

<url>https://www.historichansard.net/senate/1901/19011121_senate_1_6</url>
1901-11-21

Senate.

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

PETITIONS

Senator DRAKE presented a petition from the Colonial Women's Christian Temperance Union of Queensland, incorporated, praying the Senate to reject the Matrimonial Causes Bill.

Senator Major GOULD presented a similar petition from the Diocesan Council of the Synod of the Diocese of Riverina.

QUESTIONS

DISTRIBUTION OF CIRCULARS

Senator KEATING

- I rise to ask the Postmaster-General, without notice, or you, sir, if it is known who is responsible for placing . on the seats of honorable senators, together with their notice-paper for to-day, copies of a circular from the Brisbane Chamber of Manufacturers with reference to the Pacific Island Laborers Bill, and if, in the opinion of the Postmaster-General, that way of approaching honorable senators is the correct one?

The PRESIDENT

- I know nothing at all about the matter.

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

- I have no knowledge of the matter. My opinion is that such a proceeding is most unusual.

Senator DOBSON

- I am afraid that I am responsible for the incident. An honorable senator showed me a packet of these circulars just as we were entering the chamber, and he asked me why they were sent to him. I said - "I suppose they were sent so that you should distribute them. The better way is for you to put them on the seats of honorable senators." '

The PRESIDENT

- I do not think that any honorable senator should take the responsibility of distributing circulars.

Senator DOBSON

- I think, sir, that honorable senators have a right to distribute circulars.

The PRESIDENT

- Not on the seats of honorable senators in the chamber.

THE TARIFF

<page>7555</page>

Senator PULSFORD

- I desire to ask the Postmaster-General, without notice, - whether he can give the Senate any information as regards the suggestions for Tariff duties, about which the Government have made many promises, and for which I have inquired on a good many occasions.

Senator DRAKE

- I have to express my regret that Senator Pulsford has had to ask for these papers so frequently. I have not been idle in the matter, I have just this moment received from the Minister of Trade and Customs a note on the subject in which he says that the papers are continually in use, and that he cannot arrange until next Tuesday for their production. I hope to have them ready next week.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SENATE

The PRESIDENT

- In reference to the communication sent to me yesterday by the Premier of Queensland, I have to inform the Senate that Mr. Philp has decided to proceed by petition. I am glad that this is so, because it will enable the abstract question of procedure as to the method in which a State should approach the Senate to be discussed at the proper time, namely, , when the standing orders are under consideration, in that calm and unbiased manner which, perhaps, would be impossible if taken in connexion with a question on which there is so much strong antagonistic feeling as the Pacific Island Labourers Bill. I have, therefore, at the request of Mr. Philp, handed over all' the papers to an honorable senator, who, I presume, will

present a petition in due course.

Senator CLEMONS

- Perhaps I may be permitted to say that I am glad that the question as to the desirability or otherwise of this procedure is now removed from our consideration. I have given the question some attention since we met yesterday, and I should like, by permission, to quote some of the very definite authorities I have been able to find, which will, I hope, govern the Senate should this question ever arise again.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable and learned Senator is not in order.

Senator CLEMONS

- I will put myself in order, sir, by moving -

That the Senate at its rising adjourn until to-morrow at 6 p.m.

This question has arisen in the Canadian House of Commons. We are starting to form our procedure, and to a certain extent,

I take it that we shall be frequently governed by reference to such an authority as that House. With that view, rather than with a view to discuss this matter, I wish to call attention to the decision which has been arrived at there. For that purpose I shall quote from a debate headed "Memorials from others than Canadians."

Mr. SPEAKER presented a memorial addressed to the House of Commons of Canada by the Reciprocity and Free-trade Association of England, signed by John Saxton, president, by order of the association. He suggested that it should be laid on the table.

Mr. ANGLIN said it was an innovation to allow a foreign body to address this House of Commons.

Mr SPEAKER

- Last year the House declined to receive a petition because it was signed by American citizens, but this is signed by British subjects.

Mr. ANGLIN said it was introducing an extraordinary practice, which might be followed by extraordinary consequences. If people might address us on the subject of trade, they might address us on any other subject. We did not permit even our own people to address us except by petition.

Mr SPEAKER

- I do not know any procedure that regulates such a matter. I leave it to the House to decide what to do with it.

Mr. HOLTON said he thought Mr. Speaker was quite right in submitting it to the House. This document was a mere letter, and, as a matter of Parliamentary propriety, he did not see how the House could receive letters unless they closed with a prayer.

Mr. TUPPER. I think it would be well to let it lie on the table.

The matter was again referred to in the Canadian House of Commons, and the report is headed again "Irregular Memorials - Speaker's- ruling."

Mr. ORTON said he desired to call the attention of the House, before the Orders of the Day were called, to a very extraordinary memorial, which had been sent in yesterday, and which was, he believed, irregularly laid on the table of the House. His reason for calling attention to it was that it bore very remarkably upon the policy inaugurated by the present Government. It purported to come from the Reciprocity Free-trade Association of England.

<page>7556</page>

Mr SPEAKER

- In reference to the paper laid informally on the table yesterday, I have to say, on further consideration of the matter, that no documents can be regularly presented to the House, unless sent down by message from the Governor-General, or in answer to an Order or Address of the House, or in pursuance of a Statute requiring their production. Individuals outside of Parliament must approach either House by petition, and it has been frequently decided that no letter or declaration, nor address, nor remonstrance without a proper form of prayer, can be received; In the case of a petition, it must be presented by a member in his place. He is responsible that it does not contain any flagrant violation of the rules of the House. It has never been the practice for the Speaker to present even a petition regularly framed. When a petition was sent to Mr. Speaker Addington, that he might present it, as a member, he declined doing so, on the ground- that it was clearly irregular. The paper in question is not a petition, but a

communication containing a declaration with respect to the Canadian Tariff , now before the House of Commons, in fact, a document which' could not be regularly presented by a member in his-pl;ice, for it bears on the face of it all the evidences of its irregularity. In 1841, Mr. Milner Gibson wished to present a declaration of a similar character from th'e people of Manchester, stating their feelings with respect to the corn laws ; but the Speaker would not allow; him to proceed. This paper, then, not coming before the House as a petition in a regular way, and not having been brought down in response to an order of the House, cannot be taken notice of.

I shall now quote what Bourinot says in regard to this very case.

The PRESIDENT

-Is there any doubt whatever of the proposition which the honorable and learned senator is making 1
Senator CLEMONS

- The matter was introduced yesterday, with at any rate a suggestion that this might be done.

The PRESIDENT

- I did not know that there was any doubt whatever.

Senator CLEMONS

- I am glad, sir, that you rule so now.

The PRESIDENT

- I did not rule otherwise.

Senator CLEMONS

- Yesterday the matter was in doubt.

The PRESIDENT

- No.

Senator CLEMONS

- P submit, sir, with all respect, that your attitude yesterday created doubt in the minds of honorable senators as to whether it would or would not be done.

The PRESIDENT

- All I did was to make a suggestion to the Senate, that the novel conditions - a new Constitution, a new state of affairs - might render it advisable to have a new procedure. The old procedure is undoubted.

Senator Playford

- And you proposed to lay the communication on the table.

Senator CLEMONS

- I shall conclude my remarks by reading a criticism by. Bourinot on this very question. In his last edition at page 331, he says -

No documents can be regularly laid before- the House unless in pursuance of some Parliamentary authority. In the session of ' 1879, the speaker called the attention of the House to the fact that he had received a communication from. the Reciprocity .and Free-trade Association of England, with' respect to the Canadian Tariff, then the subject of discussion in Parliament. He decided that individuals outside the House could only approach i it properly by petition, and that the document in question was a mere declaration, and could not be presented by a member. He took this occasion of stating that no documents' can be regularly laid before Parliament, unless by a message from the Governor-General, or in answer to an order or- address, or in pursuance of a statute requiring their production. Every session, papers are received by the speaker from municipal councils, foreign associations, and individuals, with respect to public matters, bub their receipt is simply acknowledged by officers of the House, since there is no authority to lay them before Parliament. If it were permitted delay such documents indiscriminately on the table, much confusion and inconvenience would naturally follow, and the rules and usages that have long properly governed the production of public papers would be evaded.

To that criticism this footnote is given : -

In 1879, a communication from the Senate of" the Legislature of the State of Michigan on the subject of proposed legislation was laid on the table of the Upper House of the Dominion Parliament on the ground that it was only courteous to receive such a document from a cognate legislative body. This was a most unusual proceeding.

In February 1885, Mr. Speaker Kirkpatrick received by telegraph a resolution from the' Legislature of British Columbia, respecting the - disallowance of an Act (Chinese immigration). As he had no precedent

permitting him to lay such a document before the Commons, he telegraphed to the Speaker of the Assembly to have an address sent to the Governor-General.

I will not delay this matter any longer \. but I thought it was worth while to animadvert on the subject; seeing that we were yesterday concerned with it. It was because we are shortly going to consider our standing orders that I thought it desirable that your ruling upon the matter should be referred to. :

The PRESIDENT

- I gave no ruling whatever. .

Senator CLEMONS

- I withdraw any remark that would seem to indicate that you have ruled ; but, even after your declaration this afternoon that you would not proceed with the matter any further, I- thought it wise to refer to it, because we" shall shortly be dealing with our standing* orders.

The PRESIDENT

- I suggest that this: matter be discussed when the standing* orders are under consideration. Time will, then be saved.

<page>7557</page>

Senator HIGGS

- I am sure that honorable senators are not dis-: posed to discuss a matter of this kind at-; any great length ; but it must be remembered that a case of this kind, if allowed to- pass, becomes very dim in the future. If only a passing reference were made to it there might be a lengthy discussion at some other time; whereas, if a few minutes be given to the subject now, the crisis may never occur again. Honorable senators will realize that you, sir, have not given a ruling. I remember that yesterday, when I suggested that perhaps the Senate might find it necessary to object to the paper being laid upon the table, you said that you were in the hands of the Senate, and that any vote that was taken, however it might go, would not be regarded by you as a reflection on the Chair. I am sure that honorable senators will extend a certain amount of sympathy to Mr. Philp, who, acting in the interests of a section of the people of Queensland, and having spent several days in Melbourne, interviewing almost everybody whom he thought would fall in with his views, has been most unsuccessful.

The PRESIDENT

- The point raised by

Senator demons was one of procedure, and we can only discuss that point on this informal motion.

Senator HIGGS

- The motion before the Chair is that the Senate do now adjourn.

The PRESIDENT

- Inform, the motion before the Chair is that the Senate at its rising do adjourn until six o'clock tomorrow - an unusual hour ; but the subject matter is a question of procedure, and not a question of what Mr. Philp did. It would have been better had there been no debate at all. Because, after all, what has happened ? A suggestion was made that we might allow a State to approach this Senate in a different manner from an ordinary individual. That has come to nothing. No ruling has been given, and no decision arrived at. Mr. Philp now intends to proceed by petition, which is the ordinary course. When the standing orders are under consideration we can debate the question of whether we shall or shall not permit a State to occupy a different position from an individual in regard to approaching the Senate. I deprecate any further discussion upon the matter at present.

Senator HIGGS

- Had the Postmaster - General not raised an objection yesterday, probably the Senate would have entered upon a debate, and come to a wrong conclusion.

Senator Drake

- I had consulted with the President as to what he should do.

The PRESIDENT

- I may mention that I had arranged with the Postmaster-General before the Senate met.

Senator HIGGS

- Coming to the point of procedure raised by Senator Clemons, I may remark that he has given us instances which show that even a communication from a State Legislature to a Federal Parliament was disallowed because it was not presented in a proper way. This case appears to be a more aggravated

one, because the letter which Mr. Philp sent to our President was not a communication from the State Legislature of Queensland.

Senator Clemons

- The honorable senator does not know.

Senator HIGGS

- We know very well that that letter was not authorized to be sent to the President by the State Legislature of Queensland. I am satisfied that the communication comes either from Mr. Philp personally, or from his Government in Cabinet assembled.

Senator Charleston

- The Government are responsible to Parliament.

Senator HIGGS

- I know that Senator Ferguson objects to the discussion, because he would receive any letter from anywhere provided the object of it was to secure an extension of time for the employers of kanaka labour.

The PRESIDENT

- I must ask the honorable senator not to discuss the kanaka question, which is not before the Senate.

Senator HIGGS

- I think the Senate should be grateful to Senator Clemons for having taken the trouble to hunt up authorities. I am satisfied that if any other letter of this kind comes from any State Premier, it will be set aside and not laid upon the table.

The PRESIDENT

- It will be entirely a matter for the Senate to decide, when the standing orders are being framed.

<page>7558</page>

Senator McGREGOR

- I do not think that a case of this sort should be allowed to pass. I appreciate your desire, Mr. President, to hasten the business, as I appreciate every one's desire in that direction. We are 'told that nothing has been done, but we do not know what might have been done. We have a right, as senators', to complain of many things which have been done in connexion with the procedure that has been going on - not openly before Parliament, but in many other directions. I even deprecate the custom that is beginning to creep in, in connexion with the relations between the State Legislatures and the Commonwealth Parliament at the present time. Unless some objection had been raised yesterday to the receipt of Mr. Philp's letter, the matter would have been allowed to pass, and we should in future have had the Premiers and Ministers of different State Governments putting their opinions upon the table of this House irrespective of the representatives of the State concerned. I do not say for a moment that Mr. Philp intended to slight the representatives of Queensland. I do not suppose that he had any intention of doing so. But it looks very much as if the Premier of a certain State, not satisfied with the representatives whom the people of the State have sent here, and not content to communicate with the Senate through them, has endeavoured to approach the Senate through its head. If that course had not been objected to we do not know what might have followed. We may sympathize with Mr. Philp, and also with you, sir ; but it is the duty of every honorable senator to stand up and declare that he is not going to be slighted by the Government of the State to which he belongs. Honorable senators are the representatives of the people of the State from which they come. That is the position I take up, and I hope it is the position that the Senate will maintain. The sooner we let the State Governments understand that, the better will be the relation between the State Governments and the Commonwealth Parliament.

Senator Major GOULD

- I recognise, as will every honorable senator, that we are indebted to Senator Clemons for having looked up certain precedents with reference to this particular matter, but I do not regard the cases he has quoted as by any means conclusive as to the course of action that should be pursued by this Senate in dealing with a matter of this kind. The view I take is that the greatest facility, consonant with the proper dignity of Parliament, should be given to the representatives of every State, and to the Government of every State, to make representations to this Parliament, or to either House of the Parliament, upon any matters in which their State is believed by them to have a particular or peculiar interest. I am well aware that there is a certain procedure that could be adopted. There is the power of petition. It is also the right of the Premier of the State to make communications to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, conveying his opinions

about any question concerning his State, and a copy of such a despatch can be laid upon the table of either House, or both Houses of the Parliament. I have not the slightest doubt that the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, whoever he might be, would be perfectly prepared to lay such a document upon the table of either House, if requested to do so by the Premier of any State, although such document might strongly oppose the views of the Government, and might criticise them very severely.

Senator Drake

- Hear, hear ; the Prime Minister would be quite willing to do so.

Senator Major GOULD

- I fully recognise that. But with regard to the matter of petitioning, I think it is rather derogatory of the dignity of a State Parliament that it should be compelled to adopt that course in order to approach the Commonwealth Parliament. I would even go so far as to say that it might not be a correct course. It might not commend itself to the Senate. I should see no objection to the Premier of a State being able to communicate directly with either House of the Commonwealth Parliament, so long as its communication was couched in proper and respectful language - that is to say, in such language as would be - used in any petition.

Senator Playford

- He could do that by petition.

<page>7559</page>

Senator Major GOULD

- Honorable senators may say that that would be a dangerous thing to allow. I admit that it is a matter for the Senate to determine. But let me say with regard to the suggestion made by Senator McGregor that communications should necessarily be made by the Government of a State to the representatives of that State in the Senate, that I do not agree with that view. I take it that if the Premier of a State wishes to make a communication to the Commonwealth Parliament, he can certainly do it by petition. To petition this Parliament is a right which any private individual possesses. I, as an individual, could petition this Parliament about anything I see fit, and I could ask any honorable senator to present my petition. We certainly should not put the Ministers of a State in a worse position with regard to approaching the Commonwealth Parliament than a private individual.

Senator Best

- No one suggests that we should.

Senator Major GOULD

- But it is said that if a State Government wants to make a communication to this Senate it should be done through one of the representatives of the State concerned, and that otherwise a slight would be cast upon those representatives. That is a view with which I cannot agree. Any private individual can go to the representative of any State and say - "I want you to present this petition for me." But I would not attempt to insist on such a hard-and-fast method as was indicated by Senator McGregor, who, I have no doubt, made his statement in all good faith. I am sure that the statement must commend itself to every senator that we should have the proper procedure upon matters of this kind laid down upon certain definite lines, so that there may be no mistake in the future. So far as I am concerned, whatever the decision may be, I shall be perfectly willing to fall in with it. What I should prefer would be that if the Premier of a State wished to make a communication to the Commonwealth Parliament he should do it by means of a despatch to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, who should, if requested, at once lay the despatch on the table of both Houses of the Parliament.

The PRESIDENT

- Before putting the question perhaps I may make one more remark. One honorable senator has said that sympathy should be extended to me. I want no sympathy, nor do I need any. All I have said to the Senate is, that under our Constitution, as we have a new state of affairs, it might be advisable to adopt a new procedure. It seems to be admitted that exactly the same document might be laid upon the table by a Minister of the Crown. What difference is there, except from the procedure point of view, whether a document is laid upon the table by the President or by a Minister of the Crown 1

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES ACQUISITION BILL

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - I beg to bring up on behalf of the committee the reasons of the Senate for disagreeing to certain amendments of the House of Representatives in the Property for Public Purposes Acquisition Bill
Report read by the Clerk as follows : -

Reasons of the Senate for disagreeing to certain) amendments of the House of Representatives -

As to amendment No. 5 - Because it is unnecessary in view of clause 58a.

As to amendment No. 6 - Because it is unnecessary in view of clause 58a.

As to amendment No. 10 - Because it is unnecessary in view of clause 58a.

Report adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SENATE

Senator HIGGS

- I should like, with the indulgence of the Senate, to read a telegram which I have received from the leader of the Opposition in the Queensland State Parliament in reference to the matter which we have just been discussing in regard to communications to the Senate.

The PRESIDENT

- I do not think the telegram can be read unless by the unanimous leave of the Senate. If this can be done by one honorable senator, it can be done by every honorable senator, and upon all occasions.

Senator HIGGS

- Does the Senate object?

The PRESIDENT

- The question is, that leave be given to Senator Higgs to read the telegram to which he has referred.

Senator Major Gould

- I object.

QUESTIONS

EXCISE ON SUGAR

Senator PULSFORD

asked the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

Is it true, as reported, that the Government have made certain changes in the details of the proposed excise on sugar, and, if so, what are the changes ?

Senator DRAKE

-The answer is as follows : -

No changes have as yet been made, and it will be more convenient to first indicate any desired alterations of detail on any Tariff item, when the item is first proposed for parliamentary consideration.

FEDERAL COMMANDANT

<page>7560</page>

Senator Major GOULD

asked the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

Has an appointment of a Federal Commandant been yet made, and, if so, will he say who has been so appointed ?

Senator DRAKE

- The answer is as follows : -

No appointment has yet been made.

I am authorized to state, further, that as soon as an appointment is made an announcement will be made simultaneously in both Houses.

SUGAR-GROWERS' PETITION

Ordered (on motion by Senator Ferguson) -

That the petition presented by him from growers and manufacturers of sugar in Queensland be printed.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS BILL

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - I move -

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Prime Minister, in his manifesto to the people of Australia, published on the 18th January last, spoke

as follows upon this subject : -

Legislation against any influx of Asiatic labour we shall regard simply as a matter of course. As to Polynesian or kanaka labour, if we were at the beginning of it now, we should have an equally strong objection to that ; but we shall not be guilty of any oppression of those kanakas who are already in Australia, while we shall take care to endeavour to restrict the importation of any more of them. We shall try to prevent any such importations as will increase the number of kanakas now in Australia. We shall insure the gradual abolition of the importation of these people, but our legislation will be just and firm, and there will be no unnecessary delay.

The first measure introduced by the Government to give effect to their policy in this respect was the Immigration Restriction Bill, which is now under the consideration of the Senate. This is the second measure designed to give effect to that policy with regard to Polynesians. It will be observed from the Prime Minister's statement that the object is to reduce the number of kanakas in Australia, and eventually to abolish altogether kanaka labour, but in such a way as not to inflict any unnecessary hardships or injustice upon any persons now employing that class of labour. There are some who think that the policy of the Government does not go quite far enough, in that it does not aim at abolishing kanaka labour at a date earlier than that proposed. That opinion found expression in the Senate in an amendment that was moved to the

Address in Reply at the commencement of the session. In the Governor-General's opening speech, the Government indicated the lines of policy which they intended to pursue, and they were met with an amendment moved in the Senate, to the following effect -

But while fully concurring in the proposal for the gradual reduction and ultimate relinquishment of the kanaka labour at present within the Commonwealth, we are of opinion that the further importation of such labour should be at once prohibited.

Senator McGregor

- Who moved that ?

Senator DRAKE

- A leading member of the Opposition, Senator Millen. I was doing duty in my own State at the time, and I hurried back to Parliament in the belief that there might be possibly some prospect of the amendment being carried. I was, fortunately, in time to say a word or two upon the subject, because I considered that such a proposal would be harsh and unfair to a number of persons who are at the present time employing kanaka labour in Queensland. I found when I arrived here that there were comparatively few honorable senators who were prepared to adopt the very extreme attitude taken up by Senator Millen.

Senator Millen

- They heard that the Postmaster-General was coming down, and got frightened.

<page>7561</page>

Senator DRAKE

- Perhaps so ; perhaps it was only a coincidence that the harshness of that proposal became apparent to them as the prospect of defeating the Government faded away. I do not think we are likely to meet with any further objection of that character. What we have to see now is that in the measure before us we have not erred in either direction ; that we have not postponed the abolition of kanaka labour to such an extent as to fail to fulfil the promises put before the country by the Prime Minister, and on the other hand, that we have not proposed the abolition of kanaka labour so hastily as to do an injustice to persons engaged in the sugar-growing industry in Queensland. I propose to show, first of all, that this measure is a fulfilment of the promise made to the Commonwealth by the Prime Minister, and further, that it is actually in accordance with what has been the settled policy of Queensland, in one sense without intermission, from the time that the State Parliament commenced to legislate upon this subject.

The policy there has always been not to encourage this form of labour, but to restrict and regulate it with a view to its abolition generally within some limited period. I shall be able to show also that other measures have been adopted in Queensland at the same time, with a view of facilitating the change from the employment of kanaka to white labour. Some reference has been made to the introduction of Polynesians into Queensland. Doubt has been expressed as to what was the actual date of their first appearance there. Possibly there may have been an occasional kanaka brought into Queensland prior to 1863 ; but the first systematic importation of Pacific islanders was, I think, in that year or thereabouts. There is some

slight historical interest attaching to this question, and I find in a book entitled The Queen of the Colonies, published in 1876, a description of their first introduction into Queensland. Perhaps it may be a surprise to some honorable senators to learn that the Pacific islanders were introduced in the first place, not to assist in the work of sugar-growing, but for the purpose of growing cotton. The writer says, at page 292- When cotton-growing on a large scale first began to be thought of, Mr. Robert Towns, of Sydney, determined on establishing a plantation on the Logan River.

The Logan River is not in the north of Queensland; it runs between the Brisbane and Tweed Rivers in Southern Queensland. The writer continues -

The history of this gentleman, had we space to relate it, would be a romantic chapter in colonial life. He had long been engaged in the collection of sandal-wood, tortoise-shell, and beche de mer. His vessels were known in almost every part of the South Seas, and he had long been in the habit of employing Polynesians on board these vessels as sailors, boatmen, and divers. He now determined to introduce some of them to work on his cotton plantation. A shipment arrived, and were very quietly removed from the vessel in the Bay up to the plantation on the Logan River, without passing through the town, and after some time the people of Brisbane were favoured with a sight of some of these strangers driving the bullocks which drew the cotton crop into the town. A great deal of talk and some writing to the newspapers ensued, but nothing was, as yet, done in the matter.

Senator Millen

- When was that ?

Senator DRAKE

- I think it was in 1863. If it was not then, it was some considerable time before 1868.

Senator Walker

- I know there were kanakas in Queensland in 1865.

Senator DRAKE

- They were probably growing sugar-cane then. At all events, shortly afterwards the idea of using the islanders in connexion with sugar-growing sprang up, and sugar began to be produced by their help. They came in in moderate numbers from time to time, until public attention was forcibly drawn to the matter, and in 1868 the first Act of the Queensland Legislature in reference to this subject was passed for the purpose of regulating the importation of kanakas. I wish to impress upon honorable senators that the first Act passed by the State Legislature was not to encourage the importation of kanakas - they had already been brought in here by private individuals - but to restrict their importation.

Senator Fraser

- They were doing general work at that time.

Senator DRAKE

- Up to 1880 they were engaged in nearly all forms of industry, for at that time there was nothing whatever to restrict them to any particular industry. At the time that the first Act was passed, they were engaged principally in the sugar and cotton-growing industries.

Senator Fraser

- And on the station

Senator DRAKE

- On the stations afterwards. From that time, as Senator Fraser reminds me, they were employed in nearly all branches of industry, and were sent far into the interior of the colony. About 1877, I think it was, I was myself on a station in the Barcoo, and there were upon that station 39 of these islanders employed in shepherding. It was, in fact, a general thing for them to be employed there.

Senator Fraser

- They were employed on stations long before that.

Senator DRAKE

- I am speaking of that particular date, but no doubt they were there a long time before that, working as shepherds.

Senator Walker

- Were they good shepherds ?

<page>7562</page>

Senator DRAKE

- There was this disadvantage about their employment in that way, and I think it to a great extent accounted for their not being sent into the interior afterwards. They were very careful, but it was found that it was always necessary to have two of them together when employed in shepherding, because, if left alone, the kanaka had a tendency to go mad. While one white man could look after a flock of a couple of thousand sheep, if they were put in charge of kanakas it was necessary to have two in charge of them, and as that meant that each hut had to be supplied with a double ration, it became apparent that it was not particularly economical to employ kanakas in that way. In 1877 a Bill was introduced by the Hon. John Douglas which aimed at further restricting the use of these islanders. I am not going to refer in detail to the debates which took place in 1877, but honorable senators who care to look up the debates of that period will see that I am borne out in the statement that the legislation was all in the direction of limiting the employment of kanakas as much as possible. One of the provisions of the Bill of 1877 was that they should not be employed at a distance of more than 30 miles from the coast. That Bill was not passed, but from that time they ceased to be employed to any great extent in the interior of the country, as I have said, because it was not found to be economical to employ them there. In 1880 a Bill was introduced by Sir Thomas Mcllwraith, which practically gave effect to the object aimed at in the Bill of 1877. But instead of a limitation of their employment to within a certain number of miles from the coast, a provision was put in restricting the use of the islanders to " tropical and semi-tropical agriculture." This measure of 1880 is generally referred to as the principal Act, and the expression " tropica] and semi-tropical agriculture" is defined in the definition clause as -

The business of cultivating sugar cane, cotton, tea, coffee, rice, spices, or other topical or semi-topical productions, or fruits, and of rendering the productions thereof marketable.

That definition has been slightly altered since, but still in the direction of further restriction, and from that date the policy of the Queensland Parliament has always been to restrict the kanakas to that kind of work - tropical and semi-tropical agriculture. Other restrictions were added later, and in the Act of 1884 I think they were expressly prohibited from engaging in a great number of kinds of work in which white men are usually employed. There was still a very strong feeling throughout the country against the employment of this kanaka labour, and at the general election of 1883, the employment of that form of labour was pretty generally condemned. That election of 1883 turned to a very great extent upon the subject of the employment of kanaka labour in Queensland. In 1884, soon after the new Parliament met, a Bill was introduced by Sir Samuel Griffith, which limited their employment solely to tropical and semi-tropical agriculture, and made stricter rules with regard to recruiting, and this Bill of 1884 was advocated in Parliament by Sir Samuel Griffith as being a temporary measure. In 1885 another Bill was brought in with the object of preventing the importation of islanders after a certain date. It provided that no licences to recruit should be issued after the 31st of December, 1890; that is to say, that up to the end of 1890 licences to recruit might be issued. The vessels then' might start on their voyage, and they would come back at various times during 1891, so that the measure meant the total cessation of the importation of kanakas at some time during 1891.

Senator DAWSON

- It practically meant within five years.

Senator DRAKE

- It meant a little more than five years. It provided that no licences should be issued after the 31st December, 1890.

Senator Walker

- They would have three years after that to run out their engagements.'

Senator DRAKE

- The Bill was assented to on the 10th November, 1885.

Senator Millen

- It made it five years and two or three months.

Senator DRAKE

- Yes ; and then the islanders introduced were engaged for a term of three years.

Senator Major Gould

- So that it meant eight years from 1885- to the end of their engagements.

Senator DRAKE

- Yes. Under this measure the last licences were to be issued at the end of 1890.

Senator Walker

- Was there any provision for deportation after that time.?'

Senator DRAKE

- There have been no express provisions for deportation, as the Acts seem always to have implied that the kanaka should be sent back to his island after the term of his engagement was at an end, because the employer was required to make a deposit every year towards the cost of returning the ' islander, unless he was re-engaged.

<page>7563</page>

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Or unless he wished to remain.

Senator DRAKE

- That was not stated. It was assumed that after the term of his engagement was up he would go back to his island, and the employer was required to deposit a certain amount to cover his passage money.

Senator Walker

- What was the date at which the exemptions ceased ?

Senator DRAKE

-Exemptions were provided for under the Act of 1884. It provided that a " boy " could get an exemption ticket if he could prove that he had been in the colony for five years previous to that date. That will be seen from paragraph (a) of clause 2 of the Bill, which refers to islanders holding exemptions as - Persons registered under section 11 of the Queensland Act 47 Vic. No. 12, on the ground of continuous residence in Queensland for a period of not less than five years before the first day of September, 1884. Those are the islanders who are generally known as "exemption boys." I wish to draw the attention of the Senate to a circumstance in connexion with the legislation of 1885. After the Queensland "Parliament passed that legislation, practically fixing a period to the importation of kanaka labour, the Parliament voted a sum of £50,000 for the erection of central sugar mills, and with that sum two sugar mills were erected in the Mackay district. The object of voting that money and causing those mills to be erected was to encourage the large holders of land to subdivide their land and enable small farmers, settled upon limited areas, to grow sugar with the help of white labour. It was only done to a limited extent, because although there was a provision in the agreement under which the money was obtained for these mills, that the cane crushed should be grown by white labour exclusively, it was found after a few years, when the mills were getting into working order, that there was not enough cane grown exclusively by white labour to keep them going, and so cane grown by black labour was also allowed to be used in those mills. After a time the provision with regard to cane being grown exclusively by white labour was to a great extent ignored and lost sight of. I wish the Senate to bear this in mind as part of the settled policy of Queensland, that when Queensland decided against that form of labour the Parliament voted that money in order to enable this process of the cutting up of the land and its cultivation by smaller men, to be carried out.

Senator Charleston

- Was it by a resolution of Parliament that they permitted the regulation against the employment of black labour upon the plantations to fall into abeyance?

Senator DRAKE

- What the honorable senator refers to was not an Act of Parliament. There was money voted for the erection of central mills, and it was part of the agreement entered into with the farmers to whom the money was advanced to put up the mills that they should use cane produced by white labour. It was one of the conditions of the agreement. I am speaking from memory, but I think my memory is accurate upon the point. I shall have to make one or two quotations, and in quoting from the Parliamentary Debates of Queensland, I wish it to be understood that I do so to establish the contention that in introducing this Bill we are doing nothing that is inconsistent with the settled policy of Queensland.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- " Settled " or " unsettled "?

Senator Playford

- It was settled then, but unsettled afterwards.

Senator DRAKE

- I say the "settled" policy. Senator Playford probably refers to the action taken in 1892. I propose to deal with that. I think that that was no distinct break in the settled policy of Queensland, because I can show that the Act of 1892 itself was only regarded as a temporary one, and not as interfering with the settled policy of Queensland, that kanaka labour was only to be regarded as a temporary expedient to be restricted in every possible way in view of that policy.

Senator DAWSON

- That was the reason given in the House.

<page>7564</page>

Senator DRAKE

- In 1890, a resolution was moved in favour of the territorial separation of the northern portion of the colony, and the record of the debate will be found in the Queensland Parliamentary Debates, vol. 62, 1890. I am going to quote only from one of the speakers, because he was a Minister of the Crown, a man who has always taken a very great interest in the subject, and who is a strong believer in coloured labour. Any one who looks through that debate will find that nearly all the members of the Queensland Parliament who were in favour of kanaka labour agreed that the verdict of the country was that kanaka labour must cease and they were prepared to accept that verdict. I am going to quote now from the speech of the Minister for Lands and Agriculture at that time, Mr. Cowley. Mr. Cowley is a well-known man of very great ability. He was on the celebrated Royal commission on coloured labour, in 1889, with the late Mr. W. H. Groom and Mr. King. He is a gentleman who has always expressed himself unreservedly in favour of coloured labour, and especially of kanaka labour, and he has given perhaps as much attention to the subject as any man in Queensland. At page 1063 of the Queensland Parliamentary Debates for 1890, it will be found that he said -

I think the people of Australia, not of Queensland - I go further than that, the people of the whole of Australia - are pretty well satisfied that black labour is doomed, and must cease, and I will say this much, that the people who are interested in black labour up to the present time are prepared to accept that decision. They have sense enough to see that they cannot fight against the inevitable, and therefore they have to submit, I do not say that they have changed their opinions, because those opinions are founded upon many years' experience and very careful consideration. But, at the same time, they can see clearly and distinctly that the people of Australia are determined that Australia shall be a white man's country, and they bow to the inevitable. Therefore, I think the honorable member should take this in all sincerity, and not bring this cry in, because I believe it is once and for all settled.

Senator Fraser

- It is not settled.

Senator DRAKE

- That is the strongest advocate probably of black labour. In 1891, when he was a Minister of the Crown, he considered that the question of black labour, as far as Queensland was concerned, was settled. I shall now read an extract from a speech by the same gentleman in 1892. Early in that year the Premier, Sir Samuel Griffith, issued a manifesto to the people of Queensland, in which he stated that for certain reasons, which he gave, he had come to the conclusion that it would be desirable for a time to renew the importation of kanaka labour.

Senator Fraser

- There was no time fixed in the Act.

Senator DRAKE

- I shall refer to the Act directly. I shall not omit anything of importance on that point. In his manifesto, on page 9, Sir Samuel Griffith said -

The only form of labour that is, under existing circumstances, immediately available for this purpose, 'seems to be Polynesian labour. And I think, as I have said, that this labour is less open to objection than any other form of coloured labour. 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. . . . Adequate provisions must of course be made, and they can be made, for preventing abuses in the introduction of the labourers, and for preventing, them from entering into competition with white labourers in other occupations, and it should be provided that the immigration

shall continue (unless, of course, otherwise determined by the Legislature) for a definite but limited period of, say, ten years. By that time, I have no doubt that such further developments will have taken place as will enable the sugar industry to be carried on without fear of our reverting to the former system, with its dangerous incidents and consequences, and, in the meantime, I believe that a valuable impetus will be given to the producing industries of the colony'.

Senator Dobson

- Dr. Maxwell says that that prophecy has not been fulfilled.

Senator DRAKE

- It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the object in view at that time was not to reverse the settled policy of the country, but to provide for the introduction of labourers for a limited time in order to give an impetus to the industry, and with the idea that " this system now happily inaugurated of small farmers " would, within that limited time, enable the planters to dispense with that labour altogether.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Am I not right in saying that at that time the small farmers were in the cooler districts of Bundaberg and Mackay - not north of Cairns 1

Senator DRAKE

- I think that when we come- to consider the report we shall find that it is not much hotter in Cairns than in Bundaberg and Mackay. At this time the process of cutting up the larger estates had been going on in Mackay.

Senator Playford

- What did Parliament say when it passed the Bill ?

Senator Fraser

- It fixed no limit.

<page>7565</page>

Senator DRAKE

- I am going to refer to what Parliament said. I do not wish to rake up the whole business, and read quotations from this report to prove or disprove everything. I simply wish to make clear my contention that by this Bill we are not reversing the policy of Queensland, but rather that we are acting in accordance with that policy. In moving the second reading of the Queensland Bill, the Chief Secretary said on that subject -

I may say here that it is not proposed in this Bill to fix any definite period for which the principal Act shall be in force - that is, the provisions of the Act relating to the recruiting of islanders. Any attempt to do so would, of course, be futile, because, as has been pointed out before, one Parliament cannot bind its successors ; and I think it would be unwise at the end of a Parliament to make any attempt even a futile attempt - to bind its successors. What is proposed is that the restriction which at the present time exists on the importation of Pacific islanders shall be removed. It will be open to any future Parliament, if it pleases, to renew that restriction ; but in the meantime persons engaged in the sugar industry will have the opportunity, I hope, of knowing, before the coming planting season, that they will be able to carry on their industry without ruinous loss. I hope, also, that when the restriction is removed, it will continue to be removed for some time. Those who are opposed to this proposal will have the fullest opportunity for inculcating their views ; and if they can induce the majority of the electors to adopt their views, a new Parliament can give effect to them.

Senator Playford

- There was a new Parliament, and what was the result ?

Senator DRAKE

- The new Parliament did not reverse the policy adopted.

Senator Fraser

- Nothing has been done since, although there have been several new Parliaments.

Senator DRAKE

- I am not going to be diverted from my point, that in 1892 the Parliament did not intend to reverse the settled policy of the country, but only to allow an extension of the principle of recruiting as a temporary expedient.

Senator Dobson

- If it had then been considered the settled policy, they would have put on a limit.

Senator DRAKE

- No. The reason why the limit was not put on, as I have said, was that neither party was very keen about that. Those who favoured kanaka labour thought, no doubt, that they would be able to retain it beyond the ten years, while those who opposed it thought, at the time, that they would be able to considerably lessen the period.

Senator Ferguson

- The Bill was passed by 36 votes to 13, showing that there was a large majority in its favour.

Senator DRAKE

- On the amendment that the Bill be read a second time, that day six months, the division was 37 to 15, and on the motion for second reading it was 39 to 13, with two pairs. Mr. Nelson, who was then occupying the position of leader of the Opposition, spoke about a prejudice that had existed against kanaka , labour.

On page 103, he said -

That feeling has died away, and now that we are asked to continue a system which, on the whole, has worked fairly well, I think the House may very well adopt it, as it is only really a temporary measure. As has been pointed out before, we cannot bind any future Parliament.. I ' look upon it myself as only a temporary measure, which does not meet the whole question. A much larger thing than this will be required before we can establish the sugar industry on a firm and secure basis.

Senator Dobson

- Then, what the Minister calls a settled policy, Mr. Nelson called a prejudice only, which had died away.

<page>7566</page>

Senator DRAKE

- Speaking of that feeling, he said that that prejudice had died away. I shall show very clearly that it had not died away. We had a reference to Mr. Cowley, in 1890, which showed that he considered that the country had definitely spoken on the subject, and that he was. prepared to bow to the inevitable, and accept it. On page 120 of Ilansard the then Premier of Queensland is reported as having said - Mind, I do not regard this as a permanent solution of the difficulty, because in ten years there is not the slightest doubt that the population of the islands will be so reduced that the supply will have ceased. In ten years time we shall know a great deal more about sugar growing than we do now. We may be able to do with less labour in the field, and I know there is nothing like the amount of labour required now to what was required at the start. On one plantation alone, 20 or 30 hoys used to feed the cane mill, whereas that is done by cane carriers now. We may, 03'-and-b3', have cutting; machines, and there will be nothing like the same amount of labour required.

I shall now read a passage from a speech by Mr. Cowley, the Secretary for Lands and Agriculture, as some honorable senators wish to hear what he had to say on the subject in 1892. It is at page 183 - I think it is only a fair thing that this Parliament should deal with matters as it finds them, and leave succeeding Parliaments to deal with things as they find them. I do not think it would be fair to fix a limit of ten years. Another Parliament coming in would be under a moral obligation to keep it going for ten years. The question will be settled to the satisfaction of the honorable member and of every other honorable member long before the end of ten years. The question will settle itself; there is not the slightest doubt about that ; and I cannot see why he, above all other men, should object to legislation for this in the way we propose. I think it is the fairest thing both for this Parliament and for any future Parliament.

In. the same speech, Mr. Cowley said -

But there is another question to be looked at, and that is that before long federation may be accomplished. It may not be for three, or four, or five years, but it will come. . . . Federation will destroy the black labour. There, is no. doubt of that ; and it will extend our markets. If our market is extended to the other colonies, and a protective duty is put on other sugar of £4 or £5 per ton, that amount will be distributed amongst the growers and manufacturers. The manufacturers in New South Wales can give a higher price for cane that is grown in Queensland simply because there is a protective duty. The Colonial Sugar Refinery Company can afford to give 15s. per ton in New South Wales, while they only give 12s. here. With federation, our market will be enlarged, and we shall be able to give a higher price to the grower ; and if the Federal Parliament of Australia says that no black men shall be allowed in Queensland, themanufacturerers will still be able to pay at least 5s. or 6s. per ton more than the farmers

are receiving now.

He finished his speech with these words -

I feel sure that by the establishment of our central mills, and by giving the farmers assistance in the shape of coloured labour for a few years, having in view the enhanced price, which will surely come, a greater proportion of sugar than that mentioned by the honorable member for Bundanba, will, before ten years are over, be grown exclusively by white men.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Is that so?

Senator DRAKE

- That was the opinion expressed in 1892.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Has that prophecy been fulfilled?

Senator DRAKE

- What he prophesied here is, I think, now taking place. He was speaking of federation resulting in an extended market, and in the imposition of a protective duty. I will make that matter perfectly clear. I do not wish to quote either this or any other passage from a speech by a member, and give it a greater force than he intended it to have ; but it fortunately happens that Mr. Cowley, in committee, quoted in explanation that particular passage of his own speech, because he claimed that he had been misrepresented by another member.

Senator Walker

- Did he state that white labour would produce the sugar ?

<page>7567</page>

Senator DRAKE

- He stated that a larger proportion was produced by white labour than had been supposed. In committee Mr. Cowley objected to a member having misrepresented him, and in correcting this statement he said - He qualified his remarks by saying that the cane would be grown by white men after federation ; and he wound up by quoting the peroration of his speech, which I have quoted to the Senate, and said that he wished the honorable member had done him the justice to quote that part of his speech. Before I leave the year 1892, I want to make two more references as to the limit which was put in the manifesto, and which did not appear in the Bill. It was mentioned by some of the members that they feared that as no limit had been put in the Bill, there would at some future time be a claim on the part of the growers of sugar to compensation, in consequence of kanaka labour having been withdrawn. The Chief Secretary, Sir Samuel Griffith, in replying to one of those references said - He thought that to fix any period would practically give a strong vested right morally to the planters or employers of Polynesian labour, to claim that it should not be interfered with during that period. It was a very serious thing to interfere with the power of any future Parliament. If that were the first session of a new Parliament, he did not know that he would hesitate to take that responsibility, but he thought that under the present circumstances of the case, it would not be right for that Parliament to take a step of that sort. Those were mainly the reasons why the Government did not propose any limit. He would inform honorable members that a clause limiting and fixing the period was carefully framed, and that it was after very serious consideration that the Government came to the conclusion that they should not fix a limit. There he clearly gives the reason why the Government decided, after having drafted a clause to that effect, that they would not fix a limit. I subsequently asked the Premier if he would have any objection to inserting a clause in the Bill expressly stating that no vested interests should be created, and this is his reply as reported on page 238. I may as well quote the whole of it - The Chief Secretary said that, a clause could be inserted to give effect to what the honorable gentleman had referred to but he did not see that it would be any advantage to insert such a clause, considering the nature of the measure. The Bill merely repealed existing restrictions. It was not a Bill which conferred privileges upon certain persons. When an Act was passed conferring privileges upon certain persons, as, for instance, the Civil Service Act - then it was usual, for the purpose of avoiding any inference being drawn to that effect, to insert a clause declaring that it was not intended to confer any vested rights. But the Bill could not be considered to confer any vested rights whatever. They were simply removing restrictions which might be imposed again by the next Parliament. It was not possible to confer any vested rights by the Bill, and he could see no advantage in inserting a clause of the

kind suggested by the honorable member. I think those references to the debate show perfectly clearly that the extension of kanaka labour was only intended as a temporary measure, and that in the meantime it was anticipated that the process of cutting up the large estates, and establishing small farmers on the land, would go on and prove a solution of the difficulty. Now, I ask the Senate to remember the vote of £50,000 that was passed in 1885. As soon as the Bill had been introduced limiting the introduction of Polynesian labour - namely, the Bill passed in 1892, to which I have been referring - the Government in 1893 brought down a Sugarworks Guarantee Act. Under it advances were made by the Government to the sugar-growers, who occupied small areas of land, to enable them to erect sugar mills, and make profitable the growing of sugar upon small areas. Since then, there have been two amending Acts, and the total amount that has been advanced for the purpose of erecting sugar mills is £538,600. So that ever since 1892 it has been the policy of the Government of Queensland to encourage the erection of sugar mills, the subdivision of lands, and cultivation in small areas. Having in view the policy of ultimate abolition, which was the policy of Queensland, and which is the policy of the Federal Government, the question it seems to me is whether, in the Bill which is now proposed, we are taking proper measures to secure that abolition within a reasonable time, and without doing any injustice to persons engaged in the sugar industry: As to the importance of the industry there can be no doubt whatever. The process of subdividing the land and settling persons upon small areas has gone on to such an extent that there are now 2,610 sugar-growers on an average acreage of 42.6 acres. According to information which I believe is correct there are employed in factories and refineries 3,100 men, making in all 5,710 white persons employed in the sugar industry.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- In what district ?

Senator DRAKE

- Those figures are for the whole State. The number of kanakas employed in growing sugar at the present time, according to statistics with which I have been supplied, is 8,710. In the year 1900 there were 108,500 acres under cane, and the total amount of the crop in sugar was 92,500 tons. The value, at something slightly under £10 a ton, was £924,380.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- It was a small crop in that year.

<page>7568</page>

Senator DRAKE

- It was. The amount of sugar exported from Queensland was valued at £669,390. I may mention also that I have had supplied to me by a member of the State Legislature, representing the Mackay district, the estimated total production for 1902. It is given at 151,000 tons. He also states, and I believe his calculation is substantially accurate, that at the present time the total private capital invested in the sugar industry is about £6,000,000. Of course there cannot be the slightest doubt that it is to the interest not only of every one in Queensland; but of every one in Australia, that an industry of that kind should not be made to suffer in such a way as the Queensland sugar industry would if we adopted the proposal of Senator Millen for the abolition of kanaka labour, immediately. Quite apart from every other circumstance in connexion with the employment of coloured labour, it must be apparent to every one that everything that causes great dislocation in an industry must have an injurious effect. We want to know what period of time it would be fair to fix in order to give effect not only to the promises of the Government to the people of Australia, but also to the hopes that have been held forth time after time by the State Legislature to those who have gone in for the growing of sugar. We find that the process of sub-division of lands and the encouragement of small growers has gone on continually from that time to this, until now, as I have said, the total number of growers is 2,610. Dr. Maxwell has furnished to the Prime Minister an exceedingly valuable report, which I am sure must have been read with a great deal of interest by all honorable senators. Dr. Maxwell gives us all particulars with regard to the climatic conditions in each district of Queensland; he also gives us the cost of white labour and of black labour, in order that a comparison may be instituted as to the expense of employing one kind of labour or the other; and he furnishes interesting statistics with regard to the work that has been done, and very good advice as to the proper course that should be pursued in Queensland by those who are engaged in the sugar industry. He puts the employment of coloured labour as one of the most important factors, but distinctly as one of the

declining factors. He shows that with a smaller amount of coloured labour a larger production of sugar has resulted. This fact appears to me to be a justification of the policy that has been pursued by Queensland in the past, of encouraging the erection of central mills and the production of sugar by small growers.

Senator Walker

- In the southern district.

Senator DRAKE

- In the northern district as well. Dr. Maxwell says, on page 15 of his report -

The results, in the main, of the more recent years, and the conditions of the present time, indicate that the maintenance and the greater expansion of sugar production in Queensland will depend upon placing a greater number of cane growers upon the sugar-producing areas.

That is clearly the policy that the Queensland Government have pursued for a number of years past.

Reduced acreages, in the hands of the individual settlers, will render more thorough cultivation of the ground, and care of the crop, and a consequent larger yield per acre, possible, and possible by means of the labour of an increased proportion of white men, and a diminishing proportion of other kinds of labourers. This result is seen to be working itself out in the history of the past recent years. In 1885 the number of white farmers growing cane was relatively fractional ; but the number of Pacific islanders in the colony was 10,755, and the sugar produced was 65,706 tons. In 1898, as it has already been stated, the number of white cane-growers in Queensland was 2,610, with the production of sugar increased to 123,289 tons, and the number of Pacific islanders reduced to 8,826. The actual reduction in the number of islanders is . 1,029, but the relative reduction is not less than 60 per cent. from what it was in 1885, when the production of sugar at these respective periods is considered. That seems to show clearly to my mind that the cultivation of sugar in Queensland does not depend upon Polynesian labour.

Senator DobSON

- That is not Dr. Maxwell's opinion.

Senator DRAKE

- I am quoting from his printed report. He goes on to say -

The logical indications of the situation are that the South Sea islander is a declining factor in sugar production in Queensland , and that the decline is due to a natural operating law, by reason of which the lower is being gradually substituted by a higher form, and by a higher standard of producing agencies in those locations where the laws or conditions of nature, such as climate, do not operate in the opposite direction. This law may be expected to continue to operate, and with continued and increasing results, providing it is not checked through any device by which it may be sought to hasten the rate of movement of natural law.

The doctor concludes - I am reading now from the last paragraph of his report -

It is indicated that invention may be expected to provide mechanical devices for the harvesting of the cane crop and for other work ; and these will further strengthen the current tendency to substitute lower by higher forms of labour, where the conditions of nature permit. This tendency, already very marked, will be accelerated by the settlement of a greater number of white families upon the grain-growing areas, resulting also in a more intense and productive cultivation of the partially exhausted soils. The increment of white settlers upon the sugar-growing lands during the past decade, and the concurrent increase in the volume of sugar produced, with the reduction in the number of islanders employed, demonstrate the present tendency, and indicate that, under the current operation of given natural laws, and particularly in certain latitudes, the Pacific islander is a relatively declining factor in sugar production in Australia.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- Why does the Postmaster-General omit the important information to be found at page 12?

Senator DRAKE

- I cannot read the whole report.

Senator FRASER

- The Postmaster-General quotes portions of it which do not bear out the general tenor of the report.

<page>7569</page>

Senator DRAKE

- Surely the honorable senator will follow me. I have read the whole of these two paragraphs. What I desire to show is that Dr. Maxwell appears to me to be recommending the system which has been

followed for years past in regard to the cultivation of small areas. He agrees with the policy adopted by the Queensland Parliament, and that bears out what I undertook to show at the outset, that the settled policy of Queensland, at all events since 1885, is being carried out in the measure now before the Senate. We cannot discuss this Bill altogether apart from the financial proposals of the Government. The Government are proposing to ask the people of Australia to make a considerable sacrifice in order to facilitate the substitution of white for kanaka labour. That natural movement which has been going on for a long time past in favour of substituting the higher paid and more effective labour for the cheaper and less effective labour, can surely be greatly facilitated by the adoption of such proposals as the Government are submitting in another place. It is clearly necessary that these two measures should be considered together. A strong justification for the action of the Government in introducing this measure and asking Parliament to deal with it now, is that until the people of Australia understand clearly what is to be the attitude of Parliament in regard to it, a decision cannot be arrived at upon the measure which has been submitted to honorable members in another place.

Senator Higgs

- The sugar duties.

Senator DRAKE

- I refer, of course, to the sugar duties contained in the Tariff. We must know, first of all, what attitude Parliament is going to take up in regard to this Bill before honorable members in another place can be asked to decide what shall be done with the sugar duties.

Senator Pulsford

- Has the Postmaster-General figured out the sacrifice which Australia is to be asked to make in that respect?

Senator DRAKE

- No; but I have heard it mentioned at £500,000.

Senator Walker

- It will be £800,000. Senator DRAKE.- Will honorable senators remember for a moment the words I quoted from a speech made by Mr. Cowley, in 1890, who was then a Minister of the Crown. He said that, with federation, black labour would be doomed. At the same time, he expressed the opinion that the Government would have their market extended. "If we get a benefit of £4 or £5 a ton on sugar," he said, "then we shall be able to give 4s. or 5s. a ton more to the growers." He clearly intimated that, by such a proposal as that, the question would be satisfactorily settled. He indicated that, with federation, there would be increased markets and enhanced prices, and he put those reasons forward for asking Parliament in 1892, to allow the use of black labour to continue for another three, four, or five years. Black labour has been continued not for five, but for nearly ten years since then - for nearly the limit intended to be given by Sir Samuel Griffith when he issued his manifesto in 1892.

Senator Major Gould

- Because it was absolutely necessary for the continuance of the industry that the extension should take place.

Senator DRAKE

- I fail to see how Senator Gould is justified in making that statement, in view of the facts before us.

Senator Major Gould

- I say that it was Sir Samuel Griffith's view in 1892 that it was absolutely necessary to continue black labour for a time in order to preserve the industry.

Senator DRAKE

- In 1892 he said that the sugar industry was then in a state of transition.

Senator Walker

- He said it was languishing.

Senator DRAKE

- Honorable senators compel me to read a little more from his manifesto.

Senator Dobson

- Did he not say that the man who opposed it would be a traitor?

Senator DRAKE

- Very likely. He has spoken with great ability on both sides. Sir Samuel Griffith said, according to the

report to be found in the Queensland Hansard, volume 67, page 8 -

Let me now invite your attention to what has happened since that time.

That is, since 1885, when a Bill was passed to put a stop to the traffic in 1890. I will state results only. But I premise that these results are, in my opinion, due, in great part, to the legislation to which I have just referred, as well as to a general conviction, on the part of the planters, as well as the people generally, that a radical change was necessary in the system of sugar culture. In the first place, the system of large estates worked by gang labour has fallen into disfavour. The owners are not only willing but anxious to sell or lease portions of their estates to farmers who will themselves grow the cane and sell it to the manufacturers. And it is recognised, I think generally, that in future the cultivation of the cane and the manufacture of sugar must be in different hands. In the second place, it has been established by actual trial that sugar is a profitable crop to be grown by small farmers, if they can command a sale for it to the manufacturers at reasonable prices. And this system is already carried on with great success, notably in the Bundaberg, Mackay, and Herbert River districts. In the third place, it has been proved that in Queensland cane can be grown by white labour. I am aware that this position is still disputed, but it is admitted by most of the more liberal-minded planters with whom I have been in communication, and so on. His attitude was that the efforts that had been made by the Government to induce the cultivation of sugar in small areas, with a view of substituting white for black labour - supported in 1885 with a vote of £50,000 for the sugar mills - had been going on satisfactorily. He expressed the opinion that, at that particular period, in order to give an impetus to the industry, it was desirable to permit the continuance of black labour for a time. That was in 1892.

Senator Fraser

- Will Senator Drake allow me to read a line from Sir Samuel Griffith's manifesto.

<page>7570</page>

Senator DRAKE

- Cannot the honorable senator do it after I have finished.

Senator Fraser

- I think now is the opportune time.

Senator DRAKE

- Very well. Senator Fraser. - He said -

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--

Senator DAWSON

- That is more than a line.

Senator Fraser

- It shows that he acknowledged his responsibility for the blame or credit.

Senator DRAKE

- Is not that perfectly correct? Sir Samuel Griffith stated there that it was due to him more than to any one else to review the present position. He said also that the cutting up of larger areas, and the growing of the cane by means of white labour had been a conspicuous success. The policy initiated in 1885 had been successful, but at that time he thought that in order to give an "impetus to the industry" - those were his words - it was necessary for a term, the limit of which was fixed at ten years, to permit of the continued introduction of the islanders. If I have established, as I hope I have, that it has been the policy of Queensland to restrict this form of labour with a view to its ultimate abolition, can we contemplate any period at which it would be easier for the planters to substitute white for coloured labour than the present time? Seeing that if the financial proposals of the Government are accepted, the growers will get their extended market and a higher price for their products, is not the present time preferable to any future date for the bringing about of this change? It seems to me that it is impossible to look forward to any time more opportune. What are the proposals of the Government in order to assist the movement? The pledge given to the people in the manifesto is -

We shall take care to endeavour to restrict the importation of any more of them. We shall try to prevent any such importation as will increase the number of kanakas now in Australia.

It is proposed that in the first year after the passage of this Bill not more than three fourths of the number

who returned to their islands in the previous year shall be brought in.

Senator Clemons

- Assuming that there are 8,000 kanakas in Queensland at the present time, will the honorable and learned senator tell us how many will be introduced each year, under clause 6.

Senator DRAKE

- There are 6,000 at present. If 1,000 are introduced this year, then, in 1902, 750 will be introduced.

Clause 6 provides that -

Nothing in this Act shall prevent the granting of licences as follows : -

During the year 1902 to the number of not more than three-fourths of the number of the Pacific Island labourers who have returned to their native islands during the year 1901.

That is to say, if 1,000 return to their islands in 1901, 750 may be introduced in 1902. In the following year, only a number equal to half the number who return to their islands during the preceding twelve months will be allowed to come in. That is to say, if 1,000 return to their islands only 500 will be introduced. It is provided that no agreement shall remain in force after the 31st December, 1906. That is the date fixed for the final termination of kanaka labour in Queensland. Honorable senators will see that there is a clear five years during which the new duties that are proposed will be in operation. As I said before, the planter will get, not only the enlarged market, but also the enhanced price, and we can hardly conceive of any circumstances that could be devised by the Government that would make it easier for him to substitute white for coloured labour. I admitted, when speaking on the Address in Reply to the opening speech, that in some parts of Queensland it would be more difficult to make this change than in others, but I point out that there will be about 8,000 kanakas in Queensland during those five years.

Senator Clemons

- Eight thousand during the next five years ?

Senator Fraser

- We shall be commencing to deport them.

<page>7571</page>

Senator DRAKE

- No ; that is only where they are not under any agreement, but there is nothing to prevent kanakas from entering into agreements up to the end of the period closing in December, 1906. There is no provision for deportation before that time, except in the case of kanakas who are not under any agreement. If the planters like, they can re-engage the kanakas and there is no reason why 8,000 kanakas, or some number approximating 8,000, should not remain in the State up to December, 1906.

Senator Millen

- Is there no limit to the period for which they can re-engage under the State law, after an islander has served his term of three years ?

Senator DRAKE

- If none return home, of course the numbers will remain the same, and if some of the kanakas choose to return home, the number will be reduced. Perhaps I should not have said 8,000, but some number gradually decreasing from 8,000.

Senator Clemons

- That is the whole point. I was going to ask the honorable and learned senator whether under the operation of the Bill we are now discussing should it become law, and the State laws of Queensland, there still may be 8,000 kanakas in Queensland during the next five years.

Senator DRAKE

- I do not think there is anything to prevent it, supposing they elect not to go back to their islands. We know as a matter of fact that a certain number go back to the islands, and fresh recruits are introduced. Probably the same movement will go on, and I confess myself that I hope it will.

Senator Clemons

- Does the Postmaster-General say that the planters will have an opportunity in spite of this Bill and any existing legislation of employing 8,000 kanakas during the next five years?

Senator DRAKE

- I do not think there is anything in the State laws, or in this Bill to prevent them re-engaging kanakas up to the 31st December, 1906.

Senator Clemons

- That materially changes the situation from my point of view.

Senator Higgs

- We must allow for the 1,500 who are likely to die in the five years, because about 300 die every year.

Senator DRAKE

- Certainly ; the. mortality must be taken into account. There is no provision for deportation, except as to kanakas who are not under any agreement in 1906.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Seventeen hundred came in last year.

Senator DRAKE

- That is so, but without going into figures, a considerable number of kanakas will be available to the 31st December, 1906, and wherever white labour is employed to displace kanaka labour, the kanaka labour displaced will become available for districts where white labour has not yet displaced coloured labour. Knowing what human nature is, we can hardly doubt that when a bounty of 4s. per ton on cane sugar is offered, as it will be, to the man who can prove that he has grown sugar "cane by white labour, the farmers who have been employing a few kanakas will dispense with those few kanakas in order to get that bounty, and the kanakas dispensed with in that way will be available for employment in other districts of the State, in which it may be more difficult to get white labour to take the place of coloured labour.

Senator Charleston

- In those places they would not be able to participate in the bonus.

Senator DRAKE

- Certainly not. It is only granted in the case of cane grown exclusively by white labour.

Senator Charleston

- Therefore Bundaberg would get the bonus.

Senator Fraser

- Bundaberg would get it all, and the north would get nothing.

<page>7572</page>

Senator DRAKE

- I do not say Bundaberg or any other district, but I have admitted that in some districts in Queensland it will be more difficult to substitute white labour for the labour used at the present time than it will be in other districts. The Bill introduced by the Government endeavours, and, I think, succeeds in steering between two extremes. If we proposed to remove kanakas sooner than is proposed by this Bill, if we did not do an injustice, we should certainly be making it more difficult for the persons engaged in the sugar industry to adjust themselves to the altered conditions'. On the other hand, I think that if we proposed to extend the time beyond the limit fixed in the Bill, we should not be faithful to the pledges which the Prime Minister gave to the people of Australia. It is a matter, of course, for Parliament to decide, but I submit the measure to the Senate in the belief that we have done justice to the persons engaged in the industry, and have fulfilled the pledges given by the Prime Minister to the people of Australia in January of this year. Before I sit down I have, in fulfilment of a promise I made, to read a telegram which I received on 19th September of this year. When the telegram was sent to me, I replied that I thought the proper way to bring the matter before the Senate would be by petition ; but I said at the same time, that if the petition did not reach me before this debate came on, I would read the telegram to the Senate.

Senator Clemons

- Will that be quite in order, in view of the decision we have arrived at 1

Senator DRAKE

- Well, it never occurred to me before that it would not be in order for me to read a telegram in the course of a speech.

Senator Clemons

- We had an objection to a telegram being read only this afternoon.

Senator DRAKE

- That was by an honorable senator who had not at the time the floor of the House. What that honorable senator wanted to do was to get up and read a telegram when there was no question before the House.

Senator Millen

- Does the honorable and learned senator propose to put the telegram on the table of the House 1
Senator DRAKE

-I shall put the telegram on the table, or anywhere else.

Senator Clemons

- I rise to a point "of order. I wish to say that I do so without any animosity whatever towards the Postmaster-General. I do not object to his reading the telegram, but I should like to have the ruling of the President upon the question. B

The PRESIDENT

- I think the honorable and learned senator will not be out of order, but I point out that he is proposing to do exactly what it was objected that I should do.

Senator DRAKE

- It must be understood that I do not admit for a moment that the action I take in reading this telegram is at all analogous to the action proposed to be taken yesterday, and to which I raised some objection. This is the telegram : - " The municipal councils of Townsville, Mackay, Cooktown, and Divisional Boards, Ayr, Wangaratta, Cardwell, Dalrymple, Daintree, Hinchbrook, Maroochy, Thuringowa, Johnstone, Townsville Chamber Commerce having decided representation be made to Federal Parliament on subject retention kanakas sugar plantations (1) request you, as senator Queensland, place before Senate views of these representative institutions, as embodied in undermentioned resolution, other local authorities considering subject. But proposed introduction Kanaka Bill precludes writing their decisions Brisbane, amongst these South Brisbane, on sympathy resolution - one that the members of this council, noticing the intention of the Federal Premier to immediately introduce legislation to deal with the employment of Polynesian, labour in the sugar-cane-fields of Queensland - respectfully urges the following considerations for the attention of the Commonwealth Government : - 1. That the large and important industries of this position of the Commonwealth - the pastoral, because of the recent severe visitation of the tick pest, and along series of unprecedented, destructive droughts ; the agricultural; because of the ravages from fruit-fly grubs and other insect pests ; and the mining, because of obstacles to developments, due to drought and the absence of proper means of communication with the public highways - have all suffered serious deterioration, and no longer give adequate compensation for the heavy expenditure of money and labour involved in their establishment. 2. While the productiveness of the North Queensland industries has been impaired in this manner, a corresponding shrinkage in public revenue has taken place, involving the imposition of extra taxation to add to the burdens, of the white settlers. 3. The possibilities of federal legislative action influencing the conditions of State industries were not appreciated at the general elections, as is indicated by the comparatively insignificant poll brought out by the sugar-growing districts of North Queensland, and the complexion of the representation of these divisions in the Federal Parliament, should not unduly weigh with the Government in framing their course of action. 4. Dr. Maxwell's report on the economic conditions of the sugar industry conclusively shows the employment of tropical labour in the northern zone, if the industry is to continue profitable in the form in which it has been established. 5. The employment of Polynesians is regulated by conditions safeguarding white settlers, and also conserving the interests of the native by a general process of substitution small plantations, worked by white* families, for large plantations ; the tendency is to reduce the necessity for black labour by importing- greater economy into the working of the sugared, but any attempt to shorten this progress would be attended by failure. (3. The view taken by the sugar-farmers as to the possibility of pursuing the industry profitably under any such altered conditions as those proposed by the Federal Premier is indicated by the cessation of* preparatory operations in nearly all North Queensland districts. 7. With the exception of Dr. Maxwell, whose reference excluded any expression of opinion as to the merits or otherwise of Polynesian labour, no Federal officer has yet visited North Queensland with a view of acquainting the Government with the true conditions of the industry. Under these circumstances the members of the council urge that no action shall be taken by the Federal Parliament whereby the employment of kanaka labour in the production of sugar will be interfered with, restricted or prohibited, while strongly advocating measures for the exclusion of undesirable Asiatic aliens.

MUB.DO CAMERON,

Mayor

Senator Higgs

- Is it not a mistake to introduce that into a speech in favour of the Bill ?

<page>7573</page>

Senator DRAKE

- To that telegram I replied - ')

I suggest that representations of municipal councils, as contained in your telegram of yesterday be embodied in petition for presentation to Senate. If debate on Pacific Island Labourers

Bill comes- on before such petition reaches me, I will read your telegram to the Senate, but without committing myself to agreement with the views expressed. With great respect.

Senator Charleston

- I desire to know, sir, if Senator Drake 'was in order in reading a document conveying to the Senate exactly the same information as we might have expected from Mr. Philp's communication to yourself, which we have decided should not be introduced at this stage.

The PRESIDENT

- I do not think that the Senate has come to any conclusion in the matter, but the Postmaster-General was quite in order in reading a telegram from his constituents. Any communication bearing on the subject which will give information to the Senate can be read by an honorable senator in the course of his speech, whether it is from the Premier, or from a district council, or from a corporation.

Senator DRAKE

- It may have been overlooked by Senator Charleston that I was requested, as a senator of Queensland, to place these views before the Senate. In my reply to the Mayor of Townsville, I suggested - in fact, recommended to him - that if he desired to put his views before the Senate he should do so in the form of a petition, and send it down. At the same time, as there was some probability that the Bill might come on here before it could get down, in my telegram I said -

If debate on Pacific Islands Bill comes on before such petition reaches me, I shall read your telegram to Senate, but without committing myself to agreement with the views expressed.

I am not afraid of all sides of this question being heard. I am not afraid of representations from any part of Queensland or from any section of its people. I have simply fulfilled my promise to read that telegram without comment.

Senator Charleston

- I desire to explain that I did not catch ,the first words of the Minister.

<page>7574</page>

Senator WALKER

- Unfortunately I shall not be able to speak at any great length, as I have to leave in about ten minutes. I congratulate the Postmaster-General on his very pleasing and moderate way of placing this measure before the Senate. I believe that the difference between the, two sides of the Chamber is largely as to the time to be allowed for deporting the islanders. The Government ought to have offered Members of Parliament an opportunity of visiting the sugar districts. Had that course been taken, no doubt many of us would have learned what it is to work in cane-fields during the summer months. Some of us have lived in the tropics for years. Dr. Maxwell's report proves very clearly that in Queensland there may be said to be three zones for sugar cultivation, and in committee it will be the duty of some of us to propose 'that a difference be made between the sugar planters in the Bundaberg district, the Mackay district, and the Cairns district. In days gone by, sugar was grown in the Logan district, but the frost was so great that sugar-growing practically ceased there. The Commonwealth has been established to promote the common weal of the inhabitants of Australia. In Queensland there are three districts. In southern Queensland the referendum was against federation by 4,000 votes. In central Queensland it was in favour of federation by 2,000 votes, so that between central and southern Queensland the population declined by 2,000 votes to accept federation. Fortunately, as many of us think, northern Queensland came to the rescue and gave a surplus of 9,000 votes in favour of federation. . Queensland came into the Federation by a majority of 7,000 votes, owing largely to the verdict of northern Queensland. I believe that every sugar planter and every man employed on sugar plantations voted in favour of federation. Are we to punish them for having come in by saying to them - "You must get quit of black labour, and if you cannot do with white labour you must throw up the millions of money you have invested in the sugar industry, and seek elsewhere for a livelihood " ? It is ridiculous to imagine that we, living in the southern

part of Australia, are capable of judging of the conditions of living in the northern and tropical regions. I have no intention of quoting a number of letters, papers, and reports that have been sent to me. It seems to me that those who have time might, at their leisure, read the speech of Mr. R. Edwards, the member for Oxley, in the other House, on the 5th and 6th of this month, as it contains a very good summary of the position of the sugar industry in Queensland. The Queensland Government have invested £538,000 in central sugar mills. I believe that black labour is not employed in the mills, but merely in cultivation. If black labour were to cease, the

Government would probably find a great deal of difficulty in recovering that money. If we are to punish Queensland, I am not at all clear that it will not have a moral fight to ask the Federal Government to refund that expenditure of £538,000. I should have liked the Government to have appointed a commission of inquiry, but I do not intend to make any proposal on the subject. We are certainly very fortunate in having got Dr. Maxwell's reports. I congratulate the Queensland Government upon having an officer who can give such interesting and reliable information.

Senator Higgs

- Very interesting, but not very reliable.

Senator WALKER

- This reference to reliability reminds me that the other day a contract was made to send twenty men up from Townsville to the Mourilyan plantation to do work, and that within a week every one of them threw it up. It was found that the climate was too trying. Senator Playford says very truly that, as a rule, we must look to the representatives of a State as evidencing its view on a particular point, and, naturally, our anti-kanaka friends say that, as Queensland has sent five representatives here on the one side, as against one representative on the other, it is evident that its views are very pronounced on the subject. That appears to be a very strong argument at first, but we are all aware that one party was much better organized than the other, much to their credit. If you take the aggregate votes for all the candidates who were pro-kanaka and all the votes for the candidates who were anti-kanaka, the former had a surplus of 2,000 Or 3,000 votes.

Senator Higgs

- The honorable senator is not counting the plumping votes.

Senator WALKER

- There were not very many plumping votes. I have a vote for half-a-dozen constituencies- in Queensland, but I have not been able to use it. With regard to the deportation of islanders, I think we shall have to alter the Bill very materially, because otherwise we should be guilty of conduct altogether unbecoming British subjects. I have a letter from Rockhampton instancing a very remarkable case. A kanaka boy was five years of age when he came to Queensland 25 years ago. He is a fencer and bush carpenter, and a very handy man. He lives at Emu Park, but unfortunately he never applied for any exemption ticket. If he has to be sent back to his island, the probability is that he will be massacred. There are other cases. At Fairymead, Messrs. Young's plantation, there are married couples who have been there for very many years. It would be downright cruelty to send these people back.

Senator Higgs

- Did the honorable senator say that they would be massacred if they went back 1

Senator WALKER

- Many of them would be massacred, and the honorable senator has heard evidence of that fact. Many people fear that the kanaka will create what is called a "piebald Australia." We have had the kanaka in Queensland for 36 years, and in that time only 41 half-castes between whites and kanakas were born. Surely that does not look as if there were any very great danger from that source. Almost all the chambers of commerce, agricultural societies, some of the harbor boards, and a few of the municipal councils are against this proposed action. Many honorable senators were returned largely by the country vote. Take the electorate of Maranoa in the other House - do honorable senators think that there is a single kanaka in that electorate, and yet its representative coolly tells us that the kanaka would not stay five minutes if he had his way. How very easy it is to be generous at the expense of other persons. That honorable member could have stated, if he had liked, that there was a contract some years ago to make a railway between Mourilyan and Geraldton, in Queensland; that the contractors had to give it up, and that Chinese had to be got to construct it, because the whites could not stand the climate. I acknowledge

that those who differ from us on this question are actuated by as honorable motives as we are, but having lived in Queensland for 25 years, and in the tropics for several years, and having year after year gone all over the tropics, I do not think I should be faithful to my old' fellow colonists if I did not stand up for them, and I hope always to do so.

<page>7575</page>

Senator MILLEN

- I have no doubt that the Senate will follow me when I say that the subject brought to our notice by this Bill creates the first, occasion on which we find a national sentiment sharply in conflict with what are put forward as the material interests of a particular State. For that reason, I feel certain that honorable senators, whatever their political views may be, will endeavour to be extremely careful to see that everything which is put before them on behalf of Queensland or the sugar industry is given full and fair consideration. For that reason, too, I say that I was pleased that the Postmaster-General, in submitting this motion, should have been at some pains to show what is the real public sentiment of the State from which he comes. Whatever may be our views upon the question of the employment of kanaka labour, or however determined we may be to give effect to them, I feel certain that there can be no one in this Senate who wishes to do any injury to any industry or to any State. On the contrary, I am sure that we all accept it as a simple duty, especially in the early days of federation, to endeavour by our legislation to minimize the shock which must necessarily accompany the transition from the old order to the new. Following the lines laid down by the Postmaster-General, I should like to pay a little attention to the attitude of Queensland upon this matter. I do so for the simple reason that I am particularly anxious - as I am sure we all are - that nothing shall be done to give any just cause for a feeling of irritation on the part of any State towards the Commonwealth. In speaking of the attitude of Queensland I do not refer to the resolutions and petitions which have emanated either from those directly concerned in the sugar-growing industry, or from public bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce, or similar institutions. They very properly have representations to make on the part of their members, and those representations, I am sure, the members of this or any other Parliament would feel it to be a simple duty to receive with respect. But I refer to the utterance of many of the public men of Queensland, who have the right to be regarded as the representatives of their State. These protests are extremely vague, but I think it is possible to find underlying them all a feeling of soreness, and a belief that the action of the members of this Parliament in some way or other represents a less generous treatment than Queensland had a right to expect, and that the Government responsible for this Bill, and the Parliament which passes it, will stand guilty of a breach of faith. In order that I may not be deemed to be exaggerating when I define that as the attitude of the public men of

Queensland, I should like to read a short extract from a speech by a member of the present Ministry of the State. It is an utterance delivered by the Hon. Mr. Gray during the debate on the Address in Reply in the Queensland Parliament. I take it not as an isolated instance, because if honorable senators read the debate they will see that utterances on the same lines were made by many other members of the same Parliament. Mr. Gray said -

For myself, having been engaged in this industry in a practical way for the past twenty years, I feel strongly indeed on the position - the unwarrantable position taken up by the Prime Minister in his first manifesto, practically taking exception to what has been encouraged here* during the past thirty-three years by legislation - endeavouring to injure - I can put it in no other way - possibly the second, certainly the third, industry in this colony. In fact I look upon it as practically a concealment of enactments in this colony which were first brought in in 1868, and continued to be confirmed and endorsed by the several Ministries - seventeen in number - from that period to the present time. And also I say it is repudiation of a bond entered into between the administrations during that period and the sugar planters.

It is quite evident that it is worth while for the Senate, in order - to prevent any cause for a disturbance of the good relations that ought to exist between the Commonwealth and any State, to devote some little time to trying to dispel the very erroneous idea that seems to have got into the minds of many of the public men of that State. I should like to show, as I think I can, not only that Queensland could have been under no misapprehension as to what would happen if she joined the Federation, but also that she did know what would happen. My honorable friend and -colleague, Senator Walker, has referred to the fact that the voters in the districts more particularly concerned in the employment of kanaka labour gave an

overwhelming vote in favour of the adoption of the Federal Constitution. He argued from that fact that we should deal generously with Queensland in regard to this Bill, considering the loyalty of those districts to the federal sentiment. But surely there is another way of looking- at the facts. If I can show that the voters in those districts knew what would follow from the establishment of federation, I am entitled to argue that the 9,000 majority which they cast in favour of the adoption of the Constitution was practically a declaration by the districts in which those votes were cast that they at least were favorable to "the idea of the abolition of the kanaka. This question, as the Postmaster-General has pointed out, is by no means new in Queens-' land, and as proving my statement that Queensland knew what the attitude of the southern States was upon this question I will refer to the report of a commission appointed in Queensland in the year 1889. The commission, which was composed of three members, presented two reports: Two members were in favour of the continuance of kanaka labour, but the minority report, signed by the late Mr. W. H. Groom, in dealing with this question, pointed out -

Moreover, if Australia is to be a great federated dominion on the basis of the Dominion of Canada, with a dominion Parliament and a dominion Executive, and the federated colonies are still to retain their present Governments and Legislatures, then, without question, the further admission into any colony of Asiatic or coloured races is definitely settled, because federation of the colonies means the exclusion of all Asiatics And coloured races from Australia, except to a very inappreciable extent. The public men of the larger colonies of Victoria and New South Wales have already intimated in their several addresses at the recent general elections in those colonies their belief in federation, and their intention at the same time to keep . Australia free from all Asiatic or coloured races. Hence it is clear that if Queensland is to join in a federated Australia - and the aspirations of all her public men Are in that direction - the request of the planters for the extension of the terms of the 11th section of The PacificIslandsLabourers Act, of* 1880 Amendment Act of 1885 is practically disposed of.

As far back as the year 1889 there was this recognition on the part of a gentleman entitled to be regarded as in the forefront of public men in Queensland - that if that State entered the Federation the kanaka must go, that the determination on the part of the southern States was fixed upon this point of the abolition of coloured labour. The Postmaster-General has made other quotations of a similar kind, and in support of his contention I would remind honorable senators that, during the discussion in Queensland previous to the federal referendum, this matter was forcibly put before the electors. It was put forward both as a warning by those who desired to see the continuance of kanaka labour, and as an inducement to those who were opposed to it. It is, therefore, idle to pretend that Queensland did not know what she was doing at that time, or had any reason to expect that there would be any larger measure of liberality extended to her than is proposed by this

Bill. As the Postmaster-General has pointed out, the very presence in this Senate of the representatives of Queensland is further evidence in the same direction. How, I ask, can we be said to be doing any injustice to that State when we are only carrying out that which, speaking through her representatives, Queensland says she wishes to have done ? Senator Walker endeavours to explain away the result of the poll in Queensland by quoting certain figures. Fortunately for me, I also happen to have dropped across the figures to which he refers. They were published in the Brisbane Courier of Thursday last. It is there argued that the facts show that the votes cast for Senators Higgs, Dawson, Stewart, Drake, Glassey, and Mr. Hoolan totalled roundly 139,000, whilst the votes cast for the other candidates, excluding Mr. Buzacott, totalled 142,000. I accept those figures as they stand. There is a difference of 3,436 votes. But those votes simply mean one-sixth that number of electors, because at that election every voter had six votes. So that, roughly speaking, those figures as they stand mean that 600 fewer electors voted for the successful candidates, who were the anti-kanaka candidates, than for all the other candidates put together.

Senator Drake

- Then it has to be remembered that the electors were allowed to plump.

<page>7577</page>

Senator MILLEN

- When the figures put forward by the opponents of this Bill show that there were only 600 more voters on the one side than on the other, the most that can be contended from those figures is that sides are nearly equally divided. By no method of reasoning can it be shown that Queensland pronounced in favour of the

continuance of the kanaka labour. But let us analyze these figures a little more carefully. Nothing is more comforting to a defeated candidate at an election than to argue that on the figures he ought to have won. I have done it myself. It is the only drop of comfort that is left to one under those circumstances. There is a great deal in being able to say when one is defeated at an election - " Ah, at least I have had a moral victory ! " It at all events cheers the defeated man, and I have never discovered that it does any harm to the successful one. On an analysis, then, of these figures we discover to what a considerable extent that has happened here. For the House of Representatives there were 62,000 voters, who also had the right to vote for members of the Senate. We may take it for granted that practically the same number of men who went to the polling booth to vote for members of the House of Representatives also voted for members of the Senate. If each man had cast six votes, the total number of votes cast by the 62,000 voters would have been 372,000. But as a matter of fact, the total number polled was only 282,000. There was a drop of 90,000 votes. If honorable senators are prepared to assume that many voters who went to vote for members of the House of Representatives refrained from voting for members of the Senate, they are welcome to do so ; but I think -the difference is to be explained by the large number of plumpers. For whom were those plumpers likely to have been cast ? I can only assume, knowing the organization that prevails in Queensland amongst the labour' party - which put forward only three candidates - that one is justified in concluding that a very large number of those absent votes were the wasted votes of those who, if they had recorded the full strength of their voting power, would have been voting for the abolition of kanaka labour.

Senator Dobson

- The only question is that of the terms upon which' the kanaka is to go. Is the question the honorable member is dealing with important, therefore ?

Senator MILLEN

- My hope is that this debate will go a long way to disabuse the minds of Queenslanders of the idea that the representatives of the southern States are endeavouring to act hastily and to legislate upon a matter of which they know nothing. However, I will now come nearer home, to the subject of the Bill itself. I should like to point out, as an answer to those who seek the continuance of kanaka labour, that we have a sugar industry in New South Wales. As a matter of absolute fairness to those engaged in that industry, seeing that it is largely carried on by white labour, it is only fair that they should be put on an equality with the sugar-growers of Queensland. They have shown, in the northern portion of New South Wales, that sugar can be successfully produced by white labour. If any difference is to be displayed by legislation to different classes of growers, the preference should certainly be given to those who employ only white labour instead of to those who employ coloured labour.

Senator Clemons

- Here the Tariff turns up incidentally.

Senator MILLEN

- Cannot the honorable and learned senator keep tha't down for the time.

Senator Clemons

- This is part and parcel of the request.

<page>7578</page>

Senator MILLEN

- We can take it in its proper place. The very serious question presents itself whether the sugar industry of Queensland can be continued without the help of kanaka labour. This is a question which no doubt has occupied the attention of honorable senators. No honorable senator could wish to destroy- an important industry in any part of the Commonwealth, and so far as I am concerned, seeing that I have lived for many years in (a. portion of the country adjoining, and very similar to Queensland, there is a special reason why I should have rather a tender regard for that State. I know that, so far as the pastoral industry is concerned, Queensland, as well as my own State, has suffered very heavily from the recent drought. Queensland's losses have been even greater than those of New South Wales. For that reason I should like to do something, if I could, to ease the shock to Queensland which ' may accompany the imposition of the legislation before us. I want to see now whether all these predictions of disaster and ruin - which, by the way, usually accompany every effort at reform - are likely to be brought about if the kanaka labour is abolished. There are two arguments presented by those who oppose this Bill. The first is that it is

impossible for the industry to be carried on without the employment of kanaka labour. The* second contention is that' time should be given - meaning by that a time greater than the limit fixed in the Bill - to permit of the change. It seems to me that these two contentions are utterly destructive one of the other. If it is true that the industry cannot be carried on without the employment of coloured labour, what is to be gained by allowing any period greater than five years for the change to take place 1 If it is true that the industry, if deprived of coloured labour, is to be absolutely destroyed, surely it would be an advantage for the industry to close down as rapidly as possible instead of suffering a lingering death 1

Senator Barrett

- An extension to ten years will not help it.

Senator MILLEN

- It would be better for the industry to be closed within five years instead of ten years, if it cannot carry on without black labour.

Senator Fraser

- It is better that that should take place after a good season.

Senator MILLEN

- I understand from Dr. Maxwell that in the Cairns district the season is a phenomenally good one, although it is not so good in other parts of the sugar growing districts of Queensland. If it is true that the industry cannot be continued without the employment of coloured labour, then it is idle to talk of prolonging the period within which kanaka labour is to cease.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- So far as the northern part of Queensland is concerned ?

Senator MILLEN

- I am speaking of Queensland generally. Those who put forward this claim apply the statement generally. I have a manifesto here from the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, which makes no distinction between one portion of Queensland and another. Their remarks are applied generally, and I spoke in the same way.

Senator Glassey

- They are issuing manifestoes every week.

Senator MILLEN

- I confess I am somewhat tired of reading them. However, I have obtained some little relief lately, because as soon as I see the heading of the document I know what it refers to. They are all cast on the same lines. If, on the other hand, time would assist the sugar industry - if it would be possible for the growers to substitute white for black labour by degrees - then we have to consider whether any extension of the time proposed by the Bill would be likely to be of assistance. In endeavouring to work out the proposals of this Bill I find that the time will expire in 1906, so that the growers will have a period of five and a half years from the date of the introduction of this Bill within which to effect the change. What further time can be reasonably asked for? If honorable senators - especially those who had an opportunity of listening to Dr. Maxwell this morning - remember his figures, they will find that they work out so far as they relate to the various sugar-growing districts of Queensland in this way : In the Bundaberg district the proposals of the Bill mean a displacement of 400 kanakas a year in round numbers. Surely it will not be a very serious thing to replace 400 coloured labourers by white men every year in a district like that 1 In the Mackay district the growers will be faced with the awful problem of finding 295 other labourers every year to replace the kanaka. I have seen that number of men got together at very short notice, put on board a special train, and sent off at once to a shearing district, on the occasion of a strike. It cannot be a very serious problem. In the Cairns district it will mean the displacement of 830- kanakas each year. I cannot regard that as a serious problem either, provided that the white men will take the work. The mere finding of the labour does not appear to be a serious matter. - If we were to extend the time to ten years the only result would be to reduce the numbers I have quoted by one-half. In that respect the difference between five and ten years is so immaterial that I am convinced that if it is possible for this industry to be continued, at the end of the ten years' limit, it is equally possible to continue it after five years' notice. History has a rather curious fashion of repeating itself, and, looking at the alarming statements made as to the probable failure of the sugar industry, I have been rather struck by a paragraph in that excellent work by Mr. McKenzie, entitled The Nineteenth Century. Writing of slavery, he

states : -

It had been confidently foretold that the abolition of slavery must accomplish the ruin of the West India Islands. Predictions of universal ruin are the habitual defence of endangered monopolies, and the growers of sugar continue to fight their battles on the old lines.

If Mr. McKenzie stood here to-day he could not sum up the position better. I have mentioned the rate at which fresh labour will have to be found to take the place of the dispossessed kanaka. The question is whether we can find it. Now, in reading the debate on the Address in Reply, in the Brisbane Parliament, I find that from the leader of the Opposition in the one House, to the last member who spoke in the Legislative Council, very frequent references were made to the large number of unemployed in Queensland.

<page>7579</page>

Senator Dobson

- Did not Senator Millen find it stated that they would not go to the tropical districts?

Senator MILLEN

- I will come to that presently. Mr. W. F. Taylor, a member of the Queensland Legislative Council, said - Not a day passes - not even excepting Sundays - but somebody comes to my door to beg a ticket for a night's lodging. This state of affairs should not exist in a country like this, a country teeming with natural wealth, and with its small population. Surely there must be something radically wrong for that condition of affairs to exist. We know that in every community there will be individuals who are impoverished by their own acts, but that is. not the case here. Those people say they have been all over the country - to Maryborough, Bundaberg, and elsewhere - and they cannot get work ; they are starving. They are sleeping out these cold nights with very little to eat - a lamentable state of affairs which should be thoroughly inquired into.

According to that statement, these men are sleeping out on cold nights. I do not know of anything better calculated to induce a man to hail with satisfaction the prospect of employment in a warm district, than that he should have to sleep out on cold nights. There are several other quotations which I could make. But I venture to think, it must be evident from the statements made by honorable members of both Houses of the Queensland legislature, that there is a sufficient supply of labour available in Queensland.' The question remains whether it can be induced to accept the particular kind of employment offered. That raises the question of why these men do not take to the work. I have had the benefit of a little experience upon a similar question. Some years ago, when the Afghan and the camel were first introduced on the Darling, the question was often asked - " Why does not the white men drive the camel V The answer was that owing to the presence of the Afghan it was impossible for the white man to secure the work. The real solution of the trouble there was not that the employer wanted the camel more than the horse or the- ox, but that he wanted cheap labour. So long as the Afghan was willing to do the work at the rate of £6 a year - and he is still doing it - it was practically impossible for white men to expect to' share in that labour. One thing that always, appears to me to be a most serious consequence of the introduction of a servile race into any district is that the employment of an inferior race in any particular industry has the effect of causing the white labour of the country to regard that form of employment as degrading

It is frequently pointed out that for the most part market gardeners are Chinamen. Have honorable senators ever considered why so few white men take to that form of labour? I admit at once that as a race we are not specially familiar with the smaller branches of cultivation. There is another reason, however, and it is that the Chinaman has been associated with the industry so continuously that there is a natural repugnance on the part of white men to be connected with it.

Senator Playford

- Why, I am a gardener, and have been all my life.

Senator Fraser

- There is no such repugnance.

Senator MILLEN

- Every man speaks within the limits of his own experience.

Senator Fraser

- There are very few Chinese gardeners in Victoria.

Senator MILLEN

- I am not speaking for Victoria, but I know what my own experience has . taught me. On more than one occasion when living in the Darling district, I, like many others, found it necessary to keep my own garden, or do without vegetables. When I attempted to secure a white man for the position of gardener, the reply generally came with a characteristic adjective that it was " Chow's work."

Senator Sir William Zeal

- It is too hot for them there.

Senator MILLEN

- What hotter work could there be in the Darling district than that of shearing t

Senator Sir William Zeal

- Shearers are under cover.

<page>7580</page>

Senator MILLEN

- But what kind of cover ? I have touched the roof of a shed myself and found it burning hot. As some honorable senators appear to resent my conclusion in this respect, let me give them a fact that is unanswerable. What was the position, in America after the abolition of slavery, and what gave rise to the " mean white t The labour formerly done in the cotton' field by the coloured man was looked upon as " negro's work," and the white man refused to do it. In many instances, he had no means of becoming a planter himself, and so he developed into the meanest of God's creatures, the " mean white." - That is ample justification for my statement that the effect of the admission of servile races into a country is that they degrade the forms of labour with which they become associated.

I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that in the discussion which ranges round the possibility of obtaining the labour, I invariably find the use of the term "reliable labour." In the several debates - and I have taken the trouble to read those to which the Postmaster-General has referred, as well as others - I find that the advocates of the introduction of the kanaka always say that it is impossible to obtain this " reliable labour." "What does that mean? Fortunately, I have been able to obtain a slight insight into it. The other day a paragraph appeared in a Sydney newspaper, setting forth that the Orient Company was about to make the experiment of employing lascars as stokers and greasers in the place of Europeans. The chief engineer was interviewed on the subject, and was asked whether the change was made on the ground of economy. He replied that it was not; because the company were putting on two coloured men for every white man which they had employed formerly in these capacities, so that the cost was about the same. He said, however, that the lascars were "more reliable." From the tone of the interview, I gathered that what he meant was that the lascars were more obedient and docile. He went on to say that they were less liable to become intoxicated when a steamer was on the point of leaving port. I do not wish to argue as to the correctness or otherwise of that statement. A similar contention is raised in Queensland with regard to Polynesian labour. If that is the reason, however, it is one that should have no weight with us. If there is to be any dispute between white workers and their employers, it can be no part of our functions to allow the introduction of the kanaka to be used as a means of disturbing their relations. Whatever differences occur, they must be allowed to work out and adjust their conditions without the introduction of such a foreign element as that of coloured labour. We are told that cheap labour is required. How cheap it ought to be I do not know, but I was very much struck, on reading the report to which I have referred, to find this position demonstrated : that in the southern sugar-growing districts of Queensland white labour is obtained at a cheaper rate than the kanaka costs in the more northern portions, and that the kanaka in turn is dearer than the white labour employed in the production of beet sugar in Europe. That is a very strong position indeed, but it is clearly stated in the report of the Royal commission appointed to inquire into the sugar industry in Queensland in 1899. This is the statement made in the report : -

In Queensland, however, at the present time, allowing for the cost of the introduction fees payable under the Pacific Islanders Act, wages, rations, and all other expenses, it is calculated that kanaka labour (indented), costs about sixteen shillings per week, or considerably more than even the European labourers employed in the production of beet sugar receive.

That establishes the position that the kanaka is a more highly-paid workman than the European beet sugar-grower. But the report, speaking of the success accomplished by Mr. Grimes in one of the southern districts of Queensland, goes on to say -

Mr. Grimes's success, however, may be accounted for by the fact that, situated as he is in a populous district, his labour costs him less than a northern planter has to pay for his kanakas.

So that it is demonstrated, according to this report, that in the southern districts the white labour employed in the sugar industry receives less than the kanaka in the north, and the kanaka in the north receives more than is paid to the white labourer engaged in the production of beet sugar in Europe. If that is so, we are almost forced to ask whether or not it is an industry which establishes any particular claim upon our sympathies. We are not, I think, particularly concerned in bolstering up an industry which pays white workers less wages than kanakas, and if the industry cannot pay white workers better wages than are paid to kanakas, it might, perhaps, be better to get rid of it altogether.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Dr. Maxwell says that the white labour is paid double as much as the kanaka labour.

<page>7581</page>

Senator MILLEN

- Dr. Maxwell does say so. I was pleased to have an opportunity of meeting Dr. Maxwell, who has an extensive and intimate knowledge of this subject, and a happy knack of lucidly expressing it. I have quoted a statement from the majority report of the Royal commission, and the late Mr. Groom, who presented the minority report, did not controvert that statement. I am inclined to think that Dr. Maxwell, in stating the relative cost of white and coloured labour, gave the cost of coloured labour as from the 1st January to the 31st December, but, as regards white labour, the figures only apply to the period for which the white man works.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Oh ! no.

Senator MILLEN

- I am inclined to that opinion for this reason - the white man is a casual labourer only, and the kanaka is a permanent hand during the term of his engagement. Dr. Maxwell points out that when a white man becomes tired of his job, or sick, he leaves it and goes away. The plantation books, the source from which Dr. Maxwell obtains his information, will only show the amount paid to white labourers during the term for which they worked, and if the figures for white labour are taken to apply as from the 1st January to the 31st December, irrespective of any stoppages, a considerable reduction will be shown.

Senator Dobson

- I think Dr. Maxwell's figures take account of what the honorable senator mentions.

Senator MILLEN

- It is probable that the figures have been arrived at in this way : A certain number of men are employed this month at a certain wage, but the work becoming slack some are discharged. The kanaka cannot be discharged, his cost goes on throughout the year, and it seems to me possible that the cost of the white man is made to appear relatively much higher than it really is.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Dr. Maxwell deals with white labour separately.

Senator MILLEN

- That, at all events, is the interpretation I have placed upon it. The wages of the white men are calculated during the time they are working, and those paid to the kanaka are paid during the whole of his term whether he is working or idle.

Senator DAWSON

- We have to take hospital expenses into account.

Senator MILLEN

- That is all included in the cost. The Postmaster-General has properly, I think, if only incidentally, referred to another proposal, which the Senate will shortly have to consider, and which must in all fairness be referred to in dealing with this matter. That is the proposal to subsidize the sugar industry of Queensland to the extent of £5 per ton. Seeing that the figures for the last two years are admittedly below the normal production, and accepting an estimate of 150,000 tons as the production per annum, and the value of the sugar at £10 per ton, the value of the total product will be about £1,500,000. On the assumption that there is a crop of 150,000 ton?, and that there is a bonus to be given equal to £5 per ton, it really means that the subsidy paid to the sugar industry of the Commonwealth will be £750,000 a year.

Senator Glassey

- No; they only offer £3 per ton.

Senator MILLEN

- No ; we are offering £5 per ton in this way - £3 per ton and a rebate of £2 per ton on the excise. If the sugar is grown by white labour it will be subsidized to the extent of £5 per ton. There is the difference between the excise and the customs duty.

Senator Playford

- Equal to £3 per ton.

<page>7582</page>

Senator MILLEN

- And the rebate off the excise, of 4s. per ton of cane, where the cane is grown by white labour. That leaves a margin of £5 per ton, as a subsidy, where the cane is grown exclusively by white labour. That being so, I say that the Commonwealth is offering £750,000 a year as a subsidy for those who will grow sugar with white labour. In the flood of literature on this subject which has overtaken honorable senators from our friends who are interested in the industry in Queensland, some very interesting statements are made ; and amongst others the statement that £810,000 is the total amount distributed each year amongst the white workers of Queensland in connexion with the sugar industry. That £810,000 must be seriously discounted, however, for it includes no less than £172,000 for wages, rations, clothing, and medical attendance for kanakas. That is put down as money paid to the whites, although it is really expended for rations and attendance for the kanakas, the assumption being that the rations purchased for the kanakas are purchased from white people. But if we take off that £172,000, which really ought to be charged against the kanakas, we find that the total amount being distributed to the white workers, even on the showing of the advocates of those engaged in the industry, is something like £600,000 a year, and I have just pointed out that the Commonwealth to-day offers £750,000 a year to the sugar-growers if they will continue to grow sugar by white labour. If the industry cannot be profitably carried on with such an offer as that, is it not time that we recognised the inevitable, and allowed it to go the way of all other unprofitable industries ?

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- The 750,000 is in addition to the £810,000.

Senator MILLEN

- It is an addition to the money we have to put into their pockets. It reduces the £810,000 very considerably, and we shall be paying practically the whole of their wages bill. In connexion with the proposed fiscal arrangement, Dr. Maxwell gave us some figures which I think arrested the attention of every honorable senator who had an opportunity of listening to them. He pointed out that to displace coloured labour in various districts of Queensland it would cost these several sums : He estimated that the difference between the cost of the kanaka and white labourer in the Bundaberg district would be £35, in the Mackay district £45, and in the Cairns district £55. There was in each of these districts a certain number of kanakas, and multiplying the number of kanakas by the difference in price between the cost of kanaka and white labour we get these results. To substitute white labour for kanaka labour in the Bundaberg district it will cost £67,113 a year, in the Mackay £66,927, and in the Cairns district £235,199. That is if in place of kanakas white labourers are employed and paid the higher wages they are receiving and which they would naturally expect to receive. Then the bonus of £5 per ton on the product in the several districts figures out in this way. The production will entitle the Bundaberg district to a bonus of £217,000, the Mackay district to £94,288, and the Cairns district to £227,525. That would be the bonus estimated not upon the production for 1902, but upon the result of the last two years' operations, in which Dr. Maxwell candidly tells us the production was much below the normal capacity of the district owing to recent droughts through which the colony had passed. Taking, then, the figures upon the results of the diminished products of those two years we find that by the exclusive employment of white labour the Bundaberg district would have thrown upon it the additional cost of £67,113, but would receive a bonus of £217,000, or practically a present of £150,000 more than the cost of making the change from kanaka to white labour. In the Mackay district the cost of making the change would be £66,927, and the bonus of £5 per ton on the production of sugar in that district representing £94,288, as the district produces nearly 19,000 tons of sugar, would leave an advantage to the district of £27,360 in making the change. It is

therefore quite clear that those two districts have nothing at all to complain of. Later on it is quite possible that I may have to complain that they are getting altogether too generous treatment from the general taxpayer. Now I come to the Cairns district. There the cost of substituting white for black labour is £2 3 5, 1 9 9 . That district produced 45,400 tons of sugar, and consequently would receive, at the rate of £5 per ton, a bonus of £227,525. In this case there is a shortage payment of £7654. That is either a big or a little sum, according to the standard of comparison. Is it a big item compared to the total value of the industry and the product of that district ? I hardly regard it as a serious figure in view of the big production which goes on there, and the considerable amount of capital which is involved. Viewing it in one way, £7654 does not represent 5s. per cent. interest on the invested capital. I regret to see any industry lose even 5s. per cent. interest; but is there anything very drastic in this proposal for bringing to an end what has been admittedly only an interim arrangement? The utmost inconvenience which can follow on these figures is the reduction of the interest on the capital involved to the extent of 5s. per cent.

Senator Fraser. - Provided you can get white men to do the work.

Senator MILLEN

- If white men cannot be got to do the work the industry is doomed, whether this Bill is passed or not, because, as Dr. Maxwell points out, the kanaka is a declining quantity, legislation or no legislation. We have had the assurance of missionaries who know the islands, and Dr. Maxwell is very clear on the point, that the kanaka is a declining factor. That being so, what is to happen to the Cairns district if the Bill is thrown under the table ? If it is true that the white men will not take to the work the sugar industry in that district is absolutely doomed.

<page>7583</page>

Senator Dobson

- That does not quite follow, because other labour might be employed.

Senator MILLEN

- I want to know what other labour?

Senator Clemons

- The educated black man.

Senator MILLEN

- We are only waiting for the Government to give us an opportunity to pass the legislation which will keep out the other labour. Those who advocate the continuance of the kanaka are brought face to face with this position : - Either they have to discard the contention that the white man will not do the work, or if they adhere to that view they have to admit that the sugar industry in the Cairns district is doomed, irrespective of anything we may do. We ought not then to be charged merely because we hasten the operation of what is a natural and economic law. What is the outlook ? I am not taking the gloomy view which seems to be taken by many honorable senators. The most encouraging report I have read for a long time is that of Dr. Maxwell. It points out that the multiplication of individual farmers, by the subdivision of big estates, has provided a key to the problem in the Bundaberg district. That is only following the operation of a well-known law, with regard to not only sugar, but also many other industries. I wish honorable senators to consider this fact : that whilst that very satisfactory subdivision has taken place in the Bundaberg district, it is too early yet to say it is not likely to take place in the Mackay district, or the Cairns district. The three districts were not settled simultaneously. Bundaberg is differentiated from the other two. It was the first to be settled ; settlement is more firmly established there, and following that subdivision has been brought about. And what has taken place there will sooner or later take place in the other northern districts.

Senator Drake

- Sugar-growing was going on in Mackay long before it began at Bundaberg.

<page>7584</page>

Senator MILLEN

- Still Bundaberg was opened up before the more northern districts, though not as to sugar-growing. Settlement commences on a pastoral basis, and by degrees it becomes changed to agriculture. The district which is first settled first experiences that change, and when it occurs you get the more constant supply of labour to which Dr. Maxwell refers, and I venture to say you get labour which is steadier in its habits. Further than that, there is the subdivision of big estates, and the multiplication of small holders,

which Dr. Maxwell agrees has provided the real solution of this problem. I may be asked if I am prepared to allow tropical Australia to go back to waste rather than employ these coloured people. I do not consider that that question can be properly put at the present moment. We people, coming from a temperate region, have undertaken a big and most interesting experiment, in trying to see what our own race can do in tropical regions. I wish that experiment to have a full and fair opportunity. If, by and by - not after a few years, but after two or three generations - it is found that the experiment is a failure - and I do not believe that it will fail - then it will be time enough to say that we should allow coloured people to come in and take up the work which it has been proved we are not fitted to do. But until the experiment is worked out, I want to see coloured men kept away in order that our own people shall have the fullest and fairest opportunity to show what they can do. The Postmaster-General was good enough to refer to an amendment which I moved to the Address in Reply, and which I have not since regretted. He seems to forget that there is a difference of only six months or a year between the proposal I then submitted and the proposal in -his own Bill. I proposed then that no further importation should take place. What does the Government propose now? Merely to reduce the importation by a third and a half over a limited period. Under my system we should have shortened the time by six or twelve months. Had I known definitely the proposal of the Government I should not have submitted that amendment, but I was not admitted to their confidence. I had not very much confidence in them then and I cannot say that I have now. Their proposal comes so near to my own idea that I readily give it my support. I find that the matter will work out in this way. The term of a kanaka agreement is three years with the right of re-engagement for twelve months. Starting with 8,710 kanakas in the State - the terms of employment cannot exceed four years - the whole of that number would have to leave within four years, if no other importation took place and no other legislation were passed. If the kanakas are deported during the four years in equal number, during 1902, 2,180 would leave, reducing the total to 6,530. But under this Bill the planters would be entitled to bring in three-fourths of the number sent out, so that would mean an accession of 1,635 leaving the kanakas for 1903 at 8,165. In that year 2,041 would be deported and 1,020 brought in, so that in 1904 there would be in all 7,144. No more importations are to be permitted after that time. These 7,144 kanakas would then have a three years' agreement to run, and the deporting of them in three equal batches would mean that we should have in 1904 7,144, in 1905 4,763, and in 1906 there would remain 2,382 to be deported at the end of that year. For very many years in my own State I have prided myself upon always being in the forefront of those who tried to check the introduction not only of the kanaka, but of every coloured race. For that reason perhaps I have felt a little more strongly on this question than I do on ordinary matters, and have occupied the attention of the Senate somewhat longer than I had intended to do.

Senator Major GOULD

- I am quite sure that honorable senators have derived great pleasure from the address of my colleague, Senator Millen, who, as he says, has been at all times in the forefront of every effort to get rid of coloured aliens from his own State. This is a very great question, in the interests of not only Queensland, but of Australia. It is very easy to speak against alien immigration, and against alien labour in the country. But it is only fair that the Commonwealth Parliament should deal with this big question in a very tender and careful manner, so as to make sure that no injustice may be done to persons who have been induced to invest large sums in an industry which I understand is the third largest in Queensland. It behoves us to very carefully consider what has been the trend and the effect of legislation in that State. Let me say here, that so far as my vote is concerned, I am not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but my efforts will be devoted to amending it in the direction in which I think it ought to go. The Postmaster-General has pointed out amongst other things that the private capital invested in the sugar industry of Queensland amounts to something like £6,000,000. I have heard it estimated at £7,000,000 or £8,000,000. But unquestionably, whatever the figures may be, very great interests are concerned in the industry, and we ought not to do anything that can be regarded in the light of ruthless destruction. Whatever may be said as to the undesirability of persons owning large areas of country, or enormous sums of money, or great interests in industries, we have to bear in mind that without capital there cannot be any large development of the territory of our Commonwealth. Again, it has been pointed out by the Postmaster-General that the Queensland Government itself has invested upwards of £500,000 in the sugar industry, in the way of erecting mills to assist the grower of the cane, and to induce the growth of it by small farmers. I believe that it is something like 33 or 35 years since legislation on this question was

first introduced in Queensland, and it is only fair that the people of that State should look for a continuity of the policy that has been in vogue for many years. If honorable senators will take the trouble to refer to the statistics on the subject, it will be found that although, in 1885, it was considered advisable to terminate the importation of kanakas, within a period of five years from that time, the subject was reconsidered. In 1892, the sugar industry was practically at a stand-still.

Senator DAWSON

- But the importation of kanakas was never stopped.

Senator Drake

- What does the honorable and learned senator mean by a standstill?

Senator Major GOULD

- I mean that the area under cane was decreasing. The statistics show that, in 1885, there were 59,000 acres under cane ; in 1886, 54,000 acres; in 1887, 51,000 acres; in 1888 47,000 acres ; in 1889, 49,000 acres ; in 1890, 50,000; and, in 1891, 50,000 acres.

Senator Drake

- What was the result of the crop ?

<page>7585</page>

Senator Major GOULD

- In 1885, there were 55,000 tons of sugar produced. In 1890, the quantity was 68,000. In 1888 and 1889, which appeared to be the worst years, there were only 34,000 tons of sugar produced. But it is the area under cane that has to be considered, and I repeat that in 1892 Queensland was at a stand-still in that respect. Sir Samuel Griffith, who was responsible for the Bill of 1885, was also responsible for the Bill of 1892, by means of which the continuance of the employment of kanaka labour was provided for. A special session was held to deal with the question, and for a special reason - namely, because the sugar industry was declining. If we take the trouble to ascertain what was the effect of the legislation of 1892, it will be found that there was a continuous increase of the area of land under cane. In 1892 there were 55,000 acres under cane. In the year 1900 the area had increased to 108,000 acres, although in that year there was a smaller quantity of sugar produced than in the two preceding years. I find it is estimated that the crop for the present season will be something like 150,000 tons of sugar. That all goes to prove the truth of the contention that the action of Sir Samuel Griffith had a beneficial effect upon the production of sugar, because it gave a better means of obtaining labour for the purpose of planting, harvesting, and cultivating the crop.

Senator McGregor

- The honorable senator's cause and effect are out of order.

Senator Major GOULD

- If we find that a course of legislation is enacted, and that subsequently there is a certain improvement, it is a fair contention that that result has been the effect of the legislation.

Senator McGregor

- The cause was the establishment of the central mills.

Senator Major GOULD

- They were established by the Government with the belief that they would result in an increased production of sugar, although, at the same time, it was provided that the importation of kanakas was to go on for an unlimited period. I do not mean by that to say that the Government of Queensland in 1892 intended that kanaka labour should never be put a stop to. I admit, at once, that ultimately the importation of kanakas must cease. I recognise that as years pass by it will become possible to extend the cultivation of sugar, by means of white labour. But my contention is that we are attempting too rapidly to interfere for the purpose of bringing about the cessation of the importation of the kanakas. I am aware that some people desire to see the appointment of a Royal commission to deal with this question. If such a proposal were made, I have no doubt the Government would object, and further that the result of the report of such a body might depend very much upon who the commissioners were. Therefore, I set on one side any such proposal. I take it for granted that the kanaka must ultimately go. But I say that he should not go within the limited period specified by the Government in their Bill. If we had to deal only with the conditions in the northern parts of New South Wales, or those in the Bundaberg district, I have no doubt that honorable senators would be perfectly prepared to accept the measure in its present form. In the

Bundaberg district, white labour is largely increasing, and black labour is decreasing. The district is becoming settled ; there is a better climate there than there is further north, and men with smaller means are able to utilize the land. As it becomes possible for that to be done, the necessity for black labour will decrease. But, even in the Bundaberg district, there are a large number of planters who say that they cannot do away with the kanaka labour. Senator Millen has ridiculed the idea of black labour being more reliable than white. But are there not grounds for such a contention 1

Senator Staniforth Smith

- Run down the white labour !

<page>7586</page>

Senator Major GOULD

- No, I am not doing so ; but undoubtedly there are certain industries and certain climates to which black labour is more suited. Were I, for instance, compelled to work in the cane fields of Queensland, I am sure that my labour would be found to be very unreliable. Dr. Maxwell says, on page 12 of his report, that there is a certain difficulty about the continuous employment of white labour in the northern part of Queensland. He says -

The facts go to show that there is a notable measure of unreliability amongst the class of men that are taken on for special seasons. It is found, however, that the instability is greatest in the northern district, where the "personal endurance of work "of the white man is the lowest. Consequently it is apparent that much of the instability which is attributed to loose, unstable habits of the white transient labourers should be put down to their sheer inability to do given kinds of continuous work in those natural conditions.

There can be no disgrace to white labour in that.

This is amply indicated by the experiences of the races who are born to labour in tropical conditions ; as the season advanced into the hot months, many of the islanders, Chinese and Hindoos, became incapacitated for cane-cutting, and the "whole force became reduced in labour efficiency."

Then he gives certain examples showing the proportion of employment of white labour during the crushing season, and indicating the causes of those movements. He says -

The first example is taken from the extreme north, in the Cairns district, and this example sets forth that 409 white labourers passed through the books in order to provide and maintain a daily requirement of 88 hands to keep the mill in operation during the season of 30 weeks. This year the crushing has gone on at the same mill for only three weeks, but already 172 men have engaged and left again. The staff required this year is 95 hands.

I read these passages to show that there is something in the contention with regard to the unreliability of other than kanaka labour in the tropical parts of Queensland. But honorable senators will say - " You admit that the kanaka will have to go some time." ' Yes, I do admit that ; and I recognise that by degrees white men would become adapted to the climate and circumstances of northern Queensland. Moreover, the probability is that the harder and more dangerous work of clearing the cane lands will have been done by that time. The country will then be more adapted for white labour than it is now.

Senator DAWSON

- White men do the clearing already.

Senator Major GOULD

- To a certain extent.

Senator DAWSON

- They do it almost wholly.

Senator Major GOULD

- There is another matter to be considered with regard to the reduction of the number of hands, and that is that the reduction applies equally to the most northern as well as the most southern parts of Queensland. It applies equally to the place where they are more dependent upon this class of labour, and to those places where they are less dependent upon it. I find, according to the statistics supplied, that while in the Cairns district there are about 523 white labourers, there are 3,700 kanakas. It will be found that the number of kanakas in the Cairns district is proportionately larger than in the Mackay district, and proportionately larger in the Mackay than in the Bundaberg district, showing that the further north we go the more dependent is this industry upon black labour for the time being. Then it is said that the Government are going to meet this case by giving bonuses to the persons producing sugar by means of

white labour, so that although the white labour will be more costly the grower will have an equivalent. Senator Millen considers that the bonus on next year's crop will be about £750,000, but he will find that he has miscalculated the amount. If the crop were grown entirely by black labour there would still be an advantage of £3 per ton given under the Government Tariff proposals, and there would be £450,000 by way of bonus.

Senator Millen

- If they are employing black labour in their own districts.

Senator Major GOULD

- They have to pay an excise of £3 per ton. In any case the growers get the benefit of the £3 per ton margin. Those who employ white instead of black labour will get the benefit of the £5 margin ; they will be £2 per ton better off than the men who grow their sugar by means of black labour, so that the bonus actually given will be very much less than Senator Millen has suggested. The duty is £2 per ton in favour of white as against black labour. When these figures are worked out, it is found that after paying for white labour at the present rate of wages, instead of black labour, the growers in the Bundaberg district will gain £150,000; in Mackay they will gain £27,000; while in the Cairns districts there will be a loss of £7,000. This shows at once how unequally the bonus will apply. If we could apply it upon a purely scientific basis, it is more than probable we should say to the growers in Bundaberg, and the districts near at hand - " We do not propose to give you any special bonus because we recognise you can afford to grow sugar cane by means of white labour." But when we went further out into the worse climate of Mackay we should give a bigger bonus, and a still bigger bonus to the growers in the Cairns district. In that way we should be able to equalize the position of these three classes. While we are making a great gift to the people in the southern districts we are saying to the people in northern parts of Queensland, "You are not going to receive this benefit, but, as general taxpayers, you will have to contribute to the benefit given to those persons who are in a more favoured position."

<page>7587</page>

Senator Pearce

- But the growers in the Bundaberg district are crying out against the Bill to a greater extent than those at Cairns.

Senator Major GOULD

- They are not doing so now, because they see the prospect of a good bonus, and I do not anticipate that the sugar-growers in New South Wales will make much complaint in view of that fact. We find inequalities in the system proposed by the Government. The Government recognised in the first instance that there was very great justification for the action taken by the Queensland people in declaiming against this Bill.

Senator DAWSON

- The people of Queensland are not doing anything of the kind.

Senator Major GOULD

- I say they are.

Senator DAWSON

- The presence of the Queensland representatives in the labour party here is an answer to that statement.

Senator Major GOULD

- I shall come to that presently. When this Bill was first introduced the following report was presented by Dr. Maxwell to the Queensland Government : -

Brisbane, 5th October, 1901

Sir, -I have the honour to receive your letter of the 4th inst., requesting my views "upon the Pacific Islanders Bill now before the Federal Parliament;" and further requesting me to "furnish you with an unreserved opinion upon the great importance of the sugar industry, and upon the probable effect of such a measure, if passed, upon the industry." The text of the Bill was set forth in the official telegram recalling me to Brisbane, and is before me. Concerning the measure with its present provisions, if it is passed I am persuaded that it will paralyse the industry. One effect will be instant. A very large proportion of the cane-growers are depending upon the banks and other financial sources to aid them in producing and harvesting their crops and in the permanent development of their farms. This aid will stop, and in many cases at once. . . .

That is the opinion expressed by Dr. Maxwell, a gentleman who was brought out by the Government of

Queensland as a world-wide expert ; a man with a vast knowledge of the sugar- growing industry, and a man upon whose honesty of purpose and fairness of report every one can rely absolutely. I know that honorable senators who had the pleasure of listening to him this morning felt that he was giving an honest exposition of the position as it appeared to him, both as the result of special inquiry, and from his knowledge of the sugar industry generally. Therefore, we cannot afford to ignore reports of this character. We have to recognise and consider them. It is all very well for honorable senators - many of whom have no special knowledge of the question - to set themselves up as experts, and to offer their own opinions. After all, unless a man has some special knowledge on the subject, he must be guided by information given to him from authoritative sources, which he has no occasion to disbelieve. We know well that the Government of Queensland have followed this matter up very vigorously by protesting to the Commonwealth Government, on every possible occasion, against the provisions of the measure as it now stands. We know also that every one of the agricultural and pastoral associations in Queensland, as well as the Chambers of Commerce, have entered their protest against such sudden legislation. Let us bear in mind the fact that to the sugar industry in Queensland is largely due the development of our local mercantile marine. The carriage of goods in connexion with the sugar plantations and the return freights have enabled shipping companies to fix their rates very much lower than they could have done otherwise. They have been the means of placing on these coasts larger ships, with better passenger accommodation, than we could have expected otherwise. All these matters ought to be considered most carefully. Some honorable senators claim that the views of the people of Queensland in regard to this question have been proclaimed by the sending of five honorable senators into this House who are in favour of the abolition of kanaka labour within the period of five years. One honorable senator said they advocate the abolition of kanaka labour at once, but we will assume that they are prepared to advocate its abolition within five years. Nevertheless, when we come to look at the way in which the votes were recorded, there is something to be said - although not very much - as to the opinions expressed by the electors at the polls, by giving a smaller number of votes to the men who were against the immediate abolition of the kanaka compared with those who were in favour of the retention of the trade. But we must bear in mind that this question has been prominently before the people of Queensland since the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament.

Senator Glassey

- And before then.

<page>7588</page>

Senator Major GOULD

- Both before and since. What has been the opinion expressed by the electors since then 1 The Queensland Government have been fighting very hotly against the closing down of the kanaka trade, and yet we find that they have secured three out of four seats in the State Legislature vacated by honorable members on their return to this Parliament.

Senator Keating

- The electors knew that the Queensland Parliament had nothing further to do with this question.

Senator Major GOULD

- I find that the seats formerly occupied by the late Mr. Groom, Senator Higgs, and Senator Stewart in the State Legislature have been gained by the Government from the labour and the opposition parties, notwithstanding the efforts of the outgoing members.

Senator Glassey

- The late Mr. Groom's colleague in the State Parliament - Mr. Tolmie - is a decided anti-kanakaite.

Senator Major GOULD

- At a more recent election for that constituency a gentleman was returned who was entirely with the Government in opposing the closing down of this trade.

Senator Glassey

- No.

Senator Major GOULD

- Then, in the contest for the seat vacated in the State Legislature by Mr. Fisher upon his return to the House of Representatives, the Government candidate was beaten only by four votes. If we are going to consider the question of what is the opinion of the people of Queensland as shown by their votes, we

must have regard to these by elections, in view of the fact that the Queensland Government have so strongly opposed the early abolition of kanaka labour.

Senator DAWSON

- So far as the fight for Mr. Fisher's seat in the State Parliament is concerned, there was no difference of opinion in the views of the two candidates upon this question. They differed only in regard to the general policy of the Government.

Senator Major GOULD

- I am very sorry that Mr. Philp, the Premier of Queensland, has not been afforded an opportunity of placing his views before honorable senators, in order that we might have seen how far they were worthy of consideration.

Senator DAWSON

- We are going to give him an opportunity.

Senator Major GOULD

- But it is a pity we have not got his views before us now.

Senator McGregor

- We know what his views are.

Senator Major GOULD

- Senator McGregor is perhaps so fixed in his determination to support this Bill that no argument would move him.

Senator McGregor

- Mr. Philp has expressed his views already to different honorable senators.

Senator Major GOULD

- I recognise that we shall have to put an end to this traffic sooner or later, and I think it will be a fair thing if, when the Bill gets into committee, we amend it so as to provide for an extension of the time from five to ten years. I hold that view, because I find that there has been a continuous policy in Queensland for 33 years of allowing kanakas to be used. I am indebted to the Postmaster-General for the statement that there have been some seventeen different Ministers in existence during that time.

Senator Drake

- No ; that was a statement quoted from a speech by Mr. Gray, in the Queensland Parliament.

Senator Major GOULD

- I believe there has been a list of the Premiers sent to honorable senators, and it shows that there have been something like seventeen in the time. The only occasion on which an attempt was made to stop the importation of the kanaka was in 1885, and, as showing how the legislation affected the sugar-growing industry, it was subsequently determined by the Queensland Parliament to continue the employment of the labour without fixing any limit whatever upon the time during which it was to be employed, leaving it of course to any future Parliament to determine, if it saw fit.

Senator DAWSON

- The honorable senator wants to keep them in Queensland.

Senator Major GOULD

- .No; I only want them to remain in Queensland so long as they are necessary, in order to provide against unduly interfering with men who have ventured into the industry, which was established under certain conditions with the consent of the Government of the State.

Senator DAWSON

- Five years is long enough to enable them to change the conduct of the business.

<page>7589</page>

Senator Major GOULD

- Between the honorable member and myself, it is simply a matter as to what is a reasonable time to allow, and I think that is the only point upon which any difference exists in the Senate. However hard an honorable senator may fight on one side or the other, I am willing to believe that he is actuated by honest and conscientious motives, and by a desire to promote what he believes to be the best interests of the community at large, and not of a particular section.

Senator DAWSON

- If the honorable and learned senator had lived amongst the kanakas he would have known what it

means, and he would not keep them one hour longer than is necessary.

Senator Major GOULD

- I do not ask to.

Senator DAWSON

- Five years is long enough.

Senator Major GOULD

- No further time will be given unless it is the desire of the people of the country, as it was in 1892.

Senator O'Keefe

- They asked for ten years then.

Senator Major GOULD

- And they did not get any fixed period at all. Referring to the effect of the proposed change upon the trade of various ports, I find that in the speech quoted by the Postmaster-General, Mr. Gray points out what has been the effect upon the shipping trade generally of growing sugar in these outlying districts. I wish to impress honorable senators with the fact that, whatever their views are, they ought to be most careful how far they interfere with any great industry of any one of the States. I say we have a right to consider their industries very carefully, and even to give way to a certain extent to what we may regard as the prejudices of the people who are engaged in them. There is no doubt that when we go amongst the men residing on the high lands of Northern Queensland, where they have no connexion at all with black labour, and do not wish to have black labour brought amongst them, we find that they have given a mandate to their representatives to get rid of black labour as soon as possible, and not to allow it to come in amongst them. But let honorable senators bear in mind that the kanaka labour is confined to certain tropical industries, and to certain branches only of those industries, and that it is confined also to low lands, which form a fringe on the coast of only about 30 miles in width. It really only affects a very small portion of the colony of Queensland, and there is really no fear of its interfering with the white population or with white labour generally. I have been more disposed to regard the kanaka as being a means of finding employment for a large number of white men. After all, I think it must be admitted that the work is not fit for white men. Of course, any work should be undertaken by white men if it is necessary to earn an honest living, but I say that no white man would by choice select that class of work, and if by the employment of these other people for a time we can provide work for a large number of the white population, which would not be provided for them otherwise, the employment of those people will be of advantage to the white people of the country. That is one of the reasons why I desire to see a little longer time given than is proposed by the Government in this Bill. I have no fault to find with the Government. Mr. Barton may have surprised some people by his proposal, but he stated that he was going to take steps to bring this kanaka labour to an end within a reasonable time. He is giving what he considers a reasonable time to the planters. We cannot, I think, quarrel with the Government for the position they have taken up, however much we may disagree with them as to the time they are giving to those engaged in the industry to adapt themselves to the new circumstances which must come about eventually, and which some people think are being too rapidly hastened by the members of the Government. I have already said that I have no intention of calling for a vote upon the second reading of the Bill, because with the principle I am agreed, but when the Bill gets into committee I shall endeavour to induce honorable senators to extend the time to ten years.

<page>7590</page>

Senator FERGUSON

- I rise to express my views on what I consider a very unfair and unjust proposal to deal with one of the most important industries of the State which I have the honour of representing. It is, and has been, my opinion that each State should be allowed a free hand to develop its resources, and carry on its industries, without interference from the Commonwealth Government or Parliament. The very foundation of the federal system is that the Federal Government or Parliament should take upon themselves only such functions as they can discharge better than the States, and no subject which the States can deal with better than the Commonwealth Government or

Parliament. The coloured labour which is used in the sugar industry of Queensland is well governed by State laws. It is regulated and controlled in such a way that it cannot involve any social, moral, or other danger to the State or to the Commonwealth. There might be some excuse for this interference if it had

been proved that the kanakas were increasing in number, or that they were restricting the employment of white labour in any way, or that any of the States had suffered from the employment of coloured labour in the sugar industry. I am firmly convinced that this Bill, if passed in its present form, will cause utter ruination to one of the chief industries of Queensland. It will bring disaster, not only to sugar planters, but also to thousands of people who depend upon the industry for their living. Hundreds, perhaps, thousands, of families who have formed a comfortable and perhaps humble home, will be deprived of their means of living, and very likely will be rendered homeless, because they cannot live in their district without the aid of the sugar industry. It is to the Senate that the State should look to see that justice is done. On the Senate devolves the serious responsibility of seeing that the States are fairly dealt with by this Parliament. We represent the States as a whole, and the people of each State look to us to protect their interests, to check any hasty, unfair, or unjust legislation such as we find proposed in this Bill. All I would ask for is an extension of time. Give the people who have invested their all in the industry time to look round. If they cannot find labour suitable to take the place of the kanaka, or if no machinery is invented which will do the work of the kanaka, at all events let them have a little time to get out of the business with as little loss as possible. I do not think it is unreasonable to ask for an extension of seven years, and that no greater number of kanakas should be allowed in the State during that time than there are now. At the end of that term the recruiting should cease, and one-third of the kanakas in the country should be sent away each year, so that the last kanaka will disappear from the State at the end of ten years. This proposal is supported strongly by some of the prominent labour members in the State. It is only a few weeks ago that Mr. Barbour, who succeeded Senator Glassey as representative of Bundaberg in the Legislative Assembly, stated in his place that the planters should be allowed seven years to adapt themselves to the new condition of affairs. He was backed up by another prominent member of the labour party, Mr. Reid, who I believe succeeded Senator Drake as representative of Enoggera in the Legislative Assembly. I am quite satisfied that if such a Bill as this were submitted to the State Parliament, a proposal of seven years' extension would get the support of the labour members. I hope and trust that Queensland's representatives in the Senate will follow the example of the labour members in the State Parliament, and if they do they will avail themselves of the finest opportunity they will ever have to do an act of fair play and justice and benefit to their State. I believe that if they represent their State for ten or twenty years they never will have a similar opportunity presented. If the Bill is passed in its present form, the result on the sugar industry will be immediate north of Rockhampton. We might as well pass a Bill saying that the last kanaka must leave the State in two years. All improvements will cease ; no bank or other institution will advance money to assist an industry which is doomed to failure. We have had experience, and the Act which was passed as a result of that experience, is not nearly so drastic as in this Bill. Senator Drake has referred to the early history of the sugar industry. I propose to go back to the year 1867, and show the reason which induced the early pioneers to invest or embark in the industry. In that year the McKenzie Government was in power, and the building up of the sugar industry was first started by making a grant of 2,500 acres of land to the Hon. Louis Hope. The motion for the purpose was moved by the late Hon. W. H. Walsh, in these terms -

That the cultivation of sugar-cane has so far proved successful; that the production of both rum and sugar promises to be a great source of wealth to the colony.

That the Hon. Louis Hope may be justly accorded the merit of initiating and persevering in the first attempt to realize the above satisfactory fact ; and that to his untiring energy and skill, as also to the large capital which he embarked in the experiment, this colony is much indebted.

That this House to-morrow do resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to consider the justice of recommending to His Excellency that he will cause a grant consisting of 2,500 acres of land to be made to the Hon. Louis Hope.

That these resolutions be presented to the Council for its concurrence.

The Minister for Lands brought forward a Bill to enable the Government to reward Captain Hope for the very large amount of money which he had expended over a number of years to test and prove that sugar could be grown in the State satisfactorily and profitably on certain conditions, which were that coloured labour should be secured. The Bill was passed in 1867, with this title-

An Act to enable a grant of land to be made to the Hon. Louis Hope.

The preamble of the Act is as follows : -

Whereas it is just and expedient that the important services of the Hon. Louis Hope in his endeavours to establish the production of sugar should be recognised.

A large number of people - and only capitalists could invest in the sugar industry in those days - were prepared to embark on certain conditions, namely, that the Government would arrange that they should be allowed to employ a suitable class of labour to enable them to carry on successfully, and that was Polynesian labour. The Government lost no time, and in 1868 an Act was passed entitled -

An Act to regulate and control the introduction and treatment of Polynesian labourers.

The preamble of that Act is couched in these terms -

Whereas many persons have deemed it desirable and necessary, in order to enable them to carry on their operations in tropical and semitropical agriculture, to introduce to the colony Polynesian labourers :

And whereas it is necessary for the prevention of abuses, and for the securing to the labourers proper treatment and protection, as well as for securing to the employer the due fulfilment by the immigrant of his agreement, that an Act should be passed for the control of such immigration.

Honorable senators will see that the control of this class of labour was not left in the hands of the planters, even at the very start of its introduction. It was regulated and controlled by the Government. We are now taking exception to what has been encouraged in that State for 33 years. We are practically cancelling this Act of 1868, which has been indorsed by succeeding Governments up to the present time. I look upon this Bill as a repudiation of a bond which was entered into between the planters and the Administration of Queensland.

Senator DAWSON

- Is that bond to last for ever ?

Senator FERGUSON

- It has lasted up to this day.

Senator DAWSON

- But is it to last for ever, in the honorable senator's opinion 1

<page>7592</page>

Senator FERGUSON

- That is a question with which I have nothing to do, but that condition has been indorsed by every succeeding Government of the State - seventeen or eighteen in number. The sugar-planters were under an agreement with the Government which warranted them in entering into the industry, relying on the fact, that they would be allowed a suitable class of labour. Without this binding agreement with the Administration, not a single pound would have been invested by the pioneers. On the face of what the Government agreed to do they embarked, and expended an exceedingly large amount of money in developing the industry. I shall now refer to the Act of 1885. Sir Samuel Griffith, the present Chief Justice of Queensland, was then Premier of the State. The view he took was adverse to the introduction of this class of labour into Queensland, and at his instance an Act was passed putting a limit of five years to the introduction of kanakas. What was the result? All progress in the sugar industry was stayed. A gloom hung over the whole State. A great deal of land that had been cleared to grow cane for the new mills, was allowed to revert to forest. Contemplated new mills were not proceeded with. A large amount of machinery which had been manufactured for the purpose was offered for sale at a low price without being removed from the packing cases. The banks and other monetary institutions would not make advances to assist an industry which appeared to be almost certainly doomed to failure. Evidently the industry was going back. But Sir Samuel Griffith was in power again in 1892, and he called a special meeting of Parliament for the purpose of dealing with the question. In the Governor's speech, with which Parliament was opened on the 29th March, 1892, the following paragraph occurs -

The condition of the sugar industry in the coast lands of Queensland has for some time attracted the attention of my Government, and it has become abundantly manifest that under the conditions of the existing law, a sufficient supply of labour is not available to enable this industry to be extended, or even maintained, in its present position. Many efforts have been made from time to time by the Legislature and the Government, with a view of encouraging Europeans to undertake this work, but hitherto from various causes without success. This matter appears to my Ministers to be pressing, and to demand immediate action. It is well known that a considerable supply of suitable labour can be obtained from the Pacific

Islands, whence many islanders are willing and anxious to come to Queensland. You will, therefore, be invited to remove the restrictions which now exist upon the importation of labourers from these islands, and also to make such provisions as may be necessary to prevent them from entering into undue competition with European labour in other industries.

That was the position of Sir Samuel Griffith in 1892, in which year an Act was passed by a majority of the State Parliament, cancelling the limitation imposed on the introduction of kanakas. The effect of this Act was to revive that large and important industry, and to lead to the investment of a large amount of capital in it. The amount invested by private persons has been estimated at between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000. The area of cane under cultivation increased from 40,000 acres to over 110,000 acres, and the sugar production increased proportionately to something like 150,000 tons, valued at £1,500,000. This enormous amount of money has been distributed amongst our own people, with the exception of the very small percentage paid for coloured labour. At any rate, something like £1,250,000 a year is expended in the employment of white people. The existence of the sugar industry has also been the cause of a number of new steamers being put upon the Queensland coastal trade. The increased freight obtainable induced ship-owners to build the fine fleet of steamers that is trading there to-day, and if this industry were to be destroyed we should revert to the old style of steamers, which we had in Queensland about 25 or 30 years ago. The Government of Queensland has done more than any other Government in Australia to settle a white population upon the land, and no Government in the world has done so much to encourage the growth of cane sugar without the employment of coloured labour as has the Government of Queensland. Certainly they have done their best. The proof of that is that they have built and equipped two large mills, and handed them over to a committee of small farmers, on certain conditions, of which the most stringent was that no black labour of any description was to be employed, either in the federal work or in connexion with those mills. These farmers were so determined that they would carry on without the aid of black labour, that they went so far as to employ their wives and sisters and children in the field work because they could not get other white labour to do it. But ultimately they had to cave in, and decide that they could not carry on unless they were allowed a certain amount of assistance from kanakas to do the work which white men could not, and would not, do. Consequently, the Government of Queensland were compelled to give them a concession in this direction.

Senator Glassey

- If white men cannot do the work, what is the use of merely extending the term for ten years?

Senator FERGUSON

- I admit that the kanaka must go, but let those who have invested their all in the industry get clear of it with as little loss as possible. This concession turned out to be so satisfactory that there are now 2,610 small cane farmers in Queensland. The number is increasing. The Government have continued the same policy ; and the only cry amongst the farmers to-day is that if the kanaka is to be taken away we may as well take away their farms:. It must be remembered that a sugar plantation cannot be established in a year or two. The Government advanced money to the small farmers to enable them to tide over the first two or three years until they got their crop crushed and sold, and until they were in a position to carry on without Government aid. So that the whole policy of the Government has been in favour of the small cane farmers ?

Senator Best

- Does the honorable senator say that the 2,610 farmers will be ruined if the kanaka labour is withdrawn?

<page>7593</page>

Senator FERGUSON

- No. But I say that those in the northern part of Queensland will be ruined. Another thing which must be remembered is that it was chiefly the planters in the northern part of Queensland who led to that State joining the Federation. There would have been no such thing as federation except for their help. New South Wales said over and over again " Unless the Queensland people come in we will not join." There would have been no Barton Government to-day except for these very people whom the Parliament is now going to ruin. To show the view which these farmers took with regard to federation, I will quote from a speech delivered by the Honorable J. B. Chataway, who was Minister of Agriculture in Queensland until his death. He represented Mackay for a great many years, and was a very able man. In addressing a meeting of small cane farmers in Mackay he said -

Experience has shown, both here and elsewhere, that the most favorable climate, the most productive soil, the most perfect machinery, the most unremitting care, are not enough to make cane sugar compete successfully in England with the State subsidized beet sugar of the continent. In consequence of this lack of encouragement from the old world, our sugar farmers must look to the whole body of Australian consumers for support, and that support can only be obtained by virtue of the union about to be accomplished. Of course the timid amongst us are of the opinion that the Commonwealth Parliament will discriminate between cultivators, and that, while other classes of farmers will be favoured, the Queensland sugar farmers will not only be not encouraged but will be specially marked out for destruction. But I at least have no such fear. There was a time, no doubt, when an important section of our public men were willing to cry, "Perish the sugar industry," just as the leaders of one great school of English politics were willing to cry, "Perish the colonies." But as one set of events has proved the value of the colonies to England, another set has proved the value of the sugar industry to Queensland. Neither cry is likely to be raised again by any politician who does not wish to risk his reputation for sanity. Of this no better proof could be given than an incident which occurred at the recent agricultural conference in Warwick -

Warwick is a town in the south of Queensland -

A resolution was unanimously passed in reference to the sugar industry, embodying your opinions, and the mover was a gentleman who not long ago denied to the Mackay farmers what he allowed to the Downs farmers, the right of carrying on their cultivation on the only conditions that make their efforts successful. Even on the Downs it is admitted that coloured labour is necessary to the northern sugar industry ; that without it the industry would decline and ultimately disappear ; that agricultural interests are more interdependent than was formerly thought ; that whatever diminishes the income of the Mackay cane farmer injures the Downs wheat grower ; that the fortunes of the Downs wheat grower are inseparably bound up with the fortunes of the . Brisbane importer ; and so on through the whole circle of buyers, as in the old, old fable of the stomach and the members. . So emphatically has this truth been brought home to the public mind, that no influential section of the Queensland Parliament would dream of harassing the Queensland sugar-farmers ; and it would be foolish to imagine the Commonwealth Parliament acting on this matter with less consideration than the Queensland Parliament. For the Commonwealth Parliament, being elected by the same constituents, will not differ materially from the State Parliaments, except that its members, being drawn from vastly wider and more composite areas, are less likely to be swayed by local or sectional prejudices. Gentlemen, I repeat, you need not fear the Commonwealth Parliament. I am confident it will take a rational and sympathetic view of your necessities. It will have to confess that the Australian people must have sugar wherever that sugar has to come from. It might prefer sugar grown by white labour alone, to sugar grown by the combined efforts of whites and blacks. But that option will not be open to it. However great may be its dislike to black labour, by far the greater portion of the sugar consumed in the Commonwealth must be grown by the aid of black labour. If its legislation puts an end to the Queensland industry, the only result will be to stimulate the industry in countries where black labour is employed under conditions that would never be tolerated here. For in no part of the British Empire can sugar be grown on a scale large enough to supply the needs of the Commonwealth. The question then is - Will Australians encourage 'the production of sugar by black labour exempt from their control, or by black labour subject to whatever conditions they choose to impose? Whatever may have been the scandals of the old Polynesian traffic, no one oau dispute that at present the Polynesian in Queensland has little to complain of. The consideration he receives from his employer astonished visitors to whom the relations between blacks and whites in other tropical regions are familiar. An omnipotent public opinion sees that he is neither ill-used nor misused, that his earnings are secured to him, that contracts made with him are faithfully carried out. The Federal Parliament will be aware of all this, and will not drive him away from mere whim. Our Bartons and Turners are not likely to destroy a great agricultural interest in order that Australians may get then sugar from some foreign county where the black is practically a bond-slave ; where there is neither an outspoken press nor a healthy public opinion. Of course I am not speaking of any sugar-producing portion of the British Empire, for to no portion of the British Empire is this description applicable- Yet in no other portion of the British Empire is there so small a proportion of coloured people engaged in sugar-growing compared with the number of whites dependent on them for subsistence, and the quantity of sugar produced. In Queensland the

number of coloured labourers employed in the sugar industry is under 9,000- The number of white artisans and others for whom these 9,000 provide occupation cannot be less than 20,000. In Fiji there are, exclusive of the aboriginal race, more than 12,000 coloured labourers, and the total white population is less than 4,000- In other words, three coloured men find occupation for one white person in Fiji, and for six or seven white persons in Queensland. If, therefore, the Federal Parliament wishes to encourage the growth of sugar-cane by whites, its best course will be to continue to the Queensland sugar farmer the not- very-abundant labour facilities he now possesses. That it will do so I have not the smallest doubt -

He was very much mistaken -

The men who compose it will be the flower of Australian statesmanship -

This is very good - and are not likely to take a course bound to land them in the most complicated of economic difficulties. They will not care to have on hand the intricate problem how to provide for the 20,000 or more white persons now living by the sugar industry, should that industry be destroyed by Act of Parliament. They will not care to have to set themselves the impossible task of finding an equally good market for the pastoralist, the maize-grower, the flour-miller, the dairyman, the machine-maker, and the rest who will be ruined by the collapse of the sugar districts. They will not take on themselves the responsibility of turning the most fertile and highly cultivated lands of the north into wildernesses. They will not adopt a policy which will make the fortunes of the foreigner at the expense of their own kith and kin. They will not abolish the sugar industry in Queensland, where the black man is still a human being, to foster it in a country where, perhaps, he is considered merely as an agricultural implement -

Mr. Chataway's concluding words were very correct

Gentlemen, believe me, you will be safe in trusting to the intelligence of the Federal Parliament. You will be doubly safe in trusting to its honour.

Senator Best

- Does that mean ten years ?

Senator FERGUSON

- I am only giving the Senate a speech that indicates the reasons which actuated the planters in the north of Queensland in joining to carry federation. I am certain that if Mr. Chataway were alive to-day, he would bitterly regret having made such a speech. He would bitterly regret the fact that he had misled these hundreds of farmers and caused them to vote for federation. This speech shows that the people of the north voted for federation because they felt satisfied that they would be fairly and justly treated by the Federal Parliament-a Parliament consisting of the leading men of the six States.

Senator Glassey

- Where was the meeting held at which that speech was delivered ?

Senator FERGUSON

- At Mackay. Mr. Chataway was addressing a meeting consisting chiefly of planters, and seeking to influence them to cast their votes for federation. If the sugar industry could have existed without coloured labour, the kanaka would have gone years ago. If it were possible to continue the industry without the employment of coloured labour, there would not be a kanaka employed in the sugar-fields of Queensland at the present day. Every effort has been made by the people of Queensland to carry on the industry with white labour, but every effort has been a failure.

Senator McGregor

- If they could obtain the services of white workers at the rates of wages paid to kanakas they would employ them.

<page>7595</page>

Senator FERGUSON

- They would be willing to pay any rates. White men will not work under conditions for which they are not constitutionally adapted. White men are not intended by nature to work in a sweltering heat amid tropical vegetation reaching above their heads and with the temperature at over 100 degrees. The labourers have to go into the sugar-fields in hundreds and work in a stooping position. If we put 100 white men in a tropical field under these conditions how long would they remain there? Not one of them would remain two hours. It must be remembered that the rainfall in the part of the country to which I am referring ranges from something like 12 feet to 20 feet per annum, and that sometimes there is a fall of 150 inches in three months. With the temperature at 100 degrees the steam rises from the tropical vegetation amidst which

the men have to work, and is it reasonable to expect that any white man could labour in such a position ? He cannot, and will not, do it as long as there is a white man on earth. Whilst the Immigration Act of 1885 was in force the sugar-planters in the north tried every possible means of securing white labour to take the place of the kanaka, because they believed that in all probability the measure would not be cancelled. I shall read to the Senate an agreement which was made between a planter and 30 Scotchmen to work in the sugar-fields of Queensland, but before doing so I wish to touch on the labour question by referring to the Pioneer Company at Mackay : -

Pioneer employs 180 kanakas and 50 Japanese. In the crushing season a large number of white labourers are employed in the mill. The other estates employ 123 kanakas and 69 Japanese. When Mr. Drysdale was questioned regarding the employment of white labourers in the cane-fields, he replied that the farmers or planters in the locality had not at any time considered that it was possible to obtain white labour to do the work, and even if they were obtainable it was debatable whether they were physically capable of doing the work for any length of time during the warmer months. On the other hand the utter unreliability of the white labourer, manifested in so many other walks of life, left not a shadow of a doubt in the minds of the cane-growers that it would be a disastrous expedient to endeavour to produce cane while solely dependent on the ordinary itinerant labourer. The greatest difficulty is even experienced in getting the Japanese to work in the months of February and January, although generally speaking they are good workers.

Now I come to the agreement made with the 30 Scotchmen. The Queenslander states that - Mr. T. Douglas Brown, manager for Mr. Drysdale, gave some interesting facts regarding 30 Scotch labourers Mr. McCreedy, a Mackay planter, sent out from Scotland at the time the famous Act to prohibit the employment of the kanaka in the cane-fields was introduced. Mr. Brown was at the time manager for Mr. McCreedy, and the men sent out were of the best class, men inured to hard work as agricultural labourers in their native land. They were engaged for three years, and were to receive, as wages, 15s. per week and found the first year--

Senator McGregor

- That was handsome.

Senator FERGUSON

- Will the honorable senator allow me to proceed? They were to receive 1 5s. per week, and to be found for the first year, but - 20s. per week the second, and 25s. per week the third year, with passages paid from Scotland to their destination.

That is very different to the wages paid in this State. In Victoria farm hands receive about 10s. or 12s. per week and their keep. In this case, however, the men were to receive 25s. per week and their keep. The paragraph continues -

These men made an honest effort to trash and cut cane, and succeeded to some extent during the cooler parts of the year, but so soon as the tropical sun obtained full play at them they obstinately refused to continue, and one day the whole of them either absconded or else refused to work, notwithstanding they had the best of everything as regarded food. There was no alternative but to take them to court in an endeavour to compel them to fulfil their engagement, but they preferred the more congenial atmosphere of the gaol to working in a cane-field when the thermometer stood at over 100 in the shade.

Senator Millen

- Does not the honorable senator think that the desire was to break the agreement in order to get the higher wages that were prevailing at the time?

Senator FERGUSON

- They were getting the higher wages, 25s. a week and found. I have known Scotch labourers to get 2s. 6d. per week and found.

Senator Millen

- There were better wages prevailing in the district in which these men were working.

Senator FERGUSON

- At all events they were under an agreement, and I never knew a Scotchman yet who broke his agreement if he could possibly carry it out. I would back Scotchmen to work in any climate in the world against the people of any other country. There is no climate that they would turn their backs upon. I have been myself in the tropics for 40 years. I intend to finish the reference to this matter -

They never returned to the work, and although their employer regarded the offence from a sympathetic stand-point, being convinced that the men were not physically fit, notwithstanding their robust physique, to do the work that Nature only intended should be done by a race specially designed, the law had to be vindicated, with the result that the men had to serve short sentences. Mr. Brown states that no more convincing proof than the effort these men made to perform the work allotted them, and their utter genuine failure, could be adduced in support of the theory that the European races are not adapted by Nature to trash or cut cane in the tropics.

The failure of those men is the strongest proof that we shall never get white men to work in the cane-fields in the tropical districts of Queensland. If these men could possibly have carried out their engagement, they would have done so, and their employers give them credit for making every effort. I shall now read another extract dealing with this particular question, and referring to something which took place only a few months ago. A contractor at Bundaberg took a contract for feeding a mill at Cairns, and he engaged two sets of men who had been used to handling cane. His contract was to feed the cane-carrier of the Mulgrave mill in the Cairns district, and he employed these two sets of men to do the work.

Senator Higgs

- At what wages ?

Senator FERGUSON

- He had to pay the rate of wages the men demanded.

Senator Higgs

- What were they ? We know of men getting 12s. a week and rations.

Senator FERGUSON

- There is no such thing as 12s. a week up there. I take this from a report submitted by the manager of the mill to the Agricultural department of Queensland, and it can be depended upon as genuine -

Mulgrave, 25th September, 1901

<page>7596</page>

I have the honour to report that the contractor from Bundaberg for feeding the cane-carrier at this mill threw up his contract, after working a week. He started on Friday morning, the 13th instant, and the first day's work was fairly satisfactory as far as quantity was concerned, though the feeding was very irregular. The usual number of men employed by the contractor supplying the cane to the carrier on each shift was eight, and the contractor as foreman, though on one occasion he put on ten white men at the work. The work was carried on in an unsatisfactory manner, with a gradually diminishing tonnage of cane fed, until the 19th instant, when the contractor asked to be relieved of one shift, as the men on that shift informed him that they did not intend to work any more. A gang of seven Indians was procured from the field, and put to work at six o'clock that evening.

Honorable senators must remember that when cane cutting is going on the mill must be kept going, or the crop will be lost. They cannot afford to wait, and whatever is the price of labour it must be procured.

This gang of Indians fed into the carrier seven tons more cane than the eight white men on the previous shift. In the meantime the contractor, from the two gangs of white men, made up a gang of picked men to carry on the day shift, out on the following day, before 10 o'clock a.m., two of these men had left, and the majority of the remainder expressed a wish to be relieved as soon as possible.

At the contractor's urgent request, a second gang of Indians was procured from the field, and started work at the carrier at 1 p.m. on the 20th instant. Thus, the picked gang worked half a shift only, and in a particularly slovenly manner. As a proof of this, we may state that the total tons of cane crushed from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the 20th instant, during half of which time Indians were doing the work, was 198 tons, the tons of cane crushed in the following shift (Indians only) was 210 tons, or a difference of twelve tons. A comparative analysis of the results of the crushing by the last gang of Europeans and Hindoos shows that, whereas the average tons per hour fed by white men during the course of one week only, and with an average of eight men on each shift, was eighteen and a half tons per hour ; by Indians, with seven men only on each shift, and working for four weeks, the average was nineteen and a half tons per hour, or a loss by white men of 122 tons per week ; again, as a result of the inferior crushing during the time the Europeans had the contract the firewood used per ton of sugar was 0'93 ton, as against 0'80 ton with the Indians.

The Indians require absolutely no supervision after once grasping the requirements. The white men required constant supervision to get even medium results, and in the absence of any supervision immediately relaxed all efforts, and allowed the rollers to run empty. We may here remark that of the men engaged by the contractor in Bundaberg two or three were left on the way up, suffering from fever, and these were replaced by men procured locally.

Of the fifteen men who have made statements, three only expressed willingness to continue the work. Of these Stewart was engaged by the mill as one to start the following day, but when presenting himself to fulfil his engagement was so intoxicated that the position could not be given him. The other two were found employment in connexion with the mill, and, in fact, work was offered to any who would work. No one is more deceived in the nature of the work and apparent ease with which it is carried out when looking at the Indians than the white men themselves, as was freely acknowledged by the white men when they had thrown up this work. The company have now made every possible effort to have this feeding done by white men, but without success. It cannot be said that the Indian is cheaper than the white man, for they are getting the same contract rates.

That report is signed by Mr. W. S. Davids, and I now come to the statement which is made by the contractor himself -

The following statement from W. Moore, the contractor, is appended : - 1 In reply to an advertisement in the Bundaberg Mail, I undertook a contract to work the carrier at 4d. per ton at the Mulgrave Mill, as I considered from my experience that I would be able to engage competent and reliable men. I did procure that labour, and paid their passages up to Cairns from Bundaberg. We started work, on Friday morning, the 13th September, and, after they had done two shifts they considered they had had enough of it, and these men were thoroughly experienced with cane handling. I had great difficulty in persuading them to work for a week, hoping they would have become 'seasoned'. One man said to me that up North here was hell under another name, and all admitted that the work up in this part of the country was not fit for white men."

That is the statement of the men themselves,, who went up there to try to carry out that contract, and they were determined to show that the work could be done by white men. The contractor further says : -

My own opinion, after many years' experience, is that the climate is not suitable for carrying out this class of work with white men. On the 19th September, in the evening, I was compelled* to ask the manager for labour to carry on that evening shift, as the white men told me they intended to do no more. My intention was to carry on the clay shift with the best of the white men picked out of the two gangs. These picked men: (nine in all) worked till dinner time on Friday, 20th September (half a shift), but in a very unsatisfactory manner. Before the half shift was over, two had left and the others were quite satisfied with the amount of work they had done, and wished to be relieved as soon as possible, and the manager, at my urgent request, sent out to the fields and procured a gang of Indians to relieve the white men at one o'clock. The company have given me every possible assistance in the rationing and housing of the labour, and, in fact, I did not expect so much assistance as I got. The tucker supplied to the men was, in my opinion, as good as at any other mill in Queensland. The hours worked by the Mulgrave mill are the same hours as worked by any other mill south. I am a loser of over £20 by moneys advanced to the men for passages and maintenance, but it was impossible to carry out the contract with the white labour available. That statement is signed by Mr. W. Moore and is witnessed by another gentleman. Here there are two statements which honorable senators cannot get away from, and they show that white men will not do the work in the north, and if this Bill is passed in its present form, the sugar industry there will die out. It has been stated several times that Queensland has sent to the Federal Parliament a majority of senators opposed to this labour, and that statement is of course correct. But I propose to read a statement of the votes given for the various candidates, and we shall then see how the matter stands. The total votes polled for the sixteen candidates was 284,638.

Senator Pearce

- The honorable senator told the electors that he was in favour of a white Australia.

Senator FERGUSON

- I never did. I am as much in favour of a white Australia as is any honorable senator. I said I would make due inquiries as regards the employment of the kanakas in the sugar industry.

Senator Pearce

- The honorable senator's election platform was " free-trade and a white Australia."

Senator FERGUSON

- A white Australia, as far as a white Australia is concerned, and I say so now. I mentioned particularly that, before I should do anything to interfere with the sugar industry, I should make due inquiries, and I hold to that declaration now. No one can point to a passage" in a newspaper where I said I would do away with the kanakas.

Senator Higgs

- Because the honorable senator was on the high seas at the time.

Senator FERGUSON

- The number of votes polled by the sixteen candidates was 284,638, and the number polled by the five anti-kanaka candidates 131,760.

Senator Millen

- Were the others in favour of kanakas 1

Senator FERGUSON

- Yes.

Senator Millen

- In which group is the honorable senator placing himself ?

Senator FERGUSON

- I am placing myself with those in favour of the kanakas. I am a pro-kanaka. I am sure that my speech to-night is quite clear enough to convey that impression.

Senator McGregor

- A pro-kanaka and a " white Australia."

Senator FERGUSON

- Two different questions. I shall give the number of votes polled by each anti-kanaka candidate, so that there shall be no mistake. Senator Dawson got 29,350, Senator Higgs 29,452, Senator Drake 26,552, Senator Stewart 23,736, Senator Glassey 22,670. The five anti kanaka candidates polled 131,760 votes.

Senator Millen

- How many votes were polled by Mr. Hoolan, an anti-kanaka candidate ?

<page>7598</page>

Senator FERGUSON

- He got 7,382 votes. The Electoral Act of Queensland, remember, allowed plumping. Supposing that there had been only six candidates on each side, and that no plumping had been allowed, not a single anti-kanaka candidate would have been returned. The pro-kanaka party were foolish enough to put up ten or eleven candidates against the five anti kanaka candidates, and we know how plumping was carried on. Another thing to be considered is that there was a large number of anti- federationists in the State. The federal election took place so shortly after the referendum that the bitterness of the anti-federationists had not yet died out. One-half of them did not vote, and all these if they had voted would have voted against the five candidates who were returned, as every one of them knows perfectly well. That shows how unfairly the election was carried on. In the southern States each elector had to vote for six candidates. I hope that at the next election in Queensland every elector will have to vote for six candidates. Then not a single one of the present anti-kanaka senators will be returned. It seems to me most incredible that the first Commonwealth Parliament should be in such haste to legislate on a question about which it knows so little. All the speakers in another House admitted that they did not know anything about sugar-growing in Queensland. Still they were prepared to legislate in such a drastic manner that it would ruin a fine State industry in Queensland, and one of which the Commonwealth ought to be proud. If it were carried on in New South Wales and Victoria those States would be proud of the industry. The Federal Government and the Federal Parliament, who acknowledge that they are legislating blindly, are prepared to follow this white Australian cry. They are all carried away by the cry. Would any Government dare to introduce a Bill that would ruin the butter industry of Victoria? On the basis of population the butter industry of Victoria is worth about only - one third of the sugar industry of Queensland. The sugar industry of Queensland is worth about £3 per head on the basis of the population of that State, whereas the butter industry of Victoria is worth about £1 per head on that basis. New

South Wales is very proud of its coal-mining industry, and so it may be, as it gives the State a wonderful

advantage over all the others. The output of the coal mines of New South Wales, on the basis of population, is not more than a third of the output of the sugar industry of Queensland. Take the output of coal, gold, and all the minerals of New South Wales, excluding Broken Hill, and even then it does not come up to the value of the sugar industry of Queensland on the basis of population. Again the wheat industry of South Australia is not worth the same amount per head of population as is the sugar industry of Queensland. Would any Government dare to bring forward a Bill to interfere with any of these industries?

Senator Keating

- Yes, if they employed kanakas.

Senator FERGUSON

- Would New South Wales be prepared to ruin its coal industry and its mining industry for the sake of a few black men working in the State ? Would it allow any Government to ruin its coal and gold mines simply because a few kanakas were employed in the State. No Government would dare to make the attempt, and if it did it would be howled out of office in less than a month.

Senator Glassey

- All these industries are conducted by white labour.

Senator FERGUSON

- That does not matter. What has Queensland done that the Commonwealth should pounce upon it and try to ruin one of its principal industries ? Why should we attempt to ruin an industry which is of as much advantage to the Commonwealth as it is to Queensland in one sense ? I hope from what I have said that the Senate will agree to this very reasonable request for a seven years' extension? If it does it will do away with a good deal of bitterness, which otherwise might exist for years. Is there any necessity to pass a drastic measure of this kind ? I do not see why even the most determined opponent of the employment of kanakas should hesitate for a moment to grant an extension of time. I hope that every representative of Queensland will see that that State is not ruined in the manner proposed.

<page>7599</page>

Senator Lt Col CAMERON

- We are entering upon the consideration of this Bill with a very light heart, and we are not properly appreciating the immense difficulties of the question. To begin with, this is not a matter of a " white Australia " at all ; it is a matter of a few Polynesians who are admitted into this territory for a certain term, and on certain conditions, and on the expiry of their term relegated to their homes. They remain here on the sufferance of the people of Queensland. Under that sufferance there has grown up a vast industry, which is of great importance to Queensland and the Commonwealth. Associated with that industry are concomitant industries which necessitate the removal of the cane to elsewhere, and the transport of supplies to the sugar-growing districts, including various small trading operations. These subsidiary industries have grown up under this large industry, which is flourishing with the assistance and with the assurance of a certain amount of protection, at all events with a vested interest, in the State of Queensland. Before we alter the conditions in the light-hearted way we are asked to do, I would ask honorable senators to think of the matter from a reasonable stand-point, and to grant, not only to those engaged in the pursuit of extracting sugar, but also to those connected with the associated industries, an extension of time to make arrangements for such displacement of their capital as will necessarily ensue. The ethical view of this question, I consider, should not occupy our time. It has been shown, that so far as the health of the kanakas is concerned, every attention is paid to it, and that it is not only after being engaged in sugar work in Queensland that his health is affected. It has been shown conclusively that throughout the whole history of the connexion of the white races with the Pacific Islands, the mortality of the kanakas has been increased. So that we cannot say that their connexion with the sugar industry has been the cause of the depopulation of the islands, upon which so much stress has been laid. This matter has now resolved itself into a question of what is fair to those who have entered upon the sugar-growing industry under the sanction of the Government of the State. I understand and sympathize with every labourer who wants to see wages raised. I like to get the best price I can for what I have to sell. It is a matter of supply and demand, and I can well understand the labourer desiring to get the highest price for what he has to sell, namely, his labour. I sympathize with him in his endeavour to obtain employment in profitable industries, and if it be possible under the conditions of life which we have here, to obtain for

white labourers a monopoly in an industry that has hitherto been in the hands of kanakas, I hope that that result will be attained. It is a laudable desire, and if it can be accomplished so much the better for the country. But our experience of the world and of life goes to show that nature has divided the countries that can be worked by labour between the black and the white races. The tropics, as every one who has lived there must acknowledge, are the parts of the earth's surface best adapted for the dark skins. Within the tropics white people are unable to work side by side with the black races in any industry involving an open-air life. That is an ethnographical fact that cannot be got away from.

Senator Pearce

- Then would the honorable senator agree with scuttling from Northern Australia 1

Senator Lt Col NEILD

-Col. CAMERON. - I do not say it is a case of scuttling. What I say is that we should regulate our labour, so that in the north of Australia the soil may be utilized for the benefits of the white people. Let us join issue upon this question, and have no nonsense about it ! If any man says that it is better to let Australia become a desert than that a black man should work in any part of it, then I am against him. What we want to do, if it be possible, is to enable white labour to carry on the work that has to be done. Let white labour displace black labour wherever possible. But it is not to be done by such drastic, ill thought out and hasty legislation as this. What is five years in the life of a nation 1 The Government are legislating as though the whole country were going to the dogs tomorrow. So long as I occupy a place in this Senate I will never advocate any such short-sighted policy. Let us go forward on broad-minded principles. I am with the labour party, as I have said over and over again, in giving them all the assistance I can in working the tropical part of Queensland by white labour, but are we going to ruin an industry ? The indications point to the ruin of the sugar industry if this Bill is passed. Let it have time to work its own cure, and if it is true that white labour can be used in place of black I shall be the first to encourage that in every way With me it is simply a question of whether white labour can do the work.

Senator DAWSON

- There is no doubt that white labour Can do it.

Senator Lt Col CAMERON

.- I am pleased to hear it. That statement gives me the hope that ultimately the sugar industry may be conducted by white labour. But that does not alter the fact that we are now asked to carry hasty legislation, without giving those engaged in the industry an opportunity of showing whether the conditions will enable them to make a living without the employment of kanakas. We ought to give them a chance of retiring from the industry without undue loss if they find that this change is impracticable. I regard the proposed legislation as ill thought out, and not warranted by the present exigencies and necessities of the Commonwealth .

<page>7600</page>

Senator DOBSON

- I have read so much about this question that I have not had time to think it out, but sooner than see the debate collapse, I propose to take up a little of the time of the Senate. This Bill presents to my mind the most difficult problem I have yet had to deal with. Ever since I knew that this problem would have to be faced, I have been trying to place myself in a judicial position. I have read both sides of the question, and have endeavoured to make up my mind as to what is a fair and just thing to do. I am with the labour party in endeavouring to carry out the determination of the people that the kanaka is to go, and the only point about which I have risen to speak is as to terms upon which black labour can be got rid of. Although, as I believe, I am giving effect to the wish of the Australian people, I do not believe that any Act that we pass will dispose of the matter. Because, as Senator Cameron has told us, it is a law of nature. To try by an Act of Parliament to bring about a variation of a law of nature, is something like trying to drive out a cart load of sand with a fork. It is bound to come back upon us. There will still remain the important question which Senator Cameron has raised, as to whether we are going to develop the tropical parts of the Commonwealth ourselves, or with the aid of kanaka labour, or whether we are going to make a mess of it, lose the capital that has been invested, and simply leave the land to become a desert. It is a great mistake to think that the laws of progress, and of the development of a country out of which money can be made, if capital is applied to it as nature intended it to be applied, are going to be frustrated by any Act of Parliament. Nothing we can do will make an energetic people like the Anglo-Saxon race stand by and

see a great country remain undeveloped. In the admirable speech which Senator Drake made in introducing this Bill, he endeavoured to show that the Government are continuing the policy which the Government of Queensland have already instituted in regard to the kanakas. But the trouble I have is that Sir Samuel Griffith, and practically the whole of the Queensland people, went back upon and changed their minds upon the subject.

Senator Drake

- Not the whole of them.

Senator DOBSON

- The second reading of the Bill, for the purpose of annulling the provision which provided that no licence should be issued after the 31st December, 1900, was carried on a division by 39 votes to 13. There was a majority of three to one in favour of permitting the kanaka labour to be continued, showing that the people of Queensland and their chosen leaders changed their minds upon the subject. I have taken some time to read the debates which took place in the Queensland Parliament when Sir Samuel Griffith introduced his Bill in 1885 for the purpose of getting rid of the kanaka. I have carefully read not only his remarks but those of other Members of Parliament, and also the speeches delivered in 1892, when the former policy was reversed. Although I congratulate Senator Drake on the skilful way in which he tried to ram home the point that the present Government are simply carrying on the policy inaugurated in Queensland, I have the same feeling as Senator Sargood, that it was a costly policy, and one which was adopted in the face of what was prophesied would be the logical effects of it. I find from the debate that several of the leading members of the Queensland Parliament in 1892 reminded Sir Samuel Griffith that they had prophesied in 1885 that the Act of that year would be a failure. Many of them quoted their own speeches, and showed that what they had said had come true. Sir Samuel Griffith and the majority had to change their opinions. The logic of facts showed that the sugar industry could not be carried on by white labour, and seeing that the industry was sinking, that properties were depreciating in value, that the banks were calling in their money, and that there would be distress on all sides unless the section was repealed, Sir Samuel Griffith decided to take that action.

Senator Millen

- Does the honorable and learned senator know what brought about that depression ?

<page>7601</page>

Senator DOBSON

- It was brought about by many outside causes, but I am certain that Sir Samuel Griffith's Bill had a great deal to do with the depression in the sugar industry. Lest I should forget it, let me answer Senator Millen's question more fully at this stage. Before I do so wish to congratulate him upon his admirable speech, which has to some extent altered my original intention in regard to the getting rid of the kanaka. I thank him for the careful way in which he made his points. Recently I called on a gentleman living in Melbourne, who was formerly a sugar planter, and who, I am told by Senator Fraser, is one of the most honorable and experienced merchants in the Commonwealth. I asked him what he could tell me, from his own experience, in regard to this question. He replied, " It is a very simple matter. In 1885 I was carrying on a sugar plantation with my partner. We had ordered machinery from Glasgow, but when the Bill of 1885 became law we recognised at once from our own experience that the industry could not flourish in the absence of black labour. To show you the extent of our convictions, I may say that we telegraphed to Glasgow directing that the machinery which we had ordered should be sold. It was sold at a loss of 50 per cent, to us. We gave up the whole of our plantation, and lost £50,000. I said, "What were your chief reasons for giving up the industry ? " He replied, " The passage of the 1885 Bill. We lost £50,000, and the land is lying idle." I said, " What is it worth, £4 or £5 an acre ? " The answer was, " You can have it for £2 an acre." Then I said to this gentleman, " Can you give me any more information showing whether white men can carry on the industry north of Mackay." He answered, " I can assure you, most positively that he cannot." In reply to a further question from me as to what was his own experience, he said, " We had great difficulty in getting white men to do the work. We had to make use of the lowest class of labour - the casuals who are here to-day and gone to-morrow. They found that the work in the fields was most uncongenial. It was excessively hard, and completely knocked them up. It was not a question of wages. We gave certain wages for one district, and higher wages for work in the northern parts of Queensland. We were paying higher wages than any other firm in the Commonwealth ; but it was a physical

impossibility for the men to do the work. That was the trouble." When I questioned this gentleman about the small farmers who are said to do the work for themselves, he replied - "All I can tell you is that I was discussing the matter the other day with a friend of ours who holds a property adjoining our station. We chatted about the little place which he was carrying on with his son, and I asked him how he managed to trash and cut his cane. He said 'We cannot do it.' I put the question to him, 'Can not you do the work with the aid of your son.' He replied, 'No. In the hot weather we both begin to vomit, and have to give it up.' Then how do they carry on,' I asked. He replied 'Many of these small farmers employ one, two, or three kanakas, and in that way they are able to keep going. Then it has to be remembered that they have the impetus to be derived from the fact that they are working for themselves, and they strive with might and main to carry on the industry which they have taken up.' " This gentleman also gave me some of his experiences in regard to mill work. On one occasion he went into a mill to see his cane being trashed. There were two men throwing the sugar against a large screen just as men sieve gravel. He said to the manager " These two men seem to be happy. They are under cover, and it is not so hot here. They have no cause to grumble." The manager replied "You are wrong, they have both given me notice of their intention to quit, because they say it is not fit work for white men." When a man obtains information of this kind, from one whom he knows is familiar with the subject, he must take judicial notice of it. My honorable friends of the labour party seem to be indulging in a little conspiracy of silence, because they have remained in their seats while three or four honorable senators, who are slightly against doing an injustice to the sugar-planters, have spoken. When they address themselves to the question before the Chair may I ask them to devote themselves to this point 1 If they can show me that white labour can do this work, either at Bundaberg or Cairns, they will absolutely alter the position I take up. So far as I possess a judicial mind I must bring it to bear upon this subject. I must do what is right between the Commonwealth on the one hand and the sugar-planters on the other. I believe that the facts are against my honorable friends in the labour corner. I may have misread them, but if they have any new facts I urge them to bring them forward. From what I have read in Ilansard and in the reports, it seems to me that experience shows the work is not fit for white men. I ask honorable senators in the labour corner to direct their attention to the question of wages. I have never had an argument with them - and I have had a few - without finding them falling back on the question of wages, and inquiring - " How can you ask a man to go into the tropics and half kill himself for a miserable wage? " I admit that a miserable wage should not be paid. The wages should be more than generous. But I should like my honorable friends to tell me what they think they ought to be. They know more of the subject than I do. I understand that the wages paid to ploughmen and agricultural labourers in the Commonwealth are £1 per week, and rations. Those are full rates. There are, of course, many places where nothing like that is paid. But even £1 per week, and rations, ' is very little even for common manual work. Will honorable senators of the labour party tell us what they think the sugar planter ought to pay in order to insure a sufficient supply of white labour to replace the kanaka 1 I have read in Ilansard that the trades unions of Queensland will not allow labouring men there to work under 30s. a week, with rations. That to some extent is a misstatement. Dr. Maxwell has set forth in his report what wages are paid. He tells us that the wages in the Bundaberg district are £1 0s. 2½d., together with rations, which bring them up to £1 7s. 10½d. ; in the Mackay district the wages are £1 2s. 0d., with rations, which bring them up to £1 9s. 0d. per week ; while in Cairns the wages are £1 4s. 4d. per week, with rations, bringing them up to £1 15s. 4d. Assuming that the planters offered 6s., 8s., or 10s. per day in these divisions, could any honorable senator in the labour party tell us, with any belief in his words, that a sufficient supply of white labour to do the trashing would be available?

Senator Playford

- It depends upon what part of the country the labour is required for.

Senator DOBSON

- White men might be able to do the work at Bundaberg.

Senator Fraser

- No one denies that.

Senator DOBSON

- They might also be able to do it at Mackay, but it would be rather hard work. As I understand the evidence, however, it is absolutely impossible for white men to do the work at Cairns.

Senator Fraser

- Cairns is 500 miles north of Bundaberg, and further into the tropics.

Senator DOBSON

- We must bear in mind that the sugar industry is like every other industry : there must be a living wage for the worker, and a living interest for the planter. Unless we have those two conditions prevailing side by side, the industry is doomed. I ask my honorable friends in the labour party to consider what effect the Bill will have, if it is too drastic, upon the financial aspect of this question. I have read in Hansard, and in one of the reports, that the banks will not lend money to the planters under 8 and 10 per cent. I went to a banker - one of the leading bankers of the Commonwealth - and asked for some information on the subject. I found, however, that he was the wrong man to go to, because he said his bank had few, if any, plantations. He admitted, however, that, considering the risk there is in getting in the cane, the havoc which the frost, as well as the drought, plays with it, a bank might charge interest upon loans in that industry 1 or 2 per cent, in excess of the interest they would charge on loans on station properties.

Senator Millen

- They are charging interest at the rate of 7 and 8 per cent, on loans on pastoral properties in New South Wales.

Senator DOBSON

- Then the security must be rather bad, or else my friends in New South Wales do not understand business. My banking friend said that if the security was good he would lend money at the rate of 6 per cent., and if the security were a wool-growing place he would lend it at 5 per cent. During the last three years any one with good security has been able to get money at 6 per cent. I can quite understand that every financial institution will commence to call in its money the moment this Bill receives the Royal assent. If we allow seven years within which to make the change, they will call it in very quickly, and more quickly still if the period is only five years. In calling in their money the financial men will be largely influenced by the amount of justice we mete out to the planter. These are very serious considerations. If we have regard to the fact that there are £6,000,000 of private capital, as well as £538,000 of the moneys of the Queensland Government, invested in the industry, and that there are 20,000 white men directly or indirectly interested in the industry, this is one of the largest questions that we have had or shall have to face. Therefore, we must be careful in what we do. Let me carry on the argument as to whether white men can do the work or not. I wish to repeat the words which I uttered when dealing with the question of lascars in the tropics. I do not think that either the stoke-holes of vessels in the tropics, or the sugar-cane fields in the north of Queensland, are fit places for the white man.

Senator Higgs

- Was the black man specially created to work for the white man in stoke-holes ?

<page>7603</page>

Senator DOBSON

- No, but he was specially created to bear that work with less injury to his health than the white man. Let us look at the medical evidence on this point. Dr. Maxwell says this is a question for the medical man, who understands what effect work of an improper kind might have upon the constitution. He states - In the course of an inquiry made concerning the symptoms of action of the climatic conditions in the northern sugar district of Queensland, the following statement was made by a medical authority of high standing : - " The white man is affected by the moist hot air impregnated with the odour which is always present in locations of luxurious vegetation, such as are found on the coastal land round Cairns. In the first place profuse perspiration goes on generating a craving for liquid instead of a normal desire for food. Soon the stomach and intestines become catarrhed which still diminishes the call for food and also lessens the power to absorb nutrition."

Then he goes on to point out in the most emphatic way the injury that does to white men. When he comes to deal with white ' women the same authority says -

At this time the white woman is rendering a tribute involving her beauty and her blood for the populating and settlement of the northern coastal areas.

Senator Millen

- Would the honorable and learned senator advocate the importation of coloured domestics ?

Senator DOBSON

- I am devoting myself now to the consideration of one most important point, to show that I think the

evidence is against our labour friends when they tell us, as they have done again and again, that the white man can do the work if he is paid a proper wage for it. I am asserting, from the best evidence I have, that the white man cannot do it even if he is given a generous wage, and even if he is given 50 per cent, more than is paid to farm workers on the agricultural lands of Victoria or in New South Wales. That is the evidence on the subject, and I invite our honorable friends to show that I am wrong if they can, and to produce their evidence.

Senator Higgs

- Does the honorable and learned senator know that Dr. Ahearn is the high medical authority he quotes from, and that he was on the bottom of the poll in the federal election ?

Senator DOBSON

- We cannot understand the matter quite as well as a professional man like Dr. Maxwell, but our own common sense must tell us that a certain amount of injury must follow to white men working in these steaming cane-fields. If my honorable friend is prepared to deny it, and to back, up the denial by argument, I shall be only too pleased to listen, as I always am to what the honorable senator has to say. My argument at present is that this labour is calculated absolutely to deteriorate the white man and the white woman, and will in time be a danger to the race. We are, therefore, again brought face to face with the question of whether we shall, to a certain extent, allow the industry to perish in the northern parts of Queensland, or whether we shall adopt some other plan, by the use of another class of labour, to keep the industry going.

Senator Charleston

- I am afraid we shall find, even under this Bill, that in the north of Queensland the sugar industry will be doomed.

<page>7604</page>

Senator DOBSON

- I should like to point out that there appeared to be a discrepancy between Dr. Maxwell's letter to the Premier of Queensland, and the report which he furnished to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. I discovered that it was not a discrepancy, but was due to my somewhat slipshod method of reading the documents. When I turn to the report to the Prime Minister, I find that Dr. Maxwell was asked to report upon five heads, and in connexion with one only of these, he was asked to give an expression of opinion. The fifth matter upon which he was asked to report is stated as follows : -

Such information as to progress in invention of labour-saving machinery, for use in cane-fields as csm be made public ; stating whether, in your opinion, from the history of the progress of such improvements, any reasonable inference can be drawn as to the probable success of the application of mechanical science to the problem of cane cutting within a reasonable time.

Dr. Maxwell, in furnishing his report, simply dealt with the four heads upon which he was asked to state facts and to give information, and, in connexion with the fifth, he dealt with the facts and gave his opinion. On the other heads he did not give his opinion because no opinion upon them was asked from him, and the report was furnished to enable Ministers to make up their minds. But in the letter to the Premier of Queensland we have Dr. Maxwell's opinion, and that letter appears to me to be rather an important document. He states, referring to this Bill -

Concerning the measure with its present provisions, if it is passed I am persuaded it will paralyze the industry. One effect will be instant. A very large proportion of the cane-growers are depending upon the banks and other financial sources to aid them in producing and harvesting their crops and in the permanent development of their farms. This aid will stop, and, in many cases, at once. My relations with the growers on the one hand, and with money institutions who seek my opinions, cause me to be painfully aware of the situation, and of what must happen if given action is taken. A further effect will be that the industry must stop from want of labour to make and harvest the crops if the time provisions of the Bill are enforced. Other kinds of labour are not in the country and cannot be gotten within the specified time, and the sheer economic result which must follow is patent. Putting the matter briefly, and assuming that it will be enacted that the Pacific islander must go, then in those districts which may survive the abolition of such labour, ten years is the minimum of time within which it will be found possible to adjust the industry to the proposed new conditions and provide labour for its continuance.

In another place he states, referring to inquiries made from him by the late Mr. Chataway - '

I had to reply that my experience in other countries, with my observation in this country, and the history of labour experimentation in the State, force me to conclude that if the industry should be made wholly dependent upon white labour, then sugar-growing north of Mackay must die out. It will not be instant, but I consider it certain.

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 stated that any enactment which involved the closing up of the northern cane-fields, if passed for other than other economic reasons, should, in common equity, provide compensation to mill owners and to the farmers for their vested interests, and, by such means, I considered it possible to remove the farmers to the more southern districts, where cane-growing may be rendered possible by white labour, aided by scientific appliances..... We have 2,610 of these men the backbone of their districts, and they must not be lost, yet the subjects which are matters of opinion and divisions in Parliament are questions of life and death to those men in the fields.

It will, therefore, be seen that Dr. Maxwell states in the most emphatic way that the industry would be paralyzed if this Bill were passed in its present shape, and he also says most positively that it is impossible to grow sugar-cane solely with white labour anywhere north of Mackay. I have some further quotations to make from a letter which has been circulated by Mr. Van de Velde, a gentleman who is well known in Melbourne. He says : -

I draw the following conclusions, which I respectfully submit, that without coloured servile (mostly called reliable) labour the cane industry in the tropical zone of Queensland is doomed.

He says further : -

That cutting up farms for closer settlement in the tropics, with the object of ultimately doing away with coloured labour, is an Utopian scheme. White farmers will never, and should not be, induced to settle on tropical sugar lands if servile labour is to be dispensed with.

Senator Millen

- Dr. Maxwell advocates the very thing which this man condemns.

Senator DOBSON

- But south of Mackay. Dr. Maxwell says that the cutting up of the big plantations into small farms is the only hope for the white cane-growers, because they will thus be given a personal interest in the success of their work, and it is only because of this personal interest that a white man will be prepared to jeopardize the constitution of himself and his boys who will assist him in the cultivation of the cane. Dr. Maxwell says that this cannot be done north of Mackay, but that if the cane-grower is given one or two kanakas, he will endeavour to canyon the industry. Mr. Van de Velde further says : -

In sub-tropical Queensland and New South Wales, the industry could be carried on by white labour - and I ask honorable senators to notice the "is" - if sufficient suitable white labour were available, if the farmers were compelled by their interest to use white labour only, and if sufficient protection is granted to pa3' white men's wages.

Senator Higgs

- Is not Mr. Van de Velde associated with the beet-sugar industry?

Senator Fraser

- He has been, but he is not now.

Senator DOBSON

- He goes on to say -

That on the purity of the white race account no reasonable objection can be raised against the presence of a limited number of kanakas in Queensland. That if the kanaka traffic leads to the extermination of the race, so does, although less rapidly, the presence of white men in their islands. Therefore, if white men stop the traffic, they should also leave the kanakas alone in their islands.

Senator Higgs

- Let us sweep before our own door first.

Senator DOBSON

- Then he says -

It would be unfair and disastrous to the cane industry for the Commonwealth to fix a date by law for the

abolition of the kanaka traffic, unless the same Government undertakes the responsibility of providing through immigration the many thousand suitable white labourers who could be substituted for coloured men in the subtropical zones. If a date were fixed without the Government taking any responsibility of procuring white labour, it could not be adhered to.

This brings me to the question of the substitution of other labour. I read in the Queensland Hansard that an effort was made to import some Italians about the time Sir Samuel Griffith introduced the Bill to do away with kanakas.

Senator McGregor

- Yes, at id. per day.

<page>7605</page>

Senator DOBSON

- The gentlemen speaking on the subject said that that was an absolute failure, and I have since heard that the reason for the failure was that the labour party objected to it, and that there was a great howl and outcry about alien immigration, and about foreign labour being brought into the State. I should like our honorable friends opposite to enlighten us upon that point.

Senator Higgs

- In what year was that?

Senator Drake

- I think that was about 1886.

Senator DOBSON

- I think it was just after the passing of the Bill to do away with the kanakas. Then I read that an effort was made to get German immigrants for the work, and I am told that the authorities of the German nation objected to it, and that it was also objected to in Queensland.

Senator Higgs

- They were only offered 7s. 6d. per week.

Senator Drake

- It was Danish immigrants who were suggested.

Senator DOBSON

- I should like our honorable friends to deal with these matters, because it brings us back to the question as to whether we are going to have this great northern country developed, or are going to leave it idle. We know that general farming cannot be carried on there. Dr. Maxwell told us that they could produce butter there, but that they could not make it pay, just as strawberries could be produced at the North Pole if they were grown in a hothouse and a fire was kept going. The question of the development of this great country is to me a very important matter. It appears to me that in Queensland at one time they wanted the kanaka to go, then they changed their minds, and said he should not go because the industry would be ruined if he did. Then they tried to import white men to carry on the industry ; there appear to have been objections to that, and I wish to know from whom and upon what those objections were based. If we have not labour enough in the Commonwealth to do our work, and to carry on an industry in which thousands and millions of pounds have been invested, and if on that account the industry is going to be ruined, it appears to me to be a narrow policy to say that we shall not get Italians or Danes or anybody else to do the work. That is certainly a policy which requires consideration, and I do not wish to be driven into such a policy.

Senator Charleston

- Is it fair to say that the industry will be ruined when the honorable senator has in his mind the fact that the application is only to the country north of Mackay ?

Senator DOBSON

- I quite agree with my honorable friend, and I fancy, from all I can gather, that white labour, by small farmers working their own farms, will be able to continue the industry in and around Bundaberg.

Senator Fraser. - And working their own hours.

Senator DOBSON

- The farmer himself will get up at four in the morning and go to work, and will afterwards lie down for a time, and can work when he likes and as he likes, and all the family will work together.

Senator Millen

- The honorable and learned senator must remember that four fifths of the settlers will be in that happy position. There is only one-fifth in the Cairns district.

Senator DOBSON

- The honorable and learned senator must bear in mind that in the Cairns district it is considered impossible for cane to be grown by white labour. Alluding to some admirable and useful figures which Senator Millen gave us, and dealing with the difficulty which has been found in keeping up the daily average of men required, I should like to say a word or two. First of all I find, though, that in order to get a daily average attendance of 88 men, 409 men passed through the books, so that it took six men in that country to do the work of one permanent man. Applying this to the figures which my honorable friend gave us, if it is the same class of labour, there would have to be about 1,500 men passing through Mackay to get the daily average of 295 ; 2,000 passing through Bundaberg to get the daily average of 400; and 4,000 passing through Cairns to get the daily average of 800.

Senator Millen

- The weakness of my honorable and learned friend's argument is that the casual labourer frequently does duty at several plantations or mills during the season. Having served a week or two at one, he passes on to another so that you would not require to multiply by six.

<page>7606</page>

Senator DOBSON

- I admit that my honorable friend has to some extent weakened my argument. I weakened it myself by saying that I recollected that Dr. Maxwell told us this morning that sugar cutting goes on from the 1st July to January, so that the crop seems to last a long time or to come in by instalments. The very situation of the districts and the different climates would enable these men, like shearers, to be casuals passing from plantation to plantation. I admit that the very liberal proposals made by the Government will to a very great extent help the sugar planters most materially. Here is an average preference of £5 in their favour, and that, I understand, will come to about £500,000 a year. Putting the crop at even 100,000 tons, £500,000 a year will go a very long way indeed to compensate them for any loss which they may sustain if we do away with the kanaka, but it cannot compensate them wholly, and it remains to be seen whether Dr. Maxwell's words are not true, and whether a number of plantations will not have to be abandoned. If the question of interest is a very pressing one, then supposing that out of £6,000,000, the men have borrowed £3,000,000 on mortgage, the Government might very well help, not by putting their hand in the ratepayers' pocket for another penny, but by advancing the money at 4 per cent., charging 3 per cent. for interest, and using 1 per cent. for a sinking fund. If the planters are paying 7, 8, 9, or 10 per cent., what an enormous relief could be given in that way. I shall be very happy to talk that over, and see if we cannot give the planters a little more relief, which will really cost us nothing, for we should simply be lending them the money' of the Government at a low rate. Again, could not something be done by offering a bonus or a liberal prize to anybody who invents machinery which will be labour saving in the cutting of the cane ? I think that some plan of that sort might be adopted to show the planters of North Queensland, to whom we owe our Common wealth to-day, that when they trusted in the honour, the good sense, and the justice of the Federal Parliament, they were not trusting in vain. I understand that, although it is possible to invent machinery for cutting cane, it is almost impossible to invent a machine for trashing cane. I did not understand, until I heard Dr. Maxwell's lucid explanation to-day, what trashing was. I did not quite understand that a kind of dry leaf or bark got round the cane, and that it all had to be taken away in order to let the cane grow. The cane appears to grow almost as quickly as a crop of maize. To get a machine in to trash down or take away the dead leaves, or debris, round the cane, seems to be almost an impossibility. Therefore, that labour will always have to be done by hand.

Senator Glassey

- Not at all. On many occasions there is no trashing until the cane is cut and is going to the mill.

Senator DOBSON

- My honorable friend has only to read the report of what Dr. Maxwell told us this morning to see that it is necessary.

Senator Glassey

- Some of the planters say it is not necessary.

Senator DOBSON

- Dr. Maxwell explained this morning that where the dead leaf or bark is very great, if it is not taken away it destroys the virtue of the cane and affects the quality of the sugar. I am not prepared to vote in favour of a Royal commission, or in favour of delay, because I believe that we have in the report of the Royal commission which was appointed ten years ago, the report of Dr. Maxwell, and endless documents a very large amount of information. But if in committee it is found that that information is unreliable, or that we want more information, I may be induced to vote for delay. I am not in favour of delay now, because I think we have enough information before us. The question has been before the country for years and years, and we ought to settle it at once. I said, that having heard the admirable speech of Senator Millen, I should be inclined to vote for the Bill, with probably only one or two alterations, to make the terms better. I should be inclined to vote for an extension of five years for the Bundaberg district, six or seven years for the Mackay district, and certainly eight years for the planters in the north, where the industry cannot be carried on wholly by white labour. I am trusting now to Dr. Maxwell and other men. If their information is wrong - I do not believe it is - then I am wrong. But I am inclined to think that Dr. Maxwell pointed out this morning a very big hole in the Bill, where it treats Bundaberg, in which white men may be employed, in the same way as it treats Cairns, in which white men cannot be employed to the extent which is required. An extension of five years to the Bundaberg district, six or seven years to the Mackay district, and eight years to the northern district would, it appears to me, be a fair compromise, and would do justice to the sugar planters.

Debate (on motion by Senator Glassey) adjourned.

<page>7607</page>

21:53:00

Senate adjourned at 9.53 p.m.