep away within an hour the whole of the valuables contained in that building, besides our very valuable Library.

Mr Barton

- I have every reason to believe that the structure will be removed very soon.

Mr MAUGER

- I only wished to direct the attention of the committee to the importance of the matter.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PRINTING COMMITTEE

Resolved (on motion by Mr. Barton) -

That Mr. T. T. Ewing, Mr. J. M. Fowler, Mr. P. Harper, Mr. A. Poynton, Sir John Quick, Mr. E. Solomon, and Mr. D. Watkins be members of the Printing Committee; five to be the quorum.

ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I move -

That Mr. Speaker be requested to lay on the table, as early as practicable, his warrant for the appointment of a Committee of Elections and Qualifications, consisting of seven honorable members of this House, to inquire into and report on all questions respecting the qualification of any member of this House, or respecting a vacancy in this House, and all questions of disputed elections to this House. That, unless disapproved of by resolution of this House in the course of the four sitting days next after the laying of the warrant on the table, such warrant shall take effect as an appointment, of such committee by this House.

This motion is in accordance with the usual manner of appointing Committees of Elections and Qualifications, under the Acts, which prevail in the various States, but there being no special Electoral Act in this case, we have to act under the section of the Constitution which empowers each House to determine a question of this kind when it arises. I thought it wise to propose the motion in these terms in order to provide for the early creation of such a tribunal as is well known to honorable members.

Mr WATKINS

- Would it not be possible to alter slightly the second part of the resolution? The practice, I believe, in New South Wales is that any honorable member may call for a ballot, which is interpreted as disapproval.

Mr Barton

- We have followed the New South Wales practice here.

Sir William Lyne

- Except that we allow four sitting days after the laying of the warrant on the table instead of three.

Mr WATKINS

- I do not object to that, but what I wish to point out is that in this instance it is only a member of the Government who has an opportunity of lodging an objection. No other honorable member would have a chance of getting a resolution on the business-paper within the time prescribed, viz., four days.

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Mr Barton

- In such a matter I should regard a resolution as so near an approach to privilege that I should at once make arrangements for entertaining it.

Mr. W.H. GROOM (Darling Downs). I think that the Commonwealth Parliament should not follow in the footsteps of the State Parliaments in respect to the appointment of a Committee of Elections and Qualifications. The abuses of the system which has been followed by the State Parliaments are well known to all who have any experience of our Parliamentary Government. The English House of Commons has abolished the practice of referring election petitions to a Committee. In England all disputes with regard to elections are now decided by a Judge, and any one who has read the history of the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament must be aware that the system is a highly commendable one. It relieves Members of Parliament from a very disagreeable duty; it enables questions of law to be decided by a competent authority; and it has given the greatest satisfaction in every way.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- But what about the expense ?

Mr W H GROOM

- I am aware that the system is an expensive one; but the securing of justice is a greater consideration, both to members and to the country, than the saving of expense.

Mr O'Malley

- But suppose a man has no money 1

Mr W H GROOM

- The expenses of proceedings before an Elections and Qualifications Committee may be as great as the expenses of a law suit in the Supreme Court. In Queensland the practice of referring election petitions to an Elections and Qualifications Committee became so obnoxious to honorable members that it was determined to abolish it, and the Elections Tribunal Act was passed; which provides that upon the assembling of Parliament the Chief Justice of the State must inform Mr. Speaker who is to be the elections Judge for the coming session. Mr. Speaker then places upon the table of the House his warrant, appointing six assessors from each side. If, within four days, no objection is raised to the appointment of the gentlemen nominated, this warrant takes effect. Then, if an election petition is presented, it is referred to the elections Judge, who hand's it to the Registrar of the Court to take all necessary steps to advise the parties. The parties then meet at the Court upon a certain day, and strike a panel to try the case, each leaving out the names of three assessors ; and the six men whose names remain upon the list become the assessors to try the petition.

Mr O'Malley

- That is a very good system for millionaires.

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Mr W H GROOM

- It has proved a very good system for even the poorest elector in the land. Any elector who believes that illegal practices have been carried on in connexion with an election may petition Parliament to have the case tried before this tribunal. . I have had experience as a member of a Queensland Elections and Qualifications Committee, and I know that when counsel are employed on each side and witnesses are brought by both parties from some place perhaps hundreds of miles away, the expenses are as great, and sometimes greater, than if the case were being tried before a Judge of the Supreme Court. The Dominion of Canada has also abolished the practice of appointing an Elections and Qualifications Committee, and has established a special tribunal on the English principle. The Queensland system, I may mention, is the creation of the present Chief Justice of the State, Sir Samuel Griffith. As in this Parliament we are separated from all questions of provincialism and parochialism, I think we should, in this matter, ascend to the level of the House of Commons, and resolve that all election petitions shall be referred either to a tribunal similar to the English tribunal, or to a tribunal appointed on some other plan which may commend itself to honorable members. I throw out this suggestion for the consideration of honorable members, so that they may think over the matter. "We do not know how soon election petitions may be presented. I have been on several Elections and Qualifications Committees in Queensland, and I have had to contest an election under the Elections Tribunal Act, so that I know something of the working of both systems. It is worthy of our consideration whether we should not dispense with an Elections and Qualifications Committee, and provide that the settlement of election disputes shall take place quite outside the arena of politics. In the settlement of these petitions important points of law, which probably only a Judge of the Supreme Court can determine, are often concerned, and I think that, by the adoption of some such method as that which I suggest, the most satisfactory results will be obtained.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I am entirely in accord with the suggestion of the honorable member for Darling Downs ; but I think that the House would do well to take it into consideration when the Electoral Bill comes before us. I wish to point out, however, that all that is necessary for us to do now is to make some temporary provision. Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. SPEAKER then laid upon the table his warrant, nominating the Hon. E.. L. Batchelor, Sir Edward Braddon, Mr. F. Clarke, Mr. Joseph Cook, Mr. W. H. Groom, Mr. J. W. Kirwan, and Sir John Quick members of the Committee of Elections and Qualifications.

The warrant was mid by the Clerk.

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION BILL

Resolved(on motion by Mr. Barton) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to place certain restrictions on immigration, and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited immigrants.

Bill read a first time.

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for this day week.

Mr. HIGGINS(Northern Melbourne).When can the Prime Minister have these Bills distributed 1

Mr BARTON

- I shall have them distributed as soon as possible ; but I may even yet have to enter into a further consultation with respect to this measure, because of its importance.

Mr Higgins

- And the other Bills which are to be introduced ?

Mr BARTON

- I shall have them distributed as soon as I can.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS BILL

Resolved(on motion by Mr.. Barton) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the regulation, restriction, and prohibition of the introduction of labourers from the Pacific Islands and for other purposes.

Bill read a first time.

JUDICIARY BILL

Resolved(on motion by Mr. Deakin) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for the exercise of the Judicial Power of the Commonwealth.

Bill read a first time.

HIGH COURT PROCEDURE BILL

Resolved(on motion by Mr. Deakin) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to regulate the practice and procedure of the High Court.

Bill read a first time.

Motion (by Mr. Deakin) proposed -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the clay for this day week.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- (South Australia). - I do not like to be hypercritical at the commencement of this Parliament ; but it seems to me that these Bills are not being regularly introduced. Are we to understand that they are introduced when they are read a first time 1

Mr Barton

- The reading of a Bill the first time is a proceeding which consists of reading the title so that the Bill may be brought before the House and ordered to be printed. After the order for the printing of a Bill has been made, it becomes available for distribution among honorable members.

Mr SPEAKER

- No doubt the honorable member for South Australia has in his mind the practice of the Legislature of that State, which requires that Bills shall be presented at the Bar of the House ; but that practice is not provided for in the standing orders under which we are working, and so I have not required it to be followed here.

Mr WATSON

-Are we to understand that the practice to be followed here is merely to read the title of a proposed Bill without there being a Bill before the House even in manuscript 1

Mr Deakin

- That is the Victorian and the English practice.

Mr A McLEAN

- This is merely a formal stage.

Mr Barton

- It is a formality which opens the door for the introduction of a Bill.

Mr WATSON

- That may be so ; but I should very much prefer to know that the Bill itself was before the House. The practice of the New South Wales Legislature has been to have the Bill in type.

Sir William Lyne

- No.

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Mr WATSON

- I do not say that it is provided in the standing orders that a Bill shall be in type when it is read a first time ; but that has been the practice. Bill's have almost always been in type at the first-reading stage ; and on the few occasions within my recollection when the Bills presented have not been in type, they have been presented in manuscript. If the mere drafting of a title is sufficient to allow of the presentation of a Bill, a good many of us could indulge in that kind of gymnastics.

Mr Barton

- My honorable friend will find that we have plenty of Bills ready for him.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is a very loose practice indeed to move that a Bill be read a first time, and then merely to read the title, when no Bill is before the House. That may be the practice of Victoria ; but the practice in New South Wales is to bring in the Bill.

Mr Barton

- If the honorable member is such an authority upon parliamentary law, perhaps he will tell me whether it is in order for an honorable member to debate the first-reading stage?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I hope I shall not be subjected to these insulting interjections.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member is not in order in describing the interjection as insulting.

Mr Barton

- If I have transgressed any rule of debate, I apologize to the House for having done so ; but I am not aware that I have done so.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I regarded the interjection as an insult. It has been the invariable practice of the New South Wales Parliament to bring in the Bill before moving that it be read a first time, and I do not remember an occasion when a first reading has been moved before a Bill has been brought into the chamber. I hope that the New South Wales practice will be followed here. It seems to me a good wholesome practice that we should not deal in any way with a measure which is not actually before the House.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

.- I do not recollect one occasion in the Parliament of New South Wales when, upon the first reading of a measure, copies of it were handed to honorable members. After the motion for the first reading has been agreed to, a motion, " that the Bill be printed, and the second reading be fixed for some future date" is proposed, and when that motion has been agreed to, the Bill is printed and circulated amongst honorable members.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The practice in some Houses of Parliaments, on leave being given to introduce a Bill, is for the member concerned to retire to the Bar, and with a piece of paper, which is not the real Bill at all, in his hand, to announce that he has the Bill ready for presentation. I assure honorable members that the frequent practice of the House of Commons is to permit a Bill to be introduced when it is not even in manuscript within the chamber, . though it may be in manuscript elsewhere. I believe that is also the case in New South Wales ; but I am quite sure that Bills have been introduced in New South Wales that have not been in print. That is certainly the practice elsewhere. In regard to these useless matters of form, I applaud the action of the Prime Minister in bringing forward Bills as quickly as possible. They can be properly considered on the motion for the second reading. As far as this discussion goes, I do not know

that we are in order in debating the question before the Chair at .all.

Mr. AV.H. GROOM (Darling Downs).The way these Bills are being introduced is, to my mind, unusual.

Mr Deakin

- It is the House of Commons practice.

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Mr W H GROOM

- I have never seen this form adopted. It is just as well, if we are to have standing orders for the regulation of our procedure, that the manner and form of introducing Bills should be distinctly laid down. In Queensland no Bill is introduced unless it is in print. When a motion is made for leave to introduce a Bill, if the honorable member has not got the Bill ready, he takes no further action ; but, having obtained leave to introduce his Bill, he can present it on another occasion, .and move that it be read a first time. When an honorable member has his Bill ready it is presented on the motion "that leave be granted to introduce a Bill," being carried, it is then read a first time, and ordered to be printed, and the second reading is fixed for another date. 'More than that ; in Queensland, when an honorable member brings in a Bill it is quite within the province of the House to ask him to explain its main provisions. I refer honorable members to the proceedings of the House of Commons. When the late Mr. Disraeli, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield, introduced his Royal Titles Bill, the House, on the motion for the first reading, demanded that he should explain what he intended to do. ' He did explain the measure to the House,. so that honorable members and the country knew exactly what its provisions were. We therefore have that precedent to guide us so far as the introduction of Bills is concerned. I agree with the honorable member for Bland that Bills should be 'introduced in a regular and proper form. We should establish a procedure which should be decent and in order. This is a matter in which we should start right from the commencement. We should act in accordance with the practice of other Parliaments.

Mr SPEAKER

- If this discussion had been on the motion for the first reading of the Bill it would have been quite irregular, because on that motion no discussion can take place. I have taken the discussion to be on the point of order as to whether the Bill is being properly introduced or not. On that point I may mention that the custom of the House of Commons is to require, if necessary, a statement concerning the scope of the Bill on the motion for leave to introduce ; but no such statement could be made in the House of Commons, nor ought to be made here, on the later motion that the Bill be read a first time.

Mr WATKINS

- I wish to know whether we are acting under the draft standing orders, or under the standing orders of any House of Parliament ?

Mr SPEAKER

- That is a question that can be answered forthwith. We have been acting in accordance with the practice of the House of Commons, and the ordinary practice guiding chairmen of public meetings.

Mr MCDONALD

- I am aware that a great deal of this discussion is irregular ; but I understood the Prime Minister to say, in reply to the honorable member for Northern Melbourne, that he may have to make some alterations in the Bill.

Mr Barton

- That is so. I said that I may have to consult the parliamentary draftsman with regard to the draft of the Bill. There is, however, serious illness in the family of that officer ; he has gone to Sydney and he cannot be back for two or three days.

Mr MCDONALD

- I have always understood the procedure of Parliament to be this - that after a Bill is presented to the House, and is read a first time, it becomes the property of the House, and that no one has then any right to interfere with it, or to alter anything in it. I wish to ask whether that is so, because we have to be guided solely by you, Mr. Speaker, since at present we have no standing orders. What I have stated is the procedure in Queensland. It would be a very dangerous practice to have Bills introduced into this House, and after they had become the property of the House to have them altered. If that were permitted, it would be one of the most dangerous practices we could allow. I hope the Prime Minister will recognise, as I am sure he does, that this matter should be attended to in the standing orders, though it is quite possible that

it has been overlooked.

Mr GLYNN

- I wish to point out that, according to the practice of the House of Commons, . on the motion that a Bill be read a first time, it is not invariably the rule that no debate can take place. I have known a number of speeches to be made in the House of Commons, on the motion for the first reading of a Bill.

Mr Barton

- That is on the motion for leave to introduce.

Mr GLYNN

- I think the Prime Minister is wrong in saying that.

Mr Barton

- I have been there recently,

Mr GLYNN

- But the right honorable gentleman has not been in the House of Commons all the time. The point raised by the honorable member for Kennedy is an important one. When a motion is made for leave to introduce a Bill, and the Bill is introduced and read a first time, it cannot be altered. The usual practice in South Australia is that after the motion for leave to bring in a Bill has been agreed to, time may be taken for the preparation of the Bill. When the Bill is ready it is brought in, and read a first time. What the Prime Minister is doing now is having the first reading of a Bill moved, and then taking time to frame the measure. I put it that the duty of the House is to see that the Bill is in accordance with the terms of the leave granted. For that purpose the Bill should be presented to the Clerk, who should see that it is in accordance with the terms of the motion for leave to introduce, and if it is not so the Clerk may reject the document. The practice under which a Bill is drafted after it has been read a first time is an erroneous one, and we should not adopt it.

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I think there is not a great difference between the two modes of procedure, but now the question has been raised the Prime Minister should take the matter into consideration and let the House know what he proposes to do in the future. It is well for us to understand the course the Prime Minister intends to ask the House to take, whatever it maybe. I ask the right honorable gentleman to let us know definitely what course he intends to take in the future.

Mr. BARTON(Hunter -Minister for External Affairs). - I will make that statement now. In the draft standing orders we propose to ask the House to use until the Standing Orders Committee bring up their report, we are providing for this matter of the introduction of Bills. I may say that if there is any necessity to put oneself in order in regard to what is now taking place, that necessity will be recognised, but we have followed the practice which has hitherto been adopted in the Victorian Parliament, and which was adopted simply to facilitate business and get Bills sooner before honorable members.

Mr SPEAKER

- There is no doubt that the standing orders when finally adopted will provide for cases such as have now arisen. They will provide that after a Bill has been presented to the House it cannot be altered except by the House. The present course is being adopted, however, simply to facilitate business, and so far as I can see it would be well for us to follow it on the present occasion.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

Ordered(on motionby Sir William Lyne)-

That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the regulation of the public service.

Bill read a first time.

Ordered(on motionby Sir "William
Lyne) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Tuesday next.

INTER-STATE COMMISSION BILL

Motion (by Sir William Lyne) proposed -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to constitute the Inter-state Commission, to invest it with certain powers of adjudication and administration, and to regulate trade and commerce with other countries and

among the States.

Mr WATSON

- I should like to have some idea from the Minister for Internal Affairs as to what period will be allowed to elapse between the printing and circulation of this Bill, and the honorable gentleman's second reading speech. The fact that some of these Bills are not yet in type, or even in manuscript, is an additional reason why we should have some information.

Sir William Lyne

- These Bills of mine are in type.

Mr Barton

- Almost all the Bills are in type ;. they merely require final revision.

Mr WATSON

- I should like to know what time is likely to elapse, because honorable members want reasonable opportunities for consideration of the measures.

Minister for Internal Affairs

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

. - This is an important Bill, and I cannot say precisely when the second reading of it will be moved. I shall not attempt to hurry it in any way. Though I shall fix the second reading for this day week,' it does not follow that the Bill will be gone on with then. . I only mentioned the day in order to fix a date. I shall probably circulate the Bill in two or three days. The Public Service Bill will be circulated to-morrow morning.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a first time.

Ordered(on motion by Sir William Lyne) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Tuesday next.

ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES BILL

Resolved(on motion by Sir William Lyne) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the acquisition of property for public purposes, for dealing with property so acquired, and for other purposes connected therewith.

Mr Higgins

- Does that Bill relate to the federal capital?

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Mr Deakin

- No, it relates to the property of the Commonwealth.

Bill read a first time.

Ordered(on motion by Sir William Lyne) -

That the Bill be printed, and that its second reading stand an order of the day for Tuesday next.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS BILL

Motion (by Sir William Lyne) proposed -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to regulate parliamentary elections.

Mr.McDONALD (Kennedy).- I do not know whether I am in order, but the procedure in the Queensland Parliament is that "when this question is put from the Chair, we can either speak on it or allow it to go. I desire, under the circumstances, to ask the Minister to distribute this Bill as early as possible. If any person had cared to be obnoxious, many representatives might * have been put to a considerable amount of inconvenience, owing to_ the irregular way in which some of the elections to this Parliament were carried out, in the way of being hurried on, and that sort of thing. This Bill should be one of the first introduced by the Government, so that the matter may be thoroughly regulated throughout the States. I hope, however, that the procedure already taken as to these Bills will not be followed in the future. Honorable members will see what would happen if a member of the Government or any other person were allowed 'to come down with a number of proposals similar to those now being put before the House. According to the practice of the Queensland Parliament - which, I think, is also the practice of the House of Commons - the result would be that there would be a ruling to. the effect that motions already on the paper must not be anticipated. It would be quite possible for the leader of the Opposition, if he got in first, to come down with a great number of motions similar to those now before us, and then the Minister could

not have anticipated those motions by the present ones, and we would not know what the contents of particular Bills were.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a first time.

Ordered(on motion by Sir William Lyne) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Wednesday next.

FEDERAL FRANCHISE BILL

Ordered(on motion by Sir William Lyne) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for a uniform federal franchise.

Bill read a first time.

Ordered(on motion by Sir William Lyne) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Wednesday next.

AUDIT BILL

Resolved(on motion by Mr. Deakin, for Sir G. Turner) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the collection and payment of the public moneys, the audit of the public accounts, and the protection and recovery of the public property, and for other purposes.

Bill read a first time.

Ordered(on motion by Mr. Deakin) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Wednesday next.

DEFENCE BILL

Motion (by Sir John Forrest) proposed -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the defences of the Commonwealth.

Mr HUGHES

- Will the Minister make the order of leave of such an elastic character as to permit of the insertion of an amendment, if the House should think fit, to provide for any system of defence? I do not think it would be a good thing to be tied down to the honorable gentleman's idea of defence, though I do not know whether that idea be good or bad.

Mr Barton

- The order of leave could not be made wider than it is.

Mr HUGHES

- The House should have an opportunity of discussing the question fairly without being compelled to vote against the Bill, and I want, if the occasion should arise, to insert an amendment providing for a system of defence which I believe to be reasonable.

Mr Barton

- I can assure the honorable member that the order of leave could not be made wider than it is.

Mr HUGHES

- I mention the matter because the order of leave would be held to restrict the terms of the Bill.

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Mr SPEAKER

- I may point out that the title of the Bill must agree with the wording of the resolution.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a first time.

Ordered(on motion by Sir John Forrest) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Tuesday, 18th June.

CUSTOMS BILL

Motion (by Mr. Kingston) proposed -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill relating to the customs.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Is the word " excise " deliberately omitted from the order of leave ?

Mr Kingston

- Deliberately.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a first time.

Sir William McMillan

- It is not a Tariff Bill, is it ?

Mr Kingston

- Certainly not.

Ordered (on motion by Mr. Kingston) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Tuesday, 18th June.

CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL

Resolved (on motion by Mr. Kingston) -

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for industrial conciliation and arbitration.

Bill read a first time.

Order (on motion by Mr. Kingston) -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for Tuesday, 25th June.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr McCOLL

- I beg to move -

That the honorable member for Riverina, Mr. John Moore Chanter, be Chairman of Committees of the whole House.

After some fifteen years' parliamentary experience, I have some little idea of the qualifications required for a gentleman to fill the position of Chairman of Committees in a House such as this ; and in propos 'king the honorable member for Riverina, I am sure I propose a gentleman who will carry out the duties of this onerous and honorable position with full satisfaction to honorable members on both sides of the House. The honorable member has had an experience of some sixteen years in the Parliament of New South Wales, and is very well accustomed to the forms of the House, having, I believe, on a great number of occasions acted as deputy-chairman in the Assembly of that State. He has also been a Minister of the Crown, which, of course, gives an honorable member a greater insight into matters connected with parliamentary business than any private member can possibly have. With regard to the honorable member's political career, there is nothing whatever to be said against him. There is no exception to be taken to the whole sixteen years' tenure of his position in Parliament, and his personal character is one which, I am sure, after my long acquaintance with him, will reflect credit on the position he will, I trust, shortly occupy. Of course, in a Chairman of Committees we do not require a man versed in constitutional law so much as a man of good business capacity, tact, and good nature, combined with the necessary firmness to push through the business. The Chairman of Committees will also, as you are aware, sir, act on the occasions of your temporary absence, which we all trust will be very few. I think the honorable member will be enabled also to grace that position and carry out properly in your absence the duties of the Chair. I need say nothing further in the matter, except that I have much pleasure in submitting the motion standing in my name.

Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

- I rise with pleasure to second the motion submitted by the honorable member for Echuca, and I am quite satisfied from what I know of the member for Riverina that he will fill the office with dignity, and discharge its duties to the satisfaction of honorable members. But there is another reason why I second the motion with pleasure. Although the honorable member for Riverina represents a constituency of New South Wales, he was born in Adelaide, and it seems to me that there will be a special appropriateness in the Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives both being natives of South Australia.

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Mr WATSON

- The standing orders as drafted provide that the appointment of Chairman of Committees is to be for the Parliament, and as the motion, in the name of the Premier, dealing with, the standing orders, has been postponed until to-morrow, the motion for the appointment of Chairman of Committees is brought up before the question of the tenure of the office can be decided. I would like the Premier, if possible, to give some intimation of the intentions of the Government in this regard, otherwise the House may proceed to the election under the impression that it is for the life of the Parliament. ' Personally, I am in favour of an appointment for the session, as is the practice in some of the States.

Minister of External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I am very glad to answer the honorable member. . I think it would be advisable if the motion were amended by the insertion of the words "for the present session." It was my intention to ask that such an amendment be made in the proposed standing orders, so that the appointment of the Chairman of Committees may be made for each session, or until a successor is appointed.

Mr McCOLL

- Acting on the suggestion of the Premier, I have much pleasure in adding to the motion the words : -
For the present session, and until a successor be appointed.

Sir LANGDON BONYTHON

- I have much pleasure in consenting to the amendment.

Mr McDONALD

- Does the amendment mean that as soon as the session ends the appointment lapses, or that the Chairman will continue in office until his successor is appointed?

Mr Barton

- I think the appointment should continue until a successor is appointed, and therefore I suggested the amendment.

Mr GLYNN

- I suggest that this motion ought not to be put to-night, because it should not precede the passing of the standing orders, which declare there is to be a Chairman of Committees and refer to the tenure of his office. It does not seem to me the correct thing to put in a resolution that which ought to be in the standing orders, and I cannot see any necessity for haste. In the South Australian Parliament the motion for the appointment of a chairman takes place on the first occasion on which the House goes into committee.

Mr Kingston

- No.

Mr GLYNN

- That is our practice.

Mr Kingston

- No ; it has been altered recently.

Mr GLYNN

- It was the practice for many years, and there are very many reasons why the practice should be adopted here, because the eligibility of the candidates is tested beforehand privately, and their respective merits or careers are not gone into on the motion that a particular honorable member shall be appointed. For that reason I would even now suggest that we should first pass the standing order providing for the appointment first, and declaring the duration and conditions of the office.

Mr BARTON

- If the honorable member thought that, he might have asked why I previously proposed the postponement of the standing orders.

Question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Mr CHANTER

- I desire to express my thanks sincerely to honorable members for having placed me in a very high and honorable position. I also- desire to return my thanks to the Government, to the honorable member for Echuca, and to the honorable member for South Australia, Sir Langdon Bonython, for the kind remarks they have made. I have also to thank those other honorable members whose names have been mentioned in connexion with this office, and who have so generously waived their claims to the position, and allowed the House to decide unanimously upon my election. I shall endeavour to prove myself worthy of the confidence and esteem honorable member's have placed in me by a faithful discharge of my duties- by acting at all times in a very impartial manner, and by upholding the dignity of the position to which I have been called. I also value the honour very highly, on account of my having been selected as the first Chairman of Committees in- the Parliament of Australia, which is my native land.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman of Committees : Customs Regulations

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Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - In moving -

That the House do now adjourn,

I take the opportunity of congratulating my honorable friend, the Chairman of Committees, upon his election to the distinguished position to which the House has called him. I am glad that he has been elected without opposition. From my long knowledge of him I can assure those honorable members, who are not so well acquainted with him, that he is a man whose fidelity and conscientiousness cannot be questioned, and who will apply himself with industry and intelligence to the work which lies before him, in which he has already had considerable experience. With regard to other business, I recognise that it is time to adjourn. There are a number of short measures on the business-paper, but I wish first to look into some of these, and that I think will probably expediate their passage through this Chamber.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I should like to add a word or two in regard to my friend the honorable member for Riverina, who has been appointed to the honorable position of Chairman of Committees. I think it is a very happy circumstance that both in the case of Mr. Speaker and the Chairman of Committees the House has been absolutely unanimous in its choice. I am sure we could never have had a more conscientious man to undertake the duties of the Chair, and I trust that continuous practice will give the honorable member that experience, which, with his own ability, will render him a fit and proper person to fill so high and honorable an office.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I would like, on the motion for adjournment, to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs whether it is a fact, as rumoured, that copies of the Customs regulations have already been circulated through the whole of the States privately by his secretary, Dr. Wollaston. I believe some persons in other States have copies of these regulations, and if this is so, why is it that honorable members of this House cannot also obtain copies for their perusal?

Mr KINGSTON

- It is not a fact that Dr. Wollaston has circulated copies of the Customs regulations. Whatever Dr. Wollaston has done has been done by the authority of the Minister for Trade and Customs. What has been done is this : The associated Chambers of Commerce suggested that they might be able to offer valuable advice in connexion with the Customs Regulation Bill, which I take it is a matter altogether outside of party politics. It was a view which was most heartily concurred in by myself. The Bill has not yet been finally drafted. I have already before me the result of the deliberations of the Customs officials. I have had much pleasure in confidentially placing those suggestions in the hands of representative men who take a special interest in the matter, and are prepared - it is very good of them, it seems to me - to offer suggestions in regard to this important measure ; and it is to that end, and that end only, that the documents referred to have been circulated. I do not think it would be desirable to provide for a larger circulation than is suggested on the lines I have mentioned.

Mr WATKINS

- I would like to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs if he is aware that the Collector of Customs at Sydney, Mr. Lockyer, has suddenly brought into force an order which prevents Newcastle merchants from passing entries in Sydney. As vessels lie in Sydney prior to going to Newcastle for three weeks or a month, the honorable gentleman will see at once that, should the Customs Tariff be brought down at any particular period, and should these people be refused permission to pass their entries in Sydney, they may be placed at a disadvantage as compared with the Sydney merchants. Will the Minister see that merchants are placed on the same footing in this regard all round the Commonwealth?

Mr. KINGSTON(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - The matter was brought under my notice yesterday by a letter from Newcastle. I placed it immediately in the hands of the Sydney collector. That officer has not given any instructions for any alteration of practice. I do not know that it is altogether usual for entries to be passed in Sydney for Newcastle ; but the instructions given were that the matter should be inquired into fully at once, with a view to whatever is necessary being done. Our object is, consistently with the security of the revenue, to give every possible convenience to merchants.

Mr SPEAKER

- I take it that the Minister for Trade and Customs, in speaking a second time to this motion, was doing so with the indulgence of the House.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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22:22:00

House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.