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1901-10-09

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker

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

QUESTIONS

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES

Mr POYNTON

- Some little time back the Prime Minister promised to lay on the table a return showing the amount of travelling allowances paid since the 1st January last. I wish to ask him when we are likely to get that return.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- The Treasurer informs me that he is endeavouring to secure the information, and that as soon as it is complete he will lay it on the table. I understand that the honorable member wants a general return, but that he is chiefly interested in the allowances paid to officers of the Defence department.

TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY

Mr POYNTON

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister if he has received any communication from South Australia with reference to that portion of the railway there known as the transcontinental line, and, if so, if any decision has been arrived at in regard to it.

Mr BARTON

- I have received a communication which I have not had time to fully consider. I shall be happy to show it to the honorable member, and I shall deal with it as soon as I can.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS LABORERS BILL

Mr Fisher

I wish to ask the Prime Minister if he has received a letter of protest from the Premier of Queensland in regard to the Pacific Islanders Laborers Bill, and, if not, if he will lay it upon the table as soon as he receives it 1

Mr BARTON

- Although the newspaper statement to which the honorable member referred me yesterday spoke of a letter having been despatched to me, that letter has not yet been received. When it is received I shall have the greatest pleasure in laying it upon the table.

Mr PAGE

- I should like to know if it is the intention of the Minister of Defence, in view of the statement in the Age this morning that we are going to have civil war in Queensland, if the Pacific Islanders Labourers Bill is passed as it stands, to levy the forces under his command, so that they may be sent there to enforce the law ?

ESTIMATES OF CUSTOMS REVENUE

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Mr REID

- A return was laid on the table last night, showing the total amount of revenue estimated to be received from the duties set out in each of the sixteen divisions into which the Tariff is divided, but it would be a great help to honorable members if we could have a statement showing the estimated revenue from each of the items in those divisions. There must be such information in existence. i

Treasurer

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The Minister for Trade and Customs is not here at present, but such a document as the right honorable and learned member refers to is in existence, and personally I see no reason why it should not be available to honorable members. I think that it is the duty of the Government to give honorable members the fullest information, because, no matter how careful we may be in our calculations, those who represent electorates in other States may be able to show us that we have made mistakes. I shall consult with my colleague on this matter, but I think there will be no difficulty in having the paper laid upon the

table.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE TARIFF

Mr R EDWARDS

- Has any arrangement been made for distributing the Tariff in each State, to enable the merchants there to know what are the proposals of the Government?

Mr BARTON

- I am informed by the Treasurer that copies of the Tariff have been sent to the Custom-houses in each State, whence no doubt they will be published, and that, in addition, he posted this morning to the Treasurer of each State a copy of the Tariff, and all possible information to accompany it.

CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Mr GLYNN

- I wish to know from the Treasurer whether, if a sum of money is placed on the annual Estimates to provide for the construction of buildings, those buildings must necessarily be constructed of wood and iron, or whether, in States where such buildings have hitherto been constructed of stone or brick, these materials will be used.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- The rule laid down by the Cabinet is that buildings of wood or of iron shall be paid for out of revenue, and that more permanent and expensive constructions of stone and brick shall be paid for out of loan money. Any building which is provided for out of revenue must therefore be constructed of wood or iron, but, if an honorable member can show reasons why the material used should be more substantial, the propriety of making an alteration will be considered. We shall not, however, shift an item from one set of Estimates to another, simply to provide for the construction of a building out of loan money instead of out of revenue.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I desire to make a personal explanation. An amendment was moved on one of the clauses of the Immigration Restriction Bill, providing for the taking of a direct course in regard to the exclusion of undesirable immigrants, and I supported it ; but I have been reported in several of the newspapers in the State from which I come as having opposed it, to save the Government. These reports make out that I acted inconsistently with my speeches and promises, and I desire therefore to place upon record the fact that I voted for the amendment. I hope that this statement will secure the object of correcting the wrong impression which the misreports have caused.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I find that I also was misreported in regard to my action with reference to the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, but, in my case, the newspaper did me the injustice of recording my name on both sides of the division list. The mistake, apparently, arose from the fact that the honorable member for Gippsland, whose name is the same as mine, voted with the Government. Now that the matter has been ventilated, I think it is only right that I should state that I voted for the amendment.

LOAN ESTIMATES

Mr. SPEAKER

reported the receipt of a message from the Governor-General transmitting to the House of Representatives estimates of expenditure for additions, new works and buildings for the year ending 30th June, 1901.

ORDER OF BUSINESS: SUPPLY

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I move -

That Orders of the Day Nos. 1 and 2 be postponed until to-morrow.

It will be necessary for me to-morrow to ask for further supply. Supply was granted until the end of September, and I propose to ask to-morrow for supply for another three months. I am setting out all the details for honorable members, instead of putting before them merely a lump sum, and I hope to be able to circulate the documents this afternoon, so that honorable gentlemen may be able to go through the information supplied, and see if there is any proposal to which they object. I am anxious to obtain supply

as quickly as possible, because I am running very short, and if I cannot get money this week I may be placed in a difficult position.

Mr REID

- I think the Treasurer is taking a very proper course, and one which I hope will always be followed, in giving honorable members notice of his intention to ask for supply. I hope that that course will always be followed, so that no honorable member may have cause to complain. I do not wish to discuss now his proposal to ask for three months' supply, but it is open to question whether we should fall into the habit of granting supply for so long a period.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

.- It is not our intention to make a practice of asking for three months' supply, but on this occasion the circumstances are quite apart from the ordinary, and that is why the Treasurer wishes supply for so long a period.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION BILL

Third Reading

Debate resumed (from 8th October, vide page 5673), on motion by Mr. Barton -

That this Bill be now read it third time.

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Mr WILKS

- The usual course is for motions for the third reading of Bills to be taken as formal, and, while I have no desire to labour the arguments which have already been presented to the House in respect to this measure, its importance to the interests of Australia, both present and future, is so great that I feel bound to take this opportunity to make a further protest against the action of the Ministry in regard to it. In his speech on the second reading of the Bill the Attorney-General stated that our action in connexion with this Bill would be noted not only throughout the Commonwealth but also in the old country. Personally I doubt whether the officials of the Colonial-office take the trouble to go through our debates as a rule, but in regard to this, the first important matter affecting Imperial interests that will have been passed through our Commonwealth Parliament, they may depart from their usual course and carefully scrutinize what we have done. If our action is to be closely examined by the Imperial authorities, it is only right that honorable members should speak freely and clearly with regard to this measure. After having very carefully watched the course of the debate I have come to the conclusion, which I am sure is shared by people outside, that the vote which the Ministry obtained in favour of their method, as embodied in the Bill, was obtained by party coercion and rigid political discipline, unparalleled in the political life of Australia. This was shown by the strong statements of Government supporters, who spoke in favour of the direct method -proposed by the honorable member for Bland, but who on division were found voting in an opposite direction. That circumstance in itself affords the strongest instance of party discipline and coercion such as has been unequalled in our political history. It would have been better if the Government, after passing the second reading of the Bill, had allowed this discipline to be relaxed during the committee stage, so that honorable members might have spoken and voted freely, and have given their unanimous support to the course suggested by honorable members of this side of the House. The direct method of dealing with the exclusion of coloured immigrants has much to recommend it, and it would at least have ensured a straightforward expression of the determination of the Commonwealth Parliament, and would have presented to the Imperial authorities, in a clear and simple manner, the aspirations and desires of the Australian people. The representatives in this House are fresh from the country, and are fully aware of the strong feeling of the public on this question, and as action has already been taken in the same direction in many of the States, we are well able to speak in no uncertain manner with regard to the wishes of the people' of the Commonwealth. It would have reflected greater credit on the Commonwealth Parliament, and would have given evidence of greater attachment to the Empire, if we had made a straightforward declaration of our policy on this matter. Instead of that we have adopted the sinuous and tortuous methods of diplomacy, so well known in the old world. None of us should be anxious to have the Australian Parliament acquire a reputation for tricky and sinuous methods in connexion with our dealings with matters of foreign policy, and I think we have taken up a very weak position in dealing with this

important Bill. I desire to emphasize the fact that the people are not satisfied with the decision of the House, and that the reasons given by the Ministry in support of their policy have been of a most flimsy character. We had the warmest discussion upon this Bill that has yet taken place in this House, and a number of bogeys were paraded before honorable members with a view to secure votes for the Government proposal. The loyalty bogey was used for all it was worth ; it was brought out again and again until it became quite nauseous. The vote upon this Bill, however, afforded no test of loyalty or disloyalty, because honorable members were simply required to express their opinion upon a matter in which the people of the Commonwealth were much concerned, and regarding which the Imperial authorities must know that we had the best information at our command, and were in a position to form an accurate judgment. There was a good deal of hysterical talk on the part of those who sought to level a charge of disloyalty against members on this side of the House who were opposed to the Government proposal. I do not wish to indulge in what they call in America spread-eagleism," but what in this country might appropriately be termed, "bounding-kangarooism" but I do say that in matters of Australian concern the opinions, the desires, and the aspirations of the people should be truly reflected by the Parliament. The aspirations of Australia must not be smothered by considerations connected with our Imperial obligations. The position is a clear one, and we must not allow the Foreign office to be run in conflict with the Colonial office, and to our own detriment. The treaties into which Great Britain has entered with the Eastern nations provide that, as far as the British dominions are concerned, they shall in their powers of legislation be free from the operation of the treaties. This in itself is a recognition of the concern and interest of Great Britain in her dominions beyond the seas. It shows that Great Britain is not only with us in sentiment, but is willing that we shall retain the fullest powers of self-government, and those autonomous rights which Australia must always maintain at whatever cost. Australia should not be called upon in regard to a question of this character to surrender any of her autonomous rights out of consideration for Imperial obligations or necessities. We appreciate the spirit of Imperialism, and desire to give it every opportunity of development, but our attachment to the Empire should not be subject to any arrangement that might be dictated to us in order to bring our legislation into accord with the views of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he be an astute and advanced statesman, like the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain, or Mr. John Morley, or Mr. Asquith, or some other prominent member on the liberal side. I do not wish in any way to make an attack upon the aggressive character of the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain, because I look upon his great tenacity of purpose in conserving the interests of the Empire with feelings of the greatest admiration. I think, however, that it is utterly foolish to say that those who are opposing the methods of the Government are placing obstacles in the way of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The place in which we should speak clearly and directly with regard to the aspirations of Australia on this or any other similar question which closely concerns the whole of our people is the Commonwealth Parliament, and applying the old principle of Imperialism, that we should trust in the people, I believe that we cannot carry out the true principles of government unless implicit trust is shown in the governmental machinery of the State. I think it is so much waste of time to advance reasons why we should either modify our views or simplify our system of legislation to suit the assumed or alleged desires of any high official of State in the old country. It has been stated that the Bill was not framed in the first instance in order to suit the Imperial policy, or in order that it might accord with the principles of the present administration in Great Britain. That has been said by the Prime Minister himself, and if that is true, his speech on the second reading of the Bill was so much waste of time and energy. It is true that the Ministry practically adopted the policy laid down by the Imperial authorities in their despatch ; but I am glad that the Prime Minister has declared that the Bill itself had been decided upon before the receipt of that despatch. I am glad for the sake of our system of self-government that the Ministry were not directed in their action in regard to this Bill by the despatch of the Imperial authorities, because if they had been, this House would have occupied a much weaker position than it does even now. The Ministry, therefore, are the authors of a method which is not a direct or satisfactory method, and they have prevented the House from taking a more direct course of action. They have embodied in the Bill provisions which will not secure that "White Australia" that was spoken of throughout the federal electoral campaign. We have provided for an educational test which has not proved effective in other parts of the world, and which will only serve to give us a " White Australia " with a dash. We shall have an Australia with a streak, and the Government also are apparently very streaky in their actions. The Prime Minister has stated that the

policy of the Government in regard to this Bill was decided upon four months ago, and, if that is true, I should like to know why the people did not receive the Bill until August last? Why was not the Bill put into circulation when it was decided upon? This question of a "White Australia" is no side issue, but was the main question that we put forward during the last electoral campaign. It was the issue that not only attracted the attention of the people of Australia to the effective powers of the Commonwealth, but it was one of the principal inducements held out to Queensland to join the federal union. It was the fact that the Commonwealth could and would legislate effectually for the exclusion of undesirable immigrants that influenced the great State of Queensland to join the union. Queensland was induced to place herself at a great financial disadvantage in order to secure an effective policy in this direction. I should like to refer to the statement of the Attorney-General that the measure now before us will not represent the final legislation upon this subject, but that he would be prepared to adopt more forcible methods if necessary. That in itself is an admission that the Attorney-General feared for the success of this measure. He evidently considered that something was wrong. Undoubtedly that something is to be found in the restrictive provisions which the Government propose to adopt. The admission of the Attorney-General presupposes failure. Honorable members were informed that later on we are to have a measure submitted which will be effective. I wish further to point out that if there is any virtue in the cry about our loyalty, that loyalty will be just as powerful in the year 1903 as it is to-day. I hope that we shall hear no more of this Cry, because it seems to me that honorable members have no reason to advertise our loyalty, nor is there any necessity for Australia in her legislative action to place upon record as a sort of placard the sentiment of "Loyalty to Imperial desires and aspirations." We have evidenced our loyalty in the past, and we do not require on each day of our national existence to proclaim it by mouthing it in this House or upon the public platform. But whilst endeavouring to live up to our future destiny, in the interests of civilization we must not close our eyes to our own field of thought and operation in Australian territory. For many years past there has been a continued cry that Australia must be preserved for a class of people living up to a standard of civilization equal to that of the highest in the world. Whether a Japanese or a resident of any other portion of the world, where the standard of civilization is lower than our own, can pass an educational test or not is of no concern to us. The mere fact of an Asiatic or African being able to enter the Commonwealth because he is a highly educated man, does not either reduce the problem which confronts us, or satisfy the demands of the people of Australia. There is not a single honorable member of this House who does not believe in the absolute or total exclusion of the alien populations of the world. I am generous enough to take that stand. I should be sorry indeed if in any portion of this debate the hoof of partisanship was disclosed, because this is a question of national concern. It is a problem which concerns all sections of the House. The danger of the contamination of our race by the admission of these coloured aliens has been repeatedly emphasized. The danger comes home with powerful force to honorable members in their capacity as heads of families. I should, therefore, be extremely sorry if this question were at any time made a party one.

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Mr Chapman

- Who made it a party one ?

Mr WILKS

- In reply to the interjection of the Government whip, I wish to say that it was made a party question by the Ministry themselves. When they cracked their whip and used party coercion and rigid discipline, honorable members figuratively winced under the operation, and the Government whip himself must have winced when he was compelled to vote against the very course which he had advocated.

Mr Chapman

- I voted for the only thing possible.

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Mr WILKS

- That answer is one of a political character, but I am talking to the honorable member in his capacity as a citizen of Australia. We all recognise that it is a very fine answer for a whip to give, and that it evidences how careful he is of the interests of his party. But how are we to know that it was the only possible course that could be adopted? I do not believe that this House is prepared to accept the dictum that Australian desires and aspirations must be subordinated to Imperial obligations. The Attorney-General and the

Prime Minister made reference to their reception as delegates of Australia at the Jubilee celebrations in London. They also spoke of the way in which they were received two years ago when they visited that great metropolis to aid the passage of the Commonwealth Constitution Bill. They said that the hand of friendship was held out to them by Mr. Chamberlain, who stated that the Imperial authorities were pleased that we had resolved upon federal union, and added that if in the course of time Australia should desire to part from the motherland, whilst they would be sorry to lose us, they would not prevent our severance. I hope that the day will never arise when the adoption of a policy of separation will become necessary. The only circumstances under which we can imagine that Australia might take the first step towards the disintegration of the Empire are those of the repeated thwarting of the aspirations of her citizens by the Imperial Government. Until better proof is forthcoming I will not accept the statement that the course proposed by the Government was the only one agreeable to the desires of Downing-street. In a matter of this kind Australia should speak with no uncertain voice. I recognise that as a matter of order I have no right to refer to another Chamber. At the same time I do wish to say that the Senate might fairly look to the popular House for solid direction and advice in this matter. For that reason I am indeed sorry that this House did not in a unanimous manner, and without a vote at all, adopt the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland. To my mind we are taking a step which might be fraught with the most serious consequences. We are practically surrendering our constitutional rights of self-government when, without rhyme or reason, and without any representation to us that direct legislation for the exclusion of aliens would have involved the Imperial authorities in difficulties, we refused to record what are our true and undoubted opinions. There is not a single member of this House who will by interjection say that he did not prefer the direct course proposed by the honorable member for Bland to that which is adopted in this Bill. I pause for a reply. There is not a single denial of the statement which I have made. I am willing to credit the Ministry with a sincere desire to preserve Australia as a heritage for the white races. I do not believe that the Colonial-office will read all the speeches which have been made upon this subject. They will probably read the remarks of the Prime Minister, the Attorney-General, the leader of the Opposition, and of the leader of the labour party. There is no occasion for us to ask Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Asquith or any one else what Australia shall do in this matter. We ought to be content to rely, as we have done in the past, upon the spirit of the British people themselves. I am satisfied that when the people of Great Britain found that Australia is in earnest, and spoke with an authoritative voice in regard to this question, they would not dream of refusing us the fullest powers of self-government. I do not know whether you, sir, have had occasion to advocate a solution of this problem in your own State Parliament, but I believe that, if you had, you would be in the fore-front of the advocates of the truest and soundest policy to carry out the manifest desire of Australia. After the State Parliaments of South Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales had registered their direct opinion upon this question of the restriction of coloured immigration, I am aware that they were compelled to adopt an educational test. Their Premiers at that time expressed the opinion that, if that test proved to be insufficient, a more effective course of action should be taken. The Commonwealth Government it was thought would in this matter march further and more firmly than the State Governments. But now we find that that Government, with all their powers, stand in the position of exercising no greater force and authority than have the State Governments of the past. People have been asked to look to the Federal Government to deal with the deep concerns which led to the idea of union. They were told that with federation there would be the force and power of legislative action to carry out certain reforms which the State Governments, with feeble and broken voices, have for years been asking the Imperial authorities to grant. Yet on this, the first occasion for action, the Federal Government are approaching Downing street in the position of suppliants. I urge that in this Bill we are not telling the Imperial authorities the true desire of the people of Australia, and, what is more, we are not recording the true opinion of the majority in this Chamber. The position is a sorrowful one, not only for to-day, because in other problems which will arise the effect will be felt when we are again compelled to approach the British authorities. I feel more strongly on this question than I can express, although I do not want it to be understood that the aspirations of Australia are on the lines of what is called "spread-eagleism," or "bounding- kangarooism." For years we have had a certain amount of responsible Government in Australia, and I had hoped that with federation we should have had the introduction of true representative Government, and that when passing a measure for Imperial sanction, we should have stated distinctly and clearly what were the desires of the people of Australia. If this

measure is submitted to the Imperial authorities, they will see that the people of Australia are not prepared to take a straight and direct course. We know that the people of the Commonwealth, and honorable members of this House, are strongly of opinion that it would be proper and just to adopt a straight course of action. Instead of taking that straight course, however, we have resorted to the tricky, sinuous, and difficult ways of diplomacy. I regret that on the third reading, which is a formal stage usually, I should be compelled to place as strongly and powerfully as I can before honorable members my reasons why this measure should not be adopted. The Prime Minister, when speaking in defence of himself, said the action of the Government had not been dictated by the despatch from the Secretary of State, but that their policy had been formed some considerable time before. But the measure was not circulated until August, and so far as honorable members and the citizens of Australia are concerned, we did not know the policy of the Government until then. It seems very strange that if the Government had formulated a policy of such powerful concern to the community they did not advance their ideas long before they did. I understand that the Ministry in this matter have exercised their powers of caution and rigid party discipline. I do not wish to refer to certain members on the other side of the House, but if I quoted some of their speeches honorable members would be astounded at their attitude when the vote was taken. In the interests of the Commonwealth itself it is not well that the people of Australia should be shown that the lowest and most degrading duplicity was exhibited on the part of the Government.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member must not speak of duplicity in connexion with the action of any honorable member. I must ask him to withdraw the expression,

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Mr WILKS

- I am very pleased the Speaker has directed my attention to the use of that word. I was merely using a figure of speech, which probably, I should not have used. I desire to withdraw it. What has been considered to be justifiable political action in the State Parliament of the past should not be introduced in this Chamber on an important question of this character. I am sure that you, sir, in the high position you occupy, would, in matters of this kind, like to see the Commonwealth Parliament set an example to the State Parliaments by expressing clearly and unmistakably the views of the people who are here represented. It is not for me to urge the evils which may arise from the presence of these aliens in Australia, because those evils are apparent, and have been brought home to us with great force time after time. We hope that in the interests of our race, our social life, and our industries, this continent will not be tainted by people from eastern countries. The educational test which is proposed does not represent the desire of the people of Australia. It has been said that Great Britain might be embarrassed, and that difficulties might be originated in Japan if the direct course suggested were carried out. But if the people of Japan are as highly educated as the Attorney-General would lead us to believe, they will see that the proposal of the Government is simply a subterfuge. If that nation possesses the susceptibilities and powers of reasoning which have been attributed to them, surely they will be more offended by the educational test proposed than by the straight-out course recommended by the honorable member for Bland. Speaking of the proposal in regard to Japan, the word "duplicity" might be used, but I will refrain from using it. I will only say that if the Japanese are so gullible as to swallow this subterfuge, they cannot be so highly intelligent as the Attorney-General wishes us to believe. Any alleged embarrassment in the Colonial-office, and any irritation in Japan are more likely to be caused by the round-about method proposed in the Bill than by a direct course of action. I recognise that on the third reading every power the Ministry can command will be exercised skilfully to compass the vote ; but that vote will not record the sincere opinion of the members of this House; and I am sorry that this round-about method is to be adopted.

Mr. BATCHELOR

(South Australia). So far I have been silent upon this Bill both on the second reading and in committee. One reason was that anything I might have cared to say 'had already been said by other members, perhaps more effectively than I could have said it. Another reason - was that I have been quite consistent in my advocacy of prohibition, and, as I have always voted in the same way, there was no necessity for me to explain my position. Probably there will be no attempt to divide the House on the third reading, but I think it necessary to record the fact that while the Bill may be presumed to fairly represent the opinion of

the majority of this House, from the fact of its having reached this stage, we know that it does not do so. It certainly does not represent my opinion. We know, of course, how the majority in favour of the Bill has been- made up. Perhaps it is overstating the case to say that there are two or three members in favour of the Bill - that is absolutely in favour of the methods of exclusion proposed in the measure.

An Honorable Member. - There is only one member.

Mr BATCHELOR

- I know of one member who is in favour of the Bill. There are some members who assisted to form the Government majority because they want to see no restriction at all, but think that the Bill is. better than total prohibition. One or two members, such as the honorable and learned member for Parkes, voted for the Bill as the lesser of two evils. They regard the. method proposed by the honorable member for Bland and the method proposed in the Bill as evil, but the Government proposal they regard as the lesser evil of the two, because it will let in some aliens. Then there are a number of member* who, like the Government, are in favour of total exclusion, but who voted for the Bill because they deem that our connexion with the Empire requires that we should make sacrifices.

Mr Deakin

- And that this Bill is immediate.

Mr BATCHELOR

- That is of very little importance. I want to be quite fair to the Ministry, and I think I am right in saying that there are a number of honorable members who are totally opposed to> the measure, who think the direct method preferable, but who voted for the measure from Imperial considerations, because they consider they are called on to make great sacrifices as part of the Empire. There are other honorable members who are against the Bill, and who have made sacrifices not only on behalf of the Empire, but on behalf of the Government. Because the Government have taken a certain course, they feel it necessary, for Tariff or other considerations, to vote with- them. That is how this majority has been made up. Under ordinary circumstances a Bill which had passed this Commonwealth Parliament might be fairly presumed to represent the opinions of the people of Australia, and of a majority of honorable members; but in this case we are passing a Bill which does not represent the views of our constituents, and represents the opinion of only a small fraction of honorable members.

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Mr Poynton

- Then it should not pass.

Mr BATCHELOR

- The honorable member knows that it is going to pass, and to become law.

Mr Thomas

- What about the Senate ?

Mr BATCHELOR

- I am not in favour of the Bill, and I want to take this opportunity of saying so. Australia has never asked for an education test. There has never been a barrier set up against the admission to these States of persons who have not obtained a certain degree of education. We care very little, as a matter of fact, whether those who come here are or are not educated, because it is a matter of very little importance in the life of the Commonwealth, since we believe that, through association with ourselves, they will soon acquire the necessary education, and that, in any case, the next generation - their children - because of the system of compulsory education which prevails in all the States, will be educated. But we wish to keep out persons of particular races which are alien to our own, and to whose undesirability residence for any number of generations would not make any difference. The Bill does not represent Australian views, or the views of the majority of honorable members ; it represents simply the opinions of Downing street as to the sort of legislation which we should pass. I understand that the Government do not intend to carry out the provisions of the measure literally, and that they will allow persons whom we should like to see amongst us to come in, although they may not be educated persons. I hope that they will do that, because it is necessary that they should. If administered in that way, the Bill may be of some service, without doing much harm ; but I shall always regret that this Parliament did not, at the first opportunity it had, set forth clearly and unmistakably the desire of Australia on this question, even though the Royal assent might have been refused, because of Imperial considerations. If the Royal assent had been

refused, then would have been the time, and not now, for considering any kind of compromise.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Like the honorable member who has just resumed his seat, I have not had an opportunity of speaking on this question before, and I shall take the present occasion to do so, in order to justify a vote which I have already given, and a future vote which I shall give, if a division is taken. I am not one of those who do not desire to exclude coloured aliens, and I have given the best evidence of the fact in that, like the leader of the Opposition, in 1896, I introduced into, and passed through, the Legislature of my own State a Bill for the exclusion, without qualification, of members of the native races of Asia and Africa. That Bill did not receive the Royal assent, and when a conference of Premiers with the Secretary of State for the Colonies was held in England, in 1897, it was pointed out to us that if we passed Bills on the lines of the Natal Act, containing education tests, they would receive assent. Accordingly, in 1898, I introduced and passed such a Bill through the Legislature of Tasmania. I know, as well as anybody, the desirability of keeping this fair land free from any large incursion of our fellow British subjects of India. Unfortunately, those who are likely to come here from India are not the better classes, but the mere sweepings of the bazaars and seaports - persons inferior morally as well as socially - who would be no desirable acquisition to our community. I readily adopted the suggestion of the Imperial authorities that we should pass a Bill which, while actually restrictive - as the Tasmanian Bill has proved - would not be a cause of offence to foreign peoples, and of complications to the Empire.

Mr Page

- Was the right honorable member afraid of the veto, too?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- As a loyal subject of the Empire, I was afraid of causing complications which we could not take our proper share of guarding against. It should surely be our desire, as members of the great British Empire, and not a separate and independent community, to avoid causing complications of the Empire.

Mr Page

- Australia first.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Surely Australia is as much concerned in the integrity and defence of the Empire as any other portion of it is. If we were in a position to cast aside the ties that bind us to the mother country, and to protect our coast line and our commerce on the seas, I doubt if the feeling of loyalty to the Empire would allow us to take any action of the kind suggested. But what shall we say of such action on our part which, while it might cause serious complications to the Home Government, could not be compensated by anything we could do in defence of the Empire. Let us obtain what we desire by a diplomatic course, which will effectually secure our object without arousing against us the enmities of the people of British India, Japan, and other countries, with whom it would be very serious for us to come into conflict.

Mr POYNTON

- I desire, before the Bill leaves the Chamber, to again urge my protest against it. Ever since I have known right from wrong I have been a hater of sham and of hypocrisy. In my experience of life I have found that it is much better to go to the front door than to the back door. This Bill belies the people of Australia. It does not in any sense or form convey their desires to the Imperial authorities. It appears to me that the Premiers of the several States, who met the Secretary of State for the Colonies in conference at the time of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, are responsible for a great deal of the trouble. They are responsible for tying the hands of the people of Australia in this matter before they had an opportunity to consider the question. I protest against the miserable tactics which have been used to get this measure through. It has been said to-day that there are not more than three honorable members who are in favour of the measure, and I believe that that statement is correct. Therefore it goes to the Imperial authorities without pronouncing the aspirations of Australia. I look upon it that we have virtually sold our national birthright for a mess of pottage. We are told that the debate is for home consumption, but I do not think the Imperial authorities will ever read a line of any speech that has been made on the measure. They will be quite satisfied with the Bill, because they have got what they asked for. I complain that, before we have had an opportunity of stating to them the desires of Australia, our hands have been tied by the dispatch sent home by the Ministry in May last. It was a miserable pretence for the Ministry to say, as a justification for

that despatch, that they had made up their minds upon the Bill. If that attitude is to be adopted in future, it will be a mere farce to ask us to consider measures of legislation. Apart from the serious aspect of this question, there is a most comical aspect of it. It has been stated in the press that a federal gymnasium club has been established here, and no doubt we have seen some remarkable performances of late by clever political acrobats. The other day the honorable member for Melbourne Ports interjected, in reply to a statement made by me that . he had spoken in one way and voted in another, that what I said was untrue. It is not my desire to say a word that is untrue .about anybody, but I am going to show from the honorable member's own speech that I was perfectly justified in what I said. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports, speaking of the speech made by the honorable member for Wentworth, said - I hope the honorable member and those who sit with him will be consistent, support the honorable member for Bland's amendment, and insist that all coloured immigration, even under agreement, shall be absolutely prohibited.

Again he said -

I trust that the honorable member for Wentworth will lend his eloquence and his support to the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. One thing is certain - the passage of this Bill is assured. The Opposition are going to cooperate with the Government in making it its effectual as possible.

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Mr Wilks

- Knock out the first sub-clause of clause 4. Mr.. MAUGER. - We will strike out everything that is going to make the Bill ineffectual. We are quite prepared to do anything in order to make our honorable friends keep to their bargain.

I am quite prepared to go as far as the honorable member for Wentworth would go, and if he will join with me in these and other proposals, it does not matter whether the Government are in favour of them or against them.

Now where was that honorable member when the vote was taken. Who kept to the bargain if a bargain was made 1 Certainly the honorable member did not. The honorable member for Bourke was another honorable member whose vote was not in accordance with his speeches, and he was one of the three members through whose votes the people of Australia have incurred a direct loss. The honorable member for Bourke said -

It was therefore with more than ordinary pleasure that I listened to the deliverance of the honorable member for Wentworth this morning. His manly style and straightforward utterance must give pleasure to those who have long felt that Australia is in serious danger from the influx particularly of coloured aliens. Speaking for myself alone I would infinitely prefer to adopt the method suggested by the honorable member for Wentworth, and state in the Bill, in a straightforward manner, exactly what we want to do. We want to exclude absolutely every kind of coloured immigrant. Let us put that desire on the face of the Bill and ask the home authorities to support us.

As to the educational test, it is just as well to be reminded that the Japanese and others, particularly Indian subjects, are quite able to pass that test. Those are the very races, above all others, that we desire to keep out of Australia.

There are universities in India, where the coloured subjects of the King receive as good an education as we can give to any of the white subjects of the King in Australia. Some of these men - I have met some of them myself - are mathematicians of the highest order ; some of them are scholars of repute. We have had instances of some of them entering the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and passing all examinations with credit to themselves and to the country to which they belong. In such cases, the educational test can be of no use at all. It must be absolutely worthless.

On the subject of a white Australia, there is scarcely a white citizen within the confines of the Commonwealth who would not support the proposition embodied in the amendment of the honorable member for Bland.

Yet the honorable member was one of the few citizens of the Commonwealth of whom he speaks. Then we had a still more remarkable speech from the honorable member for Moreton, who said -

My support of the Government is not so strong or so loyal that I can remain behind them if they are going to make a retrograde movement in this matter. I have heard the condition of affairs in Queensland referred to in this House, and at public meetings outside, but I have not gone about the city of Melbourne

with my eyes shut. I have seen the canker spot in every part of Australia I have visited. I would not support for an hour any Government which I thought was going to palter with this evil, because I know the dimensions which it is assuming, not only in the State of Queensland, but throughout the whole of the Commonwealth. With regard to the possibility of our attempting to grasp too much and thereby losing all, I wish to say that I believed, when advocating the union of these States, that we were going to get a larger and more complete measure of self-government than we formerly enjoyed.

That is what we all believed and what we were all told by every member of the Ministry. The honorable member goes on to say -

It is a painful surprise to me to find that we are to subordinate our desires to what we may call the exigences of Downing-street. I do not know that we have any warrant for believing that Downing-street will dare to set their opinion in opposition to the expressed will of the people of as the Commonwealth, as voiced by their representatives in this Federal Parliament. At any rate, we should go straight and give them the opportunity of saying whether or not they agree with what we have done. We shall then know exactly what to do.

We know that there is a growing power in the East, namely Japan. Are we afraid of offending Japan? Shall we put our fear of offending Japan above our desire to have a pure Australian race comprised of the best blood of Europe, which has made the British race what it is to-day? I hope that we are sufficiently courageous to crystallize our convictions into the laws which we place on the statute-book of the Commonwealth.

When the Bill gets into committee I shall vote for a white Australia, regardless of whether that vote goes to support or defeat the Government.

Now these three honorable members I have quoted made up the majority the Government had in connexion with this measure, and I single them out in particular. Other members spoke one way and voted another, but they are not to be placed in the same category with the three honorable members to whom I have referred, because those honorable members to whose inconsistency I have specially directed attention made the question of a white Australia a prominent feature during the electoral campaign. Yet, largely through their agency we have a miserable Bill that does not please any honorable member of this House, but which will go to the Imperial authorities misrepresenting the people of Australia, and carrying a lie on the face of it.

Monaro

Mr CHAPMAN

.- It has been well stated that if " speech is silvern, silence is golden," and I think it is a pity that some honorable members have not remembered that in the course of this debate.

Mr Watson

- Hear, hear -honorable members on that side.

Mr CHAPMAN

- Honorable members can afford to laugh, but they should remember the old saying that " He who laughs last, laughs best." I do not suppose that even the leader of the Opposition would dare to say that I have not the courage to vote as I think right.

Mr Reid

- The honorable member would be elected whatever he did.

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Mr CHAPMAN

- It is easy for the leader of the Opposition and for other honorable members to talk about the " crack of the whip," and the pity of making this a party question, and to try to throw all the onus of any party bitterness that developed during the discussion of this Bill on to this side of the House ; but many who are prepared to judge impartially know the history of this question. I am sorry that any personal references, such as those made by the honorable member who has just sat down, should have been imported into this debate. Surely honorable members are able to answer to their constituents without being taken to task here, or having attempts made to blacken their political character. If we get down to that sort of thing we shall go very near to the essence of political meanness. After all, it is only a question of taste ; and if honorable members like to pose as the real Simon Pures, as the only men favorable to a " white Australia," as the only men who are prepared to risk anything in order to obtain it, well and good Still I

regret that it has been thought necessary to drag these personal references into the debate.

Mr Poynton

- Did not the Prime Minister quote the leader of the Opposition the other night as to his action in 1897 ?

Mr CHAPMAN

- If the Prime Minister had referred to the action of the leader of the Opposition in the way I should have liked, we might have had a little more light thrown upon the matter. I know the right honorable gentleman as well as the Prime Minister does, and probably a little better, but, unlike the Prime Minister, I was not astonished at any change of front on his part.

Mr Barton

- I have known him for 37 years.

Mr CHAPMAN

- I have known him long enough to know that he will " jump Jim Crow" every way that suits him. This House is practically unanimous with regard to a " white Australia." That is admitted on all sides.

Sir MALCOLM McEacharn

- No, it is not.

Mr CHAPMAN

- I said practically unanimous. The only question is as to the method to be adopted in order to secure our object. The Government proposed an educational test, and, whilst general statements are made all round the Chamber that it will be ineffectual, that is not in keeping with the contention of the leader of the Opposition when he maintained the other night that it would be effectual, and when he, as far as he possibly could, extracted a promise from the Prime Minister that he would not enforce it too strictly, as it might keep out too many immigrants.

Mr Reid

- Too many of whom ?

Mr CHAPMAN

- I say that the right honorable and learned member tried to get an admission from the Prime Minister that this educational test would not be too strictly enforced.

Mr Reid

- As to Europeans.

Mr CHAPMAN

- If it were too strictly enforced the leader of the Opposition contended that it would have the effect of excluding many desirable citizens.

Mr Reid

- Yes \ Europeans.

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Mr CHAPMAN

- The right honorable and learned member has lately become a stickler for Europeans. His own contention in itself proves that in his opinion the educational test will be effective. But the question with which we were confronted was as to what would be the most effective method of excluding undesirables, and would best fit the circumstances. We know full well, despite glib utterances of some honorable members, about "Australia first," and " Away with Imperialism and this bogie of Chamberlain," what would be the effect if trouble occurred between the old country and Australia to - day 1 Consequently such talk is only moonshine. We all recognise that we cannot stand alone, and we have to keep that fact in mind when deciding which method we shall adopt. The leader of the Opposition has admitted that the educational test will prove most effective. Surely, if we can adopt a test which will enable us to exclude undesirable immigrants from Australia without jeopardizing our position in the Empire, or bringing the Empire into conflict with a friendly power, we ought to adopt it. It is very easy to give utterance to platitudes about speaking with the voice of a united people, but it seems rather suspicious that many of those honorable members who voted in favour of bringing about a conflict and of practically putting back the hands of the clock for a year or five years, have found it necessary to get up in this House and justify their votes. They attempt to justify them by abusing the other side. I credit honorable members who voted against me with conscientiousness, but I demand that they shall credit me with similar motives. I assert my right to vote as I did, because I realize that the method proposed by the Government is the only one

by which we can at present lock the door against these undesirable immigrants. No other consideration would have induced me to record the vote which I did. I give the most emphatic denial to the statement which has been so repeatedly made that the whip was held over Ministerial supporters. Let us look at the history of the fight, and remember the calm which preceded the battle. When the honorable member for Bland moved his amendment, what happened? There was plenty of talk from honorable members on the Opposition side of the House to the effect that they were going to fight it. This statement was not made upon the floor of this Chamber, where it could be used in evidence against honorable members. After a time a sudden breeze blew, and certain honorable members on the other side of the House fancied that they saw an opportunity. I do not blame them for trying to take advantage of it. We know what an Opposition will do under such circumstances. I have previously had the pleasure of occupying a seat on the opposite side of Parliament to the leader of the Opposition, and I know that when he feels he has a chance he fights very hard. But it is absurd for honorable members to get up, and almost weeping to exclaim, "See how the Government forced certain honorable members to vote."

Mr Reid

- The reaper and binder.

Mr CHAPMAN

- The leader of the Opposition has been a reaper and binder all his life, but he has never ploughed or sown. If comparisons are to be made, I ask is it fair to single out two or three honorable members in the way they have been singled out? Let us remember the men who voted for the Government proposal. Let us recollect their past political attitude in regard to the question of a white Australia. Let us put the record of the Prime Minister, or of the Minister of Customs, or of the Minister for Home Affairs against that of the leader of the Opposition in this connexion. These honorable gentlemen have fought nearly all their lives for a white Australia, and it is playing the game very low down, when it is recognised that the method prescribed in this Bill is the only way of effectually closing the door against the admission of aliens, to taunt such men with being traitors to their country. I do not take any exception to the speeches made by honorable members in support of their view that the amendment of the honorable member for Bland ought to have been carried, but I emphatically protest against the tactics which have been adopted after an honest fight has taken place, and after the Opposition has done its best. They had the opportunity of coalescing with the liberal party in this House, and they missed it. I protest against these honorable members, when they realize that they were so near success, and are now so far from it, crying about the whip having been held over other honorable members, and taunting them with having changed their opinions. Such accusations having nothing to do with the third reading of this Bill. Had I thought that there was the slightest possibility of the amendment of the honorable member for Bland becoming law, no one would have supported it more warmly than myself. But I realized that it would not become law. I am pleased that so far we have not heard the honorable member for Bland protesting that undue influence was used to defeat his amendment. He fought the question in a manly way from his standpoint, and having been defeated he bowed to the will of the majority.

Mr Watson

- I complained about the whip some time ago.

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Mr CHAPMAN

- It was a satisfaction to me to know that honorable members on the other side of the House were extremely anxious that every one of their supporters should be in his place. It is equally pleasing to reflect that every honorable member upon this side of the Chamber recorded his vote. I hope that in future our battles will be fought out in as fair a spirit as characterized the recent fight, and that when they are over there will be less political weeping and wailing because one side has been defeated. The method prescribed in the Bill is the only way by which we can effectually secure our object without involving the Imperial authorities in difficulty. I gave a vote of which I am proud. The vote recorded by this House will have the effect within two or three weeks of stopping undesirable aliens from coming here. Under this Bill, when it becomes law, the Government will have power to exclude them at once and for ever. I am satisfied that when a trial has been given to this measure, there will be no desire exhibited for its alteration. If I should happen to be wrong, and if by some means undesirable aliens still manage to gain access to this country by evading the law, this House will speedily make that law more stringent. When it

is admitted all round that a " white Australia" is desirable, surely after we have thrashed out the method by which our purpose can be best achieved, if we are true to the people who sent us here, we should endeavour to bring the Bill into operation as speedily as possible, instead of wasting time in wailing over lost opportunities.

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Mr REID

- I think that nothing could be more fitting than the defence by my honorable friend of the three gentlemen whose votes he managed to secure, under circumstances of great difficulty which might have puzzled a less experienced whip. I congratulate him upon his success, and it was only an ordinary exhibition of gratitude that he should rise and endeavour to defend those honorable members. I do not see that the honorable member for South Australia was guilty of any offence in criticising the public acts in this Chamber of honorable members of this House. We are all open to criticism. We are all attacked from different points of view in the carrying out of our public duties. My honorable friend was the last person I expected to use language which indicated that we should shrink from the discharge of our duties, even when we have to criticise the course which honorable members may take. The honorable member for South Australia uttered the truth, which my honorable friend will not deny, when he said that a number of honorable members on the Ministerial side at an earlier stage in the debates on this Bill, publicly, fearlessly, and courageously stated that they would follow the honorable member for Bland, and not the Prime Minister, upon this question even, as one of them remarked, " if it shipwrecked the Government." It is a singular thing - and one which I hope will not often happen in our proceedings - that honorable members, who had spoken as though they had absolutely made up their minds upon a great national question, who referred to the pledges given to their constituents, and to their speeches, as an indication of their intention to carry out these pledges, should, nevertheless, have voted in a diametrically opposite way. It is a pity that they did so, but of course it was under the persuasiveness of my honorable friend that they placed themselves in that false position. It was important, because those three votes, if given in accordance with the speeches of honorable members, would have affected this measure in a very vital way, and would have enabled us to put before the people of the world the fact that the Australians have determined to have a " white Australia." Now the effect of this Ministerial device is that instead of putting a " white Australia " before the world, we put a " funky Australia " before it - an Australia which seems to be shivering at the very shadow of a Japanese bogey, and which, so far as the European nations are concerned, takes up an absolutely churlish attitude. The Ministry , introduced a Bill, containing a provision that the educational test should be in the English language.. The Prime Minister stated that that test was indispensable. The provision in question has now disappeared, and instead we have a test which will reflect ignominy and discredit upon Australian legislation if it is. passed into law. It is provided that a. Customs officer may apply out of ten or twenty European languages any one he chooses to any immigrant who is distasteful,, on account of his colour or from other reasons, to the Government of this country.. It has now ceased to be a matter of law making, and has become a matter of a Ministerial bureau in touch with Customs officials. That is not the plane on which such legislation should be projected. The Prime Minister spoke of the fact that the foreign consuls would read our speeches in Mansard. What a remarkable spectacle ! A bunch of foreign consuls trying to make out what our speeches on this subject mean. If they read the speeches of the three honorable members who have been referred to, and then looked up their votes, they would suppose that these gentlemen had been tested in some strange language and had failed to pass, seeing that they did not even know on which side to vote in the face of their own utterances in the Chamber. I should think the consuls would be some-1 what puzzled if they read our debates. Is it not a lamentable thing; that we should invite other nations in a matter of this magnitude to discover our policy from the utterances, of Ministers in this House, and not from the provisions of our Acts of Parliament ? That is a most astounding position for a. Government to take up. I was not present, but I can imagine how the patriotic feel' ing of the Chamber must have throbbed in admiration when the gifted Attorney-General, in speaking on that occasion, used some memorable words, which I shall quote. That was before the Cabinet minute of the Federal Ministry, as to the despatch, was made known to the House. If the Attorney-General had made that minute known to the House when he spoke he would scarcely,, courageous in the use of language as he is, have employed this sentence -

There is no seal on our lips, and no closure that can be applied to us when we speak with unqualified and inflexible firmness what we believe to be the demands of the people of Australia.

What a magnificent sentence, and how unpalatable to Mr. Chamberlain it must have been. When that long despatch was published, and sent on to Ministers, the demand of Mr. Chamberlain was received with the utmost humility, and all they could say was practically - "Yes, Air. Chamberlain." Mr. Chamberlain sent out a treatise upon the guiding principles of the British Empire from time immemorial, and laid down the strong objections to any legislation based on distinction of race and colour, and the Federal Ministry said - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain !" Mr. Chamberlain went on to say that, besides the basic principles, on which the British Empire has been constructed, such legislation would be peculiarly offensive to Japan - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain !" Not satisfied with that, there is the further assurance from the Federal Ministry - "Your principles and our policy, Mr. Chamberlain, are precisely the same." What a beautiful harmony to establish between the Imperial and the Federal Cabinets upon a matter of Australian concern ! Yet in the face of that absolute compact and alliance, offensive and defensive, between the Federal Ministry in this House, and Mr. Chamberlain, in Downing-street, the Attorney-General had the audacity to get up as if he were making a speech in some debating club, where men are entitled to forget all the facts of the case, and say - "There is no seal on our lips ; there is no closure that can fracture our inflexible firmness " - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain !" For the great abilities and eloquence of the Attorney-General, no man has a more sincere respect than I. We all admire those qualities, but sometimes they run away with the honorable gentleman, and they ran away with him when he took up this noble-Roman attitude in this House. After that humble respectful duty to Mr. Chamberlain through the Governor-General - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain !" and after the assurance that the Federal Government shared the feeling of His Majesty's Government with reference to legislation based on distinctions of race and colour, what will Mr. Chamberlain think of the Federal Ministry when the Kanaka Bill comes along 1 That is a definite piece of legislation based on distinctions of race and colour.

Mr SPEAKER

- The right honorable and learned member cannot discuss the Pacific Islands Labourers' Bill on this occasion.

Mr REID

- I am much obliged to you,, sir, for not pulling me up sooner. When. Ministers adopt a subservient attitude, they should at least be consistent. We have here, in the case of this Bill, the spectacle, not of a "white Australia," but of a subservient Australia. This House has copied, the humble subserviency of the Federal Ministry, and this House echoes the Ministerial - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain !" I am proud to think that there is a large number of members in the House who will not be responsible for that subservient attitude. What a miserable pretence it is, with all respect to my honorable friend, for the Prime Minister to allude to the integrity of the Empire being affected. I suppose that if we thought the integrity of the Empire was affected we should stretch a. good many points, within reason, to prevent such a catastrophe.

Sir Edward Braddon

- What induced, the leader of the Opposition to at one time propose an educational test 1

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Mr REID

- I have mentioned the reason half-a-dozen times, and I shall mention it again.. I will give the reason in eloquent words used by the Prime Minister - and no one can accuse him of eloquence as a rule - when he spoke at Randwick some years ago, as follows : -

Under federation, instead of six jangling voices giving utterances to their wants in the mother country, there will be only one voice, with the result that they will get so much of what they want that separation from the old country will be impossible.

There is a different tone ! That was the voice in which the Prime Minister addressed the people of Australia - "When you get federal union, instead of these miserable provincial governments, headed by insignificant people like G. H. Reid, you will get a first-class statesman who is large enough to fill a first-class statesman-like programme;, and when I talk in the name of the Empire, then all the world must yield." But now the right honorable gentleman is in office, and the official atmosphere has settled on him so thickly, it is "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain !" I want to point out to the right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, that I convened the conference which determined that we would introduce a Bill on

the lines of the present proposal of the honorable member for Bland. That was our determination - that was our principle and our policy, and in it we represented the people of Australia.

Sir Edward Braddon

- But the right (honorable and learned member dropped it.

Mr REID

- And why 1 Because we were six disconnected colonies. Because New South Wales was part of this great people, and only one part ; and because one of the greatest colonies of the group had actually entered into a treaty with Japan.

Sir John Forrest

- Not at that time.

Mr REID

- Not at that moment, but subsequently, and before the legislation was introduced. It was known to the Premiers who went to England that Queensland intended to take that course.

Mr Watson

- It was before the basis of the Natal Act was adopted.

Mr REID

- It was well known at that time that Queensland had broken up the Australian concert, and intended actually to conclude a treaty with Japan on her own account. How could a separate colony take up the position which Australia can take up 1 If my friends opposite were in my position, they would perceive the difference between the two positions.

Sir John Forrest

- And the right honorable and learned member knuckled down at once.

Mr REID

- I think I spoke pretty straight. The Minister for Defence makes a slight mistake.

Sir John Forrest

- We were all there.

Mr REID

- The Minister for Defence when in England was, I admit, an authority on knuckling down.

Mr Watson

- The leader of the Opposition was the only one who spoke out.

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Mr REID

- A more polished courtier than the Minister for Defence in the atmosphere of St. James I never saw. I venture to say, and it is a matter of public notoriety, that I struck one or two very independent notes, not in the privacy of a conference room, but before the whole people of England, so that I think any attempt to show that I displayed any subserviency in the matter will rather fail. I took up a position in England which causes me to denounce the position that the Government are in to-day. I said that, loyal as Australia was, Australia would never be a mere joint in the Imperial tail ; but the right honorable gentleman, in writing this minute in the name of the Cabinet of Australia, did become a joint in the Imperial tail. The Ministry have bound themselves to the principles and policy of the Imperial Government, which are radically opposed to the principles and policy of the people of Australia on this subject. Whilst we respect the principles on which the Empire was built, there is one basic principle of this Australian nation now being built up - a principle that we are determined to secure, and are not ashamed to place on a statute book - namely, that this is to be a " white Australia," and we wish to announce our determination in a manly way. We wish to have it put in black and white. The Ministry have the courage to put it in black and white when it affects helpless kanakas from the South Sea Islands. A clause in that Bill provides that none of these kanakas shall be allowed to enter Australia after a certain date. The courage of the Ministry is equal to tackling the poor little kanaka from the South Sea Islands ; but the shadow of Japan is too much for these statesmen. Hence it is that, instead of putting the policy of Australia into black and white in Australian law, there is this provision, that an undesirable immigrant must try to dodge all the languages of Europe in order to enter Australia. I admit that the test is not to be applied. That is where the consuls will have to read Hansard Whilst the law will make it appear that the policy of the Australian Parliament is to allow persons of all races and colours to come here, if they can pass an educational test, the foreign consuls are asked

to read the measure in this way - "All that we Say about every immigrant being a prohibited immigrant unless he can pass an examination in an European language is waste paper, so far as European nations are concerned. We are not going to ask any unobjectionable European to pass that test. We are not going to apply it to Frenchmen, Germans, Austrians, Danes, or Italians. We are going to tell the Customs officer to shut the other eye when a German comes along the deck, but to open both eyes when a Japanese seeks to enter the Commonwealth." When honorable members talk about irritating Japan, I ask will anything irritate a great nation more than the suspicion that the people of Australia think they can humbug it? You may feel hurt by a straightforward policy affecting yourself, but you feel more irritated when persons in their dealings with you pursue an indirect course. All this is, however, mere idle talk. The fact is, as honorable members know, that Japan has expressly recognised the rights of the self-governing colonies of the Empire to make any provisions they like with reference to the immigration of Japanese. As I have pointed out before, in the treaty between Great Britain and Japan Great Britain binds the Empire to allow free and equal intercourse to Japanese, except so far as the self-governing colonies are concerned, and amongst these are named the colonies of Australia. It was provided that these colonies should have treaty rank equal with Japan on this subject. That was a recognition of the fact that we are entitled to legislate as we please on this matter - a recognition given by the Japanese Government. Therefore, it seems to me that the fear of offending Japan is an idle one. The Japanese Government will be far more offended by an attempt to exclude their subjects by trickery than by a straightforward policy of exclusion. There is no justification for this tricky policy, but there is an absolute justification for a straightforward policy. I think that the more this proposal is looked at the more objectionable and regrettable it will appear. It will be a matter of lasting regret that the Chamber has been tied up to this sort of legislation. I cannot help expressing the conviction that if the Ministry had not penned that unfortunate despatch to the Colonial-office, and had been free to take this House into its confidence, as it has done over and over again in regard to other measures, we should have had a far more satisfactory compromise.

Mr Barton

- I should have taken no other course, even if the minute had not been sent.

Mr REID

- The right honorable and learned gentleman is perfectly sincere in saying that, but honorable gentlemen have seen him adopt three or four different courses in the space of an hour. The cruellest thing of all was to compel his poor innocent colleagues in the Senate to turn a double somersault in regard to the mail-steamer contracts.

My right honorable and learned friend always means to take the same course, but he never knows what he will think about a matter five minutes hence. I do not say that the Government had not intended when they framed that despatch to introduce a Bill on the lines indicated. My complaint is that they deceived Mr. Chamberlain, and said that their principles were in accord with his when they were not. That is where a change has come over some of the members of this Ministry. The Premiers in 1897 favoured a provision such as that embodied in the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, but we yielded on behalf of our respective colonies out of a feeling of deference to the mother country, and because we thought that in our disconnected condition we should not force the matter to a final issue. But we did not give up the principles of the measure which we introduced. The Ministry, however, have given up those principles, because they have said in writing to Mr. Chamberlain, " Your principles and policy with reference to the coloured races are our principles and policy." Although members of the Ministry have changed, I have not done so. I am advocating the same line of action as I proposed when I was a Minister of an independent State. I gave way in New South Wales, but now that I am a representative of the whole Australian people, I am not prepared to give way. That is the distinction between the position of a provincial Premier and of the Australian Premier. The two positions are absolutely distinct. I maintain my principles, and I should like to see them carried out now that we are strong enough to insist upon it. By-the-bye, in the remarkable speech made by the Attorney-General, there was a reference to which I should like to make a short allusion. The honorable member for Wentworth was taken strongly to task because he made use of an expression which it was insinuated - not openly stated - showed a want of loyalty to the Empire.

Mr Page

- It is just as well the right honorable member should get a taste of it ; we have had it long enough.

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Mr REID

- I do not mind a taste of it ; it is like a tonic to me. I do not think a man who is not attacked, and bitterly attacked, by some will ever be worth a rap. It hurts me only when a bigger man attacks me. I do not care about anything I get from some of my friends.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- But it is rather hard when the right honorable and learned member attacks us.

Mr REID

- I do not wish to attack my honorable friend, though he is pretty well able to take care of himself. should like to show the House the contrast between the magnificent speech of the Attorney-General and that lamentable despatch. The honorable and learned member said -

We should be false to the lessons taught us in the great republic of the west ; we should be false to the never-to-be-forgotten teachings from the experience of the United States, of difficulties only partially conquered by the blood of their best and bravest--

A few drops of ink were enough to square the Attorney - General. When my honorable and gifted friend is inspired, and is in congenial company, he seems to breathe the valour of all the blends which make up our grand Anglo-Saxon race. One feels as though South Africa would not hold him. But he said nothing then about the fact that, in the first danger of a slight friction with the Colonial - office, the Federal Ministry wrote a despatch which one could understand if it had come from some little Crown colony in some remote ocean. It was the sort of despatch that Mr. Chamberlain gets every week from little Crown colonies in all corners of the world. What a clever thing it was for him to get such a despatch from the Federal Government of Australia ! It is not usual in Downing-street, I think. At the first invitation of the Colonial-office " to think as we do and to legislate as we do with reference to coloured races," the Attorney-General could only say, "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain." If the great American heroes had been made of that stuff, American independence would have evaporated in a series of brilliant orations. In the very birth of Australian freedom and independence it is an ominous and regrettable circumstance that the majority of honorable members, not because of their consciences or because of their speeches to their constituents, but because of other reasons, prevent the House from justly reflecting the sentiments of Australia, and put us in the unfortunate position of appearing to say with the Ministry, " Yes, Mr. Chamberlain." Australia, however, says "No" to Mr. Chamberlain on this point. The Japanese treaty shows that if Australia took a straightforward, fearless course, this question would be settled once and for ever. If a ripple or two of irritation disturbed the serenity of the Mikado of Japan at his early breakfast it would probably disappear with the setting sun. He would forget that there is such a place as Australia, and the whole thing would be over for all time. We need not expect a crop of good feeling from seed of this kind. For every scintilla of irritation which might be caused by action which was straightforward, we may now expect protest upon protest. The honorable member for Eden-Monaro spoke of the danger of several suns rising and setting unless this expeditious method were adopted. I believe that if the people of Australia were polled to-morrow they would rather have waited a month or two and sent a straight voice across the seas than have hurried this miserable attempt to deal with a great national question.

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

. - The right honorable and learned gentleman who has just sat down has, in his own inimitable manner, made merry at my humble expense, even at the expense of the Government, and to justify his merriment has found it necessary to assume a variety of opinions and attitudes which are mutually contradictory ; but any simple representative in this House, whose only object is to put plain arguments that seem to relate to the matter in hand in plain fashion, is always at a disadvantage as compared with the right honorable gentleman, who scintillates, and revolves, and shines, and shimmers.

Mr Reid

- I cannot revolve.

Mr DEAKIN

- The right honorable gentleman revolves upon his mental axis with such rapidity that as fast as one seeks to place a finger upon the argument he is using the rapidly-whirling globe leaves one miles behind. He is cometary in his brilliance.

Mr Reid

- I thought I was comic.

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Mr DEAKIN

- The right honorable gentleman might be described as a comic comet, passing from and into the void, and always far beyond the reach of any prosaic attempt to hold him down to facts, statements, arguments, or consistencies. To do that is far beyond my powers. In various parts of his address to-day, the right honorable gentleman in his familiar fashion treated of that now memorable - one of my honorable colleagues calls it miserable - minute from a variety of points of view. Sometimes he was satisfied that it was honestly written, and meant next to nothing; at other times he was satisfied that it was honestly written and meant a great deal, whilst on other occasions he was satisfied that it was dishonestly penned, with some mysterious end in view, which shifted as the right honorable gentleman's argument required. In order, however, to put it beyond all question, I rise to-day mainly to say that when I made the statement in following the right honorable gentleman the other day in reference to this minute, and the circumstances under which it was penned, I spoke with what I believed was a proper diffidence, because I was relying upon my memory. I had been challenged by the right honorable gentleman on the instant, with an unexpected interpretation of the minute - one which was surely the last to enter the minds of the Government. However, for once my memory has proved correct, and it is now no longer a matter of recollection, because I hold in my hand a demonstration of the actual fact. What I said was that the Government, in January, decided that the Bill, which was to be introduced in order to prevent the introduction of undesirable immigrants, should be drawn upon the lines of the well-understood Natal plan, which we had every reason to believe to be an effective method of excluding undesirable immigrants, and to which we knew we could obtain the sanction of the Imperial Government without any delay.

Mr Reid

- Was that before the Maitland speech ?

Mr DEAKIN

- Yes. I then went on to say that when we assembled in Melbourne after the elections, in order to draft the Bills that were to be presented to Parliament, the first sketch that was given by me of that measure was on those lines. I stated that the measure was drafted, to the best of my recollection, in May, probably before Mr. Chamberlain wrote his despatch, and certainly long before we ever knew of it. I find now that his despatch was written on 14th May, and was received by the Government in the Prime Minister's department on 22nd June. Now I have found among my papers the draft I hold in my hand of the Bill - at that time already in print - to restrict the entrance of undesirable immigrants, in which the Natal system is adopted, and in which clause 4, paragraph (a) upon which all this discussion has arisen, is word for word as it was in the Bill laid before this House. The wording of the original draft of paragraph (a), clause 4, is as follows : -

Airy person who, when asked to do so by an officer, fails to write out and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of 50 words in length in the English language dictated by the officer ;

Paragraph (a), as I have quoted it, was followed by the other restrictions contained in the same clause.

This was in print, according to this copy, on the 7 th day of June, 1901, or a fortnight before we received or saw or heard of Mr. Chamberlain's despatch.

Mr Barton

- Two days before I heard of his statement in the House of Commons.

Mr McDonald

- Was that the final draft ? Was it altered ?

Mr DEAKIN

- This has not been altered.

Mr McDonald

- I asked the Prime Minister after that whether the Bill was ready, and he said it was not.

Mr Reid

- It appears now that it was ready in January.

Mr DEAKIN

- The honorable member who -makes that interjection is labouring under an obvious misapprehension. This original draft was altered in this and in later clauses in minor particulars. .

Mr McDonald

- I asked the Attorney-General whether it was altered, and he said- "No."

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Mr DEAKIN

- I was speaking of paragraph (a), of clause 4, upon which the whole of the discussion upon this Bill has turned. It was paragraph (a) which I read, and which I said had not been altered since the original draft, but otherwise the Bill has been altered in several particulars because new sub-clauses were introduced, and sub-clauses then provided were afterwards dropped. They related merely to the machinery for the carrying out of the measure. The proposal to adopt the Natal test - the test as we proposed it - was then in print, and we had accepted it. In order to be quite certain as to the date of the first draft, I sent a note to the Government Printer, as follows : -

Can the Government Printer inform me if this was the first draft of this Bill ? If not, what was the date of the first draft ?

And the reply I received was -

No, this is the second draft, the first was furnished on the 4th June last.

So that this measure, as far as it relates to the particular matter in hand - not only the general character of the measure, but the particular proposal submitted to this House by the Government with regard to the application of the educational test, and the adoption of the English language - was printed as early as the 4th of June ; and, in fact, the measure was, as I have said, drafted in May. We have no need, however, to go back as far as May.

Mr Reid

- The Bill was only a draft until the Ministry sent that minute to Mr. Chamberlain.

Mr DEAKIN

- It was a Bill which, so far as this particular is concerned, was never altered. From the first draft, prepared by myself early in May, to the last draft laid before the House, in that particular portion to which the attention of the House has been directed, relating to the educational test, there was never a word altered.

Mr Reid

- That proves that the Ministry were always in sympathy with Mr. Chamberlain's views.

Sir John Forrest

- It shows that the right honorable gentleman is bowled out.

Mr DEAKIN

- I am always happy to avoid relying entirely on the slippery testimony of uncertain memory, and to find facts fixed in black and white, but I am especially gratified that in this matter my memory has served me correctly. It must now be plain that I was right in saying that Mr. Chamberlain's despatch had no effect upon this Bill, because fully a month before it was received the educational test was formally adopted by the Government, and never altered. I have now once and for all removed any doubts that could be entertained as to the meaning of that minute. It was simply, as I have already explained to the House, intended to convey to Mr. Chamberlain the statement that the measure we had framed was not out of harmony with his views, - a determination arrived at independently of Mr. Chamberlain, and without any knowledge of his wishes, beyond what was conveyed to my right honorable friend the leader of the Opposition, in 1897. We were already acquainted with those those views since 1897, and from the experience and example of my right honorable friend and his colleagues, had already determined that if we desired the exclusion of undesirable aliens, and at once, this was the swiftest and most effective manner of obtaining that end.

Mr Watson

- What about Australia speaking with a more powerful voice ?

Mr DEAKIN

- It is speaking with a more powerful voice. In three of the States this measure has not been adopted in any form, as the honorable member knows.. Ours is a proposal not only to apply to the whole of Australia a measure that has never yet been applied to three of the States, but to apply it in a severer form than ever before. Honorable members will see that this marks a great step in advance, first of all as applying to the whole of Australia a law which has not yet been enforced in some of the States, and secondly as applying the educational test in a stricter fashion. More than that, if there was a contention of the right

honorable gentleman, which was apparently substantial, it was the statement that when we approved the policy and principles of Mr. Chamberlain, in our minute, that action was fatal to the sincerity of our determination for the entire prohibition of colored alien immigrants. The right honorable member put his assumption in a variety of forms, from any one of which honorable members might have believed, and have been justified in believing, that the policy of the British Government as expressed by Mr. Chamberlain, and accepted by us, stopped short of that goal; but I say once and for all, that if it had stopped short of that goal it would have had no endorsement from this Government. I need not read the quotations from the long speech addressed by Mr. Chamberlain to my right honorable friend, and his colleagues, when he expressed not only entire sympathy with the objects that Australia, had in view, but gave us his assurance that if the means that he then recommended to their adoption did not prove sufficient, it rested with us, and with us alone to make them effective and absolute.

Mr Poynton

- On similar lines.

Mr Reid

- Here are the very words -

If the particular tests in these laws are not regarded as sufficiently stringent there is no reason why more stringent and effective ones of a similar character should not be adopted.

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Mr DEAKIN

- Exactly. And I say, and say deliberately, that the particular tests and the particular means employed are matters of indifference to Australia and to us, provided we obtain the complete and absolute exclusion on which we have set our minds and hearts. The assent, and the only assent, given to the proposal of Mr. Chamberlain by this Government is subject to accepting these words as meaning what they say - as implying that there will be no check, hindrance, delay, or objection to this Parliament, or any Parliament of Australia, adopting an educational test, or some similar test, in any form that it chooses or prefers, and as stringent as it pleases, in order to make it effective.

Mr Isaacs

- In the same despatch Mr. Chamberlain says we must stop alien immigration at all hazards.

Mr DEAKIN

- Exactly ; that is the plain sense of Mr. Chamberlain's words, that is what he intended to convey, and in that sense only have they been accepted by this Government. Honorable members spoke of the educational test proposed in this Bill as a comparatively simple one - that of writing 50 words - but that will suffice to exclude the vast bulk of the immigrants - the uneducated labourers whom it is not desirable we should admit. Within the limitations of an educational test, however, and without going beyond it, it is perfectly competent for us to raise its standard until it shall be so high that no one whom Australia desires to see kept out need be admitted. If the present test is not severe enough, we have the assurance of Mr. Chamberlain that a severer test will be approved. The right honorable and learned gentleman says that this will be an objectionable test to other nations and particularly to Japan. As a matter of fact, this is the one class of test which has not been protested against by the Government of Japan, or on behalf of other Asiatic peoples. It is the one class of test which has not been objected to in principle, though I do not for a moment dispute that when the Japanese learn - as they will learn - of the discrimination with which this test is to be applied, there will naturally arise a feeling of resentment which will be legitimate on their part. Such a feeling we may expect to arise, but we are unable consistently with the discharge of our duty to the electors of the Commonwealth to adopt means to prevent it.

Mr Reid

- What sort of feeling does the Attorney-General refer to?

Mr DEAKIN

- To a feeling of resentment at a discrimination in the use of the test. At the same time, that resentment will be mild in comparison with that which would be felt by a highly cultured and highly capable people upon finding themselves classed indifferently with all the peoples of Asia, as if they stood upon the same level with all those who are of a different colour to ourselves. For my part, I have been careful from the first not to attempt to justify this Bill, and the exclusiveness of feeling which it represents on the score of any moral or other inferiority on the part of those whom we desire to exclude. Whether or not there exists

such inferiority is a matter for argument or dispute elsewhere. I have frankly stated from the first that the exclusiveness on the part of the Australian people is perfectly independent of the mental and moral status of the Japanese, when measured by the only standards that can be properly applied to them, namely, those of their own race and of their own history.

Mr Fowler

- Then all of them stand on the same level ?

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Mr DEAKIN

- I am as far as possible from implying such a thing. All that it is necessary for us to urge in justification of this measure is that these people differ from us in such essentials of race and character as to exclude the possibility of any advantageous admixture or intermarriage if we are to maintain the standards of civilization to which we are accustomed. I would not take a pharisaical attitude even as regards our own civilization. Who can say how long it will last ? I have very grave doubts as to whether our form of civilization is beneficial to these people. I doubt whether it does not work far more injury than advantage to them. Our civilization belongs to us, and we belong to it ; we are bred in it, and it is bred in us. It fits us and is our means of progress and advancement. These people have their own independent development, their own qualities, and also the civilization, forms of life and government, which naturally attach to them. They are separated from us by a gulf which we cannot bridge to the advantage of either. The attitude of Australia is not an offensive one when it becomes understood that it is based upon these principles. It is not based upon any claim of superiority. Where is the standard of comparison just to both ? I am endeavouring to satisfy the House that arguments which are used in favour of exclusion do not call for any reflection whatever upon the character or capacity of the people excluded. That is not necessary. It is sufficient that these people do not blend with us, and that they cannot share our social life or our forms of self-government.

Mr Poynton

- Unless they are educated.

Mr DEAKIN

- Not even when they are educated. The education test, as the honorable member knows, is a test for the purpose of excluding and not of admitting the educated or uneducated. The object is to exclude those who come here. There is no desire on the part of the educated classes of Japan to come to Australia, and there is no desire on our part to receive them. The fundamental principle of self-preservation - of the preservation of our racial purity, of our forms of government, and of the civilization which fits and belongs to us, are sufficient motives to justify us in aiming at the absolute prohibition as undesirable immigrants of the coloured aliens who surround us. That is the position, and nothing more.

Mr Reid

- Will the Attorney-General get a statement of that sort forwarded to the Government of Japan, so that they may know what is meant ?

Mr DEAKIN

- If necessary, yes. The right honorable and learned member endeavoured to draw a parallel between the measure now before us and that relating to kanakas, altogether ignoring the fact that the kanakas in the first instance are brought here under Australian legislation.

Mr Reid

- I alluded to the clause which reads - "No Pacific Island labourer shall enter Australia on or after 31st March, 1904." That will prohibit his admission whether he comes under agreement or not.

Mr DEAKIN

- It is intended to do so. These people in themselves, and independently of the legislative action which has been taken, have never shown any desire to come here at all. We have to deal with these Polynesian Islanders because we inherit the consequences of the deliberate legislative action of a portion of the people in Australia in regard to them. We therefore find ourselves confronted with a situation with which we can deal in the most drastic way without offence to those affected by it. In this respect we are fortunate in being able to study the best interests of the Polynesian Islanders themselves - as well as those of the people of Australia - by excluding them from this country. No parallel can be drawn between a special case of that kind, calling for special action to undo what has been done by ourselves, and our

seeking to keep out those who come of their own accord. We have been asked by that member of the British Government who is peculiarly associated with the outlying parts of the Empire in which we reside to adopt a certain course and to make that course as effective as we choose. I would not attempt for a moment to imitate the right honorable and learned member's inimitable humour, but I am sure that he could act his part quite as effectively if he stood upon this side of the House and sketched the procedure which the Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Reid, followed in 1897, when, with a legislative mandate from Australia, so far as his colony was concerned, he visited the mother country. When he was told to tear up the legislation which he had passed, and introduce legislation on other lines, he bowed to the dust with the response - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain." That is what he said then in response to a request for a much more vital and serious change of front than that which he can charge against us. We had made up our minds what we intended to do before we knew of any such request. I am not reproaching the right honorable and learned member with what he did four years ago.

Mr Reid

- The Attorney-General is following my shadow.

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Mr DEAKIN

- That would not be easily missed. The course which the leader of the Opposition followed four years ago was right and reasonable under the circumstances. It is the course which he would have taken had he been in the position of Ministers to-day. The derision which he would then have poured upon his adversaries would have delighted this House quite as much as did the admirable manner in which he travestied the Government in the present instance. He is capable of that, and much more; but he cannot sever himself from his past even if he would. If he was right four years ago, then he is wrong now, and if he is right now he was wrong then. What is more, I say that we were right independently and of our own volition, whereas the right honorable and learned member, after a direct mandate from the people, was compelled to tear up his legislation and say - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain."

Mr Reid

- Would the Attorney-General mind having the despatch laid upon the table?

Mr DEAKIN

- Which despatch?

Mr Reid

- The despatch which formed the subject of the Cabinet minute.

Mr DEAKIN

- It is in the possession of my colleague. I do not wish to detain the House, but I desire to make clear one matter referred to in the speech of the right honorable and learned member which, in the minds of honorable members less familiar with the circumstances, may lead to misunderstanding. He spoke of the treaty with Japan, from the operation of which the self-governing colonies are excluded, his implication being that this was a particular exemption, which left us a free hand in this special case. But the leader of the Opposition should have added that the same provision is now inserted in every treaty with every people whatever. From the people of Guatemala or Honduras to those of the United States, Japan, or Germany, the invariable form of treaty adopted by the mother country at the present time is, whilst speaking for herself, to leave in each instance liberty to her own self-governing communities to adopt it or to put it aside. The treaty with Japan therefore differs in no respect from every other treaty. It does not point to any power of action on our part in connexion with Japan beyond that which we possess in regard to every other treaty. This statement will, I hope, prevent honorable members from drawing a misleading conclusion.

Mr McDonald

- Why is such a provision put into a treaty unless it be to give us the power of independent action ?

Mr DEAKIN

- Exactly, with relation to the subject matter of the treaty. But the subject matter of that treaty did not specially relate to the introduction of the English into Japan.

Mr Higgins

- Yes.

Mr DEAKIN

- Not particularly or in any new way, if my memory serves me aright.

Mr Higgins

- They are to have free passage from one country to the other.

Mr DEAKIN

- Freedom of intercourse? Honorable members are not yet seised of the point which I am endeavouring to put. What I think they will find, if they examine this treaty as to the freedom of intercourse and commerce, is that it repeats the ordinary provisions of this kind included in the treaties made by Great Britain with other powers, and commonly included in similar treaties. My point is - and I do not put it further - that there is no special provision in this treaty that will nob be found in any number of other treaties, when Great Britain has entered into commercial relations with other countries.

Mr McDonald

- But it has special reference to individuals in article 2.

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Mr DEAKIN

- So have other treaties. There is another misapprehension. The first misapprehension is that authority to self - governing colonies is not usually granted in treaties, and the second misapprehension is that this treaty gives a greater power as to intercourse and freedom of commerce than is usually given. If this treaty be examined in association with other treaties, it will be found to be expressed in practically the same terms and to the same intents as many treaties, made previously, and in no sense? a special treaty opening new privileges not freely granted to other nations. The same independence is left to self-governing colonies under this treaty as under other treaties. We have to remember that this is not the first occasion on which the Australian colonies have been compelled to rely on representations made for them by the British Government. The very first matter on which these colonies were associated at the dawn of the federal movement in its practical phases was the antagonism felt to the importation into New Caledonia of French prisoners - men sent there because they had been convicted of repeated crimes. Some of these were political prisoners, but many of them were sent to New Caledonia because they had been found guilty of repeated crimes, and were considered, from a legal point of view, incurable. Against that immigration Australia protested ; but we had no direct relations with France, and were unable to obtain any.. I happened, however, to have some official' connexion with the continuous efforts made by all the colonies in concert - the eastern colonies particularly - with a view to obtain, by the influence of the British Government the cessation of the transport of these criminals. Ultimately, after 1887, owing wholly and solely to the action of the British Government undertaken at the request of Australia, this immigration to New Caledonia was entirely prohibited. While there was no possibility of action on our part, we found that the British Government had full sympathy with our aims. In fact, we found the readiest assistance given to enable us to secure race purity from criminals of a people of our own colour. Consequently when Mr. Chamberlain and the British Government tell us that they appreciate the motives which lead the people of Australia to be resolved in their determination to prohibit the entrance of coloured aliens, and that they, while advising and requesting that a certain course be followed, are willing that this course shall be followed to any extent in order to make it effective, we have every reason to rely on our previous experience. We must be satisfied that if we have adopted a particular course out of consideration for the wishes of the statesmen who are charged with the future destinies and foreign relations of that Empire, we shall not be forsaken. That has been our experience on previous occasions, much, as I happen to know, to the distaste of high officials through whom the British Government were bound to express themselves. Great obstacles were thrown in the way of the British Government on the occasion to . which I have referred, by diplomatists and the sensitiveness of the French people. But the British Government insisted on these recalcitrant officials listening to the voice of Australia at a time when that voice was much weaker than it is to-day. When we were without possibility of taking legislative steps, the British Government adopted the necessary action, by means of which the exclusion of these immigrants was secured from New Caledonia, which was rendered a dependency of which France herself might be proud, and to which we can look without the grave apprehensions entertained from 1880 to 1883.

An Honorable Member. - There was a protest throughout all Australia.

Mr DEAKIN

- Of course ; but it could only be a protest and nothing more.

Mr Reid

- There is the difference that we can legislate now.

Mr DEAKIN

- But those protests without the power of legislation sufficed to move the Imperial Government. Now that we are endowed with the power of legislation, and have followed a course we have been requested to follow in order to attain an end admitted to be necessary and inevitable, attaining it without occasioning friction to the statesmen of the Empire in their dealings with foreign nations - are we to be asked to believe that we have been led into that course for the mere purpose of defeating our expectations ? On the contrary, we send forward this measure with the assurance not only of its acceptance, but of its immediate effectiveness and operativeness all over Australia, including the three States that have no such measure. We are sending the measure home with the assurance that the British Government, having requested that this course shall be followed, have incurred a responsibility to Australia that they will not be slow to discharge - a responsibility which, I believe, the British Government will accept to the full and discharge to the full - the responsibility of seeing that this measure is so backed up and supported by diplomatic representations that its effectiveness will be assisted by operations in other directions, though they are not made public nor placed on the face of any statute, but which nevertheless will have the effect of cutting off the stream of supply at the source. That can certainly be done in relation to British India, from whence, at the wish of the Imperial Government, the influx of coolies can be altogether stopped.

Sir Edward Braddon

- They are not coolies.

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Mr DEAKIN

- The right honorable member for Tasmania is quite right ; his knowledge of India is large and exact, and he properly corrects me when I use a title improperly. Those who come here are low caste tribes, who are not Hindoos in the ordinary sense, and are not properly known as coolies. A number of them probably come from beyond British borders. But this immigration, from India, can be stopped at its source, which is just as effective, and even more satisfactory than endeavouring to stop it here. In addition, we have reason to believe that the empire of Japan will be perfectly willing, on representation, to assist the operation of this measure by cutting off its stream of supply also. If this measure, effective in itself, is supported as it is certain to be by the ample guarantee of the Imperial Government, which must be read into their request that a particular course shall be followed in order to obtain a particular end, it will, I believe, secure to Australia - and that is why the Government recommended it - the exclusion of prohibited immigrants quite as effectively as could be done by any other form of words that could be chosen. It will give us a greater claim than ever that all the powers and authorities possessed by the mother country shall be used on our behalf in order to stop this influx, which we have every reason to dread, and which we are determined shall be turned away from our shores. There are a number of other problems, but I think I have satisfied honorable members who are inclined to lend an open ear to the few pertinent facts and the one or two arguments I have endeavoured to put before them. I have shown that Mr. Chamberlain's despatch had nothing in the world to do with this measure. I can absolutely say, without qualification, that not a single line, or a single word of any line, or any phase of the measure, has been altered in consequence of that despatch. Our minute was simply an intimation of what we intended to do, and had decided upon. The reference to policy and principles meant the policy of absolute prohibition and exclusion. That is the policy, and those are the principles with which this Government concur. But the means adopted to secure prohibition are adopted at the request of the Imperial Government, at whose hands we are entitled to expect, and are certain to receive, all the support and assistance they can give in a great variety of ways in order to make this legislation effective, as effective it must and shall be.

Mr. JOSEPH

COOK (Parramatta). We are satisfied that the Attorney-General knows how to scintillate as well as the leader of the Opposition, whose scintillations he criticises. The way in which the Attorney-General has scintillated all round the literary sky during the last half hour has created a beautifully sympathetic impression, and no doubt contributed to the result he so desires. May I point out that the main object of

his rising to read again the despatch, and to show that the Bill had been drafted before any communication was received from the Secretary of State, is so much beating the air, because it entirely misses the point of criticism on this side of the House. Our point is not that this Bill was not drafted before this message from

Mr. Chamberlain,

but that the Government committed Parliament without consulting it to the passing of this measure at Mr. Chamberlain's

instigation. This reduced the matter to a pure farce, because the Government had already bound themselves to

Mr. Chamberlain,

in that they would not submit to have the Bill altered by the House. The Attorney-General knows as well as I do, that the deliberate opinion of this Chamber is against the Government as to the method of dealing with this question. The Government have simply bludgeoned the Bill through the Chamber by threatening their own supporters with all kinds of pains and penalties. It is well known that members on the Government side of the House were " talking dissolution " to their own supporters. Ministers told some of their usual followers that if this Bill were not passed a dissolution would inevitably follow.

Mr Deakin

- I never heard of that.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I never heard of it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is wonderful how loyal supporters of the Government do not hear things. It is always left to those who drift about the House and are not so loyal in their support of the Government, to hear all that goes on in a time of crisis.

Mr Higgins

- I voted against the Government, and I did not hear what the honorable member alleges.

Mr McCay

- I challenge the honorable member for Parramatta to produce one member on the Government side to substantiate his statement.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I shall not trouble about convincing the honorable member for Corinella, so he may keep his insinuations to himself.

Mr Conroy

- I can give the honorable member for Corinella the names of two honorable members.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- There are honorable members in the House listening to me at the present moment who were threatened with a dissolution by Ministers now sitting in the House. That is a direct enough statement, and it can be proved. These are questionable means to adopt to pass a Bill through the House on the advent of federation, when every consideration should have prompted the Ministry to give the freest interplay of opinion on a subject which cannot possibly have a party hue, but which affects vitally the entire Commonwealth.

The result of this is that honorable members on that side were put into the peculiar position of having to declare their opinions during one part of the debate and absolutely to nullify them on the division. This criticism comes legitimately from the Opposition.. The point is not whether Ministers had the Bill drafted before they despatched their minute to Mr. Chamberlain ; the complaint that we make' is that they committed themselves to Mr. Chamberlain without knowing what the opinion of the House was. The result is that we have a Bill which does not represent the opinion of the majority of honorable members.

Mr Sawers

- Could not the Ministry formulate a policy of their own without consulting Parliament ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course they could, but upon a question like this, when there was no danger of party issues being raised, they should have consulted honorable members from whom they might have expected loyal

support. The speech of the Attorney-General was brilliant, as his speeches always are, but it was so much beating of the air. His argument amounted to this : that we can get what we want, but we must not ask for it. I cannot believe that at the beginning of our existence as a nation disastrous results would follow from asking for what we want, knowing that it is our intention to realize our views on this matter. The Attorney-General says that we shall realize our intentions ; therefore, I ask, why should we not express them firmly and respectfully in black and white? There is no analogy between the position to-day and the position in 1896 and 1897. One of the reasons for federation was that we might speak with a stronger, firmer, and more united voice upon matters vitally affecting the integrity of our race. "When we were given this charter which enlarges our powers of self-government, the Home Government meant us to exercise those powers upon the necessary occasion, and it is a poor beginning when, before any friction has arisen, or there is the slightest symptom of trouble, we say to them - " We shall be satisfied with what you required in 1896, and shall not ask for anything further." That is not the attitude which a powerful community like this should take. The sooner His Majesty's Ministers of State in London recognise that Australia has arrived at years of national discretion, the better it will be for the peace and welfare of the continent, and for our harmonious relations with the Empire. It must be recognised that we have a right of sovereignty - I do not use the word in its exclusively technical sense - in determining matters connected with our own Government, and we have, therefore, the right to respectfully present our claim to be heard upon this matter. The measure now before the House does not realize the aspirations and intentions of the people of Australia. It does not do this, because the first Australian Government have bound the hands of Parliament, and, by means of party coercion, have forced through a measure which does not represent the real feeling of the people of Australia.

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Mr FOWLER

- I am quite willing to accept the suggestion thrown out at an earlier stage of the debate by the honorable member for Eden-Monaro, that we should accept the vote taken upon the division in committee, but, when listening to the charges of disloyalty that were being hurled at the heads of those of us who voted for the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, I made up my mind to take the first opportunity to repudiate those insinuations so far as they concerned me. Of course, I thoroughly realize the misconception in the minds of those who made such charges. They assume that loyalty to the empire is identical with loyalty to the policy of the Colonial-office. I am surprised, however, that such insinuations should come from honorable gentlemen who, from their knowledge of the doings of the Colonial-office in years past, should hold a totally different opinion. I need only refer honorable members to the record of the lives of such men as Sir George Grey and Sir Bartle Frere to indicate that loyalty to the Empire has very often meant disloyalty to the policy of the Colonial-office. We have a striking instance of that in the knowledge that, if the policy of those great statesmen had been followed in South Africa, Great Britain would not have the present trouble upon her hands. I regret that our Government did not take a leaf out of the book of those statesmen. If they had done so, they would be amply justified, not only by what has happened in the past, but by what will happen in the future. We who are now charged with disloyalty will, before long, be shown to be the true loyalists, true to not only the interests of Australia, but to the interests of the Empire as a whole.

Mr WATSON

- I think it would be a mistake for the House, after the decision which has already been arrived at, to vote against the third reading of the Bill. While my opinion that the adoption of my amendment was the proper course to follow is as strong as ever, we shall lose a little at least if the Bill does not become law. I have no doubt that the Attorney-General is correct in his statement that its provisions can be made effective, but the question is, at what cost ? They can be made effective only at the cost of irritating the powers immediately concerned, and that irritation would have been absent if we had made a clear declaration of the policy of Australia. The continued rejection of their people is more likely to give offence to foreign powers than a clear statement of our policy, which they could meet with a declaration of what their own line of action would be. The probability is, too, that variations of administration will be almost inevitable. The first Minister may administer the measure in the rigorous spirit in which we are assured by the Attorney-General the Government have brought it forward, while his successor, either designedly or for some other cause, may ignore the underlying intention, and carry out its provisions more literally, and his

successor again may restore the rigorous administration of the first Minister. Such differences of administration are likely to prove a continual source of irritation to the Governments of the races affected. The probability of effective administration, too, depends upon the continual presence in Parliament of a body of men - I do not speak of any particular section - who are determined to keep the Government up to the mark. But we cannot always live at high pressure even in politics, and there is a possibility of other large issues diverting the attention of the people, temporarily, at all events, from this matter. While their attention is fixed upon some other question, and they are fighting fiercely for, say, free-trade or protection, the administration of this measure will be overlooked, and may fall short of what they actually desire. Besides, no Parliament can watch the efficiency of all the details of administration. That is one of the reasons I have for the opinion I expressed before as to the undesirability of adopting the roundabout method of exclusion proposed by the Ministry. One feature of the question to which the Ministry have paid too little attention so far as their own consistency is concerned is that, during the agitation which preceded the adoption of the Constitution Act, we heard from the Premier, and from other gentlemen who worked for its acceptance against all opposition that, once federation was accomplished, matters such as this could be dealt with much more effectively than was possible while the States remained separated.

Mr Sawers

- Because uniform action could be taken.

Mr WATSON

- Not only because of the uniformity of the action, but because of the effectiveness which could be acquired, and the degree to which we might go. As one who was opposing the Bill in New South Wales, I remember that we had a most difficult question to face, and the argument most frequently used by the electors - who concurred with everything we urged against the constitutional aspect of the Bill, and against the preponderating power which was being conceded to the smaller States - was that they had been assured by the Prime Minister and by the Attorney-General and every gentleman associated with them, that we should be able to deal with coloured labour in a manner that would leave nothing to be desired.

Mr Deakin

- Hear, hear.

Mr WATSON

- What advance is shown in the present measure upon what was proposed in New South Wales a few years ago ?

Mr Deakin

- This Bill applies to six States, instead of to three.

Mr WATSON

- But it was quite possible for the other States to have passed such a law before.

Mr Deakin

- They did not wish to - Queensland did not.

Mr WATSON

- I admit that they did not pass such a law, but that was not the point that was urged.

Mr Deakin

- That was one of .them.

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Mr WATSON

- It may have been one of them, but the main point put forward, not only by Ministers, but by one consistent upholder of federation - the Sydney Bulletin - was that a united Australia could speak to the British Government in a strain that no single State could hope to adopt, and the complaint that I have against this

Government is, not that they have neglected to fight the British Government on this matter, but that they have not even tried to do so. They have never made use of the fact that they represent all Australia, and that Australia has given expression to its desires on this matter in no uncertain way - they did not even go to the extent of making humble and respectful representations to the British Government. In 1897, if it had come to the worst, I should have been prepared to accept a compromise, but it would have been after all negotiations had failed, and the whole of the difficulties on the other side had been placed before us in

the fullest possible light. Now, as in 1897 we were assured, in the first place, that the Natal Act would be sufficient, but now, after having seen the Act in operation in New South Wales, I have come to the conclusion that it has proved absolutely inefficient.

Sir Edward Braddon

- It proved efficient enough for Tasmania.

Mr WATSON

- Who wants to go to Tasmania ? Not even a Chinaman. I have a great respect for Tasmania, but I think they should have tacked it on to Victoria, and made one decent State of the two. In 1897 we were assured that the Natal Act would be effective, and as one who voted at that period for a more complete measure, I was prepared to give it a little trial in view of all the difficulties, and especially in view of the fact that at that time there was a probability of federation being consummated within a short period, and of our being able - according to the statements of the Attorney-General, and the Prime Minister, and other advocates of the Bill - to speak to the British Government in such a manner as to ensure what we desired. I was prepared then to let things go for a certain time, but that is no reason why we should continue in that course for all time. With all respect to the Attorney-General, and having regard to the possibility of going further, I want to know how long we are to wait? We have already experimented for four years in the various States, and now it is proposed that we shall make another experiment for another few years before a further Bill is demanded. Whilst with proper administration this Bill might certainly be made effective, I am afraid that it will be extremely difficult to ensure that on all occasions. I do not wish to imply that the Custom-house officers or those charged with the detailed administration of this Bill, are by any means dishonest persons, but I do say that occasionally it is found that some of them are dishonest, and where large interests are involved, or where people have a pecuniary interest in securing the admission of undesirable people, there is always a danger that the officer will not be so careful to put the test in the complete way that the Minister may desire. No such escape would be possible to the officer if the colour line were drawn, and I think the only clear and definite way of attaining our end is to declare that coloured aliens are unfit to mix with us, and that they shall be excluded. There are other provisions in this measure which to my mind make it of some value, and for that reason I do not propose to vote against the third reading. There is even a hope that another branch of the Legislature may see that it is desirable to conform to the wish of what undoubtedly, in my mind, is a majority in this House, and a majority of the people of Australia. I do not think that in his Maitland speech the Prime Minister made any mention of the educational test ; but a distinct promise was given to the people of Australia that the Government would work for a " white Australia." I do not remember the exact phraseology of the statement, but I remember that the impression borne in upon me was that the Government were going to exclude Asiatics and other undesirable persons, and, as far as people could glean from that speech, there was no other interpretation to be placed upon the intentions of the Government than, that they proposed to absolutely exclude coloured aliens. If Ministers led the people to believe that they were going to take steps to absolutely exclude these aliens from Australia, how is it that, without making a fight and without firing a gun, they have, on the first invitation, surrendered to the British Government?

Mr Deakin

- Because this Bill will exclude the aliens.

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Mr WATSON

- That has yet to be learned ; but there is a distinct difference of opinion as to whether it will or not. With the proper kind of administration I am prepared to admit that it may be possible to exclude coloured aliens under this Bill ; but probably firm administration without a Bill at all would have done that.

Mr Deakin

- Not as regards British subjects.

Mr WATSON

- No ; I am prepared to admit that, as far as British subjects are concerned, we could not have done that. The point to which I principally wish to draw attention is that the Government, notwithstanding the position they took up at the federal elections, made no attempt to convince the British Government of the inefficiency of the course proposed by the Imperial authorities. If they had done that, and failed, I think the House would have met them in a much fairer temper than was the case last week. There was no word in

the statement made by the Prime Minister in his speeches during the federal election campaign of a Bill that would provide for anything less than absolute exclusion, and it is idle for the honorable gentleman to say that no public man ever proposed anything more than was provided for under the Natal Act. I do not suppose that we labour representatives are entitled to be called public men, but our utterances on the subject - went to the full degree of absolute exclusion, without any possibility of error. The public were allowed to believe that as far as the Government itself was concerned, and the straight and honorable course for Ministers on that occasion was to have given the people to understand clearly what their own proposal was. It is no use saying that no one proposed to go further than the Natal test ; the Government should have told the people that they did not intend to go any further than that. Possibly, if they had told the people any such thing, they would have found a great difference in the results of the elections. I know that if one or two of the gentlemen who represent constituencies in New South Wales had told the electors that they would not attempt to go any further than .to adopt the provisions of the Natal Act, they would have found their majorities seriously diminished, or would have seen them .disappear altogether. Therefore, the attitude of the Government has been rather more ingenious than ingenuous. I do not propose to vote against the third reading of this Bill, because it would be a pity to lose the chance of getting a Bill through even in the ineffective and inefficient shape of this measure, but I hope 'that within a very short time we shall find it practicable to bring .up the matter, again, because I am convinced that the people of Australia will not be satisfied until their desires are expressed in the clearest and most definite language.

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Mr KNOX

- I have had considerable difficulty in deciding what the particular object of this debate has been. If honorable members who are in opposition had expected that we were going to a division on the motion for the third reading of the Bill, I presume that, now that the honorable member for Bland has indicated that he will not oppose the third reading, a vote will be taken without any more beating about the bush. I distinctly indicated that I was in favour of the direct method of excluding coloured aliens, and I have no hesitation in saying that, if that course had been adopted, it would not have been surrounded with the difficulties that some honorable members seem to imagine. But I regard as paramount, in connexion with this question, the considerations of Empire, which were so clearly laid before us by the Prime Minister. I hold no singular position in that respect, because I am prepared to believe that almost every member of the Government holds the same view as I do. They would have preferred to have a Bill specifically stating what they intended, and without qualification that they wished to secure a "white Australia." That I understood to be their position. But we are entitled to be led by those in this House who are responsible for indicating to us what questions are Imperial questions. Therefore I surrendered my position, as I clearly indicated at the time, and voted with the Government. I am prepared to do the same thing again. Experience has shown that the educational test has in other cases proved effective, and the Government have said that if it does not prove effective they will take steps to make it so. I am satisfied that there is not a single honorable member of this House who wishes to fight the home Government where Imperial interests are involved. This is a loyal House, which is anxious to maintain its connexion with the mother country, and to assist it in every possible way. It is for us, therefore, where *a course is presented which will .accomplish the object we have in view to give it a trial. If that trial is not successful, let -us take other measures which will give us the desired result. The honorable member for Bland having now indicated that he intends to support the third reading of the Bill, I hope we shall get on with the business.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I do not think there is any honorable member who proposes to do other than support the third reading of this measure. There is a strong feeling, which has been freely expressed at all stages of its discussion, that a more direct and effective course should have been adopted. The House, however, is practically committed to the method proposed by the Government, and therefore all that honorable members can do is to hope that the administration of the measure will be of such a character as will prevent absolutely the influx of the objectionable people whom it is designed to exclude. I credit the Ministry with having been actuated by a desire to prohibit the influx of alien races. Any criticism which I have directed against the Bill has been in opposition to the particular method proposed for restricting the immigration of these undesirable people. But we are face to face with the final stage of the Bill, and having adopted every

legitimate course to secure its amendment in a way which would give expression to my views, I can see no possible good to be achieved by attempting to delay the passage of its third reading. My object in rising is to deal with one or two remarks which have been made by the Attorney-General. There was, perhaps, a misconception of the Attorney-General's position, owing to his speech upon the second reading of this Bill. On that occasion he spoke at considerable length, and I certainly gathered from his remarks that the attitude of the Government on this question was determined to a very great extent by despatches received from the Imperial Government. If honorable members have misjudged the Government in that respect it is due to the statements made by the Attorney-General himself during his second reading speech. He clearly hinted that any drastic legislation, such as that proposed by the honorable member for Bland, would not be acceptable to the Imperial Government, and threw out the suggestion - certainly a bare suggestion - that the passage of a more drastic Bill might be attended with some danger to the very principle which we were advocating. The Attorney-General, therefore, is alone responsible for any misconception which has arisen. I believe there would have been no danger either in the direction of Imperial veto, or of any considerable delay, had the Government adopted the more courageous course of introducing a Bill which would have excluded the Asiatic races without the round-about educational test which is now provided. At the same time I sincerely hope that the administration of this Bill will be effective. I credit the Government with the sincere desire to carry out the intentions of the people of Australia and to exclude coloured aliens from our midst. But they will require to sternly administer the provisions of this measure if they are to preserve the British character of our population. If their administration is characterised by energy and determination there is a possibility that the Bill may prove more effective than some of us have imagined. On the other hand, if it should be found in practice that this measure will not be as effective as its framers believe, they will be under the obligation to this House and the country of bringing forward more drastic proposals to secure the object in view. I have not taken up any position of hostility to the Government as a Government, nor have I criticised them, simply because I sit upon this side of the House. I believe that the course proposed by the honorable member for Bland was the right course. I think it would have been more effective, would have clothed the Administration with greater power, and have given them a very much stronger position than will this Bill. But since we have not succeeded in amending the Bill in the way we desired it is our plain duty to see it through its final stages, and to urge upon the Government to administer it with a determination to uphold its main principles.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

PACIFIC ISLANDS LABOURERS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed (from 2nd October, vide page 5505) on motion by Mr. Barton -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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Mr REID

- I made some reference to this Bill this afternoon. First of all I wish to say, with reference to the policy of the measure, that I am thoroughly in favour of the principle which is aimed at. I feel absolved from any difficulty in reference to the Bill, by the simple fact that the principle it involves was the burning question in the great State of Queensland at the time of the Federal elections this year. The result was to show that an enormous majority of the people of that State are in favour of the stoppage of this kanaka traffic. Since the people of Queensland have placed on record in unmistakable terms their wish that this sort of legislation should be applied to their State, I think that honorable members representing other States need have no hesitation in supporting the Bill. The Government have gone to the furthest length to which any Government can consistently go in the way of consideration for this traffic. The feelings of the people of Australia, with regard to these coloured aliens, are well known. Outside of Queensland the views of the people of Australia generally are clearly, unmistakably, and absolutely against the continuance of any such traffic. We have also the special verdict of the people of Queensland on this very point. Since the verdict of the people of Australia outside of Queensland has been almost unanimously against the traffic, and since the special finding of Queensland is also against it, there is no need for honorable members to hesitate about supporting the Bill. I gathered the other night from the speech of the honorable member for

Darling Downs, who has been most recently elected, that there has been no change of feeling on this subject in Queensland. We had the deliberate verdict of that State in March last. We also had an election which tested this question only a few days ago - the election of the honorable member for Darling Downs - which afforded another proof that the people of Queensland are unmistakably opposed to this traffic. All Australia having expressed this opinion, I think that the Government are justified in bringing forward this legislation. A remarkable difficulty - and one of their own making - faces us in connexion with this Bill. It is not a difficulty to myself or other honorable members who voted in a certain way upon another measure, because we have our principle recognised in the Bill. There is no foolery about putting a kanaka through the educational test, but the Ministry have gone straight to the point. They say in clause 3 that no Pacific Islands labourer shall enter Australia on or after the 31st day of March, 1901. That is a prohibition on account of race and colour - a totally plain, straightforward prohibition to all eternity of the Pacific Islands labourer. That is the sort of legislation that some of us are in favour of.

Mr Higgins

- Are there not some British subjects among the Pacific Islands labourers ?

Mr REID

- That scarcely touches the point I am dealing with. We were told that the educational test was because of the tendencies and susceptibilities of the Japanese. I have never heard yet that the course adopted in the other Bill was owing to the sensibilities of the kanakas or the South Sea Islanders. That is a new aspect of the matter which we have not had presented yet, but which may be put before us. We have to deal with the broad fact that the Government had before them a despatch from Mr. Chamberlain based on these terms. The despatch said -

In the first place it (the Bill) embodies a disqualification based on the place of origin - that is practically a distinction of race and colour. Any attempt - "Any," mind you ; it is not limited - to impose disqualifications on the basis of such distinctions, besides being offensive to a friendly power is contrary to the general conceptions of equality which have been the guiding principle of British rule throughout the Empire.

To those principles and to that policy the Federal Ministry have said - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain." The Ministry have adopted the language of Mr. Chamberlain, and have gone further, and said - "We are not likely to propose any legislation that will conflict with these views." Where will the Colonial Office be when it gets this Pacific Islands Labourers Bill ? The Colonial Office will get the Japanese Bill, and find that it bears across it, not conspicuously, but in a way that can be read between the lines - "Yes, Mr. Chamberlain." This Bill will go back with the water line - "No, Mr. Chamberlain."

Mr Barton

- "Yes-No" is the right honorable gentleman's monopoly.

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Mr REID

- I can assure the Prime Minister that among all the exploits of politicians in the way of "yes-no," this legislation of the Federal Ministry is pre-eminent. Now, I want to point out the extraordinary position into which the Federal Government are dragging this most subservient House. Mr. Chamberlain has been assured that any distinctions based on race and colour are not only contrary to the conceptions of the British Empire, which the present Federal Ministry have developed, but that the Ministry are not likely to submit any legislation conflicting with Mr. Chamberlain's views. Therefore, in order to exclude races of a yellow colour, a Custom-house officer is to be appointed to dodge them with various living languages of Europe. Whites of any nation in Europe can walk past the Custom-house officer and tread on his corns while he dare not look at them because he has received instructions that he is to let Germans and Frenchmen pass. But when the yellow-skinned gentleman comes on deck all the languages of Europe are brought out of the box, and the question is - "What language shall we try this unfortunate heathen with - what shall we stump him with?" It may have been heard that the yellow-skinned gentleman can do the test in English or in French, or that owing to his remarkable training he can speak English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. But the Government are equal to the occasion, and they will try this learned pundit with Turkish or some language from a little corner of Europe. That is the statesmanlike policy of an enlightened Christian Government in reference to the yellow-skinned Japanese ! There is an extraordinary position into which to drag this Parliament ! The European language test is something new, and was never in the Bills proposed four years ago. But the policy of the Government is, and is

deliberately intended by them to be, that if a Japanese or a Chinaman comes along the deck he is to be dodged by the Customs-office and flogged in some language he has not learned. That is a statesmanlike way for Australia to deal with these unfortunate people ! Why should not the same principle be applied to the kanakas of the South Sea Islands? They are persons with human susceptibilities, and many of them have probably as much sense of self-respect as have people of a different colour. But there is not the slightest attempt to deal with them in this indirect method.

Mr Higgins

- There may be British subjects among them.

Mr REID

-The clause may include British subjects. The expression used in clause 3 is that no Pacific Islands labourer shall enter Australia after the 31st March, 1904, The definition of " Pacific Islands labourer " is that the words include " all natives "-that is whether labourers or..not.

Mr Higgins

- And whether British subjects or not ?

Mr REID

- Yes ; the definition will include any British subjects. We are told that the words " Pacific Islands labourer " includes all natives not of European extraction " from any island except the Island of New Zealand, situated in the Pacific Ocean." I hope I am not wrong, but I have an idea that Japan is an island in the Pacific Ocean. I may be wrong in my geography, but I think I learned at school that Japan was an island in the Pacific Ocean. If that be correct, we must take care that we do not get into trouble. This is a matter I commend to the earnest attention of the Prime Minister, after all he has gone through, in order to let the Mikado alone. Surely the Prime Minister will be careful in committee to have inserted the words "of any island except Japan," or "all the islands in the Southern Pacific except Japan," or something to that effect.

Mr Barton

- I will chance it.

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Mr REID

- I have no doubt the Prime Minister will chance anything ; but what will Mr. Chamberlain think of that ? Here is a Federal Government who have represented in the strongest terms that their principles are opposed to any legislation excluding on the basis of race and colour, and another Bill goes ahead in accordance with that minute. Then within perhaps a week there comes : a Bill in which appears the stigma and disqualification on account of race and colour, and which provides that no human being not of European extraction born in the islands of the Pacific Ocean shall enter Australia after the 31st March, 1904. In this Bill we have the amendment of the honorable member for Bland accepted and adopted by the Federal Ministry. I hope the Ministry will pay some attention to this, because, in view of the arrangement -I do not say it is a binding contract - or of the understanding which has been voluntarily entered into between the two Governments in respect to this matter, this Bill presents a flagrant breach, seeing that it excludes men on account of race , and colour. It is an impudent, bare-faced outrage on the Pacific Islanders. But the Pacific Islanders have no Mikado, no ironclads, and no large army, and they are not in a position to be of some use in connexion with the Chinese question, or in stopping the aggressive march of Russia. Surely this Government of humanity and toleration will not descend to these methods of legislation simply because the islanders of the Pacific are friendless, or because they have no material strength or resources behind them to avenge this outrage on their colour and nationality 1 This Bill seems to me a fitting ending to the hypocritical beginning which was made with the other measure, after all the professions of consideration for humanity and the adoption of the basic principles on which the British Empire is built. One of those principles is that when a man of any colour gets beneath the British flag he is safe. Now, however, we must add the proviso - except he be black and born in the South Seas. The basic principles to which I have referred are infringed by this Bill. Could we have a better revenge on the inconsistency of the Government and of the House, who have adopted the Immigration Restriction Bill, than this Bill which is to follow it ? The poor kanaka is to be branded with a race disqualification. He is to be singled out from among the peoples of the earth for this insulting legislation. There might have been some consideration for the kanaka. Surely the ingenuity of the Government is great enough to discover some other test for him. I should say that a physical test would floor most of the kanakas. "Why should

not the Government provide that no kanaka who cannot carry 2 cwt. on his shoulders shall be admitted to the Commonwealth ? That would exclude every kanaka in the South Seas, and the provision would not be offensive to them, their fathers, their mothers, or their "sisters, and their cousins, and their aunts." Or why not put them on a diet of Scotch oatmeal for a month, which would kill them off under the guise of hospitality?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I think there can be no question as to the importance of the subject now under consideration. The Prime Minister, in his second reading speech, gave us some figures which indicate the overwhelming importance of the subject. But, notwithstanding its importance from a pecuniary and material point of view, it seems to me that the attempts of honorable members to vie with each other in endeavouring to secure the most effective way of dealing with the question must be set down to the patriotism of the House and of the country. There is only one desire on the part of honorable members, and that is to get rid of black labour in Queensland in the speediest and most effective manner. There can be no doubt as to what the mind of the people is upon this question. Both sides had to unmistakably declare their attitude at the recent elections. The Government made it clear that it was to be part of their policy to abolish black labour in Queensland, and the Opposition did the same.

Mr Higgins

- At what stage ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- At every stage of the campaign the Opposition, as a body, were in favour of getting rid of the kanaka traffic. Although the leader of the Opposition, when in Queensland, said that he would not say his final word upon the subject then, his attitude was one of declared hostility to the traffic. One of the main reasons for federating was that we might deal with this matter. It was not so much that we might prevent the immigration of undesirable people, as that we should get rid of conditions in connexion with the growing of sugar-cane in Queensland which are a menace to the continent. So strongly did many parties in Queensland feel upon this subject, that considerations in respect of the sugar industry alone caused them to hesitate about giving adherence to the movement which was progressing in the other States ; but when the people of Queensland had an opportunity to make their opinions felt in the only effective way possible, they left no doubt as to what their mind on the subject is.

Mr McDonald

- It was the first time they had an opportunity to speak on the question.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Although it was sought in the press, in Parliament, and in various other places to minimize the importance of the vote which was given, there can be no doubt that Queensland spoke decisively as to the conditions under which the growing of sugar-cane must be carried on there ; and there can be only one question for us to address ourselves to, apart from all party considerations, and that is - What is the best course to pursue in order to carry out the undoubted wishes of the people ? Whatever the considerations involved, the kanaka must go from the continent. In pursuance of that clearly expressed mandate of the people, this Bill is being introduced, and is being cordially supported by all parties in the House. We have been told that if it passes, its provisions will have a disastrous effect upon Queensland, and will involve almost the bankruptcy of that huge State ; but I cannot help thinking that such talk is very largely twaddle. Those who expressed themselves in regard to the extremely disastrous effects which the measure will have must know that they are not voicing the clear, temperate opinions of reasonable men. How can the results be considered likely to be so disastrous to Queensland when we compare the sugar industry there with some of her other primary industries 1 The value of the sugar produced in Queensland is £ 1,000, 000 a year, whereas her gold is worth three and a half times as much, and the produce of her pastoral industry six or seven times as much. To say that Queensland will reel and stagger if legislation of this kind is passed, is to speak as the result of oblique vision regarding the actual condition of things. That there may be temporary disarrangements to a slight extent may very well be conceded, because we cannot interfere with an industry like this without temporary displacement and disadvantage, but it will be only temporary, and whatever the disarrangement, we must carry out the will of the people of the continent. It is but natural, in considering a matter involving such large material interests, that there should

be a multitude of counsellors. It has been written that " In the multitude of counsellors there is safety," and we have no Jack of counsellors upon this question. They tell us in tones of warning, and almost of menace, that if we proceed to execute the legislation now proposed, serious consequences will result to Queensland, and serious action must be taken by the rulers of that State. On the other hand, we are told by men who are thoroughly conversant with the industry, that nothing very serious will result either to Queensland or to the industry affected. In this connexion I should like to refer to some of the statements of Dr. Maxwell, who is supposed to be the expert upon the question for the whole Continent. I understand that he has been engaged by the Queensland Government at a huge salary to confine his attention to the sugar industry in that State. Everything bearing upon it is referable to him. Mr. Chataway, equally with the Premier of Queensland, had to consult him before taking any steps in connexion with the industry. I cannot help feeling, however, that his report to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth is to some extent inadequate. He omits to say many things which he might fairly be expected to say, and there is a great difference between the tone of that report and the tone of the report presented to his own chief in Queensland. I do not know that there is any need for this difference. We have been told that in Queensland he holds an absolutely independent position so far as the Government are concerned, and that while his tenure of office lasts he cannot be affected by the movement of party politicians. Consequently he is able to express his views, whether they happen to be satisfactory to the Government or otherwise. In his statement to the Premier of Queensland, however, he says - I consider it certain that cane will not be grown solely by white labour north of Mackay to keep the mills in existence. In a more formal and reserved sense, this view is expressed in my statement made to the federal Premier.

I take it that when the Prime Minister asked Dr. Maxwell for a report, he did not ask him for a suppressed, reserved, and formal opinion. He asked for a frank expression of his views upon the whole question. Therefore, the statement of Dr. Maxwell is disappointing, and detracts largely from the value of his report. We might have expected that Dr. Maxwell, in furnishing data on which we could form an opinion, would have shown us how the sugar growers are distributed over the three main sugar producing districts of Queensland, but, instead of doing so, he lumps them all together. He tells us that the sugar industry north of Mackay will assuredly - if not instantly, yet certainly - cease ; but he does not tell us how many growers there are north of Mackay, which the destruction of the industry there would affect. He demonstrates in almost mathematical language that, so far as the southern portion of Queensland is concerned, white labour is more valuable than black labour. He says that at Bundaberg white labour is cheaper and superior to black labour, and that even at Mackay there is a slight advantage in favour of the white man. It is only when you get north to Cairns, he says, that the white man is inferior to the black man. Why, therefore, in speaking of the probably fatal effect of this legislation upon the sugar producing interests of Queensland, does not

Dr. Maxwell

tell us of the number of sugar planters north of Mackay who will be placed at a disadvantage, instead of speaking generally as to the possible effects upon the 2,601 sugar - cane growers in Queensland? All this is misleading, and we had a right to expect

Dr. Maxwell

to tell us how many of these men north of Mackay would be affected. Then he might have told us the difference between the economic value of the labour of the black man and that of the white man, but he leaves us to figure this out for ourselves. He supplies us with certain data, it is true, but we do not know whether, in working it out for ourselves, there may not be factors that we are overlooking, and we had a right to expect that an expert of high order, such as

Dr. Maxwell,

would have made up this sum for us. If he had done this he would have helped us greatly in the consideration of the matter. Whilst

Dr. Maxwell

undoubtedly supplies much valuable information, there are certain aspects of his report which I think are rather unsatisfactory. The question we have to consider in discussing this Bill is this - Can the white man do the work of producing sugar in Queensland ? This question is, however, important and supreme only when we are considering the matter in the abstract. After all, the people of Australia have settled that

question as far as this Legislature is concerned, because they have said that, whether the white man can do the work or not, the black man is no longer to be allowed to do it. That is the will of the people, as expressed unmistakably at the recent elections. Now we are told, by gentlemen who have been up to Queensland to specially investigate this traffic, that the white man can do this work. I think that is made very clear in the series of admirable articles which appeared in the Melbourne

Herald,

written by a special commissioner. He reports that on the whole, with the exception of trashing cane, the white man can do all the work, and that the trashing of cane is not absolutely necessary in the dry districts. I should like also on this occasion to refer to some statements made by a gentleman who has been sent down here post-haste to inform this Parliament as to the true facts of the case, and try to influence our decision in favour of the retention of black labour. This gentleman, who is a member of the Queensland Parliament, has given a description of the conditions under which the sugar industry is carried on. Now, what is the traffic which we are supposed to have under our especial care, and with reference to which we are asked to exercise the utmost prevision, so that we may do no damage to it? We get some valuable side-lights as to the nature of it and the kind of industry that we are asked to preserve, from some of those gentlemen who are advocating the continuance of it. Take, for instance, a statement like this. Speaking of the obstinate members of this House,

Mr. Paget

says -

They cannot, or will not, be made to understand that no amount of money, no manipulation of a Tariff, will alter the climatic conditions of a country. White men cannot be got for any length of time to do work for which they are physically unsuited. And it is something to be thankful for, that we have not yet reached that stage in the industrial development of Australia when civilized beings are compelled from economic considerations to endure the life and soul destroying drudgery of the tropical cane-fields.

Mr. Paget

describes this life in the tropics as one of soul-destroying drudgery, and then he goes on to say that it is only the drudgery that the kanakas are permitted to do. The same gentleman gives us a glowing account of the happiness of the kanaka who is engaged in this drudgery. He says that the kanakas have so much money in the bank, and then he goes on -

Slavery that permits of aborigines being clothed and fed, of being Christianized and civilized by missionary effort, and, above all, of accumulating a bank balance, would appear to be limited indeed. I think there is a slight inconsistency here which Mr. Paget ought to explain. How can a work be life and soul destroying drudgery and then open up realms and vistas of happiness as far as the kanaka is concerned? In the first place, can white men do this work? Mr. Paget says they cannot. I say that no effort has ever been made to get white men to do this work at wages such as men ought to receive for working in a climate like that. That is the whole gist of the matter - it is a question of economics, and the test has never been made as to whether white men will work in Northern Queensland at decent wages such as are sufficient to compensate them for their labour under such trying conditions. When men go to such places as Western Australia, where in the early days the conditions of life were particularly unfavorable and such as would probably correspond with the drudgery that is spoken of by Mr. Paget - when these men went away and endured the hardships and discomforts attaching to life in Western Australia, they had wages given them which were out of all proportion to what they had been previously receiving. That is to say, that those who employed them had to pay such wages as would attract them from the more comfortable conditions of life in the eastern colonies, and the rule was to go from their wages here to better wages, under harder conditions, in Western Australia. In Queensland, however, the further north men go in search of work, and the more difficult and uncomfortable the conditions are, the less they receive for their labour; and I shall show how very shockingly the wages in the north of Queensland compare with the rates paid in the southern colonies. In Queensland there seems to be a universal law which enacts that the greater the drudgery and the more uninviting the conditions under which it has to be done, the less shall be paid for it. Dr. Maxwell speaks of the kanakas being clothed and fed at a cost of about 25s. per year - I wonder how we should like to be clothed at that rate - but Mr. Paget says that they are quite happy. As to the feeding of these kanakas I have not very much to say, but Dr. Maxwell makes it clear that the greatest possible economy is exercised in the feeding of the kanakas,

and that they do not get much more than is absolutely necessary to keep them in health and in working form. Then as to the kanakas being Christianized and civilized by missionary effort, I should much prefer to take the statements of those men who have lived in the islands and have worked amongst the islanders for years trying to Christianize them than any statement made in an off-hand way to a newspaper interviewer. Against Mr. Paget's statement, we have the testimony of the Rev. J. D. Paton, the veteran missionary, who wrote to the Argus recently, pointing out what he considered to be the absolute duty of this Parliament, namely, to put an end - and an instant end if possible - to a traffic which he describes as worse than slavery. He says it is a crying shame upon our civilization and an injury to the kanaka himself. He writes as follows : -

In a letter just received from Tanna, from a missionary in the New Hebrides, he says, " Labour schooners have been doing their deadly work lately, and many of our lads and young men have gone away in them, in too many cases to their graves. The mortality in Queensland is simply appalling."

They say that the white man cannot do the work in North Queensland, but, according to the best testimony we have, the kanakas die off like rats there. Mr. Paton goes on to say -

But the evil does not end there. The fresh young life is sucked out of the islands by these labour vessels. Family supports are taken away and families rapidly decay. I know villages which have gone to pieces through this cause. Men talk glibly about the wearing of clothing by the natives depopulating the islands. It is no such thing, for the heathen are dying out faster than the Christians. In the best interests of humanity, in common with all who know of the cruel wrongs, oppression, fearful mortality among the kanakas in Queensland, and the blood-stained character of this kanaka labour traffic all along its history, though only now and again brought to light in law courts, as in the cases of the "Hopeful" and "Wm. Manson," and many others trading in the persons of boys and girls, and of men and women, we rejoice, and praise God that by the legislators of our Australian Commonwealth it is likely now gradually to be suppressed, and this dark stain on Australia's honour blotted out for ever. No doubt very many of them will be laid in their graves like dogs in Queensland before the expiration of the proposed five years, and no doubt the collectors, employers, and many blinded by the gam of this shocking traffic, will, as in the past, minimize and cloak its evils, and praise its blessings to the kanakas, and the ruin to Queensland's great sugar industry by its suppression, to get its continuance extended. To the kanakas it has been, and is now, an unmitigated evil - taking away wives from husbands and husbands from wives, children from parents and parents from children, all they can get hold of, and so breaking up all family relations on the islands, and causing much suffering and want to those dependents who remain.

According to the Reverend Mr. Paton we are depopulating the islands and bringing about the worst possible results in family and domestic relations. This is the statement of a missionary who was engaged in this work. He describes the attempts to Christianize and civilize them by missionary effort.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Is that the Rev. J. G. Paton 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes.

Sir Malcolm MCEACHARN

- I have very, little confidence in him.

Mr Wilkinson

- Every word of what he says is true.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I shan leave the honorable member for Melbourne to deal with him. I am bound to accept his statements in good faith. At any rate he has a reputation throughout Australia as a zealous, enterprising missionary, who has devoted his life to his work.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- He is a bit of a crank on this particular subject.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is a very singular thing that nearly every missionary who has been to the islands is a similar crank. Let the honorable member for Melbourne find missionaries who have been to the islands and who are in favour of a continuance of this traffic. That is the best way in which he can answer the statements of this

gentleman. It is not quite fair for the honorable member to say that this gentleman is a crank unless he can prove his statements. Now, as to Mr. Philp himself. That he is disappointed goes without saying. I always knew that he would be. One of the peculiar features of the last election was that the right honorable and learned gentleman at the head of the Government received the support of two sections in Queensland over this very question of a "white Australia." He had the labour section heartily supporting him, and Mr. Philp, who represented the kanaka sugar growers, also supported him, because he believed that the Prime Minister was going to do justice to the planters. During my election campaign I pointed out that disappointment was sure to come to one or the other party in Queensland, and that the Prime Minister could not satisfy both parties in that State as he appeared desirous of doing. I am glad that the disappointment is on the side that it is. I am glad that the Prime Minister has determined to put an end to this traffic. Mr. Philp must make the best of his disappointment so far as we are concerned. He threw in his lot with the Prime Minister, and ought not now to complain of what the latter is doing. Mr. Philp sets up a very strange theory in his letter to the Prime Minister.

Mr Fisher

- Has the Prime Minister received that letter yet?

Mr Barton

- No.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I hope that when it turns up the Prime Minister will promptly pay the deficient postage upon it, if that is found to be the cause of delay. Mr. Philp sets up a very strange doctrine. I have yet to learn that the Federal Government is under any obligation to consult with the State Governments as to what shall be done regarding a purely federal function. When Mr. Philp voted for Mr. Barton at the recent election, he voted to give him absolute control over the kanaka traffic of Queensland, and to do what he chose to secure its obliteration. He, therefore, has no standing when he makes a claim for consultation regarding the abolition of this kanaka traffic.

Mr Barton

- I venture to say that I said nothing in Queensland to warrant the remark that my action justifies surprise.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I cannot say what the Prime Minister said. He certainly managed to get the support of both sections during the campaign.

Mr Barton

- I do not think that was quite so.

Mr Watson

- The two leaders were upon a par in Brisbane.

Mr Barton

- I think the "white Australia" men were duly opposed in Queensland,

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- In my judgment all the pother which has been worked up in Queensland regarding this legislation conclusively proves that, underneath all the talk as to the temporary character of the employment of the kanakas, there has been a sincere belief that the planters were going to keep this coloured labour for all time. That is what all the trouble at the present moment really means. The planters are disappointed now that they see a prospect of this labour going away from them. I cannot help thinking that the strenuousness with which they are fighting for its retention merely shows that they had no idea that it would be absolutely abolished.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- Federation would not have been assented to in Queensland but for that belief.

Mr Barton

- I told them very plainly that it would be swept away.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I wish now to come to the question of whether the white man can perform the work of producing sugar in Queensland. After all it is a very serious question, and it rests upon us to show that white labour can do the work. We can only prove this by the citation of authorities who are supposed to know all about the

conditions, and who have specially investigated them. I turn again to the report of the special commissioner who was sent up to Queensland to investigate this question. He says that the trashing need not be done in the northern districts of Queensland. He quotes a Cairns grower as showing that white men can do trashing if need be. He j says that he has seen girls doing it ! without any very serious results, and points out that if trashing must be done in North Queensland it has only to be done in the cool months of the year - during April, May, and June - and that therefore the white men can do it without any very serious trouble. He sums up the position in this way-

No man can truthfully say that white men cannot do the work ; but it is hardly fair to bring the white man down to the level of Chinamen and Hindoos. Whites must be paid a reasonable rate, a rate that will bring them to the work, and they must receive a guarantee such as is given to the Chinamen and Hindoos that they will get the season's work.

That is the statement of a Cairns planter, Thomas Mackay, upon the question of whether a white man can do the work. The same gentleman proceeds to produce a balance sheet. He goes into particulars and brings out a net profit of £229 10s. for farming 50 acres of sugar cane in Queensland by white labour. If a person can make that amount from 50 acres of cane which is tended and matured by white labour, I do not think it can be argued that the introduction of white labour for the fields generally is likely to smash up the industry in the ruthless way we have been led to believe. As to the moral phase of this question, there is another testimony which I should like to commend to the honorable member for Melbourne. It is from the pen of the Rev. William Gray, an old missionary in the islands. He says : -

There are four mission societies carrying on work in the recruiting grounds of the Queensland kanaka labour traffic, and the missionaries throughout, almost to a man, are agreed that the supply of kanaka labour under the present regulations is not compatible with British honor and Christian sentiment. I am personally acquainted with the captains of the traffic, the Government agents and the recruiters. I have seen the work before the days of the Hopeful ease, and since. It was thought that the traffic had been shorn of its flagrant abuses, until the William Manson trial shattered that belief. And in spite of this " eye-opener," I willingly admit that a better class of men are now in the traffic ; but the more I know of natives, the more I know of "good men" in the traffic, the more I know what the kanaka labour traffic was and is, the more I am convinced that this traffic must be at heart what it always was, and still is - a cruel, unjust, un-Christlike, demoralising traffic, in human flesh.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- What is the date of that?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The date is not given.

Mr McDonald

- It is taken from a pamphlet which was issued in 1895.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- The letter may be of a back date.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The extract is from a letter of recent date. Its author speaks of the better conditions under which traffic is now conducted. But he describes the traffic even under those better conditions as being
A cruel, unjust, un-Christlike, demoralizing, traffic in human flesh.

I quote now from the Sugar Journal and Tropical Cultivator. Mr. Givens, who, I am informed, is a reliable witness, and whose statements may be taken as truthful, in discussing this matter in the Queensland Parliament, pointed out some of the causes which hampered the growing of sugar by white labour in the north of that State. He speaks of the exorbitant price which has to be paid for money with which to farm sugar lands. The interest paid in some cases is as high as from 8 to 12 per cent. When people have to pay such a high rate of interest, it is a drag upon the industry, and tends to crush it more than anything else could do. Speaking of the other causes which oppress this traffic, that gentleman says : -

It will hardly be credited that the sugar grower gets only 55 1/2 per cent. of the total market value of the sugar, and that, for the mere process of refining it and putting it on the market, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company grab 44 1/2 per cent.

That may enlighten us further as to what is the real trouble in regard to the sugar industry. It would seem,

from a statement of the witness, that one cause is that the sugar growers are largely in the hands of the banks, who command high prices for their money. In the next place, there are trade conditions of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, which exacts tribute to the extent of 44 1/2 per cent. of the total value of the product for the process of refining. I do not know whether these statements are correct, but I say again, that from all I can find out, the gentleman who makes them is a trustworthy witness. If what he says is correct, we get at once an insight into some of the trouble which oppresses the sugar growers. . But I come back to the question - is this an industry in itself which is worth paying exorbitantly for ? That is the question we ought to face, and we ought not to be mealy-mouthed about facing it in its nakedness. Is it an industry which on the face of it we ought to take special precautions to maintain, even though its maintenance should involve a great deal of sacrifice on the part of Australia ? I admit that an industry in which £7,000,000 is invested is an important industry ; but there are other points of view to be considered as well as the point of view of the capital invested. We ought to investigate the conditions obtaining in the industry as they relate to the social ideals of the people, and to the decency and comfort of the homes of the persons engaged in producing the sugar. That is a point of view as much entitled to consideration as the point of view of the man who has millions invested in the industry; and I invite the attention of the House to that view for a moment. What are the conditions as to wages and labour in this industry? Here, again, I quote Dr. Maxwell, who tells us that the whites earn £1 10s. 11d. per week, and the kanakas 14s. 11 1/2d. ; that is to say the cost of the kanaka is 14s. 11 1/2d. per week. According to Dr. Maxwell, I find that the mill hands - if we exclude engineers, who are professional men, and the sugar boilers and mechanics - earn an average wage of £1 13s. 5 1/2d. per week.

Mr McDonald

- That is, including rations.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes ; that is the total payment in each case. We are told that one strong reason why the labour traffic in kanakas must be maintained is that work may be given to the whites of Queensland. Does it come to this : That we must impose a duty of £5 per ton in the first place, and give the growers the privilege of importing cheap black labour in the second place, in order to maintain an industry for white men, which gives them in the one case 5s. 2d. per day, and, in other cases, 5s. 6 1/2d. per day? What would be said of a man in these southern latitudes who kicked up all this pother, and asked Parliament to specially interfere to protect him in order that he might pay wages as low as those I have mentioned ? The reason men will not go north is that there is nothing to attract them. The further north we go the more devastating - perhaps that is not the correct word, but it will do - the labour is, and the more severe and soul and-body destroying it is, according to Mr. Paget, the less is paid for it. It is a total reversal of the rule of trade in relation to every other industry. The real secret of the refusal of white men to go north is that there is not a living wage sufficient to attract them there to do the work required. The Minister for Trade and Customs last night, in unfolding his Tariff proposals, said that the sugar industry was one natural to the soil and climate of our country. If this natural industry is to be protected up to the hilt to the extent of £5 per ton, and if all we can get out of it for the working man, is a wage of 5s. 2d. per day, I say that that is a glorious example of the benefits of a protective policy. We are told that we must support the kanaka traffic in order that whites may have work at, roughly, 5s. per day. That is the traffic we are going to continue to surround with a protective duty equal to £5 per ton. I have been through these refining mills myself, and I must admit, as one honorable member pointed out the other night, that since that visit of investigation I have not had much sympathy with sugar either for eating or for any other purpose. I venture to say that it is about the only industry on this continent . where we can see men working under such conditions. When it comes to men having to work without a stitch of clothing on, because of the atmosphere in which they are engaged, for an average wage of 5s. 6 1/2d. per day, it would not appear to be an industry so vital to the well-being of Australia as is sometimes sought to be made out. Such an industry is a black man's industry.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- That is what we say.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Exactly, but the difference between the honorable member for Melbourne and myself is that I prefer to

let the black man do the work in his own country, rather than in a white man's country. Of course I know how all the difficulty has arisen. We have allowed this traffic to grow up, and these large vested interests to become established. But I repeat that if these are the total results of a protective duty on sugar, they present a fine glowing argument in favour of the Ministerial policy. In this connexion I should like to say a word regarding the proposals of the Government as to the Tweed farmers. It is well known, for instance, that in Queensland the cane growing areas are more prolific in results than are similar areas in New South Wales. That is to say, the yield per acre in Queensland is over 16s. more than it is on the New South Wales rivers. And the Queensland growers have the advantage of £2 per ton in the way of Tariff, and have had that advantage for some years past. The Queensland growers have had a very decided advantage over the white sugar-growers on the Tweed River. Yet, notwithstanding that the yield of the Tweed is 16s. per area less than the yield in Queensland, and that the Tweed growers have enjoyed £2 per ton less duty, the wages earned on the Tweed, according to Dr. Maxwell, have been 7s. per day. How can it be argued, therefore, that if we make it incumbent on the producers in Queensland to employ white labour their industry is necessarily going to fall to the ground? There is the fact that while these wages men are getting 5s. a day for working in a broiling sun, and under the very worst possible conditions, some of the companies are paying 10 per cent, and upwards on the capital invested. I suggest without the slightest qualm of conscience that there is a margin, if a margin be required, in dealing with this question of alien labour versus white labour. Until we see that some of these companies have failed in their efforts to produce sugar with white labour, we need not be so very squeamish in our treatment of the kanaka question. The Government are proposing a rebate on white-grown sugar, so as to . compensate for the difference in their judgment between the value of the labour of black and white men, and in order, as the Government put it, to assist in the banishment of black labour from the continent. I think these were the words used by the Minister for Trade and Customs last night. I understand that much of the black labour is indentured to growers in Queensland and that they are bound to employ the kanakas until the period of the contract has expired ; this, in many cases, extends over at least the next three years. If that be so, it occurs to me that, instead of imposing a rebate, it would be better for the Government to state plainly in the Bill that the growers must get rid of black labour. That would be better than to give them a time limit -with the one hand, and to take it away on the other hand, in the shape of a rebate of the kind proposed. The rebate is about equivalent, I understand, to the difference between black and white labour as carried on in Queensland. The more straightforward course, instead of bothering about a rebate at all, would be for the Government to say that, in obedience to the wish and mandate of the people of the continent, black labour shall go. This is a species of legislation I cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, appreciate, and I do not think that the sugar planter in Queensland will appreciate the treatment. The planter would prefer the straight-out method of telling him what we mean, rather than covering up the intention in the way we are doing in this proposal. It would be far better to tell him that kanaka labour must cease at once than to tell him it may continue for three years, and then fine him as much during the three years as the advantage which he derives from the black labour.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The choice remains with the planter.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course; but this is supposed to be a concession, so that dire results may not come to the planter and his industry. That is the proposal made by the right honorable gentleman all through the last election, and all through the life of this Parliament; and yet we find him giving concessions in the Bill, and taking those concessions away in the form of rebate. We are told by Dr. Maxwell that the difference in labour value varies in accordance with the climate and district. For instance, the two classes of labour are about equal in Mackay, and the white man is more valuable than the black man in and around Bundaberg. But supposing there is this difference between black and white labour throughout the whole of the industry, the figures work out, so far as I have been able to gather, at about £420,000. That is to say, that by the substitution of white for black men in the sugar industry in the Northern districts of Queensland, there will be a difference of £420,000 in the cost of labour. On a capital value of £7,000,000, which the Prime Minister mentioned as the amount invested in the industry, that would be equal to about 6 per cent.

Mr Barton

- I said the figures showed the capital invested in the industry to be about £6,000,000, although it was

generally spoken of as £7,000,000.

Sir Malcolm Mceacharn

- It is nearer £7,000,000.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Then it would be about 6 per cent, on the total capital invested in the industry. There will be no trouble about this matter, according to Dr. Maxwell, except north of Mackay, and it is a thousand pities that that expert has not given us the number of growers carrying on operations north of that district. If he had done so, we should have known what was really at issue so far as the £ s. d. aspect of the question is concerned.

Mr McDonald

- The bulk of the sugar comes from below Mackay.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The point I want to make is that, even from the worst view of the case, the displacement of black labour by white in the sugar-growing industry will mean only a consideration represented by 6 per cent. on the total capital invested. Dr. Maxwell makes it clear in his report that the displacement can only affect sugar growers north of Mackay, and, therefore, only a modicum of the growers of Queensland. I cannot bring myself to believe that with all the resources of science and our civilization an adjustment cannot be made without any serious consequences to the State of Queensland. I think the position was well put by the honorable member for South Sydney when he said that it was simply a matter of manure, mechanism and a market. I cannot believe that the resources of science as applied to sugar production, are so meagre that we cannot adjust this difference without difficulty. In dealing with this matter we have to consider not only Queensland, but the kanaka himself. One would imagine from the statements made about him by his advocates that he is brought to Australia to lead a happy life in the elysium of North Queensland. We have the testimony of many men to the contrary. They show that the result of bringing the kanaka into contact with the white man is detrimental to himself, and disastrous to his nationality and his home. On the moral aspect of this question we have gentlemen rising up to tell us that we have a duty to perform to the kanakas in North Queensland, and that the sooner we realize it the better it will be. They tell us that if for no other consideration than the moral welfare of the kanaka, we ought not to prevent him from coming here, and that his importation to Australia must result to his infinite advantage. As to that, I should like to point out one fact, which seems to speak eloquently upon the moral aspect of this question. Honorable members have heard what the Rev. Mr. Paton, and the Rev. Mr. Grey, have to say on the moral aspect of this traffic. Let us take one fact alone, which seems to me to speak volumes. In the first place, the conditions under which kanakas are brought here are such as do not lend themselves to the cultivation of the best morality, as applied to their home and domestic life. We have been told by some honorable members from Queensland that the kanakas are an absolute menace and peril to some of the villages in North Queensland where they live. With over 8,000 kanakas employed on the sugar plantations up north, there are less than 500 females of the same race, so that evidently they are not mated in the sense that white people are supposed to be. Knowing their condition as we do, we need not be surprised at the tales of rapine, assault, and plunder that we hear of now and again. The very conditions of their existence predispose them to these things, apart altogether from their natural characteristics. How can it be a means of teaching or aiding their moral developments, and cultivating their higher and better nature, to bring them to a foreign country - as this is to them - under such circumstances as I have just indicated. We see the result upon their family life : that it breaks up their families, destroys their homes, and depopulates their villages. Whether it is right for us to encourage the certain depopulation of these islands of the Pacific, for the purpose of carrying on this industry, is a matter for very grave and serious consideration. Not only do we not improve their moral conditions by bringing them here to live, but we constitute them a menace to our wages rates and our social life. If we want to do something in the way of improving the morals of the kanaka, in the way of uplifting his life and engrafting upon him some of our civilizing influences, we have a much better chance of doing it in his own home than we possess when we bring him here. It is far better to go and Christianize him in his own islands than to bring him here, expose him to new temptations, and attempt to do it under the conditions in which he lives in Queensland. If we

want to improve his moral development we shall not do it in the best way by importing him to Queensland. We can do it far better - as the work has been done for years past - by the efforts of those self-denying men who are willing to live with the kanaka in his own home, than by importing him to Australia and subjecting him to the further temptations, which undoubtedly exist in the circumstances under which he lives in Northern Queensland. Environment has everything to do with the formation of character, and environment such as that which surrounds the kanaka in Northern Queensland tends, not to his moral development, but rather to his moral degradation. There are weird stories told in the reports of the missionaries relative to the moral effects of the kanaka's contact with white men. To our shame be it said that in some cases his contact with white people in Queensland has led to the complete decimation of villages when he has returned home, taking with him the diseases which are common to white people in this country. All the missionaries who have lived with him in his own home say that the conditions under which the kanaka lives here expose him to moral temptations, and cannot tend to his moral enlightenment and progress. Every consideration, both economic and moral, should induce us to take the action contemplated by the Government, to prohibit the introduction of kanakas. We should keep them in their own homes, where they can enjoy their natural environment, and develop their own character, surrounded by their own people. That is the ideal we should aim at. We should do away once and for all with the menace which exists in North Queensland, no matter what the consequences may be to the sugar industry. I sincerely hope they will not be serious. I want to see no rough and rude displacement of the industrial conditions of Queensland, and I do not believe that this measure will have any such effect. Temporary displacement there may be, but I do not think it will be serious. If the growers only betake themselves to the doing away of this labour, and the giving of employment to their own kith and kin, the result will be anything but deleterious in its effect upon the industry as a whole. I believe that they will in the long run make up the difference, whatever it may be at the present time, between the cost of black and white labour ; and they will have the consciousness, when they do so, that they are doing nothing to repeat the troubles that have occurred in other lands where coloured labour has been tried before. I sincerely hope that, in considering this matter, we shall always keep in mind the fact that we are trustees for the future of this continent for those who have to come after us. We have not only to think of the occupation of to-day, but to remember that we are fixing the conditions under which people will live for generations after we have passed out of existence. We are trustees for them. We are concerned in their environment, and in their social ideal. If we betake ourselves to a serious apprehension of the issues involved in this question, and rid the continent of this black spot, then those coming after us will applaud our action for its resoluteness and courage. But if we have regard only to the passing considerations of the moment ; if we lend an ear to the people who would keep this black labour on our continent as they have done, then - when the trouble is complete, when contamination of our race has taken place, and we have a colony in our midst fructifying and multiplying just as has been the case upon other continents - those who come after us will not commend us for our action, but rather condemn us for our tardy, timorous performance of duty in a great crisis. That crisis exists at the present time. The trouble is in its incipient stage ; we can nip it without disastrous consequences to the trade as a whole, and our duty therefore ought to be clear.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- I acknowledge that the Prime Minister has endeavoured to deal with this measure in a fair spirit, but I do not think that he is fully seised of the true position. If he had visited the sugar-fields of North Queensland he would be able to realize the damage that will be done by the Bill which is now before us, and the unfairness of its operation on those who have very large sums invested in the industry.

Mr Page

- The Prime Minister went to Bundaberg.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- But the right honorable and learned gentleman may have seen very little there. Very often such a trip made by a gentleman in the Prime Minister's position is merely a junketing.

Mr Page

- The same may have occurred in the case of the honorable member for Kooyong.

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Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- It may have happened, and, judging by the newspaper extracts read by the honorable member for Maranoa, I should think his trip was a mere junketing expedition. If he had been in the honorable member's company he would have seen a great deal. I do not agree that this question is on the same footing as that of the restriction of Asiatics. If Asiatics were allowed to remain in Australia they would constitute a danger from which we should have much to fear, but there is no evidence whatever to show that the kanakas exercise in any way a baneful influence among us. If there was any likelihood of the contamination of the white races by permitting them to remain in the industry, the Prime Minister would have brought forward evidence to show it. I approach this question rather from a plain, straightforward point of view, and I consider that the cry for a white Australia, so far as the kanakas are concerned, and the endeavour to introduce into this question of the kanaka the feeling that exists in relation to Asiatics, is wrong altogether. The plain fact is that there has been an attempt to placate the labour vote, both in this and in the election cries that were raised in Queensland on various dates. I am not going to say a word against my honorable friends of the labour party, whom I have learned to respect since coming into personal contact with them. I think they have done a very great deal of good. They have shown their ability in debate, and have done very useful work in committee. I am not going to blame them ; I admire them rather for the straightforward way in which they do their work. There is no mincing matters with them, but I think it would be better for those who debate the provisions of this Bill to acknowledge the fact that its sole object is to placate the labour vote.

Mr B EDWARDS

- No.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- At all events that is my view, although the honorable member may differ from it. Let me say at once that their real aim is to secure a monopoly for white labour, and I should be willing to go with them if I believed it was at all possible to carry on this industry by means of white labour. I should not be one to put forward the kanaka to take work away from our own people, but I believe I shall be able to show that, so far from being able to assist the white laborer, we shall be really working him a considerable amount of harm by doing away with this kanaka traffic. The Prime Minister has stated the capital invested in the sugar industry at £6,000,000 ; but he has omitted to consider the sum of about £600,000 that has been advanced by the Queensland Government. Beyond that the Government have built railways, and tramways, and wharfs, and in other ways have expended a very large sum of money. Therefore the amount of £6,000,000 will have to be very considerably added to in considering the amount of capital invested in connexion with the sugar industry. In this matter, we have not only to consider the planters, but also to bear in mind the position in which we stand towards the state of Queensland, which, I am convinced, would never have joined the Federation had her people been aware of the drastic measure that was to be submitted to this House.

Mr Barton

- I believe they joined us in the hope of abolishing black labour.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- I always like to agree with the Prime Minister, but on this occasion I cannot. I believe that if there were a dissolution such as the honorable member for "Wide Bay has referred to, a vote taken in Queensland would show that the people there consider this Bill to be an extremely unfair one.

Mr Fisher

- The honorable member does not know Queensland.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

-I think I know it as well as the honorable member. However, whether my views be right or wrong, we should be extremely careful how we treat the State which joined Federation after considerable hesitation.

Mr McDonald

- I deny that. It was on the part of the Government that there was a good deal of hesitation.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- We know that the Government lead in these matters.

Mr McDonald

- They led very crookedly in that case.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- That may be in accordance with the honorable member's views, which are not always correct.

Mr Salmon

- The Queensland Government were very loyal to federation.

Mr McDonald

- They were the most disloyal Government in Australia.

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Sir malcolm Mceacharn

- We know that a very strong feeling exists in Queensland, and I am very sorry that the Prime Minister should have made the references he did yesterday to the correspondence with Mr. Philp. I know Mr. Philp personally, and I am sure he would not intentionally put a slight upon any one ; and I hope that there may be such an explanation that the Prime Minister will

Mr Page

- But do the A.U.S.N. Company's steamers carry sugar only ?

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- No ; but the trade in which their steamers are engaged is carried on very largely owing to the volume of traffic created by the sugar industry, and if it were not for that industry there would not be so many steamers running, and the public convenience would not be by any means so well served. At any rate the sugar industry is a very important one, and any injury to it, will seriously affect the amount of wages paid in the directions I have indicated. We should, therefore, pause before we do anything that would be calculated to destroy the industry - as- 1 believe it will be destroyed if we decide to shut out kanaka labour.

Mr Watkins

- But the people of Australia will not live without sugar.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- No, perhaps not ; but if we do not produce it ourselves, we shall have to import it, and the money which is now spent in the form of wages among our own people* will go to foreign countries to a very large extent. At a meeting of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, held some short time ago, statistics were produced to show that something like 20,000 people are occupied directly or indirectly in connexion with the sugar industry, and if we take the same average as was adopted by the Prime Minister, namely, five members per family of those

Mr Barton

- I quoted them down as late as 1892.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- I have not noticed that in the report of the right honorable gentleman's speech, but, at any rate, I propose to quote a few instances from the Queensland Hansard, starting in March, 1892.

Mr Barton

-Is any statement to be found in Dr. Maxwell's report that white men cannot do the work on the sugar plantations 1

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- No, but I can tell the Prime Minister what Dr. Maxwell does say, and he is the Ministry's own expert.

Mr Barton

- No, he is the expert of the Queensland Government, from whom he receives £3,000 a year.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- He was loaned to the Federal Government, and is therefore their expert so far as this report is concerned.

Mr Barton

- Any one who reads between the lines of his report will be convinced of the justice of my action.

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Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- I do not say for one moment but that the Prime Minister has endeavoured to be just; but I do not think that he is sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances of Northern Queensland to enable him to do the people there complete justice. I have here an extract from a newspaper report, which states that Dr. Maxwell presented a lengthy report setting forth his views, and that he asserted that this measure if

passed would paralyse the sugar industry. That statement is as good I think as any contained in Dr. Maxwell's report. In connexion with the debate on the address in reply in the Queensland House in March 1892, Sir Samuel Griffith gave the full text of his manifesto which is interesting reading, showing as it does that whatever his views may have been in 1885, he had had reason to see the damage that had resulted from his action, and had determined to do what only a bold man could do - namely, make a complete change of front, acknowledge that he had done wrong in the past, and do his best to put the industry right for the future. The manifesto reads : -

In common with the rest of the community the Government have of late had their attention directed to the present condition of the sugar industry in Queensland, and especially to the difficulty of obtaining labour for carrying it on. It cannot be too often impressed upon our minds - that we all directly or indirectly depend for our livelihood on the products of land of the colony. Any serious falling off in its productiveness, from whatever cause, is therefore a matter of national concern. It has been urged that a revival of the sugar industry, which is at present in a condition of depression and uncertainty, would result in the restoration of prosperity throughout the colony. But while I am unable to attribute to this cause alone so much of the prevailing depression as some people are disposed to think, many other causes being apparent, not only in Queensland, but throughout the rest of Australia, I have arrived at the conclusion that it is the imperative duty of the Government, and perhaps more especially of myself, to whom rightly or wrongly, much of the blame or credit of the existing state of things has been attributed, to review the present position, and to state plainly what we think is the right policy to be adopted by the country at this time. The urgency of the case induces me to adopt the present somewhat unusual mode of declaring that opinion. He then goes on to say -

Yet every opposition has been offered to the introduction of any additional labour, the opinion has been promulgated that field labour in tropical agriculture is degrading, and the employment of white labour in that industry has been denounced, except at rates of wages which the industry cannot pay. In short, these men will neither engage in the work themselves, nor, so far as they can prevail, allow any one else to do so.

Again he says -

If then the system, now happily inaugurated, of small farmers is to be carried on to a final success, I can see no alternative but to permit for a time at any rate the resumption of Polynesian immigration.

He further says -

Some of us - I for one - have been struggling for years to induce white people to engage in that industry - taking the place of the kanakas whom they desired to displace. I have done my best - and what do we find ? How many amongst the unemployed persons in the community who are clamouring to go upon the land, have been found willing to go to work upon the cane fields at reasonable wages ? Not one of them. In one instance some men did go ; they were said to have been sent by the unions. But there is very strong reason to believe that before these men went on to that plantation it was arranged that they should make the experiment a failure. That was the only experiment that was tried. It is a fact that these men, who are clamouring for access to the land, and to keep out the kanaka, have absolutely refused to do his work.

Mr Deakin

- Will you give the reference for that quotation %

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- It is the Queensland Hansard for 1892, page 10. The same gentleman goes on to state : -

Here we find a great agricultural industry in such a condition that there are only two alternatives - either to let it be carried on with the assistance of coloured labour, or to let it die : and I say that any man in this colony, or any member who will stand up in his place in Parliament, and say he would allow a great industry to die is a traitor to his country.

Mr McDonald

- That is - after he had coalesced with a traitor.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- Sir Thomas

McIlwraith is dead. Let him rest. Continuing, the Chief Secretary said : -

I believe the only chance we have of saving a great industry is to remove the existing prohibition with

regard to Polynesian labour.

Reference has been during the debate upon this Bill to one of our greatest statesmen, who, unfortunately, is not present to see the consummation of that for which he had worked so hard, namely federation. I am alluding, to the late Sir Thomas Mcllwraith,, who was declared by the Prime Minister to have- been at one time in favour of the abolition of the kanaka traffic. The honorable member for Kennedy stated that Sir Thomas employed kanakas upon his. station. I took the trouble to. telegraph to Brisbane in order to find out whether that was the case or not. I find that it was not the case.

Mr FISHER

- He was against the kanaka traffic.

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Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- In 1885 he was against kanakas being employed, except ki the cane-fields, but in the same debate upon the address in reply, he said -

I am not going into the kanaka question, but I will simply state, as a fact, that the introduction of kanaka labour, or the mere promise of it, will give a great impulse to the colony at the present time. If the honorable member for Enoggera-- the present Postmaster-General - studied public opinion, he would see that the labouring classes, who are so much out of employment, are the men who have been converted. The white Australia cry was a splendid one upon which to go to the country, because it was bound to catch the labour vote. Will any one say that the restrictions imposed upon the introduction of kanakas are not such that we could prevent all possibility of racial contamination or trouble? Certainly not. But that is not the -question at all. The general desire is to get the kanakas out of the country. I am absolutely in accord with that desire if white men can do the work which is now being performed by the kanakas. But they cannot. Reference was made by the Prime Minister to leading politicians of Queensland, and in this connexion it would have been better if the right honorable and learned gentleman had gone further, instead of limiting himself to the period when they changed their views. The Honorable B. D.. Morehead was referred to. That gentleman is reported in the same volume of Hansard as follows : -

I say that from one end of the colony' to the other - from the bloated capitalist on the lower side to the working man at the top end - I think the passing of this measure will do good to all. Holding these views, I shall most heartily support the Government in the second reading of this Bill, and do all I can to pass it into law.

Again the Chief Secretary declared that he could not agree to the amendment moved >by Mr. Glassey, which provided that the Act should not come into operation till the 1st July, 1893. To quote Hansard, he :Said : -

He could not agree to the proposed new clause. The object of the Bill was to give immediate relief in a pressing trouble.

I have quoted these gentlemen in order to show that the whole of the facts of the case were not placed before the House, and that those who were supposed to be so much against kanaka labour had to change their minds to prevent the industry being entirely wiped out. In Queensland in 1889, a Royal commission was appointed, which has also been referred to. I have had an opportunity of perusing a very admirable report by the late Mr. W. H. Groom, which is based upon the evidence given before that commission. That gentleman took up an attitude quite different from that of Messrs. Cowley and King, the other commissioners, and stated his reasons for so doing in a plain, straightforward, and admirable manner. His report is worth reading, because it evidences the care which he must have bestowed upon its preparation. But even his expressions of opinion were based rather upon the fact that it was a foregone conclusion that the desire of the country was to do away with coloured labour. He says - The question of coloured labour, so far as legislation is concerned, may be said to be practically closed. The people have already pronounced an authoritative opinion upon it, and the principal public men of the colony have, whenever opportunity has occurred, more or less emphatically declared that they are not disposed to reopen the subject. . . . Consequently, if the question " Is Queensland able to do without the sugar industry, except on the basis of a white population ? " is answered in the affirmative, then undoubtedly a very large portion of the coast districts of the north will not be cultivated, at all events for a long time to come, and from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 of capital which has been vested in the sugar industry will be wiped out of existence, and the whole of the population now dependent upon the sugar

industry for a livelihood will, for a time, and until new industries arise, be thrown out of employment. Can Queensland at the present time afford to do this ?

That is the opinion of our late lamented colleague, who was opposed to the views of the other members of the commission. Talking of the Herbert River district, Messrs. Cowley and King say : -

In this district there was absolute unanimity amongst all the witnesses examined that white men could not cultivate cane. Putting on one side altogether the evidence of planters and employers of labour who have tried to get field work done by white labour ineffectually, we find the small selectors all telling the same tale. At Port Douglas, Mr. Jones says - " Europeans will not cultivate with the hoe, and withdrawal of black labour means shutting up of Northern districts."

The commissioners say : -

In the districts south of Townsville a different condition exists. Here white labourers can work without such great danger to life or health, but they dislike the handwork in the field so much that they will not willingly undertake it, and never continue at it long, and then the question arises whether, though they can do the work, it can be done by them profitably.

The cost of labour has been gone into very fully by the honorable member for Parramatta, and I do not wish to weary the House with statistics, but merely desire to show as far as I can from the evidence which has been taken, that this industry cannot be carried on without the employment of kanaka labour. In the examination of a selector who gave evidence before the commission, page 14, the following passage occurs -

Then is the high cost of labour the only reason why Europeans do not cultivate their land ? No; there is another thing. You cannot get white men here to work. You might get them to work seven months out of the year. When the hot weather comes they cannot stand it, and you cannot get men to work. I myself cannot stand it, and I would not expect a man to do what I could not do myself. When the thermometer stands at 120 degrees a white man cannot work.

Mr Watson

- Where is that ?

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- On the Mosman River.

Mr Page

- Who built the Cairns Railway ?

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- That is a totally different thing. The honorable member must know that.

Mr Page

- It was 120 degrees in the shade there.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- But the honorable member could work anywhere. He has the strength to work anywhere, and the strength also of his opinion.

Mr Watkins

- Railway work is as hard as any

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Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- It is different to working in the fields. The same witness, Johnson, who is a selector, was asked -

What did the white men do ? - In the summer time, nothing at all.

Are they overseers or labourers ? - Labourers. I kept them chiefly fencing and splitting timber.

Then there was a witness who had five years' experience on the Johnston River, and whose evidence was -

From your five years' experience, do you think that white men can work and do a fair day's work here, or can they not ? - Certainly not. I am positive they cannot. If you wish, I will give you one year's experience I had six years ago.

He then refers to the fever and the difficulty he had in getting white labour. Mr. Cowley asked him -

Supposing that the land was cleared of scrub and brought under the plough, can white men work then ? -

No. The weather gets so hot during five months of the year that I consider that it would be dangerous for white men to work in the field.

Then there is a witness named Montgomery, who was a selector with 160 acres of land in the Port Douglas district. His evidence reads -

If the scrub was once cleared and stumped could white men earn a good living in the neighborhood ? - Yes ; if they liked to ?

Is it necessary that they should have the scrub cleared and stumped in the first instance? - Yes ; unless they have plenty of money to help them.

Then they must either have cheap labour or let the land to Chinamen ?- Yes ; unless they have money to aid them to pay for white labour. We could not have done it ourselves without leasing it to the Chinamen, and no one else would take it.

The evidence right through is almost all to the same effect. We have Thomas Mackay, who, I believe, was quoted to-night, and whom somebody called " a right good man." At any rate this is his evidence in Cairns -

Do you find the climate affect the health of yourself and other Europeans at all ? - I have been in Northern Queensland for seventeen years, and nine years in Cairns. The climate is good, but I cannot do the same amount of work that I could in the South, and the men I employ cannot. Even the horses cannot do the same amount of work.

Then we have a hospital attendant who perhaps does not know much about the condition of labourers, except that he had many sick men through his hands. His evidence was -

Did you do any work yourself when you were with them ? - No.

Do you think you could have done it ? - I could have done it I dare say.

What work were they doing? - Weeding and trashing.

Do you think that is work that white men could do ? - No ; not weeding.

Do you think a white man could not do that? - No."

Have you ever seen any white men doing work in the cane fields ? - No ; not the trashing.

Have you seen them weeding ? - No : I have not.

Then we have the evidence of a ganger -

Have you seen any Europeans engaged in field work? - No ; except in driving horses and ploughing.

They do not work in the cane.

Would you, as a ganger, like to do the same kind of work as the kanakas? - No; not on any account.

Why ? - Because it is too hot.

But supposing you were paid 30s. a week and your board for doing it? - I would do some part of it, but not the whole of the work that they do.

How long have you been living in the Northern districts ? - Seven years.

Then the manager of a sugar plantation, who evidently had some contracts, was examined as follows : -

From your experience do you think that the climate of this district is more trying to white men than that of Maryborough ? - Very considerably.

How so ? - I may mention that I am Chairman of the Divisional Board and a case came before me which is a case in point. About a month ago a large contractor doing work for the board wrote me a letter, not asking for extension of time, or to stop, but saying that he had knocked off work on all of his contracts as the men could not go on on account of the excessive heat. If you like I will have the letter put before you.

We would like to know from the contractor whether he knocked off on his own account or whether in consequence of the men refusing to work on account of the heat ? - On account of the men.

Will you read the letter ?- Yes, it is as follows : -

December 16, 1888. To the Chairman of the Johnstone Divisional Board.

Dear Sir, -

I have to stop all board contracts on hand at present as none of my men can stand the heat. I will start when the weather gets a little cooler. Trusting you will not be strict on appointed time. -I have, &c., Dan Behon.

There are numerous other witnesses who all speak to the same effect, and show to my mind that even if evidence were taken at the present time it would be conclusively shown that it would be impossible to carry on the industry with white labour. Dr. Maxwell, in addition to the telegram he sent down just lately, said : -

These conditions rendering continuous labour by the white man, even in the kinds of work reserved to him

by the Polynesian Labourers Act, a great physical strain and difficulty ; while for the classes of work, such as trashing and cutting cane, which are done by the lower types of labour, the white man is practically unfit.

He went on to give reasons why white men cannot work there, and said : -

The situation remains, however, that the personal estate of the islander upon the plantations and cane farms is strongly satisfactory, in general,

That will show that the honorable member for Parramatta was not quite correct in the statement he quoted from Mr. Paton, that the kanakas go to the islands to die. As a matter of fact, kanakas very often ask to be taken to Queensland, knowing that they get medical attendance there. The death-rate was referred to by the honorable member for Parramatta, and I have here statistics up to the 26th September of this year. These figures show that the death rate for the five years, from 1891 to 1895, was 42.73 per 1,000, and that in the last five years the death-rate has been 30.08.

Mr Mauger

- What is the death-rate on the islands?

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- On the islands the death-rate is often so great that the population of whole islands are wiped out. They enjoy much better health on the cane-fields, where the death rate is very low.

Mr Mauger

- That is not what the Rev. Mr. Grey says. He says it is 12 per cent.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- The above statement is prepared from the Queensland immigration agents' Pacific Islands Immigration Reports. The physique of the kanakas is not such as to enable them, wherever they live, to show the same death rate as Europeans.

Mr Watson

- And yet they are taken to a dangerous climate.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- It is a dangerous climate to work in, but not dangerous to health. The white man cannot do the work, whereas kanakas can. Honorable members who have seen the kanakas in the cane-fields must have observed that the majority of them are strong able-bodied men. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports, who has interjected more than once, paid a short visit to Queensland, and seems to have come back a perfect authority. He reminds me of somebody who once induced me to read a book of 250 pages entitled A Peep into Russia. It was an extremely interesting book, but I learnt that the writer had gone three miles across the border of Russia, and not having a passport, had been turned back ; but, of course, he had a lively imagination.

Mr Fisher

- Before the honorable member leaves the statistics, has he got the death rate of the white people?

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- I have not; but I should say it is somewhere about 23 or 24 per 1,000.

Mr Fisher

- For men, women, and children it is about 10. Queensland has the best climate in Australia.

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Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- I now want to refer to the distribution of the money which is produced from the sugar growing industry. The crop of sugar at present is about 150,000 tons, which at the 1900 price of £10 15s. per ton, including freight to the refinery, would realize £1,612,500. Out of that total, aliens receive one-eighth, or £200,000, and, therefore, white labour must receive seven-eighths. These figures are very important, as showing that the amount which goes to the kanakas is very small compared to the great good that is done by the distribution of the rest amongst the white labourers.

Mr McDonald

- That is £262 10s. per head. I worked it out this afternoon.

Sir malcolm mceacharn

-I have given the figures which have been prepared. Those who look at Dr. Maxwell's report will see that the kanakas are paid more than similar workers in France, Germany, and Russia, taking only the wages

paid ; and also that that white labour is paid much more in Queensland than in any other place where sugar is produced. I contend that I have proved, as far as any one can prove, from the evidence of the Royal commission, that it is utterly impossible in Mackay, and north of Mackay, to carry on this industry without kanaka labour. I think I have shown that the industry must die - these are the words of Sir Samuel Griffith - unless there is kanaka labour, and that something like £1,000,000 of money will cease to be distributed amongst white labourers. If the industry be destroyed a great deal of labour will be thrown on other markets. Our commerce will certainly be lessened, and a great injustice will be done to a State with which, I am sure, we all desire to be on perfectly friendly terms. I am convinced that if the reverse of what I have stated had been the case the Prime Minister would have laid before us some facts to show that white labour can carry this industry on. I do not know whether he is aware that the Queensland Government advanced a considerable sum of money for the establishment of the Eton Race-course Mills. The contract contained a stipulation that only cane grown by white labour should be crushed by the mills. They were forced, however, to alter those regulations, and to allow kanaka grown cane to be sent there. That shows clearly that even the Queensland Government have failed to bring about that which honorable members desire, and which I am as anxious as any one to secure, if it is possible to obtain it without entirely destroying the industry. The Prime Minister referred to the possibility of some machinery for cane-cutting being invented. That consideration must have been put forward, because he feared that, unless something in that direction did occur, there would be more than a prospect of damage being done to the industry by the passing of this Bill into law. Why did not the Prime Minister, with this idea in his mind, propose some further relief for the industry until such time as machinery is invented which will enable the grower to carry on without black labour ?

Mr Higgins

- It will never be invented until we put a stop to black labour.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- I am told there is a machine now being patented which will do the work. I feel as strongly as any one that the kanakas should be kept in their own islands if they are going to keep white men out of employment. We all know, however, that the sugar mills are not doing well ; the plantations are struggling, and are heavily in debt to the financial institutions. The planters are endeavouring to rid themselves of that debt, and why should we, immediately upon the creation of the Commonwealth, which it was thought was going to do so much good for all the States, pounce down upon one State and say - " You are to have this labour taken from you, the only labour by which you can support the sugar industry " ? It is manifestly unfair to bring in a Bill allowing such a short term within which the employment of coloured labour must cease. At least ten years should be allowed ; at the end of that time the industry could cease entirely, if necessary. We should have no concern with what happened after that. We should be able to say we had done what was fair; that on a previous occasion a request was made for more time, and that ten years was granted. It may be said that at the end of the seven years the planters would be urging, for a further extension of time. I do not think, however, that those interested in the industry would deserve any further extension, because in the meantime they should put their house in order, and endeavour by some other means to carry on the industry.

Mr Mauger

- Would two years make all that difference ?

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Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- It would be more than two years. A certain number of kanakas are to be deported in the first year, and a certain number the next, and so on. That makes the difference. If those engaged at present in the industry remained for the time being the industry could go on as it is now, and every one of the kanakas could be out of Australia at the end of the three years. That would be a fair thing, and would help the industry very considerably. At present there is a great feeling of distrust on the part of those who have money invested in industries in Queensland. There is a great feeling of distrust in Queensland itself, and I do hope the Government will consider this matter carefully. I know it is useless to ask for the appointment of a commission to- make further inquiries. The feeling of the House is for a pure " white Australia," but I do say that we should consider the matter very carefully before we pass such a drastic measure as this. The industry is a very important one, and has been carried on under considerable difficulties for many

years past. I would appeal to honorable members of the labour party, who are perhaps most desirous of doing away with this kanaka labour, to say whether it is fair to fix such a short term within which the employment of kanaka labour must cease as that provided in the Bill. I would ask them to say whether it is not likely to have a very serious effect upon the white workers themselves, and whether it would not be better to ascertain the correctness or otherwise of my statements before they take steps which must, to a certainty, destroy a very important industry.

Mr WATSON

- I am glad that the Government have introduced this measure at a comparatively early period of the session. I for one am hopeful that it will become law before the session closes. I must say that the speech made by the honorable member for Melbourne was couched in very moderate and fair terms, but in regard to the words just uttered by him as to the wisdom of honorable members refraining from taking a step which is so drastic, I should like to say that I do not consider this measure a drastic one. I look upon it from a contrary direction altogether. The feeling that I entertain upon this question is that even if it means the absolute annihilation of the sugar industry, I am prepared to vote for the abolition of the kanaka. In my appeal to the electors of my constituency I expressed that opinion in no uncertain terms, but I am convinced that there is no likelihood of the annihilation of the industry because of the action proposed to be taken. So far as the general question is concerned, I think that the people declared very distinctly upon it on that occasion. With regard to the statements put forward this evening by the honorable member for

Melbourne, and advanced a few days ago by the Premier of the State of Queensland-

Mr Fisher

- Only on hearsay.

Mr WATSON

- Yes. The statements made by those two gentlemen were to the effect that if the people of Queensland had known of the treatment likely to be meted out to them in this respect they would not have joined the federation. I desire to say that the man who, being a resident of Queensland and knowing the feeling of the southern states - which has been for years past against coloured labour - was not aware at the time of the federal elections that all the probabilities, almost the certainties, were in favour of the abolition of kanaka labour, must have been politically and commercially, very simple indeed. It seems to me that those of the sugar-planters of Queensland who voted for federation were quite alive to the probability of the kanaka traffic being stopped ; but they thought that the opening up of the large markets of the south would be worth more to them than the retention of the kanaka. I do not say that their votes alone were sufficient to carry the Constitution Bill, because we find that there are only some 2,600 white men engaged in growing sugar cane. Their votes would not be an exceedingly large factor in the determination of the matter, but so far as they did cast a vote for federation, it seems to me that they had their eyes fully open to what was likely to occur. They reckoned on getting a market for their sugar, with protection against the outside world, and on being placed in a better position commercially than they were before. Now, having got the market secured, with the probability of some protection against imported sugar, they desire to keep both the market and the black labour. I have always shown a leaning towards the protectionist side of the fiscal question ; but if the planters do not get rid of black labour, they will get no protection from me. I have no ambition to pay more for the sugar that I consume, or to force others to do so, in order to keep in employment a number of degraded individuals such as these kanakas. These gentlemen in the North are rather overreaching themselves in the demands they are putting before the country at the present time.

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Mr Isaacs

- Protection is to maintain the standard of white labour.

Mr WATSON

- Precisely. That is the only justification from my point of view for the contention of the protectionist. It does not seem that we can get these gentlemen to view the matter from anything like a reasonable stand-point. Another aspect of this question is its industrial bearing. While I believe that the white man is not likely to be employed under present conditions in the general field work of sugar growing - although I understand that a large proportion of Queensland sugar is grown by white labour, and white labour only -

I would point out that it is useless to refer to the scarcity of white labour while the rates of pay now being offered obtain. According to Dr. Maxwell's report, I find that in the Cairns district, which admittedly has the worst climate, the wages given to white labourers working in the sugar fields amount on the average to £1 4s. 7 1/2d., or, roughly speaking, 25s. per week, and rations. In these southern districts, with all the advantages of a good climate, men cannot be got to work on stations for less than £1 per week and rations, and yet the honorable member for Melbourne expressed his horrified surprise to find that white men would not undertake work in the Cairns district at this low rate of pay. I do not suppose that if the honorable member for Melbourne, himself were able to do the work ten times over in that climate he would be anxious to undertake it at that remuneration, and I should be sorry to ask any white man to do such work unless I was prepared to pay a much higher rate of wages than that. The whole question is one of wages and general conditions, and if white men are offered fairly good wages, and have a reasonable prospect of steady employment, there is no doubt that in the greater portion of Queensland they will be found to do the work reliably and well. White men will go wherever they can get good pay, and will perform their tasks in all extremes of heat and cold, from one pole to the other, much more efficiently than any black men. It is stated that, unless we are prepared to allow the kanakas to be employed in Queensland or in the Northern Territory generally, a large proportion of our resources there will remain undeveloped. We have to consider not only the probability of the contamination of our race, but also what work of development can be carried on by means of kanaka labour in the Northern Territory; that is to say, how many of our own people will find profitable employment. I do not desire to see a development which means only the encouragement or the bringing into existence of a number of Legrees, who take advantage of the slave labour which is, practically, at their command ; but I would rather see a development there under conditions which will permit of our own people living in comfort, and allow them to bring up their children in the proper way. It has been argued that the kanaka is able to stand his work in the cane-fields a great deal better than the white man ; but, with regard to that point, I should like to direct the attention of the honorable member for Melbourne to some inconsistencies in his own speech. He said that the black man was much better able than the white man to carry on this class of work, but, in explanation of the large death rate among the kanakas, he stated that their physique was bad.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- No, I said their physique was good. They send over a great many who are sickly, but I stated that on the cane-fields you will find strong men.

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Mr WATSON

- Dr. Maxwell

mentions that, in the first year of their employment in Queensland, the kanakas lose about six weeks through ill-health, and the death rate amongst the kanakas should be compared with the death-rate amongst whites of practically corresponding ages. The deathrate amongst the kanakas quoted by the honorable member for Melbourne was 30 per 1,000. By reference to Coghlan's Seven Colonies

I find that in Queensland during 1898 the total deaths amongst whites numbered 3,771. Of these 1,353 deaths occurred below the age of 15, and 1,285 over the age of 50. I think that if we take the age of the kanakas as ranging between 16 and 49 we shall be quite within the mark. The figures I have quoted include females, so that I am giving the honorable member for Melbourne all the benefit of the comparison. Out of the total of 3,771 deaths, we have to exclude 2,638 as being outside the ages which we have selected for the purpose of comparison, and that would bring the deathrate of the white people in Queensland between the ages of 16 and 49 to between 6 and 7 per 1,000. This is to be compared with 30 per 1,000 among kanakas, and is a very considerable improvement upon the death-rate quoted by the honorable member for Melbourne. It may be that a large proportion of sickly people are introduced there, but if so, what becomes of the regulations under which these kanakas are supposed to be imported ? The regulations state that no islander shall be allowed to land unless he is physically fit to perform the work.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I was speaking of my experience when I was up there years ago.

Mr WATSON

- If physically incapable men are introduced into the State in spite of all regulations, serious questions

must arise as to the efficiency of the regulations, and we must conclude that in a traffic such as this, where we have on the one hand the human being who is only considered as a beast of burden, and on the other hand the person of superior intelligence who is placed in control over him, we cannot by any regulation bring the two parties into the relative positions they ought to occupy from the point of view of humanity. There is not only a strong probability, but almost a certainty of our being unable by regulation or inspection to prevent unjust, unfair, and inhuman treatment of people occupying such a subordinate position. The honorable member for Melbourne spoke of the comparatively small danger of racial contamination from the kanaka as compared with the Asiatic. I admit that, so far as the present position is concerned, there is not quite the same danger to be feared in that respect from the kanaka as from the Asiatic, but official returns show that quite a considerable number of kanakas marry white women in Queensland.

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Sir Malcolm Mceacharn

- We can stop that by law.

Mr. WATSON.- That would probably lead to worse results. The condition of the kanakas, accompanied as they are by only some 5 per cent, of their own womenkind, must necessarily lead to a state of moral degradation not at all creditable to us, and not at all likely to commend itself to a Christian people such as we are. With regard to the provisions of this measure, I think the Bill is essentially a compromise between those - and they represent no inconsiderable number of honorable members in this House - who think that the traffic should be immediately stopped, and those who think that a fairly lengthy period should be allowed for the closing up of the labour traffic. I am quite prepared to admit that where a large industry has been established under the statute of a State, it is only fair that something like a reasonable time should be allowed in which to bring about a change in the condition of affairs. There is a considerable distinction between the position in regard to the kanaka and that which arises in respect to coloured aliens generally, but no reasonable complaint can be made against the term which is set out in the Bill. If we make the period too long, there will be a danger of the whole matter slipping through our fingers. In Queensland they have fixed two or three periods for the closing up of the kanaka traffic, but on each occasion, owing to the long period allowed, agitation has been worked up which has ended in an extension of the time. I think that we should declare ourselves regarding this traffic in such an emphatic way as to hold out no possible hope to the planters of Queensland of any extension of time being granted. Once this Bill has passed, it should be taken as the final word of the Commonwealth on the subject. I was not in favour of any extended period, but when the Government give us an opportunity of making a clear and definite declaration, I am willing to go to the extent proposed in the Bill. A suggestion was made some little time ago, and has since been given greater prominence, that it will be possible by differential excise duties as between the sugar grown by white labour and that grown by black labour to make up to the sugar-growers the amount that it will be necessary for them to pay in order to employ white labour. The proposition at present before the country is that sugar grown by white labour shall pay an excise duty of only £1 per ton, and that, as compared with the £6 per ton protective duty, leaves a difference of £5 for the protection of such sugar. It seems to me that 5s. per cwt. is a very fair thing. It ought to be a sufficient protection to enable the sugar-growers of Queensland to be in a much better position than they have been up to the present, so far as the employment of white labour is concerned, because, though there has been a duty on sugar imports in Queensland, it has been absolutely inoperative. Owing to the great production of that State as compared with its local consumption, the duty upon sugar has been absolutely inoperative. As it does not seem likely that, for some years to come, the whole of the sugar production of Australia will be sufficient to cope with the consumption, it is certain that any Customs duty placed upon sugar by the Commonwealth will not only raise a certain amount of revenue, but will materially affect the price of local sugar. It seems to me that whatever import duty is imposed will have the effect of raising the price. Because our production all over Australia is not sufficient to meet the demand, it follows that any Customs duty will have the effect of raising the price. Although I do not suppose the price will be raised to the exact extent of the duty, it will probably get within 10s. a ton of it. In that case I anticipate that there will be a difference in favour of the sugar grown by white labour of £4 10s. per ton, which means to the sugar grower in Queensland an increase of twice that amount per ton if he grows his sugar by means of white labour. Of course, to the man who grows sugar with black labour

it only represents £2 10s. per ton. There is another feature in regard to this suggestion of differentiating between black and white grown sugar which occurs to me. It is argued that differentiating in that way would be unconstitutional, because only one State would be affected. It must be remembered, however, that New South Wales employs in the sugar industry quite a number of kanakas and Hindoos - more Hindoos than kanakas - but a fairly large proportion of each. The number of these coloured labourers is given by Dr. Maxwell at just under a thousand. I am sorry to say that the backwash of the Queensland black labour traffic is responsible to a large extent for the existence of coloured labour in the New South Wales sugar industry. We always run that risk. It is all very well to say that these men only come here for a year or two, and are then taken back and thus trouble us no longer ; but we cannot prevent leakages. It is impossible under any law to absolutely prevent leakages, and the kanakas in New South Wales are almost entirely the result of leakages from Queensland. They number between 300 and 400. The Hindoos are chiefly direct importations. In any case the fact remains that we have employed in New South Wales at the present time a considerable number of these people - indeed, nearly all the trashing in that State is done either by Hindoos or kanakas. That is sufficient at least to get over the suggestion that any differentiation between white and the black grown sugar would be confined to one State only, and for that reason would be unconstitutional. As a matter of fact, at least two States are involved, and if the sugar industry were extended - as is quite possible - to the Northern Territory of South Australia, a third State would be affected by any such proposal.

Mr Watkins

- They are suddenly finding out that the white man cannot cut sugar cane on the northern rivers of New South Wales.

Mr WATSON

- They are bound to do that, for wherever there is an opportunity of getting coloured labour cheaply, a variety of excuses is always available to those desiring to employ it. In New South Wales the planters are just as ready as are those in any other section of the Commonwealth to take advantage of an excuse of that character. I do not think it is necessary to say much more on this matter. I have only taken that general interest in the question which the citizens of Australia, outside of Queensland, have so far exhibited. There are, I am glad to say, in this House a number of honorable members who are more closely associated with the industry, and who, at any rate, because of its proximity to themselves, have had a better opportunity of giving it a detailed study than have most honorable members. Therefore, we may expect from them a greater attention to details, and a closer acquaintance with the whole bearings of the subject than has been exhibited by the honorable member for Melbourne. As far as I am concerned, whatever the position of Queensland itself might be, I would still argue for the abolition of the kanaka traffic in that State. Those of us who hold that opinion are at least confirmed in our general intentions by the verdict of Queensland itself. Not only so, but in view of all the circumstances that were likely to arise, and in view of the almost certainty that the Southern States would declare for a white Australia, Queensland entered the Federation. Also, in the election that has since taken place, that State declared by an overwhelming majority in favour of a white Australia.

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Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- That was on account of the popularity of the candidates.

Mr WATSON

- It was on account of the popularity of the cry. The honorable member stated a few minutes ago that he was becoming used to politics.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I am beginning to know what they are.

Mr WATSON

- The honorable member said that the candidates in Queensland had taken up the popular cry, but he should know enough of politicians to feel assured that they would never have taken up that cry unless the people were likely to support them. The fact that it was a popular cry shows that the people must have been in favour of it. Otherwise it could not have become popular.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- The honorable member's leader would not decide in Brisbane.

Mr WATSON

- The honorable member has no right to refer to any one here as my leader. The leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Government were, I am sorry to say, equally hesitant in Brisbane with regard to the time within which this legislation should become operative. The successful Queensland candidates, however, were not hesitant at all, because they gave the people clearly to understand that they would abolish the kanaka traffic at the first opportunity.

Mr R EDWARDS

- Not all of them.

Mr WATSON

- I think that I have a recollection of the honorable member for Oxley declaring himself in favour of the abolition of this traffic.

Mr R EDWARDS

- If it could be done without destroying the sugar industry.

Mr WATSON

- I understood the honorable member to say that he was not returned as a supporter of the kanaka in the sugar industry. If I was mistaken I apologize. In any case, the important fact to be borne in mind is that a majority of the members returned to represent the State of Queensland in both Houses - not only a majority in sectional districts, but a majority for the whole of Queensland polled as one constituency - has declared in favour of the abolition of kanaka labour. Every man in the Senate representing that State is opposed to black labour, whether it be in the form of kanakas, or of any other coloured persons. In this Chamber I do not know that there are more than two honorable members who were returned in favour of black labour.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I said that I would not abolish kanaka labour.

Mr WATSON

- But the honorable member was returned for a district where the pressure of the kanaka does not appear on the surface, and where even the Chinaman is kept out of sight. In the districts from which the Queensland representatives come the evil is close at hand, and is realized by the people. Therefore, it is the more significant that we have had the results to which I have alluded. It has been already mentioned that the recent Darling Downs election affords another instance in which the present State Government took advantage of the opportunity to again raise the black flag. They fought the question there, and yet with all the faggot votes thrown in - the votes of a number of people in Brisbane who did not reside in the district - and with all the other influences in favour of the State Governmental candidate, they did not succeed in winning the seat.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- That was because the honorable member for Darling Downs had the Federal Ministry at his back.

Mr WATSON

- But as the programme of the present Federal Ministry had been disclosed, they ought, according to the honorable member, to have been the most unpopular men in Queensland; instead of which the more they stiffen their backs upon this question the more popular they become. Then I notice that Mr. Philp seeks to discount the victories of the anti-kanaka candidates in Queensland by a statement of the number of votes which they received. He says that out of a total number of 90,000 votes on the roll, they received only 29,000.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- The others put too many candidates into the field.

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Mr WATSON

- If we count all the votes recorded for the pro-kanaka candidates, we find that they are still a long way behind. The fact of the matter is that of those who took the trouble to vote in Queensland there was a very considerable majority against the continuance of the kanaka traffic. There is only another observation of Mr. Philp that requires comment. He states that if Queensland had desired to herself abolish the kanaka traffic, she would have done so through the local Parliament. But plural voting obtains to a far larger extent in Queensland, so far as the actual facilities offered to the plural voter are concerned, than in any

other State. There are ballot-boxes at Brisbane for quite a variety of places, some of which are 1,500 miles distant - a state of affairs that never occurred in New South Wales, even in the worst days of plural voting. In view of that it is a wonder that so many men were returned to the Queensland State Parliament pledged against the kanaka traffic. But in addition we know that there is an organization in Queensland known as the "bull-coekers," or some name like that - an association called after the gentleman who is responsible for its existence.

Mr B EDWARDS

- There is no such organization.

Mr WATSON

- I have heard it alluded to.

Mr McDonald

- It is the National Association.

Mr WATSON

- It seems that the special province of the association is to take advantage of the temporary absence of any individual from home to have his name removed from the roll if he is not of the right political colour. The result is that the association boasts every year of the number of unsuspecting voters who have been removed from the roll by virtue of objections raised before the purifying magistrate, as he may be termed.

Mr McDONALD

-PatersoX. - That is all wrong.

Mr WATSON

- My experience in other places teaches me that it is pretty well correct, in all probability. However, I say that under all circumstances, even in New South Wales, it is comparatively difficult for one who is a working man, and who has no home of his own in the ordinary sense of the term - who is not a freeholder, and has to shift about from one place to another, following his employment- to continue on a roll, or to get on long enough before an election to qualify to vote. Under the circumstances in Queensland I can quite understand that it is even more difficult, with the result that a large proportion of the community is permanently disfranchised. Therefore any argument founded on the appearance of things, so far as the success of the State elections is concerned, has to be discounted by facts of this character. I have only to say that, so far as the Bill is concerned, I am prepared to give the Government every assistance in carrying it through. But I trust this House will see the wisdom of not relaxing the provisions of the Bill in the slightest degree. It will certainly be something gained, from my point of view, if at the end of this Parliament we are able to point to the definite date on which this kanaka traffic, in all its various ramifications, will cease. If we extend that period to a too distant time, there is danger always of a successful ad misericordiam appeal on behalf of a number of these planters, or of advantage being taken of some temporary aberration on the part of voters generally, when engaged on some other question, to alter the law. I trust that the Bill will be passed in its present state, and that it will be declared without any possibility of misunderstanding that the people of Australia have determined that this semi-slavery shall end, no matter what the consequences may be.

Motion (by Mr. B. Edwards) proposed -

That the debate be now adjourned.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I consent to the adjournment, but it is only fair to intimate to honorable members that if they desire, as I hope they do, that we shall finish the session by Christmas, we shall in the future have to sit a little later. It is not, of course, the fault of the Government, any more than it is the fault of honorable members, that the expression of opinion, which is free and untrammelled, takes some time, and we know there has hitherto been no obstruction. That I can frankly say, with thanks for the generosity of those who have not obstructed. Nevertheless, if we do wish to get away to our homes before Christmas, all sides of the House will be with me in seeing that we must sit a little later. I will leave the question of extra days of sitting until I see the result of sitting a little later in the evenings.

Motion agreed to ; debate adjourned.

AD J OURNMENT

Later Sitings - Alleged Threatened rebellion in Queensland - Javanese and Japanese at Thursday Island.

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -
That the House do now adjourn.

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Mr GLYNN

- As to the suggestion that we should sit a little later at night, I do not think that the progress of business would be facilitated by its adoption. It is utterly impossible for honorable members to read up parliamentary papers and to sit here until perhaps after 12 o'clock at night. I enter my protest against what I consider would be an undue strain on the intellects of members if they are expected to sit up all night in order to read parliamentary papers.

Mr PAGE

- I asked a question at the commencement of the sitting, and got no reply, though I did not expect a reply, seeing that the Minister for Defence was not in the Chamber.

Mr Barton

- It was my mistake. I thought the Minister for Defence was behind me, or I should have made some statement in answer to what the honorable member said.

Mr PAGE

- I desire to ask the Minister of Defence whether he has had his attention drawn to a paragraph from Queensland, which appears in this morning's Melbourne Age, referring to an article in the Pastoralist's Review, to the effect that responsible men in Queensland are seriously talking, of resorting to civil war rather than submit to the expulsion of the kanaka. History is repeating itself. This day ten years ago the same gentlemen who are talking about rebellion were asking the Government to send their troops to the west to shoot us ; and the Government did send their Gatling guns, their nine-pounders, and their sixteen-pounders, but they did not over-awe us. It is a peculiar tiling that these very gentlemen, now that we are in Melbourne, and that it is our defence force, want to make themselves rebels. If such a paragraph as this had appeared in the old country, especially in Ireland, the paper would have been seized, and the writer of the article would have been tried for treason, and sent to Australia, or, now the case, to South Africa. I should like to know whether the Minister for Defence is mobilising the troops so as to have them ready to invade the country before the rebellion arises ?

Minister for Defence

Sir JOHN FORREST

. - My attention has not been drawn to the statement, nor have I taken any action in the direction indicated by the honorable member.

Mr BAMFORD

- I would like to draw the attention of the Prime Minister to a letter I received yesterday from Thursday Island. It is as follows : -

September 23rd, 1901

Dear Sir, - The large pearling fleet owners held a semi-secret conclave here last week. Partial results just leaked out. Yesterday Henry Douglas (son of Hon. John Ditto), manager for Bowden Brothers, left here by a passing "tramp" for Batavia to bring down 400 (four hundred) Javanese for (it is understood) Thursday Island pearl fisheries. Mr. J. S. Hocking, manager for James Clark and Company, is to leave here for Japan by the next N.Y.K. steamer, to bring down 500 (five hundred) Japs for Burns, Philp and Company, James Clark and Company, and others to be also used in T.I. pearl fishing. Latter indented three months ago. Make what use you like of this information. Verb.

Sap.

Yours faithfully.

P.S. - Since writing enclosed, I learn that the Javanese are for New Caledonia, but the Japs are to be smuggled in here on the pretence that they are for the sugar plantations.

Has any Executive action been taken to prevent the landing of these people in the event of their coming

Mr Barton

- When are they expected, according to the honorable member's advices ?

Mr BAMFORD

- This letter is dated 23rd September, and as these people were indented three months before, they may arrive at any time.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I was very glad to hear the Minister for Defence give a peaceful answer to the honorable member for Maranoa. I know that, like an old warhorse, the honorable member for Maranoa scents the battle afar off, but I do not think we are going to have any fight. Any attempt to enlist white men in favour of the employment of black labour would not, I think, be successful in Queensland. As to the question put by the honorable member for Herbert, I anticipate no trouble about the Javanese he speaks of, because we find that all the drafts of Javanese that have hitherto arrived, have been intended for New Caledonia. Where they have landed or were intended to be landed in the ports of the Commonwealth, the course I have pursued is to enable the ship-owner to unship them in a convenient place, such as a hulk, and to take a bond that they will pursue the journey to the place for which they are designed. That course has proved successful. With regard to the Japanese, it is a more difficult question. Pending the passage of legislation, honorable members will recollect that there is an agreement, within the Japanese treaty, between the Queensland Government and the Government of Japan- an agreement made under circumstances which received the approval of the Imperial Government. I do not mean that the agreement received the approval of the Imperial Government, but that the liberty to make it was allowed by the Japanese treaty. That agreement was to the effect that the Japanese Government would restrict the emigration from Japan for Queensland of Japanese subjects to an extent which would replace only the existing number, so that the new arrivals would not exceed the departures from Queensland.

Mr McDonald

- Yes; that was the agreement.

Mr BARTON

- I have some reason to suppose, from figures I have seen, that more Japanese have arrived annually in Queensland than have left that State. That, perhaps, has not gone on to any serious extent, and it certainly has not occurred during the last two or three years. For the last three years or thereabouts, the departures have exceeded the arrivals. It is only fair to Queensland to make that statement.

Mr McDonald

- The departures have exceeded the arrivals by about 1,000.

Mr BARTON

- These arrivals are, no doubt, under that agreement, and we cannot and will not interfere with the operation of the agreement until our legislation takes effect. "When it does take effect, it may be a serious question for us to consider to what extent we can interfere with the agreement. If we had passed our Bill in the form which the honorable member for Bland desired, instead of in the form which it now assumes, the same question would have arisen. So far as this Government is concerned, we shall make a most strenuous effort to see that our legislation prevails. It will prevail in its present condition, so far as this agreement is concerned, just as much as it would have done if passed in the form proposed by the honorable member for Bland. It would be idle for me to deny that such a large influx as 500 Japanese is a matter of no concern to the House or to the Ministry. All that I can say is that until our legislation is passed we cannot interfere with the operation of the agreement which exists.

Mr. Watson. - Who has the administration of the Act in Queensland to insure that the agreement is not contravened?

Mr BARTON

- The Queensland Government.

Mr Watson

- Do not the Commonwealth Government oversee it?

Mr BARTON

- Until we pass legislation no one else can do it. That was one of the reasons which impressed me with the advisability of getting something on the statute-book as soon as possible.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.