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1901-05-23

House of Representatives

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half past two p.m.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BARTON (Hunter- Minister for

External Affairs). - Before the order of the day is called on, I might mention that there is a very light business-paper for to-morrow, Friday, which I suppose honorable members would like to be regarded as a private day. The only business on the notice-paper is two questions and two motions for the production of returns, and therefore, as the day is the anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria, the Government do not desire to press honorable members to sit, unless they wish to do so.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- And what about Tuesday?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- As to Tuesday, I should be happy, with Mr. Speaker's approval, to hear any proposal that any honorable member may have to make. I think that any suggestions honorable members desire ' to make had better be made now.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I think that, so far as honorable members on this side of the House are concerned, they would like an adjournment until Wednesday next, so that they might have a reasonable period to spend in Sydney during certain celebrations which are about to take place there. If it is consonant with the views of the Prime Minister, I would suggest that, when moving the adjournment to-night, he should propose that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday.

Mr BARTON

- Under ordinary circumstances I should, of course, endeavour to consult the feelings of honorable members, so long as no harm is likely to result to public business ; but perhaps my honorable friends opposite will tell me that they will make an effort to close the debate on the Address in Reply to-night. If they will do that there will be no difficulty whatever in adjourning until Wednesday.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

-There must be no conditions.

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Mr BARTON

- I do not suggest any conditions; but, if honorable members would make an effort to close the debate to-night, I should be willing to sit as late as twelve o'clock with that end in view. I do not want an assurance from honorable members that they will close the debate to-night; but I should like the assurance that an effort will be made to close it. If such an effort is made, we might sit until eleven or half-past, or even until midnight.

Sir William McMillan

- I do not think any unnecessary delay will be caused by honorable members on this side of the House. Their speeches will be short.

Mr BARTON

- Perhaps honorable members will consider the matter further while the debate on the Address in Reply is in progress.

QUESTION

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

-I desire to know whether the attention of the Premier has been drawn to the threat made by the Minister of Defence last night, that if the transcontinental railway were not constructed he would " use all his power to undo the federation," and, whether his attention being called to it, he intends to take any steps to allay the feeling of unrest that must arise throughout the Commonwealth if such a threat levelled against the Constitution by a responsible Minister is allowed to pass unchallenged by the head of the Government?

Mr BARTON

- No one knows better than my right honorable friend that when a trusted colleagues of the leader of the Opposition has moved a motion involving the fate of a Government, Ministers cannot answer questions until the termination of the debate. He will also understand as well as I do that it is not customary to ask questions on matters which are under discussion at a time when the debate upon them is just about to be called on.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This is a matter of privilege, and the right honorable member has a right to ask the questions now on that ground.

Sir Edward Braddon

- The construction of the Western Australian railway is not now under debate.

Mr BARTON

- The remarks of the Minister of Defence were not taken exception to when they were made during the debate on the Address in Reply last night, and may therefore be referred to by the right honorable member when he rises to speak

Mr CONROY

- I also desire to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the threat of the Minister of Defence that he would break up the Federation if certain proposals are not carried. Does the right honorable gentleman realize the danger to the Constitution which arises from this threat, since the right honorable member for Swan is the head of the permanent defence force, and will he have the citizen soldiery called out and provided with arms to meet it? Will he also take care that a suitable residence in the Pacific Islands is chosen as a place of exile for the Emperor of the West, if the sad occasion arrives to necessitate it!

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address in Reply

Debate resumed from 22nd May (vide page 228) upon motion by Mr. W. H.

Groom : -

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

May it please Your Excellency : -

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

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

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

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Mr WILKS

- Most honorable members who have addressed you, sir, during this debate have prefaced their remarks by wishing you a happy time in the chair. I am satisfied that if our discussions are continued on the same high level as the speeches to which it was my privilege to listen last night, honorable members will all reach the sphere of ethereal bliss. But the members of the Opposition have upon their shoulders the duty of pointing out all lurking danger to the Constitution. We were told by the Minister of Defence that he trusted that all questions brought before this House would be treated with thoughtfulness, and investigated with strong political vision, honorable members not confining their horizon to that of their own individual States ; but in conclusion the Minister showed such a rebellious spirit towards his leader that I am not surprised that honorable members have drawn the attention of the Prime Minister to the need of taking into consideration the right honorable gentleman's remarks.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They almost amounted to treason.

Mr WILKS

- Only a few months back, the Prime Minister journeyed to various parts of the continent to warn the electors against certain candidates who, he stated, wished to stab the Constitution. The watchword and

party-cry of honorable members opposite was - "The Constitution is in danger, and we are the people to guard it," and now an attack upon the Constitution is made in the early stages of the debate upon the Address in Reply by one of the honorable member's own colleagues. No doubt honorable members have often wondered how it was that the Minister of Defence was able to continue in power in his own colony for so long a period; but, now that we have evidence of his strong personality and his great fighting abilities, we need do so no longer. He has told us, however, that if a certain line of railway is not made - in justice, as he terms it, to the State of Western Australia - he will endeavour to undo the federation. To those who have been led to believe that the strong defenders of the Constitution were the honorable members who sit behind the Government, the speech of the right honorable member came as a great shock. He has insinuated he would maintain the rights of the people of his State, even at the cannon's mouth, and no matter what might happen to federation. You, Mr. Speaker, are able to preserve a countenance unmoved by emotion; but it seems to me that, as a true federalist, you were troubled and vexed in spirit by the honorable member's remarks.

Sir William McMillan

- The honorable member should ask the Minister to apologize and withdraw.

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Mr WILKS

- I think that something further than apology is needed. If the honorable member for Wentworth thinks that an apology will meet the case, it remains for the Minister for Home Affairs to take up the cudgels on behalf of the Constitution. We, of New South Wales, however, Jove a fighting spirit such as that displayed by the Minister of Defence ; but the honorable member must be prepared to receive back the blows which he directed at us. He said, in light and airy fashion, that, as the fiscal question had been thrashed out at the elections, it would be almost a waste of time to deal with it here at the present moment; but the Ministry, have put the question in the very forefront of the programme contained in the Governor's speech. Those who for many years have been taking a part in the fiscal light will not shirk their responsibility in this matter, nor fear to criticise the proposals of the Government. The Minister of Defence said that he believed in placing import duties upon such articles as we could produce ourselves, letting articles which we could not produce come in free ; and his remarks have been practically re-echoed by many other honorable members during the debate. Honorable members who speak in the arena of federal politics must, of course, acknowledge that they have to consider, not only the necessities of Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, or of any other State from which they may have come, but also the varied requirements of all parts of this great island continent. We hear the cry which on the platform has a specious ring about it, and is very useful - that such goods as you can produce in the country should be protected, whilst those which cannot be produced in it should be allowed to come in free. That is seductive at the first glance ; but, although you may recognise the enormous mineral and agricultural resources of Australia, you must see that there is great difficulty about producing here all that is required for consumption. The honorable member for Newcastle echoed this cry. The honorable member from Southern Melbourne has strong radical tendencies, and the ideas that he enunciated in this Chamber apparently expressed the aspirations of the working class of Victoria. I hope that in some measure I shall be able to re-echo the radical aspirations of the people of ' New South Wales, seeing that I represent an electorate which has within its borders a larger number of persons pursuing industrial avocations than are to be found in any other electorate in Australia. I do not say this egotistically, but in order to support the views held for a number of years by men who are not new to political movements and thought. Because if anything in the political movements of Australia does strike us it is that our middle and working classes are keener on matters of politics and more conversant with the tendencies of political thought than are the leisured classes. I do not offer that remark as an insult, but I wish to emphasize the fact that the working classes follow political thought closely because they think that sound policy has an important bearing on their prosperity, and that they are thus compelled to give close attention to politics, which attention other classes have apparently neglected. The honorable member for Southern Melbourne said that he considered the fiscal proposals of the Government to be inadequate. That was his view as an honest protectionist. He evidently thought that the protectionist policy of this Ministry was not in line with the opinions held by himself and the radicals of Victoria whom he represents. Then, again, the honorable member for Gippsland, who represents a country district; denied the force of the comparisons presented

as to the population statistics of New South Wales and Victoria. He stated that numbers of people had migrated from Victoria to Western Australia, not only from a love of adventure, but also with the desire to make themselves more speedily rich on the gold-fields than they could do by pursuing industrial operations in Victoria. The honorable member said that these people left with their pockets full of gold. But the honorable member for Newcastle also stated that thousands of miners had departed from his constituency to Western Australia with the same object in view. The argument of the honorable member for Gippsland is not therefore of much value,, seeing that we find that from the two great colonies an exodus of a similar kind has taken place.

Mr Watkins

- I said hundreds, not thousands.

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Mr WILKS

-Well, say hundreds then : the argument is the same. I know, at any rate, that the vessels leaving Sydney were always loaded with passengers. The excitement of a gold rush in one State is always the cause of an exodus of population from other places. Such movements have been general throughout the whole of the States. I do not wish to throw an array of statistics on the table. It is not very inviting for honorable members to listen to such a dry-as-dust treatment of the question, nor does it carry much conviction. The experience we have in the daily affairs of life is more valuable. I do not consider for a moment that the honorable members who favour protection take that view with the stubborn idea that their fiscal policy is a kind of religion, and that because they have held it for some years they should not give it up. I do not believe that any more than I believe that the free-trader is equally obstinate if he is convinced that an alteration of fiscal policy is desirable. But holding the views he does, it is his bounden duty to advocate them. It is, I contend, our duty to debate the subject from the point of view of national policy. The tests I can apply are those which the Prime Minister himself in the remarkable speech he made in Melbourne during the election campaign acknowledged to be fair. He then made it understood that he would fight for a revenue Tariff of such a character that, while it did not ruthlessly destroy those industries which had been established, yet would be sufficient to bring in the revenue required. He said that he would look after the revenue as the primary question, and that it would be impossible to take such a Tariff as that of Victoria, with its very liberal free list, and expect to raise the revenue required for all Australia there being only about . £33,000,000 of taxable imports. The deduction of the free list would leave only £16,000,000 of imports for taxation. A Tariff devised upon those lines would raise only something like £5,000,000 for the purpose of governmental exigencies, which would mean about 31 per cent. But the Ministry have not yet foreshadowed their ideas in regard to the Tariff. In the financial statement to be presented by the Treasurer, as well as from the Tariff measure to be introduced by the Minister for Trade and Customs, we shall find further details. But prior to that it appears to me that the Government are doing what Ministers in the State Parliaments have done in the past. They are following as keenly as they can the course of the debate, and trying to obtain a declaration from honorable members as to the strength of their opinions upon the fiscal question. That is a scientific way of obtaining information which was hitherto obtained by the whip system. I hope the Minister for Defence realizes that it is not a matter of beating the air from this side of the House. The Government must now understand from the declarations of the Opposition the strength of the views here entertained upon the Tariff. From that point of view the debate will not have been lost time. The

Ministry will have been placed in the position to obtain the opinions of Honorable members. I will give some indication of the views I hold upon the matter. In passing, I wish to say that the Opposition are fortunate enough to have an excellent lighting man in their leader. The right honorable gentleman has the same good spirits and good nature as the Minister for Defence, who has at the same time a strong personality and much determination. The leader of the Opposition has an equally strong personality and powerful acumen. The honorable member for Newcastle led the House to believe that the leader of the Opposition, when asking the New South Wales Parliament to accept the Commonwealth Bill, said that as far as he was concerned he admitted that free-trade had become a thing of the past. "What the right honorable gentleman did say was that for a few years of the operation of Federal Government free-trade could not be put into operation as exactly as in New South Wales; but he also said that, holding his present views, it was his intention to address the electors of New South Wales and the Commonwealth,

for the purpose of proceeding as far as possible in the direction of a free-trade policy.

Mr Watkins

- I will give the honorable member the passage in Hansard I was quoting from.

Mr WILKS

- There is this further test of the right honorable gentleman's consistency in this matter - that he has persistently and with vigour addressed meetings of electors all over the Commonwealth in support of the proposition I have cited. The memory of the honorable member for Newcastle may have played him a trick. I do not think his intention was to place the matter in a false light, but if his statement were allowed to go unchallenged it might be taken as true by honorable members. The politicians and business men of Victoria are "cute" people, who get up with their eyes open; and they might have assumed, from the honorable member's statement, if I did not offer this contradiction, that we on this side were showing a timidity on the question which we certainly do not wish to present. The experience men have is better than what has been called in the course of this debate a fetish. My experience leads me in the direction of the retention of the fiscal policy which has been carried out in New South Wales, which, in my opinion, would benefit all Australia. Upon that experience I take my stand. But a mere recital of experience is not sufficient. The honorable member for Gippsland paid a very nice compliment to New South Wales last night. He said he admired the mother State, but he took the view that her natural advantages are so great that her fiscal policy is not answerable for her present condition. That argument can be applied to the whole of the States of the union. A course of good seasons in any of the States makes for the progress and prosperity of them to a much greater extent than does their fiscal policy. But I believe that the fiscal policy of New South Wales, if adopted for all Australia, would benefit the Commonwealth by assisting the people when trying seasons come upon them. With regard to the question of population, I do not think that because Sydney and its suburbs have increased so wonderfully within the last ten years, whereas Melbourne and its suburbs have practically lost their natural increase, that that is a matter to rejoice over. The advancement of one portion of the Commonwealth and a retrograde movement in another part, will not make for the common good. In my opinion, the friendly rivalry and emulation that have existed in the past have done much to place the States not in a condition of jealousy towards each other, as is sometimes hastily assumed, but in a condition of material prosperity. Attention must, however, be paid to the matter of population, as so much depends upon it. I find that in 1871 Victoria had close upon a quarter of a million of people more than New South Wales. By 1881 the population of Victoria had diminished to an excess of 110,000. By 1891 it had further diminished to 8,000; and in 1901 New South Wales had an excess of population over Victoria of close upon 300,000.

Mr McCAY

- What is the square mileage of the two States?

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Mr WILKS

- Whereas New South Wales in 1871, compared with Victoria, was minus 230,000 in population; she had in 1901 300,000 in excess. Some explanation must be presented to account for that change. It could not have been, as the honorable member for Gippsland said, that the settlers of Victoria have been attracted by the cheaper land of New South Wales. Those are matters of recent date. But this overhauling of Victoria by New South

Wales in the matter of population has been consistent in its operation. There must be some other reason for the change. We are told by strong protectionists that the policy of free-trade does not give encouragement to industries or to the employment of labour but we find that in the city of Sydney and suburbs the population has increased during the last ten years by 102,000 souls, while the industries there are built up on their own financial stability. There is no State assistance, yet the industries stand to-day as a record and example to the other industries of Australia. The free-trader does not say that he does not wish to see industries established; the main difference between the protectionist and the free-trader is that the free-trader argues that those who run any special industry should receive no more assistance than those who run other industries. We find, not only in Victoria, but in all protectionist countries, that the assistance given by the State to industries is always in proportion to the political power those interested in the industries have in the Parliament. I am not making any charge of corruption against the State Parliament of Victoria - I am not even suggesting a charge - but I suggest that according

to the power of the capital behind certain industries,' so are those industries brought into prominence, and as they are brought into prominence and made an active factor in politics, in so far do they become the first concern of Parliament. I have given some facts relating to the population of New South Wales, and have drawn certain deductions and if the latter are fallacious, I trust some honorable members will pull them to pieces. I would like now to refer to another illustration, not in Germany or France, though the Minister of Defence referred to those countries, after telling us that such reference ought not to be made. The argument used by the Minister of Defence was indeed a very dangerous one for his own side : because, according to him the countries we have to fear are those where the hours are long and the wages are low, and whose products, according to the protectionists, come into competition with those of Australia. But I prefer local illustration ; and as between Victoria and New South Wales, we to a great extent find dear lines of comparison, seeing that we have in those two States people of similar habits, desires, and aspirations. In February of this year we find in the columns of a protectionist newspaper - not of a freetrade organ or from the lips of a biased freetrade orator, or from any free-trade organization in New South Wales - some significant words. These words come with heartrending effect, because, although we cannot rejoice over the fact, they appear in the columns of a newspaper in the very centre of protectionist Victoria - in the queen city so far as protection is concerned - namely, in the columns of the Aye newspaper. On 15th February of this year we find the alarming headline - "Long hours, low wages, the employment of boy and female labour." On the same date we find a leading article alluding to the speech of the Premier the night before, and suggesting, not a low Tariff, which was said to be impossible, but suggesting a repetition of the policy of Victoria, namely, the imposition of 31 per cent. ad valorem duties. At no meeting arranged by acute politicians or by the strategy of free-traders, but at the Trades Hall, from which I am told much of the active political support of the protectionists has in the past been derived, were the statements made which called for those headings. On that date there was a meeting of 60 delegates representing 30 different callings, which it was sought to have placed under the conditions of the wages board. The delegates made most alarming statements, and as I do not wish to weary the House with detail, it will be sufficient to cite one case in the city of Melbourne, where industries are supposed to receive the full benefit of protection, and where they are supposed to be flourishing with high wages. We are asked by the Minister of Defence to carry out a somewhat similar policy for Australia, on the ground that such a policy has a tendency to fight against the low wages of the outside world. There was one case, not of a labourer, but of a mechanic - a brush-maker, and a married man - whose wage, according to the Aye, as stated by one of the delegates, was 16s. 6d. a week. As an active participant in the political warfare of South Australia you, Mr. Speaker, must have been aware of the effect of pictures presented to the electors by protectionists, where we find facts diametrically opposed.

Mr Watson

- The honorable member for Dalley has a strike in his own electorate.

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Mr WILKS

- I am pleased to say that the strike is not one in which mechanics are fighting against 16s. 6d. a week, but one in which labourers are fighting for ?2 2s. a week.

Mr Deakin

- They are fighting to obtain wages which have been paid in Victoria for years.

Mr WILKS

- The Attorney-General makes a most grievous mistake there. Mr. Franki, the manager of the institution involved, only two days ago, said he was willing to grant the ?2 2s. if he could compel Victorians to adopt a similar wage. The member for Newcastle knows as an active member of the labour party, that the difficulty in New South Wales in 1891 was that the result of the efforts of the men involved in the labour trouble there was destroyed by the free labourers from Victoria. In New South Wales they are not afraid of an exodus of citizens required in the community; but they are afraid of the surplus unemployed from Victoria coming there to keep down wages.

Mr Deakin

- We have had the unemployed from New South Wales under the same circumstances.

An Honorable Member. - What is the good of pots calling kettles black over matters of this kind?

Mr WILKS

- In debate points of this sort are made, and no doubt the honorable member for Newcastle acted with some object and intention. I hope to hear that the men on strike have obtained what they are fighting for; and it is an admission of the power of our industries that the men are in a position to fight against wages which they consider too low, because, if employment were so scarce as some honorable members represent, the men would not be able to take such a stand. Honorable member's must rejoice that the skilled mechanics and powerful trades unions of New South Wales are assisting the men on strike, because we do not wish to see in any State of the union any wage less than that which we can call the lowest living wage - £2 2s. a week. I think I have supplied enough information in regard to population, and now I will deal with the arguments used by some honorable members last night. One honorable member asked us to have regard to the immense territory and resources of New South Wales, and said that with these advantages that State ought to be prosperous. But it will be admitted that for a number of years a great and marvellous advantage to Victoria, in keeping down State expenditure, was the compactness and smallness of the territory. In New South Wales we have certain fertile spots, but there are miles on miles of arid waste that have had to be traversed by Government roads and railways before those fertile spots have been reached. The member for Gippsland used the same argument as the Minister of Defence, only in different language. The former member expressed some fear lest the States might not be allowed to offer bonuses, and that the border farmers and pastoralists would suffer by the removal of the stock tax. In Victoria a stock tax was put in operation, with the alleged purpose of assisting the agricultural and border districts. The member for Gippsland with a good deal of acuteness, which did him credit, suggested that the State should have the power of continuing the bonus system; and one feature of that system which free-traders can admire is that the amount of the impost can be accurately ascertained. The stock tax was either of use to this country or it was not of use. Free-trade, I thought, was supposed to be one of the advantages of federation. If the electors of this State have in the past received assistance by a stock tax, then by the removal of the stock tax those people are so much injured. The same argument operates in regard to the kauri grown sugar of Queensland, and the sugar industry on the borders of New South Wales. We are told we must approach the question in a most timorous manner, and that it would not do to hurriedly destroy vested interests. One of the benefits of union is a uniform Tariff, and immediately we have the latter, the sugar-growers of Richmond River will have to compete without restriction with Queensland. Yet we find honorable members saying we should not sanction the abolition of kauri labour, owing to vested interests. The honorable member for Wentworth said this was a question we should approach with "feelings of justice," and so on.

Sir William McMillan

- I only ask for an independent inquiry.

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Mr WILKS

- I do not wish to be taken as an extremist, who says that the coloured races must go at this very moment. I am trying to deal with reasons and arguments presented in this Chamber for the alteration or maintenance of certain doctrines to which we are opposed in New South Wales. I have referred to the "vested interest" cry. We never hear the "infant industry" cry, though we do hear the "home market industry" argument, and of the "produce what you can" principle. In Victoria, protection was first started to give an impetus to industries 'within the State, with the idea that after a few years those industries would not require State assistance. There has been protection in Victoria for 30 years, and during that time New South Wales, with the exception of two occasions, has practically been a free-trade country. These occasions were when Sir Patrick Jennings and Sir George Dibbs were in power, and when, for short periods, there was a departure from the doctrine of revenue Tariff. For the last six years the doctrine of a free-trade Tariff as perfect in its incidence as a Tariff in any free-trade country in the world has prevailed in New South Wales. The State of New South Wales, during the last six years, has not been assisted by any great discovery of gold, or the development of any valuable mineral resources. It has not been assisted by any regularity of seasons. On the contrary, the last six years have been marked by a continuance of droughts, and all the other natural disadvantages which have already been referred to by honorable members, and yet, notwithstanding that trial, that State stands today admittedly the premier State of the group. When a further opportunity is offered in debate I hope to go more fully into the fiscal question than I have done. There are other matters that I would like to refer to, one of which is the site of

the federal capital. I desire to speak deliberately on this question, because honorable members must recognise that they are placed in an invidious position. We know that there is a provision in the Constitution under which the federal capital must be in New South Wales, and the opening speech says that an area will be chosen of ample size for all public requirements, and of which the climate, accessibility, and natural beauty will give promise of a seat of Government worthy of the new nation. For a time, we are told, that we are to reside in the city of Melbourne, and I would like to put clearly, what in a very short period will be in the months of the electors of the Commonwealth, as to our position in this city. I did understand from reading the debates which took place in the Victorian Parliament that for the prestige conferred on Melbourne by reason of the Federal Parliament sitting here we were to be provided with accommodation free of charge. It now appears that this Parliament is to be a sort of paying guest or boarder. It is now the subject of general conversation in the corridors and elsewhere that the State Government of Victoria have capitalized these parliamentary buildings, and ask the Commonwealth Parliament to pay rental for their use.

Mr Barton

- They have made no such request to me.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Perhaps the Treasurer knows of it.

Treasurer

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I am not aware of it

Mr WILKS

- It is current talk outside, and I hope it is not true. It is quite justifiable that we should be called upon to pay for the maintenance of the establishment; but whatever the facts may be, what I have already said is in the mouth not only of the man in the street, but also of certain honorable members.

Sir George Turner

- Victoria spent from £25,000 to £30,000 in alterations to the Exhibition building. I suggested that the Federal Government ought to pay that expense', and the State Government repudiated the idea. That is many months ago.

Mr WILKS

-I believe that the Exhibition building was offered as an alternative place of meeting for this Parliament. It is not the amount of money about which I am concerned ; it is simply a question of the position in which we are placed, and I do hope therefore that the Minister for Home Affairs will do his best to expedite the settlement of the site for the federal capital.

Mr Barton

- May I assure the honorable member that no such demand as that ' to which he refers has been made upon me or any other member of the 'Government. It would be made to me first, I presume ; but no suggestion or hint of the kind has been made.

Mr A McLEAN

-I was instrumental in bringing in the Bill relating to this matter, and there was not a single member of the Victorian Parliament who made any such suggestion when the Government introduced the Bill.

Mr WILKS

- It was not said at the time of the introduction of the Bill, but it has been said within the last few days.

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Mr A McLEAN

- In passing the Bill, the Victorian Parliament gave the Government power to place either House at the disposal of the Federal Government.

Mr WILKS

- That is what I said. My reading of the debates led me to believe exactly what the honorable member is now saying.

Mr Harper

- Would it not have been better to have asked the Prime Minister privately about it?

Mr WILKS

- I have not had an opportunity of doing so, and, in any case, I do not quite accept the ethics which the

honorable member accepts.

Mr Harper

- The honorable member should not believe every tale that is bandied about.

Mr WILKS

- I hope matters of this kind will always be aired in this Chamber so long as there is any tangible reason for so doing. I trust that the Minister for Home Affairs will speedily give members an opportunity to arrive at a decision regarding the site of the future federal capital. There is no necessity to wait until an elaborate building is erected. There is no necessity for a palatial building for the meeting of Parliament.

Mr Barton

- Hear, hear.

Mr WILKS

- I am glad to have the Prime Minister's approval. The structure need not be an elaborate one at the beginning, and I am quite satisfied that honorable members would feel more at home in such a chamber than they would do in submitting to discourteous treatment by the Government of Victoria. With regard to banking legislation. I understand that the Government are collecting the necessary data to enable them to prepare a Bill dealing with this matter. I trust that they will collect that information as speedily as possible. We have a ready recollection of the difficulties that occurred in New South Wales in 1893. I am not now referring in any Bashibazouk manner to the banks in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but to institutions of fungoid growth. The law which permitted them to prey on the confiding investors of New South Wales remains to-day, and there are many people who, recognising that it is within the power of the Federal Government to make uniform banking laws for the Commonwealth, firmly believe that by doing so a great many securities would be made more convertible than they have been in the past. I am willing to realize the danger of unduly rushing matters of this kind. Every honorable member must know that the banking institutions which exist here differ materially from similar institutions in the old world. The latter rely chiefly on their discount trade. In this country, probably because we have been unable to prevent it, a danger has been allowed to remain, which requires legislative action. I refer particularly to many investment societies. It is apparent to any keen observer that these institutions are much more sensitive than the banking institutions of the old world. I trust that the Government realize that it is desirable to prevent a repetition of the disaster of 1893, and I hope that while the promised Bill will legitimately protect enterprises of the character referred to, it will protect equally those who use these institutions for the purposes of deposit. I seconded the amendment moved by the honorable member for Parramatta, Mr. Cook, which I do not regard as an attack upon the Government, although they have chosen to take it as such.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I shall vote against it.

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Mr WILKS

- I have a perfect right to say that I shall vote for it. Whilst in this House party lines are drawn to a certain extent, still party lines do not cover the whole ground of a member's political belief. The amendment has not been designed by the Opposition for the purpose of harassing the Government, and the Ministry ought rather to be pleased that it has been submitted. The labour party, after reading it, saw distinctly that it was an amendment covering the whole gamut of Asiatic immigration. What more striking illustration of the need for such an amendment could be found than the spectacle presented in the heyday of our festivities last week, when hundreds of Chinamen paraded before the people as a special feature of the Commonwealth celebrations. Probably the display was used by Victorian politicians to show the growth and the great power of the Asiatic people. This question is not only an industrial one, but a racial one. We do not wish to have a repetition of the black race problem of the United States. It is a problem which has troubled the greatest statesmen and publicists in that country. Already in the Northern Territory the Minister for Trades and Customs, in conjunction with Sir Horace Tozer, of Queensland, has had to face the trouble of a Chinese invasion, and some steps must be taken to avert in Australia the evils which have caused such great difficulties in the United States of America. There should be no want of courage displayed in dealing with this matter. Although the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Government seem to be, in a manner, sparring for wind, while they are attempting to ascertain exactly

how honorable members will range themselves, it is necessary .in the interests of humanity that this question should be dealt with as speedily as possible. Another reason for its early consideration is the fact that, with the abolition of intercolonial duties, the New South Wales sugar growers will be placed in direct competition with the kanaka labour of Queensland. It is this consideration which will lead the representatives of New South Wales to make every effort to press for a settlement of the question. At the same time I acknowledge that the question is hemmed round with difficulties. But I should like to point out to honorable gentlemen that the leader of the Opposition, whom the members of the labour party and other honorable gentlemen are disposed to think of as one who has dallied with the question of securing a white Australia, was the first to introduce a comprehensive Aliens Restriction Act. Five years ago he piloted through the New South Wales Legislature a Bill for the restriction of Chinese immigration ; but it was vetoed by the Imperial authorities.

Mr Kingston

- The South Australian measure was passed at the same time.

Mr Barton

- The Bill to which the honorable member refers was not a Bill for the restriction of Chinese; it was a Bill to prevent the introduction of other undesirable immigrants. The late Sir Henry Parkes passed the present New South Wales Chinese Restriction Act, many years before the time of which the honorable member is speaking.

Mr WILKS

- The Bill to which I have alluded was a Bill to amend the Chinese Restriction Act, which imposes a poll-tax of ?100 on every Chinese entering the State of New South Wales.

Mr Barton

- Yes. That is the Act now in. force.

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Mr WILKS

- That is so. The Undesirable Aliens Restriction Bill to which I have referred provided an educational test, and while the measure which was finally passed, on the lines of the Natal Act, is not absolutely effective, it has clone a great deal to prevent the introduction of undesirable aliens into the State. In dealing with this matter, however, we must remember that it is of no use to ask for more than we can obtain ; and you, Mr. Speaker, are aware that the Imperial authorities have the same right to veto the legislation of this Parliament as they have to veto the legislation of the State Parliaments ; but the High Commissioner of the Commonwealth would be able to speak with greater force and authority to the Home Government than the Agents-General of the various States have been able to do. I hope, however, that the leader of the Government will not attempt to force any particular measure upon the House, and that he will, remember that the question is not one to be regarded as a party question, but that any measure dealing with it should be taken into consideration quite apart from party feeling. Tins Parliament Inning passed such a measure, he will be in a better position to invite the Imperial authorities to give consideration to1 our views than any State Government has been in the past. I do not know whether the legislation which we desire would, if sanctioned, abrogate Imperial treaties; but I think that the Imperial authorities, in recognition of the active as well as the sentimental support which ; these States have given to the Empire during ! the last two years, will be inclined to deal with our requests in a more kindly spirit than they have often shown in the past. In conclusion, I desire to thank honorable members for the hearing which they have given to my somewhat disconnected and disjointed remarks upon the various questions which I have brought under review, remarks to which I have been prompted by the debate itself. In my opinion, the sooner we get rid of preliminaries and come to close holds the better. The Prime Minister is quite right in attempting to ascertain the fiscal views of honorable members, and J. hope that I have been open with him on that subject. We, on this side, arc not afraid to ask for or to tight for a. fair Tariff; and, judging by the right honorable gentleman's silence when the honorable member for Wentworth said that he believed him to be a moderate tariffist I am of opinion that the Tariff Bill, when presented to us, will be more in accordance with the views of the opposition than with the views which the protectionists expressed a few months ago at the general elections. I shall be glad to welcome a revenue Tariff. The Attorney-General said something last night about a liberal free list. Now, iron appears on the Victorian free list, but New South' Wales protectionists, such as the Minister for Home Affairs, believe that for the purpose of

developing iron deposits in that State, and encouraging the iron industries there, a tax should be put upon iron.

Mr Mauger

- We will yield that willingly.

Mr WILKS

- And perhaps ask twenty times as much in return.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member should speak for himself.

Mr WILKS

- The honorable member yesterday referred to the manner in which an industry was sometimes encouraged by the placing of certain articles used in it on the free list. No doubt it is a great encouragement to many of the Victorian industries to have iron upon the free list of Victoria, but it would probably suit the protectionists of New South Wales to have iron on the list of import duties. Similarly, the people of New South Wales and Queensland may want to have sugar kept upon the list of import duties, while the people of the other States may want to have it imported free. I mention these matters by way of illustration of the difficulties which will occur when we come to deal with the Tariff. We who come from New South Wales cannot, of course, expect to obtain a replica of our present free-trade policy, but we hope that the Tariff which will be imposed will be of a revenue-producing character only, and that as population increases we shall be able to remove all import duties from the necessities of life.

Mr A Chapman

- The leader of the Opposition wanted to protect the iron industry.

Mr WILKS

- He wished to encourage it by giving a bonus - not by imposing customs duties.

Mr Barton

- Does not the giving of bonuses coddle an industry?

Mr. WILKS. - Certainly it does ; but a free-trader would rather vote for the giving of bonuses, because by that system the assistance given can be more accurately measured. The Minister of Defence asked why it is that Victoria keeps to her protectionist policy if she has done so badly by it. My answer is that it is because protection has established vested interests, and those who have those interests will fight for them. That is a reason why the federal capital should be removed from Melbourne, and kept away from any other centre where there is likely to be this fight for vested interests.

An Honorable Member. - If Victoria lends the Commonwealth her parliamentary buildings rent free, will the honorable member be willing to stay here ?

Mr. WILKS. - No. I have given honorable members the opinion of the electorate which I represent. It is not an electorate in which industries are waning. We have industries there which are greater and more powerful than any in Australia.

Mr Mauger

- Smelting works ?

Mr. WILKS. - I refer to industries like the Morts Dock and Engineering Works, and the Balmain Chemical Works. The tendency of these industries is to grow.

Mr Mauger

- May they increase !

Mr. WILKS. - There are employed in the iron works to which I refer at least 100 one-time Victorians, who in emigrating to New South Wales have found constant and regular employment, and none of the arguments which I have heard in favour of protection during this debate are such as should encourage a free-trader to weaken in his fiscal belief.

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Mr BARTON

- By way of explanation, and as a matter of courtesy to my honorable friend opposite, perhaps I may be given an opportunity to read the letters which passed between the Commonwealth Government and the Government of Victoria in reference to the occupation of these buildings by the Commonwealth. The first letter was a letter from the Premier of Victoria, and was addressed to myself. It is as follows : -

Premier's Office,

Melbourne, 10th April, 1901.

SIR, - With reference to the forthcoming meeting in Melbourne of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, I have the honour to state that this Government has much pleasure in placing at the disposal of your Government, for the purposes of the Parliament, either the present State Parliament House or the Exhibition Building.

While leaving your Government perfectly free in its choice of whichever of the two buildings it may deem the more suitable, I desire to remark that such alterations are in progress at the Exhibition Building as will, it is considered, most fully meet the requirements, and promote the comfort of the members and the representatives of the press, should that place be selected.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. PEACOCK, Premier.

The Right Honorable Edmund Barton, K.C.,

Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

To that letter the following reply was sent : - 12th April, 1901.

Sir, - I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 10th inst., offering accommodation for the Parliament of the Commonwealth in either your State Parliament House or the Exhibition Building, and to inform you that after most careful consideration, and a personal inspection of both buildings, Ministers are of opinion that for the work of the Federal Parliament, after the inaugural ceremony, which must, of course, take place at the Exhibition Building, in order that their exceptionally public character may be emphasized, the existing Parliamentary buildings, in Spring-street, are preferable. They therefore exercise in that direction the option so generously offered them by you, on behalf of the Government of Victoria.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

EDMUND BARTON

The Hon. A. J. Peacock, Premier of Victoria.

Mr EWING

- A considerable number of the representatives of the State of New South Wales, who are closely identified with the Government in their fiscal policy, thought that it would be well to sit quietly in their tents during this debate, because it was apparent from the first that all the charges made were blank cartridge. There is no scent of battle in the air; there is no foe in shining armour; there is only a snake-in-the-grass amendment which will mislead no one. It appeared to us, therefore, that we should best aid the Government, and the deliberations of this Parliament, and possibly best discharge our duties to the Commonwealth by remaining quiet. We have, therefore, sat silent during the last day or two ; but at last the provocation has become insupportable.

Sir William McMillan

- The worm has turned.

Mr EWING

- We want representatives from other parts of the continent, those unfortunate men who come from these degraded and down-trodden protectionist States, to understand that on your right, sir, there sit some men from New South Wales who believe that the whole of the wisdom of Australia is not centred in that State, who believe that there is some intelligence, some wisdom, some reasonableness, and some enterprise outside their own State. It is to show how a large number of those who represent New South Wales view the situation that I rise to speak this afternoon. I will deal for a moment or two with the prosaic fiscal policy. I am aware, however, that anything that may be said at this stage will be useless, or at least result less. Every member of the House appreciated the speech of the honorable member for Wentworth last night. It was a reasonable, manly deliverance, and we felt as we heard it that we were listening to a man who was addressing us not only with knowledge, but in a spirit of compromise. If ever there was a time in the history of this country for members to lay aside their local bias, or what they may regard as their local responsibilities, and enter into Australian politics with a sense of compromise, it will be in this Parliament during the next few months. But I would like to ask how far it is possible for us to agree with reference to the revenue of Australia. If I make an error I look to the honorable member for Wentworth, with his large

knowledge of finance, to correct me. First of all, I think we can, in three or four minutes, get the whole question of the fiscal policy of Australia put in a nutshell. The value of the goods imported into Australia for home consumption is about £33,000,000. I believe there is no doubt about that. £1,000,000 worth of those goods are for the service of the State. There is no duty paid upon them. A million and a quarter are made up from the imported raw material, and re-imported. Therefore, that amount disappears. Narcotics and stimulants are worth about £3,100,000, and are dealt with specially. I think there is no doubt as to those figures.

Sir William McMillan

- Does the honorable member mean that that is the amount of the duties paid %

Mr EWING

- No, the value of the goods imported over-sea. If we take the aggregate of those amounts from the £33,000,000 we have left an amount of about £28,000,000. Up to that point both sides of the House are in accord. There is another step to be taken. It is one in regard to which there is further agreement - that you can divide the £28,000,000 worth of goods into two classes. Upon one class any customs duties levied will be protective in its effect, while if you levy customs duties upon the residue they will not be protected. The first amount is about from £8,000,000 to £8,500,000, and the second is from £1,9,500,000 to £20,000,000.

Sir William McMillan

- That is the estimate of Mr. Speaker, and I think it is probably correct.

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Mr EWING

- Yes ; a number of us have to express to you, sir, and to all the leading-men of Australia, a considerable amount of thanks for the aid we have received. Both sides are agreed that the amount of revenue required to govern a free-trade country is about the same as that required to govern a protectionist country. That amount is set down at about eight and a half millions or thereabouts for this country. Therefore, from eight to eight and a half millions has to be obtained through customs and excise. It is also conceded that you can obtain something like from four to four and a half millions in narcotics and stimulants. Therefore, you have to obtain from twenty-eight million pounds' worth of goods from four to four and a half millions in customs and excise. This is really as far as it is possible for us to agree. We come then to the parting of the ways. In all parts of Australia, and certainly in New South Wales; we hear descriptions of the brutal thing called protection. 'It is represented as a hydro-headed monster which ought to be trodden out of existence in any country where it dares to show its head above the surface, It is said that if ever there was in existence in the world a system productive of brutality, murder, and sudden death, it is to be found in a system of protection.

Sir William McMillan

- Who said all that 1

Mr EWING

- The whole of honorable members opposite have said things very much like it. Even in this Parliament during the last day or two it has been represented that the whole difference between brutality and Christianity was the difference between free-trade and protection.

Mr Barton

- We have all been called burglars and robbers.

Mr EWING

- My vocabulary is not sufficient to describe protection as it has been represented. Not only was it so described, but we were told that that fiscal system was responsible in this city of Melbourne for those blatant, glaring sins you see before you, and which have hit the white-souled free-trader straight in the face like a blow, as well as for those veiled sins that undermine human nature.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is evidently responsible for seditious language.

Mr EWING

- If that is a true description of what is said of protection by the free-traders of New South Wales, I do not see how those free-traders can have anything to do with a protectionist country : so that honorable members opposite must eliminate from the £28,000,000 the £8,000,000, and get the whole of their

revenue from the ?19,500,000 or ?20,000,000 of goods. I believe that an estimate for a revenue Tariff upon those goods gives something like 25 per cent. There is the position we have to face. Such are the needs of Australia. Such are her necessities. Such is the environment created for us by the States. To get the money you require, if you are true to your principles, you have to put on duties, of at least 25 per cent.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Sir William Lyne says 10 per cent.

Mr EWING

- There is no possibility of evading the position. It must be so. And this is the Tariff that was masqueraded before the people of Australia as a low Tariff! The free-traders are on the horns of a dilemma. I believe that the honorable member for Wentworth is a whole-souled free-trader. He believes that free-trade is progress, that it is peace, that it is goodness and sound policy. But we are in the position of being obliged to impose a Tariff with a number of duties which must be protective.

Sir William McMillan

- The honorable member has left out the specific duties, a few articles in which would give nearly a half of the remainder.

Mr EWING

Mr. EWING- It is not necessary for me to go into the whole of the details. I put before honorable members an aspect of the case which appears to me to be absolutely unanswerable. The time will come when the Budget will have to be faced, and when the Opposition will have to enunciate a policy of their own. It is easier to find fault with the proposals of others than to show how better things can be done. The Opposition will have to divulge their alternative scheme, and then we shall perhaps discover that there is not one. The House must by this time be nauseated with the statements about New South Wales that occur in some speeches. It is New South Wales every time.' Now South Wales is the place of wealth, of greatness, and of many other things. If the House will follow me I will give them a little New South. Wales history which the honorable member for Wentworth will not dispute.

Mr Poynton

- More New South Wales !

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Mr EWING

- New South Wales is the greatest of all the States. If there ever was any doubt about that there can be none, after hearing the speeches of the other side.

No doubt it is a great country. It is specially favored in its public men. The leader of the Opposition was once Premier of New South Wales : and in fairness to him I "may be permitted to say that I believe his rule was an honest one and that he did his work competently. It is only reasonable and fair to say so much. When the right honorable and learned gentleman became Premier of New South Wales the Dibbs Tariff, from which we were raising some . ?2,500,000 a year was in operation. The leader of the Opposition destroyed the Dibbs Tariff in 1896, and brought in what was known as the Reid Tariff; which returned ?1,700,000. There was a difference of ?900,000 between the two Tariffs. Of course, the House will understand that New South A Vales, having a population of 1,300,000, and having ?900,000 of taxation taken off - or 15s. per head - leaped at once from a state of degradation and misery, and became a place of prosperity and peace ! Some honorable members may doubt that, but such is the contention. That state of things went on for a year or two. But in 1898 the right honorable gentleman amended his Tariff, and brought in another one which increased the revenue from customs and excise by some ?200,000. The reclaimed lady in Sydney again showed frailty. If New South A Vales, with her magnificent advantages, combined with the fact that her revenue is buttressed and supported by ?2,000,000 of revenue, or capital, from the sale of her public estate-

Sir William McMillan. - One-half comes from rents, and the other half, roughly, comes from the sale of land.

Mr Harper

- One million and a half comes from land sales.

Mr EWING

- Including conditional purchases, of course. If the honorable member for Wentworth says that what he has just stated is correct, I accept it.

Sir William McMillan

-Wereceive ?800,000 from rents, and ?1,200,000 from land alienation.

Mr EWING

- If it be a fact that New South A Vales, with her magnificent opportunities, with her great resources, combined with the further fact, here admitted, that her revenue is buttressed by one and a quarter millions of money which should never enter the State Treasury as current revenue

Mr Harper

- She is living on her capital.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is not all net revenue.

Mr.EWING. - -I have taken the figures on the admission of honorable members opposite.

Sir William McMillan

- Administration - costs about ?300,000 a year.

Mr.EWING. - If you allow for a proportion of that, it is only about ?100,000.

Sir William McMillan

- The honorable member forgets the enormous territory to be administered.

Mr EWING

- What I say is that New South A Vales has marvellous opportunities, considering that her revenue is aided by the sale of her public estate to the amount of a million and a quarter a year. Add to that the fact that the politician of New South Wales has shown considerable ingenuity in transferring the construction of bridges and such like from current revenue loan fund. If, under those circumstances, New South A Vales cannot live, how can the unfortunate "cripples" who have to be "put in hot houses" outside? How is it possible?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member call that a fair statement of the case ? He knows it is not.

Mr EWING

-Well, the honorable member is a very good judge of fairness.

Sir AVilliam McMillan

- Did not the honorable member nearly bankrupt the Treasury through the construction of roads and bridges for his own constituency ?

Mr EWING

- Now that I am a member for all Australia, I do not think I. need say anything of my constituency, but, unless I had done my duty by it for the last decade and a half, it would not have given me the pleasure of the honorable member's company to-day.

Sir AVilliam McMillan

- Hear, hear.

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Mr EWING

- I return now to another aspect of the case. Every one understands that the importer working in a great city, such as Sydney, lives on air, and does his work for nothing. The description of Sydney by the member for Wentworth was perfectly accurate from one point of view. There is now no doubt we have there a wonderful harbor, and, as Trollope said, we are so proud of it that any one would think we had dug it out ourselves. It is absolutely true we have great resources. If any persons in the impoverished State of Victoria, or any other country, were to come to the metropolis of Sydney it would be well for them. Living so long in protectionist countries may have made them shaky in their morals, and breathing the rarefied air of Sydney would be distinctly good for them. What would they see? A great city with palatial buildings, and suburbs with magnificent houses and splendid villas. I would like to ask the member for Wentworth how these things came there? Does not every member of the House, with as much intelligence as a wombat, know? Those edifices and houses - Sydney being a great trading centre - represent the difference between the price which Sydney merchants pay for goods in all parts of the world, and the price for which they sell them to their own countrymen. Those great edifices, and the luxury and wealth, simply represent the loot of the traders for some decades.

An Honorable Member. - Are there not similar buildings in Victoria ?

Mr EWING

- I do not know ; but if the honorable member imagines the importer works for nothing, he is too simple to be here. I know nothing of the wealthy manufacturers of Victoria, but I guarantee I will find ten importers in Sydney who will cover those manufacturers' cheques every time.

Sir William McMillan. - Our argument is that free-trade brings wealth.

Mr Deakin

- Wealth to the importer.

Sir William McMillan

- To everybody.

Mr EWING

- The leader of the Opposition in speaking - though I do not know that it was in Melbourne - said that between the producer and consumer there was a long pipe which was never tapped in a free-trade country, but which in a protectionist country was tapped by the manufacturer. Any one who knows about the business of agents and importers in Sydney will see that the consumer might as well pay the extra money to his own countrymen in wages, and allow manufacturers to get what they can.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What a fool the consumer is!

Mr EWING

- I will not discuss the question of folly with the honorable member. I do not know whether it is necessary to follow honorable members into questions of figures; but the honorable member for Echuca made an interjection, that we ought, as far as we can, to have honest debate. We should have truthful debate, and no man has any right - though. I know in politics we are inclined to state our case - or is justified under any circumstances, either in Parliament or before his constituents, in stating a portion of the truth.

Although I have been a protectionist for many years, I have more than once quarrelled with the protectionist party, because I believed a portion of a truth was at times suppressed, and it is never worth the while of a 'party to do that sort of thing. Take the attitude of the honorable and learned member for East Sydney, who is an able' man. Does not the right honorable and learned member know that the whole of the figures he placed before the House were absolutely misleading - not untruthful, but misleading? It is almost degrading to one's intelligence to have to follow the honorable member ; but take, for instance, the matter of emigration to Western Australia. That State suddenly sprung from what her enemies call the Swan River settlement, and the home of a number of objectionable things, to be the wealthiest gold-producing country in the world bar the Rand. In fact, it is generally conceded that at Kalgoorlie there is the richest square mile of auriferous country in the world. Of course, men went to Western Australia for gold, as they will go anywhere for gold, and the increase of population there had no more bearing on the fiscal policy than the presence of a huge number of men at Klondyke had to do with the fiscal policy of Canada.

Mr Kingston

- Western Australia is protectionist.

Mr EWING

- The figures given have had no bearing on the case, and, while perfectly truthful, bear an inference that no honest man should place before Parliament. If you asked the member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, or any other representative of that State, how it is Tasmania has progressed in population recently, he would say it was in connexion with, and because of, the recent mineral discoveries. If you will permit me, Sir, to refer to the State from which you come, I might ask why South Australia has held her own. It is because there was discovered, adjacent to the South Australian border, the greatest silver mine in the world, and Adelaide became the distributing centre for that mine. In addition to that, the South Australians were a little ahead of any one else in appreciating the great chances and opportunities which would result from the discovery of gold in Western Australia. They were first there, and having made their money came back to Adelaide and spent it.

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Sir John Forrest

- There are a lot there yet, and they have not spent all their money.

Mr EWING

- I suppose so ; they have kept some, perhaps, in order to take shares in the railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie. I want to tell this House one or two things we do know concerning New South Wales. All along the Murray fringe from Berrigan, Finley, and other places on the Murray up along the Lachlan and the Murrumbidgee, at Never-tire, and right away north to the Namoi, we have a continuous sprinkling of Victorian farmers who have been of the greatest benefit to the mother State with their enterprise and thrift, and from the fact that every one of them has held closely to the policy of the State from which he came. In proof of that, I may ask, who are the representatives along the border where the Victorians are settled ? There are the member for the Hume, the honorable member for Riverina-

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- All by narrow majorities.

Mr EWING

- They are there; and if they and others had been flying from the protectionist barbarism of Victoria, there would not have been a minority, but a majority in favour of free-trade. Further north, we have the honorable member for Bland and the honorable member for Gwydir, both of whom are protectionists; indeed, go to all the places where these Victorians are, and there will be found a protectionist majority. What need is there to sneer at the work Victoria has done ? A man may well be proud, if he is a Victorian, of the great and important work carried out by this State. There are many men here from distant parts of Australia, where I have also been, and I can say if honorable members go to Hillston, Mossiel, and Ivanhoe, across the Darling, and on to the Paroo, the Culgoa, the Narram, and the Birie, past the great table-land that separates the water flowing to the south from the Gulf water, they will find Victorian brain, energy and muscle every time. When we compare this little corner of Victoria, small in resources and limited in area, with the great and powerful New South Wales, which has the advantage of great coal resources, 40,000,000 to 60,000,000 of sheep and 20,000,000 of cattle, I say that all praise is due to the men of Victoria for their enterprise, and for the foresight that enabled them to be in the race at all.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is a wholesale condemnation of the honorable member's own State.

Mr EWING

- My responsibilities are the same in all parts of Australia. I would like to say a word or two with regard to the question of black labour ; and there is no need to disguise the fact that this is the most important, intricate, and serious question with which we have to deal. As to the amendment of the honorable member for Parramatta, if we cannot get genuine action with regard to a white Australia from men like the Minister of Trade and Customs, and the Treasurer - I need not enumerate the men who form the present administration - we may regard the case as hopeless. If we cannot get them to deal with the matter honestly, competently, and speedily, we can get the question dealt with by no member from any other part of the House. But it is for us to make it clear what our views and the desires of our constituents are. The amendment is one of those things specially framed to impose on people who were born yesterday. If it could be carried, of course the end in view would be achieved. It would simply delay the advent of the Bill dealing with the question. Every reasonable man, no matter how strongly he feels on the question - and no man feels more strongly than I - every man who is inclined to deal reasonably with the matter can do nothing but wait until the Bill makes its appearance. The member for Wentworth last night stated that there were 20,000 white men working in the sugar industry. I have no desire to inflict figures on the House, but I will undertake to prove that if 20,000 white men are working in this industry, they are working for about 3s. 6d. per week.

Mr McDonald

- That was stated by the member for Darling Downs.

Mr Fisher

- The number of white men engaged is slightly under 4,000.

Mr EWING

- I looked up the statement of the honorable member for Darling Downs, because I know his knowledge of and accuracy on the subject, and it was reported in the newspapers that the 20,000 referred to in that statement included men, women, and children, which makes a wide difference.

Mr McDonald

- The number is about 6,000, according to Government statistics.

Mr EWING

- I have the literature issued by the Mackay Sugar-growers' Association, written by the secretary, whose name has slipped my memory, but who is evidently an able man, and whose statements may be regarded as reliable from the sugar-planter's stand-point. I have gone into the facts and the figures, and at a later date I shall be glad to show how erroneous the honorable member for Wentworth has been in his statement. In Queensland in the sugar industry 130,000 tons of sugar is made annually. It is worth anything from 8 10s. per ton to 10 per ton f.o.b. in Queensland. That represents the magnitude of the sugar industry in Queensland. The year before it was 138,000 tons. Australia consumes approximately 170,000 tons of sugar annually. Queensland approximately makes, as I have already said, 130,000 tons, and New South Wales anything between 20,000 and 30,000 tons. I think that must be regarded as a fair statement of the case. Queensland says - "if you take away our kanakas the sugar industry will die." If it can be proved to this House that it is absolutely essential to employ black labour in any industry then this House will pronounce authoritatively that that is not a true native industry. As a protectionist, I am prepared to acknowledge that sometimes we must pay for our industries, but when we do pay for them we pay for white industries, for the employment of men who are friends in times of peace, and allies in times of war. No industry should be established which will give the black man the run of the white man's market. If it can be proved that the kanaka is essential to the production of sugar, then we must face the question in another way. Although I have said definitely that I am opposed to black labour, and although I enunciate certain principles, I recognise the difficulty of the position and do not desire to be unreasonable to the Government. We are always hearing that the white man cannot do this work. In the early days we were told that it was impossible for any white man to work in the tropical scrub in the northern part of New South Wales, but the white settler - such is his adaptability to his environment - has pressed right on past the Tweed, past Brisbane, past Bundaberg, right up as far as Rockhampton, and it is now conceded that he can work in the sugar industry. What the future of the white man in the sugar industry will be there is no need to discuss. Let us take one more example. In 1861, when the great war broke out, between the Federals and Confederates, in America, the cry of the Southern States was - "If you emancipate the slaves the cotton industry will die." In those days only one-tenth of cotton grown in Texas was produced by white labour. Now one-half of it is grown by white labour. One word in regard to the broader aspect of the case. If any honorable member had been asked a century or two ago, seeing the shiploads of coloured people coming from the west coast of Africa to be landed on the mainland of America, what was the future of those men, would he have thought that their descendants would cause the bloodiest fratricidal war the world has ever seen - that they would stand today a menace and a blot upon the American civilization. There they are, ten millions of them, in the "black belt" of Louisiana, Carolina, Georgia, and so on. The climate suits them; the industry suits them. The choicest minds in America fall back in blank despair when confronted with the problem of what is to be done with them. The American nation is paying the debt thus incurred, as any nation must pay it. They paid in a bloody war, they will pay again in some mysterious way that no one can tell of to-day. I will concede at once that the kanaka has not the power of standing the impact of white civilization that the negro has. He cannot carry our vices as can the negro. He is not so dangerous. But when I see the danger in its accentuated form in America, I refuse to take even a homoeopathic dose of the Asiatic. I want the Government to understand that we have in this matter a great responsibility to our constituents. After my electioneering addresses, I feel I must be honest to the best people in the world to whom a man can be honest, that is, to therein who trust him. I am sure the Government will not place us in a false position. I hope they will be absolutely firm. Perhaps the House will permit me to say a word or two with regard to the environment of Australia whilst dealing with the question of the black races. It is not the silent invasion of the Papuan, it is not the presence of a few Syrians that is our trouble. One of the greatest nations of the world lies, like a storm cloud over-shadowing Australia. In China there is a population of 400,000,000. They do not love us. There is between them and us that mysterious racial hatred, originating no one knows where, but deep-rooted and strong. China is just waiting, lazily rubbing her eye after her long hybernation. Let not honorable members lull themselves into a sense of false security. These people are separated from us by but a summer sea. We do not measure distance by miles, but by the time it takes to get from one place to another. Then there is the great Indian Empire, containing 250,000,000 of men, who are kept in

subjection by a military occupation. If I were asked what is the greatest danger to Australia, I would say it is the menace of the black and yellow men. Now let honorable members be very sure about this white Australia, because there are very few parts of the world which are left as breeding places for the white man. And where are those places ? In India ? Is there room for the descendants of the nation there? Climatically there is none. Canada, because of the frigidity of her climate, offers little room. In Africa? is there room there? Every one knows that when Kitchener passed up the Nile, driving the Baggara Arabs before him, and overthrew them at Omdurman, there was no room for white occupation, because the brown men came down on the alluvial bottoms of the Nile, and there they settled and occupied the land. I do not want to give the House a geography lesson, but if honorable members will allow their minds to travel down Africa, past the lake system, past the Zambesi, and down to Cape Colony, they will remember that millions and millions of black people occupy that continent. Every one knew from the moment England showed her strength what the result of the Boer war would be. But the great enigma will be found when millions and millions of brown men stand face to face with the white men numerically much weaker. Our greatest trouble will come from the presence of huge numbers of men alien to us in thought, alien to us in religion, and antagonistic to us in every sense. With regard to Australia alone, we know that the few black men here when the white man came have disappeared like the dew in the morning. Australia is practically white to-day, and it should be the business of this Parliament to keep it white. There are many other tilings to which I would like to refer, but I have taken up as much time as is reasonable on this occasion.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member will support the amendment after this ?

Mr EWING

- I do not want to be drawn aside by interjections. Does not the honorable member know that the amendment was specially designed to prevent the Bill dealing with this question from being placed on the table of the House ? He knows that as well as I do.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member must have some excuse ready for the Tweed sugar-grower.

Mr EWING

- I do not want any excuse with regard to this matter. Every honorable member knows that if the amendment were carried the task of dealing with Asiatics would be postponed for six months. Therefore, I am not likely to be led into supporting any bogus amendment of the kind. I have dealt with the fiscal question, and with the most important thing which is to come under our consideration, namely, the question of black labour. If I may be permitted, as one of the youngest members of this House, to say so, it appears to me that our greatest duty now is to obliterate all those minor differences, those local antagonisms between the States. That can best be done by honorable members curtailing their speeches, by not arrogating to any State any title to special consideration, and by every honorable member feeling that he owes exactly the same responsibility to every man in Australia as he does to the individuals in his own electorate. We all feel that this occasion is a great one. This is the first Parliament of a new nation, and it will be a great nation. We have a responsibility extending over a whole continent, a fair land, with mighty potentialities. We have been elected under the freest Constitution the world has ever seen, and he would be a poor man indeed who did not put forward his best endeavour to be loyal to his trust.

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Mr KNOX

- I do not propose to detain the House at any great length, nor to cover the varied ground that has already been covered by so many honorable members. Indeed, one feels that the tenor of the speeches here has been, in a great measure, the tenor of the addresses delivered during the campaign through which we have recently passed, and that most honorable members are probably addressing their own distinctive constituencies rather than speaking with any expectation of changing or modifying the opinions of a single member of this Chamber. So far as the Governor-General's speech is concerned, no one can complain that it is other than a comprehensive document, and, no doubt, if any of the subjects which are referred to therein had been omitted, the Government would have been charged with neglect. I think that they have done rightly and properly in including the large number of subjects which are referred to in the speech,

thus evidencing their intention to deal with these matters as speedily as is desirable. In my opinion, if in this session, prolonged as I think it will be, the House succeeds in creating the machinery which will put the Constitution into working order, and also passes a measure which will define our fiscal position, it will, accomplish a very great work. My feeling is that if too much is attempted honorable members will become exhausted, and- the thoughtful and careful consideration which these subjects require will probably be wanting. I do not desire to unnecessarily traverse the ground which has already been gone over by honorable members on both sides of the House ; but as I, although a free-trader, am supporting the Government, I may very properly reply to the justifiable question which was put to honorable members by the leader of the Opposition the other night. It was a new departure for the night honorable member to take honorable gentlemen to task as to the positions which they occupy in this Chamber, but he is a man of many parts, all of which he displays admirably and well; and, as a believer in the theory- of free trade I feel that I shall do right in explaining to the House my present position. So far as the right honorable member himself and those who follow him are concerned, I am surprised that there are so many honorable members sitting on that side of the House. I should have thought that a feeling of loyalty to the man who,, by the general opinion of the electors of Australia, was called upon to put the Federal Constitution into working order, would have induced them to give him assistance and support.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Would the honorable member have us sacrifice our principles t

Mr KNOX

- In- my judgment, when we come to deal with the fiscal question we shall not be able to accept in- their entirety the doctrines of which the leader of the Opposition is the exponent ; nor can we, on the other hand, accept the protectionist views which have been so strongly advocated by many honorable members on this side of the House. If I thought that it was the intention of the Government to press upon the House a protective policy, I could not honestly sit on this side of the Chamber; but I am prepared to believe that the man to whom the destinies of this country, at the inception of federation, have been committed is prepared to do what is the only thing that is practicable under the circumstances, and bring forward a moderate Tariff which will conserve existing vested interests. Notwithstanding all this talk about a revenue Tariff, a free-trade Tariff, and a protective Tariff, we must have a Tariff which will, as nearly as possible, meet the varied conditions of the different States, and will at the same time give us the revenue that we need.

Mr Conroy

- Why not impose an income tax 1 If we are to tax the poor people at the rate of 5s. a head,- why not get 5s. a head from the rich people, too ?

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Mr KNOX

- I am aware that the Commonwealth Government has the power to raise revenue by other means than customs taxation, but, if we carry out the spirit of the Constitution, our revenue will be raised only by means- of customs duties and duties of excise. I am distinctly in favour of a revenue Tariff, but if a moderate Tariff, which will assist existing industries, is proposed I shall be pleased and gratified. I look upon Victoria as a State which has for a long time been in a state of intoxication through having taken a wrong view of the fiscal position. But we do not remove from the inebriate all at once the intoxicant which is destroying his system; we try to bring about healthy conditions gradually. So we must act in this case. I am not prepared to agree entirely with the strong and demonstrative advocates of free-trade,- nor do I entirely agree with those who expect that protection will do everything. It is a- middle course alone that we are justified in adopting. It is only by the exercise of a spirit of compromise that there is the slightest prospect of justice being done to the varied conditions and circumstances of the different States. We must endeavour to deal with these varied conditions by an equitable compromise, and not accept the proposals of the extremist on either side. That is the view which is held by several honorable members who sit in this corner of the Chamber, and who conscientiously believe, as I do, that the adoption of free-trade and the maintenance of open ports is the best policy in the interests of the great mass of the community. I should not have dealt with this subject, however, had not the right honorable gentleman questioned me and others as to why we sit on this side of the House after having declared ourselves in favour of free-trade. Under present conditions I favour the introduction of a moderate Tariff, and if such a Tariff is

proposed by the Government it will receive my support. Another question to which I should like to refer is the question of womanhood suffrage. I have consistently opposed the adoption of womanhood suffrage in the past, and I propose to continue to do so. I do not think that this is a fitting occasion to give in detail one's reasons for opposing that measure, but I may be permitted to refer to the fact that the subject is now being dealt with by some of the State Legislatures.

Sir John Quick

- Will the Victorian Upper House pass the measure ?

Mr KNOX

- They may or may not pass it, but I think it would be a pernicious practice for the Commonwealth Parliament to attempt to deal with subjects while they were being dealt with by the State Legislatures. There is no doubt that by the Constitution Act we are given power to deal with this subject. I hold that in the interests of women, as well as of men, it would be a bad thing to adopt womanhood franchise. I shall certainly oppose its adoption ; and I hope that the Government will see that it will be unwise to bring the matter forward while it is being dealt with by any of the State Legislatures. The honorable member for Richmond said that the black labour question was one of the most difficult which this Parliament could deal with, and I agree with that view. The prevention of the importation of kanakas is, I think, the smallest part of the difficulty. There are international complications which will have to be considered. Do honorable members imagine that this question can be lightly considered? It is one which will want the careful consideration of the Commonwealth and of the Imperial Parliament as well. I would not be misunderstood as to this alien blight, or this alien employment of labour. If it can be shown that the work can be done by white labour, then white labour ought to do it. But that is the smallest portion of the whole subject, which is the mingling of these alien races with the Australian people. As has been well pointed out, we have on our northern shores Indians and Chinese, and these black and yellow peoples may be a source of great trouble in the future. There are other social questions such as arbitration and conciliation, factory laws, and old-age pensions that will have to be dealt with. Although I am perfectly aware that we have not full and complete power to deal with all these subjects, especially the factory laws, yet I hope some steps will be taken soon by which the Commonwealth will be able to deal with them. I believe that we must have uniformity of legislation if we are to put all our artisans and manufactures on one common level. I do not think that until the question of old-age pensions is dealt with by the Commonwealth - which will be a considerable time from now - any arrangement that can be made by the States will prove satisfactory, unless they agree to adopt uniform legislation in connexion therewith. I wish particularly to make it clear that, so far as my right honorable friend the Prime Minister is concerned, he may look to myself, and I honestly believe to this the Ministerial corner for loyal support, as long as he is true to himself and carries out a moderate policy, which I know he himself desires to do. But the dominating consideration must be that we must meet the financial needs of the Commonwealth by raising the necessary revenue, and in my judgment we can raise it in only one direction. I hope all our efforts will tend to sustain the high position which this Parliament, this House, and the Commonwealth ought to occupy, and that we shall endeavour during this session to lay well the lines of legislation the effects of which may be felt for generations to come. For this reason it should not be hurried legislation and we should be cautious about it. There is a disposition to press on two or three matters unduly, but in my judgment they ought to be more carefully considered.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- It has been somewhat of a disappointment to me that Ministers have shown reluctance to rise on this occasion. Without regarding parties at all, it is hardly fair to private members that the Government should have left it entirely to them to puzzle out some of the cryptical utterances of the speech, and find the key for them. I asked my honorable and learned friend the Attorney-General if some Minister was to speak, and he said that Ministers had nothing to answer. It seems to me rather that Ministers have no material with which to answer. In fact, they are in a somewhat nebulous condition with regard to their policy, and seem to be waiting to have it settled for them by the House - especially by the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition spoke most generously of the Government - too generously perhaps. He said that if Ministers would bring down a Tariff for revenue purposes, the Opposition would support them. I have very little doubt that Ministers will bring down a revenue Tariff which will go far to fulfil the wishes of the

Opposition, who can still claim that they are free-traders, although they ask for a revenue Tariff.

Sir John Forrest

- That is what the honorable member is discontented about. He has no grievance.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- We do not know what grievances we have escaped. We are honestly trying to prevent one if it can be done.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member had a good big protective Tariff when he was Premier of Tasmania.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- No protective Tariff ever existed in Tasmania. We had high duties, but that was owing to the severe strain placed upon our finances. Our Tariff was in no way protective or discriminating as between one commodity and another. I do not propose to speak at such length as would be involved in my explaining why in Tasmania we imposed heavy duties. But we did so at a time when we had to double the land tax, decrease our expenditure by some ?200,000, and impose for the first time an income tax. We did it under sore pressure of circumstances ; and we did it with reluctance and for revenue purposes only. I have given notice of a question with regard to that unfortunate remark of the Minister for Defence yesterday, because that utterance flies directly in the face of the pronouncement of the Prime Minister. Speaking at Maitland, the right honorable gentleman is reported to have said that any one who aimed at reforming the Constitution before it had had a fair trial was an enemy to federation. Perhaps the right honorable gentleman will say that he was not correctly reported then t

Mr Barton

- I will not be responsible for the actual words, but it was something of that kind ; and I am seriously angry with my right honorable friend the Minister for Defence for making the joke he did.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- If we are to regard that as a joke I think it is a very , questionable one. It is not a joke that ought to come from the mouth of a responsible Minister of the Crown. As to the Governor-General's speech, Ministers have my entire sympathy as one who has been the author of several similar documents. It has frequently been my fate to hear it said of the Governors' speeches I have drafted that they said nothing in a considerable number of words. As to the speech before the House, it can be observed that it says nothing of a serious character, nor has any serious intentions in it, with very many more words than I ever dreamed of using. It says a good deal that might have been left unsaid, because there is no very serious intention of carrying out what is promised in some parts of the speech. We have now before the House an amendment on the coloured labour question. That amendment does not, as far as I know, touch upon one rather important omission from the speech. In the paragraph dealing with the immigration of coloured races there is no reference to any other coloured races than Asiatics. I take it that that was an omission that was not intended, and that not merely coloured Asiatics, but Africans also will be excluded. That they should be excluded seems to me to go without saying ; and while it is hardly necessary to move an amendment to remedy an omission of this character, I hope it will not be accepted as a guide to Ministers in the Bill that they will bring down. As to the whole question of the immigration of undesirable races, it has to be remembered that those Australian Parliaments which have passed Acts prohibiting such immigration have encountered some measure of difficulty from the Home Government, except when they were based on the educational test, such as was provided by the Act passed in Natal.

Mr Barton

- Do I understand the right honorable member to complain that the speech does not deal with the exclusion of such people as Afghans 1

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I said Africans.

Mr Barton

- The Bill of which I have given notice already will deal with that phase of the subject.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Well, that is all right.

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Mr Barton

- I am going to deal with the whole question of coloured labour as far as I can.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Three of the States have passed legislation based on the Act of Natal - that is to say, applying an educational test. Except we adopt that principle for our legislation, I see very little hope of getting it accepted by the home authorities. Because the most objectionable coloured aliens we could have admitted to our shores are the natives of British India - our fellow British subjects. I have some considerable acquaintance with the character of the natives of India, and speaking from lengthy experience, I can say that, to my mind, no class of coloured people we could have amongst us would be so injurious to the best interests of the white population of Australia as would those natives. Yet, as British subjects, they can only be excluded by means of an educational test such as has been accepted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies as one that may be adopted. As to conciliation and arbitration I hope the Government will proceed with the measure, and a very full measure, which will as far as possible apply to all the States of the Commonwealth at the earliest possible moment. I take it that on this subject there will be no difference of opinion in the House, but that we shall all agree that in the interests of commerce, and in the interests of manufacturers and employes alike, it is desirable to have legislation of this sort passed as early as possible. I echo the hope expressed by one honorable member that we may be able at no distant date to take power into our hands which will enable us to pass a law applicable not only to individual States, but as a standing law for the whole of the Commonwealth from end to end. Passing over the question of patents and inventions we come to the question of the uniformity of practice in our federal elections, to be provided for by the adoption of adult suffrage. The honorable member who has just spoken has announced his intention of opposing female suffrage. It is early now, perhaps, to discuss the question, but it is a question that has always, in a large degree, puzzled me, inasmuch as I have never been able to understand why those who are liberals, and who claim to be liberals, should desire to see women invested with the privilege of voting, seeing that their vote must necessarily be conservative.

Mr Kingston

- Are women not entitled to the vote ?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- We have one instance, and, I think, only one instance, of a vote being passed in the British House of Commons in favour of woman's suffrage, and that was passed on the motion of and largely by conservatives. One might also find objection to a protectionist adopting this proposal, inasmuch as it will be a distinct interference with the one-man-one-vote principle, and will give a large body of women electors to the Commonwealth, all of whom would be free-traders to an extreme length, all of whom would do away with customs duties altogether if they possibly could - for I never met a woman who wanted to pay customs duties - all of whom would, at any rate, favour the lowest possible customs duties to be levied.

Sir William Lyne

- Let the honorable member go to Newcastle, and see whether the women are not all protectionists.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Then they do not know their own interests, and perhaps have never had to pay customs duties to any extent. I now come to the more important question of the modelling of our electoral law on the widest and most liberal principles. I hope the law will provide such a system of registration, not only for enrolment, but for continuing on the rolls, as will enable every man - every adult, supposing the women's franchise be carried - to give an effective vote at every election. To that end, I hope we shall see adopted by the Commonwealth Parliament the Hare system of election, which has recently been tried for the third time in Tasmania, and tried with such eminent success ; that is to say, a system providing in the most minute degree for the fulfilment of the great principle of one man one vote, which gives to every elector one effective vote and no more, which insures that no votes shall be wasted on a candidate, because the candidate having got his quota, any additional votes polled in his favour go to other candidates, and which insures also that the election shall give a result which will be a true reflection of all opinions, and a true representation of all the interests of the State. All other systems that I know of - have failed to give those results. Under the block system, which is the only available substitute, where more than one

candidate has to be returned for a constituency, it is possible for a bare majority to carry every State, and leave a minority, short only by some few hundreds or by a few units, with no representation at all. Surely in regard to the representation in this House, we should see the very fullest measure of consideration given to every body of people in every portion of the Commonwealth, who are large enough in numbers to secure the quota required to return a candidate. The speech points out the interest with which the "civilized world will watch the labours of this Parliament." Whether the whole civilized world will be largely exercised on the subject or not, there will, at any rate, be a very considerable amount of interest taken in the work of this House throughout the whole of the British Empire. We have to consider the very important and honorable position that all of us occupy as members of the first national Parliament of Australia. That is something which can never be taken away from us, and something which we can leave as a heritage of honour to those who succeed us. That being so, it is one of our most important duties to so conduct the affairs of this Parliament as to set up a lofty standard of order and decorum which will be followed, and followed with respect, by Parliaments to come and Parliaments over which we have no jurisdiction. Fully confident that you, sir, at any rate, will give that high tone to the House all members would desire, I take this opportunity of officially recording my hearty congratulations on your election to the Chair. Now, I come to what, after all, is that portion of the speech over which members have puzzled, and in which they are necessarily interested. The Prime Minister has said something about the majority of members being in favour of the Government fiscal policy, as described in the speech. But how honorable members can be in favour of that policy as described in the speech, unless it is by virtue of some singular belief in that which is hidden - a belief inspired by confidence in those who have drafted the speech - I am at a loss to conceive. To the ordinary intelligence the paragraphs relating to the fiscal policy of the Government tell little that one did not know before, and little that it was not obviously necessary to say. We are told that "the fiscal proposals of any Federal Government must be largely dependent on the financial exigencies of the State." That is so, no doubt, and would go without saying. The speech goes on - "The adoption of the existing Tariffs of any one of these States is impracticable, and would be unjust." I think that also would go without saying, because we all, even the Attorney-General, knew it before. We are, further, told that to secure the necessary surplus for each State, so that the Constitution may be observed, we are to avoid the unnecessary destruction of sources of employment. Can any one conceive that the most rigid free-trader would desire to carry his policy to the extent of unnecessarily destroying any industry?

Mr Deakin

- Some free-traders have announced it.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The unnecessary destruction of industry?

Mr McColl

- I cannot conceive of their doing anything else.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- If it were said there must be no destruction of any industry, necessary or unnecessary, there might be something in it.

Mr McColl

- The leader of the Opposition said he would throw them into the water, and let them sink or swim.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Possibly in the mind of the leader of the Opposition, as in the mind of others, that is necessary, not for the destruction of the things thrown into the water - "puppies" I believe he called them - but for the saving of them, and to give them stamina that will enable them to stand by themselves.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable gentleman wants a sort of web-footed dog.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The speech proceeds -

Existing Tariffs have in all the States given rise to industries, many of which are so substantial that my Advisers consider that any policy tending to destroy them is inadmissible.

I should like Ministers to lay on the table a return showing the various industries that have been established in the different States by a protective Tariff, and then I should like them to explain how, if those industries are so substantial, they still require bolstering up.

Sir William Lyne

- And side by side with that, I should like another return showing the number of industries established by a free-trade Tariff.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The number of industries that have existed under free-trade, which have been promoted and encouraged by free-trade, would put to shame those which protectionists claim to have been set up and substantially established by their policy. We have some notable instances of industries in Victoria which, I may be told, are firmly and substantially established. There is the wax vestas match industry, and three or four industries of that sort, which involve a very considerable loss to the revenue, and which find employment for so limited a number of people that it would pay the State handsomely to pension off all the people employed, and save the difference between the amount thus spent and what the State is losing now. Members, I think, have some right to be doubtful as to what this policy, as outlined here, really indicates, from the different assertions made from time to time by different Ministers. We have learned from reports that have appeared, that the Minister for Home Affairs has declared that a 10 or 15 per cent, ad valorem Tariff would be ample for all purposes.

Sir William Lyne

- What I said was that a Tariff which averaged 10 or 15 per cent, all round would be sufficient, but I did not advocate an ad valorem duty of 15 per cent.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I thought the Minister did. Then the Minister for Defence is reported to have said in Western Australia that we must have a revenue Tariff on a 15 per cent, basis.

Sir John Forrest

- No. I quoted the *Are/us* as advocating that.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The right honorable gentleman was reported as having said we must have a revenue Tariff.

Sir John Forrest

- Where 1

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- In Perth, I think. He is reported to have said that we must have a revenue Tariff on a 15 per cent, basis.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member gave protection to the Adams' sweep industry.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I am not talking about the Adams' sweep industry. The Minister for Defence ran one, which he protected, as far as that goes, but I am speaking of what the honorable member said as to the Tariff.

Sir John Forrest

- I think I advocated protection in Western Australia all through - moderate protection.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Well, there has been some curious conspiracy on the part of the press, because in whatever newspapers Ministers were reported, they seem to have been reported to have said what they did not say.

Mr Kingston

- The free-trade press is very unreliable.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Ministers seem to have been misreported, not only by the free-trade press, but by the protectionist press, and I rather think I saw the utterance that was put in the mouth of the Minister for Defence in a protectionist paper. Among other things that have been said by Ministers from time to time, was a remark by the Prime Minister, that we could not raise the revenue we required, except by a high Tariff, and that any one who asserted that the necessary revenue could be raised by a low Tariff was absolutely incorrect.

Mr Kingston

- The leader of the Opposition said in the Sydney Assembly that federation must result in a very high Tariff. That is recorded in Hansard. It is not a question of having been reported in either the protectionist

press or the free-trade press.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I am speaking of what the Prime Minister said on a recent occasion. The right honorable gentleman challenged, any one to say that sufficient revenue could be raised on a low Tariff, that is, a Tariff of low duties. I say unhesitatingly, as Sir Philip Fysh has said over and over again, that a larger revenue can be raised by low duties than by high.

Mr Deakin

- What does the honorable member call high 1

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- What I call extremely high the Attorney-General would possibly call very moderate.

Mr Deakin

- I call the Tasmanian Tariff high.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- But the Attorney-General has said that the Victorian Tariff is the high-water mark of scientific protection.

Mr Deakin

- I do not remember saying so. I have no objection to having the credit of the authorship of that remark, but I do not think I deserve it. If it will please the honorable member, however, I will admit it.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- In Tasmania, we have had an object-lesson in this direction provided by our 12 per cent. Tariff of 1891. That Tariff realized a great deal more than did the subsequent Tariff of 20 per cent, on the same lines.

Mr Deakin

- The State was much more prosperous then.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I admit we were prosperous, but in 1897 we were also fairly prosperous, and the times might be called normal when there was that serious discrepancy between the customs realized then and the amount realized in 1891.

Sir John Forrest

- The State is doing better than ever now.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- We are better off, because by dint of heavy taxation and retrenchment the deficit has been paid off, and Tasmania is free to work out her own destiny. One knows that, in speaking in Victoria, the free-trader must necessarily be as the missionary of truth seeking to convert those amiable, highly intelligent, and highly fascinating people, who are led away not by a mere fiscal faith, but by a superstition which makes them do homage to an image represented in the most glowing colours and put on a pedestal, which they call protection. It may be that, for a time, the free-trader will talk to deaf ears, but the logic of facts will eventually reach the people, and Victoria will become converted from her fiscal heresy. The leader of the Opposition has accepted the term "revenue tariffists" for those who sit on this side of the House as free-traders.

Mr Deakin

- But he has carefully distinguished between free-trade and a revenue Tariff.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I do not suppose that he will for a moment go back on the resolution passed by the free-trade conference held in Sydney not many months ago. At that gathering the following resolution was passed : - That the Customs and Excise duties imposed by the Commonwealth should be imposed only with the view to provide for the wants of the Treasury, and in no way to give support to any special industry at the expense of the general community.

Sir John Forrest

- That is an old affair.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- It may be old, but it is at any rate respectable. What is more, it is full of justice and reason from beginning to end.

Sir John Forrest

- Why did not the honorable member practice what he preaches when he had the opportunity in Tasmania ?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I did.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member taxed the people all round.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- We taxed them not for the benefit of the individual, but for the benefit of the State.

Mr Kingston

- The State has the smallest free list in Australia.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- That may be. Honorable members clearly will not see the difference between a Tariff that raises revenue for the sake of protection, and a Tariff which gives protection as a consequence of raising revenue.

Mr Kingston

- Is the excise on your manufactured tobacco equal to your Customs duty on the article 1

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- No. What is more, we removed the last vestige of protection from the farmers of the country when we removed the tax on sheep and cattle. Here is the position : You are imposing protective duties, which it is admitted cannot protect the agriculturist, or the miner, or any one except a few manufacturers. I suppose the Attorney-General will accept the evidence of the Victorian Tariff Board.

Mr Deakin

- We accept everybody's evidence, and form our own opinion.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I am afraid that not even on the most convincing evidence will the honorable member change his opinion.

Mr Deakin

- We want to see the man who can convince us.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- It is too late in this discussion on a blank charge to go at length into the Tariff question, because later on, when the proposals of the Ministry are before us, it will necessarily occupy our time for possibly some weeks. There are, however, some points upon which one could desire that honorable members who favour protection might be convinced, even at this early stage. If they could only come to believe that the large exodus of population from Victoria is not an indication of prosperity, but rather the reverse, that would be something gained. If they could be taught to understand that with the bolstering up of industries by heavy customs duties which are restrictive and, possibly, prohibitive - the true protectionist requires duties that are prohibitive - it must inevitably happen that the great mass of consumers, the labouring classes, and those whom we should first think of in this connexion, are the people who have to pay for them, that would be another point gained. As Daniel O'Connell once said - " This great thing, protection, means merely the robbery of the poor by the rich."

Mr Kingston

- What has free-trade done for Ireland ?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The Attorney-General said the other evening that living was as cheap in Victoria as anywhere else. I should like him to point out how one may live as cheaply here as elsewhere. It would be well for honorable members who are visitors to Melbourne if they were told how this can be brought about. We know that Becky Sharp arranged a mode of living at the rate of £3,000 a year upon an income of nothing ; but hers was not the kind of conduct which I think the honorable member would recommend to us. If one is to judge of the cost of living here by the price of articles sold throughout the State, all the evidence points to the fact that things are dearer in Victoria than anywhere else.

Mr Mauger

- What tilings ?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Every article which I have had the misfortune to purchase. Binder twine is one of the articles which is manufactured in Victoria under the protection of a heavy duty upon the imported article; but it can be bought more cheaply in Tasmania than in Victoria.

An Honorable Member. - They sell it in Tasmania because they cannot get rid of it all in Victoria.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The same thing happens in New South Wales

Mr Kingston

- Is it not notorious that a protectionist country always slaughters her surplus stock in outside markets ?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Victoria may send inferior stuff to the other States, because she makes inferior stuff.

Mr Kingston

-What is done by America and Canada ?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The practice to which my right honorable friend refers does not prove that protective countries benefit by selling their exports at a loss. Germany and America export many of their manufactures at a loss- in order to make trade.

Mr Mauger

-What is the difference between the home trade and the export trade of America? The export trade of America is not 5 per cent, of her home trade.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- But Germany and America in particular are making great efforts to extend their trade, by expedients which have not been resorted to by England, and they are selling many of their goods at a loss in order to make trade, and thus attract custom which they may be able to keep.

Mr Mauger

- That is the unfair competition from which we want to be protected.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Those countries are not profiting by that practice, because their goods are becoming discredited, and in some trades are being rejected to a great extent. I know that the honorable member holds a very high opinion of the prosperity of any country which has a protective policy ; but it is a curious fact that, while he holds that view, he cannot defend the status and position of the German laborer as contrasted with that of the English laborer.

Mr Mauger

- The position of the German laborer is due to the conscript system of Germany, and to other reasons which are foreign- to the Tariff consideration.

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Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The conscript system has very little to do with it. The fact is that people are far more flourishing in England than in protected Germany or in the protected United States. With the exception of some of the States of .Australia, and possibly some of the Canadian States, the people of our race are free-traders. The Liberals of England are free-traders. It would be inconceivable to the liberal mind of the mother country that anything like a reversion to the policy of protection could be tolerated. Why is it that the working men of England are so thoroughly satisfied with free-trade ? It is because under free-trade they have seen wages increase from 10 to 70 per cent., while the cost of living has decreased by 32 or 35 per cent. Under free-trade their condition has improved in every way. That this is so is proved by the testimony of the great labour leaders. Men like Burns, Tillet, Keir Hardie and others, who have made special inquiries in the United States to test the condition of the people there on this subject, and for the purposes of comparison, have found that, although in some, but not in all, instances the workmen of the United States are more highly paid than English workmen, the English artisan and the English labourer, by reason of the cheapness of living, and the better conditions which surround them, enjoy a greater measure of comfort and freedom than is enjoyed in the United States by persons belonging to the same class.

Sir William Lyne

- When were the Tasmanian duties on produce taken off? I see that according to a recent list they' are still

in force.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Only the duties on sheep and cattle were taken off, and they were taken off lately. AVe have in the speech a reference to the old-age pension question, and it is one of the most deluding statements in the document. A long time must elapse before the financial condition of the Commonwealth will permit any provision being made for an old-age pension system. According to the statement of the Prime Minister, there is no possibility of the question being considered for five years to come.

Mr Deakin

- Unless we have direct taxation.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- This delay has been explained by the statement that it will be impossible to deal with the question of old-age pensions until the bookkeeping system dies out. But whether the bookkeeping system exists or does not exist, revenue must be found to provide for old age pensions. Unfortunately, we have to deal with this question a Prime Minister who, in the Convention, never lent a favorable ear to the idea. Two votes were taken on the proposal to add the question of old-age pensions to the list of subjects that might be dealt with by the Federal Parliament, and in both divisions the name of the Premier is recorded amongst the noes. In the first instance a majority voted against the proposal ; but, in the second instance, when the opposition had dwindled to five, two of those who opposed it were members of the present Administration. I believed in that addition to the Constitution, and supported it as strenuously as I could in the Convention. It is the proper and legitimate function of the Commonwealth to look after its aged poor throughout the length and breadth of the Australian dominion.

Mr Deakin

- Hear, hear.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I know the Attorney-General voted for it. It is only by the Federal Parliament that the subject can be effectually dealt with. It can only be done by the Commonwealth or by the whole of the States as one, and it should not be left to each individual State to attend to the matter after its own fashion, and at its own time, for itself. I hope Ministers will give closer attention to the subject, and see whether it is not possible, by reasonable, financial measures, to arrange for it in the current session. Five years hence means the next Parliament.

Mr Deakin

- The leader of the Opposition said that we could not deal with it, because of the Braddon blot.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I did not gather that he said that. But neither that nor the financial exigencies of the States interferes in the slightest degree with the carr jung out of this proposal.

Mr O'Malley

- Hear, hear. They have nothing to do with it at all.

Sir John Forrest

- The right honorable member's leader said differently.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I am sorry he did, and I do not agree with him. AVe have heard more than enough about the trans-continental railway.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable members has heard very little as yet.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Far too much last night. It would be quite legitimate for Tasmania to say that if that railway is to be constructed, we shall expect the Federal Parliament to build a bridge across Bass' Strait, and that if we do not get that we will burst up the Constitution.

Mr Deakin

- You have just as good a chance.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Of bursting up the Constitution or of . getting the work 1

Mr Deakin

- Both !

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I should like to say a few words now with regard to the undesirable and improper disregard of Tasmania's claims to recognition when the Federal Government was formed. Tasmania, if I may be allowed to recount her share in the history of this movement, was from first to last steadfast and loyal to the cause. At imminent risk, as was pointed out ;at the time, to her finances, she gave in her adhesion to the union at the very outset without a selfish thought of any kind. At the first meeting of Premiers in January, 1895, when the Federal Enabling Bill was adopted, that measure was accepted by only four of the Premiers there assembled. My right honorable friend, the Minister for Defence, would not touch it at all. He would not have anything to say to it.

Sir John Forrest

- -Where was that 1

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- In Hobart.

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Sir John Forrest

- It was only the mode of electing the conventions I objected to

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- That was the source from which federation has sprung. At that meeting the right honorable gentleman would have nothing to do with the proposal.

Sir John Forrest

- I did not agree with the way of doing it.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Sir Hugh Nelson also would not accept that paragraph which I and others regarded as the mainspring of the whole, viz., the proposal for the referendum to the people. Four States adopted it, Tasmania being one. Three States subsequently passed the Act by a statutory majority. Tasmania was one of the three. Tasmania, together with Victoria and South Australia, declared in favour of the Commonwealth Bill when it was first submitted, and it was through that action that we were in a position under the Constitution to declare ourselves a Commonwealth. Later on, when the referendum took place, what was the action of the people of Tasmania ? Not blinded by any appeal to their selfish and parochial interests, they recorded a larger majority in favour of the union than any State of the group.

Sir John Forrest

- How many voted for it?

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The voting was 17 to 1.

Sir John Forrest

- 17,000 altogether.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I do not carry the figures about with me.

Sir John Forrest

- Only 14,000 voted for it out of 180,000.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- The majority was greater there than anywhere else.

Sir John Forrest

- But look at the small number who voted.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- That does not signify. What point is there in it ?

Sir John Forrest

- A great point. The people were indifferent.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- That, in brief, was the position of Tasmania on the question.

Mr Deakin

- A very honorable position. .

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I think so. And it seems to me that Tasmania deserved better consideration than that an honorary Minister should be appointed by way of second thought, as a sort of fly-wheel to the Cabinet, particularly when the gentleman first appointed had distinctly said that it was not his intention to seek a seat in the Federal Parliament. I hope that Tasmania's deserts, though overlooked then, will not be disregarded when we come to deal with other matters than the personnel of the Government.

Mr Deakin

- Hear, hear.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- That State has done well for the federal cause. Although she only had a population of 180,000, at any rate at the first initiation of the federation movement, she gave to it so large a measure of support that she now deserves to be remembered by the Commonwealth.

Mr Deakin

- She was remembered, too.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Afterwards, perhaps.

Mr Deakin

- - No, no.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- Now that I have had my personal grumble on behalf of Tasmania, I hope this will be the last time I shall be found uttering in this House any sentiments that will have any parochial feeling in them at all. In future, I trust that I shall speak for the Commonwealth, and that that large measure of freedom given to Australia by the Constitution - a measure of freedom unparalleled in any Constitution on the face of the earth - will be used to unshackled trade and confer freedom upon our people in commerce and in every other walk of life.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I agree with those honorable members who have referred to the importance of the fact that we must now look upon ourselves as representing the whole of Australia and not any particular State. The honorable member for Richmond and my light honorable friend who has just sat down, have laid great stress on that fact. Only by acting upon that line and up to that standard can we reach that " purer atmosphere," and attain to that " higher plane " to which the honorable member for Wentworth has referred as the hopeful outcome of federal politics. This is an occasion of which the House may very well feel proud. During a series of years, dating back even in my own case nearly a quarter of a century, we have been struggling to consummate this Federation. We now meet together for the first time, representative of the whole of Australia. To me, even though I should not, and I probably shall not, be here in a subsequent Parliament of the Federation, it will be an event of very great honour in my career that I occupied a seat in this our first Parliament. I sincerely hope that we shall appreciate the responsibility resting upon us by adequately discharging the duties pertaining to our office, which, during the first session of the Federal Parliament, must necessarily be of much greater importance than they are likely to be subsequently. Just as we frame those great measures which will subsequently come before us in the session, so shall we lay down the lines upon which our successors will have to continue the executive work of this great nation. The opportunity is given to us to lay down those lines in directions making for the development and extension of that freed om and j justice which have ever been exemplified during the political, career of these Australian States. It is with peculiar satisfaction that I look back upon the admirable way in which the States of the Commonwealth have celebrated the inauguration of the Federation.. I do not want to quibble about the expenditure upon those celebrations. . The occasion was unique, and even though the expense may have amounted, as I believe it did, to some ?100,000 in my own State - and I doubt whether it will be less in Victoria - I think, under the circumstances, the money was well spent indeed. This union is one which has been worked for even in my own humble case for 25 years, and the consummation of such a work may very well be the subject of popular rejoicing without the expenditure thereon being considered a squandering of money. The Ministry, in the speech which they have put into His Excellency's mouth, have laid before us a very big bill of fare indeed. The document includes, I think, everything that any man could

expect to find in it, as the practical outcome of federation in its first half-dozen years. I do not think any charge can be levelled against Ministers for having left any important consideration out of the bill of fare. But whether the soup is clear or thick, how it is flavoured, what sort of fish is provided, and how it is cooked, and what the joint shall be, are left out. The bill of fare is so framed as to mention' nearly everything that could be desired, and yet to give us no idea of what we shall have placed before us. Although it is quite consistent, as the honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, has said, with other documents of a similar nature which Ministers have put into the mouths of Governors in the past, I hold we had an opportunity in this new Federation of departing in several instances from old and worn-out traditions ; and if any tradition is old and worn out it is the tradition of seeking to disguise the intentions of the Government. It would have been very fitting if this Ministry had put into the mouth of His Excellency a very simple business-like statement of what they will bring forward for the consideration of this Parliament in the first session, and had shown exactly in what manner they would deal with the particular proposals they were going to lay before us. With such a document as that, we could have divined exactly how we should deal with the proposals; but we have given to us a statement which, after rightly and correctly referring to the inauguration of the Commonwealth, goes on to touch on everything, and gives no possible information that can be a guidance to this House in deciding on the questions which may be brought forward, and on which honorable members may be called upon to vote. The document gives no information whatever, and refers to many things which cannot occupy the attention of this Parliament for at least five or ten years to come. On the question of old-age pensions, for instance, nobody is more strongly of opinion than myself that this is a subject which should be dealt with by the Federal Government for many and various reasons. In every State that has adopted the system of old-age pensions, which seems to be forced on us by the growing radicalism or socialism of the age, special provision has had to be made to guard against the residents of other States coming in to claim pensions. If we could have a federal measure, with a charge on federal funds, we would get rid entirely of the difficulty of meeting claims from adjoining States, and the Act could be administered much more easily, satisfactorily, and safely than at present. The Government refer to the great subject of defence, but give us no more information than that they intend the defence to take the form very largely of citizen soldiery. But it would be an extraordinary Government, in Australia, that would tell us, or hint in any way, that they were going to establish a standing army. I trust to God that this land, which has never been stained with blood, or warfare of any description, will never see such a fatal institution as a standing army on its shores. We have seen in the war in South Africa, where our own men have been fighting side by side with Imperial soldiers, what can be done by citizen soldiery, and I do not think we need desire a better, braver lot of men - men more amenable to discipline, or more ready to face the foe. If we look back on our old country's history, we will see that the finest army history has ever recorded - the army of the English Commonwealth, from which we take our name - was a citizen army, which, when it had done its work, was absorbed by the citizens. It was not necessary for the Ministry to tell us that the force necessary to protect the liberties of this country from foreign aggression should never take the form of a standing army. It is in these and other respects I hold this document might have departed from the traditions of the past, and that the Government would have done well to consider whether this is not an opportunity to get rid of other traditions. I have been fourteen years on the press of Australia, I have reported fourteen sessions of Parliament, and I have seen fourteen proform? Bills introduced, and have never been able to understand why ; yet the same formality has been repeated here.

Mr Deakin

- We shall pass the Bill.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- That may be so, but it is the absolutely worn-out tradition of which I complain. There is no reason for it, and no man could ever show a reason for it at this end of the world, whatever reason there may have been in the past history of constitutional government in the mother country. Indeed, we went further ; and after you, sir, had been elected to the high position which we so safely intrust to you, we announced you for the Governor - General's approval. That was not necessary under the Constitution, and similar action has been abandoned in some of the neighboring Legislatures. We, with our fuller, freer Constitution so admirably said by several honorable members this evening to be the freest Constitution in the world, went down to the Governor-General, and, loyal subject as I am, I was surprised to see adopted the old form ' of

submitting our Speaker for the approval of His Excellency. It is an empty matter of form, but it is a bad form, and we should have taken the opportunity to get rid of it. It is far better to get rid of these tilings when they have survived their usefulness.

Mr Crouch

- We must be careful not to bring other things down with them.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The member for Corio referred the other day very warmly to the fact that Edward VII. had been designated Emperor. With the written Constitution we have, I do not care whether the King be called Emperor, Kaiser, Augustus, or what you will in a commission of this kind - with our written Constitution that does not matter twopence. I took an oath of allegiance to the King, and I am a loyal subject; but I hold a responsible position which makes me as loyal a subject to you, sir, without the oath as I am to the King with the oath. I will always stick out for upholding the undoubted privileges of this House in the free choice of its highest presiding officer, and we ought at this time to have departed from a worn-out form which has no reason for existence.

Mr Deakin

- It was only a courteous introduction of Mr. Speaker to the Governor-General.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- It would have been quite courteous for the Speaker to have attended on the Governor-General, and to intimate respectfully that he had been elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Mr Deakin

- That is what he did.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The Speaker was submitted for the approval of the Governor-General.

Mr Deakin

- No, he was not.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- If that is so, I am under a misapprehension, and withdraw all I have said ; but it, perhaps, is just as well that it has been said, because the impression I have voiced exists very largely amongst outsiders in the various States.

Mr Deakin

- Perhaps the honorable member will allow me. I can say with absolute certainty and knowledge of the fact that the Speaker did not submit himself " for the approval " of His Excellency. I believe that form of expression was used in some document in connexion with the matter, but it crept in inadvertently, and, as a matter of fact, the Speaker was introduced, or introduced himself and other honorable members, but was not submitted for approval in the old form.

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Mr SPEAKER

- I am glad to be able to call attention to page 9 of the Votes and Proceedings, where what took place is recorded in the following words :

Mr. Speaker, with the House, went to attend His Excellency, and having returned, Mr. Speaker reported that the House this day proceeded to the

Government/ offices, and that he presented himself to His Excellency the Governor-General as the choice of the House of Representatives, and that His Excellency was pleased to address him in the following terms and so on. I may say I expressly avoided either asking approval of my appointment, or making any request for privileges which are ours already by statute.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I am very pleased to find the facts as they are, and I think the House will excuse any error into which I have fallen, because a misunderstanding exists, and it is, perhaps, a good thing it should be cleared up. There is another matter of form to which I desire to refer. In the speech His Excellency specially addresses the gentlemen of the House of Representatives, and tells them that the Estimates of Expenditure in the usual form will be submitted to them. That is correct, as such Estimates of Supply have first to be submitted to this House, but the Ministry made a mistake in following that by referring the question of the Tariff, which is a question of taxation, to the two Houses, thereby overlooking an

undoubted right of this House. All the paragraphs referring to measures of expenditure and measures of Supply, as well as measures of taxation, ought undoubtedly to be addressed to the gentlemen of the House of Representatives ; and this, perhaps, is a matter of more importance than a mere matter of form. Here we are dealing with a matter likely to become a subject of dispute between the two branches of the Federal Legislature.

Mr Deakin

- It is the practice of five out of the six States.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I know it is the practice, but the practice is bad, and we had an opportunity to get rid of it. Under our written Constitution this House undoubtedly has certain rights of initiation as to certain measures, and one of these is Supply, which right is recognised by referring that question to this House. The other right is in regard to taxation, which is not properly recognised, seeing that it is referred to both Houses. If one is wrong, the other must be wrong ; and if one is right, the other should have been made right, too. It will be a matter of peculiar interest to watch the development of the relations between those two Houses ; and it would take a very clever political philosopher indeed to forecast their ultimate relations. No matter what comes, we, being in charge of this House for future generations, should preserve its rights as laid down in our written Constitution ; and I regret that the Ministry did not see that this message was properly and constitutionally framed, without reference to what has been done in other States and under other Legislatures. The constitution of the Ministry is one - no matter what may have been levelled against it by my right honorable friend and other friends with whom I am proud to associate myself - which, under the circumstances, could not have been otherwise. The Premier very properly selected leading men from other States to join him in forming his Administration. This was the only possible course he could take - the only course to give anything like satisfaction to Australia ; and the Premier has given satisfaction to Australia in a very large measure by reason of the men he asked to join him in launching the ship of State. But I wish to point out that in any attempt to ascertain how far this Ministry have the confidence of Australia in their fiscal belief, great allowance must be made for the way the Ministry has been constituted, and for the fact that they have been supported by a large number who, in the matter of fiscal faith or belief, are entirely opposed to them that support being given in deference to the general feeling that the first Ministry of the Commonwealth should have what is called fair play. I shall later on refer to this question, because there are other matters of importance connected with it, and I here only wish to express my sense of the great work which the Premier has done for Australia. I had the honour, three or four years ago, of following and supporting him when standing for a constituency, being devoted to his interest simply because I thought he was the man of all other men prepared to give us this Federation which for many years had been the sport of prominent politicians. The politicians had made it their sport, and the right honorable gentleman himself did not show much energy about it until the people took it up, and practically intrusted him with the task of bringing the work to a completion. From that point onward the right honorable gentleman, more than any other man in Australia, brought the movement to a successful issue, and therefore I was proud to see him rewarded with the honour of forming the first Federal Ministry

Mr O'malley

- That is why I support him.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- That is why a great many others support him. I am afraid, however, that he is now going to inflict an injury on Australia by reason of the patriotic support which he has obtained from men who recognise his great services to the national cause. The Tariff that was promised when this Ministry was brought together was undoubtedly a Tariff of a protective character, and although I was a supporter of Mr. Barton in his effort to obtain federation, I have been a consistent free-trader all my life. Over and over again it has been reported that we were to have protection at the hands of this Ministry. We were to have a national policy of real legitimate protection. But now Ministers have given every evidence, both in the speech of the Governor-General and in the speeches we have heard from them, that they are receding, and will recede still further, from the position they then took up. I do not complain of that, as a free-trader. I will help no man into office. I am not likely to get there myself, even if I wanted to, and I certainly do not want to. If the Ministry, as the result of public sentiment throughout Australia, and by the opposition of

honorable members in this House, give us a revenue Tariff, I would just as soon have it from them as from men on my own side. If they give us what I believe this House will only allow them to give us, the more independent men on our side will be quite content to permit them to remain in office and carry out their task of launching the ship of the Australian Commonwealth. The leader of the Opposition was perfectly right the other night when he spoke of the relative strength of the two parties. I have been through the figures myself, and I know the men ; but those who listened to that gentleman took his remarks in quite another sense from that which was intended. Mr. Reid was asked why, if he believed in his own statement, he did not divide the House on the question, in order to see the respective strength of the two parties. The reason he did not do so was because he knew that he would not win. Honorable members would not have voted against the Government. There is no disguising the fact that the Prime Minister has obtained support from a number of honorable members, especially from those on the I cross benches, which will enable him to carry on only on condition that the policy of the Government is that of a revenue Tariff. I see old Tasmanian friends around me - Mr. Piesse, for example. I knew that honorable member of old as a free-trader. Then there is Sir Philip Fysh, whom I have known all my life as a freetrader.

Mr O'Malley

- I am a protectionist.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The honorable member is a protectionist, but he is no Tasmanian. Tasmania I know - I edited a paper there - has been a free-trade State as long as I can remember, and never adopted the policy of protection during the whole of its history, until forced to retaliate against Victoria. Finding the markets of her neighbours shut against her, Tasmania was compelled to adopt the policy she has on the score of self-preservation.

Mr O'Malley

- She was not compelled to elect me.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- It is difficult to know how some gentlemen get elected, but I know that the State of Tasmania is a freetrade one, always has been so, and is likely to? remain so. We have returns from Western Australia, as the leader of the Opposition stated, which show that that State, so ably presided over by the King of the West, is sound on the question of a revenue Tariff, and being largely composed of miners, according to my experience, it is likely to remain so.

Mr Deakin

- Not at all. We represent miners, and they are protectionists.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- It seems to me that it hardly matters in Victoria what man is a protectionist, because the people have never had anything else ; but the time is coming when the sun of freedom will rise, its light will go forth, and we will witness a very different state of things. The free-traders have done very well in Queensland. They have done well in New South Wales, although I am aware that they would have done still better in the latter State had it not been for the patriotic reasons to which I have referred, which prompted many electors to Support the Prime Minister. But at the next general election, when this loyal feeling - which I cannot blame any man for exhibiting, because I was nearly carried away by it myself - has passed away, New South Wales will be more free-trade than ever, because she has more to gain from it than ever. As the leader of the Opposition. has stated, the policy of protection in Victoria has never been submitted to any keen criticism in this State. I have lived here and been in business here, and I am a man who generally acquaints himself with what is going on, and I say that, so far as my recollection goes, there has never been in Victoria anything like an able leader on the free-trade side. But the people of this State are going to get able leaders at last. Light will be let in upon them, and the present condition of things will be changed to one under which the free-traders will first have a respectable minority, but ultimately a majority in this State. There is nothing so sure but that a truth such as free-trade is, must in the end prevail. The policy adopted by the other side is essentially a policy of empiricism. It is the policy that has always been supported by individuals who look for their own immediate gain. "So one can point to any great men of genius who have supported their policy.

Mr Deakin

- What about Bismarck?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I am talking of men of intellectual genius, and I deny the right of any man to claim intellectual genius for Bismarck. He was a great man, but he was not intellectually pre-eminent. If one goes to the best minds, to the men whose books have influenced human thought and progress, one will find that they have all been on the side of freedom of trade as the natural corollary of every other kind of freedom. But if we trace back the history of protection, we find that everywhere it has been consistent with the idea under which authority, no matter how constituted, could force people to think and to act in the way it chose to lay down for them. The policy of free-trade is to allow people to follow the dictates of their own conscience, to study their own interests, and these principles must eventually triumph.

Mr Deakin

- It is a case of the devil take the hindmost.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- It is a question of giving full, fair, and free play to those capacities with which God the Creator has endowed each man. The protectionist policy is one which restricts and cramps people in a way which is as bad as trying to make water run uphill. If honorable members trace this doctrine back to its source they will come to the Smithfield burnings. I do not want to remind the House of ancient history, but I cannot help thinking of the condition of Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries. At that time Spain was at the head of the nations of the world in every way, materially, intellectually, and politically. She was in advance of the other nations in her manufactures, and her army and fleet were in the most perfect order. She was the great foe of England, and absolutely beat England over and over again.

Mr Deakin

- When ?

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I do not mean that England was beaten ultimately, but Spain at that time was holding her own against England by sea and by land. She was a very wealthy country by reason of her manufactures, and the wealth of the new world was being constantly poured into her. She had the finest fleets and the finest fighting army known in that day. She had, too, a more liberal government in some respects than England then had, and a more liberal Parliament ; but, in spite of that, she has become within the two centuries and a half which have elapsed since the period to which I have been alluding, a byword among nations, and a shocking example to Europe. England used to , be a protected country, and thousands of Acts of legislation have been passed in England to carry out the policy of protection ; but, during the last century, and more particularly during the last half of this century, she has legislated in the direction of securing freedom all round, accepting even its final corollary of freedom of trade. During this time the circumstances of England have improved in every way. Her national wealth has increased, and the condition of her working classes has improved, both in respect to their earning power, and in respect to the purchasing power of their earnings. The difference between the two countries can be attributed to no other circumstance than the fact that in Spain the governing party tried to regulate the lives of the people, and to force them to act in certain channels, whereas in our dear motherland, freedom was given to individual effort to carve out its own fortune. If we look now to the other side of the world, at China, we see a country where, under dissimilar circumstances, and quite a different civilization, the same desire to regulate by government the affairs of the people, has prevailed even to the extent of trying to shut out the rest of the world. But China, which is probably the richest country on the face of God's earth, is now tottering to its fall, and is being divided up amongst the nations. Side by side with her let us place Japan, whose people are closely akin in race, in manners, and in customs with the Chinese ; but, for reasons which I do not pretend to understand, they only quite recently came to the conclusion that it would be better to open their ports to western civilization, and to adopt some of the western methods for the free development of their people in such directions as their brains and their capacity might lead them.

An Honorable Member. - They have a strong protective policy in Japan.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- It is less protective than the system which formerly held sway there, and less protective than the Chinese policy. The direct outcome of the adoption of a freer policy by Japan has been her immediate

advancement, until she is today one of the first of the second-rate powers of the world. I admit, however, that one can gain very little by referring to the circumstances of other countries. But we have to fight this battle over and over again, and I have heard in electioneering speeches nearly every statement that I have listened to in this House during the present debate. We refer to America and to England over and over again, yet we do not settle the matter. But we have in our own country a condition of things which, I think, has not been properly dealt with by any of the speakers on the Government side of the House. How do these honorable gentlemen account for the prosperity of New South Wales ? I have heard it said all round me that it is due to her large natural resources, to her coal mines, and the vast territory which gives her such a large output of wool. But that answer does not meet the case at all. During the bad seasons which have prevailed in New South A Vales for nearly seven years past, our vast territory has been a cause of loss to us rather than a gain. Men who have invested their money in station property have lost it year after year. If we had had all the coal in the world, and had exported it and got money for it, we should not have been able to do what we have done there - we should not have been able to establish boot manufactories which can hold their own against the free competition of the world. Not all the wealth in the world would have enabled us to do that. We have done it only by the enterprise and energy of our citizens.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- And with the help of a lot of borrowed money, too, I expect.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I do not know about that. I can only tell the honorable member that the manufacturers are solvent. I, myself, started business with borrowed money ; but I quickly paid it off. Probably these manufactories were started on borrowed money ; but I know from personal experience that they are in a prosperous condition now. It is a triumph for the New South Wales policy if, after for over a quarter of a century attempting to build up industries by a system of protection which has undoubtedly imposed burdens on her people, Victorian manufacturers can do no more than our manufacturers have done. I am not talking now of our greater national wealth. That, to a certain extent, may be attributable to our possession of coal, and to our other natural resources. What I want to draw attention to is the fact that we have established factories which to-day are sound commercial concerns, and have been able to do it without imposing unnecessary burdens upon our people by increasing the price of the articles manufactured.

Sir William McMillan

- These are facts, not theories !

Mr G B EDWARDS

- They are facts from which there can be no getting away. In some respects the conditions have been in favour of Victoria. She started with an immense impetus, and attracted the very cream of the energy and enterprise of New South A Vales and of my native colony, Tasmania. She has within the limits of her territory better country, acre for acre, and a better rainfall than we have in New South Wales. She is in all respects so situated that she should have beaten us in the particular lines of manufacturing which she set herself to consistently and continuously build up by means of her protective policy.

An Honorable Member. - Victoria is not one-fourth the size of New South Wales, and one-fifth of her country is mallee country.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I have referred to that. The Northern Territory, while it may ultimately be made something of, does not at the present time increase the national wealth of South Australia, although it adds to her size. I hold that, and that vast territory, which comprises the back blocks of New South Wales, has not helped us, particularly during the last seven years of drought, to establish our manufactures, because our investors have lost heavily there.

Sir John Forrest

- Then what has helped New South Wales ?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The freedom which we have had to do as we will with our own. The possession of coal has made very little difference in the establishment of many of the industries which have been most successful with us. How much coal is used in connexion with a boot factory 1 One could put it all almost in a few boots.

These factories are worked by gas-engines of small power, though they employ a large number of hands.
Mr Kingston

- Does New South Wales import Victorian boots ?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I do not know: but I think it is quite possible that under the ruinous economic system of protection of this State we do import boots from Victoria. Victoria must send them to us at a loss, and so long as we are free-traders we shall be willing to buy them. Where you force production by unnatural means until it exceeds the local demands, there is always a surplus which has to be sold in other markets at a loss.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- More boots are made in Sydney than are made in Melbourne.

Mr Deakin

- That is utterly incorrect.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Honorable members on both sides of the Chamber have referred to the cost of living in the two States. I have lived both in Victoria and in New South Wales, and I am rather an experienced man at gauging the cost of living, because in my younger days I had to do so, and I say, without fear of contradiction, that in all the items which go to make up a working man's weekly expenditure, the cost of living is higher in Victoria than in New South Wales.

Sir John Forrest

- Will the honorable member give us one item ?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- You can buy your boots more cheaply in New South Wales than in Victoria. I have been led into a discussion of details because details have been gone into by other honorable members ; but I think it would have been better if the discussion had been confined to broad questions of policy. I am glad that the Tariff question is going to be made the principal question of this session, and I hope that if we cannot get all we want we shall get the nearest approach to it. We have been asked over and over again, why, if you are free-traders, do you put a duty on this or that ; but there is no policy or problem in public, private, intellectual, or moral life in connexion with which one can attain his ideal. Free-trade never meant to the most ardent free-trader free-trade in spirits and intoxicants. Why, no one ever suggested such a thing.

Mr Deakin

- Yes, some one did.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- He must have been a lunatic to do so.

Mr Deakin

- Henry George did.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I am not a follower of Henry George.

Mr Deakin

- But the honorable member would not call him a lunatic.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I do not know that he made such a suggestion, but, if he did, it was in every respect a bad one. If we cannot get a free-trade Tariff we will get the nearest approach to it possible. If we are forced to allow revenue to be raised by means of customs duties, we shall not allow it to be raised, as was the original intention of the great majority of those who sit on the Government side of the Chamber, under a system by which a certain amount would reach the Treasury, while a certain amount would go in the way of increased prices to the manufacturers. I hold that if ever an attempt is made to impose a strongly protective Tariff the law courts will be moved to decide whether we are competent to fix a protective policy upon the Commonwealth. We have power to raise taxation through the Customs, but we have not power to impose duties for the protection of any industry, and if a highly protective Tariff is proposed the time may come when the question of our competency to do more than raise revenue will be tested in the courts of the Commonwealth. The honorable member for the Bland and other honorable members seem to think that no sincere and liberal democrat can be a free-trader. Are they going to put on one side the

keenest politicians in the world, the Scotch operatives? Have they no democratic, no liberal opinions? I have been told in my youth that the Paisley weaver is one of the keenest politicians to be found anywhere. These men are not protectionists, and can never, be made protectionists. They are satisfied that free-trade is the greatest boon they can have. They know that taxation is always an evil, but if some one must be taxed, they want to be taxed not for the benefit of somebody else, but for the necessities of the State. It has been said by the honorable member for Dalley that he represents the largest labour constituency in New South Wales. I do not think that is quite correct; but if there is any honour in the claim, I think I may claim that I represent the largest constituency in the Commonwealth, and certainly the largest labour constituency in New South Wales. I opposed in my constituency the strongest labour representative we have in Australia. He was the leader of the labour party in New South Wales - a really able man, a sound man in every respect, whom there was nothing against, but who tampered with this question of protection and free-trade, and would not decide definitely what he would do. I, an unknown man, with positively nothing in my favour, tackled that constituency, and in two weeks fought him out of it. Why? Simply because I believe in free-trade, and that constituency of working men was sound to the core on that principle. '

Sir William Lyne

- A majority of the protectionists voted for the honorable member.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The honorable gentleman is quite wrong. Any sound free-trader could have won that seat if his character was clean, and if he fought the election with a proper degree of energy. I mention this to show that the working men of New South Wales are perfectly sound on the question of free-trade, and are not to be led astray by promises that they would benefit by protection. I am looking forward to a similar awakening in Victoria. We shall see, at the next general election at the latest, that there are plenty of working men here who know that their best interest is in being taxed as lightly as possible, and having as much liberty as the Government can give them. The Governor-General's speech foreshadows certain great measures that are to be brought before Parliament. A High Court for the Commonwealth is to be created, and a Commission on Trade and Commerce is to be formed. There are also other features of ' that sort. I hope the Ministry will show patriotism as to the appointments they make to the high offices that will be created, it is of the highest importance that we should have in "those high offices the very best men we can get. I trust we shall have no repetition of the- regrettable incident of Mr. Fegan's appointment.

Mr O'MALLEY

- A very good man he is.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- He may be a good man; I do not know his qualifications. But there were men quite as fit for that office in the civil service of the States, who were looking forward to appointments, and lightly expected them as a reward for their past services. AVE should not take the higher offices from those civil servants. I hope the Ministry will have the patriotism to select the really ablest men they can get, no matter from what State. A very good suggestion was made by the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, in respect to the High Court of the Commonwealth - that we should take the existing State Judges, at any rate for some time to come, and not appoint a lot of highly-paid officers who would for some years have really nothing to do. Similarly, the Government might well accept the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, and allow the question of a site for the capital of the Commonwealth to be settled, irrespective of party, by a committee selected from both sides of the House. That is one of the most important things we can deal with. There is no party feeling concerning it. All we have to do is to get the best available site, and get it under such conditions that the Commonwealth may build its capital without any expense, by getting the revenue out of the value of the surrounding land.

Mr O'Malley

- They tried that in Canada.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I do not care where they have tried it. I feel certain, as a business man, that it can be done here with profit. AVE have in the speech a reference to economy - one of those stereotyped allusions that we

usually find in such documents. I hope we shall carry on the Government of this Commonwealth with every economy consistent with getting the public services discharged in an able and proper manner. In the past, we have been too extravagant in the Government of the Australian States. Two or three honorable members have referred to the land revenue of New South Wales. I quite believe that the land revenue derived from that State has been absolutely squandered, just because we have had it to spend. I trust we shall allow no squandering of the people's money in the service of the Commonwealth. Now I come to the question of coloured labour. I am utterly opposed to it, and regret to see that the Government have not had the courage of their opinions and put their foot down definitely. Let them determine to stop the kanaka traffic altogether. Of course, if there are existing contracts, we must recognise them ; but we should determine at once that kanaka labour shall cease. I cannot make out why the Government have not put their foot down, because undoubtedly the whole of Australia is opposed to the introduction of this black labour. I am pledged up to the hilt to oppose it. It was no extorted pledge on my part, but I willingly gave it, believing that the traffic is bad in every way you look at it. It has been said that it is not consistent for free-traders to oppose the introduction of black labour : but, as was well remarked in New South Wales, it does not follow that because you have to buy a cabbage from a Chinaman, you should ask him in to dine with you.

Sir William LYNE

- New South Wales buys her cabbages from Victoria.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- Seeing the difficulties that have existed in the United States in regard to black labour, seeing the enormous trouble the negro question has given there, we cannot be too firm in tackling the question here. The United States are brought face to face with probably the most terrible racial difficulty that ever existed in the world. That example shows us that we should not incur the risk of having any such difficulty in our fair land of Australia. I am told that the kanaka traffic will only exist under Government regulations, and can be restricted. But, sir, I know well that where great profits are at stake, where employers of labour can get black labour cheaply, these restrictions will be evaded, until we have, not a Monroe doctrine for Australia, but a Mason and Dixon's line drawn across the continent, with a black population beyond it to contaminate us. I regret, however, that an amendment has been moved upon the subject. The Opposition had agreed, as a party, not to test any question at this stage of the session. But the honorable member for Parramatta having moved his amendment, and I having taken up so decided an attitude upon the question, I shall be forced to vote for it if it goes to a division. Nevertheless, I am sorry that the amendment has been brought forward, because I do not believe in wasting the time of the House. We may have occasion in a few days, when the proposals of the Government are definitely before us, to discuss them in detail. Then, if they are not in accord with our views, we shall be able to table a motion to that effect. The Government should have given us fuller information. Without it the amendment is ill-timed and misplaced, and I hope it will be withdrawn. The Government propose to adopt adult suffrage, and I do not see how they can do otherwise, seeing that it has been adopted in two States already. But I am quite in accord with Sir Edward Braddon in his objection to female suffrage. It would take too long to go into the question at this time, but I may say it is one of those things for which there is no need. The suffrage has not been demanded by the women as a body. It is only advocated by old men among women and old women among men. It is demanded without any consideration as to whether it will do any good. In my opinion, giving the suffrage to women will double the expense, time, and trouble of ascertaining the opinions of the people, and leave the results precisely the same. You will divide the people into two parties on any question, and leave the results precisely as they would be without woman's suffrage. Moreover, you will drag woman out of the sphere that she occupies with respect, and bring her into the muddle of politics, which is not always the best place for her. I hope when we deal with the defences of the Commonwealth, and constitute our citizen army, that we shall adopt some system of democratic appointment in regard to officers. In the armies of the old world the officers are taken from one section of society, and the men from another. That system will never meet with the approval of Australia. From the field of battle in South Africa we have heard of instances of men from our own country and from the mother land, who were appointed out of the ranks to the position of officers, and who have discharged their duties well. We have the instance of successful and popular generals in the South African army, who

rose from the ranks. I do not mean to say that because a man is in the ranks he should necessarily be steadily promoted until he gets to the top of the tree. But according to the democratic principles which prevail amongst us, the private soldier should have the opportunity, if he wishes, of rising from the ranks. No citizen defence force system will be satisfactory to me unless it contains a provision, under which a man who qualifies himself, and whose conduct fits him for the position, is not allowed opportunities of getting a commission. Old-age pensions are referred to in the speech. I think the only form of pensions the Commonwealth should take into consideration at present is one for getting rid of the weak protected industries of Victoria. It would pay us better to pension off the persons concerned in those industries than to continue supporting them by protection. I trust the Government will bring in a proposal for amalgamating the debts and the railways of the States and placing them under one Government. That will do away with a great many of the provincial difficulties we are face to face with, and enable us to tackle the fiscal question with a clearer outlook than we have at present, while we have in every move we make to consider the financial position, not only of the Commonwealth, but of each State Treasury. I believe the prospects of this Commonwealth are as bright as any young nation could have, and I trust the Parliament will devote itself to passing such legislation as will develop to the utmost the great resources which Australia possesses, making her a great although a young nation.

Mr. HIGGINS(Northern Melbourne).My attention has been aroused by a remark of the last speaker. He proposes to refer the question of the Tariff to the law courts. That means profit to the lawyers. If he is successful it will be found that all the lawyers in the Cabinet will leave it and go to the courts, instead of remaining in an unprofitable Parliament. But I am afraid from some figures which are in my hand that the honorable member for South Sydney will not be here sufficiently long as a representative of his present constituency to allow him to take this matter to the Law Courts. I find that in South Sydney there were 1,868 more votes against the honorable member than for him. There were 15,777 voters, and the honorable member, who came out on the free-trade ticket, polled 4,783, while Mr. McGowan, who was a protectionist, 4,331, and Mr. Hoyle 2,320.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Mr. McGowan had the support of free-traders.

Mr HIGGINS

- Mr. McGowan was also handicapped by the terrible crime of being in the labour party.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- It is no crime there.

Mr HIGGINS

- It would be very improper for us to treat as lost the time which has been spent in this discussion, because the circumstances are very exceptional. We must recollect we have come from the four corners of a big continent with different experiences, different surroundings, different prepossessions, and we have come full of our election campaigns. I really do not know any process by which to separate the wheat from the chaff in our views so effectively as coming into a central place of this sort, and having them discussed. It has to be remembered that from all sides we have come to discuss the affairs of the continent in an Australian spirit. We have to face new problems for this continent, problems which no other country has had to face, and we have to face old problems in a different mood. Therefore, no time is lost which will enable members to understand one another, and particularly to understand the difficulties and wants of the parts of the continent which are remote. There is one advantage which Ministers will be the first to recognise, namely, the advantage of knowing what sort of members the Ministry will have to deal with, and what sort of complexion their views take. In fact, the debate will enable the Ministry, when the due time comes, to be more distinct and more definite in their utterances. Of course, it would be impossible in a Governor's speech for them to have been much more definite.

Mr Deakin

- And unprofitable, too.

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Mr HIGGINS

- And unprofitable also, as the honorable member says. At the same time, I do not grudge the Ministry the advantage they possess, and which they ought to exercise in that regard. This first Australian Ministry is entitled to fair and generous treatment from all the States of Australia, and I feel sure that, with the

Australian love of fair play, they will get that treatment. Although I was one of those who ventured to differ from my honorable friends the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General with regard to the question of accepting the Constitution Bill - I fought as hard as I could against them, and I am not ashamed of the fact - so far as I am concerned, I will exert myself loyally to do the best for Australia. In addition to the advantage of the discussion generally, we have had from the leader of the Opposition one of the best debating speeches I ever heard, and, as he is not present, I may say so without expecting a blush. I must confess that as a debating speech it surpasses anything I have heard in our Parliament, or elsewhere. The right honorable gentleman kept within the legitimate bounds of his position as leader of the Opposition. He did not degrade himself by any personal or malicious remarks ; in fact, he is the model of an Opposition leader. He complains of the unconstitutional action of the Government in creating two new offices in the Ministry; but, since the Government have created two new offices in the Ministry, they might create a new one on the Opposition side - that of permanent leader of the Opposition - and that being done, no one would fill the position so well as would the light honorable member for East Sydney.

Mr Kingston

- May he long live to fill it.

Mr HIGGINS

- I thought I should lead out the Ajax of South Australia, whom nothing in the world would please better than to bring in an amendment of the Constitution, providing that the honorable and learned member for East Sydney be the leader of the Opposition.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- 'This is a good "chestnut," slightly altered.

Mr HIGGINS

- I was not aware it was a "chestnut," but some animals like chestnuts and others do not. The discussion has shown that the elections have been on a false issue, and we are gradually coming to realize the fact. There has been far too much made of this issue of free-trade and protection. I hope I shall be understood as preferring a protective duty to what is called a revenue duty ; but, at the same time, I think that in a few years people will recognize the absurdity of the struggle which has taken place on this Tariff question. Most parts of Australia have been "stumped" on the fiscal question, and we have heard the cries of "unrestricted commerce" and "take the shackles off industry," together with that of "free exchange." But no one now proposes "free exchange," and no one suggests it ; we now hear of a revenue Tariff. "What does "revenue Tariff" mean %

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- How can the honorable member have free-trade and raise eight and a half millions of money ?

Mr HIGGINS

- It is about time to admit that. Why talk of free-trade when that amount has to be raised ? I will assume for the present that all the claims as to the benefits of protection are wrong, and will look at the question from the point of view of the consumer merely. It is admitted that a revenue duty adds to the price of the article, and that a protective duty may or may not do so. The member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, made a magnificent peroration to his speech, again referring to taking the "shackles off commerce," but I have the advantage of being furnished with Walsh's Tasmanian Almanack for 1901, which contains a table of the duties in Tasmania. I understood the right honorable gentleman to say there were no protective duties in Tasmania, but I find that on bran, pollard, and chaff there is a duty of 10d. per 100 lbs ; that bullocks, calves, heifers, and steers pay ?2 each ; that cement, plaster of paris, and whiting pay 9d. per cwt. ; that cider and perry, which are made in Tasmania from the nice apples and pears there, pay 1s. 3d. per gallon ; that wheat and flour pay 2s. per 100 lbs. ; that fruit trees pay 2d. each, and, what will interest honorable members, horses and foals pay ?2 each, whereas pigs, are insulted with a duty of only half-a-crown each.

Mr Conroy

- Pigs pay 10s. in Victoria.

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Mr HIGGINS

- Then the people of Victoria have more respect for pigs than have the people of Tasmania. What, then, is the distinction between a protective Tariff and a revenue Tariff ? When the honorable member for

Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, was speaking, I thought of the fact that, according to Lemuel Gulliver, the land of Lilliput was on the north-west coast of what he called Van Dieman's Land, but what we call Tasmania ; and I dare say the right honorable gentleman has inherited from his ancestors a knowledge of the dispute between the Little-endians and the Big end i ans. The Big end i ans insisted that the proper way to break an egg was at the big end, whilst the Little-endians insisted that the proper way was to break it at the little end ; and it will be remembered that war arose between the kingdoms of Lilliput and Blefuscu in consequence of that dispute. And the great fiscal discussion that has concerned the whole of this continent is very like the discussion between the Little-endians and the Big-endians in Lilliput. AVe all knew, and the leader of the Opposition must have known, that the kind of Tariff was settled from the first by the facts of the case, and by the necessity for eight and a half millions of money. We all knew, and no one knew better than the leader of the Opposition, that the Tariff was not to be a black Tariff or a white Tariff, but was to be a piebald Tariff. The leader of the Opposition has used the fiscal question as a splendid election cry, and I never knew anything so well done. I was in Tasmania when the right honorable gentleman came there to instruct the people of Hobart how to vote. According to him at that time, the "shackles of commerce" were to be thrown off at once, and the whole of his peroration dealt with that matter and the throwing in of "puppies" and that sort of thing. It was simply splendid, and reminded me of that stanza in the Biglow papers : -

I go free-trade thru thick an' thin,
Because it kind o' rouses
The folks to vote - an' keeps us in
Outquiet Custom houses.

The lender of the Opposition wants the Custom house as much as any one else, only he will not have a duty which may do good to somebody, but prefers a duty which will do no good to anybody. The whole falsity of the position is shown. The leader of the Opposition referred to the statement in the Governor's speech with regard to the fiscal proposal, and said - " That is our policy." Of course it is his policy, and although he says so, we are spending a lot of time debating the question of theory in regard to the fiscal issue. The fact is that the last thing in the world we mention in Australia is what the honorable member for Parkes has referred to, namely, our debts. One would have thought that the leading factor in all our Australian problems to-day was the very problem we are trying to hush up, our debts and the ??7,500,000 per annum of interest. That is the very thing which has to be regarded in the framing of a Tariff. Of course the leader of the Opposition makes no proposal of direct taxation. To my mind the worst form of taxation is that which is based on the needs of the people and the next best is that which is based on the ability of the people to pay. When we come to proposals with regard to the Tariff, honorable members will find that we shall agree still more. We shall all agree that there must be a stiff amount collected from narcotics and stimulants. With regard to revenue duties, revenue tariffists do not agree amongst themselves. Whom are we to follow % Are we to follow what has been put into the Melbourne paper which leads for the revenue Tariff side, and have low duties upon articles which can be produced here, as well as on articles which cannot? If so, we shall fall foul of Senator Pulsford, who, in a publication that has been sent round for the edification of us poor ignorant members, has distinctly repudiated that idea, and stated that the low Tariff propounded by the Argus is the thin end of the wedge of protection. I happen to have read a very interesting paper on this subject, which appeared in the last issue of United Australia, which it is suggested that there must be a small free list, and a 15 percent. duty on all the rest. Where is the advantage there? Is it worth while taking stock in it ? Then there is the suggestion of my old friend Sir William McMillan to have what we call a drag-net Tariff all round - a drag net Tariff which would mean taxing the necessities for our people, and the raw material for our industries. Where is the advantage, and which party are we to follow? The attitude taken up by Mr. Reid was that he had come with his phalanx of supporters to instruct the poor ignorant members from other States.

Sir William McMillan

- Hear, hear.

Mr HIGGINS

- I should be very glad to get instruction, but I have not got it yet.

Sir William McMillan

- The honorable member means he is not converted yet.

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Mr HIGGINS

- I am afraid it will be a long time before I shall be converted to vote for a Tariff that will do no good to anybody, find against a Tariff which may do good to somebody. At the same time I wish to tell the free-traders that I shall vote consistently throughout. I shall go as far as possible towards reducing the duty on articles which cannot be produced in Australia. I am willing to vote against any duty on such articles as rice and tea. I am afraid I have transgressed by going into the Tariff question now. So far as I am concerned, I intend giving Ministers as loyal a support as I can. I do not see the honorable member, who represents the constituency in which I live, present - I mean the honorable member for Kooyong, Mr. Knox. If that gentleman were present, I should say that I am going to be more courteous to the Government than he has been. The honorable member said he would not support the Government if he thought they had any honest intention of carrying out the programme they have put before members. The honorable member who represents me in this House, does not represent me when he expresses that view. There is another matter to which I desire to refer, a matter touched upon by the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, and one which has not been yet considered with the interest it deserves. The honorable member has referred to the creation of the Federal High Court. As a lawyer, I may claim to know a little about what that means and the work which such a tribunal would have to perform. The honorable member has asked, what business the Federal High Court will have for some years to come, and I think that question ought to be faced by the Government. At the beginning of the Commonwealth it is our duty to keep the expenditure as low as possible, and if there is any machinery which is expensive, and perhaps unnecessary, we should wait until we really feel the want of it. I was as strongly as any one in favour of the establishment of the Federal High Court for Australia; but, at the time I voted for it in the Convention, there was a provision in the Constitution that all appeals from the Courts of these States should be brought to the High Court. By an error in the final drafting of that Bill in Melbourne in 1898 - an error to which the attention of the leader of the Convention was called at the time - the power of appeal to the Privy Council from the Supreme Courts of the States was not taken away.

Mr Glynn

- I tried to take it away, but I lost it by three votes.

Mr HIGGINS

- Yes; the honorable member and myself did our best to call attention to the mistake; but the House, very properly, always pays more attention to the member responsible for the drafting of a Bill than to a private member. Owing to an inadvertence, there can still be an appeal from the Supreme Courts of the various States to the Privy Council.

Sir John Forrest

- It was originally intended that there should be.

Mr Glynn

- The right honorable member supported me in my endeavour to abolish it.

Sir John Forrest

- I did not. I voted for the appeal.

Mr HIGGINS

- As things are, we find, that, notwithstanding the amendments made by Mr. Chamberlain in the Constitution Bill, all appeals can be taken from the Supreme Court of Victoria or any other State to the Privy Council. Under these circumstances, the question is - "Ought we to create the Federal Court until we feel we want it, and want it absolutely?" I know I shall be attacked as one who fails to realize the Australian destiny; but I say we could create this judicial tribunal in due time. If we establish this mill now, will there be any grist brought to it? I will assume that there are twenty appeals per annum from the State courts of Australia to the Privy Council.

Mr Glynn

- I gave the average for 50 years past.

Mr HIGGINS

- Of course, I am assuming against the figures of the honorable member and against myself. Suppose that there are twenty appeals per annum at present from Australia to the Privy Council, I ask is that enough to warrant us in creating this Federal High Court with a huge and expensive staff? We should

have to appoint either three or more Judges with very high salaries, and we should need all the equipment of a court - sheriffs, bailiffs, and all sorts of officers. At the same time we must confess that we are going into this Federation with not a very clear outlook as to our finance.

An Honorable Member. - Some of those appeals that now go to the Privy Council will continue to go there.

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Mr HIGGINS

- That is quite right, but assuming that they all go to the Federal High Court, is it worth while to create such a tribunal merely for the purpose of hearing these twenty appeals ? Of course, I may be told that there is some original jurisdiction which the Federal Court may take up, but when I look at the original jurisdiction, I must say that I do not think there will be many cases bearing upon it for a very long time. I sincerely hope there will not. We have in the Constitution a very important clause, providing that all the judicial powers of the Commonwealth may be vested in any State Court which this Parliament may think fit. Why should we not vest in the State courts the full judicial power of the Commonwealth until we see either that they abuse it or that it is insufficient? As the honorable member said, by way of interjection, if you create a Federal High

Court you will have in it only the same class of men as you have in your State courts. I admit that eventually, and probably soon, we shall be able to have a Federal High Court which will answer a good purpose, and I sincerely hope that then we shall have all appeals from our State courts decided within our own bounds, just as we have all our laws made within them. But, for the present, as there can be an appeal from a State court to the Privy Council direct, on constitutional as well as on other points, why should we not use the State courts until we feel that the shoe pinches, and that we require a Federal High Court ? There is no provision in the Constitution which requires that the High Court shall be created within a certain period of time, though there is a provision which says that a uniform Tariff shall be imposed within the space of two years.

Mr Glynn

- We could constitute the Federal High Court by allowing the Judges of the various States to come together and hear appeals.

Mr HIGGINS

- I do not want to go into the question now ; but the matter is worth considering, and I think that it will make the Government very popular with the people if, at the beginning, they show that they will not create big positions, and appoint officers at large salaries, unless there is absolute occasion for them. But, as the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, referred to the High Court, I want to add one word more. The Constitution provides for the establishment of an InterState Commission which, to all appearances, will be a very expensive and responsible body; but I have studied the Act very carefully, and it is my firm conviction that for many years the members of that commission will have little or nothing to do, and little or no power.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- The honorable member does not understand the conditions of Australia if he thinks that.

Mr HIGGINS

- I think that Australian conditions require some such regulation of commerce as should be enforced by an InterState Commission, but Australia has not given power to the Inter-State Commission to make such regulations. I think that the relations of the States with regard to the control of rivers, railways, and commerce generally ought to be regulated from a common Australian point of view ; but, having looked at the machinery provided in the Constitution, I think that the InterState Commission which is provided for will have brought before it few cases that could be profitably dealt with, and will not have power to deal with the cases which need dealing with. The only power that is given to the Inter-State Commission by the Constitution is the power to regulate trade and commerce between the States. It will, for instance, have no power to regulate those tapering rates which are the bane of rival railway managers, so long as these rates are confined to the trade of one State, and I know that during the federal campaign several representatives of New South Wales who supported the Bill held that view. The Constitution gives the Inter-State Commission no power to deal with so-called differential rates which do not affect the transit of goods from one State to another.

An Honorable Member. - The Interstate Commission cannot interfere with differential rates so long as the trade which they cater for is the trade of the State which imposes them.

Mr HIGGINS

- I thoroughly agree that we should deal with questions of railway rates in the interest of Australia as a whole, instead of in the interest of any particular State ; but I am dealing with the legal question as briefly as I can in a House where I find that lawyers are neither esteemed nor liked. The point which I ask the Government to consider is whether they cannot postpone the creation of an Inter state Commission until we have had experience of the want of it feel convinced that we shall soon feel the want of some body of the kind. We ought to make the railways national in their working, and when the Constitution was being considered in the Convention I voted in favour of nationalizing the railways on those terms.

Mr McMillan

- Is not the Constitution mandatory in regard to the creation of an Inter-State Commission?

Mr HIGGINS

- The Constitution says that there shall be an Inter-State Commission, just as it says that there shall be a Federal High Court ; but it is not mandatory in regard to these matters as it is mandatory in regard to the Tariff, in connexion with which it fixes the period of two years.

Mr Glynn

- It was not intended that it should be mandatory.

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Mr HIGGINS

- In our ordinary experience we know that it is bad to make detailed provision before we know exactly what we have to provide for, and I desire that the people shall feel the want of some regulation before the Inter-State Commission is appointed. I think that if the railways are taken over by the Commonwealth, as they are almost bound to be eventually, the need for an Inter-State Commission will vanish. My point is that you ought not, at the inception of federation, to create courts - although, unless the Constitution is amended, we must eventually create them - until we have ascertained the need for those courts. I think that, with regard to the Federal High Court, you will have plenty of machinery but no grist ; and with regard to the Inter-State Commission, you will have neither grist nor machinery.

Mr Glynn

- The Inter-State Commission will be required chiefly to deal with the river traffic.

Mr HIGGINS

- I admit that eventually that matter will be of some importance, but it is only the Inter-State traffic that the Inter-State Commission can regulate, so that for a long time there will be very little for it to do.

Mr. Maxwell. Will not that be a very fortunate thing for the Commonwealth ?

Mr HIGGINS

- Reference has been made to the question of banking, and I think that one speaker suggested that the Government ought to pass some legislation on that subject. I agree thoroughly with what has been said as to the need for walking warily in connexion with this matter, because money problems are almost the most difficult economic problems with which one can deal. But why should we not adopt a safe and tried method which will give us plenty of money with which to build our federal capital? The idea is not my own, it is an idea which has been put forward by others, but I should be very glad to see it adopted. In Canada the private banks are compelled to keep 40 per cent. of their reserves in Canadian bank notes. No one is injured, and the security is absolute. By adopting that system here, the Government would have, at the very first, a large sum of money, which it could spend in establishing the federal capital. No doubt we should walk warily in this matter, but the system which I suggest has already been tried, and I appeal to honorable members on each side of the House, whether they belong to any of the four or five classes of revenue tariffists or are protectionists, to give the system a trial. I am very glad that we seem to be approaching the determination of the black labour question. I had no idea that the feeling on the subject was so strong, and I congratulate the Queensland representatives upon the verdict which Queensland has given upon this matter, which is so vital to the interests of the people of Australia. Any man who has seized anything of the idea of the future of Australia must feel the vital importance of keeping out all races of an inferior type.

Mr McDONALD

-Paterson. - The honorable member should hear some other speakers.

Mr HIGGINS

- I have been waiting forth for three days to do so, and I shall be very glad to correct my views on this subject if the honorable member can show me a reason for changing them. The great argument against the exclusion of coloured labour is that it may mean the destruction of an industry, and no doubt we should be very careful before we do anything which would bring about the destruction of an industry. But the value of any industry is to be gauged not wholly by the value of its output, or by its profits, but chiefly by the degree of human satisfaction which it gives to human beings. I have given notice of my intention to ask for the production of the report to which the honorable member for Darling Downs has referred. I think that that report would be extremely valuable to the representatives of Victoria and other southern colonies.

Mr Barton

- I have already taken steps to obtain all the public papers on the subject that I can get.

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Mr HIGGINS

- In that case there will be no need for me to ask the question which I have on the notice-paper. A question has been raised by the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, which I am surprised that other honorable members have not dealt with, and that is what is to be the future of the Northern Territory of South Australia. I was never there, and I do not know much about that part of the world, but I think that South Australia has been doing grand work in preserving that territory for Australia. No amount of expenditure would be too great to preserve it for Australia, to the exclusion of black and other coloured races. We must see that the Northern Territory of South Australia and the north-west portion of Western Australia are kept free from men of an alien race. I understand that there are some sad goings-on in connexion with the pearl fisheries of Western Australia.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- We had better make the honorable member a commissioner, so that he can have a look at them.

Mr HIGGINS

- I should be very glad to be made such a roving commissioner. This matter is at least as important as the making of a railway through a territory of sand. There is one matter of form which struck me - although I may be wrong - in regard to it. I find that the reference to the Estimates in the Governor-General's speech is addressed to the House of Representatives only, but that the reference to the fiscal proposals - ways and means - is addressed both to the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Mr Deakin

- The honorable member for South Sydney has drawn attention to that.

Mr HIGGINS

- I was not present at the time ; but I hope that the Attorney-General will show what grounds there are for this change from our habitual practice.

Mr Deakin

- Five States out of the six follow this practice.

Mr HIGGINS

- In South Australia they have a peculiar rule, that gives to the Second Chamber a power over Money Bills that the Second Chamber in Victoria has not.

Mr Kingston

-In South Australia we do not give much to the "Upper House that they are not entitled to.

Mr HIGGINS

- While the right honorable gentleman was Premier, they did not, perhaps ; but when he became a member of the Upper House, I suppose it was different. The question of the money powers of the two Houses will become vital before very long, perhaps much sooner than we expect. One of the greatest of problems is how to reconcile responsible Government with the powers of both Houses as to Money Bills. I am sure the Ministry have looked into the matter, and will justify it as well as they can. It would be a serious thing if the House in which four-sixths of the members represent about one-fourth of the taxation were to have equal power with us in the question of taxation. However, I need not go into that now, as it is a very big question.

Mr Watson

- This House will attend to that at the proper time.

Mr HIGGINS

- Having regard to the peculiar circumstances, accepting the Constitution loyally, as we must do now, we should be exceptionally careful to see that we keep within our just rights, as conferred by it. I find by the Constitution that ways and means and expenditure of money are put upon the same level.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- We should not have one without the other.

Mr HIGGINS

- If anything there is in the Constitution a more stringent provision against ways and means being interfered with by the Senate ; because that House is not allowed to increase any tax. So that I do not know why this was done in the speech, and I thought it was my duty to the House to point it out. This House is supposed under the Constitution to have the chief say with regard to the expenditure of money, inasmuch as it represents the people in proportion to the population who contribute the money. So far as I am concerned, although I was one who fought against the Commonwealth Bill upon both referenda, although I am proud that I was one of those who helped to get such amendments as were made at the Premier's conference, and although I think we could have secured a better Bill for Australia if only our leaders had stuck to their guns sufficiently well, I shall give them loyal assistance as far as in my power lies, to work out the destinies of Australia to the best advantage.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I did not at first intend to take any part in this debate. As one who is altogether new to parliamentary life, and comparatively new to public life, I felt a certain amount of hesitancy about engaging in a discussion in which some of the ablest and most experienced politicians of Australia have taken part. I feel compelled, however, to make some remarks. They will be very short, but I have to make them because of certain references which have been made to the State of which I have the honour to be one of the representatives. Those remarks dealt with the transcontinental railway, which, in spite of a certain amount of ridicule in this House, is, so far as we in Western Australia are concerned, a matter of so much importance that without it federation would be nothing more than a name. I am here as the member for Kalgoorlie, the people of which, together with the people of Coolgardie, have during the last few years added what may be described as a new province to Australia. Those people, most of whom came from the eastern parts of the continent, have established an industry in what was previously a desert, and have added to the wealth of the Commonwealth by ?6,000,000 or ?7,000,000 per annum. They have built up cities with broad thoroughfares and handsome buildings, fitted with all the comforts and advantages of civilization, cities which I think are a credit to them and to Australia, and enduring monuments to the energy, the perseverance, and the industry of Australians. As has been said by some honorable members who have previously addressed the House, most of those people who went to Western Australia at first held to the idea that protection was the best policy for a community to pursue. There are very few of those people who now hold to those ideas. When they went to Western Australia they received sufficient protection to last them to the end of their days. They were handicapped in almost every possible direction. The clothes they wore, the food they ate, the tools they used, the machinery employed in their industry were all taxed to the utmost extent. Although they have prospered, they have prospered in spite of the difficulties with which they were surrounded. Having enjoyed what some of them are told is a boon in the shape of protection for many years, they have now sent to represent them in the Federal Parliament members who will support a revenue Tariff upon free-trade lines. I am not going to dwell upon the subject of protection or free-trade. I am quite in accord with those in this House who say that neither free-trade nor protection will be an absolute cure for all the ills of society. But as a Tariff has to be framed for the Commonwealth of Australia, and as the majority of honorable members seem agreed that almost the only means for getting revenue is by means of a Tariff, and as we have to choose between a Tariff for protective purpose and one on freetrade lines, I have no hesitation in taking my seat in accordance with the mandate of the people who sent me here with those who are most in accord with a Tariff framed on free-trade lines. I have heard it said that it is somewhat inconsistent for Western Australians to favour a revenue Tariff on free-trade lines, considering that they have had what has been

called a concession, in the form of a sliding scale, for the retention of their duties for five years. It has been said that that concession was granted by the Federation Convention in response to the wishes of Western Australia. I am here to say that Western Australia never asked, or desired, a sliding scale. I believe, if we submitted the question to the people of Western Australia to-morrow, by an overwhelming majority they would favour the abolition of that sliding scale.

Mr Kingston

- Last year they passed an Act of Parliament to take advantage of it.

Mr KIRWAN

-- That Act was in no way representative of the views of the people of Western Australia. It was passed largely by pocket borough representatives. One of the members of that Parliament represented a constituency that had only 46 electors on the rolls.

Mr Kingston

- Are they likely to undo that thing after the general election?

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Mr KIRWAN

- I will answer that question in a moment. Out of the 46 names on the roll of the constituency I have mentioned, the majority were proxy votes in Perth, and the residential voters in the Ashburton constituency amounted to only something like 14 or 15. That is to say, 15 voters in the Ashburton constituency had the same voting power as over 9,000 persons in the East Coolgardie electorate. That is an example of the gloriously liberal laws of Western Australia, of which we heard so much last night from the Minister for Defence ! The Minister for Customs has interrupted me to the effect that the new Parliament in Western Australia has not altered the law. Unfortunately, the pocket borough system is not yet ended. It is true that the constituency I have referred to - the Ashburton electorate - has been blotted out; it was a scandal to the whole of Australia, in common with the other pocket boroughs of that benighted State. The state of affairs with regard to the representation of Western Australia was worse and more scandalous than anything that ever existed on the Australian continent. It was quite as bad as anything in England prior to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. Certainly, a Redistribution Bill has now been passed, but nevertheless constituencies like the Kimberleys containing about 115 or 130 electors, have been retained, and, in fact, a further pocket borough has been established on the Collie, while the gold-fields, with constituencies containing from 3,000 to 5,000 electors have only the same representation as places containing 40, 50, or 100 people in certain favoured districts. That is a sample of the liberal laws of Western Australia! Now, as regards the sliding scale what happened is this : In the Federal Conventions that were held those who posed as the representatives of Western Australia were merely the representatives of the Parliament of that State, and did not represent the people of Western Australia at all. Those delegates never went before the people - never gave the people the slightest idea of what their views were - but went to the Conventions leaving the people of Western Australia in a far worse position than the people of Queensland were in. Queensland had no representation at the Convention whatever, and the result was that she was not misrepresented, as we were. There were certain concessions that were wanted badly by Western Australia, but they were not even asked for. AVe wanted a guarantee of the construction of a line of railway within a certain, period after the inauguration of the Commonwealth. Nothing whatever was done in regard to that matter by those who misrepresented Western Australia at the Convention. All this has existed because, as I .have pointed out, we have had in Western Australia constitutional government in name, but not in substance. It was not alone by pocket boroughs that the predominant minority maintained their power - a "minority that has been often referred to as identical with the minority that governed the Transvaal. There were other means by which this minority retained its power. Various members returned in different parts of the State turned most remarkable political somersaults as soon as they got into the Parliament in Perth. How that was brought about I am not going to say, but I was extremely sorry on a recent occasion to notice that a gentleman who occupies a seat on the Ministerial bench here, boasted of what he had done in that respect, and furthermore suggested that that method should be introduced into this House and specially applied to Western Australian members. I should be very sorry if the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia were brought in any way to such a state as the Western Australian Parliament was said by a London journal to have reached. That journal, which took an impartial view of the position, described the Western Australian Parliament, now in

a dishonoured grave, as the worst Parliament of the Empire ; and I am sure no one wants anything of that kind introduced into the Federal Parliament. Some of the abuses which exist in Western Australia fortunately can be remedied by the federal authorities. I was sorry to hear the last speaker express the opinion he did regarding the Inter-State Commission, because he seemed to doubt whether the Commission possessed the power we have all along believed it would exercise. Of course, I would not venture to question the opinion expressed by that gentleman, but I sincerely hope his interpretation of the Constitution is not a correct one, because we in Western Australia sadly need the interference of some such commission to regulate the railway rates there. In Western Australia there is a system of preferential railway rates which amounts to a form of double customs duty, imports from the eastern portions of Australia being charged altogether a different rate from that charged for local productions. All this tends to increase the unnecessarily high prices on the gold-fields, and the consequence is we feel the necessity for the abolition of those abuses. One of the first duties of the Inter-State Commission should be to fully inquire into the rates charged in Western Australia, and those rates only need to be inquired into to be immediately abolished, because they are contrary to both the spirit and, I believe, to the letter of the Federal Constitution. There are other matters which need the attention of the federal authorities, such as the quarantine regulations which, in Western Australia at any rate, are used largely for protective purposes ; and it is certain those regulations prevent the gold-fields people having that supply of fruit which there is so essential to health. Fruit that would otherwise be imported from the eastern States is not permitted to come into Western Australia, because it is said it is infected with pests which are not in existence in that State ; but many good authorities say that the codlin moth and the fruit fly are just as prevalent in Western Australia as in the eastern States of the Commonwealth. However that may be, this is a matter which requires the attention of the federal authorities. If the codlin moth and the fruit fly be not in the coastal districts of Western Australia, then the quarantine regulations are perfectly justifiable, but even if these pests are not in existence there, no earthly reason exists why fruit should not be brought to the gold-fields in eases which would be opened there. There are no orchards or fruit gardens on the goldfields to be affected by any pests which might be let loose, and no harm whatever could result from the adoption of the suggestions I have made. Before I conclude I would like to make some reference to the great fight that was fought in Western Australia in order that that colony might become a State of the federal union, It will be remembered by those who followed that struggle that we there had a harder struggle than had any of the people of the other States, the fight being between the people on the one side, and a ruling minority on the other. That ruling minority long endeavoured to prevent the people from having a voice as to whether Western Australia should enter the federal union ; and a petition signed at great expense by 23,000 people, and submitted to the Perth Parliament, asking that the Commonwealth Bill might be sent to the people, was rejected with derision. The consequence was that the people on the gold-fields were compelled to apply to the British authorities, and it was entirely owing to the separation movement that Western Australia is now a State of the union. I would like in this connexion to refer to the assistance lent by the Secretary for State for the colonies. That gentleman received the representations of the gold-fields people in a very good spirit, indeed, and there cannot be the least doubt that it was a result of his despatches to the Western Australian Government that a special session of the Parliament was called, and the Bill ultimately submitted to the people. AVe also received very valuable assistance from several of the prominent men of the eastern States, and the help they rendered to the gold-fields on that occasion is not yet forgotten by the mining community there. As a Western Australian, I cannot agree with those who regard as satisfactory the' clause in the Governor's speech with reference to the trans-continental railway. There is one sentence in that clause which needs explanation : "It is hoped that certain inquiries that are now being made may result in showing that the undertaking is justified." I would like to know whether that means the undertaking will not be proceeded with unless the line is a paying line from the start. I am amongst those who believe the line will pay from the very start, but even if it should not pay from the start, the Commonwealth has certain moral obligations which must be fulfilled, and those obligations include the construction of the trans-continental railway. All the other States are connected by rail, and surely the Commonwealth is not going to leave Western Australia always in a state of isolation. The hope of the construction of this line largely influenced the vote given in Western Australia in favour of federation, and that hope was strenghtened by the opinion expressed by many of the leading men of Australia. Several of those leading men at the time of the federal campaign led the people of

Western Australia generally to believe that the work would be the first big undertaking of the Commonwealth Parliament. There is a clause in the Commonwealth Constitution to the effect that the Commonwealth will protect all of the States against invasion, and the contract in that clause cannot be carried out until the transcontinental railway be completed. The best authorities on the defences of Australia say that until the Western State is united with the rest of Australia the defence of that portion of the continent cannot be regarded as adequate. So that not only according to promises made by representative Australian men at the time of the referendum, but also according to the wording of the Federal Constitution, the Western Australian people claim that the Commonwealth is bound to construct this line. It is a great national undertaking which will assist materially in developing the resources of the Commonwealth, and whatever differences may exist between Western Australians on other points, I believe we shall act as one man in doing our utmost to have the transcontinental railway constructed at the earliest possible moment.

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Mr HUGHES

- In considering the speech of the Governor-General I am bound to confess I consider it a comprehensive, and, on the whole, a satisfactory document. I cannot at present call to mind a subject, either important or unimportant, that has been omitted, and although there does not seem any immediate prospect of some of the proposals being carried out, still the Government, I presume, intend to press on with, and pass those measures as time and opportunity afford. Of course, humanly speaking, it would be impossible for a Government to frame a speech that would be acceptable to all men. I do not profess at all that the opening Speech is satisfactory to me in every detail. I notice with a great deal of satisfaction, however, that the Government has placed in a very prominent part of this document a reference to the alien labour question, and, although my honorable friend the member for Parramatta has pointed out that it does not go far enough, still we can deal with that matter in the concrete Bill, and we shall be able to make it go, I hope, as far as the honorable member suggests in his amendment. There is only one matter in that connexion to which reference has been omitted, and that is the undesirable white pauper labour. In the United States it has been found necessary to impose certain restrictions on undesirable white labour.

Mr Barton

- I am moving for permission to bring in a Bill which covers that.

Mr HUGHES

- That is very necessary, because, whatever we may say against the coloured labourer, he is, if anything, to be feared less, industrially, than the pauper white labourer. I notice, amongst other items in the opening speech, which, owing to the prominence of the Tariff question, may be termed minor matters, that it is proposed to introduce a measure dealing with the public service of the Commonwealth. I hope a lesson will be taken from the various mistakes made in the other States. I shall not enter into what I conceive to be a proper basis for the Commonwealth Service. The errors that have occurred in the States are sufficiently apparent, and no doubt the Government will be warned by them. What I think we want, and want quickly, is a comprehensive Federal Electoral Act, so that we may have, at any rate, equality of representation. In this connexion, I was amazed to learn from the honorable member for Kalgoorlie that a condition of things has existed in the sister State of Western Australia of so astounding a character that he was compelled to go back to pre-reform days to discover an equally disgraceful state of affairs. I never thought it possible that fifteen people resident in one electorate, and 30 or 40 non-residents, could return a man to any Australian Parliament. One can readily understand that under such circumstances it has been possible to maintain that continuity of policy upon which the Minister for Defence, Sir John Forrest, has on various occasions prided himself. Only last evening he took the House so much into his confidence as to explain that it was precisely owing to that continuity of policy that liberal and progressive legislation had been possible in the Western State. I had the honour of hearing the honorable gentleman some two years ago when he spoke at a meeting of the Early Closing Association in Sydney. On that occasion he said that he would tread very hotly on our heels in the measure of progressive legislation. He even went so far as to assert that he set the democratic pace in Australia, and that we had been lagging, perspiring, more or less hopelessly, in the rear. But I learn from the honorable member for Kalgoorlie that such is not the case.

Sir John Forrest

- Not a very good authority, I may tell the honorable member.

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Mr HUGHES

- I am not going to say that everything that the honorable member for Kalgoorlie says is true. He described such an amazing state of things that I should be loth to believe that his statement is true, and shall be very glad indeed to listen to its refutation, which should be very easy. I am sure every one will sympathize with the honorable member for Kalgoorlie in his admirable desire to have a trans-continental railway constructed ; and I am perfectly certain that, were I returned for Kalgoorlie, my sentiments would lead me in the same direction. But we are here to consider the question as to how it affects the whole of Australia, rather than its effect upon Kalgoorlie or Western Australia itself. Although before I come to a decided opinion on the matter, I shall wait for the report of the experts that the Government are now employing, still I say at once that, unless the report contains almost a revelation, I do not think I shall vote for the project. I do not see how this infant Commonwealth can saddle itself with a debt of ?5,000, 000 sterling, for no other purpose than to allow Western Australia to have railway communication with the eastern States, and perhaps to shorten the mail service by three or four days-. Of course it may be that there are arguments sufficiently weighty to justify Parliament in sanctioning the undertaking, but at present I think it is an item very much like, if not entirely resembling, the reference to the North Shore bridge which that great statesman the late Sir Henry Parkes used to insert in the Governor's speech year after year. I am now absent from New South

Wales, and many things may have occurred since my departure from that State ; but up till that time the North Shore bridge was not an entity. I think that Sir John Forrest may find that although the exigencies of Kalgoorlie are great, and those of Western Australia are greater - since his regime there is practically over, and it is not now so easy to do those things which were necessary to conciliate a minority and keep a majority together - that the transcontinental railway will not be built by the Commonwealth. Although I have been invariably opposed to the construction of land-grant railways, I would be prepared to allow a firm of contractors to construct this railway, giving them a certain area of land on either side of it. I think that would be a perfectly fair and generous offer. I feel sure that if this country is, as the honorable member for Kalgoorlie would have us believe, a place which needs but the magic touch of the " ribbons of steel " to make it blossom into a paradise of roses, that here is a chance for the capitalists with plenty of money and no opportunity for investment to lay it out. I do not think that the House will agree with the idea that has been suggested by the Minister for Defence, and I shall be loth indeed to interpret the statement made last night by the right honorable gentleman as an intimation that a bargain was struck by him with the Government that the price of the inclusion of Western Australia in the union was the construction of this railway. Certainly the honorable gentleman said he intended to get out of the federation if this line were not constructed. His attitude this evening seems to be entirely one of negation. Sir John Forrest said that if this railway was not constructed western Australia would retire from the union, or that he himself would retire, which means the same thing. Before touching the fiscal question I want to refer to the clause in the Governor-General's speech which deals with navigation and similar matters, and to say that I am very glad that they have been included. I reiterate what my friend the honorable member for Bland, has said, and hope that no subsidy in future will be granted to any steamer that does not carry white labour. I have noticed throughout this debate an assumption of astonishment on the part of several gentlemen, that a man can be an advocate of labour and at the same time a free-trader. Although we are not now in a position to carry into effect a free-trade policy, still I think it necessary to show why a man may be a very staunch advocate of labour reforms, and still believe in free-trade. First of all, it may be said that free-trade does not profess to be a panacea at all. It is merely the natural order of things. Protection is a remedy. Now, to the healthy man you do not need to apply a remedy; Free-trade, I repeat, is the natural order of things. It existed from the beginning of commercial exchange, and still exists in all countries in the world, protectionist- as well as free-trade. All men buy as cheaply as they can, and sell as dearly as they can. Free-trade does not profess to be a remedy ; it simply professes to be a reversion, where other policies have existed, to the natural order of things. Therefore, I do not say that free-trade is a remedy for the unemployed question, or that it will accomplish any of the wonderful things that people affirm protection will accomplish. But, since we now have an opportunity of choosing between two policies, I prefer to choose a free-trade policy, and lacking that, a revenue Tariff, because I believe it is best for the

whole nation, and that any law which aims at anything but the benefit of the whole nation is class legislation, and class legislation, though it may sometimes be necessary, and may sometimes be defended, is at all times an undesirable thing, theoretically and equitably, too. The Minister for Home Affairs and other honorable members, particularly the Prime Minister, said that there could be neither free-trade nor protection under these conditions. £8,500,000 had to be raised, and it did not matter very much what policy you had, you were limited by that. But I understand that the Attorney-General, the Treasurer, and other members of the Ministry and their supporters said something very different. They said that protection was an admirable thing, which could, and ought to, be in force under the conditions of the Commonwealth. I notice, however, that this view has been so much modified in the Governor-General's speech that the reference to protection almost disappears. -The excuse offered is that put forward by the Premier the other evening, that protection is impossible under the conditions existing under the Constitution. I utterly deny that. I take up the position that if there be any virtue in protection it is possible under our

Constitution. A protective Tariff of the most rigid and exclusive character existing in any part of the civilized world could be put into force here, and could be made to raise £8,500,000 of revenue, more or less, on our present volume of trade. In a country which has a policy of the most notoriously protective character - the United States of America - they raised through the Customs \$37,000,000 on imports which in one year - I think in the year 1897 - were valued at \$136,000,000. What does that fact mean?

Assuming that they have no free list, it means that their duties are equivalent to an average duty of 25 per cent. No one will deny that America is the ideal protected country so far as such an ideal is humanly obtainable. We are told that in America protection has done so much for the people that their condition is elysian compared with that of the people of other countries. Their Tariff is such that it protects their native industries, and yet in one year the value of their imports was equal to \$136,000,000. Why could not what they do in America be done here? Could we not, by placing some articles on the free list and putting a low ad valorem or specific duty on others, while we put a heavy protective duty on things that we can manufacture in the country, obtain just the kind of Tariff we want. There is no other reason why we should not do so, save that in a House composed as this House is composed it is unsafe. But it is of no use to say that protection is impossible under the Constitution. Protection is possible under the Constitution ; but the courage of honorable gentlemen opposite, which was at fever height during the elections, has now sunk to zero, and they are not even upholding the advisableness of introducing a protective Tariff. We have heard from the other side of the House a number of very entertaining dissertations on the virtues of protection - what it has done for Victoria and for America, and what free-trade has done for England. The employment of child labour has been discussed, and so, too, have a hundred and one other questions whose discussion serves to entertain the groundlings during election times. . But, except that uttered by the honorable member for Southern Melbourne, we have not heard a complaint against this inexcusable abandonment of the protectionist policy by a protectionist Government. If I were a protectionist I should protest against the abandonment of a policy calculated to do so much for the people, and which, although it has done so much for Victoria, America, and other places, no one has the courage to introduce here.

Mr O'malley

- They have not abandoned it ; we are going to make them bring it in. They will have to face the music.

Mr HUGHES

- They have abandoned it, although in a very unobtrusive and courteous way. I see no reason why a protective policy should not be introduced. I hope that it will be introduced. If it were introduced, I could fix the time when this Government will pass away. I remember with what turbulent joy the introduction of the protective policy of the Dibbs Government was greeted in New South Wales, and what howls of execration went up from one end of the country to the other against the Government when the people began to feel its effect. There never was a cleaner sweep made of any political party in the history of New South Wales than was made of that party, although the policy they introduced was the merest pretence for a protective policy. Only a part of this continent has tasted the true and unfathomable advantages of protection. If the whole continent were subjected to those advantages it would rise against them, and this Ministry would be submerged. But they propose to do what, under the circumstances, although not courageous, is very discreet - to introduce a revenue Tariff. The honorable member for Northern

Melbourne said that he could not quite understand the difference between a revenue and a protective Tariff.

Mr Higgins

- I did not say that.

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Mr HUGHES

- The difference is very clear, and will be very clear to the people. A revenue Tariff would remain the same year after year. One year it would bring in a certain amount of revenue in proportion to the value of the imports, and the following year it would bring in the same proportional amount. But if you put such high protective duties on half-a-dozen articles as to exclude their importation, in order to obtain the necessary revenue, next year you would have to tax some of the articles which were originally on the free list, or increase the tax on those articles which were formerly only lightly taxed, and the more protection you gave the higher the Customs taxation would get. The protective duties would never be taken off the list, and you would have to raise your revenue taxation higher with each successive wave of protection.

Mr HIGGINS

- According to the honorable member's contention the taxation would not be paid on the articles consumed here.

Mr HUGHES

- I do not think I said that. It appears to me that a revenue Tariff places all men and all industries on the same footing. The honorable member for Northern Melbourne asked why we should stop the importation of raw material. But is not the raw material of one man the finished article of another ? To those industries which have sprung up in New South Wales without any stimulus at all you are going to apply a medicine which - although it suits the delicate and anaemic industries of this State, which, without it, would immediately fall down and become as dead - would crush the New South Wales industries out of existence. Our industries depend upon the freest interchange of trade, and they must get their raw material as cheaply as possible. If they do not get it cheaply, if we put a 15 or 20 per cent. duty upon any article of raw material which is used by a New South Wales manufactory, we shall either crush it out of existence, or at least help to do so. I have heard it said during the debate that there is some sort of innate relationship between protection and labour, and that no man could be a real reformer unless he were a protectionist ; but I am opposed to protection because it is a monopoly. Protection gives an unfair advantage to a section of the community at the expense of the whole community. I ask any honorable member who is a protectionist to name one economist of standing who supports his theory. Of course I know that in every State where protection has been in force for any length of time economists are evolved who will explain and defend or excuse anything; but I ask honorable members who are protectionists to name one economist of European and world-wide standing who defends their theory.

Mr O'Malley

- Carey, of the United States.

Mr HUGHES

- I understand that there is a man named Carey, but no one ever pays him the compliment of regarding him as an economist of world-wide standing.

Mr O'Malley

- A free-trader naturally reads only what suits his particular views.

Mr HUGHES

- It is very easy to invent a number of supporters for one's theories, but I still say that there is no instance of a man of standing in the economic world supporting the theory of protection.

Mr O'Malley

- Carey is the bald headed eagle of the Rocky Mountains.

Mr HUGHES

- I will consider for a moment the statement that protection has done something for the people of America. I should like to say, first, that in America they have the advantage of a free interchange of commodities among 70,000,000 people.

Mr O'Malley

- 76,000,000.

Mr HUGHES

- They have a country of unbounded fertility and natural resources, and it would be an extraordinary thing if there were no signs of very great prosperity there. But, notwithstanding that fact, and the existence of their protective policy, they recently imported \$136,000,000 worth of goods in one year. That seems to indicate that they have not been so successful in establishing industries as one might imagine.

Mr O'Malley

- It showed that they are manufacturing the requirements of their own intellectual people.

HUGHES.- We have to deal with a policy by its results, and the result of protection in America is that there exists there a wider chasm between the rich and the poor than exists in any other country in the world.

Mr O'Malley

- The honorable member is mistaken.

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Mr HUGHES

- I do not wish to say anything that will put my honorable friend off from the valuable suggestions which he has to make ; but it is quite competent for him to publish them either in a book or by a speech on the floor of the House. As I did not catch what he said - although that is a lamentable thing to acknowledge - my honorable friend, who is teeming with a number of ingenious ideas, is utterly wasting them upon me, and I do not know that anybody else is much better for them. I say that there is a greater gulf in the United States of America between the rich and the poor' than in any other country in the world. My honorable friend, the member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, does not seem to like that statement, but it is a fact.

Mr O'Malley

- No.

Mr HUGHES

- My honorable friend may bring forward some writer to say that facts are not reliable tilings. But still in an old-fashioned way some of us prefer to rely upon them. In America there is a condition of monopolies ringed together in trusts such as hitherto the industrial world has never dreamed of. There is nothing in the wide world to compare with the great steel trust recently formed. Does any honorable member think for a moment that it can be for the good of the people of America that one company should control the whole of the steel and iron output of the United States ? Does any man think that it is a good thing that one company should hold the very town and the very houses in which the workmen live; that those workmen should be compelled to buy their food and their clothes from the company ; that they should have to deal with the company or leave ; and that there is such a system of espionage and blackballing that it is impossible for a man who gets marked in the oil trust or in the steel trust to get employment in these industries again ? Does not the honorable member, Mr. O'Malley, know that there are greater industrial conflicts in America than in any other country in the world? Does he not know that scenes of violence have taken place there such as, happily, have never marked the industrial struggles of any other country in the world ? Does he not know that in State sifter State there is hardly a man who has his holdings clear of mortgage ? Does he not know that it has passed into a proverb in America that the whole of the West is mortgaged to the East? Is not that borne out by the publication of the bureau of statistics at Washington ?

Mr.O'Malley.-No.

Mr HUGHES

- It is a lamentable thing that my honorable friend was not coeval with the Creator at the making of the universe, because I feel convinced he could have given Him a great many hints. I particularly regret that my honorable friend was not a member of the Convention that framed our Constitution, and it is much more to be regretted that it is only our descendants who come after us who will feel the great loss then sustained through the honorable member's absence.

Mr O'Malley

- The honorable member is quite right.

Mr HUGHES

- If my honorable friend will believe the bureau of statistics at Washington, he will find that the information that I have given is correct. Although it is true that in certain industries the wages of American artisans are

greater than are those of English artisans, yet in very few instances is the purchasing power of the American greater than that of the Englishman.

Mr O'Malley

- The honorable member is wrong again.

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Mr HUGHES

- I notice that the artillery of these gentlemen is a chorus of "no." One may point out this fact or that, but unassailable as the position may be it is settled by my honorable friends by a direct negative. It is to be taken as sufficient that honorable members opposite should say - "It is not so." Although Mulhall and the bureau of statistics at Washington say "It is so," that goes for nothing. However, I may tell the honorable member that I belong to an organisation that has branches in San Francisco and all down the west coast of America. I am in weekly or monthly communication with those organisations, and I feel assured that there is no reason why they should, merely for electioneering purposes, supply me with false information so far as they and their industries are concerned. I know the condition of things there from them, and from what Mulhall and the bureau of statistics say I am convinced that men who earn their living have greater difficulties in the United States of America than in England. I know, as every man may know if he will only lookup the facts, that the condition of things in America, good though they may be in some parts, is on the whole inferior to the condition of things in England. I am not denying that they may be good in some parts. It is impossible to suppose that in a country like America things should not be good somewhere. But they are not good because of protection. They are good in spite of protection. At any rate they are good, when they are good, because of the indomitable energy of the people, the unbounded resources of the country, and the inestimable advantages arising from the free interchange of goods amongst 70,000,000 of people. Some honorable members have been saying that industry in Victoria has been fostered under protection, and that the Victorian manufacturer under protection has far outstripped the New South Wales manufacturer under free-trade. Well, now, I have here some statistics. I do not know whether my honorable friends will accept them. I quote from the Statistical Register of New South Wales by Mr. Coghlan, and from the statistics for Victoria for the year 1899, compiled in the office of the Government Statist. I find that this policy has been so signally successful in Victoria that, in the year 1899, there were produced in Victorian factories 2,929,011 pairs of boots, whilst in the same year in New South Wales there were produced 3,207,196. There is a difference amounting to some hundreds of thousands.

Mr Deakin

- It is only an estimate, and it is obviously incorrect.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It is a Victorian estimate.

Mr Deakin

- It is taken from Coghlan, and we have shown over and over again that it is incorrect.

Mr HUGHES

- It is something to wring an admission from my honorable friends that the figures are there, although they now say the information is unreliable. Formerly I understood they denied the very existence of the documents. Now, the documents being admitted, it is merely their veracity that is impugned. I heard my honorable friend the member for Gippsland say, I think, that protection had stimulated the output of coal. The honorable member for Newcastle also asserted that under protection industries had sprung up which had stimulated the output of coal and the consumption of it within the State.

Mr A McLEAN

- I did not say so.

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Mr HUGHES

- I find from official documents that the horse-power used in the factories of New South Wales and Victoria compares as follows for the year 1899 : - In New South Wales the horsepower was 33,180, and in Victoria 33,046 - a slight amount in favour of New South Wales. But that is not the point. The point is that the whole of the horse-power of New South Wales and Victoria, so far as factories is concerned, is 66,226. That represents very nearly as much as the coal &ut into the steamers in my electorate in one week. These factories consume in a year coal to provide 66,000 horse-power, and every week there go

out of the port of Sydney mail steamers, inter-colonial steamers, and steamers engaged in the carrying of passengers and cargo with an amount of horse-power greater than 66,000. It will not be denied, I suppose, that it takes just as much coal to feed a horse-power engine on a ship as on land ? I hope no one will take exception to that fact. That being accepted, it follows that all the factories of New South Wales and Victoria - all the factories that have been stimulated in Victoria for the past 25 years - consume an amount of coal per annum less than five mail steamers in the port of Melbourne. So that you have built up this enormous output of coal for your native industries as the result of 25 years of effort, and you have only managed to consume as much coal as five or six steamers ! Yet it is coolly proposed by those gentlemen who favour this protectionist policy to cripple the natural resources of this continent by imposing a Tariff that will divert the shipping industry of the world from Australia. Does not any man know that if ships cannot get cargo here they cannot afford to bring goods here ? And if you will not buy their goods they will not come here anyhow. If any man will read the figures as to the increase in the amount of shipping in Sydney since the restrictions have been removed, at any rate, whatever other conclusion he may come to, he will agree that it has stimulated the output of coal to an extraordinary extent. Before I sit down, I wish to quote a few more statistics. I have no doubt it will be said they are utterly wrong, but they are furnished to me from the Government Statist. They show that the number of males employed in Victorian factories in 1889 was 49,105, and the number of females 8,327. In ten years the males decreased by 5,064, and the females increased by 7,702, making a total increase of only 2,638. As to the factory hands of New South Wales there was an increase of 5,764 males and 4,318 females, being a total increase of 10,082 for the decade. These figures show that during the last ten years there has been an employment of female labour in the Victorian factories at the expense of male labour, and a decrease of males employed during the decade ; whereas in New South Wales on the other hand, there has been an increase both of males and females, but chiefly of males. Whatever else that shows it certainly proves that industries can get along very well without protection. They have got along without protection in New South Wales. and they have got along without it in England. The conditions in New South Wales and Victoria are very similar, although it has been pointed out by an ingenious gentleman that, the area of New South Wales being four times greater than that of Victoria, therefore New South Wales ought to be four times as prosperous. In answer to that, I would point out that there is no density of population in Victoria worth speaking about. At any rate, the people of Victoria have been going away so steadily during the last decade that if they keep on Victoria will soon be in the unenviable position of France in being the second country in the world that does not increase its population. Of all arguments the one that is absolutely reliable is that all men go where they can get the better conditions. No man goes from a good country to a bad country. No man goes from England to Hungary, or from England to Russia, but many men go from Russia, Hungary, and Germany to England. No man goes from America to England, but many go from England to America, where there is greater scope and greater opportunity. No man goes from Australia to England, but men come from England to Australia. No man goes from the State of New South Wales to Victoria, but very many go from the State of Victoria to New South Wales ; and so great has been the rush from Victoria that it has been found necessary to confine the clamorous applications for employment on State works to citizens of New South Wales.

Mr Deakin

- AVE had to do exactly the same thing here with the New South Wales unemployed.

Mr HUGHES

- It was found that the number of _ men who crowded over from Victoria to get employment on State relief works in New South Wales was so great that our own men had no chance at all, and therefore it was found necessary - and I think honorable members will agree it was an excellent provision - to make a condition that each man employed should be a citizen of the mother State. If this Tariff is a good thing - if it protects industry and does good to the working man - by all means let it be established here.

Mr O'Malley

- AVE are going to give it to the honorable member.

Mr HUGHES

- Then I should like to hear the honorable member's violent denunciation of the Government for not bringing it in. Are honorable members going to say that this milk-and-water Tariff will suit my ' protectionist friends %

Mr MAUGER

- Wait until the Tariff comes.

Mr HUGHES

- As a matter of fact, gentlemen know very well that if there be any virtue in protection at all, it must be protection that excludes the foreign article.

Mr Mauger

- We never said so.

Mr HUGHES

- The kind of protection that does not exclude the foreign article is a very peculiar kind of protection. I had occasion lately to buy a hat in Bourke street, and I find that it was an imported hat, and that a very large number of imported hats were for sale.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member must have gone astray.

Mr HUGHES

- There has been a duty on hats here for many years, and if it were an effective duty I utterly fail to see how the imported article got in here at all. But my honorable friends know very well that the whole system of these duties has been a sham, and that it broke down years ago ; and they now resort to factory acts, wages boards, and to a hundred and one other things which years ago they denounced. Even the Age newspaper has been tardily converted to opinions which that organ denounced with vehemence years ago.

Mr Mauger

- Is it not desired to resort to those things in New South Wales 1

Mr HUGHES

- If the policy of protection be a good one it ought to be able to stand by itself.

Mr Mauger

- That is not an answer to my question. Is it not desired to resort to those things in New South Wales 1

Mr HUGHES

- I do not say that freetrade is a panacea for all evils ; but that claim is made for protection.

Mr Higgins

- We have never said protection was a panacea.

Mr Deakin

- The honorable member does not answer the question.

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Mr HUGHES

- I really am at a loss to know whether I am to take those gentlemen on what they said last night, what they said to-night, what they said in their election speeches, or on the qualifications they now propose in the adverse circumstances under which they now meet. In the ferocious denunciation of free-trade by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports there was nothing to lead the electors to believe, and I am sure there was no sort of belief in his mind that he was going to favour a policy of a mere revenue Tariff, thinly veiled by a few specific duties.

Mr MAUGER

- Who says so ?

Mr HUGHES

- The Government do not hint at such a thing, and certainly are not prepared to do what the honorable member wants, while he is not prepared to ask them to do so. While I have nothing to find fault with in the whole of the speech except the vagueness in regard to the alien question, which has been remedied by the utterances of the Prime Minister and the assurances of the Attorney-General as to the amendment of the order of leave-

Mr Deakin

- There is no need to amend it ; it was drawn amply so as to cover that.

Mr HUGHES

- We have the assurance of the Attorney-General that the Bill will provide for white pauper labour. The other point is the fiscal measure, and the wide divergence in opinion in regard to it; but it is a divergence

that apparently exists only in theory, because I believe the proposals it is intended to introduce contain very nearly the kind of Tariff we are prepared to accept. I am very certain there was nothing in the speeches of the gentlemen who represent Victoria, or even of the gentlemen who represent South Australia, during the time of the elections to lead us to believe such proposals would be made.

Mr Higgins

- I said so.

Mr HUGHES

- The people of Australia are very much to be congratulated on the fact that the verdict upon a fair and square appeal in at least three of the States, if not four, on the fiscal question, resulted in so unmistakable a demand for free, or at any rate the freest possible trade under the circumstances. The exigencies of the Commonwealth, and the Braddon clause, demand that a high revenue shall be raised, a demand which my honorable friends the protectionists have put in so many words. But there is still a possible resort to direct taxation. It is open to the Government to raise its revenue in that way, and such a step would be acceptable to both the protectionist and the free-trader, since no protection can be logically complete unless it seeks its revenue in other directions than the Customs house, and, on the other hand, no free-trade can logically be carried out by any other means of raising taxation. I am almost inclined to advise the Government, seeing the extraordinary change in the opinions of my honorable friends the protectionists, to bring in that policy, since it would be a policy acceptable to both sides of the House. If they cannot do that, I would have them be courageous enough to stand by their principles, and introduce a policy which, if all they say of it be true, will build up this country; and although it will build up the country at the expense of the people who live in it, still, for the time being there would be furnished an illustration and object lesson of such a character that I believe at the next general election the Government will be defeated.

Motion (by Mr. PIESSE) proposed-

That the debate be now adjourned.

Sir William McMillan

- Has the question been decided in regard to the day to which we are to adjourn ? The Government might let us know what the arrangement is.

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

. - A request has been made, I understand, by a considerable number of honorable members, who desire an adjournment over Tuesday next, so that the House may meet on Wednesday. The object of these members is, I understand, to return to their various capitals for that period, the members of New South Wales being particularly anxious to welcome His Royal Highness the Duke of York on his visit to Sydney. That request has been preferred and partly taken into consideration, and as the Prime Minister is now here, and has been dealing with the matter, he will perhaps be able to give some information to honorable members.

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Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I was about to move that the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next, because I do not know, if we adjourn over that day, what prospect we have of finishing the debate on Wednesday. I do not wish unduly to press matters in the first debate in this Parliament. I desire to give every consideration to honorable members, but we have now been occupied in this debate three nights; and, except on one subject, there is no contention, and as on that subject there is not perhaps now very large contention, I was hoping we might conclude the debate next Wednesday. In any case, I place reliance on honorable members to do their best to finish the debate. Recognising that this is not an occasion for pressure, I will consent to an adjournment.

Debate (on motion by Mr. Piesse) adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I rise to move that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday next. As a large number of

honorable members will be returning on that day we had better make the hour of meeting three o'clock p.m. Therefore I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday next at 3 p.m.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

"Hansard."

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr WATSON

- I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether the Cabinet or he himself has yet come to any conclusion with regard to the price at which Hansard will be issued to the public. Several honorable members have already received a large number of inquiries from their constituents as to the price at which the numbers will be obtainable. Unless the matter is decided quickly, the first issue may get out of print, and consequently be unobtainable, by those who desire, perhaps very naturally, to have a complete record of the proceedings of the Federal Parliament. If the Prime Minister is not able to let us know to-night, he might perhaps at the next sitting give us some information on the matter, so that we may know the condition under which copies of Hansard are to be issued.

An Honorable Member. - At 7s. 6d

Mr WATSON

- I do not know that that price has been definitely arranged. I hope, in the interests of federation generally, a lower price will be found possible.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

in reply: - Unless some one else desires to speak, I wish to say something on this subject. My attention has been directed by the Chief Parliamentary Reporter to the fixing of the price of Hansard. Of course, honorable members will understand that, instead of getting six copies each, as do honorable members in the New South Wales Legislature, they will receive twelve copies, as do honorable members in the Victorian Legislature. Instead of receiving one proof copy, honorable members will each receive three, and, as in the case of both Parliaments to which I have referred, they will receive the remainder on application. The price has been fixed as low as the price of any publication of the kind before, that is, at 3d. per copy; but the price for the session, which is 10s. in New South Wales and 7s. in Victoria, was fixed, on consideration of the circumstances so far as I had them before me, at 7s. 6d.

An Honorable Member. - It is only 3s. in Queensland.

Mr BARTON

- I did not know that then. Since that fact has come to my knowledge, and since I know there are a large number of honorable members who desire that the price should be made more reasonable, I am willing to reconsider the matter, and I think I shall be able to make a reduction, not necessarily to 3s., but something in the nature of a substantial reduction.

Mr SPEAKER

- May I remind honorable members that it is not in order for them to move from their places when a question is being put from the Chair. Just now, when the question, "That the House do now adjourn," was being put, some dozen or so of honorable members moved from their seats, and consequently I was not aware that the honorable member for Bland had risen to address the Chair.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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22:17:00

House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.