

<url>[https://www.historichansard.net/hofreps/1901/19011210\\_reps\\_1\\_7](https://www.historichansard.net/hofreps/1901/19011210_reps_1_7)</url>

1901-12-10

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker took the chair at 5 p.m. and read prayers. [Sitting suspended until 7.30 p.m.]

#### QUESTIONS

##### NEWSPAPER CARRIAGE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr CHANTER

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

Whether it is a fact that special free trains are still being used to convey the metropolitan newspapers of New South Wales into the country districts ?

If so, whether the cost is defrayed by the Commonwealth or by the State Government ?

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

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

Special free trains are not now being used to carry the metropolitan newspapers of New South Wales into the country districts at the expense of the Post and Telegraph department.

##### PERTH TO ADELAIDE CABLE

Mr CHAPMAN

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

Is he aware that the Eastern Extension Company has, in its recent report, intimated that it proposes to lay a cable from Perth to Adelaide early next year ?

Has the company the authority to do this, and will it be done with the consent of the Australian Postal department ?

Can he state what effect this will have upon the Commonwealth's existing Perth-Adelaide lines ?

<page>8464</page>

Mr DEAKIN

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

The Postmaster-General is aware that the Eastern Extension Company proposed to lay cables from Perth to Adelaide early next year.

The company has authority to do this under the agreements entered into between the company and the States of New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania. The consent of the Australian Postal department does not appear to be necessary.

The contracting States have the right, which has now passed to the Government of the Commonwealth, to use the cable from Glenolig to Fremantle when the land lines are not in working order, on payment to the company of 5d. per word, but as long as the land lines between Western Australia and South Australia are in working order, the cable cannot be used for the transmission of Inter-State telegrams not forming part of the international traffic.

#### THE TARIFF

In Committee of Ways and Means :

Consideration resumed from 9th December (vide page 8464).

Item 74. - Manufacturers of metal, viz. : Agricultural, horticultural, and viticultural machinery and implements, n.e.i., including mould boards, shares, and plough plates cut to shape, sheepshearing machines, horse-gears, engines (portable) fixed on a locomotive boiler horizontally, with wheels and shafts suitable for transport, traction and oil engines, and road-making ploughs and machines, ad valorem, 15 per cent. Special exemptions : Apparatus - Diving, crucibles. Engines - Fire, machinery (not including motive power engine combination or power connexions, if any), viz., cream separators and testers, knitting, linotype and monotype, machinery for scouring, washing, carding, spinning, weaving and finishing manufacture of fibrous materials.

<page>8465</page>

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- This is an item to which I wish to call the attention of the committee, because it is a very important one to the natural industries of Australia. I do not wish to unnecessarily repeat arguments which I have already used, and I shall endeavour to condense my remarks into the smallest possible space. At the same time a

great many articles affecting very seriously the people who are developing our primary industries are included in this division. In considering the items we are not dealing with the question of free trade versus protection so much as with that of compensation to those men who are toiling under the most disadvantageous circumstances in the interior of the continent - the men to whom protection might have been a benefit when there was competition between the States, or competition from the foreigner. Now, however, we are dealing with an entirely new state of affairs. InterState free-trade and a uniform Tariff have dissipated all those unnatural contentions which formerly existed between the different States, besides which many of the primary products have become surpluses upon our hands. Take, for instance, the case of wheat in regard to the production of which New South Wales was for years third or fourth in the race with other States. That State is now largely exporting wheat. All these primary products are at present in such a position that they can derive no advantage whatever from the highest protective Tariff in the world. That being so, we must differentiate in regard to the duties to be imposed upon articles which peculiarly relate to these industries. Nobody will deny that the farmers, owing to the arid conditions which prevail in many parts of Australia, the want of navigable rivers, and the lack of that peculiar system of mountains which prevails in other countries, whereby irrigation and the conservation of water are rendered easy of accomplishment, are handicapped very seriously. We must, therefore, consider the conditions under which many of these men labour, and the necessity which exists for supplementing as much as possible the single hand of the farmer in dealing with the rude operations of the earth. We know that machinery is continually improving, especially in the congested parts of the world, and that it is in large populations where there is an aggregation of genius and talent that the greatest improvements take place. It would not be reasonable to expect such improvements in a small community like ours. As an illustration, I may mention the fact that the other day that great man who began his career by inventing weapons of destruction - I mean Maxim - has almost ended his career by inventing a plough which is said to be able to plough 30 acres in one day. We have to deal with all these possible inventions throughout the world. In the Government Printing-office, Sydney, of which I have had some experience, so necessary was it to keep pace with the times that we ransacked the universe for every new machine and invention in order to facilitate our operations. So, in dealing with products which we want to bring down to the coast of Australia as cheaply as possible in order that they may be sold in the markets of the world, it is absolutely necessary that the farmers shall not be handicapped in their operations. Looking at the matter from a protectionist point of view, I say that if ever there was anything which enjoys a natural protection on account of its size, its clumsiness, and because of freight charges and the difficulties of sea transit, it is machinery. It enjoys a natural protection, which is quite sufficient apart from anything else. Even in the very extreme protectionist country of New Zealand, if I am not mistaken, a great many of the articles enumerated in this item are admitted free of duty. Ploughs and plough plates are admitted free, and I am informed that the people of New Zealand have been able to do a trade in them with New South Wales. Whatever agricultural machinery is made in New Zealand, I am told, requires no protection. I ask honorable members to look at this matter free from all party feeling. In a previous division we have dealt with manufactories of different kinds, manufactories which largely prevail in the great centres of population. Even from a protectionist point of view, we have done fairly well for a people who are afraid of competition. Therefore, I think, that when we come to deal with articles which are used solely by the farmers and the people of the interior, who can derive no benefit from protection, we should extend some little consideration to them. We have already taxed their clothing, their groceries, their condensed milk, and almost everything that enters into domestic use, and we ought to give them some compensation. Even protectionists, if they are true to the ideal that all parts of the Commonwealth should be considered in the light of their peculiar conditions and necessities, must deal with this item upon the broadest possible basis, remembering the people who are absolutely the backbone of our industrial life, who make possible such cities as Sydney and Melbourne, and to whom we owe everything - so far as the production of Australia is concerned. I therefore beg to move -

That the words "and on and after 11th December, 1901, free," be added to the duty "Manufactures of metal, viz. : - Agricultural, horticultural and viticultural implements, &c, ad valorem, 15 per cent."

Mr Glynn

- I wish to secure the insertion of some words in the various sub-heads of this division, I do not know whether it would be the most convenient course to move for their insertion at this stage. There are some

items, such as "gas-engines," which I want to see removed from the 25 per cent, list and placed upon the 15 per cent. list.

Mr McDonald

- This is a question of procedure, and I should like to have it settled. If the committee decided that the whole item shall be placed upon the free list, would it be competent, subsequently, for an honorable member to move that any single article mentioned in the list should be separately dealt with ?

Mr Kingston

- We can have the details of the item put separately if the committee wish.

Mr McDonald

- I think it would be far better to proceed as we did last night, taking each article mentioned in the item. Then we shall know exactly what we are doing. If the amendment of the honorable member for Wentworth is negatived, I am of opinion that it will not be competent for any other honorable member to move that a particular article be placed upon the free list.

The CHAIRMAN

- The usual rule of Parliament is that it is not competent to debate any clause or item as a whole after the latter portion of it has been amended. That also is the procedure laid down for this committee by our Standing orders. I have intimated that, in my opinion, if any honorable member desires to move the insertion of words in the item, it will be more convenient that that should be done before the committee deals with the amendment of the honorable member for Wentworth, which is to add words affecting the whole item. It is only with the concurrence of the committee that I should be inclined to depart from that procedure.

<page>8466</page>

Mr McCAY

- I understand that the amendment of the honorable member for Wentworth is to place upon the free list the whole of the articles mentioned in this item, upon which the Government have proposed a duty of 15 per cent. I must say that the amendment is a wholehearted proposal, sweeping enough to satisfy even the honorable and learned member who has previously upbraided the acting leader of the Opposition for not being sufficiently stringent in pushing his freetrade principles. I myself desire to see some of the articles mentioned in the item placed upon the free list, for special reasons. But . I do not wish to see them all placed there, upon the grounds alleged by the honorable member for Wentworth. I heartily coincide with what he has said in his description of the hardships of agricultural life, and I also agree with his view that those hardships should be mitigated as much as possible. But when he tacitly assumes - as he did throughout his remarks - that the retention of this item means increasing those hardships, I join issue with him, and venture to say that he does not know the history of agricultural implements in this country.. He does not know that agricultural implements have grown cheaper and more efficient in the State of Victoria and in other States of the Union where there have been protective duties, than in States where there have not been protective duties. He does not know that the price on the wharf or at the railway station of Victorian-made agricultural implements is the same for the residents of Victoria as for the people of the Riverina, which is in the State of New South Wales. He does not know that our industry in the manufacture of agricultural implements in Victoria, with the assistance of a moderate protective duty such as this 15 per cent, duty is, has been a living proof and example of the benefits of protection, not only to the producers of the articles, but also to the users of them. I say without hesitation that the prices prove 'that fact conclusively. I would draw the attention of the committee to lastyear's history with regard to agricultural implements in the Commonwealth. I have taken 'the trouble to look up the figures in the Statistical Registers of the various States. I find that the agricultural implements and machinery imported into New South Wales in the year 1900 amounted in value to £230,000, and the re-exports of foreign made agricultural machinery - that is, not New South Wales made machinery - amounted to £15,000. So that the nett imports into New South Wales were of the value of £215,000 last year. New South Wales exported £15,000 or £16,000 worth of agricultural machinery and implements, of which no more than £2,123 were made in New South Wales. The imports are divisible in this way - from other parts of the Commonwealth, £112,700 worth, and from ports beyond the Commonwealth, £117,000 worth. I leave out the odd pounds in stating these figures. The New South Wales Statistical Register States only the port of shipment, and not necessarily the country of origin of the article. Therefore, I do not know

whether the £112,000 worth of machinery and implements that were shipped to New South Wales from other States of the Commonwealth were or were not made in those other States, though the figures which I am going to quote to the committee lead one to believe that they were. According to the Statistical Register, New South Wales had engaged in the manufacture of agricultural implements nine establishments, employing 169 hands. The horse-power in actual employment was 57, and the value of the plant £7000. Now, what are the Victorian figures? Victoria, in the same year - half of her imports of agricultural machinery and implements being duty free, and half subject to a duty of 15 per cent. - imported £126,600 worth of agricultural implements and machinery, of which £63,500 worth were duty free. Duty of 15 per cent, was paid on the other half.

Mr Thomas

- Would the articles upon which duty was paid be cheaper or dearer by reason of the duty?

Mr McCAY

- The prices were, as a matter of fact, the same in Victoria as in New South Wales ; that is, the Victorian made implements were the same price.

Mr Thomas

- But what of those which paid duty?

Mr McCAY

- I suppose that the imported implements, having to compete with the Victorian-made implements, the price would be the same.

Sir William McMillan

- Let the honorable and learned member give us the whole story.

Mr McCAY

- I am giving the story as rapidly as I can. Victoria during the same year re-exported £32,480 worth of previously - imported machinery and implements, of which £29,000 worth were dutiable imports. So that there was a nett importation into Victoria of £94,000 worth, of which £60,000 worth came in duty free, and the other £34,000 worth paid duty at the rate of 15 per cent. Victoria, however, exported much more than £32,000 worth of agricultural machinery and implements. She exported £128,000 worth, of which £96,000 worth were Victorianmade. Some honorable members taunt us at times with not having been able to build up an export trade in protected industries in Victoria. They cannot make such a charge against us in this case, seeing that we exported £96,000 worth of agricultural machinery and implements. Out of that quantity £81,000 worth went to New South Wales. Apparently, the price of those articles suited the New South Welshmen.

Sir William McMillan

- They paid for them, I suppose?

<page>8467</page>

Mr McCAY

- There is not the slightest doubt that the people of New South Wales paid for them. If they had not paid for the first lot, they would never have got a second. The Victorian manufacturer does not supply articles unless he is paid for them, any more than does the manufacturer in Europe. The foreign manufacturer, whose interests are so carefully guarded, but over whose operations or actions we have no control, does not give his goods away, except when he wants to ruin a local manufacturer who is just beginning his operations. Then he will reduce his prices until he drives the local man out of the market. That remark applies not only to free-trade manufacturers, because every trader will try to drive his rival out of the market if he can do it. What we want to do is to prevent the temporary fall of prices which is always followed by the permanent rise. There are 51 establishments in Victoria, manufacturing agricultural implements and machinery, as compared with nine in New South Wales. The number of hands employed is 1,104 as compared with 169 in New South Wales. The horse-power in actual use is 371 in Victoria, as compared with 57 in New South Wales ; and the plant is valued at £61,000 in this State as compared with £7,000 in New South Wales. From the manufacturing point of view, at all events, this duty of 15 per cent. has fully justified its existence. In Queensland practically the whole of these goods come in free. A small proportion of them are subject to a duty of 25 percent., but nearly the whole of them enter duty free. The imports of agricultural implements and machinery into Queensland last year totalled £61,500, of which £14,000 were Australian made, while £47,500 were foreign made. The exports from Queensland were

practically nothing. I cannot make out the exact figures for South Australia owing to the way in which they are given, but I find that agricultural implements and machinery of something like the value of £48,500 were imported into that State for the year, of which two-thirds paid a duty of 15 per cent., while the remaining third came in free. There was also an unascertained portion of another £50,000 ; it might be a quarter or a half, or less,-

Mr Glynn

- South Australia exported nearly as much as did Victoria.

Mr McCAY

- I am coming to that. As far as I can understand the South Australian Statistical Register, the exports from that State last year totalled £39,200. I am speaking only of agricultural implements and machinery, and not of machinery generally, in regard to which South Australia has a very good record. Of the £39,200 worth of agricultural implements and machinery exported by South Australia last- year, £36,800 worth were of her own manufacture. Western Australia imported last year some £26,500 worth, half of which came in free, the remaining half being subject to a duty of 5 per cent. It may be that only 47 per cent. of these goods entered that State free, but practically half of them did. Tasmania imported about £23,000 worth. A notable feature of these figures is that they show that the two States which have imposed a duty on these implements have become exporting States, while the four States that have not given any duty have not become exporting States so far as agricultural machinery is concerned. I do not think it would be possible to obtain a more striking set of figures.

Sir William McMillan

- If Victoria can export this machinery to a free-trade State, does it not show that she does not require a duty?

Mr. McCAY. - That is the old story, and it is time that it was exposed. What I was showing was that, of the six States, two have sought to establish the local manufacture of agricultural implements, in the interests, not only of the makers, but of the users. The fact that Victoria and South Australia alike can export these goods largely and successfully, at the same price - at any rate so far as Victoria is concerned - as that for which they are sold locally, shows conclusively to my mind that the prices are not higher to the agriculturist than they would be if there were no duty. Then I am asked why we require a duty in view of that fact. I shall ask the honorable member for Wentworth to assume that he and I were the only bakers in a country town, and that by competition with each other we had brought down the price of bread to a proper charge of 4d. per loaf, when a third baker came along and started to sell in the same town at the same price. Assuming that the third baker took away a portion of our trade, we might recognise that he was entitled to do so, but nevertheless we should regret it. The consumers would not benefit in the least degree by the arrival of a third baker, but the two bakers who were there first would suffer. . That is exactly the position in regard to this industry.

Mr Thomas

- The consumers might obtain better bread.

<page>8468</page>

Mr McCAY

- Of course anything follows if one chooses to alter the premises to suit his own convenience. Competition might do this, and that, and the other thing, but I premised my remarks with the assumption that the bread was good bread sold at a proper price, just as I am assuming that the agricultural implements made here are sold as cheaply with the duty as they would be without the duty - and that is exactly a parallel case. The arrival of the third baker in the town would interfere with the trade of the two existing bakers, without benefiting the consumers in any shape or form. In exactly the same way, if in Victoria we had a market for, say, £300,000 worth of agricultural machinery and implements, and if we sold them as cheaply as the imported article could be sold, and sold as good an article - as we do, without the shadow of a doubt - then the coming in of a third competitor would injure the local manufacturers without benefiting the local consumers. Assuming that they all sold at the same price, and as cheaply as possible, the same extent of trade would be divided among a larger number of manufacturers. Consequently those engaged in the trade would suffer, and the probability is that the falling-off in the output of the local manufacturers, and the comparatively small output by the foreign competitors, would be just as likely to raise prices as it would be to reduce them. Therefore I say that we require protection to save our market, even if we are

selling as cheaply as the foreign maker would do if he could come into it. Our object is not to keep the prices high, but simply to keep our market. What is the advantage of having implements to sell cheaply if we cannot find any one to sell them to?

Mr Thomas

- Is Victoria keeping her male population ?

Mr McCAY

- What has that to do with the price of agricultural implements 1 The honorable member ought to know that the migration of population from more densely populated localities to less densely populated localities is an irresistible tendency of mankind. It is not a question of a place being over populated, but merely of one place being more populated than the other. There is every reason for retaining the duty, notwithstanding that we may be selling as cheaply as could our foreign competitors. The figures I have given show conclusively that these duties have succeeded in creating in the two States that have enjoyed them, a substantial trade which employs a very large number of people. I cannot give the figures relating to South Australia, because I have mislaid that part of the register in which they are to be found, but the figures which I have quoted show conclusively that the employees in the community are benefiting by these duties. I challenge any honorable member to show that prices are higher to any extent than they would be without the duties. The internal competition in Victoria alone has sufficed to keep prices down, and most assuredly the internal competition throughout the Commonwealth will do the same. It is impossible to-day to find a farmer who complains of the prices of articles that are manufactured locally. The articles which are not manufactured locally, and which have been allowed to come into Victoria free, are in the first place our old friend the reaper and binder, and our more recent, but still familiar friend, the cream separator, and they are the only agricultural implements in regard to which complaints of excessive charges have been made continuously.

Mr Thomas

- Why put them on the free-list?

Mr McCAY

- Because they are not made locally.

Mr Thomas

- But we could make them ?

Mr McCAY

- I understand that they are protected by the patent laws, but perhaps my honorable friend knows better. The honorable member for Wentworth has referred to the question of natural protection. The raw material employed in these implements - the metal - has generally to be imported. I regret to say that practically New South Wales does not yet supply us with any iron so far as iron is required in the manufacture of these implements. In connexion with mining machinery I came across a startling illustration of natural protection the other day. In 1899 an air compressor was required by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, and several tenders were sent in. One was sent from Castlemaine, the town in which I live, and another from Chicago. The Chicago firm obtained the contract, although the Victorian tender was the lowest.

Mr Thomas

- It was not as good an article.

<page>8469</page>

Mr McCAY

- Tenders were invited for the supply, according to specification of a particular portion of plant which could be made here just as well as it could be made in Chicago. Subsequently the agents for the two firms, in comparing notes, found that the railway and boat freights combined from Castlemaine to Port Pirie and from Chicago to Port Pirie came to the same amount per ton. This shows that the story of natural protection is a very unreliable one. "When one hears it he is led to believe that Australia is about the size of Melbourne or Sydney, and that there is no question of conveying the article from one place to another. We cannot have factories in every town and farm. I have taken out other figures with which I need not weary the committee, but those I have quoted show conclusively that the system has been a good one, so far as providing employment for the people is concerned. The price lists when compared will also show that it is of benefit to the agricultural community. The result has been, indeed, to gradually lower the prices instead of to put them up, and in the interests of the agricultural community it is desirable that we

should have local manufacturers competing with importers or even commanding our own market in order to prevent the farmer being placed at the mercy of importing rings. It is a significant fact that the articles so largely in use which are on the free list, are the very articles concerning which the farming community has complained. Some articles on the free list are not produced locally, because they are protected by patents or for some other reason. I desire to see them on the free list, and I am prepared to see them named specifically, or I shall name them specifically myself later on. I think the committee will not indorse the ad captandum gallery appeal of the acting leader of the Opposition to the farming community. This sweeping proposal is about the most extraordinary suggestion I have yet heard during the debate in view of the honorable gentleman's watchword "compromise." In the interests of the users the duty upon the bulk of these articles should remain at 15 per cent., while there are some which should properly be placed on the free list. So far as my electorate is concerned I do not speak in the interests of agricultural implement makers. There are small shops in my electorate, as in every other electorate, where a certain amount of this work is done ; but I represent a very large number of farmers. Nearly half of my constituents are farmers, or are connected with farming, and I am satisfied, from what I have learned from them, and from what I have observed, that they will not suffer from the retention of this duty, while there is great danger of their suffering from its abolition. The abolition of the duty would not benefit them, but it would injure thousands of other people throughout the Commonwealth, and for that reason I hope that the committee will not approve of it.

Mr GLYNN

- I am obliged to the honorable and learned member for Corinella for enabling me to shorten the few remarks I have to make, because really the honorable and learned member has delivered a splendid argument in favour of putting these articles on the free list. According to his own statement, Victorian protection has succeeded, and the time for its abolition has come. The honorable and learned member has proved that it has succeeded, because he explained that Victoria now exports agricultural and horticultural machinery to the extent of £95,000 per annum. He showed that out of a total exportation of agricultural implements and machinery from South Australia last year of £95,000, agricultural machinery was represented by something like £38,000 in value, and the claim that the industry should have further protection has been utterly refuted by the honorable and learned member's own arguments. The honorable and learned member, with the astuteness of a lawyer, when giving the comparative employment provided by the industries in New South Wales and Victoria, out of a list of about eighteen picked out the particular item which seemed to be most pregnant from his point of view.

Mr McCay

- I spoke only of agricultural implements, because that is the item now under discussion.

<page>8470</page>

Mr GLYNN

- I think there is a general discussion at present on the item. The honorable and learned member argued exceedingly well for about half-an-hour in favour of two or three items, and with a Belial-like plausibility which almost convinces the judgment of the unthinking. He told us that in New South Wales the number of persons engaged in the manufacture of agricultural implements last year was 169, while the number engaged in Victoria was 1,151. But if the honorable and learned member had taken the whole of the eighteen articles included in item No. 74, he would have found that the total employment given was in round numbers 12,000 in New South Wales, as against only 9,000 in Victoria. So that, making allowance for the difference of population, practically the same amount of employment was given in the free-trade State as in Victoria.

Mr Isaacs

- Does that include the smelters?

Mr GLYNN

- I can give the whole list if the honorable and learned member wishes; engineers, iron-founders, boilermakers, brass and copper workers, docks and slips workers - surely if docks were in Victoria they would be protected - lead workers, railway carriage workers, tinsmiths, wire workers, electro-platers, galvanized iron workers, surgical instrument makers, makers of electrical apparatus, meters, ovens, and ranges, and metal workers.

Mr McCay

- I spoke of nothing but agricultural implements.

Mr GLYNN

- I know the honorable and learned member spoke of nothing but agricultural implements, and I have referred to nothing but what he spoke of. What I was pointing out was that it was only by making a comparison of the employment afforded in the two States in connexion with a particular line of articles that the honorable and learned member was able to show greater employment proportionately in Victoria than in New South Wales. In South Australia, the protection in this case has been nearly the same as in Victoria, and the results in South Australia are practically as good as those in Victoria. I know, however, that some manufacturers of agricultural implements in South Australia can rest upon the good quality of the implements they produce, and they do not want any more protection. They export many of their agricultural implements to New South Wales, and can succeed in the competition of the open markets of New South Wales, owing to the superior quality of the articles they now turn out. They can now walk with their natural muscles, and can dispense with crutches.

Mr Isaacs

- Only so long as they are protected against degrading labour conditions.

Mr GLYNN

- The honorable and learned member would put straps around the waist of every industry, and keep it on crutches until the day of doom. The old idea was that it was sufficient to extend protection to infant industries for about fifteen years, but the modern idea is to keep them infants for ever. Really these Victorian industries must be of a female character because they never grow old, no matter how many years roll on. Looking over the articles included in item No. 74, I find that there is a great deal of manufacturing activity in connexion with them in New South Wales without any bottlefeeding. I find that at Mort and Company's docks in Sydney there has been a considerable addition to the number of hands employed during the last four or five years without the aid of protection. I find that they now employ 1,230 hands, and carry on their work night and day, while the wages are much higher than they have been in Victoria for similar employment.

Mr Tudor

- That is why they struck. They struck for Victorian rates.

<page>8471</page>

Mr GLYNN

- The honorable member may give us particulars of the strike, but it is an extraordinary strike when we find from the quotations of wages for 1900 taken from a report of an engineering society that there has been a considerable addition in the last six years to the wages paid in this particular employment. The Clyde Engineering Works started in free-trade New South Wales in 1898 with 205 hands. In 1901 they employ 705 hands, at pretty good wages, and they also work overtime, and sometimes all night. The honorable member for Corinella also mentioned reapers and binders. I thought we had heard the last of the reaper and binder business. I heard it ad nauseum throughout the campaign in South Australia. Unfortunate protectionists, when they lost everything else, clung with a kind of despairing tenacity to reapers and binders, and whenever they were short of arguments they raised the reaper and binder question. I made a note of this reaper and binder business, and I find the position is this: The honorable and learned member for Corinella talked about prices in competition with protection being lowered. I suppose the honorable and learned member meant that they would be lower without the duty, otherwise what on earth would the duty be wanted for? I believe there was a 20 per cent duty on reapers and binders before 1879. The price was then £90, and the day after the 20 per cent duty was taken off the price shrunk in proportion to the duty, and it was soon down from £90 to about £70; it was £75 the day after the duty was removed. The price in Canada and America a few months ago was from £24 to £26, while in Australia it was somewhere about £34.

Mr Kingston

- It was £18, free on board, in New York.

Mr GLYNN

- I prefer to take what I consider to be fairly reliable information on the point. If we add all charges - which I am not going to enumerate - to the American and Canadian price of from £24 to £26, that brings the figure here up to £34 14s. 10d., and at present I believe the machine can be bought for £34.



Mr Mauger

- Not in Sydney.

Mr GLYNN

- The price may be a little higher in Sydney ; but does the honorable member think that that is due to free-trade?

Mr Mauger

- I think it is due to a freetrade ring.

Mr GLYNN

- No ; it is due to the fact that the patentees of the machine, and the American exporters more rigidly bind their agents in Sydney, and keep up a monopoly which is to some extent disappearing in Victoria. I believe they allow more agents in Victoria, and consequently there is more competition.

Mr Mauger

- I am informed that the exporters will not sell a machine in Victoria for delivery in New South Wales.

Mr GLYNN

- That is not the fault of protection or free-trade, but is due to the patentee and exporters in America disallowing the rights of agents to buy and sell.

Mr Kingston

- Does the honorable and learned member know that the patent has run out?

Mr GLYNN

- No ; but I am happy to hear that is so, because the machine may become cheaper. I fail to see the remotest connexion between the price of the machine and protection and free-trade, in the face of the facts which I have stated to the committee ; and I should have thought the proposal of the acting leader of the Opposition was a foregone conclusion. If, after the general discussion, we consider the item in detail, I shall propose that before the word " oil " the words " gas and " be inserted, so as to put gas engines and oil engines in the same category. Gas engines are used by small manufacturers in the cities, and oil engines are used in the country; and I do not see why any distinction should be made.

Mr PIESSE

- I regret that the acting leader of the Opposition has dealt with the whole of the item. It would have been more convenient had we had before us the item more specially relating to agricultural and country industries, and subsequently considered the others.

Sir William McMillan

- I am quite willing that that course should be taken. It was the proposal of the Government to have a general discussion.

Mr PIESSE

- There is a good deal in the appear that men engaged in developing the soil deserve special consideration, whether we are free-traders or protectionists. Some country industries will not get so great a benefit from federation as will other industries, and they ought to be freed as much as possible from taxation. I should like to see "agricultural, horticultural, and viticultural machinery and implements, n.e.i., including mould boards, shares, and plough plates cut to shape, sheep-shearing machines " placed on the special exemption list. Horse gears may sometimes be used for other purposes, and portable and other engines are used for other than country industries ; and if we are to tax machines at all, I do not see why these should be placed on the special exemption list.

Sir William McMillan

- Why does the honorable member not make his suggestion comprehensive?

Mr PIESSE

- Unfortunately we cannot do just as we would, owing to the necessity for raising revenue. In answer to the honorable and learned member for Corinella, I would point out that under federation the agricultural implement makers of Victoria will receive a considerable accession of customers, and they have already proved that they can compete in the open markets of New South Wales to the extent of £95,000.

Mr McDonald

- According to a circular I have received, the Victorian agricultural implements makers say that this Tariff will ruin them.

<page>8472</page>

Mr PIESSE

- I am dealing with the arguments of the honorable and learned member for Corinella, which are, no doubt, more powerful than those which can be advanced by any one outside the House. I have no doubt that the Victorian agricultural implement makers, having proved that they are able to provide what is necessary for Australia, will, under federation, extend their business to Western Australia and Tasmania.

Mr McCay

- These are free States now.

Mr PIESSE

- That is one very good reason why they ought not to have a burden placed upon them. Three of the States have hitherto admitted these articles free, and unless the proposal is to tax the user by increasing the cost, I do not see why there should be a duty imposed. I shall be prepared to support any proposal to place on the free list the articles I have mentioned, leaving the remainder of the items for future consideration. In my opinion, road-making ploughs and machines ought also to be exempt, seeing that there are no manufacturers of those articles in the States, and that they are of so much general good to the community.

Sir William McMillan

- Would the honorable member leave " engines portable" &c, taxable?

Mr PIESSE

- Yes; engines suitable for transport and traction and oil-engines.

Mr SKENE

- I agree that the honorable and learned member for Corinella has put his case plainly and concisely ; but when he compared the output of machinery in New South Wales with the output in Victoria and South Australia, he omitted one very important consideration. So far as my recollection of the history of agricultural implement-making goes, I fancy that the trade has practically followed the wheat and grain-growing industry. Wheat-growing has become a very large industry in Victoria of late years, and is now making great progress in New South Wales.

An Honorable Member. - In the latter State mostly by Victorians.

Mr SKENE

- The honorable member is right. But the first advance which the wheat growing industry made in Victoria was due to the knowledge and enterprise of South Australians, the implements which were required coming from the latter State ; and we now see that the implements which are required in the wheat growing industry in New South Wales come from Victoria. The implement makers of Victoria are a class of whom we may be proud. They have been able to supply the growers with implements against the world. So far as I know there are at present scarcely any imported implements used in the northern parts of the colony, across the Dividing

Range, except, perhaps, some very complicated machines, such as reapers and binders and drills. That being the case, I really do not see why the Victorian implement makers should ask for protection. There is now no prejudice against implements manufactured in Australia. I admit that in the case of a great many other goods there is prejudice against " the colonial article," but as to agricultural implements, I believe there is a prejudice in favour of those manufactured in Australia. Implements which have been made here can be most easily and best mended here, local implement makers having intimate knowledge of local conditions; and that is a great consideration. I may say that, without looking at what is included in subsequent items in this division, I marked off all preceding and including "road-making ploughs and machines" as " entitled to separate consideration. One reason why we should not attempt to exclude agricultural implements is that new machines stimulate the inventive genius of our people here. There is hardly an implement from abroad which has not been improved on under our local conditions, and seeing that Australian makers have been able to control the whole of the local market, I do not see that they require protection.

Mr Kennedy

- How did they get control of the local market?

Mr SKENE

- They got control of the market because of their knowledge of our local wants and conditions, and, being able to improve on ideas from abroad, they have been able to retain that market. In my opinion every

implement imported from abroad is a revenue-producing article. Every implement that comes here benefits the country by increasing the production of the land and the returns of the railways, and I do not see why we should put a high duty upon all implements manufactured abroad, in order to keep them out, until our own people can make them for us.

Mr Watson

- But locally-made implements also increase the production of the land and the returns of the railways.

<page>8473</page>

Mr SKENE

- Yes ; and we need them both. I farm in a pretty large way, and all the implements used on my farm are locally manufactured, except such as cannot be made here. I have heard it suggested that the imposition of a duty will enable drills to be made here, but I understand that the castings cannot be satisfactorily made here, so that the chances are they would be imported in parts and only put together here. Every improvement in agricultural implements improves the condition of the smaller farmers, by allowing them to make more from a small area of land, or to increase the area of their cultivation at comparatively little expense. I do not want to be unjust to the implement makers of this country, because they are a set of men whom I respect for their intelligence and enterprise ; but I do not think they require protection. I am satisfied that reapers and binders will not be made here for many years to come, and the local manufacturers of implements are sufficiently well off in having the possession of the market for such implements as they manufacture. The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, has suggested - I think very wisely - that shearing machines shall be placed upon the free list.

Mr Watson

- Those who use shearing machines can afford to pay a duty upon them as well as any class in the community. '

Mr SKENE

- In reply to the honorable member I would say that shearing by machinery is very expensive. The machines work well and smoothly for the first few years, but when tine parts begin to wear the repairs are very expensive, and if an additional duty were imposed upon them the chances are that they would soon be put aside for the old-fashioned shears. The shearers very much prefer machine-shearing to the old-fashioned hand-shearing.

Mr Watkins

- The£l a 100 man does not.

<page>8474</page>

Mr SKENE

- I think that he does. . A friend of mine this year engaged shearers at £1 a 100, because in New South Wales the rule was made that shearers should receive the same prices for machines hearing as for hand-shearing, whereas formerly for machines hearing they received ls. a 100 less. He started his men at shearing by hand, but he said that he would set his engine going so that they could shear by machinery if they would accept ls. a 100 less ; and nearly every man in the shed accepted the reduction. A great many men can make a large tally with machine shears, who could only do very little with the ordinary hand shears, because hand-shearing requires men to be very strong in the wrist. This year a man in my shed, who had cut his hand so badly that he could never again shear with the ordinary shears, was able to get through between 70 and 80 sheep a day with the machine shears before the shearing was over, and he is now capable of shearing anywhere with machine shears. Therefore the price of machine shears is a matter which affects the shearers as well as the owners of sheep, because in many cases, if the price is increased, machine shears will be done away with. An engine is another very useful thing upon a farm. When a farmer has to take two of his best horses out of his team to work for the greater part of a day at cutting chaff, he feels that he is wasting their time, and it pays the men in a large way to use engines to drive their chaff-cutting machinery. I therefore sympathize with the suggestion of the honorable member for Kennedy that engines of less than a certain horsepower should be exempt from duty ; in fact they might practically be all exempt. The honorable and learned member for Corinella has twitted the acting leader of the Opposition with there being no compromise in respect to this item ; but how can there be a compromise, when no protection can be given to the farmers, unless we allow them to get their implements free of duty ?

Mr. BATCHELOR(South Australia).Any representative of South Australia would necessarily feel that he was false to the interests of his State if he did not do everything he could to assist the agriculturists. South Australia is almost entirely dependent upon the agricultural industry. We have no mining industry of any importance, compared with that of the other States, and I feel that if I were to take any action which would make it harder for the farmers and wheat-growers to get along, I should be false to the interests of my constituents. It is for that reason that I do not care to leave them to the tender mercies of trusts of American or other foreign manufacturers, or of local importers, who will make them pay tin'Ough the nose for everything they have to buy. I am convinced that it is only by establishing local competition that the prices of agricultural implements have been kept so low as they are to-day. The reaper and binder case, which has been trotted out so often, and any allusion to which makes honorable members opposite squirm, is not the only case that could be brought forward to show that the absence of local competition makes things dearer ; but it is so striking a case that every advocate of Australian industries has felt bound to mention it.

Mr Cruickshank

- They have reduced their prices already.

Mr BATCHELOR

- I believe that the prices have been reduced, as the result of the exposure by the protectionists of what seemed to me to be the nefarious transactions of a ring, and the people of Australia are now getting the benefit of that exposure. Some fifteen years ago, before the South Australian Tariff was altered in the direction of protection, the price of English cast-iron Howard ploughshares was from 14s. to 19s. a dozen.

Mr Poynton

- What was the price of wire-netting when it was first introduced ?

Mr BATCHELOR

- Would the honorable member contend that cast-iron ploughshares were first invented fifteen or sixteen years ago? When the South Australian Parliament put a duty of 15 per cent upon ploughshares, Mr. Forgan commenced making them at Crystal Brook, and placed them on the market at 12s. 6d. a dozen. Now, they are sold at 9s. a dozen.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

-Then what was the good of the duty to him?

Mr BATCHELOR

- Mr. Forgan started with very little capital, and he would have had no chance at all of competing with a wealthy English company without the protection given to him by a duty. I will show the honorable member how free-trade has worked out in this matter in New South Wales. Messrs Shearer have a reputation all over Australia for their malleable steel ploughshares, which are sold in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, and, in fact, in all the States. They were sold in South Australia at 35s. a dozen. That is the price at which they were delivered at Quorn, and I believe that about the same price obtained at Port Adelaide. In Victoria, where there was also local competition, these plough shares realized a similar price. The honorable member for Moira, and the honorable member for Wimmera, will confirm the accuracy of my statement. But in New South Wales, under a policy of free-trade, similar shares were sold at 52s. 6d. per dozen.

Mr Cameron

- Similar shares ?

Mr BATCHELOR

- Yes. I am speaking of Shearer's patent malleable steel shares, which is the same article all over the Commonwealth. Then, again, in Queensland, where formerly no duty was imposed upon these shares, the price of them was £3 5s. per dozen.. I am thoroughly convinced that if the committee take any action which is likely to lead to the destruction of this local industry the farmers will be called upon to pay a great deal more than they have hitherto done for their agricultural machinery. If the Government were proposing anything like a prohibitive duty upon these articles I should not be found supporting them. To my mind, however, 15 per cent, is a reasonable duty. It is the same rate under which South Australia has built up a fairly good business in agricultural machinery. It will not add to the cost of farming appliances, but, in the end, will keep down the prices, and prevent us from being fleeced either by local or outside rings.

<page>8475</page>

Mr WATSON

- I should like to point out that, in framing a general Tariff, it is hardly possible to avoid imposing a duty upon some one's raw material. In the present instance, some honorable members, who, as a rule, are extremely fair, seem to have overlooked the fact that the implement makers under this Tariff will be charged duty upon some articles used by them which must make a difference in the cost of manufacture. For example, they will have to pay duty upon bolts and nuts, screws, shafting, steel blocks, iron piping, belting, sprocket chains, paints and oils, and rivets. In addition to these articles, there is a contingent possibility under division VIa, that the committee may tax bar-iron and castings. I would ask honorable members how we are going to raise the necessary amount of revenue, if we do not impose a duty upon some of these articles ? It seems to me that we are justified in placing reasonable duties upon a number of these manufactures which come into the Commonwealth. In the making of a harvester, the duty upon the articles I have mentioned will involve a payment by the implement manufacturer of £2 7s. I believe in relieving from taxation as much as possible the people who are not likely to benefit to any large extent from the imposition of protective duties. But I do not believe that we shall be placing anything like a prohibitive rate upon these articles if we impose a duty of 15 per cent. Only a little while ago a man who spoke of 15 per cent, as being a protective duty either in New South Wales or throughout the rest of the Commonwealth, would have been held up to ridicule. I am free to confess that if it were not for the special circumstances which surround us, I should vote for a considerably higher duty than 15 per cent, on protective items. But those special circumstances demand special treatment, and therefore neither protectionists nor free-traders can have their desires. A duty of 15 per cent, upon a harvester - assuming it to be invoiced at £25 - would amount to £3 15s., whilst the amount of duty that will be charged under this Tariff upon the various articles which go to make up a complete harvester, is £2 12s. 6d. There is thus a difference in favour of the local manufacturer of £1 2s. 6d. per machine. I should be the last person - representing as I do one of the most important farming districts in New South Wales - to take any action which would have the effect of unduly hampering the agriculturalists. But I do not believe that by reason of the operation of a moderate protective duty the farmer will be placed at a disadvantage, so far as obtaining his machinery is concerned. Even the honorable member for Flinders has admitted that the agriculturalist derives considerable advantage from having a local implement-maker near at hand to whom he can go for duplicate parts of, and repairs to, his machinery. I say distinctly that it is worth at least 10 per cent, to the farmer to have a local manufacturer making his machinery. He can afford to pay that much extra, because he secures the possibility of his repairs being executed at a reasonable price, and also of obtaining duplicate parts in the proportions and sorts he requires. In New South Wales during the last few years we have had a very fair importation of agricultural machinery, the greater portion of which has come from the protectionist States of Victoria and South Australia, whilst there have been importations in a moderate degree from New Zealand. One reason has been that until very recently manufacturers in places like America have not manufactured extensively the class of harvesting machinery which is favoured by the farmers of Australia. Another reason that has to be admitted is that a very large proportion of the farmers in the inland districts of New South Wales have come from Victoria and South Australia, and naturally have a preference for the machinery of the districts that they have left, and to which they have been accustomed. But so far as concerns quantity and quality of machinery, Victoria and South Australia have been able successfully to compete against America. With the local competition that exists to-day, and that is likely to continue to exist throughout the Commonwealth, the imposition of a duty of 15 per cent, will operate to keep imports from America out of the Commonwealth, whilst not increasing prices to any material extent, if at all, so far as the farmer is concerned. I am rather of opinion that the duty will make it possible for the price to be decreased, slightly by the increased manufacture that, is likely to result - in New South Wales for example. It is true that in the past we have had a fair proportion of drills, cultivators, and machinery of that description imported from America - principally from Canada ; but I contend that those articles' could be made within the Commonwealth.. If even this moderate amount of protection. - which is very small indeed - is imposed,, it will have a tendency to encourage those industries being established in the agricultural districts, which, as I have said, would, in my opinion, be worth at least 10 per cent, to the farmer in respect of proximity in the execution of repairs. I therefore trust that the 15 per cent, duty will be carried. We shall certainly be bound to put duties on some things that enter into the manufacture of local machinery.

Mr Thomas

- Why ?

Mr WATSON

- We cannot exempt, everything.

Mr Thomas

- We have passed millions, already.

Mr WATSON

- If it comes to a question of what benefits the farmer most, giving him duty-free kerosene and tea, or giving him duty-free machinery, I think it would be better to exempt the articles which, he purchases every week than those which, he only buys occasionally.

Mr Piesse

- That is giving away revenue.

<page>8476</page>

Mr WATSON

- The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, and others are willing to make the appearance of doing; good to the farmer whilst keeping the substance away from him. They would, perhaps, relieve him of £1 or £2 upon his machinery, which he has to buy once in five? years, but would take many pounds per annum away from him in regard to tea, kerosene, and other things which he has to buy every week.

Mr Piesse

- But the honorable member has asked where we are to get our revenue from.

Mr WATSON

- We have to obtain revenue from the farmer, as well as from every other person in the community, and I prefer to take it in respect of those articles the imposition of a duty upon which will incidentally encourage local production, bring a class of Australian workmen into existence, and be of some benefit indirectly in the directions I have already mentioned:

<page>8477</page>

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I have been very much interested in the last two or three speeches delivered by honorable members, because they have shown conclusively that the industry in agricultural machinery does not require any protection whatever. It was very interesting to hear from the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Batchelor, that in his State plough shares are made which are superior to those which are made in any other State in the Commonwealth. He tells us that not only is that so, but that there is a manufacturer in South Australia who appears to have the knack of making plough shares which can compete with the whole of "the rest of the world. He can supply the whole of the trade in South Australia, and send his plough shares into Queensland, where there is no duty upon them, and into New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia. There is but one State, namely Victoria, in which this manufacturer is unable to compete, and that is because Victoria is fighting South Australia with her own weapons. Within the Commonwealth, of course, we shall now enjoy Inter-State free-trade. They are most excellent plough shares, and there is no reason why they should not compete with the world in every State. At Gawler, a thriving town in South Australia, agricultural machinery has been made for the last 25 or 30 years, and has been able to compete against the world. Settlers in the habit of using -this machinery have gone from South Australia to Queensland and New South Wales. It must be borne in mind that only during the last few years has a new province in agriculture been opened up at Narromine "and Trangie in New South Wales in regard to the production of cereals. The South Australian settlers, who have gone into that part of the Commonwealth which is within my electorate, have imported machinery with which they were acquainted from the State from which they came. They are making fortunes in that part of New South Wales. Those settlers and others who are producing the staple products of the country - the agriculturists, the viticulturists, and. the miners - should be able to obtain their implements and machinery at the lowest possible cost. Again, in South Australia boilers and engines are made and are supplied to New South Wales. It has come under my notice that the Union Engineering Works are able to provide boilers equal to any that can be made in any part of the world. They compete in supplying thfr mining community of New South Wales, with boilers and engines. Consequently they require no protection. I am sorry to say that within South Australia itself very little machinery of this character is now used for mining purposes, but in

the past,, when the copper mines were in full swing, a great deal was used, and then a higher price was charged in the State in which, the machinery was made than in States to which it was exported, for the reason that there was a heavy duty on the importation of high-class machinery into South Australia, whilst that which was. imported into New South Wales paid no duty. While it is true that Victoria has made rapid progress in the manufacture of agricultural machinery, I would point out that she was doing so before she had any protective duty whatever. I refer honorable members to the Statistical Register published by the Victorian Government in 1865. They will there find that there were then sixteen agricultural implement makers whose manufactories were supplying the farmers, of this State. They were at that time competing with the machinery which was in operation in Chili, because the farmers were competing with the growing of cereals in the South American republics. The manufacturers then were able to fight the foreign manufactures in the local market, though there was a free tariff so far as concerned this class of machinery. Honorable members who refer to the Statistical Register for 1865 will find that Victoria, actually exported £2,201 worth of agricultural machinery, although she then had to» face the competition of the world. She had also at that time 40 iron, brass, and copper foundries.

Mr Kingston

- Does the honorable member refer to local products that were exported ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I assume that they were local products ; but the right honorable gentleman can make no point out of that, there were sixteen agricultural implement makers here. Does he imply that Victoria was simply importing agricultural machinery and re-exporting it to the other States ?

Mr Kingston

- Why not ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- In 1865 they did not enjoy the facilities that we possess for travelling between the States by steamship, and it took ten days to go from Melbourne to Adelaide by sailing vessel. The agricultural machinery that was required from abroad in South Australia in those days would be brought from California direct. California has had up-to-date machinery for the manufacture of agricultural implements for many years past. In 1865 there were engineering works in Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo and Castlemaine, and they were all manufacturing machinery of this kind. There were sixteen manufacturers of agricultural machinery and 40 iron, brass, and copper foundries.

Mr Kingston

- How many hands were employed in the sixteen factories ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I am unable to say, but all these works were in full s wins.

Sir George Turner

- They might have been only a few repairing shops.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The Treasurer would imply that these factories were not of any value. I would point out, however, that there was keen competition amongst them, and in that year alone articles produced by iron foundries were exported from Victoria to the extent of £5,791.

Sir George Turner

- Probably the articles were imported and re-exported.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- No ; those were not the clays for importing goods into Victoria and re-exporting them to another State. In those days people were making immense fortunes on the Victorian goldfields. I should like to point out, further, that in New South Wales there are 11,091 persons employed in agricultural implement factories, engineering works, iron foundries, boiler-making establishments, brass and copper works, docks and slips, lead-works, railway-carriage factories, bicycle works, the cutlery trade, and lamp-making, tin-smithing, wire-working, electroplating, galvanized iron-making, shipbuilding, electrical apparatus-making, surgical instrument-making, meter, oven, and range-making, and other metal works.

Sir George Turner

- Do those figures include the employes in the smelting works ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- No. In Victoria there are 9,000 employes in these trades, or 2091 less than in New South Wales, notwithstanding that the Tariff there has been absolutely free.

Sir George Turner

- Does the honorable member believe that to be a fair comparison ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- An excellent comparison. In 1896 the number of persons employed in these works in New South Wales was 7,669 ; now there are 11,091, or an increase of 3,422. During the last ten years rapid progress has been made in New South Wales in factories similar to those which are protected in Victoria.

Sir George Turner

- Especially in the making of agricultural machinery.

<page>8478</page>

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- They are making agricultural machinery in New South Wales. Under the protectionist policy which existed for a certain time in New South Wales these factories closed down, but when free-trade was introduced again the industry received a great impetus. The Clyde Engineering Works closed during the protectionist period, but they are now supplying the requirements of the State in this direction to a large extent, and exporting even agricultural machinery to South Australia, and other Australasian colonies. They are doing an immense trade in that particular line. I shall leave the honorable member for Dalley to show the progress made in the docks and slips. Under free-trade wages have increased in New South Wales. In 1895 the wages paid to coppersmiths were 1s. 2½d. per hour, now they receive 1s. 4d. per hour; turners and fitters were paid 1s. 2d. per hour in 1895, now they receive from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 5d. per hour; pattern-makers received 1s. 2½d. per hour, now they are paid 1s. 4d. per hour ; moulders received from 1s. to 1s. 1d. per hour, now they receive from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 4d. per hour. I shall not enlarge further upon this matter, because the honorable member for Dalley desires to refer to it, but I must give point to my argument. A great many points might be made in this direction During the existence of protection in New South Wales the Clyde Engineering Works lost most of their capital and had to close down.

Mr Kingston

- When did they close down ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- In 1896.

Mr Kingston

- Immediately on the passing of the Reid Tariff.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- They were losing their capital right through the protectionist period, and in 1896 they had emptied their coffers. In 1898 a company took over the plant of this manufactory, -which is known now as the Clyde Engineering Works Limited. In that year 205 operatives were employed in these works. In October last there were 700 operatives employed, and they are working night and day. The high rate of wages paid is attracting men from Victoria, and the honorable and learned member for Corinella will learn with interest that the manager, Mr. E. J. Clarkson, comes from Castlemaine. My reason for mentioning his name is that the honorable and learned member for Corinella has an unfortunate and objectionable habit of asking for authorities. It is sometimes not only inconvenient, but undesirable to give names, because it is not wise to run the risk of injuring a man who supplies one with information by mentioning his name in Parliament. In this case, no harm can be done. Mr. Clarkson, who is a free-trader, was employed at Thompson's foundry in Castlemaine, and he knows his business. He states that the moulders in the Clyde Works are paid £3 per week ; the blacksmiths £2 16s., £3 12s. and up to £4 10s. per week ; fitters and turners, £2 18s. ; carpenters £3 ; and a bonus in addition of 25 per cent, to the good men. I assume that he employs only good men.

Mr HUME COOK

- When did Mr. Clarkson make that statement ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- On the 1st October last. The labourers .who work inside are paid 39s. to 42s. per week, and the casual labourers receive 36s. to 38s. per week. This company is most careful of the comfort of its men. Not only does it pay them well and give good men a bonus in addition to their wages, but it provides an ambulance



room in case of accident, and also a dining-room 80 feet by 40 feet for its men. The company pays half the cost of conducting the dining-room for the benefit of the men.

Mr Mauger

- Is not the company doing all Government work 1

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- No ; the company also provides a sports' ground, five acres in extent, for its men. It is able, not only to pay high wages as well as a bonus to its men, and to take great care of them, but to export agricultural machinery even to South Australia- -where 25 per cent, duty was levied prior to the introduction of the Federal Tariff - notwithstanding that machinery of that class, as good as any to be found in the world, is manufactured there. On the authority of Mr. Clarkson, I say that there are no works in Victoria which will compare with the Clyde Engineering Works.

Mr Mauger

- What nonsense !

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Let me give the committee another instance. Hordern and Sons have a very large emporium in Sydney where the masses as well as the classes are supplied. In 1893 they commenced the manufacture of metal goods with five men, but in October last they were employing 211 hands in these works. The minimum wage is 8s. per day, but they pay up to 12s. per day, and they have 50 men engaged in the manufacture of bedsteads alone.

Sir George Turner

- What work is involved in the manufacture of bedsteads ?

<page>8479</page>

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I presume the right honorable gentleman thinks they do the same as the manufacturers of these articles do in Victoria - import the parts and put them together. He should make inquiries. The firm also manufactures wire spring mattresses, bicycles, steel and iron castings, and tinware, and their factory was established under what was known as the "Reid" Tariff- the freest Tariff in the world. That is what we have been able to do under free-trade in New South Wales. The people do not require protection in Victoria, and they simply grin in their sleeves at the honorable gentlemen who bring forward these proposals. I have received letters from friends in South Australia and elsewhere, who say that the people do not want this protection ; they want only an opportunity to drive out of office the Ministry who have had the audacity to propose such a Tariff. Martin and Co., at Gawler, make the finest agricultural machinery in Australia. They supply agricultural machinery to other parts of Australia, and in open competition, including American manufacturers, who are second to none. They are able to make ploughshares and supply New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania, in competition with the world ; and yet men tell us that this industry requires protection. It is an extortion upon the people, which I trust the committee will not sanction.

Mr KINGSTON

- I have been rather interested in the remarks of the honorable member for Robertson, who talks about the " immense exports " from New South Wales of agricultural implements. If the honorable member will only refer to the figures and statistics, which I imagine cannot lie, he will find that the total amount of these exports is £2,061.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- For what year ?

Mr KINGSTON

- For 1900. And he, will also find that the value of implements imported was £14,358. It is by the light of figures such as these that we can interpret the observations of honorable members opposite. Two thousand pounds value of exports for the senior or mother State is truly an immense export of agricultural machinery : and surely the language which the honorable member has applied to it is altogether unjustifiable. It is very useful to be in a position to interpret what he means when the honorable member talks of " immense exports." The honorable member told us that the Clyde Engineering Works broke down under a protective Tariff. They did not do anything of the sort. As a matter of fact they struggled on manfully until the Reid Tariff came into force in 1895. That was the last straw upon the camel's back, and

they did close on that account in 1895. The result was that a business which cost £300,000 was sold for £20,000 in 1895, after federation and a Tariff such as honorable members now have the pleasure of considering was assured. I do not wish to detract in any sense from the operations of those works ; I am only too glad that they should be extended ; but, when such large words are employed as we have heard used, we have to recollect the advantage they have had. In starting with a plant that cost £300,000, for £20,000, I venture to think that they started under very favorable circumstances, and it would be a pity indeed if they were not able to make the thing pay. I should also like to, know if these works have had any assistance in the shape of Government contracts.

Mr Henry Willis

- Under Hudson's they had.

Mr KINGSTON

- Have they had any since 1 I am asking for information which the honorable member ought to possess. As the honorable member does not know, I will ask an honorable member who does know if they have had any Government contracts.

Mr Watson

- They have had a lot of Government contracts.

Mr KINGSTON

- Of course they have had Government contracts, and have done very well out of them. They have not had protection straight away, but they have had an advantage given 'them out of the public purse.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What contracts have they had?

Mr KINGSTON

- I do not know ; but I know that what I have stated is a fact.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is not a fact.

<page>8480</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- This persistent interruption is characteristic of the honorable member ; that is all that can be said in its favour, and that is nothing at all. On the subject of agricultural implements, I venture to think that, coming from the State I represent, I might have been expected to give particular care to an industry of this sort. Let me tell honorable members that South Australia stands preeminent as an agricultural community. Although the total area under cultivation there is not at the present moment very large, still the acreage under cultivation per head is infinitely in excess of that of any of the other States. The proportion in New South Wales, which has lately very considerably developed her agricultural resources, is 1 '8, in South Australia it is 6, and the average for the federated States is 2-3. So 'hat we have in South Australia, three times the average of the whole Commonwealth. Under circumstances such as these, honorable members would indeed have cause to be surprised if they found that we were proposing anything detrimental to the interests of the agriculturists.. In the State from which I have the honour to come, we have had protection in connexion with lines of this sort, somewhat to the same extent, certainly not less,, than the protection proposed here, and there has been no outcry on the part of the agriculturist for a remission of this taxation. He considers he is very fairly treated, under all the circumstances, and there is no getting away from the fact that as good machinery is made in the State to which I refer as in any part of Australia. The names of various makers have been mentioned, but I do not propose to repeat them. I only say that it will not be seriously contradicted that the manufacture of agricultural implements is in as satisfactory a state in South Australia as in any part of the Commonwealth.

Sir William McMillan

- That does not affect the farmer.

Mr KINGSTON

- I venture to think that if we can point to the fact that in an agricultural State there has been a fiscal policy of the description now proposed, and that the result has been eminently satisfactory, it is at least a reason, and a strong reason, in favour of the extension of that policy to the entire Commonwealth. I know very well how honorable members opposite would have put the position against us had the result been otherwise.

Sir William McMillan

- It is all right for the manufacturer.

Mr KINGSTON

- I put it to honorable members further that when we come to contrast the condition of agricultural implement manufacture in the States which have protection, with its condition in the States which have not protection, the result is altogether in favour of the former. I have shown that in respect of the quality of the article turned out ; but I can also show it in respect of the very considerable profitable and reasonable employment it gives to the people of the States. Really the agricultural implement manufacturing industry in New South Wales is comparatively of little moment, and is hardly worth mentioning.

Sir William McMillan

- That is not our point; our point is the way in which the farmer is affected.

Mr KINGSTON

- I do not know what the honorable gentleman's point is, but it is my point that protection as applied to the agricultural implement manufacturing industry is a success where it has been tried ; and that where it has not been tried the industry is not flourishing by any means.

Mr Glynn

- Since the Tariff in 1887, what has become of Cameron Brothers, a leading firm in the trade ?

<page>8481</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- We know the facts now, and what is the good of pursuing the fortunes of each particular firm ? I ask honorable members to look at the general result. Coghlan tells us in this connexion that agricultural implement making is an industry worthy of encouragement. He says - Works connected with the treatment of metals, manufacture of machinery, agricultural implements, and railway rolling stock, form a large and growing class of industry.

I have here figures which show the state of affairs in New South Wales as compared with the other States, but I may lead up to the quotation of those figures by some further remarks from Coghlan. He says -

The number of hands set down as employed in the manufacture of agricultural implements in New South Wales is only 193. Few establishments devote themselves solely to this business, the manufacture of implements being usually associated with iron working generally.

One hundred and ninety-three are there employed, and Cogldam says that he considers the industry a comparatively minor affair. From the figures which I shall quote, it is clear that compared with Victoria and South Australia, the industry in New South Wales is entirely a minor affair. In New South Wales, with a population one-third greater than Victoria, the number of hands employed in the industry is 193, while in Victoria there are 1,107 people employed in this industry receiving good wages, which they fairly earn, and supplying an article equal to anything that is required at a price that is entirely reasonable. I further quote the figures as regards South Australia. South Australia has a population considerably less than the population of New South Wales, but the number of people employed in her agricultural machinery factories is 242, or nearly 40 per cent, more than the total number of people employed in New South Wales in the industry. I say, therefore, that as regards the particular item we have now under discussion, it is shown as clearly as it can be that by the operation of protection, we get a good article at a cheap price, and ample employment for our own people, and that where that protection is absent, we find altogether different consequences. I put it further to honorable members, that where free-trade has been tried in connexion with the manufacturer of agricultural implements, it is established as clearly as it can be, that the result is altogether to the disadvantage of the consumer, whose interests we profess to be so anxious to preserve. In regard to reapers and binders, which have been quoted over and over again, it has been shown that the profits are at least 100 per cent, on the price at New York. Such a position there is no possibility of defending ; and nobody has attempted to defend it seriously. Here I come to the cry that is generally raised - " If you can turn out the article as good as you say at so cheap a price, why do you need protection?" We need protection for our preservation against the unfair competition of foreigners in our home markets. Who can say that 15 per cent, is undue protection, seeing that it is an amount which is often accepted by free-traders as a revenue duty ? It cannot be seriously described as extravagant ; and I do not know that the necessity for protection was ever more strongly shown than by the acting

leader of the Opposition only, a short time ago, when he pointed out that a free port leads to most- unfair competition.

Sir William McMillan

- I never said so.

Mr KINGSTON

- I shall quote the honorable member's own words, and ask whether competition of the character to which he referred does not justify my interpretation. He said -

Again, wherever you have a free port, you have the sweepings of the consignments of the world.

That is the sort of competition which our producers and manufacturers are to be called on to meet. The honorable member continued -

All the better for the consumer. When I use the word "sweepings," I do not mean it in the sense in which evidently my honorable friends opposite take it. I mean that you will have the surplus products of the world thrown upon your markets.

When it becomes a question of preserving our manufacturers from competition of that sort, there is no man who, having given the question consideration, will not plump for protection and say that 15 per cent, is a reasonable duty. According to the honorable member we are asked to compete with the surplus, sacrificed slaughtered stocks of the world. Each manufacturer in Australia who is endeavouring to earn his living must, if the free-trade doctrine be adopted, compete with the " sweepings of the world." To what a depth of degradation must we inevitably be reduced if we are not protected against competition of that sort !

Mr Cameron

- Penalize 100,000 people in order to protect 100 !

Mr KINGSTON

- I say that we protect all. It has been said that we cannot protect the farmer. But we can protect the\* farmer in some items, as we see perfectly well when there is an outcry coming from, other countries as to the effect of the Tariff on agricultural products. In regard to exports which inevitably compete with the product of the farmer, protection, in the proportion in which it causes disadvantage to producers abroad, aids our own producers. Although we may not be able to do as much for the farmer by this particular policy as we are able to do for others, we can assist him in a variety of ways at the expense of the community. We give, and rightly give, that assistance by providing cheap land, cheap money, roads, railway bridges, jetties, and bonuses and I should, be only too glad to see a system of bonuses, adopted as part of the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth, if it could be arranged.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I rise to order. I understand that the question before the Chair is that of the duty on agricultural machinery, but the Minister for Trade and Customs, for the last quarter of an hour, has been debating the question of freetrade and protection without the slightest reference to that item.

Mr Kingston

- It has been contended that this item should be struck out because it cannot possibly assist the farmer ; and I was pointing out that we do assist the farmer in a variety of other ways at the public expense, and urging that the contention raised has no application to the propriety, or otherwise, of adopting this item.

The CHAIRMAN

- The item under consideration is that of agricultural, horticultural, and viticultural machinery, and implements ; and I fancy that the Minister for Trade and Customs was rather trespassing upon order in the latter part of his' remarks.

<page>8482</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- I bow to the decision of the Chair most cheerfully, and trust I set an example to others under similar circumstances. I was contending, on the words of the acting leader of the Opposition, that there was necessity for protecting this industry from cruel competition, and I am able to fortify the remarks of the honorable member by a quotation from Bismarck, who declared against the impolicy of making his country the dumping ground for the over-productions of other countries. That confirms me in the position for which I am contending as to the necessity for the preservation of a fairly successful industry from competition of a character to which it would be inevitably exposed if we had no protection of the sort

proposed. I should like to relate a little of the experience we had in South Australia in connexion with the manufacture of agricultural implements. Two industries - axle-making and share-making - were started before the Playford Tariff of 1887, which was the first time South Australia had protection in any reasonable sense of the word. I quote now from an Adelaide journal, which criticised the Playford proposals, but at the same time gave away the whole position by showing what had happened previously to the adoption of protection. That journal said -

The plough and scarifier shares now placed at 15 per cent, might easily be made here. In fact this industry was started up at Leura about the same time as Gray Bros, introduced axle-making, but the importers at once cut prices down, and stifled the industry.

The industry was thus destroyed on account of the want of protection, and as soon as that destruction had been brought about, up went the prices again. I venture to say that the beneficial effects of the establishment of many local industries in the different States will be altogether swept away if they are deprived of the protection which they already have. What did we do in South Australia? In connexion with the manufacture of shares we replaced the 15 per cent. - the very duty proposed now - and the industry was re-started, protected against unfair competition. Not only is that industry a credit to the State, but the shares have acquired a reputation which enables them to find a market in the other States ; and there is no expense whatever to the public, but a great advantage to the community generally. I should like to say that the proposed duty means £35,000 or £40,000 per annum, so that it is important from a revenue stand-point ; and I do not think for a moment that we are able to dispense with an amount of that sort. From the two stand-points of protection and revenue, the proposed duty is amply justified. We propose to take the sense of the House on the line &lt; Agricultural, horticultural, and viticultural machinery and implements, n.e.i." ; and I shall ask that the question be put in such a shape that we may vote generally on the question whether or not these articles shall be free. If we decide that they are not to be free, then we can decide on the duty.

Sir William McMillan

- Does the Minister stop at " n.e.i."?

Mr KINGSTON

- I am willing to do that.

Mr McDonald

- We must remember that there is a 25 per cent, duty on machinery, which includes all mining: machinery.

Mr KINGSTON

- I do not want to mix the two questions. Confusion would result if we intermingled all the items as they are shown on the Tariff, and the desire is to give the committee every possible opportunity of coming to a decision upon any or all of them. After we have settled the question in the way I suggested, it will be competent for any honorable member, seeing that " n.e.i." is attached to the line, to move any exemption he pleases. But let us deal with the group first, and lay down the principle whether there is or is not to be a duty. The Government have provided for some exemptions, and there may be others which honorable members think desirable. This is a matter which should be very carefully dealt with, because we should be very sorry to provide for a duty which is not necessary from a revenue point of view, or which is levied when it is impossible that the article can be produced locally. Honorable members have already given notice of certain exemptions, and I hope that all who intend moving in that direction will place their proposals on the notice-paper, so that, for the benefit of the committee generally, reports may be obtained on the items concerned.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Are we going to deal with the exemptions to-night ?

<page>8483</page>

Mr KINGSTON

- Exemptions, as a rule, are considered at the end of a division, when the general principles of taxation have been laid down. I trust that the rate, on account of its reasonable and useful character, will be adopted as it stands. I know the nice little ways of the acting leader of the Opposition. If the Government propose a duty of 20 percent., and he wants a duty of 15 per cent., he asks for a duty of 10 per cent., and then, when he is beaten on that, he manages to persuade other honorable members to support a reduction to 15 per cent. The Government- think that in this case the proposed duty should remain as it is,

both for revenue and for protective reasons. We sympathize a good deal with what fell from some honorable members when they said that under other circumstances it might have been well to fix the rate higher, but we have adopted the rates hitherto in force in Victoria and in South Australia, and I think that upon full consideration honorable members generally will come to the conclusion that our proposal is a very moderate one. I trust that the item will be passed as it stands.

Mr. HENRYWILLIS (Robertson).The Minister for Trade and Customs tried to discount the progress of the Clyde Engineering Works by saying that they had been supported by Government contracts. To my own knowledge they had Government contracts before they collapsed ; but, until the present leader of the Opposition reformed the New South Wales Tariff, that State imported an immense quantity of breadstuffs from Victoria and South Australia. Since then, however, practically a new province has been added to it by the agricultural development of districts like Narramine, Trangie, and other places in my electorate, and similar agricultural development has taken place elsewhere. This agricultural development brought with it a need for agricultural machinery, and the output of agricultural machinery accounts' to a great extent for the later progress of the Clyde works.

Mr WILKS

- The Minister for Trade and Customs in the early part of his remarks traversed the old arguments in favour of protection. I do not intend to follow the right honorable member in those remarks. In referring to the failure of Hudson Bros.' Clyde Works, he said that it was due to the adoption of free-trade in New South Wales, but when he was met by the statement that Messrs. Cameron and Sons, of Kapunda, South Australia, failed in 1887 - the year when protection was introduced there by the Playford Government - he said that he was not prepared to follow the fortunes of any particular firm.

Mr Kingston

- How long after the introduction of the Playford Tariff did Cameron and Sons fail 1

<page>8484</page>

Mr WILKS

- I might ask how long after the introduction of free-trade in New South AA'ales did Hudson Bros, close, or I might adopt the Minister's answer, and say that I am not prepared to follow the fortunes of any particular firm. He stated that the Clyde Engineering Company had prospered since, because they were assured of federation ; but in 1898 New South Wales had not made up her mind to enter the union, and federation was far from being an assured thing. Moreover, the policy of the Commonwealth was not then determined, and since that time the Minister, notwithstanding the assistance which he has received from the representatives of Victoria and from other honorable members, has found it very difficult to get this protective Tariff through committee. In 1898 the employes of the Clyde works numbered 205, and three years later they numbered 700. Seven hundred men were employed by one firm in New South Wales, although her ports were open to the manufacturers of the world. No engineering establishment in Victoria, notwithstanding the years of protection they have had here, employs so many hands. The right honorable gentleman, quoting from ' Coghlan, contrasted the number of persons employed in New South Wales in the making of implements with the number employed in Victoria, but he forgot to tell the committee that Coghlan found it impossible to separate the New South Wales implement makers from other iron-workers in very many cases. Most of the work done by the Clyde Engineering Company, Messrs. Ritchie Bros., and other firms consists of the manufacturing of agricultural implements. The right honorable gentleman asked us if the fiscal policy of the country was always to blame for the failure of industries. We do not say that it is, because we know that bad management will bring about the downfall of an industry under either free-trade or protection. But the right honorable gentleman has no right to attribute the failure of an industry in New South Wales to the fiscal policy, and refuse to allow that the failure of a similar industry in South Australia was due to the same cause. The leader of the labour party said that he would vote for these duties as revenue duties, whereas the Minister for Trade and Customs speaks of them as protective duties ; but they cannot be both. The leader of the labour party gave as one reason why he would support a duty of 15 per cent, the fact that it was intended to tax articles imported to be used in the manufacture of agricultural implements ; but what right has he to anticipate the decision of the committee in regard to those items? No doubt if we place a duty of 15 per cent. upon agricultural implements, the Treasurer will tell us, when we come to deal with these other articles, that, as we have assisted the agricultural implement makers, we must give him a little revenue by placing duties upon the articles which

they use. The leader of the labour party also stated that in New South Wales a duty of 15 per cent. would be laughed at if it were called a protective duty, but you, sir, know that the protectionist party of New South Wales, whom you supported, never ventured beyond a 10 per cent. duty, and a 15 per cent. duty on luxuries. The New South Wales engineering firms have been built up without protection, and I represent a larger number of iron-workers and other mechanics than are to be found elsewhere almost throughout the Commonwealth. It has been pointed out that the men at the Mort's Dock and Engineering Works struck the other day for an increase- of wages, and that fact has been referred to as indicative of bad times there. But, as a matter of fact, that firm has had only two strikes in twenty years, and, as the men who work there will admit, is a model firm. The mechanics, pattern-makers, boiler-makers, iron-workers, fitters, turners, moulders, and so on have not struck ; it is only the labourers, painters, and others who asked for a minimum wage of £2 2s. a week, and when the dispute went to voluntary arbitration, they were awarded 39s. a week. In my opinion £2 2s. a week is the lowest minimum wage that should be paid in any occupation for adult male workers. That was without the intervention of a wages board.

Mr Tudor

- There is no wages board in connexion with the iron trade here. The very pump at Mort's Dock is of Victorian manufacture.

<page>8485</page>

Mr WILKS

- I believe that that is a stretch of the honorable member's imagination. In 1893, when New South Wales had protection, the number of employes at Mort's Dock was 700, but in 1894 it had increased to 800, and in 1901, under freetrade, it was 1,230, while three weeks ago it was 1,500. But the committee does not find the free-traders asking for assistance for the industries in their electorates. The wages of the mechanics employed by this firm have steadily increased, until now coppersmiths are receiving about 7s. a week more than they were paid in 1895, turners, fitters, and pattern makers about 8s. a week more, and moulders about 12s. a week more. These wages were paid without the intervention of wages boards, and I am told that the men complain of too much overtime, some having drawn no less than £8 for one week's work. In all cases double time is allowed for Sundays, holidays, and the first two hours of over-work at any time ; thereafter, time and one-half. This information has been furnished by Mr. Samuel Kirkby, secretary of the Balmain Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. He also states that the three Sydney branches of this society contain 600 members ; that in October of the present year scarcely any were out of work ; that there was a scarcity of turners and fitters, and that many had come from Victoria - twenty-four Victorians having applied for work at Mort's dock in one week. That is the answer to those honorable members who are pleading for protection. The Minister for Trade and Customs has referred to the Clyde Engineering Works, and has stated that but for the Government contracts which they receive those works would be closed. But what about the Victorian engineering companies 1 Do they not receive Government contracts 1 What about the Phoenix Foundry, for example ? It has also been put by the Minister for Trade and Customs that Hudson Brothers failed in 1896, but the right honorable gentleman was careful to make no reference to the failure of Cameron and Sons, of Kapunda, just after the imposition of a stiff protective Tariff. Neither has any mention been made of Langland's foundry, Nicholson's foundry, nor Munro's foundry. In reference to the Clyde Engineering Works, I wish to point out that under the Dibbs Tariff, Hudson Brothers were very unsuccessful. Having paid no dividends for years, and lost most of their capital, the works were closed early in 1896. In that year they were purchased by the Clyde Company, which has been very successful. Starting with 205 operatives in 1898, they now employ 700 operatives, and the machine shop is working night and day. They do a considerable export trade to New Zealand, Borneo, and elsewhere. A good many of their employes have come from Victoria, being attracted by the higher wages which are paid in the free-trade State. In the face of these facts, how can the Minister for Trade and Customs expect the committee to accept his arguments? Recognising that the engineering industry has thrived very well under free-trade, I am prepared to vote for placing the articles enumerated in this item upon the free list. Failing that, I shall support as low a duty as may be proposed.

Mr TUDOR

- During the past half-hour we have heard a good deal about the Mort's Dock and Engineering Company, and from the way in which the honorable member for Dalley has spoken, one would think there was not a

piece of machinery in the world, which could not be made better by that company than by any one else. Yet the very pump which is used for pumping out that dock was made in Victoria. The honorable member also mentioned that the three Sydney branches of the society of engineers contain about 600 members. But I would remind him that there is an equal number in Melbourne, notwithstanding the fact that it has not the great harbours or facilities which are enjoyed by Sydney.

Mr Wilks

- The Marine Engineers are a separate society.

Mr TUDOR

- The honorable member knows very well that Mr. Samuel Kirkby, whom he quoted, is the secretary & of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers of New South Wales. I trust that honorable members will not reduce the duty of 15 percent, which the Government propose to levy upon agricultural machinery. I agree with the honorable member for Melbourne Ports that it would be to the advantage of the farmer as well as - of the implement maker if the rate were increased. Those who represent farming constituencies know the difference between the cost which is involved in obtaining the product of the land to-day by means of the harvester, and the cost of garnering it with the implements that were used a few years ago. Victorians having catered for the local market in this respect, have produced a machine which is being copied elsewhere with the object of supplying Australia. Today American firms are sending out for this machine, and next year they will be prepared to flood the market with copies of the harvester that has been in use here for some time. To my mind, the imposition of a duty of less than 15 per cent, will work injury to this industry.

Mr THOMSON

- . Honorable members are asked to continue the protection upon agricultural implements which has previously existed in some of the States, upon the plea that the industry requires it, although the manufacturers are already exporting largely. The question that arises in my mind is - "When will an industry cease to require protection?"

Mr Mauger

- When the conditions in other parts of the world have changed and we are dealt with fairly.

<page>8486</page>

Mr THOMSON

- I suppose the honorable member means when there are no black races existing on the face of the earth; because that is the great cause of competition, according to the speeches we have heard on many occasions. If there continue to be black races, I suppose the conditions will never change sufficiently to allow of the abandonment of protection. Surely this industry, which is competing in the markets of New South Wales, according to the figures of the honorable and learned member for Corinella - which, like his arguments,, were to the point, from his side of the question - can exist without protection. According to those figures, Victoria exports. £96,000 worth of agricultural implements, and machinery, and sends into New South Wales £81,000 worth out of the £215,000" -worth of her imports of this commodity.. The honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Batchelor, stated that South. Australian ploughshares went into the market of New South Wales not at the rate at which they were sold in South Australia, nor at the rate at which they were sold in Victoria, but at 17s. per dozen shares higher. Surely the competition of the world is not to be feared if that; is a fair example of the products of the South Australian factories. For my own part I think the honorable member for South Australia was wrong in his figures. I do not see how ploughshares could be sold! here at 35s., and then be sent on to New South Wales or Queensland and sold for- 52s. or 65s., without the competition which, keeps them down in South Australia and' Victoria following them to New South i Wales and Queensland, with the competition of the imported article affecting those prices. But what I want to point out is the consideration that is given to other industries, and which -is refused to the agricultural industry. In connexion with other industries the machinery used is- absolutely exempt from taxation. We have amongst the exemptions - Machinery for scouring, washing, circling, spinning, weaving, and finishing the manufacture of fibrous materials.

We have also stitching machines and machinery for the manufacture of paper and felting, as well as machinery vised for stereotyping and electro-typing. We likewise have among the exemptions machinery and tools used in the following industries : -



Apparel and attire making, bookbinding, boot-making, brush-making, glass-making and working, hat-making, india-rubber working, leather dressing, metal working, paper cutting, finishing and folding, stone-working, the pipe and brick-making, wood-working.

I could quote a number of other exemptions which the Tariff purposes to give to industries which enjoy a considerable amount of protection. But the farming industry which, from its very nature, can. receive very little protection, gets very little consideration from this Tariff. Its tools of trade and its implements are to be taxed. Its machinery is to pay duty. Surely that needs explanation, and is a good reason in favour of the action of those who think that the whole system of protection presses most heavily on the primary producers. It is a good reason for those honorable members trying to secure some consideration for the primary producer - some little of that consideration proposed to be given to the secondary industries which are not so important, and to which there has already been granted considerable protection under the Tariff as it stands. Under these circumstances there is ample justification for the proposal to remit this duty on the tools of trade, the machinery and the implements of the farming industry. The Minister for Trade and Customs has asked whether the farmer does not get assistance from the State ? He asks us to consider the roads and railways. But has not the expenditure upon the railways to be paid for, to a considerable extent, by the freight earned ? In some States it is altogether paid for by the freight earned. Does not the farmer provide that freight ? Moreover, the roads are not made entirely for the farmer. They are for the benefit of the whole community. The Minister might as well say that the wharfs and warehouses are for the benefit of the farmer. The farmer only incidentally shares in the benefit arising from them, and while he does that he pays his proportion of the expenditure upon them.

<page>8487</page>

Mr BROWN

- A considerable amount of argument on the respective theories of free-trade and protection has centered around this particular item, that affects so materially the farming interests throughout the Commonwealth. The honorable and learned member for Corinella, and the Minister for Trade and Customs, have endeavoured to show that the farmers will benefit from the protective incidence of the Tariff, to the extent that it will mean the establishment of machinery manufactories in the different States. A number of statistics have been quoted relating to South Australia and Victoria as compared with, New South Wales, in connexion with the importation and local manufacture of farming implements and machinery. It has been claimed, that because those statistics show a certain manufacturing advantage in favour of South Australia and Victoria, they prove that protection has benefited the farming industries in those States. It is not usual . for the manufacture of farming implements to precede agricultural development. But that is just what those arguments really mean, if they mean anything. South Australia has been more forward in agricultural development than the other States. Agriculture commenced on an extensive scale there earlier than in any other State. South Australia was followed by Victoria, and more recently New South Wales has come to the front as an agricultural State. Let us look for a moment at the statistics which Mr. Coghlan has supplied upon this matter, and which have not been quoted by the honorable members to whom I have alluded. These figures supply the key to the situation. In 1891 there were only 365,666 acres under wheat cultivation in New South Wales. In Victoria there were 1,332,682 acres; and in South Australia 1,552,423 acres under cultivation. In 1899 the area under wheat in New South Wales totted up to 1,426,166 acres, showing an actual increase in the eight years under review of 1,069,500 acres. That was in the eight years prior to 1899. In Victoria the increase for the same period was 833,011 acres, and in South Australia the increase was 268,714 acres. So that in South Australia, and Victoria, prior to 1891, the wheat industry had reached large proportions ; and the result of the large area under wheat, and the extent of cultivation in those States, meant the establishment' of factories, within those States, whilst the absence of agricultural development in New South Wales was responsible for the absence of extensive works for the manufacture of agricultural machinery. Though the figures which I have quoted extend over eight years, the real agricultural development dates from the passing of the Land Act of 1895, by which areas of suitable land in the central part of New South Wales, ' which, prior to that date, had been locked up in pastoral leases, were made available for settlement. The settlers devoted to agriculture land that was formerly used for pastoral purposes. So that the enormous increase of area in New South Wales amounting to over 1,000,000 acres, really refers only to the past four or five years. Therefore, the agricultural industry upon an extensive scale, is a comparatively new thing in New South Wales. Those

facts supply the explanation of the figures which the honorable and learned member for Corinella, and the Minister for Trade and Customs quoted. The farming industry is one of the primary industries, and will employ more men and bring in a larger amount of wealth than will any industry that is sought to be established under the Tariff proposals submitted to us. Therefore, in South Australia as in Victoria, the development of the agricultural industry has in turn brought about the establishment of manufactories in those States, and the same principle will operate and is operating now in New South Wales. In order that the argument advanced here against the free-trade State of New South Wales may hold good, it is necessary to presuppose that the establishment of agricultural machinery factories precedes agricultural development itself. That has never taken place in any part of the world and is not likely to take place in New South Wales.

Sir William McMillan

- It would be placing the cart before the horse.

<page>8488</page>

Mr BROWN

- Exactly. I know a little about agriculture. I remember the time when the farmers of New South Wales did their agricultural work by means of wooden ploughs, the scythe and the sickle, and sometimes a team of bullocks. I have seen them advance from those primitive methods until now they are using the most modern machinery obtainable. Where previously the proper cultivation of a few acres of ground was beyond their ability, thousands of acres are being treated - and treated more successfully, with the same amount of labour - as the result of improved machinery. The wonderful advance in the discovery and perfecting of patents suitable for the development of agriculture, and in the application of machinery to this industry, has made farming possible in parts of the Commonwealth where under the old primitive conditions it was impossible. It has helped largely to bring about that development of the industry which has enabled us to compete in the open markets of the world. Therefore the application of labour-saving machinery, and of machinery that can treat large areas of country cheaply, is essential to the further growth and prosperity of this industry, and anything that will tend to prevent their application will operate to the detriment of those engaged in it. It will retard their operations in the great worldwide competition in which they are engaged. It is contended by the Government that this is a combination Tariff - that it protects local manufacturers from undue competition with foreign manufacturers, and that, on the other hand, it is necessary in order to give the Treasurer part of that enormous revenue which he requires to finance the Commonwealth. So far as this argument applies, if it means anything at all, it means that an additional burden is to be placed upon the farmer who is engaged more particularly in agricultural pursuits, and in so far as the proposed duty operates in that direction it will prevent him from competing successfully in the open markets of the world. With respect to the advantages that have been brought about by the application of machinery to agriculture, I find the following paragraph in a leaflet, entitled "Reasons Why the Import Duty Should be Raised from 15 per cent, to 30 per cent.," issued by the Agricultural Implement-makers' Society Trades conference : -

In order to show how purely Australian invented articles have made it possible for the Australian farmers to maintain their industry along with a reasonable protection, it is only needful to compare the difference in the cost of tilling and harvesting the crops. To take, for example, the harvesting alone, the reaper of twenty years ago averaged per acre, as the total cost, 12s. 6'd. ; and then came the stripper and winnower - total cost per acre, 4s. ; and now we have the harvester doing the work at the total cost per acre of 1s.

This shows how the application of machinery has enabled the farmers of the States to enter into a world-wide competition. If it is possible, by further improving upon the wonderful and marvellous inventions of recent years in relation to agricultural machinery, to reduce the cost of production, the farmer will be able to compete more successfully than he has ever done in the open markets of the world. Any Tariff which results in the increased cost of machinery increases the cost of production, and makes it more difficult for the farmer to carry on that competition. The leaflet to which I have referred also contains the statement that -

A 15 per cent, duty is altogether inadequate to maintain the industry, and considering that a large quantity of the material used in the manufacture of implements and machinery is dutiable from 10 to 25 per cent., it is only just that our request be granted.

That is the assertion made by workmen engaged in the making of farming implements. The Minister for Trade and Customs and the honorable and learned member for Corinella maintain that the 15 per cent, duties which were imposed in South Australia and Victoria were ample to enable the establishment of the industry upon a sound basis in those States ; yet this body of men declare that 15 per cent, affords practically no protection, that it is altogether inadequate, and they urge the committee to grant them a duty of 30 per cent, to put them upon an effective basis. I shall leave that matter for the protectionists to deal with. I am not here to battle for the manufacturers ; I am battling for the farmers, the primary producers. I desire to state their case for the consideration of the committee. ' I wish, if I can, to induce the committee to look upon the position from' their particular stand-point, as well as from the point of view of the manufacturer, so that as the result of our deliberations something like justice and fair treatment shall be meted out. When speaking last night, I expressed the opinion that the primary producers were the working bullocks of this Tariff upon whom the task of footing the Bill which the Commonwealth Government present - in the form of a Commonwealth Tariff - falls more heavily than any other class ; that whilst special privileges are given to other interests, and particularly to manufacturing interests, the primary producers receive practically no special preference. A preference is supposed to be given on some of the lines which they produce ; but the fact that they are exporters, and that the Commonwealth are not importing in their particular lines, results in their receiving no benefit. A few moments ago the Minister strongly urged the committee to impose a Tariff that would prevent the surplus products of outside manufacturers from' being dumped down within the Commonwealth, to enter into competition with local manufacturers. If that is a sound and wise policy I desire to know what is going to be its effect upon the primary producers, the wool-growers, the wheat farmers, and the mineral producers of the Commonwealth! Their products largely exceed, the requirements of the Commonwealth, and their surplus has to be dumped down upon the markets outside Australia. They have to bear the brunt of prejudice and of any opposition that is offered to them in that special competition. No doubt there is a good deal of conservatism amongst our farmers in regard to the implements they use. Some of them become accustomed to a certain class of implement, and prefer to pay a bigger price for it than is required, perhaps, for some other implement which is superior in many respects. In the face of the keen competition that obtains, however, that feeling is largely dying out. The farmer who wants to hold his own, and to keep abreast, of the times, has to apply his intelligence to his work, and to call to his aid the very latest labour-saving and most effective machinery. Therefore, competition in relation to certain lines of machinery is not so large as it was, but there is keen competition in relation to those articles which practical experience has shown to be the best suited for the work to be done. As a result of the wonderful inventions that have been perfected in recent years, and also of the large areas operated upon, a machine does not stand for any great length of time, and the farmer is obliged to discard it, and replace it by more up-to-date machinery. He has had to discard the old reaper and binder for the stripper, and he has had to discard the stripper for the harvester. In order to hold his own with competition, which is world wide, and not confined to one State, he is compelled to supply himself with the best machinery it is possible for him to get. It is for that reason that this Tariff, in its incidence, will bear heavily upon him. In order to give a certain protection under the Tariff to the manufacturer of agricultural machinery, the honorable member for Bland said he was prepared to place this burden upon the agriculturist, but he considered that compensation might be obtained later on by remitting duties proposed upon tea., kerosene, and other articles consumed by the farmer. If the farmer has to pay a tax, whether it be upon his machinery, the clothes he wears, or the food he consumes, it has to come out of his earnings, and it is burdensome upon him. I am not going to take any risks in this line. This is a tax which presses directly upon the farmer in the matter of the instruments of his trade, and while at this part of the Tariff, I shall try to get some consideration for the man upon the land. When other items come to be considered, I shall try to get consideration for him in connexion with them also, and even if I succeed right through, he will still have less consideration given him than many others will obtain under this Tariff. I admit that the Tariff has been framed in such a way that the manufacturer of farming implements, as well as the farmer, is under a disadvantage. In the last issue of the Sunday Times, a newspaper published in New South Wales, there is an article headed - "How the Factories Act operates in Melbourne," and it is there stated - The utmost alarm prevailed in many departments of enterprise in Melbourne in regard to the results of the combined evils of the Tariff and the Factories Act. The proprietors of the Sunshine Harvester Works at

Ballai at (Messrs. H. V. McKay and Company), say they are granted 15 percent, protective duty, and charged 25 per cent, on the raw material. ... If the present Tariff proposals are insisted upon they will discharge 500 hands without delay, and import manufactured parts from Germany and America where the men work ten hours a day at lower wages than the Victorian rate.

That is how the Tariff works out. The manufacturer is given a protective duty of 15 per cent, on the manufactured article, but he is charged 25 per cent, on the raw material he uses. I do not desire to do any injustice to the manufacturer any more than to the consumer. I wish to see the articles included in this item transferred to the free list, but I wish also to have the raw material used by the manufacturers placed on the free list so that each may get a fair show.

Progress reported.

| ADJOURNMENT.

personal explanation- duty on tea hours of sitting - christmas adjournment.

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. PIESSE(Tasmania). - I wish to say a few words by way of personal explanation. Last night I was led to put a certain construction on some words spoken by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie. Since the adjournment the honorable member has shown me that I misunderstood him. I have already assured him privately, and I now desire to state to the House that I regret having characterized his speech as I did. I certainly should not have done so if I had correctly interpreted his meaning. I should have made this explanation earlier had the honorable member been in his place.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I should like to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs if he will give us some opportunity before the adjournment for the holidays of settling what shall be the duty upon tea. There is no doubt that the trade is at present in a chaotic state, and the duty ought to be settled.

Mr. KINGSTON(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - The matter to which the honorable member for South Sydney refers is one which claims our early consideration, but there are various other matters which have almost similar claims. We shall do our best to deal with the matters of most pressing importance, but there still remains an opportunity for His Majesty's Opposition to put the Tariff through.

<page>8490</page>

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - - Before the motion is carried I should like to say that it has struck me that honorable members may desire to discuss further the question of the adjournment as intimately connected with the hours at which we commence business. It might be advisable that I should ask leave to withdraw the motion that the House do now adjourn, because I feel inclined to move that there should be morning sittings of this House, in order to bring us nearer to some reasonable time for adjournment. I am not at the present stage inclined to move in the matter unless it is clear that there is some consensus of opinion on the part of honorable members that it is desirable to expedite business. If there is such a feeling, I should be inclined to move for an adjournment at an earlier date than that which has already been indicated. I do not wish to force anything upon the House, but I feel that if we are to adjourn early, we ought to meet at ten o'clock or half-past ten. I fancy that honorable members on both sides of the House may be agreeable to do that in order to enable us to adjourn earlier than is at present proposed. I do not feel inclined to propose such a course, unless it is clear that members on both sides are disposed to deal with matters in a prompt way. In saying that, I do not wish to exact too much from any one, but, if honorable members wish to get away before Wednesday, they might offer to the Government some means by which an equal amount of business will be got through, in which case the Government would not object to adjourning before that day. I wish to put the matter in a purely suggestive way, because I recognise very clearly that whatever we have to do may be better done by a general agreement of the House. In the absence of such a general agreement, we shall have to adhere to what has, so far, been proposed, and ask the House to sit until next Wednesday. That there may be some discussion of the matter, I ask leave to withdraw the motion for the adjournment of the House.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

The SPEAKER

- Does the right honorable gentleman desire to move any other motion ?

Mr Barton

- I do not propose to move any other motion at present, but if my honorable friend, the acting leader of the Opposition, has anything to say, I ask that by the indulgence of the House, he shall be allowed to say it, before I move another motion.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - It has occurred to me, and I am sure it must have occurred to other honorable members, that we shall be placed under a very great disadvantage if we have to come back here next week and sit on Monday and Tuesday - because I do not imagine that very much will be done on Wednesday. I think that the time lost by foregoing the proposed sittings next week can be made up by sitting in the mornings for the rest of this week, sitting until the usual hour on Friday night, and again on Saturday until one o'clock. We should do as much work by continuous sittings in that way as we should do by adjourning on Friday and coming back next week. I should like to point out to honorable members who perhaps have no business to attend, that if we do not adjourn for the holidays on Saturday, we shall lose the week before Christmas. The week in which Christmas Day occurs is a broken week in business, and then coming back so very soon after the New Year, honorable members will be deprived of an opportunity to do necessary business. I cannot take it upon myself to answer for honorable members, or to say that they will be prepared to deal with a certain number of items, but I can say that I am willing to sacrifice myself personally, and I think that most honorable members on this side will be prepared to sit in the morning for the rest of this week, to sit until 11.30 o'clock at night, and from 10.30 to one o'clock on Saturday, in order to get as far forward with the Tariff as possible.

Mr. BARTON (Hunter - Minister for External Affairs). - The honorable member for Wentworth will recognise that Christmas week commences on the 22nd December, and there is no reason, unless we come to some mutual arrangement, why we should not go on with the business of Parliament in the week anterior to that.

Mr Page

- What arrangement does the right honorable gentleman suggest ?

Mr BARTON

- The Government have suggested an adjournment on the 18th December, a week before Christmas, which will give us more time for our parliamentary business, and allow honorable members to leave Melbourne in time to reach their homes before Christmas day. The honorable member for Wentworth suggests that we should sit from 10.30 in the morning until 11.30 at night on the remaining days of this week, with the exception of Saturday, when he suggests that we should adjourn at one o'clock.

Sir William McMillan

- Suppose we settle it to-morrow. We cannot very well arrange to meet at 10.30 in the morning without giving notice to honorable members who are away.

<page>8491</page>

Mr BARTON

- If there is to be any value in the concession which my honorable friend offers, we must meet at 10.30 to-morrow morning. Therefore, if I accepted my honorable friend's suggestion, I should move, with concurrence, that the House at its rising adjourn until 10.30 a.m. to-morrow.

Mr McDonald

- I shall object to that.

Mr BARTON

- By meeting at 10.30 to-morrow and Thursday, we should gain five hours, and if we abandoned the proposed sittings on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of next week, we should lose 22 hours. I understood my honorable friend to favour originally a late, and, if necessary, an all-night sitting on Friday. If there were no obstruction, but a hearty cooperation in getting on with work, the Government might be justified in making some arrangement of that sort. So long as we can work amicably with honorable members opposite, we shall try to do so. I am prepared to move that the House meet at 10.30 a.m. to-morrow and Thursday only on the understanding that honorable members who wish to avoid coming here next week will agree to sit long past eleven on Friday night for the discussion of business.

Mr SPEAKER

- I cannot allow this discussion to continue unless a definite motion is made.

Mr Barton

- It saves a lot of time.

Mr SPEAKER

- We have certain standing orders, and they must be obeyed. Considerable latitude has been allowed, but I cannot permit further discussion unless a definite motion is submitted.

Mr Barton

- I cannot submit a motion until I have some sort of assurance from the honorable member for Wentworth. Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - The Prime Minister misunderstands anything that may have passed if he thinks that I agreed under any circumstances to sit after 11.30 at night. I agreed to sit on Friday as on an ordinary day, and if we meet to-morrow and Thursday morning, and sit late on Friday, we shall gain practically another day, as against two days next week ; because I do not suppose much business would be done on the Wednesday. We also have the advantage of practically continuous sittings, and it will be the desire of every one to get through as much work as possible in order that we may leave Melbourne on Saturday. Upon that understanding I shall be very glad if the right honorable gentleman will move that the House at its rising adjourn until 10.30 a.m. to-morrow, and will allow us to finish our sittings at one o'clock on Saturday, so that we may catch the trains which leave Melbourne on that day for the other States.

Mr. BARTON(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - As there is no assurance in the direction which I expected, I have no alternative but to move -

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- I think every honorable member is willing to make some sacrifice in order to obtain an early adjournment, but before we adjourn we should come to a decision, in justice to the commercial community, upon some of the items which have been postponed until after the consideration of Division6A. I believe that protests are sent to honorable members every day about the dislocation of business which is caused by the uncertainty which prevails as to what Parliament will do in regard to the duty on tea and other articles of large consumption, and I think it would be unfair to adjourn without having dealt with those duties.

Mr Fisher

- And without passing the sugar duties.

Mr WATSON

- We might also pass the sugar duties, because I believe that there is very little difference of opinion now with regard to them. I should be willing to sit till the end of next week, sooner than have these matters left in abeyance for three weeks or a month, and I think honorable members should make some sacrifice of their personal convenience in order to deal with these matters. A few nights will be sufficient ; but this evening we have sat for some hours without passing even one item. It seems to me that it is our duty to our constituents to press on with business.

Mr McDONALD

- I object to having a sitting to-morrow morning, because I do not think honorable members can sit all day for five days a week and deal fairly with the business of the country.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They can do it for one week, and that is all that is asked for.

<page>8492</page>

Mr McDONALD

- We sat five days, last week and had several late sittings, but. I do not think we shall be acting fairly to those who sent us here, or to ourselves, if we continue these early and late sittings. There has been a good deal of discussion, but, taking into consideration the peculiar circumstances, I do not think there has. been too much. The more we ventilate the matters connected with the Tariff, the more likely are we to have it settled upon - a satisfactory basis. There seems to me a tendency to make compromises, and these compromises will undoubtedly make the Tariff more acceptable to the people than it would have been if it had been passed as it was originally framed. The honorable member for Bland has referred to the unsettled condition of the commercial world of the Commonwealth, and there is, no doubt, a great deal of uncertainty amongst those engaged in commercial pursuits ; but that state of things is, I suppose, unavoidable in the consideration of a Tariff. While we should make every effort to pass the Tariff as soon

as possible, I do not think we should try to rush it through at such a speed that honorable members will not be able to give full attention to its details.

Mr SPEAKER

- I would remind the honorable member for Kennedy that Ministers can at any time, without notice, move a motion fixing the hour of meeting next day, so that any objection he might make would be of no avail in preventing the moving of such a motion.

Mr FISHER

-I would remind the House of the desirability of passing the sugar duties before we adjourn for the Christmas holidays, because it will be necessary to proclaim the date at which men can begin to grow sugar by white labour ; and the sooner that date is fixed the better.

Sir WILLIAMMcMILLAN (Wentworth). - I do not want the Prime Minister to reply to-night, but I think that the House should adjourn 'for the Christmas holidays at the end of this week. I do not think the country expects us to work all the year round, and every honorable member, whether he is in a regular business or not, has his private affairs to attend to. We do not all live in Victoria. In the week in which Christmas Day falls no business can be done, and scarcely any business is done in the first week of the new year. I think, therefore, it would be very hard, if not harsh, to keep honorable members here next week, and allow them to leave Melbourne only just in time to get to their homes before Christmas Day.

Mr. KINGSTON(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - We must all recognise that the Tariff is a matter of great importance, and 'that its early settlement is desirable, as far as may be consistent with due deliberation and discussion appropriate to its gravity. I venture to think that at this stage we should think first of our duty to the country rather than of those other matters that the approaching season suggests. We must also recollect that we cannot have such an adjournment as will enable honorable members who come from the distant States to return to their homes, and that instead of keeping them in idleness in Melbourne we should enable them to utilise their time in discharging the public duties for which they have come here. Our convenience is one thing, and our pleasure is another ; but our duty to the country is the most important. I do not think that it was ever so important that we should, at the earliest possible moment, address ourselves to the early settlement of the business before us ; and I think the country will fully appreciate any example we may give them of devotion to our public duties as opposed to the consideration of our own convenience or advantage. I thoroughly sympathize with the remarks which have fallen from some honorable members as to the importance of dealing with the question of the sugar duties, as it is of the utmost concern to those who are interested in sugar-growing that they should know upon what date the prohibition regarding the employment of black labour shall begin. I am sure that under all the circumstances honorable members will come to the conclusion that their highest duty is to attend to public business, which requires an early settlement.

<page>8493</page>

Mr CONROY

- I think we owe it to the public that we should be in such a frame of mind that we are able to discuss the large and important questions brought before us. There is no doubt that honorable members are becoming jaded in mind and body. It must not be forgotten that the House has been sitting for seven months. We have been here four days, and, for some time, five days a week, and no legislative body has ever before sat so many hours in the same period of time as this House has done This ought to be sufficient to show the country that there has been a devotion to duty on the part of the Federal Parliament such as has never before been exhibited by any legislative body. Under these circumstances, it is not too much to ask that honorable members should be allowed to take a month's ret. We shall then be able to return refreshed, and in such a state of mind as will enable us to give to the matters before us the full consideration they require. If we go on as we are now doing, it will be impossible for many honorable members to devote their attention to parliamentary work at all. They may be able to sit in their places, but, as honorable members know, an immense amount of outside work has to be done to enable them to follow up the various arguments presented, and to enter into all the necessary details of legislative work. If we are not able to do this, we shall no longer have any claim to be called a deliberative assembly. I hope the Prime Minister will agree to make such arrangements as will enable us to rise on Saturday.

Mr McCOLL

- I think the request made by the acting leader of the Opposition is most reasonable. Many of us have had

to leave our business almost entirely for the last few weeks, and as no business can be done during the holidays, or for some days immediately following New Year's Day, it is very desirable that honorable members should be released from their legislative duties on Friday or Saturday. If we meet in the mornings, we shall do more work than if we are required to attend here next week.

Mr O'MALLEY

-I hope the Government will accept the suggestion of the acting leader of the Opposition. We have been here since May last, and as I have not missed one sitting of the House since the session was opened, I know that, in common with many other honorable members, I am more fit to be in the hospital than here. It would only be fair to allow honorable members to get away by Friday or Saturday, and I feel sure that if we are required to meet next week, we shall not make much progress. We are not fit to do much more work, as we are all jaded, and cannot do justice to the important business of the Commonwealth, which involves millions of money.

Mr PHILLIPS

- I desire to support the proposal of the acting leader of the Opposition that we should meet early to-morrow, and continue our sittings in an endeavour to clear matters up by Friday night or Saturday morning. Although honorable members have stated that the Christmas adjournment is a matter of small importance to "Victorians, I desire to point out that I am one of those Victorians who have been unable to reach their homes since Monday sittings were commenced. The representatives of New South Wales can return to their homes on Friday nights, and meet here again on Monday mornings, but I am not in that fortunate position. I would certainly recommend the Government to adopt the suggestion that has fallen from the acting leader of the Opposition.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I join in the wish which has been generally expressed that the Government should endeavour to arrange for an adjournment not later than Saturday morning. If we meet to-morrow morning, and sit on Friday night and on Saturday morning, we shall add the equivalent of a full sitting day to the time at our disposal for business, and as the proposal of the acting leader of the Opposition conveys that we shall help the Government to get through as much business as possible, I hope it will be adopted.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I hope the Prime Minister will withdraw from the position he has taken up, and agree to the House meeting to-morrow morning.

Mr Watson

- It would not be fair to meet to-morrow morning without giving notice to honorable members who are away. We might sit on to-morrow night if necessary.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I object to extended sittings through the night. I have no hesitation in saying that fully 70 or 80 per cent, of honorable members are in favour of the proposal of the acting leader of the Opposition, and I hope the Government will see their way to fall in with it.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

<page>8494</page>

00:00:00

House adjourned at 12 (midnight).