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1901-10-30

HouseofRepresentatives.

Mr. Speaker took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

MOTION OF CENSURE

<page>6571</page>

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - Before the order of the day is called on I should like to make a short statement to the House as to the position of public business, which grows urgent while the debate proceeds. Amongst other things, there is fixed for Friday a conference between the members of the Government and representatives of the Governments of the States in respect to several important matters upon which an interchange of views is desirable. We think that under ordinary circumstances this discussion might have been over earlier, . but as there are yet a number of honorable members who desire to speak, Ministers, instead of endeavouring to take a division to-night, are prepared to adjourn at a reasonable hour ; but, without any desire to unduly curtail the debate, I think I can rely on the co-operation of honorable members when I express our intention to bring it to a conclusion during the sitting which commences to-morrow afternoon.

Debate resumed (from 29th October, vide page 6569) on motion by Mr. Reid -

. That this House cannot accept the financial and Tariff proposals submitted by the Government -

Because they would place the finances of the Commonwealth and the States upon an unsound and extravagant basis.

Because they fail to adjust the burdens of taxation and the advantages of the free list in an equitable manner, revealing a marked tendency; which this House regrets to observe, to press upon the necessities of life and appliances used in our farming, mining, and pastoral industries more heavily than they do upon many articles of luxury.

And because they would in their operation destroy the stability of the revenue by making imposts for national purposes a source of undue profit to a few individuals, and a few favoured industries, at the expense of the whole community.

That the foregoing resolutions be conveyed, by address, to His Excellency the Governor-General.

Mr EWING

- I am sure that any honorable member who consulted his own feelings would not intrude himself upon the discussion at this juncture, because almost everything which could be said on both sides of the question has already been ably said by some of the best speakers in the House. One feels, also, that parliamentary institutions are on their trial, and every representative should be prepared to sacrifice his individual feelings to the interests of those institutions. Therefore, I shall simply make the brief statement to my constituents which . I think I ought to make. If the policy of the Government were such as it has been stated to be by honorable members on your left, Mr. Speaker, there would be' only one course for honorable members on this side to take - to cross the chamber and join them. The fact that I speak from the Ministerial side of the House shows that I am not of their opinion in regard to the Government policy. It has appeared to me that from the very first a false issue has been raised. We have before us on one hand the statement of the Government, which is accurate so far as it can be in respect to the aggregate amount required to be obtained from the people of Australia in taxation, and accurate also as far as possible in regard to details - a plain, bare statement, open to full consideration and criticism. On the other hand, we have the nebulous policy of the Opposition. So far as my intelligence enabled me to understand them, the argument of the whole of the speeches which have been delivered from the opposition side of the Chamber has been - " Place us on the Treasury benches, and there will be no taxation of the people of Australia."

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- No one has said that..

<page>6572</page>

Mr EWING

- That is the inference which I draw from the statements of honorable members opposite. They say that too much taxation is being wrung from the people. " Place us on the Government benches, and we shall

be able to lessen the burden of taxation, and govern Australia without imposing taxation at all." What other inference is to be drawn from the fact that honorable members have called attention to the duties on molasses, barbed wire, and other articles, and shown that the people are being unjustly taxed upon those articles, if it is not that if honorable gentlemen opposite were in power they would allow such articles to come in free? But when honorable members are asked whether money will not be required for the Government of the country, to pay its politicians, maintenance men, policemen, and public servants generally, whether its policy is free-trade or protection, they have to concede that money is required for these and other purposes. Therefore, we come to the first issue : How much taxation is required? Opinions vary as to the amount which should be raised. Some put it at £8,048,000, and others at under £9,000,000, but if we take the mean, which is a little over £8,500,000, and subtract it from the amount which the Government propose to raise, which is a little under £9,000,000, the balance comes to about 2s. 6d. per head of the population, and that divided by the 52' weeks in the year is equal to something less' than three farthings per week for each inhabitant. This is the heavy burden of taxation which these four-hour speeches have been delivered against. But, it being conceded that the money is required for the Government of the country, and that about the same amount would be required if the Opposition were in power as is required by the Government, we come to the question of the incidence of the proposed duties. The term "incidence" is a magnificent one, and it would have served honorable members capitably if some of them had not been a little more honest or ingenuous than others. So long as they kept to generalities there was some safety, but unfortunately some of them went into details. Honorable gentlemen will remember how the faces of the Opposition fell when the honorable member for Wentworth went into details, and the glaring looks when the honorable member for North Sydney pointed out that the difference of incidence meant quite as objectionable taxation in detail as the Government proposals. I think the financial editor of the Daily Telegraph is as competent a man as we have in Australia with regard to the freetrade aspect of any case. In New South Wales his is a name to conjure with. When he proposed a Tariff dealing with the question in detail, every honorable member on the other side felt what a fatal mistake had been made ; for the moment the freetrader commenced to deal with details, the moment he commenced to deal with his revenue Tariff, it was clear that the taxation on the people must be as heavy and as objectionable under one party as under the other. Therefore we get rid of the two aspects of the case. Honorable members who have left this side for the other, and taken with them our kindly personal wishes, might remember two tilings. First of all, they must concede, as any honest man must concede, that in the aggregate the taxation to be levied by the Opposition must be as great as that levied by the Government, and that in detail a revenue Tariff would press as heavily on the people of the country as do the proposals of the Government, in fact more so. I shall not enter into that aspect of the case, in respect to which some honorable members have endeavoured to prove that one can take a less number of articles and on each of them put a lower duty and still obtain as large an aggregate revenue as if one took more articles and imposed a larger duty. But there is an alternative, and the honorable member for the Barrier has touched the only point at which these honorable members can escape, if they are free-traders. What do we express by the term free-trade? It is the difference between indirect and direct taxation. A man who will not accept direct taxation, with all its responsibility and all its defects, is not a free-trader. If honorable members do not vote for the suggested amendment, and destroy the customs that are' presumed to shackle our trade, let them say good-bye to any freetrade. Their professions are only misleading. They are beeping in existence protective duties, and under a protectionist flag they are carrying on a system their protests against which, if they refuse to accept direct taxation, are useless chatter. What does it mean?

Mr Thomas

- Should we get a Customs revenue from a true protection ?

Mr EWING

- The honorable and learned member for Parkes proved that. I have endeavoured to put in order what I desire to say, and if honorable members will allow me to go on for a moment, I shall come to any point upon which they desire me to touch. The amount of direct taxation levied by all the States in Australia is, roughly speaking, £2,700,000 per annum. Leaving out narcotics and stimulants, we should have to get in taxation something over £4,000,000 per annum.

Mr Conroy

- That is about £600,000 wrong.

Mr EWING

- I am making no mistake. There is a sum of £2,700,000 levied by direct taxation in the States. If honorable members desired to adopt a free-trade policy they would have to double their stamp duties, their income tax, and their land tax, and then they could talk about freetrade.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Does not the honorable member know that the Constitution does not provide for direct taxation ?

Mr EWING

- Exactly ; the needs of Australia are such that it is utterly useless to talk about free-trade or protection. The environment of Australia is such - and every man conceded it during the passing of the Constitution Bill- that it is absolutely essential to have a heavy Tariff. Now we have got back to the old point. Honorable members are fighting the Tariff as free-traders. They are not free-traders ; there are no free-traders in the House. As a rule a free-trader will face his principles, and now and again he has them in spasms. If these honorable members tell the people of this country that they intend to keep in existence the direct taxation in each State, and in addition to that to double the land tax, the income tax, the stamp duties, and so on, in order to provide for the needs of the central government ; if they will make that statement, and stand up to it, I am then prepared to believe that they are men who accept the responsibilities of their principles ; otherwise I regard them simply as fiscal masqueraders.

<page>6573</page>

Mr CONROY

- But the Federal Government requires only £300,000 for its own services.

Mr EWING

- We have a Constitution. If I forget to deal with any of these points later on, I shall be very glad to be reminded of them. It appears to me that every speech made from the freetrade or protectionist aspect of this case has been so much energy thrown away - and for this reason : Before it is possible to argue with regard to two nations there must be similarity of conditions. If honorable members will take the British Tariff they will find that there is raised by customs duties about £23,000,000 a year, of which only about £1,000,000 is obtained on articles somewhat similar to those on this Tariff. If they are prepared to bring into existence a Tariff similar to that of Great Britain, then I will concede at once that their comparison with England is a fair one. Will they endeavour for a moment to understand exactly the position ? It is idle to deal with the question of Australia and Great Britain, unless it can be shown that there is a similarity of Tariff. The basis of their argument is this : Get rid of customs duties, get rid of shackles on trade, get rid of everything which interferes with free intercourse oversea, and then the nation will be great and prosperous. If they can show that it is possible to have a Tariff here similar to that in Great Britain then there is some basis for their argument, otherwise there is none. But if we made our Tariff similar to the free-trade Tariff of Great Britain only £100,000 a year would be obtained by customs duties from Australia.

Mr Conroy

- Nonsense !

Mr EWING

- It is not nonsense. The revenue from narcotics and stimulants I have excepted. We understand that those things stand in a different category. They are tilings which the baby does not want, and which, as a rule, women do not consume very largely ; they are luxuries. If honorable members desire to use Great Britain by way of a comparison with regard to fiscal policy, they will have to run Australia on a Customs revenue of £100,000. An honorable member asks me to give the figures. I state - and honorable members can look up the figures if they like - that outside the revenue from narcotics and stimulants, Great Britain does not get £1,000,000 out of customs duties. There are 40,000,000 people in England, or ten times the number of the people here. Divide £1,000,000 by ten, and we have £100,000. I can prove it in many other ways, but that is near enough. Honorable members .must concede that they are referring to a country with a free-trade Tariff, and they have conceded that they have to bring into existence in Australia a Tariff that will very heavily shackle its trade. By their own admission, there is n&t;j way out of it, except that which is suggested by the honorable member for the Barrier. If it be true that there is no similarity between Great Britain and Australia - and I emphasize it for the sake of getting it at last into that

nebulous thing which is known as the grey tissue of their brains - if honorable members concede that they have to obtain between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000, and that if they had the British Tariff they would collect only £100,000, the reference is a contrast, and not a comparison. The two things stand in absolute antithesis. Therefore, according to my view, the arguments which have been used by honorable members on the other side of the House have been absolutely thrown away, and any person not tainted with party feeling will see this at once. As there is no similarity in the conditions of the two countries, and as according to their own showing honorable members on the freetrade side are willing to shackle trade to so great an extent, we must not turn for an example to a country where there is no taxation such as that which it is necessary for us to impose. I am not, therefore, going to follow honorable members through their statistics. Some of them were very clever and very ingenious. One honorable member took four hours to prove that before free-trade was established in England 60 years ago, Englishmen travelled about in coracles - little bits of things made of wicker-work and covered over with skins - that the English soldier went to war stained with woad and armed with a spear, and that, furthermore, England had no ships, that Drake and Frobisher fought from rafts, and that there was no commerce, and no trade. One honorable member actually spent two hours in trying to prove that a bus horse lived longer under free-trade than under protection. Although the longevity of a bus horse may be an important matter I do not see that it has much to do with the case we are now considering.

<page>6574</page>

Mr Fowler

- Free-traders are more humane than are protectionists.

Mr EWING

- I remember that the honorable member turned the full force of his scorn upon members on this side of the House, and told us that Lincoln and Bismarck, from the mere fact that they were protectionists, had worked in the interests of monopolists, and had sucked the life blood out of the people. He furthermore stated that the only way in which he could force his arguments into the heads of protectionists generally was by driving them in with an axe. Having heard the honorable member's arguments I concede there may be some truth in the statement. If honorable members will pardon me for a moment or two, in the midst of this long, weary vigil through which we are passing, while listening to this debate, I will tell them one or two things which have struck me. I listened very attentively to what honorable members had to say, and now I have an opportunity of telling them what I think of them. They have occupied two or three weeks in addressing the House, and I think that a two or three minutes' resume of their speeches will not be out of place. All of us have been very much interested in seeing how nations are made, how they have grown, and - how they have progressed. There is one thing that has always been insisted upon by those who have expressed authoritative opinions on the matter, and that is that savage men talk a great deal more than civilized men. We can understand how the savage, on returning from his foray, or from snaring his prey, or from killing his antagonist, goes to the camp fire. Although no one is very much interested, he is very full of his adventures, and there is plenty of room for turgid oratory, and flamboyant talk.

Mr SPEAKER

- I do not think this has much to do with the subject.

Mr EWING

- I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I am not going to make any mistake. I am simply tracing developments from the time the family merged into the tribe, and the tribe consolidated into the nation. There came a time for the discussion of matters affecting the general community which gave a premium to intelligence; those possessed of the best facts, and who were able to reason from cause to effect, were at a premium, and they were the men who eventually won. I do not say that honorable members' speeches ought not to have been delivered, simply because they were destitute of facts or because they were unsound in reasoning, but because men would have to live to be as old as Methuselah in order to justify the length to which some of the speeches have been extended. Have honorable members ever visited a mining field, and seen the vast heaps of apparently useless spoil lying about in the form of tailings, and so on? They have, perhaps, seen these accumulations lie undisturbed until the chemist came along, and by the application of science was able to obtain a few grains of gold out of the huge mass of *avoirdupois*. I think, Mr. Speaker, we ought to make your work as easy as possible, and although I do not attach much importance to the words of honorable members on the other side, I shall endeavour to take a considerate

view of their efforts. If, therefore, we put their four-hour speeches through a sort of concentrating process, I think we might probably get four seconds of consecutive intelligent thought.

An Honorable Member. - The honorable member is too sanguine.

Mr EWING

- I think that is a fair expectation.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The educational, effect has evidently not extended to the honorable member's mind.

<page>6575</page>

Mr EWING

- Honorable members are very much interested apparently in cheapness, and seem to think that if we could give the people cheap barbed wire and cheap molasses that would be all that the nation would require. I would point out, however, that we do not all worship at the shrine of cheapness. The first element of national greatness - -I emphasize this at the risk of reiteration - is the character of the people, and it matters very little what kind of fiscal policy is established, or what the national opportunities are unless the men composing the nation are of a good type. Without this element there is no greatness in front of the nation. The next thing is the character of the soil. If a nation is to become rich, it must be able to wring out of the soil without too much labour what is required for its sustenance. What follows in its natural order is a fiscal policy. Protection is not a principle, nor is freetrade a principle ; they are expedients which may change in character with almost every degree of latitude. When I hear people speaking of eternal principles I wonder whether they understand what the phrase means. The honorable and learned member for Parkes was asked to explain what a principle was, and gave his views on the subject. It is a very difficult matter to explain. There are certain things that are true all the world over, and lying, fraud, and trickery of all kinds, or anything that means a sacrifice of the happiness of another individual to ourselves, means a want of principle. We know that; but what have eternal principles to do with the question of free-trade or protection ? Why, 60 years ago no one had ever heard of free-trade, excepting the smuggler, the freebooter, or the pirate. And how old is the world? The world, as far as we know, has been inhabited by men for thousands of years; history, partly oral tradition of one kind and another, takes us back for 8,000 years, whilst exact history takes us back it may be 3,000 years. Of all that time there have only been about 60 years devoted to this temporary experiment of free-trade ? Will honorable members divert their attention from that solitary instance for one moment, and allow their eyes to rest upon what has happened in all parts of the world 1 What has happened 1 There has been, first, an advance in practical science, and secondly, an awakening of the coloured races. Practical science will place the coloured races in the possession of machinery, and will bring the products of that machinery right to the threshold of Australia. If I may be permitted to make a prophecy, whatever my reputation as a prophet may be worth, I am sure that no textile industry, or such industries as the making of boots, hats, or harness, will be found in Australia in two or three decades, unless under the shelter of a heavy protective Tariff. Honorable members who realize the awakening of the coloured races, and the rapidity with which space is being annihilated by science, must see that what I have described is absolutely certain to occur. I do not . desire to overlay this question of free-trade and protection, but I should like honorable members opposite to be a little more thoughtful in regard to protectionists. In some minds, protection is identified with two great twin sisters - the twin sisters of poverty and crime. You, Mr. Speaker, as a free-trader, will concede what other honorable members will concede anywhere out of political debate, that some of the nations which run neck and neck with England for the manufacturing power of the world - nations which are our compeers in thought and literature, and the relative strength of which can be decided only by the cruel arbitrament of war - are protectionist nations. Notwithstanding the statements which have been made about thick-headed protectionists, into whom it is possible to drive argument only by means of a claymore or a battle-axe, some of the* names which will be handed down to posterity as synonyms for everything that is great, virtuous, and straightforward are the names of protectionists. A truce, therefore, to this patronizing talk. I object to be patronized by men who outside are prepared to concede all these considerations, but who in debate will apparently concede nothing. In New South Wales, unfortunately, a portion of the people are free-traders, but five of the States are protectionist. So far I have not seen any evidence of that criminality which we are presumed to expect amongst protectionist people. Of course, it will be understood that I am speaking only of the Government

side of the House, and of those with whom I am more closely associated. The first charge made against protection is that it destroys primary industries - that if we have protection, there will be failure to recognise the importance of primary industries. A good deal has been said in regard to the two States of Victoria, and New South Wales, and that, perhaps, is pardonable, seeing that some of the other States have already gained a notoriety which entitles them to stand a little while in the background. Tasmania, for instance, returned to this Parliament a gentleman of whom we speak with all reverence. I refer to the right honorable gentleman, Sir Edward Braddon, who, at the Federal Convention, was the originator of the provision known as "the Braddon blot," - which makes it absolutely certain and essential-

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Not the originator - the stepfather.

<page>6576</page>

Mr EWING

- The provision of the Constitution to which I refer is known as the " Braddon blot," and its origin does not very much matter. The right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, was the originator, or is presumed to be the stepfather, of a provision in the Constitution which makes it absolutely certain that an enormous Tariff will have to be levied on the oversea trade of Australia. Then Tasmania produced another gentleman with widely different views, whose name was also Braddon. I cannot imagine the latter to have been the man who originated the " Braddon blot," because after originating that provision, which makes it perfectly clear that Australia must be taxed to the extent of at least £7,500,000 on the oversea trade, he would not be likely to proceed to point out the marvellous beauty of unrestricted intercourse. Is that not fame enough for one State? Then there is a section in the Constitution under which "Western Australia is able for five years to levy duties on Inter-State commerce. Western Australia has seized her opportunity, and I should like the representatives of that State on the Opposition side to observe what is the present position. It is in the power of the Western Australian Parliament to give their people to-morrow cheap butter, cheap cheese, and everything that is required for the working man.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Everything that is made within the borders of Western Australia 1

Mr EWING

- Everything that is made in Australia. In Western Australia they have the opportunity of giving the working man cheap food, cheap clothes, and cheap material in connexion with the whole of the necessities of life.

An Honorable Member - What about cheap sugar?

<page>6577</page>

Mr EWING

- Sugar was admitted free under the old Tariff. Western Australia could, if the local Parliament liked, have an absolutely free Tariff with Eastern Australia. But what has been done? All the necessities of life have been loaded with taxation, duties against the other Commonwealth States having been placed on boots, flour, and everything the working man uses. Yet the representatives of Western Australia make an appeal to this House, on what ground? On the ground that we must not tax the capitalist's machinery. Let those honorable members go back to the working men of Western Australia, and tell them that what the Federal Parliament says is - "Let Western Australia do her duty; let her give her population cheap food; let her take down the barrier between the Eastern States and herself, and then the Federal Parliament will be prepared to consider the question of the capitalist's machinery." Is it thought that the Federal Parliament is composed of idiots, who cannot see exactly what is meant? The representatives of Western Australia can tell the working men of that State that if their own local Parliament will do its duty, the Federal Parliament will do its duty also. Let taxation be taken off the food of the working man in Western Australia; let the representatives of that State give their constituents a free port, or let them give up talking about free-trade. I hear no reply from the representatives of a State which within the last few days has put special taxation on the food of the working man. That, surely, is as much fame as any State desires. It may be the fame which Macaulay says is very close to infamy, but it will stand in the place of fame. I should like to say a word or two now in regard to Victoria and New South Wales. New South Wales has four times the greater area, and four times more sheep than has "Victoria; but with regard to cattle, horned stock and horses, "Victoria has many more than she ought to have in proportion to her size. I do

not say that these facts prove anything, but they indicate that in protectionist Victoria the primary industries have not been neglected. We now come to the question as it affects the farmer. Although the area of New South Wales is four times that of "Victoria, we find that butter, cheese, and all those things by which we can apply a test, are in each instance produced more largely in Victoria. I do not say that proves anything, except that, notwithstanding the fact that Victoria is protectionist, her primary industries have not been neglected. As representatives of farmers in New South Wales, we have been accustomed to hear at every election the same old story of cheap barbed wire, cheap molasses, and so on. What has been the reply made by the farmers of New South Wales? The reply has ever been the same. There has been always a solid phalanx of representatives returned for the farming districts in support of the men who desire to develop their own territory and employ their own countrymen. Look at the result of the federal elections ! Every man who sits on the Government side of the House is purely and simply a farmer's representative; and that would be remarkable, if the charges made by honorable members opposite were correct. What have the farmer of New South Wales always found? AVe know how heavy the New South Wales dairyman's work has been. AVe know that when he brings his goods to market, he finds the Sydney population endeavouring to get food at the cheapest rate from any part of the world. I should like the honorable member for Grampians to bear with me for a moment or two while I say a few words in regard to the position of the farmer and producer. I am afraid that the honorable member does not know the importer. I speak with the fullest sympathy for him. If he knew what the importers were, he would be aware of this - that the little finger of the importer is thicker than the manufacturer's loins. We know it in New South Wales. I presume that honorable members opposite want to make the whole of Australia a freetrade country. Well, what has the farmer found in New South Wales ? He has found, when he got his produce to market, the indent agents of Sydney, and those employed in selling there, getting their goods from all parts of the world, and endeavouring to get them in any way they can, so long as they can break down the price of the farmer's commodity. What has the, sugar-grower found ? He knows that, because of bounties which are paid to the producers of sugar in other countries, it has been made utterly impossible for him to live except under the shelter of a protective duty. What has the timber-getter found? Any man who knows the work of the timber-getter, as I know it, is aware that he has to work during long days and nights, that he has to face perils from flooded torrents, and spend weary hours working by the side of his bullocks in the scrub. He finds, when he gets his timber to market, the Sydney population with their arms outstretched to the foreigner, trying to bring down the price of his labour. What does the wheat-grower find ? After toiling, it may be in the Murray fringe, or some other part of the country, he finds, when he gets his produce to Sydney, the importers with their hands again outstretched, endeavouring to get wheat from whatever source they can obtain it, in order to break down the value of his labour, and bring him to a condition of penury. It is always the same story. The producer finds this great trading Sydney population, with arms outstretched to the alien, and with backs ever turned against their own countrymen. He finds them, and will ever find them, never ready to employ the labour of their own country and develop their own resources. He finds them ever eagerly scanning the sky-line looking for a ship coming over the horizon - a foreign ship, manned by foreign crews, stuffed .with foreign goods, the importation of which will tend to break down the value of every commodity produced in their own State. This is the experience of the farmers and producers in New South. Wales. What is the reply they have made to the free-traders? How do they view the free-trade policy favoured in Sydney? They look upon the free-traders as purveyors of nostrums, just as the ordinary qualified medical man regards the person who purveys " pink pills for pale people." They look upon them as fiscal thugs, who first mislead them, and then destroy them. I do not think that I need examine at any great length the attitude of the farmer towards free-trade. The farmers give their reply every time an election takes place. But I should like now to say a word or two as to the signs of the times. I do not desire to follow honorable members into lengthy speeches with regard to heathen mythology and the tutelary goddesses of long ago, but I wish to deal with, the signs of the times with which we Lave to do. There is, in England a Manchester School of political thought, one of the doctrines of which is. cheapness. Honorable members opposite appear to be all impregnated with the doctrine of the Manchester School, but I may remind them that that is not the view of some of the ablest free-traders in England. I will give the House simply one example. There was recently held in London a Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire. I took the trouble some time ago to write out a portion of what was said at that congress, and I will quote it to the

House.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Where did they sit?

<page>6578</page>

Mr EWING

- They sat in London, in June, 1900. The honorable member for Parkes will recognise that this is not a quotation from the Drapers' Gazette. It is a quotation from the proceedings of the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire. They dealt with the important question of bounties. The bounty has been a device that has done more to shatter freetrade principles than has anything that has happened in modern times. And for this reason. Free-trade is presumed to be the flowing of goods from A to B without interruption; and if B can make them better and cheaper than A, they flow back again without interruption. The result is said to be that the people get the best result with the least labour. That is the theory. Some years ago certain countries gave bounties in connexion with the production of sugar. The result was that sugar was sold in the markets of the world for actually less than the price for which it could be produced. But there was this enigma in connexion with it, that it appeared that the inferior product, beet sugar, would eventually beat the superior product, cane sugar, out of the market. Usually speaking, under free-trade the best man and the best acre would win, but under bounties to-day the acre and the man plus the State Treasury would win. The State Treasury is a disturbing element. At this meeting of the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce, the representative of St. Albans made a remark which I shall quote. It must be remembered that these men were nearly all free-traders. Honorable members opposite may not pay attention to my opinion, but they should listen to the opinions of representative free-traders. This is what this gentleman said ; it is very significant -

We are perfectly prepared to pay a fair and proper price for every commodity which comes to these shores, but we are not prepared to accept any commodity at any price, more particularly if those prices are to affect injuriously the colonies and also the industries of Great Britain.

Honorable members see the force of that argument as far as it affects cheap sugar. The men who agreed with this gentleman, that cheapness is not everything, were representatives of Chambers of Commerce in Liverpool, South of Scotland, Bristol, and Glasgow ; and the resolution was carried by a huge majority.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- What is the resolution ?

Mr EWING

- It was framed in some such words as I have cited. I have read an epitome of the statement.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The honorable member appeared to read part of a speech.

Mr EWING

- This shows that we are on the verge of industrial war in the world. Instead of the nations adopting free-trade, there is every sign that they are going in the opposite direction. Just a word or two more, and then I shall have finished. What is a deadly blow at Australia ?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Protection !

Mr EWING

- But the honorable member must understand, as I have already proved, that we shall have protection under any circumstances. I hope I am not wasting my time; I have endeavoured to show that the honorable member's Tariff must shackle trade just as much as any other Tariff.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Well, I have not appreciated the logic of it.

Mr EWING

- I have described already the honorable member's speech, but I do not think he was present when I did so. Exclusive of narcotics and stimulants, the Commonwealth Tariff on all other articles amounts to £4,500,000 per annum, or £1 5s. 6d. per head of the population. That is the aggregate amount of the Tariff which either party would find it necessary to bring in.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- That is the taxation through the Customs?

Mr EWING

- Yes. Under the Victorian Tariff the taxation levied in the same way amounted to £1 4s. per head of the population, while that of Tasmania was £2 per head.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The honorable member admits that the Commonwealth Tariff taxes the people more than did the protectionist Tariff of Victoria..

Mr EWING

- The Commonwealth Tariff, viewed in that light, is £1 5s. 6d. per head, while the amount raised through the Customs under the Victorian Tariff was equal to £1 4s. per head of the population. But we are leaving out of consideration the one great element in the matter, and that is Inter-State freetrade. I shall deal very briefly with that point in a moment or two. Tasmania has lived with a Tariff on the same articles equal to £2 per head of the population, or 14s. 6d. per head greater than the Federal Tariff. How would she carry on under federation with a Tariff more than 14s. 6d. per head below that which she imposed previously 1 Then the people of Queensland under the former Tariff were taxed to the extent of £1 13s. per head through the Customs, or 7s. 6d. per head more than under the Federal Tariff, while Western Australia was taxed at the rate of £3 per head, or £1 1 4s. 6d. per head more than is proposed by this Government.

Mr Kirwan

- Where did the honorable member obtain his figures ?

Mr EWING

- I will vouch for their accuracy. They are taken from the statistical registers of the States.

<page>6579</page>

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- They are not obtainable.

Mr EWING

- Anything is obtainable if one knows how to go about it.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Anything is available to a Government supporter.

Mr EWING

- Surely the honorable member does not place that interpretation upon my statement? There are certain facts, and it is possible to collect the figures readily enough if one only takes the trouble. Let me go over these figures again. The Federal Tariff is 14s. 6d. per head less than was the Tasmanian Tariff ; that means that much less degradation to Tasmania than the old Tariff of £2 per head would mean, unless New South Wales, as many people in that State anticipate, is going to pay for all. The Tariff proposed by the Federal Government is 7s. 6d. per head less than that formerly raised in Queensland ; £1 14s. 6d. per head less than that raised in Western Australia ; and 4s. 6d. per head less than the South Australian Tariff.

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member is wrong.

Mr EWING

- I think not.

Mr. Bruce Smith. - In making his calculations, has the honorable member had any regard to the small amount which the States other than Victoria and New South Wales contribute to the Commonwealth Tariff ?

Mr EWING

- Yes. I will stand to this statement, for I know it is correct. If honorable members take the trouble to go into the matter they will find that I am not misleading them. The Commonwealth Tariff is less than that raised hitherto in all the States with the exception of Victoria.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The honorable member is taking the average percentages without considering the amount which the States contribute.

Mr EWING

- No; I am not doing so.

Mr Poynton

- What is the South Australian Tariff?

Mr EWING

- I say that the taxation levied through the Customs under the old South Australian Tariff amounted to £1 10s. per head of the population. Of course I am excluding narcotics and stimulants.

Mr Poynton

-What is the total ?

Mr EWING

- I have not with me the calculations inclusive of stimulants and narcotics. I took out the whole figures, and I found that South Australia was paying taxation equal to £1 10s. per head of her population. The honorable member will find that my statement is correct. If that was the state of things in the several States prior to federation, how can they expect to do with less now, unless New South Wales, as presumed by the free-trade party in that State, is to foot the bill 1 New South Wales will pay more than she has been doing. The reason of this may be seen very easily. Land revenue in Victoria is £330,000 per annum ; Tasmania, £70,000 ; Queensland, £590,000; South Australia, £160,000; Western Australia £150,000; and New South Wales, £2,100,000. There is the whole case. So long as New South Wales is able to sell her lands and put the proceeds into current revenue, she is able to do with less taxation. A country travels on its stomach, just as an army is presumed to do. In the future, if New South Wales continues to receive this increase of customs revenue she will be able to pay for her wooden bridges out of other than loan money. She may be able to pay her interest out of legitimate revenue and make a number of other payments of that kind. This will give her an opportunity of doing so. I should esteem honorable members much more if they would be politically honest. I will endeavour to show what I mean by that. The one great idea in New South Wales is that that State is to foot the bill for the Commonwealth. There may be a few exceptions, but when speaking in New South Wales nearly every honorable member from that State sets forth that she is the richest of all the States - which is absolutely correct - and that she will have to pay for the impecunious States.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Nonsense.

Mr Piesse

- That is the whole trouble.

Mr EWING

- Exactly. We hear that statement made on every hand. It was made right through the appeals to the people during the federal campaign. One may hear it at every street corner ; read it in almost every free-trade paper, and hear it asserted by almost every free-trade speaker.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- New South Wales gets back her extra taxation.

<page>6580</page>

Mr EWING

- I will forgive those honorable members all their arguments and unwisdom if in the statements which they make in the future, in regard to the finances of Australia, they point out that in the Constitution Act it is laid down absolutely that each and every man within the Commonwealth shall pay exactly the same amount of taxation - that taxation all over Australia is uniform. If that fact were put clearly before the people of New South Wales - if it were put forward at every meeting and emphasized, that taxation is uniform throughout Australia - it would take the sting out of everything that appears in the Tariff.

An Honorable Member. - What does that prove ?

Mr EWING

- It proves that New South Wales is not, in the euphemistic language employed by some honorable members, being loafed on by the other States. Do honorable members imagine that it would have been possible to get up the agitation now going on in Sydney, unless the people of New South Wales were persuaded that the other States were sucking the blood out of the mother State?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- That question has never been raised.

Mr EWING

- I know the story from beginning to end. The people have been appealed to on that ground, and will be

appealed to again.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The honorable member knows the story, but not the truth.

Mr EWING

- I know the story well. If honorable members would only explain to the people of New South Wales that every individual throughout Australia pays exactly the same taxes ; that the taxation imposed upon a man in New South Wales is not greater than that imposed upon a man in Victoria or Tasmania, we should not have a particle of agitation in that State. I have heard the honorable and learned member for Parkes say that this is a question between New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I said that New South Wales and Victoria would have to pay two-thirds of the Commonwealth revenue, and that therefore it was their percentages that should be considered.

Mr EWING

- The honorable and learned member said it was a question of Tariff between New South Wales and Victoria, and that New South Wales had not a fair show. As a matter of fact, however, it is a question of Tariff between the five protectionist States I have mentioned and New South Wales - a question of five to one.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- But the contributions of the other States are so small.

Mr EWING

- They are all sisters in the Commonwealth, with exactly the same responsibilities as those imposed on New South Wales. Instead of being a case of one against one, it is a question of five States to one. Another statement made by the honorable and learned member for Parkes was that protection means the discouragement of importation, and, therefore, that under a protectionist policy we should get no Customs revenue. That is point No. 1.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I did not say that we should get no Customs revenue.

Mr EWING

- Well, the honorable and learned member said that we should get very little. Point No. 2, which he made, was that this Tariff is a protectionist Tariff Point No. 3 was that under this Tariff we should get about £12,000,000 of revenue.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- If the calculations of the Government were correct.

Mr EWING

- I take the three points advanced by the honorable and learned member. His first was that this Tariff is a protectionist Tariff, his second, that under a protective Tariff, no revenue would be derived, and his third, that the Tariff before the House would yield £12,000,000, which is £3,000,000 more than is required.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I did not say that under protection we should receive no revenue.

Mr EWING

- The honorable and learned member said that under protection we should receive very little revenue. His next point was that this is the Victorian Tariff. The Victorian Tariff and this Tariff, he said, are a sort of x quantity, being equal, but the annual value of the goods that came into Victoria during the last year or two was about £18,000,000.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I said that the difference in value between the oversea imports in 1899, and the oversea imports of 1900 represented £7,000,000.

<page>6581</page>

Mr EWING

- I am not dealing with that point. The imports of Victoria, according to the Government Statistician, represent an annual value of £18,000,000. Of this amount, £6,300,000 worth of goods come from States within the Commonwealth, and yet the honorable and learned member for Parkes says that there is no alteration in the status of Victoria. He takes up a truly remarkable position. I do not pretend to answer his

speech for two reasons - first, because I do not think it would be fair to the House ; and secondly, because I consider that it answers itself. We are told to behold the signs of the times - the handwriting upon the wall. There has been a huge meeting held in Melbourne. Honorable members are told that such a large meeting must have some effect upon every one. It had a very great effect upon me; it caused me to look up the lunacy statistics of Victoria. Melbourne is a city with approximately 500,000 inhabitants, and the leader of the Opposition was about to make a speech. I believe that in any city of the world the leader of the Opposition is entitled to an audience. His qualifications, his abilities, and his powers, will ever entitle him to a good audience. He got one. What does that prove ? The admission was by ticket.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Only to the gallery.

Mr EWING

- The honorable member for South Australia wants to separate the sheep from the goats.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- All the protectionists who were shut out attended the overflow meeting.

Mr EWING

- I have been thinking over the matter very carefully, because the speech of the honorable and learned member for Parkes did not supply me with very much food for thought. I have been thinking whether that meeting was really a sign of the times, because if Beelzebub were advertised to deliver an address in a hall in Melbourne, that building would be filled from floor to ceiling in just the same way.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- And there would be an overflow meeting.

Mr EWING

- Yes. The fact must always be remembered that if a ticket is sent to a man for a dog show he will attend it, because he immediately imagines that he is a person of importance and is entitled to some special consideration. If you want to get a meeting together by all means let tickets be sent out. In order to gain admission to the meeting which was to be addressed by the leader of the Opposition, one required to have a ticket. If one went to see Beelzebub, one would desire a ticket in order to get out. At the present time Sydney is, no doubt, very indignant. A considerable number of men in that city are angry. But we must always remember that the Sydney people were never in favour of the Constitution Bill. Fifty per cent. of the people there fought against it. The present agitation against the Tariff is not a circumstance to the agitation which was raised against the Constitution itself. The present agitation is raised by the same men, who tell the same old story, and make the same unfortunate exhibition. The same old gang are gathered together again, and they tell the same old story. In a great city like Sydney, with 50 per cent. of her people against federation, of course it is easy to make a fuss. Some indent agents are very indignant because they speculated in the wrong thing. What are the scenes we see in Sydney ? Scene No. 1 is that of the importer or storekeeper rushing in and marking up his goods 5, 50, or 100 per cent. higher than they were formerly irrespective of whether those particular goods are on the free list or not. He is so fond of the people that he gives them an opportunity of paying duties which he himself has never paid. If the writing up of the goods in Sydney and various other parts of the Commonwealth happened under any circumstances except those connected with trade, it would be absolutely criminal. Scene No. 2 shows these men rushing out into the streets and crying that they are very sorry for the consumer. They attend meetings in every part of the metropolis. In every tearoom, and every restaurant one hears the raucous voice of the indent agent. It is a perfect babel of foreign tongues. The tongues of all the men who hate Britain like poison, who regard our Country as merely a sojourning place, are heard wagging in every direction. Above it all can be heard the guttural grunt of the kanaka and the babbling jargon of the Chinese. These are the men who form the basis of the meetings which are being held in Sydney. These are the people who are sorry for the Australian workman. The Chinaman, the kanaka, and the foreign indent agent say that Australia has been accustomed to buy cheap labour, but the Federal Parliament will no longer permit of that being done, and, therefore, they are fully in sympathy with the working man.

Mr McDonald

- All the kanaka supporters in Queensland are protectionists.

<page>6582</page>

Mr EWING

- I do not think that the honorable member is in earnest, but even if he were, that fact has nothing to do with the principle involved. I am giving a correct description of the state of things which exists in the metropolis of Sydney. Amongst the free-traders I know there are good, intelligent men, who are suffering, perhaps, from a temporary aberration or hallucination, but who are, nevertheless, good, loyal, and honorable citizens. Their feelings appear to me to be very much those of a man who is fighting the battle of freedom, and who finds himself surrounded by savages, with scalping knives and tomahawks. They know that, although they may demolish the enemy, the time will come when these lovers of cheap labour will destroy them.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order ! The honorable member is departing far from the question before the Chair.

Mr EWING

- In conclusion, I wish to say that from the very first I regarded the question of union as an abiding faith. I always told my constituents in the north - and I stood pretty well alone in this respect for a time - that we should never get a white Australia until it was washed white by a Federal Parliament. I knew that the basis of Australian industry would never rest upon a firm foundation until it was under the control of this Parliament. I am glad to see that the legislation so far shows that I made no mistake. We, native-born Australians, do not regard this continent as a boardinghouse, where a man pays his score and goes along, or peddles a few goods and passes out of the country to enjoy what he has made. We regard it as our home. To my mind, there does not appear to be any better way of showing our devotion to Australia than by endeavouring to develop the resources of our own country, to patronize our own industries, and to give work to our own countrymen.

Mr Fowler

- I wish to make a personal explanation in reply to certain remarks which have just fallen from the honorable member for Richmond. He charged me with having stated in my speech on the motion before the House that in my opinion the only way to deal with protectionists was to use an axe to them. I interjected that the honorable member was wrong in attributing that statement to me, but, notwithstanding my denial, he repeated his remarks, and said that he had heard me use the words. I will read exactly what I said, as reported in Hansard I had referred an 19 ti 2 honorable member to a certain publication, and I went on to say -

The book is quite a recent publication, but the date does not appear, It is not more than two or three years old. I shall be very glad indeed if the honorable member will read it.

Mr Mauger

- I know it very well ; I have read Professor Ely.

<page>6583</page>

Mr Fowler

- I must apologize for asking the honorable member to read it. I forgot for the moment that I was addressing a protectionist whose only means of getting light upon such a subject as this would be by the application of an axe of considerable weight wielded by somebody of considerable vitality.

I think that that quotation indicates that what I said was merely in the nature of a humorous remark, by way of reply to an interjection, and I resent the insinuation that I meant it to apply to protectionists in general. Nothing could be further from my intention.

Mr. HIGGINS(Northern Melbourne).In dealing with the motion before the House, I do not intend to enter into a theoretical discussion of the respective merits of free-trade and protection, for I cannot find that any one proposes free-trade or even an approach to it, or that any one proposes a really protectionist Tariff or anything like it. We have not a long enough free list on the proposed Tariff, and its duties are not high enough, for protection. I regard the Tariff as oppressive, but in its main features necessary in order to meet the requirements of the several States. I regard it as oppressive chiefly because of those duties which the members of the Opposition most favour - revenue duties on tea, coffee, flannelettes, cottons, linens, and other articles, duties which admittedly are burdens, and nothing but burdens. I take up the position which has been adopted by so many others, that we must get -money; and tins money must come from the pockets of the people, because there is nowhere else that we can get it from. To put the blame upon the proper shoulders, the cause of this heavy and burdensome Tariff is the very heavy interest which the States have to pay upon the money which they have borrowed, interest which amounts

to nearly £8,000,000 a year ; while the cause of that heavy interest is the shiftless, thriftless, and selfish policy of borrowing, and pawning the future of Australia to the bond-holders, which has been pursued by the State Ministries for years past. I am sorry that the first Federal Ministry is, in the first session of the first Federal Parliament, proposing to follow their bad lead in this respect by superadding to the six State borrowing machines a seventh borrowing machine on the part of the Commonwealth. If honorable members will help me, I shall be willing to vote against the proposal of the Government to borrow £1,000,000. I think, however, that the Barton Ministry are acting straightforwardly with regard to measures which are of infinitely greater permanent moment to the Australian people, and I should regard it as a distinct disaster if they were ousted, because it would mean delay in the passing of those measures, and probably great risk to their proper enactment. It is significant that those who have crossed from the other side of the chamber to this, to help the Government in the present crisis, are men who are in sympathy with progressive ideas, while those who have left this side of the House to support the motion of want of confidence - and I hope I may say it without offence to personal friends of my own - are men who are least in sympathy, amongst those on this side, with such ideas. Under these circumstances, I have no hesitation in voting against the motion.

Mr CHANTER

- I recognise that the debate has already been prolonged to an undue length, and I shall endeavour to compress my remarks into the shortest time possible. I propose to deal with statistics only in a very small way, but I feel it to be my duty to embrace this opportunity, which is the only one I shall have, to speak to honorable members who are not personally acquainted with me, and do not know the reasons for the principles I hold. I wish also to reply to several of the remarks which have been made by honorable members sitting on the opposite side of the Chamber, and which I have been very sorry to hear. In the first place, I exceedingly deplore the fact that some of those who occupy leading positions on the Opposition side of the Chamber have charged the Prime Minister with breach of confidence, with breach of trust, and with almost every other breach of faith with which they could have charged him. I cannot forget that I was associated with him during the whole of the federal campaign, and that honorable members opposite when they stood on the platform with me told their audiences time after time that federation would sound the death knell of freetrade, so far as New South Wales was concerned, and that the people of that State must be prepared to accept a very high Tariff. The Prime Minister stated at Maitland what the policy of the Government would be. He said that it was impossible to have either an ideal protectionist or an ideal free-trade policy - that there must be a compromise, because revenue was the first consideration. The honorable and learned member for Parkes is not usually unfair ; but last night he manifestly distorted the words of the Prime Minister. As one who has been behind the scenes and before the curtain in regard to the federal movement from the time of its commencement, I say that the Prime Minister has been true to his speeches, and to the speech which he delivered at Maitland, announcing that the policy of the Government would be framed to suit, not the free-traders of Sydney, nor the extreme protectionists of Victoria, but the - requirements of the people of Australia as a whole. That was his position then ; that is his position now. My honorable friends on the other side, with whom I have always been on the most friendly terms, will not attempt to deny that during the late elections to this House they raised the cry of free-trade, and fought for it on every platform. They sent one of the strongest men they could select against myself, and, following the lead of the leader of the Opposition and others, he detailed to the electors of Riverina what a terrible calamity it would be to them personally, and to Australia as a whole, if the Barton Government were allowed to retain the reins of power, because, as he said, they would establish some more match or starch factories. There is not an honorable member on this side who did not have to meet the same kind of opposition. I told the electors of Riverina that I had faith in the Prime Minister that he would keep his pledges. I hold that faith as strongly now as I did then. I told them then--

Mr Conroy

- That it would be a revenue Tariff.

<page>6584</page>

Mr CHANTER

- Nothing of the kind-. I said that the Prime Minister had said that it would have to be a compromise Tariff ; that the duties were so high in Victoria that some of them would have to be lowered, and that the proposal

was to lower them ; that the duties in New South

Wales would have to be increased, and that articles then free would have to be taxed. From my knowledge of the leader of the Opposition, gained during my political experience ranging over nearly twenty years in New South Wales ; from my recollection that in one session alone he was so anxious to obtain control of the Treasury benches that he moved no less than thirteen motions of censure, it is my deliberate opinion that, no matter what Tariff this Government had proposed to the House for its acceptance, it would have been opposed just as virulently as that which he now proposes to condemn.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- And would the honorable member have consented to any Tariff he would have proposed ?

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member knows that on the floor of the Legislative Assembly I did as much as any man could possibly do to prevent the right honorable and learned member from bringing New South Wales into the disastrous position that he did. The honorable member for North Sydney laughs at my statement, but I can recollect the time when he stood on the 1 floor of that House and denounced the financial doings of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr Thomson

- Not only the leader of the Opposition, but all Premiers in New South Wales.

Mr CHANTER

- I can also recollect the honorable and learned member for Parkes and the honorable member for Wentworth doing the same thing. I can recollect all the right honorable gentleman's lieutenants, at the present time, denouncing him.

Mr Thomson

- It was his system of finance.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable and learned member for Parkes was not in the House at the time.

Mr CHANTER

- He was not in the House at that particular time, but he was there during the time that the leader of the Opposition was Premier, and my honorable friend Postmaster-General. This union has been brought about with the full knowledge that what is called free-trade - but which I prefer to term foreign trade - would be impossible ; there was to be internal free-trade within the Commonwealth, and a reasonable protection for its industries and manufactures by the imposition of customs duties on certain imports. The Treasurer, the Prime Minister, and the Minister for Trade and Customs tell us that with the advice of the most experienced men they can gather from the States - advice far better, I venture to say, than any member of the House can offer without the knowledge of these experts - they have arrived at the conclusion that a certain amount of revenue must be obtained to meet the requirements of the States ; and because in obtaining that amount, New South Wales is to get more than it is said she wants - those in power, however, do not say that she is to get more than she wants - there is an attempt to displace the Government. For what purpose ? To reduce the amount of revenue raised, and thus, at once, to put at least three States out of the six into an absolutely insolvent position, or force them to levy taxes on their people, which we have no right to do. We must be fair to the compact we have made, and we should stand here not as members for a State, but as members for Australia, who have entered into an honorable compact to deal with every State in a just, liberal, and honest spirit. That can be done in no other way than that which is proposed. Of course the Tariff as a whole is not acceptable. Did honorable members ever see a Tariff which was acceptable? I have no recollection of any Tariff being proposed which was acceptable to the people as a whole. Tom objects to the Tariff because it affects his interests ; Dick objects to it because it affects his interests ; and Harry objects to it because it affects his interests. The only advice given to the Minister for Trade and Customs is practically - "Leave me alone, and tax the other fellow." We are not here for that purpose. We are here to place the burdens, if they are burdens, in a manner in which they can be beneficial, and not prejudicial to the people as a whole. One statement which the Prime Minister made at Maitland - and on which some members of the Opposition base their arguments - was that the policy of the Government would be to obtain revenue without destruction. Any schoolboy understands what that meant - that the revenue was to be obtained in the best manner possible, but in a manner which would have no destructive effect on the industries which had been

brought into existence by the laws of the States.

<page>6585</page>

Mr CONROY

- I wish that had' been carried out.

Mr CHANTER

- It was put as clearly as possible. Amongst my papers, I have the report of the Prime Minister's speech, in which he deliberately declared at Maitland that that was to be the policy of the Government, and no amount of distortion can get away from the fact that since that time - I think the Minister for Trade and Customs and the Attorney-General were on the platform - he has repeated that statement in Melbourne, Adelaide, and other places. There is no one who wishes to be honest and straightforward but knows exactly what the intentions of the Government were, but must declare, if he wishes to be fair in politics, that they are honestly trying to keep the pledges then made. My principal object in rising was not to deliver an elaborate address on the principles of foreign trade as against Australian trade, but to reply to certain speakers, not by quotations from Mulhall, Coghlan, or others, but from my own experience in Australia, in which I was born and bred, and have all my interests. I claim to know, perhaps, as much about the agricultural community as do many honorable members,, not from a theoretical, but from a practical point of view. My first farming experience was obtained in Victoria. When I came here with my parents from Adelaide my father purchased a large area of land in the Kyneton district of this State. It is a very fertile district, and I then got a practical experience of farming which I have retained, because I have been connected with the industry personally and in connexion with my business ever since. I am now going to speak of what the Victorian policy has done for the State of Victoria, and of what the policy of New South Wales has not done for the State of New South Wales. Living, as I do, on the border of the two States, and having business with, and holding the confidences, financial and otherwise, of many interested in agricultural pursuits on both sides of the River Murray, I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the policy of Victoria has had the effect of advancing the Victorian agriculturist far beyond his fellow on the other side of the Murray. It has enhanced the value of Iris land ; it has given him a market for his produce ; it has secured his home market in every possible way, and when he has readied the stage at which he has been able to fully supply his own market, then the protecting hand of the State of Victoria has been stretched out to find a market for him wherever one is to be found in the world-.

Mr Conroy

- Yet 130,000 people have gone away from the State in ten years.

Mr CHANTER

- I have heard that statement time after time.

Mr Conroy

- Is it true ?

<page>6586</page>

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable and learned member, with whom I hope to continue on the best of terms, only repeats that because he has heard it. I am not going into figures, but I might retaliate by asking what drove the people away from New South Wales ? How is it that the policy of New South Wales has not been such as to keep the best of her people in that State 1 The fact remains that they had to go away from New South Wales, and to petition the Home authorities to allow them to act for themselves that they might adopt the policy which best suited them. From that moment Victoria began to advance, and New South Wales began to stand still. I do not desire to repeat what has been said by others any more than I can possibly help, but New. South Wales would not be in half as good a position as she is in at the present time, had it not been for the Victorian energy, grit, and capital, which has developed her territory. The impetus given to agriculture by the Victorian policy was marvellous. Those of us who are old enough to know the times when population here became denser than at any other time, will remember that there was one great attraction, an attraction which it is admitted is always potent, and that is the existence of gold. Gold was not found here first, as we know that New South Wales had had her gold-fields, but there is no doubt that the gold-fields of Victoria did attract a very large number of people from the other States and from other parts of the world. Victorian politicians were then wise enough to know that the gold-fields of the State could not absorb the whole of the population that was coming in, and that they must make provision for

the outflow from the mines so that the people might be occupied in some kind of agricultural or industrial pursuit. The State of Victoria laid itself out at once to secure and retain a class of population which is beneficial to any State. Certain land laws were passed - and here, as has been said by other speakers, let me say that protection will not do everything. No one has ever claimed that it would.

Protection is simply one link in the chain which had to be forged. The first question the State had to consider was what to do with the people in order to retain them, and Victoria did what New South Wales has not done. The first thing said to the miners and others who were here was that they might go upon the land, and they would get it on deferred payment without any charge for interest. They were told also that they would be helped to grow produce on it for the requirements of the State. In New South Wales that was not done. In that State they started by charging the same price for then- land, but they charged the agriculturist 5 per cent, interest on the principal. In Victoria that was never done. After production had reached a certain stage, and especially in the case of the butter industry, other steps were taken - and I cannot help specially referring to this matter, because the honorable member for Illawarra and other honorable members have spoken of it. If the policy adopted in New South Wales is the correct one, and has been as beneficial as it has been claimed to be, how is it that the great butter industry has not reached the importance in that State that it has reached in the State of Victoria? I can recollect when the latest and most modern machinery was brought into New South Wales - into the district of the honorable member for Illawarra - in connexion with this industry. It was imported at a large cost, but even then with the semi-provincial idea of supplying only the requirements of the South Coast district of New South Wales. I can recollect Victorian politicians travelling over to Sydney with me and going into the South Coast district to inspect this machinery. Coming back here with the knowledge obtained, they started at once to develop the butter industry ; but they started here with the assistance of the State, which offered bonuses for the development and export of this produce, which, I have no hesitation in saying, rapidly placed the State of Victoria in the front rank so far as this particular class of production is concerned. That is what was done under a protective policy. There is also another link in the chain for the benefit of the farmer, who, it is said, is going to be ruined under this Tariff- I shall show directly how he will be ruined. - In Victoria the State said to him, " We shall help you in every way we possibly can. We recognise that you are going away out of the cities and away from the domestic and other advantages which are possible only in city life. We are going to give you free schools, and we shall educate your children without any cost whatever to you." New South Wales has not done that, and at this moment in the ordinary public schools of that State people are being charged 3d. per head and a maximum of 1s. per week for the education of their children. In regard to roads, bridges, railways, and such matters, let honorable members go from one end of this State to the other, and what will they find ? They will find railway stations everywhere - not little boxes such as exist in the agricultural districts of New South Wales, but commodious stations for passengers, large sheds for the accommodation of produce, and large subsidiary sheds outside the platforms. We cannot find them in New South Wales.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member is slandering his own State.

Mr CHANTER

- I am stating here what I have endeavoured during the last eighteen or twenty years to get New South Wales to do. I have endeavoured to induce my own State, the State which I love and in which I have a very great deal to be thankful for, to embrace a policy different altogether from that which she has embraced ; to induce her to stop selling her land and putting the proceeds into revenue ; to induce her to stop that wasteful criminal procedure she has adopted, which is leaving a burden as a heritage for our children which we should be manly enough to bear ourselves.

Mr Kennedy

- The honorable member could not get them to do it.

<page>6587</page>

Mr CHANTER

- No. The honorable member has reminded me of it, and as comparisons have been made between the two States, I must deal with the matter. When I went into that State there were seven individuals, the Minister for Home Affairs and myself amongst the number, who had the courage to declare that the best policy for New South Wales was a policy which would protect her own people, and not a policy for

protecting the foreigner, against her own people. Gradually the feeling grew, and I will now take the opportunity of replying to the statement made by the leader of the Opposition. The members of the labour party who come from

New South Wales will bear me out when I say that the people of that State as a whole, when appealed to at the last three elections, including the one which has just taken place, returned a majority of protectionists as against foreign traders.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What nonsense !

Mr CHANTER

- I make a statement that can be easily proved. What defeated the protectionist majority in the House after the first of these elections! The honorable member for Parramatta was then the leader of the labour party in New South Wales, and controlled that party to the number of 31. The leader of the Opposition offered the honorable member a portfolio, and the labour party became allied with the foreign -traders, who were enabled to hold the reins - of power although the people of New South Wales had spoken in favour of protection :as against foreign trade.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is absolutely inaccurate, and the honorable member knows it!

Mr CHANTER

- I repeat the statement in the presence of other honorable members here who know the facts. After that election, when a Ministry was formed by the leader of the Opposition, a portfolio was offered to, and accepted by, the honorable member for Parramatta, who was leading the labour party of 21 members in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- But the honorable member for Parramatta has been a consistent free-trader.

Mr CHANTER

- If the honorable member for South Sydney will take the trouble to look up the Sydney Morning Herald, he will find one of the strongest protectionist letters ever written over the name of the honorable member for Parra- matta.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is an - I was going to say, absolute fabrication.

Mr Chapman

- It is quite true, and I shall quote the letter presently.

Mr CHANTER

- The letter has already been quoted. It was written before the honorable member became Postmaster-General of New South Wales.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The letter was written years before I entered political life, and the honorable member knows it.

Mr CHANTER

- I do not wish to be misunderstood. I say again that the letter was written by the honorable member, and published in the SydneyMorningHerald, before he was leader of the labour party in New South Wales, and before he accepted a portfolio in the Ministry formed by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member say that I wrote that letter after I had entered political life ?

Mr SPEAKER

- Order ! If the honorable member for Parramatta considers himself misrepresented, he will have an opportunity of making an explanation, but he must not interject.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It is very unfair to misrepresent an honorable member.

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member for Macquarie had better keep quiet, or I shall have something to say about him. At the two elections held in New South Wales prior to the election which recently took place - at which the fiscal question was supposed to have been sunk, but was not - the people of New South Wales were appealed to as a whole, apart from the labour party, which sunk the fiscal question, and they returned a

majority of protectionists to the House. They also recorded a larger number of votes for protection than for free-trade. Therefore, the claim of the leader of the Opposition that he came back to Parliament with a mandate from the people to establish free-trade was not correct.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- He made an appeal to the country, and was returned to power again.

Mr CHANTER

- The leader of the Opposition made an appeal to the country, and so did the honorable member for Macquarie, and no one knows better than the honorable member for Macquarie that there are very many side issues which influence elections. The honorable member knows very well that he got in on one of those side issues. The Bathurst electorate, which had been represented by the honorable member, was noted for the part it took in the federal movement, and on a subsequent occasion the people voted against the honorable member and rejected him.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- They reversed their decision the next time - they may have been humbugged by a few people like the honorable member.

<page>6588</page>

Mr CHANTER

- They might have been humbugged by me for a few minutes, but the honorable member can lay claim to having humbugged people all his life. No one has been louder in advancing the supposed claims of the farmers to consideration than the honorable member for Parramatta, but the district he represents is more of a mining than a farming district. The man who grows a bit of hay, or who goes into his paddock and cuts a bit of lucerne, calls himself a farmer, but the real farmers - the wheat growers - are represented in the largest numbers in my own constituency all along the Murray.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What nonsense!

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member may say it is nonsense, but he knows that he is stating what is untrue.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order ! The honorable member must withdraw that expression.

Mr CHANTER

- I withdraw, Mr. Speaker, and am sorry that I have been led by these interjections into a breach of the rules of debate.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I have some of the best farmers in New South Wales in my district.

Mr CHANTER

- I have been through the honorable member's district, and I have failed to see the farmers. However, if it is more satisfactory to them, I will concede that my honorable friends do know something about farming. They have told this House of the terrible burden the farmer is going to bear, and the leader of the Opposition and others have complained of the disabilities under which the farmers are to be placed by this Tariff. Now if any one has been humbugging the farmers, I am afraid the accusation must be made against the honorable members to whom I am referring. Where are their burdens? What is the first consideration to the farmer ? His first concern is to obtain land, and when he has done that he has to put up his fences. For this purpose he requires certain implements - a pick and shovel and crowbar - with which to dig his post holes. All these articles are on the free list. When he has put his posts in the ground he requires fencing wire, and this also is on the free list.

Mr Poynton

- Not all of it.

Mr CHANTER

- All but barbed wire. How many farmers use barbed wire?

Mr Poynton

- Thousands of tons are used in the State of South Australia.

Mr CHANTER

- That may be; but does one farmer out of a hundred use barbed wire ? I know many farmers who have

very strong objections to barbed wire, because it has injured some of their stock.

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member wants to go into the north of South Australia in order to see the extent to which barbed wire is used.

Mr CHANTER

- Even supposing that farmers do use barbed wire, they will not be placed under any handicap, because I am glad to say that barbed wire is already manufactured in Australia.

Mr Poynton

- At £2 15s. per ton more than it is sold for in New South Wales.

Mr CHANTER

- That opens up another question altogether, and if the honorable member will allow me to proceed I hope to be able to prove even to him that the mere fact of placing a duty on an article does not increase its price. The price may be increased for the moment, until internal production can be brought about, but, so surely as internal production is carried on, so surely will the price go down, not only below the amount of the duty, but below what it was before the duty was imposed. I can recollect the time when the machinery used in farming consisted of a sickle, a scythe, what was called an "American cradle," and implements of that kind. I saw the first reaping machine, known as the "Windmill," which was imported, and I know that after Victoria adopted the policy of protection, establishments were started at Bendigo, Ballarat, Kyneton, and other places, until the farmer had Australian manufacturers to provide machinery at half the price which had been previously charged. That development has gone on, and it is of no use honorable members endeavouring to deny the experience of history. Every farmer, who is honest and straightforward, must admit that he purchases his machinery in Australia because it is cheaper and better than that which he was able to obtain prior to the imposition of protective duties.

Mr Poynton

- A farmer does not live on machinery only.

<page>6589</page>

Mr CHANTER

- I know that the farmer does not live on machinery only, but there are some honorable members in the House who do seem to live on "machinery." They live in a "factory" where figures are worked up with a view to deceive people outside, and especially with a view to deceive the farmers. That kind of machinery we are used to, and I am now laying some facts before those who, perhaps, have not had practical experience in the farming industry. Those who have had such experience know which is the best policy, but I do not want people who are now going on the land to be led away from their best interests. I have dealt with the alleged burden which is on the farmer when he fences his land. I have shown that the posts, the wire, and the tools which he uses bear no duty, and that consequently he suffers no burden. Having enclosed his land, the farmer has to build his house, and here again he uses Australian material in the shape of timber. The only things on which he is called upon to pay duty are the nails with which he fastens his boards together.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- There must be galvanized iron for the roof, and there must also be doors and windows.

Mr CHANTER

- Galvanized iron is being made in Australia at present, and I am satisfied that under this Tariff ironworks will in a short time be established not only in New South Wales, but elsewhere.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Then the farmer has to wait for his roof until a factory is established.

Mr CHANTER

- I am not so foolish as to say that until factories are created the farmer has not to pay a somewhat increased price, but that is only for a short period of time. Mr. Sandford, the owner of the ironworks at Eskbank, in the Parramatta electorate, has written showing what the policy of protection is going to do for the people of Australia in connexion with corrugated iron for roofing and iron for other purposes. After the farmer has built his house, in connexion with which I claim he bears no burdens, because the doors--

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Doors pay a duty of 7s. 6d. each.

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member does not seem to be able to get away from the idea that the farmer rushes out and buys nothing but what is imported. If the farmer could not get his material in Australia at reasonable prices I could understand his being forced to buy imported articles. But cannot the farmer buy Australian doors and windows, which are manufactured by his fellow-countrymen ? That is what the farmer does, and he is proud and patriotic enough to do so in preference to spending the money abroad and getting no benefit in return.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Is not Oregon timber necessary ?

Mr CHANTER

- In my own electorate we have pine, which is superior to Oregon timber, and is preferred for building purposes. A house built of Oregon in the Riverina, or the northern part of Victoria, would not last, because the white ants would soon have it down to the ground, whereas Murray pine, which is provided by nature in abundance and is used for building purposes, is impervious to the attacks of ants.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Are doors and windows made of that pine ?

Mr CHANTER

- They can be.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Are they made of it?

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member seems to think that a farmer is an individual who can sit down at his desk and sign cheques to any amount for the purpose of building a mansion.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The farmer will require a cheque-book in order to build, under this Tariff.

<page>6590</page>

Mr CHANTER

- The Tariff is giving the New South Wales farmer a rapidly increased banking account, as I shall show honorable members. In the matter of cultivation, what are the tools used by the farmer ? He requires ploughs, harrows and machinery of that description, and for not one of the implements needed for modern farming is it necessary to go outside the Commonwealth. Ploughs, harrows, and machinery of the very best description, are already manufactured in Australia at a price which is cheaper than that the farmer would otherwise have to pay for imported articles. The first stripping machine was invented in my native State of South Australia. . That invention has been followed up by others, and such progress has been made that the farmer can now sit on his combined winnowed and harvester, driving his own horses, and leaving behind him a trail of bags of wheat ready to cart to the market. The machines used in the wheat growing districts are not, and never have been, imported, and the Government recognise the fact that to impose a duty in such a case would be absurd. The same remark applies to the farmer's other implements. For putting in or taking off his crop, he requires no imported machinery ; and here let me state a fact to my honorable friends from New South Wales, who claim to know a great deal about the farmer. In New South Wales there was an open market for machinery, as for everything else, and American, English, German, and other machinery was available. Why is it that when the farmer had the opportunity of getting these goods at the cheap rates which freedom from duty is said to create, he did not do so, but preferred, to purchase his machinery in Victoria and South Australia - the very machinery that the farmer is using in New South Wales at the present moment. Is that not the best proof I can give that Australian machinery is quite as cheap as imported machinery, and that the former- is the better adapted for- work in Australia? Manufacturers in other parts of the world make machines for the purpose of sale, but the manufacturers in Australia make machinery for the dual purpose of sale and of giving honest value for the money paid. In Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, and throughout the farming districts repairs to agricultural machinery can be promptly attended to, men being sent round for that purpose. " Mr. Wilks. - That was done by the Clyde Engineering Works in New South Wales.

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member must know that £300,000 was absolutely sunk in those works. The firm of

Hudson Bros, was known and well respected in New South Wales, and had one of the largest plants in that State. Capital to the amount of £300,000 was sunk in their works. What was the result ? Under the free-trade policy of New South Wales the firm was ruined, the proprietors and shareholders lost the money they had invested, and the place was sold not very long since for £20,000.

Mr Wilks

- It is still going, stronger than ever.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Mr. Hudson is one of the greatest free-traders in New South Wales.

Mr Wilks

- The firm employs 800 men.

Mr CHANTER

- When the farmer has got through his fencing and building operations, and has put in his crop and taken it off, he takes the grain to the miller. What miller ? Not the miller we hear so much of, whose works are in England. We have it drilled into our ears that the price which the farmer gets is the price ruling in Mark-lane. But in Victoria the farmer has had millers competing for his grain, with the advantage of selling it to whoever would give the highest price for it. He has not had that advantage in New South Wales. He never has had it in New South Wales, until this Tariff was imposed, and has never obtained anything like the price that has been obtained by his brethren in Victoria and in South Australia for their wheat. That is an undeniable fact, which can be proved from the columns of the Argus. When the farmer has harvested his grain - I am speaking more particularly of the wheat farmer - he puts it into - what ? He puts it into corn-sacks, of course. Let honorable members look at the Tariff. There is no duty on corn-sacks.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Marvellous !

Mr CHANTER

- I intend it to be a revelation to honorable members and others, because the farmers of this country are told that they are going to be taxed off the face of the earth. I am showing, as clearly as possible, that nearly everything that the farmer requires - with the exception of a few articles, such as tea, cocoa, and similar things, the duties upon which are revenue duties - is not taxed. He does not import the articles, and, consequently, he does not pay the duty.

Mr A Paterson

- What about boots ?

<page>6591</page>

Mr CHANTER

- I have something here from New South Wales about boots, and I will come to that directly. Some farmers also engage in dairying. The cream separator of the farmer is not at present manufactured in Australia. It is on the free list. The reaper and binder is on the free list, if the farmer uses that implement; but it is not largely used, except in the colder districts. It is seldom used in the wheat districts. So that nearly everything that can be done for the farmer has been done for him. Now, when I had the honour of speaking in this House upon the address in reply, I quoted certain prices from the Argus. I showed then that under the free-trade policy of New South Wales the farmer was getting less for his produce than were the farmers of Victoria and South Australia. My quotations were taken from the Argus of the 30th May. They gave the price of wheat in Victoria as at 2s. 10d. a bushel, whilst the price in New South Wales was 2s. 7¹/₂d. The price of bran in Victoria was 1 ld., in New South Wales 8¹/₂d. The price of pollard in Victoria was 11 1/2 d., in New South - Wales 8¹/₂d. Flour was £6 Ds. a ton in each case. Potatoes were £3 15s. a ton in Victoria, and £3 10s. in New South "Wales. In every case, with the exception of flour which was exactly equal in price in the two States, the New South Wales agriculturist was getting a price a long way below that received by his brethren in Victoria and South Australia. I asked the reason why the prices differed so much. The Argus dealt with my argument, but no sufficient answer was given to the question I then put. It has been asserted, and repeated, and reiterated by one after another of the speakers on the opposition side of the House that protection can do nothing for the farmer in Australia, because he has reached the condition in which he has to compete in the markets of the world.

Mr Wilks

- That has been said from the Ministerial side also.

Mr CHANTER

- Then I respectfully differ from honorable members opposite as well as from those who have used the same argument on this side. Experience teaches wisdom. This Tariff was laid upon the table, and came into force on the 8th instant. If there was nothing in the contention which I made on the 30th May in regard to the advantage of protection to the agricultural producer in Australia, will honorable members opposite tell me why, immediately the Tariff was imposed - I will use that term - and the door was locked in New South Wales against the importation of foreign produce, prices went up, and are now, for the first time, on a level with the prices ruling in Victoria and South Australia ?

Mr Wilks

- Is that a benefit generally ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Protection does make things dearer, then ?

Mr CHANTER

- I have shown that before the Tariff was imposed the farmer in New South Wales got less for his bi'an, his pollard, and his potatoes than the farmer in Victoria. The ring of importers and others put the flour up to the same price, however, and the consumer had to pay it although the farmer received less. I have taken the trouble to look at some more recent quotations from the same authority - the Argus.

Mr Wilks

- The honorable member could not get a better.

<page>6592</page>

Mr CHANTER

- I am glad to hear it. On the 15th of this month the Tariff was in existence, and the door was closed in New

South Wales against these importations. Wheat has been practically the same in Victoria as when I quoted its price on the 30th May. The price then was 2s. 7½d. in New South Wales. But since that time in New South Wales it has gone up to 3s. There is a jump straight away from 2s. 7½d. to 3s. since the Tariff has closed the door against foreign competition, which the farmer had previously to deal with. Bran is now 8½d. in Victoria, and 8¼d. in New South Wales. The price of pollard is 9d. in each State. Flour is £6 7s. a ton in New South Wales and £6 15s. in Victoria. Potatoes were £7 per ton in Victoria and £8 in New South Wales. That, as I say, was on the 15th of the month. On the 24th of this month wheat was 2s. 10½d. in Victoria and 3s. in New South Wales. Bran was not quoted in one State. Pollard was 9½d. in each case. Flour was £6 7s. 6d. in Victoria and £6 15s. in New South Wales. Potatoes were £7 in Victoria and £7 to £8 in New South Wales. Practically the same figures apply to the 29th of this month - only yesterday. There is no getting away from these facts and arguments. For the first time - with one exception, and that is when the Dibbs Tariff was imposed - the farmer of New South Wales has the same protection as the farmer of Victoria and of South Australia against outside competition. Under the old free-trade system he had always to lose, while the importer gained. Under this Tariff the farmer can save 1s. on every bag of wheat that he grows, and that is a large consideration. He can save in other directions also. There is no denying these facts. They show a benefit for the farmer right through. It is said in this connexion that we cannot import what the farmer produces. I am sorry for those people who make such assertions without any warrant. I have seen great ocean steamers, laden with wheat from California, berth alongside the mill of one of the largest millers dealing in wheat in Sydney, and I have had invoices placed before me, showing that the charge for the carriage of the wheat from California to Sydney was 10s. per ton. I have seen that for myself again and again, and I have deplored it greatly. The farmers in the district which I have the honour to represent, produce a very large quantity of wheat, but it would cost them more than twice that amount to convey it by rail to Sydney. Why have these prices increased ? I can give the reason. With the outside markets open under free-trade to the millers and others of New South Wales, they were able to say to a local farmer - " I will give you so much for your wheat." The farmer might reply - " They are getting more than that in Victoria ; " but the miller knew that under the old order of things the farmer could not sell his wheat in Victoria, South Australia, or any other State in the Commonwealth because of the barriers of protection. Now that those barriers have been broken down, the miller in New South Wales realizes that the local farmer can send his wheat to Victoria, or to any other part of Australia,

and he has to buy it himself or lose it altogether. I have seen purchases made in New South Wales by firm which you, Mr. Speaker, must know better than I do. I have known 30,000 bags of wheat to be stacked at one station in my own electorate for carriage to Sydney by a railway, about twenty miles of which was made practically to enable the farmers to convey their produce to the New South Wales capital, and I have seen Darling and Sons' representatives buy the whole stack and convey it to Adelaide. They cannot do that now. The local miller was careless then. It was a matter of indifference to him whether Darling and Sons or any other firm purchased grain grown in New South Wales, because he knew that he could obtain his wheat from California, and that the freightage would be very low.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Pauper labour.

Mr CHANTER

- Under this Tariff, however, he will not be able to obtain it from outside sources without payment of a duty, and therefore he has to look to the local producer. The honorable member for Parramatta should not try to drag me off the track by interjecting in regard to pauper labour.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member is putting forward a splendid free-trade argument.

Mr CHANTER

- Then I present it to the honorable member for his acceptance. What I have proved is that under freetrade the farmer in New South Wales has been robbed, but that already under the operation of this Tariff he is getting his just dues, and is being placed on the same level as his brother in other parts of the Commonwealth. This Tariff compels the millers and shippers in New South Wales to satisfy their requirements by purchasing from the local farmers or from farmers in some other part of Australia. They will no longer be allowed to break down the farmers' home market by immensely large importations of produce from other parts of the world. I am going to keep my promise to refrain as far as possible from reading statistics, but there is one quotation which I find it necessary to give. I made a statement the other night that agriculture in New South Wales was decreasing, under the conditions which had existed hitherto. That assertion was denied. I desire to inform the House that my authority for the statement is the Age newspaper. The following telegram from Sydney appeared in its issue of the 23 rd instant - The Government Statistician, Mr. T. A. Coghlan, has completed his estimate of the area under cultivation in the State, as well as the area under wheat for the present season. As regards wheat, it would appear that the total area sown amounts to 1,776,000 acres, which is a decrease of about 86,750 acres on the area of the previous year. The total area under crops is estimated at 2,363,517 acres, as compared with 2,445,564 acres last year, showing a decline of about 82,000 acres.

The Age is a well-known Victorian journal.

Mr Wilks

- I had never heard of it before. .

<page>6593</page>

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member will hear a great deal more of it. It is a journal which has done a very great amount of good for 'Victoria. It has stood by the agriculturist, the artisan, and the mechanic, and if there had been an Age newspaper in New South Wales. we should have had an Australian policy there ten or fifteen years ago. I would ask those honorable members who have given consideration to something more than the theoretical aspect of the question, to look at the value of the home market to the farmers. Honorable members of the Opposition appear to think only of the external trade. They attach no value whatever to an internal trade within the boundaries of a State or the Commonwealth as the case may be. What is the advantage of the home market to the farmer 1 It enables the farmer who grows wheat, oats, barley, or any other produce, to go to the market created for him at his own door. The manufacturers assist it by providing more mouths for him to fill, and as a result he is not compelled to accept any price for his produce that is offered to him. If the price is not satisfactory, he is able to hold back until he can obtain a legitimate one. If he has to depend entirely upon Mark-lane or any other outside market, his position is changed. He is not able to convey his wheat in his own drays to those markets. That work is handed over to some person who buys for speculative purposes, and who is within the ring and knows -what risk he has to take in regard to losses and insurances. The farmer in Australia knows very well that

the home market is much better for him than the external one. He can control the home, but he cannot control the external market. That is controlled and will continue to be controlled by rings. But while a home market is secured for him under the Federal Tariff, he is not deprived of the outside markets for his surplus. He is not deprived of his right to sell in Mark-lane to the extent even of one bag of grain. Why do they purchase our wheat or wool there? Is it to please the Australian farmer? Certainly not. They purchase it because they cannot produce it themselves, and are therefore compelled to buy it. Under the protection which the farmers of the Commonwealth are about to receive at our hands, they will be able to enjoy a home market - just as those in Victoria have done - and to place their surplus produce on the markets of the world, where it will be sold at whatever price shippers, agents, or speculators choose to give. The farmer wants to enlarge his home market still further. The larger it is the better it will be for him, but it cannot be large "unless we have a strong industrial life within the Commonwealth to give the necessary impetus. I have shown that industrial life increases the home consumption. I have said also that a protectionist Tariff does not interfere in any way with the output of the farmer or the squatter. I have said that the imposition of duties - perhaps only for the time being - upon machinery which the farmer uses will bring into life local industrial agencies, which will produce the implements that he requires. In that way a very natural competition will be created between the local producer and the importer, with the result that the farmer will be able to obtain his implements cheaper than he has been able to do. Thus the home policy is best for the farmer. The same remark is applicable to the squatter. How is the squatter injured? I have a large number of squatters in my electorate.

Mr Wilks

- So have I

<page>6594</page>

Mr CHANTER

- Yes; but those in the honorable member's district are domain squatters. This Tariff has given to the farmers and squatters whom I have the honour to represent a Christmas box, or New Year's gift, which will prove of lasting benefit to them. Time after time they pleaded with the New South Wales Parliament to give them railway communication so that they might be enabled to get their produce down to the nearest seaport. But their pleadings were unheeded. To the discredit of the politicians of that State, the policy of New South Wales has consistently been to prevent the extension of railway communication to places near to the Victorian border. Why? Because New South Wales feared that such extensions would have the effect of diverting trade from that State to Victoria. The policy of Victoria has rightly been to impose protective duties in favour of her own people. Hitherto the New South Wales farmer has been handicapped on the one hand by the speculators and millers in that State, and on the other hand by the imposition of a duty of 2s. a bushel upon his wheat, of 30s. per head upon his cattle, and of 2s. per head upon his sheep. This Tariff, however, has placed the Riverina farmer in such a position that for the first time in his life he feels that he is an Australian. He can bring into the markets of Australia his wheat, his cattle, and his sheep, and share those markets with his brethren. This Tariff will put into his pockets hundreds and thousands of pounds of which the policy of New South Wales has hitherto deprived him, besides in many instances utterly ruining him. These are facts that no one can deny, because they are historical. Honorable members have heard a good deal about the mining industry. I do not pretend to have any intimate knowledge of the miner from a practical standpoint. But I do know that mining, even to those engaged in it, is not a pleasurable occupation. The father of a family has, perhaps, been brought up to it because there was no other means open to him for obtaining a livelihood. He takes his life in his hands daily, until he becomes so inured to it that he grows utterly callous so far as his own personal safety is concerned. But he has sons to consider, and he wishes to prevent them from adopting the avocation which he himself follows. He, therefore, desires to see an industrial life created in which they can find employment.

Mr Mahon

- Of what sort of miner is the honorable member speaking?

Mr CHANTER

- Of any sort of miner.

Mr Mahon

- Ninety-nine per cent. of the miners in Western Australia are freetraders.

Mr CHANTER

- I am speaking of the value of a protected home industry to the miner. We cannot all be miners, and we do not wish to be. If the extreme contention of honorable members upon the opposite side of the House were correct, I should say unhesitatingly - " Give them their way. Give them the opportunity of making this Tariff so low that it will destroy the industries which are in existence, and which are furnishing employment to the rising generation." But what would be the inevitable result? If we throw those who are engaged in these industries out of employment they will be forced to enter the primary industries. They will become boundary riders on stations, or may perhaps be compelled to work in our mines. If we want some other walk of life in which their energies can be profitably employed we must create an industrial life. We cannot create that industrial life under the conditions which have been operating in New South Wales. We must, therefore, consider the advantages of this Tariff to every class of the community, including the miner. I know something of the district which is represented by the honorable and learned member for Bendigo, and I can appeal to him to confirm my statement, that of so much value did a protectionist policy prove to the miners of Victoria that a very large number of them found it more profitable to take up land and become farmers than to continue in their former avocation. Nearly the whole of the north-western portion of Victoria is largely populated by erstwhile miners, who would not go back to the mines to-day if they had the opportunity of doing so. I do not wish to deal at any very great length with the position of the labourer. If we are to adopt a free-trade policy, surely we must have free-trade in labour. How can the two things be dissevered ? If we exclude from our shores the Chinaman, the Asiatic, and other undesirables, how can we benefit the labourer if we allow their products to come into competition with his? The free admission of their goods would have the effect of reducing our workman to their level. We have, therefor, not only to exclude undesirable races, but also their productions. The views which I hold in regard to the necessity for protecting the people of Australia are strong and deep-rooted. No one claims that the Tariff under discussion is a perfect one. The Treasurer himself does not consider it perfect, and he gave us an assurance that whilst he is not prepared to put it upon the table and allow it to be worried by honorable members, he is willing that the united wisdom of the House should make it more acceptable to the people as a whole. The policy of the Government is one for the prevention of the destruction of existing industries, and for the encouragement of new industries. But what is the policy of the leader of Opposition and his followers 1 They preach free-trade, but they never practise it. They have never practised it in New South Wales during my political career. I recollect very distinctly the time when the Parkes policy was adopted in New South Wales. I remember when it was superseded by the Dibbs policy. The highest duty then imposed was a 15 per cent. ad valorem. That Tariff operated for three years, during which period it gave the greatest impetus to the agricultural industry that it has ever experienced. It, and it alone, was the cause of inducing a large number of agriculturists to go into New South Wales and arrange with the pastoralists, who had become landed proprietors, to settle upon the land. They said - "We have the machinery, horses, &c, and now that we have an opportunity of making a profit by farming, if you will allow us the use of land we will give you the proceeds of half of our produce." No less than 86,000 acres went out of cultivation last year as a result of the reversal of the Dibbs policy. The present leader of the Opposition, when he obtained the reins of power, said that he intended giving a free breakfast table to the people of New South Wales. 11 that principle were good, why did he not stand to it ? The only article at the breakfast table which was absolutely free was sugar. The idea of the right honorable and learned member was to reduce the duty of £5 or £6 per ton, which was formerly levied upon this article, by one-half each year, so that in the third year it would vanish altogether. Notwithstanding the assertions which have been made by honorable members opposite, as to the mandate given to the leader of the Opposition, to provide a free breakfast table for the people of New South Wales, a motion of censure was tabled against his Government, and two or three honorable members, putting duty and principle before everything else, determined to save the sugar industry of the northern, districts from annihilation, and to vote for that motion. The right honorable gentleman, however, made a compact with them that he would not lower the duty if they would not vote for the motion of censure, and the duty was retained for the avowed purpose of sustaining the industry. The right honorable member has also said here that he is prepared to keep a heavy duty upon sugar for the purpose of sustaining the Queensland sugar industry. Now, if he is prepared to protect the sugar growers of New South Wales and Queensland, I ask why

should he not vote to protect the agriculturists of Australia generally. On a former occasion I made a comparison between New South Wales and Victoria, which I shall not repeat, but because of which I was charged with being disloyal to my own State. I am as loyal to my State as any man can be, and shall prove my loyalty by voting for a policy which will tend to advance it. The result of the adoption of an opposite policy there has not been so evident as it would have been had New South Wales not spent £2,000,000 of land revenue each year, and borrowed large sums to squander on unproductive works. But for such extravagance the State would long since have been forced to impose duties for revenue purposes, and those duties would have had a protective incidence. The land of the State is part of its capital, and when it is sold the proceeds, instead of being squandered, should be used for the redemption of loans. I have condemned, times without number, the practice of borrowing money for the construction of unproductive works. The leader of the Opposition, when asking the electors of New South Wales to place him in power, made use of this remarkable sentence - "I am the chap to save the country. Give me 24 hours in power, and you will have no more unemployed." He was in office five years, and during that time the number of the unemployed increased so largely that a permanent Department of Relief, with a head office and several branches, had to be established.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- How was it that the people of the State kept the right honorable member in power for so long a period under such distressing circumstances 1

Mr CHANTER

- The people of New South Wales did not keep him in power. He was kept in power by the labour party.

Mr Henry Willis

- Do not the members of the labour party represent the people ?

Mr CHANTER

- Only a section of the people.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Did not the labour party keep the right honorable member's successor in power ?

Mr CHANTER

- The right honorable member was able to hold the reins of power for five years because of a combination between the labour party and the so-called free-trade party. The labour party went into the House for a certain purpose, and one of its members declared that its support would be given only in return for concessions. If honorable members look at this morning's newspapers they will see that the Broken Hill miners have telegraphed to the Ministry in Sydney asking for the establishment at Broken Hill of relief works for the unemployed.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- What has that to do with free-trade? The depression at Broken Hill is due to the low price of silver.

Mr CHANTER

- The policy of New South Wales has not established industries at which these people can find employment.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Does the honorable member think that we shall improve their condition by imposing a tax upon timber and mining machinery 1

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member does not know as much about geography as I gave him credit for.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I know more about Broken Hill than the honorable member knows.

Mr CHANTER

- That is very likely, because I have not been there, but I know that if a railway were constructed from Broken Hill to Menindie, a township on the Darling, only 70 miles away, the mines could be supplied from the Murray forests with all the timber they want, and all the country wants for the next 200 years.

<page>6596</page>

Mr V L SOLOMON

- What a slow crowd they must have had in the New South Wales Parliament not to have made that railway.

Mr CHANTER

- The policy of New South Wales has been opposed to the extension of railways towards the borders of other States, for fear that trade should go towards Melbourne and Adelaide instead of to Sydney. It is the narrow-minded jealous policy of New South Wales that is to be blamed.

Mr Henry Willis

- The mine-owners of Broken Hill say that the timber to which the honorable member refers is not suitable for their purposes.

Mr CHANTER

- Does not the honorable member know that timber is being supplied from those forests to even deeper mines, where great strength, durability, and lightness have to be taken into consideration quite as much as at Broken Hill. The Bendigo mines, and mines in other places, are being supplied with it.

Mr Henry Willis

- The Broken Hill mine owners know all the facts about this timber, and they say that it is not suitable for their purposes.

Mr CHANTER

- Is it not marvellous that an honorable member will make such a statement, when the fact is that they are using Murray timber.

Mr Poynton

- Not in the Broken Hill mines. They have never used it there.

Mr CHANTER

- They are using it in other mines. They do not use it in Broken Hill, because they cannot obtain it there. A railway 70 miles long will put Broken Hill in connexion with its own forests of timber, as durable and as good as any imported timber. Would not the miner of Broken Hill rather have his countrymen employed in his own forests than depend at all times on that which comes from people who have nothing in common with us? The labour bureau has been one result of the policy of New South Wales, and stands as a monument against her.

Mr Wilks

- The people are willing to continue that policy.

Mr CHANTER

- No one knows better than does my honorable friend that it is of no use to attempt to hide the fact. I find no pleasure in declaring these tilings, but I feel that it is due to the people of Australia to know the truth. Can my honorable friend, who has participated in the matter to which I am about to refer, find a parallel for it in Victoria? There are not only thousands of unemployed sleeping in the parks or wherever they can, but the Government have built a shelter-shed for them on the Burrangong-road, and there are thousands of poor outside. My honorable friend and many others, not once or twice but many times, have gone to the Ministers and declared that poverty was so rampant--

Mr Wilks

- I never did.

Mr CHANTER

- Pardon me a few moments. They have declared that people were so poor that in the winter season they had not the means of buying the cheap blanket which was imported into New South Wales, and appealed to the Ministers time after time for the issue of blankets to the poor.

Mr Wilks

- I never asked for blankets.

Mr CHANTER

- The Sydney Morning Herald and the Daily Telegraph - honorable members used to take a pride in it - announced that Mr. So-and-so, M.P., had been instrumental in obtaining from the Chief Secretary so many pairs of blankets.

Mr Wilks

- The honorable member never saw my name appearing in that way, and he knows it.

Mr CHANTER

- I apologize to the honorable member if I have used his name wrongly, but can he deny that many other city and suburban members have done so and published the fact in the newspapers ?

Mr Wilks

- They used to do it while the Dibbs Ministry were in power - to their shame.

Mr CHANTER

- I do not recollect it.

Mr Wilks

- The papers were full of it then.

Mr CHANTER

- It does not make any difference if they did. I only wished to show what the effects of the policy had been. I have shown that it has established a department of State for relief works ; that money has been expended out of loan account to build a shelter shed on the Burrangong-road; that it has resulted year after year in the people being supplied with charity blankets by the State. I shall now show that it has originated a permanent soup kitchen, and many other institutions of that kind, to which the poor of Sydney can go at the expense of the State.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Was there never any distress in Melbourne?

<page>6597</page>

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Or in Adelaide or anywhere else ?

Mr CHANTER

- I do not deny it. In. all large communities there will be a certain amount of poverty tinder any conditions, but in proportion to the population there never has been during my political life, running over a considerable time, the same poverty in Victoria as there has been in and around Sydney.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- My experience is quite contrary to the honorable member's.

Mr Henry Willis

- The poor do not get blankets here ; that is the only difference.

Mr CHANTER

- If my honorable friend can show that the policy of Victoria has resulted in permanent relief works, the issue of charity blankets, the erection of soup kitchens and shelter sheds for the poor, for whom the Government cannot find employment, he will break down my contention. The leader of the Opposition, in dealing with the Tariff, appeared to me to play the game of politics down very low. Instead of taking a statesmanlike view of the question, and showing how the people, as a whole, would be affected, he picked out some miserable, insignificant articles, such as condensed milk and starch, and spoke in glowing terms of the poor unfortunate swagman, travelling 500 miles distant from a cow, who could not possibly go to his rest unless he had condensed milk, and said that we were going to put a tax of a penny or a penny halfpenny per lb. on that article. The right honorable member also spoke about starch. I have had a very large experience of people in all walks of life, especially country people. I have seen thousands and thousands of swagmen travelling, but I never saw one who used or carried condensed milk. Picture the position of the poor unfortunate swagman. He takes his " bluey" off his shoulder, puts it down, and lights his fire. He then has to have condensed milk, and he must starch his shirt and put on his dress - suit before he can take his meal. The idea is so absolutely absurd that it is ludicrous to refer to it here. How can a swagman possibly be affected 'by duties on condensed milk and starch ? The speakers from this side have always contended, with truth, that a duty is imposed for two purposes. When it is imposed for revenue purposes alone, and it is made low, it has no incidental protective effect ; but when it is made reasonably high, it has a protective effect at once, and immediately brings about a benefit to the producer.

Mr Poynton

- It increases the price.

Mr CHANTER

- That is where my honorable friend and I differ.

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member admitted it a little while ago.

Mr CHANTER

- For the time being. What has been the result of the proposed imposition of a duty on condensed milk in the electorate of the honorable member for Illawarra, who I am sorry is not here? There is a gentleman there, well known and well respected-

Mr Wilks

- Mr. Fuller gave him a terrible beating.

Mr CHANTER

- That is apart from this question altogether.

Mr Wilks

- The same man and the same electorate.

Mr CHANTER

- Whether he was beaten by Mr. Fuller or not does not get away from the fact that the name of Mr. Hay on the south coast of New South Wales is an honoured name. It is highly respected by those who differ from him in political views, and it has only to be mentioned in that part of the district-

Mr Wilks

- And Mr. Fuller's also.

<page>6598</page>

Mr CHANTER

- I draw no distinction between the two gentlemen. I have not one word to say against the honorable member for Illawarra. I am speaking of the swagman's condensed milk, and I 'wish to show how Mr. Hay has promised to come to his succour by making arrangements with his tenant dairy farmers to provide the article. On the 24th of this month the following announcement appeared in the press : -

From Berry, the centre of the Illawarra dairying district, comes a report that Mr. A. Ha} met about 300 dairy farmers this afternoon, and submitted to them important proposals regarding milk condensing and concentrating, which, if adopted, will be of advantage both to themselves and the dairying industry generally. The Federal Tariff, he said, would have a great influence on the dairying industry, and would stimulate the production of articles of which they did not produce enough. Few dairying districts would benefit more than the Shoalhaven district, because, being close to a market, it could make the most of its present opportunities. He desired to make a proposal to them for obtaining sufficient milk for condensing purposes, and before long they ought to produce enough condensed milk to Supply the whole of Australia. Last year £63,000 worth of condensed milk was imported by New South Wales, and other States imported large quantities. The Federal Tariff, imposing a duty of 1½d. per lb., would be a great stimulus to the condensed milk industry. The Berry Estate did not intend to pocket the extra price that could be obtained for condensed milk through the Federal Tariff -

That is an answer to my honorable friend the honorable member for Robertson -

But would pay it to those who worked on the soil and produced the milk. First of all they wanted sufficient milk to supply the Australian market. He would like a guaranteed supply of 2,000 or 3,000 gallons daily to be condensed at Bomaderry. He would not ask them to observe any stricter conditions than were required in Victoria for butter making purposes, namely, that only milk from healthy cows should be supplied. The cows should be milked with dry hands, the bails should not let in rain, and the milk be kept free from all noxious smells. He would pay for milk suitable for condensing at the rate of 11/4dpergallonover the rate realized for butter. He had faced many difficulties during the past five years in trying to raise the industry and the dairy farmers. China, Japan and other countries remained to be exploited, and offered large inducements for the expansion of the condensing industry, which should become one of the flourishing industries of the State. Mr. Hay's proposal was very favorably received, and the following motion was passed unanimously : - " That Mr. Hay's offer is a very reasonable one, and that farmers should give it their serious consideration."

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Does the honorable member contend that the pastures of Australia require protecting against the pastures of Switzerland?

Mr Kennedy

- Does the honorable member think that Australian milk will not agree with Australian citizens?

Mr CHANTER

- I contend that when a gentleman who is a large landed proprietor, having a number of tenants in the

south coast district, represented by the honorable member for Illawarra, shows that in the State of New South Wales alone £63,000 worth of condensed milk has been imported, and when he says to his tenants - "I want you to produce that £63,000 worth of condensed milk in New South Wales" - that man is a patriot, and a benefactor to the dairy farmers and to the whole of the people of the Commonwealth.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I contend that he could do it without the duty.

Mr CHANTER

- That is the contention of an honorable member engaged in another industry, and the statement is made in the face of the words of Mr. Hay, that during the past five years without this protective duty he could not deal with it, and now that he has got the duty he can say to his tenants - "I can deal with it, and I do not want to put the money into my pocket, but into yours." I shall pass away from the apparition raised by the right honorable the leader of the Opposition of the unfortunate swagman who is to be denied his condensed milk. It is proved conclusively, to my mind, that the right honorable gentleman has the same object in regard to the Commonwealth of Australia that he has had in regard to the State of New South Wales. He has had consideration only for one class, and that is the importing class. The right honorable gentleman has had great consideration for the poor importer. The cry now raised is that this industry, this ring, or whatever honorable members like to call it, is to be injured. It is not put in that way, but the people are told that they are to be injured. The real cry behind that, and the real fear behind it, is not that the people of Australia are to be injured, but that the importing ring of New South Wales, who have controlled the destinies of that State for so long, are to be injured. I have no hesitation in saying that that is my opinion of the right honorable gentleman's pleadings, and that those are the persons for whom he pleads. The right honorable gentleman quoted several matters to which I shall reply as quickly as I can. This is the kind of thing that we have to deal with in Sydney. Unfortunately, New South Wales is not favoured as Victoria is favoured by its press. In Victoria we have the Argus representing one party, and in New South Wales we have the Sydney Morning Herald and the Daily Telegraph representing the same party. The only corrective so far as the two States are concerned is the Age newspaper. I say all honour to it for the good it has done, and I sincerely wish we had an Age newspaper in New South Wales.

Mr Wilks

- It would not get a single subscriber over there.

<page>6599</page>

Mr CHANTER

- If we had papers on each side in New South Wales, as we have in Victoria, we should never read such statements as appear in the Sydney press. I have in my hands an article headed - "The cost of living. Increased prices in Sydney." I do not intend to weary the House by going through all the items referred to, but I find that not one legitimate item is dealt with in the article. It says -

Investigations made in the suburbs of Sydney show that the cost of living amongst the working population has been considerably increased. Establishments here and there are still giving their customers goods at the rates which existed before the imposition of the new duties, but as a general rule the Tariff is in full force. In the populous suburb of Balmain the following details give a fair idea of the advance which has taken place in the price of groceries - corn-flour 1d. per lb.

New South Wales is the home of the cornflour industry; on the northern rivers of New South Wales is grown the finest corn in Australia. Although they grow it there, and make the corn-flour there, the traders of Sydney, in order to damage the Tariff and the present Federal Government, have raised the price of corn-flour by 1d. per lb.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The Tariff enables them to do it.

Mr CHANTER

- Then they are absolutely dishonest in doing it. I think the trader is dishonest who makes a profit upon an article by raising the price in consequence of a Tariff when that Tariff does not make any such rise in price necessary.

An Honorable Member. - If the honorable member makes inquiries, he will find the reason for the increase in price.

Mr CHANTER

- I do not need to make inquiries when I know what I am talking about. I know where the corn is grown and where the corn-flour is made, and in paying this extra 1d. per lb. on corn-flour the unfortunate customer is being gulled by the storekeeper. It is an absolutely dishonest transaction. They have no justification for doing it, as is shown by some of these items. I will now read honorable members a statement, of what is alleged to be a fact, that was published in the Age of the 23rd of this month, showing again how dishonest tradesmen are acting in collusion with those who want to damage the Government and the Tariff, by asserting that the prices of goods are increased, whereas in regard to many of the goods, no higher duties have been imposed -

Much discussion took place in the lobbies at the Federal Parliament House last evening with reference to the absolute dishonesty of certain importing tradesmen in Melbourne in connexion with the commercial changes wrought by the Tariff. The following illustration of the practices resorted to was much commented on : - A lady went into a boot shop recently, and asked the price of a pair of boots of a certain class.

"Thirty-two shillings, madam," was the reply. "Why?" asked the lady, who happened to be the wife of a Federal legislator, "I have never been asked for more than 25s." " Oh, the Tariff, you see, madam," was the bland response. " But I happen to know," promptly answered the lady, " that the duty on this kind of boot has been actually reduced." There was a hasty consultation between members of the firm behind a screen, and a moment later the lady was informed that she could have the boots for 20s. Facilis descensus - 32s. to 20s. The Government is powerless to prevent this sort of dishonesty.

It can only ask all citizens to possess themselves of a copy of the Tariff, and hand same to their wives, with an intimation that it should be consulted before starting on shopping expeditions.

Mr Edwards

- That was manufactured in the Age factory.

Mr CHANTER

- And a very good factory it is.

Mr Edwards

- Yes, it is ; for that kind of manufacture.

Mr CHANTER

- Now I will quote something from New South Wales which was not made in the Age factory. This statement, which comes from Sydney, shows that the same kind of dishonesty amongst traders is going on all round. It is stated -

Fresh evidence accumulates daily of the beneficial effects which the protective duties of the Federal Tariff will have in New South Wales. Already consumers are beginning to realize that they have been exploited by free-traders, and that they are now being charged excessive prices on goods imported prior to the imposition of duties. They also see that a Tariff addition has been added to goods which are on the free list. A well known business man, Mr. W. H. Soul, declares that more than one wholesale house has been guilty of this scandalous imposition.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Does Mr. Soul say that he is in favour of this Tariff?

Mr CHANTER

- I cannot say any thing about that, but whether he is a freetrader or a protectionist, Mr. Soul says that the free-traders, for their own dishonest purposes, are acting with the traders in Sydney in order to gull the people.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The Age says so, but no one in New South Wales believes the Age.

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member for Macquarie will find that before the next elections come round, many thousands of people in New South Wales will believe the Age, and that they will have the Age, or a duplicate of it, in that State. The leader of the Opposition, in what I think was a very unfair way, dealt with the boot industry of New South Wales. He was very careful to quote three firms which he classed as manufacturers, whereas there is no honorable member in this House from New South Wales who does not know in his heart that they are more importers than manufacturers. I refer to Messrs. Enoch Taylor and Sons, McMurtrie and Co., and John Hunter.

<page>6600</page>

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- McMurtrie and Co. manufacture more boots than does any other boot manufacturer in Australia.

Mr CHANTER

- That is another wild assertion on the part of the honorable member.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- They are employing 300 men, and they turn out 8,000 pairs of boots every week.

Mr CHANTER

- I am about to quote the statement of a legitimate boot manufacturer in Sydney who has never imported a pair of boots, Mr. J. Jackson, whose word I suppose will not be questioned.

Mr Wilks

- They had a meeting last week to raise the price of their own boots.

Mr CHANTER

- That is not correct. I do not object to interjections, but I strongly protest against the wild assertions that are made from time to time by honorable members. I will let the manufacturers speak for themselves. The statement I have here is as follows : -

Mr. J. Jackson, a prominent boot manufacturer, who does not import, writes to the Sydney freetrade press on the Tariff as follows: - "As one who has been in the boot making business for 30 years, I can safely say that the public need not be at all alarmed at the boggy raised by interested parties. I assert without fear of successful contradiction that the adoption of the Tariff as proposed will eventually reduce the cost of the article without any diminution in the value of the boots supplied. It is an acknowledged axiom that the greater the output, the less the price. To say that the working classes will suffer is ridiculous on the face of it, for it is only the higher and more expensive classes of boots that will be handicapped at the outset. 011 r imports in boots and shoes in New South Wales alone for the six months ended June last were over £275, 000. Will any sane man venture. to say the circulation of that money in our midst will not better the condition of the workers '! So far as my own business is concerned, the effect of the Tariff' has been an increase in the wages of my employes, and it is with confidence I state that the adoption of the Tariff will result in great good to the community at large."

Multiply that by two and you will find that the State of New South Wales alone annually imports over£500,000 worth of boots. Now what about these great manufacturers that the honorable member for Macquarie speaks of ? Here is a boot manufacturer who deliberately says that £275,000 has been spent in six months upon imported boots - imported largely by the three firms who were quoted by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- B. Edwards. - Can the honorable member give the figures showing the boots manufactured in New South Wales 1

Mr CHANTER

- I have given Mr. Jackson's figures, and they are authoritative, because Mr. Jackson has signed his name to the statement.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Coghlan shows that there are more boots manufactured in New South Wales than in Victoria.

Mr CHANTER

- I do not think Coghlan does show that, but some honorable members may turn and twist the figures in Coghlan to show anything. The honorable and learned member for Indi was challenged upon the statements he made regarding the decadence of England's shipping, and I desire now to quote an article appearing in the Daily Mail which to a large extent supports his- statement. The Daily Mail is not disloyal, but doubtless desires, as we all desire, to see England advance ; but there is no use in shutting our eyes to the facts of the case.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- One would not think that some honorable members desired to see England progress, judging from the way they refer to her.

<page>6601</page>

Mr CHANTER

- I am simply quoting these remarks from the Daily Mail becausethe statements of the honorable and

learned member for Indi were challenged. That journal says -

The supremacy of the British merchant service is even more unquestioned than that of the British Navy. We hold such a huge and preponderating lead in the shipping tonnage of the world that we can afford, so long as we maintain our lead, to look with equanimity on the enormous strides being made by other countries. No nation, however, can afford to burn the candle at both ends; and when we find, as we do in the shipping return just issued by the Board of Trade, that in every direction British shipping is losing ground, while our trade rivals are improving their position by leaps and bounds, it is desirable that we should not disregard the information. No matter how great our preponderance, if there is a steady decline on our side, and an equally steady increase on the part of other countries, this must soon begin to make itself felt. Last year the British shipping entered and cleared in our ports for foreign countries showed a decrease of considerably over two millions of steam tonnage. On the other hand, Germany alone showed nearly a million tons increase. The Suez Canal statistics, which are a capital index to foreign trade, tell the same mournful story - a huge British decrease and a large increase on the part of Germany and other maritime nations. Our figures are the lowest on record since 1890. In the same period Germany has jumped from hundreds of thousands to millions.

The figures dealing with the manning of British ships are not more reassuring. Excluding lascars and Asiatics, our vessels are now manned largely by foreigners. Last year over 1 per cent. of the crews were aliens. Nor are we training a new generation of British sailors? In 1870 we had 18,000 apprentices. To-day we have only 5,000. There is no necessity to be pessimistic, but these figures cannot be lightly dismissed by British statesmen. An effort must be made to find a remedy. We cannot and do not wish to prevent other nations from increasing their trade, but there is no reason why we should allow the Empire to lose its place without a struggle, or abandon our ships to the foreign seaman who is fast displacing the genuine British tar.

That is a complete corroboration of the statement which was made by the honorable and learned member for Indi, and was challenged at the time. This information comes from no protectionist source, which some honorable members might regard as sullied, but from a well-known English journal.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What is the difference between the tonnage of British ships and the tonnage of other nations?

Mr CHANTER

- I have given my authorities, and if they are challenged, honorable members must look to the sources of my information. The honorable member for Illawarra, in dealing with the dairying industry, had a good deal to say about butter boxes; and I want to remove a false impression which appears to prevail. First of all, I ask honorable members, and through them the people of the country, to really look at the Tariff list. The honorable and learned member for Illawarra said that the best timber which could be used for making butter boxes was Kauri pine; and if he had looked at the Tariff he would have found that Kauri pine comes in absolutely free.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- In certain forms.

Mr CHANTER

- In the proper form. If Kauri pine comes in as planks it bears a duty, but if it comes in undressed, and gives employment in the way of cutting up, and making into boxes, not one cent. of duty is charged. Undressed Kauri pine is a raw material, which cannot be produced in Australia, and, in order to afford employment, it ought to be allowed to enter free of duty. I cannot see how an honorable member can say that the dairy farmer is burdened by a duty on butter boxes, when the timber from which they can be made bears no duty.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The boxes will cost more to the consumer.

Mr CHANTER

- That is an assertion with which I am constantly met. We are told that if the log is brought from New Zealand and cut up and made into boxes by Commonwealth workmen, the finished article will cost more to the consumer than if New Zealand workmen were employed. It is absolutely ridiculous to say that circumstances which are so nearly alike can increase the cost in the absence of any duty on the raw material. The labour has to be paid for, in the one case in New Zealand, and in the other case, in

Australia, but in the latter case the labour is that of workmen, who have to bear a share of the taxation of the country, and have money in their pockets with which to pay it.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- The honorable member must see that we are paying on the waste.

Mr CHANTER

- Where is the waste?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- In bringing the wood here in the log ?

Mr CHANTER

- If undressed squared timber is brought, there is no waste.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- There is the land carriage to and from the mills.

Mr CHANTER

- If we want timber, we have to go to the forest, whether that forest be in the valley or on the hill ; and really there is no waste at all. I venture to say that there may be classes of timber in Australia just as suitable for butter boxes as is kauri pine.

Mr Page

- In Queensland.

Mr CHANTER

- Queensland is, I believe, very rich in timber. If wood suitable for this purpose could be found in Australia, there would be no land carriage of the log, because those who desire to invest their capital in the industry would place the mills alongside the timber and there turn out the finished article, all the time keeping in view the fact that where we have the commodity - where the Almighty has favoured us as He has done, by giving us these great gifts - it is our duty to utilize it to the best advantage of our own people, and not to give to others what legitimately belongs to the Australian workman.

Mr Henry Willis

- A firm of butter box-makers had to pay £300 duty the other day.

Sir George Turner

- They brought the timber in cut up.

<page>6602</page>

Mr CHANTER

-If that firm have been so unpatriotic, as by giving employment to other people, to deny to our workmen their legitimate means of sustenance, I have no sympathy with them. The firm now have the opportunity of getting the same class of timber in logs without paying any duty, and of allowing Victorian, South Australian or New South Wales workmen to make it into boxes. The boxes are there for the dairy farmer, and they should not, and will not, cost him one solitary cent more than if they were made up in New Zealand. There has been some strong criticism devoted to trusts, and when the honorable and learned member for Indi was speaking on the question, his statements were challenged. In reply, I have to quote the following as corroborative of the honorable and learned member -

An indication of the determined resolve on the part of the American Tobacco Trust to spare no effort to gain control of the trade in Great Britain, is afforded by the statement made by Mr. W. Duke, the leader of the trust. Mr. Duke declares that the trust, which is composed of millionaires, is quite willing to lose £1,000,000 if necessary, in order to capture the English trade.

Mr Poynton

- That is an American trust under protection.

Mr CHANTER

- If that fact affords satisfaction to the honorable member, he is welcome to it. But what of Great Britain under free- trade ? We read -

A cable message received a few days ago stated that the American trust, in its endeavour to win trade, is spending immense sums in free gifts of cigarettes to the English retailers. The Americans British rivals, in reply to this attempt to capture English custom, have promised to give the retailers, on condition that they do business solely with the British trust, a share in its profits.

What about Britain's free-trade in that case?

Mr Poynton

- Is that not very good?

Mr CHANTER

- I say it is very good. I am very pleased.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The trusts in America do not give a share.

Mr CHANTER

- But we have been told that England is so fast wedded to freetrade that she is going to adhere to that principle in all cases. Now we see, however, that she is to be driven out of her own markets unless she protects her own people. Another statement has been made in regard to the relative poverty existing in Great Britain and America. I am going to quote from Mr. A. M. Brice, who, I presume, will be taken as an acceptable authority upon the condition of affairs in England. Writing on old-age pensions, in Temple Bar magazine, he says -

If I take the total population of England - of all classes, be it marked - above the age of 60 years, I find that three in every ten are permanent recipients of parish relief. If I deduct the upper and middle classes from this reckoning, I find that of the working class residuum four out of every nine are hopeless paupers. Again, if I group the whole population of all classes under the age of 65, I find that instead of 30 per cent. being wholly paupers, the proportion is reduced to 8 per cent. What would you infer from this ? Obviously I think, that the sudden and enormous increase is the result of those impaired physical powers which make it more and more difficult for men and women to obtain their ordinary work at a fair wage, and ultimately any work at any wage.

Roughly speaking, nearly one in every two of the wage-earning class becomes a pauper on passing the age of 60, and those who fear that a national scheme of pensions might impair the good done by friendly and provident societies would do well to remember that one out of every three of the total population of this country becomes a pauper at 65 in spite of all the help and encouragement to thrift which is provided by these [societies ; while if I take the lower-paid workers - like the agricultural labourers and unskilled workmen - I find that at the age of 65 two out of every three are paupers. Pauperism, in fact, is at present inevitable in certain classes of our industrious countrymen. Through no fault of their own, they have nothing but the workhouse to face them after a long life of honest labour. For it is practically impossible for a working man to put enough by out of his wages to create for himself an old-age annuity, and as a consequence, the prospect being hopeless, no incentive exists to thrift of any kind.

That is another corroboration.

Mr McDonald

- What does that prove?

Mr CHANTER

- It proves the truth of the contention of the honorable and learned member for Indi, that there is a greater proportion of poverty in England than in America.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What happens to the workers in America before they reach the age of 65 ? Most of them are in their graves.

Mr CHANTER

- I made a statement just now with regard to Broken Hill, and will give the House my authority for it. Here it is -

The mayor has telegraphed to the Minister for Works, suggesting several road works which might be undertaken in order to relieve the unemployed. He states that the practical solution of the difficulty is to grant assistance which will enable some of the unemployed to leave the district. Mr. J. H. Cann has written to the mayor, stating that Mr. O'Sullivan considers that matters are not so bad as represented, only 70 men having applied for work, and only ten being willing to start.

That is my authority for the statement I made.

Mr Poynton

- Only 70 men in a large town like Broken Hill !

<page>6603</page>

Mr CHANTER

- But that is a statement made to Mr. Cann, the member for the district, by Mr. O'Sullivan, in answer to a request from the mayor of Broken Hill that men might be put on to making roads to provide them with some employment. The mayor of the town ought to be the best authority for the condition of things there, and he says that there is not sufficient work for the people in the mines.

Mr Poynton

- Because lead has fallen in value.

Mr CHANTER

- The honorable member may give the cause himself. There is also another matter to which I wish to refer before I bring my remarks to a close. Another statement made by the honorable and learned member for Indi has been challenged. He made one of the most valuable contributions to this debate, and it is my duty, supporting the same principles as he does, to bear out his statements as far as I can

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Which speech does the honorable member refer to - the 1892 speech or the one delivered last week ?

Mr CHANTER

- I am referring to a statement made by the honorable and learned member for Indi in this House during the present debate. The question I refer to was a comparison between the Canadian Tariff and this Commonwealth Tariff. The honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, also dealt with the matter from rather a different point of view. He challenged the statement of the honorable and learned member for Indi, and told the House what Sir Wilfrid Laurier had done for the Dominion of Canada. I hold in my hand the Canadian Tariff, as well as the Commonwealth Tariff. Perhaps honorable members opposite will be surprised to hear that as a rule the duties in the Canadian Tariff are a long way higher than those proposed in the Commonwealth Tariff. The duty on axles in Canada is 35 per cent.; in the Commonwealth Tariff the duty is 25 per cent. The duty on belting is 25 per cent, in the Canadian Tariff; in the Commonwealth Tariff, 20 per cent. The duty on chaff cutters in the Canadian Tariff is 20 per cent. ; in the Commonwealth Tariff, 15 per cent. The duty on engines, portable, in the Canadian Tariff is 25 per cent. ; in the Commonwealth Tariff, 15 per cent. The duty on hammers in the Canadian Tariff is 30 per cent.; in the Commonwealth Tariff, 15 per cent. And so on right through the whole list. I have quoted enough to prove my point.

Mr McDonald

- We saw that in the Age.

Mr CHANTER

- Then the honorable member saw it in a good paper. If honorable members opposite would read the Age every day, they would derive a great deal of benefit from it. But it seems to me that any quotation from the Age newspaper, which is a valuable journal, is always received with a certain amount of doubt by honorable members opposite, as though it were of an unreliable character. I read both the Argus and the Age, but my honorable friends opposite are so absolutely narrow-minded in their views on these points that they will not admit the truth of anything that happens to appear in the Age ; they invariably refer to it as though it were a dishonest newspaper.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It only speaks the truth by mistake !

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member has not given us a quotation from the Argus.

Mr CHANTER

- I have quoted from the Argus, and I will ask either the honorable member or the Argus itself to disprove what I have said, or to give a reason for it, namely, that under the New South Wales Tariff the farmer was robbed in respect of all his articles of production - wheat, bran, pollard, and everything else - whilst immediately this Tariff was imposed the prices received by New South Wales farmers were levelled up to the prices received in Victoria and South Australia, whilst in some cases higher prices are now being received in New South Wales.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member takes credit to this Tariff for getting rid of the border duties. It was federation that did that - the Constitution itself.

Mr CHANTER

- That is all very well, but until the Commonwealth Tariff was imposed the old border duties had to remain in force.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- They could only remain for two years.

Mr CHANTER

- Would honorable members opposite like to keep on the border duties for two years 1 If I had my way I would have had them off earlier.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Did the honorable member always want to do so ?

Mr CHANTER

- I always wanted to take the burden off my brother, but I do not place my Australian brother in the same category as the kanaka, the black fellow, the convict in an American prison, or the convict in New Caledonia.

Mr Poynton

- Or on .the same level as the people of New Zealand and Canada !

<page>6604</page>

Mr CHANTER

- "i would sooner relieve those nearest-and dearest to me first. Comparing the Commonwealth duties with the Victorian duties, in many cases they are lower.

Mr Poynton

- And in some cases considerably higher.

Mr CHANTER

- I am about to quote from a letter written by a gentleman well known to some honorable members - a highly esteemed man, who knows what he is talking about, and who has backed up his opinions by putting all the money he has into the iron industry - I refer to Mr. Sandford, of the Oakbank Iron Works at Lithgow. He says -

The basis of wages was from 50 per cent, to 100 per cent, over English rates. This was maintained until the arch-fiend to all progress in arts and manufactures, the Hon. G. H. Reid, came into power. He took the duty off at once, without any notice. We were turning out about 1 ,200 tons per annum. Things were looking very black for the proprietor.

Mr Poynton

- I thought that the wages were very low in New South Wales ; those on that side of the House say so.

Mr CHANTER

- I could make a comparison between the wages earned by the peoples of Victoria and New South Wales, but others have already dealt with the question. As I have said before, there is practically little difference between the States in respect to the rate of wages, but what difference there is is in favour of Victoria.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Coghlan does not say so.

Mr CHANTER

- Honorable members will remember what I have already said about the attitude of the leader of the Opposition in regard to the sugar duties -

I appealed to the Premier (which Mr. Cook knows) to serve me as he served the powerful sugar people, and allow three-fifths of the duty to remain. No, he would not hear of it. I was a nobody in the world of politics. As he served me and others at the time, so he would serve all the industries of Australia to-day if he had the chance. And this cannot be too widely known.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This must be the letter published in the Age.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- It is a grossly insulting letter.

Mr CHANTER

- It is a truthful one.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Then it is a novelty for the Age.

Mr CHANTER

- I have never spoken a disrespectful word of the Melbourne Argus, but when I quote from the Age honorable members continually refer to it in a most contemptuous manner.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- It is a mendacious rag !

Mr CHANTER

- Before honorable members have an opportunity to appeal again to their constituents, the power of the Age will have made itself felt. It is fighting for the Australian people, instead of for a few importers. Mr. Sandford continues - I repeat that if "free-trade" was adopted in this country the Eskbank Iron Works would close, unless the men accepted the same wage as is now paid in other countries supplying this country with iron and steel. During the last two years iron and steel have been very high.

Mr Conroy

- Is Mr. Sandford a friend of the Prime Minister ; is he getting something out of the Tariff?

Mr CHANTER

- I do not know whether he is a friend of the Prime Minister, but he is a friend of Australian progress. He represents £100,000 of capital which has been sunk in an industry employing thousands of workmen. The Minister for Home Affairs is the only Minister who has done anything to help that industry. When he was in office in New South Wales I saw steel being rolled out and other operations taking place at these works. Everything was in a prosperous condition then, but the leader of the Opposition when he came into power wiped the whole thing away, and put scores of people out of employment.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is absolutely incorrect. More iron has been made there since than was made there before the leader of the Opposition came into power. Why does the honorable member make such misstatements?

Mr CHANTER

- I take the statements of the proprietor of the works.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- He never said any such thing.

Mr CHANTER

- I am quoting from his letter, published in the Age of the 25th of this month. I am led to believe that the Prime Minister has a copy of it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Will the honorable member read that passage which states that men were discharged when the duty on iron was taken off?

Mr CHANTER

- I will read the whole letter if the honorable member likes. How could these works close without throwing people out of employment ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member said that when the duty was taken off men were thrown out of employment.

<page>6605</page>

Mr CHANTER

- I say so now. The following is the last quotation I will make : -

With regard to the other industries in the Parramatta electorate the proprietors of the Tweed mills at Lithgow have lost tens of thousands of pounds; and one man after another has worked them. They are going on well just now on account of a good supply of orders, and the output has very considerably increased. Why? For one thing they have Government orders, and the principal stimulus is that Barton's party is in power. Go from Lithgow Tweed Mills to Parramatta Tweed Mills, and I know the same conditions apply there.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They paid a dividend of 6 per cent, not long ago.

Mr CHANTER

- Will the honorable member listen to me for a few minutes? I know that he does not like it, but he has plenty of time to refute my statements. The letter proceeds -

Reverting to Lithgow again. Why are the pottery works idle to-day ? Simply because they stopped lifting the Dibbs Tariff was taken off, and will not be started again until there is a duty to keep out the surplus of other countries. Why were the copper works started at Lithgow? Simply on account of the cheap coal and water and special railway freights. Why are the collieries running? Simply because the railway commissioners take the bulk of the coal, and have given very low freights to Sydney. If the railways of the west were sold to a private syndicate, and they worked their own colliery elsewhere, what would become of the trade of Lithgow ?

Where would the Esk Bank Iron Works be if Reid and his party got into power, and we had free-trade as proposed? In a very short time they would be in the position of the Clyde works, near Parramatta-- works costing £300,000 sold for about £20,000, and the ordinary shareholders' money lost. This occurred not long ago. Take any other industry in New South Wales, and I say that no industry exists without protection of some sort.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- All these works are doing well, and paying dividends.

Sir William Lyne

- The pottery works are closed.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They are not.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- How is it that the honorable member for Parramatta was returned for that electorate ?

<page>6606</page>

Mr CHANTER

- Both my honorable friends know that there were other forces at work to secure the return of the honorable member for Parramatta. I desire to detain the House only for a few moments longer. I want to ask the people of Australia to consider the position. I claim that the promise given by the Prune Minister in his Maitland speech has been kept by him and all his colleagues. I claim that an honest attempt is being made by the Government to redeem the pledges they gave to the people on that occasion. The Treasurer has said he will . be glad to have the assistance of the committee in rectifying any anomalies in the Tariff that do not affect the principles of the policy laid down by the Government. When promises such as these are made by responsible Ministers, but are not accepted by the Opposition, it shows me, as it must show the people of Australia, that one motive only can be imputed to honorable members opposite, and that is that they have no regard for the people of Australia, or for the provisions of the Tariff itself, but that in their attack they are actuated solely by a desire to displace the Ministry. The people have to ask themselves this question : If the Opposition are successful, what will be the alternative scheme 'i If this Government were displaced, the leader of the Opposition would be sent for by the Governor-General, in the natural course of political events, and asked to form a Ministry. We have not yet had from the leader of the Opposition a solitary word setting forth his alternative policy for Australia. We have had from the honorable member for North Sydney, and the honorable member for Wentworth, certain proposals in regard to the finances of the Commonwealth, but we cannot take those as authoritative statements made on behalf of the Opposition. AVe have to deal only with the leader of the party, who, if this motion were successful, would become Prime Minister in succession to the right honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government. He has asked Australia to take him on trust. Is Australia going to take him on trust as against those who have been tried in the political atmosphere of Australia for 20 or 30 years, and who have given to Australia a policy, which even in our altered circumstances will be sufficient to obtain the necessary revenue without the risk of disaster. Are the people of Australia prepared to reject those men for the leader of the Opposition ? If so, let it be stated as quickly as possible. Under this Tariff, three of the States will not receive as much as they raised from their former customs duties. A revenue of about £9,000,000 will be raised, and the circumstances connected with the allocation of that money are such that three out of the six States must suffer a decrease, and must impose taxation of some other kind. If we reduce that amount of revenue by any means to £8,000,000 or £7,000,000, in accordance with the various suggestions which have been made, then we shall place these States practically in an insolvent position, or force them to tax the people further.

Mr Thomson

- My proposal would make only a difference of £35,000 to Tasmania.

Mr CHANTER

- A difference of £35,000 might be more to the small State of Tasmania than £300,000 would be to New South Wales.

Mr Kingston

- It would mean a difference of £70,000.

Mr CHANTER

- Tasmania has not a large territory which she can slice up and sell whenever she requires money. She has to tax her people, and she does not go into the money market as New South Wales has done. I speak as one from New South Wales, possessing a love for that State, and I am sorry to have to say that many of my colleagues from that State cannot give a moment's consideration to any State other than New South Wales. They seem to think that Sydney is New South Wales.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member does not think of New South Wales !

Mr CHANTER

- I do think of it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member is a Victorian.

Mr CHANTER

- I have not an interest in Victoria representing the value of the pair of spectacles which I hold in my hand. All my interests are in New South Wales. But, because I have a sense of fair play and justice, and because I have common sense sufficient to enable me to see what Victoria has done for her people, that it offers a pattern for New South Wales to follow, I have to meet this miserable cry about disloyalty to New South Wales. If the honorable member for Parramatta had been as loyal to New South Wales as I have been, that State would be in a very much better position to-day. This is a question for the people of Australia to decide. This attack is not what it ought to be. It is supposed to be an attack upon the Tariff. It is made on behalf of the swagman and his condensed milk, the swagman and his evening dress suit, and the washerwoman and her pound of starch. It is on behalf of such miserable little interests as these that this attack is made. The Ministry speak, however, on behalf of the great people of Australia; on behalf of the rising generation of Australia who are now employed in our manufactories ; and on behalf of our industrial life. The Opposition are speaking in favour of a policy which will throw people out of employment, and we shall hear the pattering of their bare feet on the sidewalk.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That expression is not even original.

Mr CHANTER

- No ; but it is true. I do not care a fig for originality. I have been at all times a student of this character, that if I am impressed with the thoughts of greater minds than my own I am ready to adopt them. It is, however, an original fact that we have now an Australian Parliament, and that the Australian people demand at the hands of Australian legislators that they shall legislate for the whole of Australia, and not for New South Wales.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- And not for Victoria.

Mr CHANTER

- New South Wales has no right to demand - any more than has Victoria - that the policy which it has hitherto pursued, should be the policy adopted for the whole of Australia.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Who has made such a demand?

Mr CHANTER

- It has been consistently made by honorable members upon the other side of the House, who have not scruples to hurl the most insulting epithets against Victoria. Does that evidence a commendable federal spirit? Is it not rather out and out provincialism ? This taint of provincialism was exhibited by the present leader of the Opposition when in my presence, in his capacity as Premier of New South Wales, he told a contractor who had submitted the lowest tender for the erection of a bridge in that State that he would not

give him the contract because he was a Victorian.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Was the honorable member trying to get the contract for the Victorian ?

Mr CHANTER

- Undoubtedly I was. After we had invited people to lodge tenders for a contract, I should regard myself as one of the meanest individuals in existence if I refused to accept any man's tender, merely because he happened to come from another State. That, however, is what the honorable and learned member for East Sydney did.

Mr Conroy

- The contractor had no property upon which to levy in Victoria, and he refused to make a deposit.

<page>6607</page>

Mr CHANTER

- I must resent the statement of the honorable and learned member for Werriwa, which, I am sure, has been made without a full knowledge of the facts. I happen to know more about this particular case than does any other man.

Mr SPEAKER

- I do not think that the reasons why any particular tender for a bridge was or was not accepted have anything whatever to do with this debate.

Mr CHANTER

- That is true, Mr. Speaker, and I shall not discuss time matter. I am sure, however, that the House will permit me to say a word or two in explanation. It has been alleged by the honorable and learned member for Werriwa that the contractor in question, Mr. McKenzie, was refused the contract because he would not lodge the necessary deposit. I am in a position to say absolutely that he was not only willing to lodge the required deposit, but that the money was actually awaiting acceptance as a guarantee of his good faith. . I went with this gentleman to the honorable and learned member for East Sydney, and I heard the latter's reply. I repeat that the statement of the honorable and learned member for Werriwa is grossly unfair to a man who is outside of this House, and cannot therefore defend himself. I have done my duty. I have given the reasons for the fiscal faith which is in me. I have spoken as a duty to myself and to my constituents, who principally comprise farmers and pastoralists. I intend adhering to my hustings pledges. I told the people of the electorate which I represent the sort of policy which I thought the Government would bring forward. They have done precisely what I anticipated they would do. They have submitted a Tariff which is a compromise, and which contains neither the high duties of the Victorian Tariff nor the low duties of that of New South Wales. They have done what circumstances forced them to do. I claim that what has been done in Canada, America, and other parts of the world can be done in, Australia, if honorable members opposite will permit the imposition of a Tariff which will encourage internal industries and give life and vigour to our own people. If they consider our own people first, they will be performing what to me seems an obvious duty, and Australia- will be grateful to them for having assisted in the fashioning of a Tariff which makes for industrial expansion and for an abiding national prosperity.

Mr MAHON

- He is a most unobservant person who passes through the world without learning something from everybody he meets, and so the last speaker has suggested to me some things which should be avoided. To my mind it is little short of an insult to the House for any honorable member to take up our time with a mass of details which are more or less irrelevant to the subject at issue. I hope I shall not imitate the honorable member for Riverina in other respects. I cannot understand the frame of mind of an honorable member who depreciates the great State of New South Wales which sent him here. As one who spent some years in that magnificent country - I suppose one of the most favoured lands of the world and one of the most prosperous - I repudiate his remarks concerning New South Wales. It was very bad taste on his part - and I am sorry he is not present to hear my remarks - to come here and disparage his own State. He stated everything he possibly could in disparagement of his own State, and concealed all the charges of provincialism which could be made against Victoria. Coming as I do from Western Australia, I have no interest in uplifting New South Wales or depreciating Victoria in the slightest way. But New South Wales has always set a magnificent example to the people of Australia. She has opened her ports to the products of every State, placing no restriction upon the free interchange of goods. Yet the honorable

member forgot to tell the House that Victoria put on her statute-book one of the most barbarous imposts ever placed by one civilized community against the products of another. I was in Victoria when the honorable member for Gippsland succeeded in getting the stock tax imposed. I knew the condition of the people of Melbourne at that time, and I saw greater distress then in Collingwood and Richmond than I have seen in any of the great cities of the old world, taking even London into account.

Mr A McLEAN

- What year was that %

Mr MAHON

- It was about the time of the bank smash.

Mr A McLEAN

- Did the honorable member ever know meat to be cheaper in Melbourne than it was at that time ?

<page>6608</page>

Mr MAHON

- Cheapness is a relative term. If a man has only 3d. to buy what costs 6d., he is of course worse off than if he had 6d. to buy what costs 6d.

I am speaking of the general condition of the people at that time, and of the effect which the stock tax had in intensifying the misery of the community. I only refer to this incidentally, to show that New South Wales has never treated Victoria in the way in which Victoria has treated her, and to illustrate the bad taste of a representative of New South Wales in concealing a fact of such very grave importance. I do not intend to imitate him by troubling the House with details which are more or less irrelevant to the question. The issue raised by the leader of the Opposition is a very simple one. He has challenged this Tariff as a protectionist one, and submitted that the true policy is a Tariff imposed for the purposes of revenue. I do not wish to go into an academic discussion of the rival fiscal policies of New South Wales and Victoria, because I find that argument is lost to a large extent on a great many persons. There are persons, even now, who say that the earth is a flat surface, and I have met men who were disposed to question the axioms of Euclid. Consequently, it does not surprise me to find persons who are disposed to hang on to the fallacies of protection. The arguments concerning New South Wales and Victoria, and all the particulars given as to the various trades and occupations of the people, go by the board in face of the important fact that New South Wales has gained population during the last ten years, while Victoria has lost it. A man may not be a fiscal expert, but he knows where his bread and butter can best be obtained. In the census period, 1891 to 1901, in New South Wales, the total increase of population was 227,709, and the natural increase 226,845, showing a gain of 864. In Victoria in that period the total increase was 61,101, and the natural increase 172,534, showing that she had lost population to the extent of 111,433. All academic arguments go by the board in view of these enormously important figures - figures moreover compiled not by the statist of New South Wales, but by Mr. Fenton, the statist of Victoria, the officer employed by the protectionist Government of Victoria.

Mr Kennedy

- But there is another little fallacy underlying it.

Mr MAHON

- I am afraid there is a number of fallacies in the honorable member's position. Before I leave the subject I wish to touch upon some remarks made by the Minister for Defence the other evening. The right honorable gentleman expressed surprise that the workers of Australia should be free traders, and asked what is the minimum wage but protection, and what is the Factories Act but protection. Undoubtedly the minimum wage is protection, and so is the Factories Act, but the right honorable gentleman would find some difficulty in proving that they have any real fiscal significance. He might as well say that the Act passed some years ago to compel employers to place seats in shops for girls who served behind counters had "something to do with the fiscal theory. None of these things have any true relevance to fiscalism. The minimum wage is simply a determination on the part of Parliament to do for a certain class of people what people in other walks of life are able to do for themselves. For instance, lawyers and doctors are able to keep up the fees they are in the habit of receiving ; but the greater competition arising from the larger numbers of the labouring class, makes it necessary for society to step in and do something in a collective fashion, which these people are not sufficiently organized to do for themselves.

Mr Higgins

- Why not free labour as well as free-trade ?

Mr Page

- No, we had quite enough of that in Queensland.

Mr MAHON

- Free-trade seems to have a different significance to me from what it has to the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne. Free-trade in my opinion is freedom of effort, freedom on the part of each man to do the best he can for himself. I have not all the attributes of a free man and I do not consider that I am a free man, if somebody may come in at the end of the week and take away a portion of my wages.

Mr Mauger

- That is what the employers say.

<page>6609</page>

Mr MAHON

- A Government may have a legal right to do this, because anything is legal which is made so in the constitutional way by a majority of the people, but no Government ever had, or ever can have, a moral right to take away from me a portion of the money which I have honestly earned by my own industry and effort. I would be less than a free man if I did not have the right to do the best I could with the money I earn. I am quite prepared to admit that every man owes a duty to society. That is to say, society discharges certain functions for every citizen in the community, and every citizen is bound to contribute in some form or other towards the expenses of those services. I say society has a right to exact payment for its services in any legitimate form it thinks fit. If it does so by Customs taxation upon commodities, it is exercising its rights ; but when society goes further and takes more money from the pockets of the people and applies that money, not in maintaining order, not in protecting property, and not in carrying out any of the other legitimate functions of government, then, I say that society is doing the individual, a great wrong.

Mr Isaacs

- What are the legitimate functions of government?

Mr MAHON

- If the honorable and learned member would allow me three or four hours, I might be able to exhaust the subject. At present I do not think I can enumerate all the legitimate functions of government. The education of the people, the maintenance of the peace the protection of property, and the conservation of the public health, are among the main functions of government. I do not consider that it is any function of government to rob me in order to put money into the pockets of capitalists. I do not consider it is any function of government to foster a factory in Footscray, and close down a mine in Western Australia.

Mr Mauger

- The Tariff will not do that.

Mr MAHON

- It will do it, and I tell the honorable member that it will depopulate some of the districts of Western Australia.

Mr HUME COOK

- We are afraid it will close down some of the factories, too.

Mr MAHON

- It would be a very good thing for the people in some of the factories if it did close them down. It would be a very good thing for some of those unfortunate aenemic people if somebody came in and closed down the factories and sent them out to earn their living in the open, under natural conditions.

Mr Mauger

- In a village settlement ?

Mr MAHON

- It would be far better for them and for the country also. I do not say that Customs taxation is an ideal form of taxation. Even for the legitimate purposes of government, I would not be altogether in accord with Customs taxation.

I think that a tax upon accumulated wealth is far preferable to this system of Customs taxation; but, so far, we have not devised a scheme of that kind, and nothing better has been presented, so far as I know, than the system of raising revenue through the Customs, to meet the legitimate expenses of government. I

heard the right honorable the Minister for Defence make some remark about popularity. He said there were two kinds of popularity - one that came to a man legitimately, and the other that he ran after.

Sir John Forrest

- It was not an original observation.

Mr MAHON

- Probably not. If the right honorable gentleman returned to Western Australia to-morrow, as an advocate of this Tariff, I think the popularity he would meet with would be of that sort which he would like to run away from.

Sir John Forrest

- We have had some of it before.

Mr MAHON

- Yes, and I will do the right honorable gentleman the justice to say that I do not think he has always received justice from those who criticised him.. But before I go into a discussion of the Tariff, I should like to say that there is, at any rate, one of the duties which I heartily approve of, and that is the duty on printing paper. I give the Minister for Trade and Customs credit for having the pluck to propose this duty. It is a duty which touches the pockets of certain persons largely responsible for placing the Ministry in their present position. I hope that when the critical time comes the House will carry this duty. I am sure the Minister for Trade and Customs will try to carry it, but will the Ministry as a whole be in earnest and insist upon their supporters voting for this tax ? They ought to do so, for this is perhaps the only tax proposed in this Tariff which cannot be passed on to the public. The proprietors of the metropolitan newspapers enjoy a very large revenue. One in this State, I believe, enjoys a revenue of between £50,000 and £60,000 a year, and in some years even more. I think these gentlemen can well afford to pay this taxation.

Mr Manifold

- What about the country newspapers ?

Mr MAHON

- The honorable member for Corangamite has asked me what about country newspapers ?

<page>6610</page>

Mr Page

- It would be just as well if some of them were squashed.

Mr MAHON

- So far as the country press is concerned, the tax upon them would be infinitesimal. Taking the ordinary weekly newspaper with a circulation of 500 or 600, I should say that the tax would not, at the outside, exceed 5s. or 6s. per week ; so that the owners of country newspapers will not feel the duty, whereas the big newspaper proprietors who enjoy many monopolies and advantages from the State will pay handsomely, some of them up to £3,000 or £4,000 a year. I think the division on this matter will be a good test of the democracy of some honorable members. From it the country will learn the names of those honorable members who are sincere in their professions that those best able to pay taxation shall bear their proper share of it. I strongly disapprove of one feature of the Tariff. The linotype, that will be used solely by large newspaper proprietors, is to be allowed to come in without paying any duty, whereas the small printer, who is, perhaps, carrying on his business with one or two men and a boy, will have to pay a tax of 10 per cent, on his type. .

Mr Mauger

- They can get any quantity made here.

Mr MAHON

- I wish the honorable member for Melbourne Ports would keep his fallacies for Footscray. I know something of this matter, and I say with confidence that a duty of 10 per cent., or of even 100 per cent., would not enable the local manufacturers to turn out type equal to that sent out from Caslon's foundry or from some of the American foundries. The honorable member can take that from me. I know that interested manufacturers have poured their tales into his sympathetic ears, but the facts are as I state them. The local type foundries may turn out type, but the printers will not get the same value for their money as if they buy their type from the American foundries, or even from the English foundries. I think the Government should show the same consideration for the poor printers that they show towards wealthy newspaper proprietors. If they allow linotypes to come in free, they should also allow type to come in

without the payment of duty. The linotype is a machine which displaces labour, and that in itself is an important point.

Mr Kennedy

- Does not all machinery do that?

Mr MAHON

- Well, yes; and I am not making any objection on that ground alone. In this case type is required by the poorer class of newspaper proprietors, who will never be able to afford to buy a linotype ; and if rich newspaper proprietors are able to get their machines in free, poor printers should not be compelled to pay duty on their type. This is an anomaly that I hope the Government will consider by-and-by. There are a large number of accessories which are included in the definition of type, and which are also taxed at the rate of 10 per cent. Some of these things are just as necessary to the printer as the tools of other trades which have been exempted under the Tariff. Now, I was rather interested by the statement of the Treasurer that this Tariff will reduce the taxation of Western Australia from £5 9s. 2d. to £3 17s. 7d. per head of the population. I thought when I first heard that announcement that it was rather a good thing for Western Australia, and as I knew that the right honorable gentleman had the reputation of being a very careful financier, as well as an economical one, I accepted his estimate in good faith. I took the trouble, however, to go through the Tariff in detail in order to discover the articles upon which remissions had been made, and found to my amazement that the only articles of any note upon which an appreciable remission had been made were spirits, the duty on which was reduced to the extent of 2s. per gallon, and opium, the tax on which was reduced from 30s. to 20s. per lb. I could see that there must be some mistake, and I then endeavoured to discover how the Treasurer came to say that the taxation under the head of Customs and Excise in Western Australia last year was £5 9s. 2d. per head. I eventually discovered that the Treasurer took the revenue for 1900, which amounted to £933,716, and divided it by the population for 1899, which was 171,030; whereas the population in 1900, the year in which the Treasurer's calculation was made, was 184,146.

Sir John Forrest

- £944,000 was the amount of Customs and Excise revenue which the Treasurer adopted for his calculations.

<page>6611</page>

Mr MAHON

- I will give the right honorable gentleman the figures, from his own statistical register. I find that the total revenue in Western Australia in 1900 was £944,746 5s. 7d. The Minister is right, but there are certain additions to that, which bring the total revenue from Customs and Excise up to £987,000. If I have made any mistake, it is in favour of the Treasurer, but I took the amount of £933,716 from the Treasurer's own Budget papers. However, working that out, and dividing the amount by 171,030, we get the figures £5 9s. 2d. ; but if the revenue is divided by 184,146, which was the real population last year, we arrive at a taxation of £5 3s. 7d. per head of the population. So the Treasurer has overstated the taxation from Customs and Excise in that year by 5s. 7d. per head. That, of course, is not a very serious matter, but it does not explain the difference between £5 9s. 2d. and £3 17s. 7d. per head; and I find on investigating the matter further that the estimate of £933,716 included Inter-State duties, which I estimate amounted to £275,000.

Sir John Forrest

-We reckoned them at £256,000.

Mr MAHON

- They did amount to £256,000 in the previous year - in 1899 - when the revenue was very much smaller. I have the exact figures here, and I find that the revenue in 1899 from customs duties on British and foreign products, and from excise, amounted to £577,098 ; and from Inter-State duties to £256,060. That makes a total of £833,158. In 1900 the revenue from customs and excise duties was £944,746, or £696,746 from duties on British and foreign goods and excise, and £275,000 from duties on Inter-State imports. The total Inter-State duties for 1900 have not been officially published, but it is fair to take them at £275,000, since the increase in British and foreign imports for same year was about £90,000. It is, therefore, a fair thing to assume that the Inter-State duties were a few thousand pounds more than in 1899. But to come back to the point. The Treasurer, when stating that the taxation in 1900 was £5 9s. 2d. per head, includes the

InterState duties, but excludes these duties later on when estimating the new taxation at £3 17s. 7d.

Sir John Forrest

- The Treasurer will not get anything from Interstate duties.

Mr MAHON

- But the Treasurer concealed the fact that the Inter-State duties are still being collected.

Sir John Forrest

- Not by the Federal Government.

Mr MAHON

- I admit that, but the Treasurer, as a candid man, should have told us the fact.

Sir John Forrest

- He did not know.

Mr MAHON

- He should have included the Inter-State duties when he alleged that we were taxed £5 9s. 2d. per head.

Sir John Forrest

- The Treasurer did all the calculations for the other States in the same way.

Mr MAHON

- I am not aware that two wrongs ever made a right. It has gone forth to the people of Western Australia that their taxes are being reduced by £1 11s. 7d. per head.

Mr Kingston

- It is for the State Parliament to remit the other taxation if they like.

Mr MAHON

- The Government, according to their own estimate, are imposing £3 17s. 7d. per head ; but as a fact they are not reducing the taxation at all ; on the contrary, the taxation is being increased. On the Government's own estimate, I shall show that the taxation of Western Australia has been increased very considerably, leaving out of consideration altogether the Inter-State duties. The revenue from British and foreign imports and excise in 1900 was £658,716, not including Inter-State duties. Taking the Treasurer's estimate for a normal year, customs and excise, without any Inter-State duties, he is to collect £708,008 ; that is to say, there is an increase of federal taxation of £49,292 per year.

Sir John Forrest

- There is only half the volume of trade.

Mr Barton

- In other words, if we relieve half the trade from taxation we must put a little more taxation on the other half.

Mr MAHON

- I have the telegram of the Minister for Defence, and it is evident that he has not gone into the figures, or that message would not have been sent.

Sir John Forrest

- The figures are right.

Mr MAHON

- The figures are right as far as they go, but they do not go far enough. The Government say to the people of Western Australia - "Why do you complain ? We have reduced your taxation per head from £5 9s. 2d. to £3 17s. 7d." But the Government do not tell the people that this £5 9s. 2d. includes Inter-State duties, the abolition of which is not a matter for the Federal Government, but a matter for the Western Australian Government.

<page>6612</page>

Sir John Forrest

- I think I referred to that a good many times in the telegram.

Mr MAHON

- I have the telegram here, and should be glad if the right honorable gentleman would point out where that is said.

Sir John Forrest

- Do I say nothing about the sliding scale?

Mr MAHON

- The salient paragraph is number 5, which reads -

I gather, therefore, that it is the manner by which customs and excise duties are to be raised that is objected to--

That is the telegram from the Minister for Defence to the Mayor of Perth. The message proceeds - and there cannot be any objection to the aggregate amount to be raised in Western Australia by the proposed taxation, which, as I said before, is £280,000 less than was raised last year, and is equal to 2s. per head less than that "hitherto existing.

Is that not a plain statement that the customs and excise taxation is reduced by 2s. per head to the people of Western Australia? The fact is that the taxation is not reduced. Again, in a letter to the Argus, the right honorable gentleman says -

This proposed Tariff and excise, high as they appear to them, would only realize £708,000 for Western Australia.

But the right honorable gentleman did not tell the people that these same taxes last year only realized £658,716; and that is the material fact. The right honorable gentleman should have told the people that the taxation, which he now says is £708,000, was last year only £658,716. Then the right honorable gentleman goes on -

And consequently while there will be 2s. per head less taxation -

But not less taxation by the Federal Government - there will be a deficiency of £280,000 of revenue to be made up by the local Parliament, by extra taxation, or arranged for by a reduction of expenditure.

The position is that the Federal Government have not diminished taxation. Nothing the Government have done has diminished the taxation of Western Australia, on the contrary, taxation has been increased by nearly £50,000.

Sir John Forrest

- Western Australia gets it back again.

Mr MAHON

- Western Australia gets three-fourths returned.

Sir John Forrest

- Perhaps more. It is not enough; they want more, and that is the difficulty.

19 K

Mr MAHON

- That is precisely the point. I know there is a difficulty, but I say that the taxes are coming out of the wrong pockets. My estimate works out in this way: the revenue from British and foreign imports in 1900 was only £3 13s. 4d., and on the Treasurer's estimate the same imports will pay £3 18s. 4d., or an increase of 5s. per head of the population. I wish the Treasurer were here, because, with all respect to the other Ministers, these figures, although they come from an uninfluential person like myself, call for some notice and answer, especially the figures I am now about to quote. How does the Minister arrive at his estimate of £3 17s. 7d. per head? He naturally and properly excludes the Interstate duties wholly, although these Interstate duties are still in operation. I do not say that the right honorable gentleman made these calculations himself; but what really happens? Here is the great, salient, and extraordinary fact that the Treasurer discards the population factor, which he used in a previous part of the calculation, and makes his estimate, not on the population of 171,030 in 1899, but on the population of 182,315 on the 31st March, 1901.

Sir John Forrest

- That was the census.

Mr MAHON

- Whether it was the census or not, the calculation works very much to the Treasurer's advantage. If the £708,000 be divided by the population of 182,315, we get £3 17s. 7d. per head, but if we divide the £708,000 by the population of 171,030 we get £4 2s. 9d. per head; and that is the Treasurer's proposed taxation. If we take the population of 180,146 on the 31st December, 1900, even that gives a total taxation per head of £3 18s. 7d. Here we have the Treasurer of the country using one population factor to impute the ante-Federation taxation of Western Australia, and then using another and a different factor when he desires to show that under Federation taxes will be diminished.

Sir John Forrest

- I do not think that is so. The revenue was £944,000, and dividing that by .180,000 we get £5 os. per head.

<page>6613</page>

Mr MAHON

- I have passed away from the £944,000, and I am now dealing with the Treasurer's estimate of £708,000. Since the population in 1900 was 180,146, why did not the Treasurer employ that factor instead of the number of the population in the previous year when making out the per capita taxation in 1900?

Sir John Forrest

- The Treasurer took the population of 180,000.

Mr MAHON

- The Treasurer took the population at 171,000.

Sir John Forrest

- No ; £944,000 is shown in the public returns.

Mr MAHON

- I can show the figures used in the Budget papers by the Treasurer. According to those papers the revenue for 1899-1900 from Western Australia was £933,716.

Sir John Forrest

- That was in an abnormal year, or something of that kind.

Mr MAHON

- Those figures are in the papers circulated by the right honorable gentleman's own colleague. If there is any error in them, it is the Treasurer's, not mine.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member has made a mistake. I have the papers here.

Mr MAHON

- Apparently the right honorable gentleman does not comprehend my point. The figures for 1899-1900 are £933,716. As I have said, I take these figures from the Treasurer's own papers. However, the fact is that, using the Treasurer's population factor, his federal taxation is £4 2s. 9d. per head after federation, as compared with £3 13s. 1d. before federation. That is to say, the taxation, on that basis, so far as Western Australia is concerned, is increased by 8s. 8d. per head. But going back to the year 1889, and using the whole figures of that year to effect a comparison with the Treasurer's estimate for a normal year - and he has elected to stand on the figures for 1899 - we find this interesting result : -

That is to say, on the basis of population, in 1899 the Treasurer's taxation will be £4. 2s. 9d. per head, as against £3 7s. 5d. We see that in 1899 the actual revenue from those imports which the Treasurer has power to tax, and is taxing to the extent of £708,008, was only £577,098, a total increase under federation of £130,910, or an increase per head of the population of 15s. 4d. I will just summarize for the benefit of the House exactly what the Treasurer has done. In the first case he has overstated the Western Australian customs and excise taxation for the year 1900 by 5s. 7d. per head by using as a factor a lower total population than existed at the period to which the calculation relates. Next he inflates the estimate by including Inter-State duties in comparing taxation totals. As the Federal Government collects no duty except on British and foreign imports, only the revenue from these imports should have been taken into account in comparing the rate of taxation per head under the old system and the new. The actual taxation per head on these imports was in 1900' £3 13s. 1d., not £5 9s. 2d.; and it is with £3 13s. 1d., and not with the higher figure that the Treasurer's estimate of federal taxation - that is £3 17s. 7d. per head - should be compared. The Federal Tariff, therefore, on those items alone, where it takes the place of the State Tariff, increases customs and excise taxation by 5s. a head, on the Treasurer's own estimate - or a total of about £49,292 - instead of diminishing it by £1 17s. 7d. This fact is demonstrated by a comparison of the Treasurer's own estimate of revenue with the actual revenue collected in the year ending 30th June, 1901. As the Inter-State duties are still being collected, the amount of these - for next year they will be about £300,000 - must be added to the total federal taxation. I know that these figures are rather wearying to honorable members, but it seems to me that there is a great deal of importance in showing that this factor, which has been used sedulously, has been used in error, and that the taxation of Western Australia under this estimate has not been diminished, but increased. It is most important that these

figures should go forth to the people. No wonder that the Chamber of Commerce of Fremantle has telegraphed to the Minister for Defence to say that they could not follow his figures ! I should think not ! I wonder who could follow them !

Sir John Forrest

- Why not ?

<page>6614</page>

Mr MAHON

- Because they hide the true facts.

Sir John Forrest

-Western Australia has to pay £708,000 instead of £980,000.

Mr MAHON

- The fact is that the people are under the impression that they will be taxed £111s. 7d. per head less, whilst as a matter of fact, instead of paying £658,716, as they did in 1900, they will, according to the Treasurer's estimate, and as I shall show later on, pay £708,008 - that is to say nearly £50,000 more.

Sir John Forrest

- They paid £980,000 last year.

Mr MAHON

- The right honorable gentleman is talking now about the period for the year ending 30th June, 1901.

Sir John Forrest

- Any year the honorable member likes.

Mr MAHON

- I will come to that year in good time, but will the right honorable gentleman allow me to finish with the year 1900. I am making a comparison between the revenue in 1900 and the Treasurer's estimated revenue ; and if the right honorable gentleman will be good enough to follow me, I think I shall be able to make my meaning clear. There was collectable under the Western Australian Tariff in the year 1900 the sum of £658,716. Excise amounted to £31,664. The first mentioned sum refers to British and foreign goods only.

Sir John Forrest

-Why exclude InterState goods?

Mr MAHON

- I exclude the InterState duties because the Federal Government will not collect them. The true comparison is between imports on which the Federal Tariff will be collecting duties, and the same imports which yielded duties before. Surely the right honorable gentleman cannot be serious in saying that we should include Inter-State duties ? Does he mean to tell us that he has a right to take into the comparison duties which the Federal Government are not collecting, and which they have no power to collect? What I want to show is that the Treasurer is increasing and not diminishing the taxation on the British and foreign imports.

Sir John Forrest

- That is another matter altogether.

Mr MAHON

- But that is the point. I want to leave the Inter-State duties out of the question altogether, because the Federal Government has no power to collect them, and therefore we have no right to consider them in a comparison of this sort.

The following tables show the revenue obtained from imports during the three years, 1898-1900 : -

Mr Piesse

- Can the honorable member give us the value of the imports during these years ?

<page>6615</page>

Mr MAHON

- Yes, here they are, with, the population on the 31st December in each year from 1896 - .

Let me deal now with the statements which have been made as to the benefits which the proposed Tariff would confer upon Western Australia. I admit that the year 1900 was a good year, just as the year 1899 was a bad one, but for the purposes of my calculation I have assumed that the consumption of goods in Western Australia during the present year will be on a par with the consumption in 1900, and I have taken

from the Western Australian statistical register the quantities consumed in 1900, and applied to them the rates of duties provided for by the Federal Tariff. The Federal Tariff places duties upon many articles imported from the United Kingdom and foreign places which were formerly admitted free, and they will return a revenue amounting to £161,896. The revenue from duties upon British and foreign imports which have been increased will amount to £86,026, and excise duties - taking the Treasurer's own estimate for this - to £111,727, or £359,649 in all. That is to say, the Federal Tariff will produce £900,000 of revenue in Western Australia, upon a consumption equal to that of the year 1900.

Sir John Forrest

- Some doubt as to figures.

Mr MAHON

- Well, I am corroborated in this estimate by the views of no less an authority than the present Treasurer of Western Australia.

Sir John Forrest

- I do not consider him a great authority.

Mr MAHON

- He happens to be the Treasurer of the State, and, as the right honorable gentleman's successor, we must assume that he is to some extent worthy of his position. My estimate is below his.

Sir John Forrest

- He probably took in the Interstate duties.

Mr MAHON

- I expect that he did, but I shall give the right honorable gentleman the benefit of them. Mr. Illingworth, in delivering his Budget speech in the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia on the 9th October, 1901, is reported in the Western Australian Hansard to have said that, after studying the Federal Tariff, which was laid on the table of this House the day before, he expected next year to obtain £1,084,500 from customs and excise duties. That amount is very nearly arrived at by estimating the revenue to be collected under the Federal Tariff at £900,000, and subtracting one fourth, the amount retained by the Commonwealth. That leaves £650,000, and, adding £350,000 for Inter-State duties, a total of £1,000,000 is obtained.

Sir John Forrest

- The Treasurer says that the Tariff will produce only £708,000.

Mr MAHON

- Well, if I err, I err in good company, and my estimate is considerably under that of the Treasurer of Western Australia. I put down £350,000 for InterState duties. So that the people of Western Australia may understand what this Tariff means to. them, I have taken the trouble to make out a list of household commodities which hitherto were imported into the State free of duty, but are now taxed. It was the strong hope of the people of Western Australia that federation would make life on the gold-fields a little less expensive, and a little more tolerable. Why, I have known a working miner to tramp 20 miles through the sand to record his vote in favour-of the union of the States.

Sir John Forrest

- He knew that tea and sugar would be taxed under a Federal Tariff.

Mr MAHON

- Did he imagine that arrowroot, sago, tapioca, cornflower, maizena, cocoa, chocolate, coffee, oatmeal, rice, tea, kerosene, farinaceous foods, blankets, rugs, blanketing, stearine, and paraffine, which have hitherto been free of duty, would be taxed ?

Sir John Forrest

- That was done by a good and paternal Government.

Mr Kingston

-What would the honorable member do?

Mr MAHON

- I would not impose a Tariff that presses on the man who turns his back upon the sea coast and goes into the bush to face the hardships to be encountered out there. For the purpose of starting a factory at Footscray I would not close down a mine in Western Australia, nor would I impose such duties as these for the purpose of coddling artificial and anaemic industries in the towns and big cities. I would not for the

same purpose hamper the men who have the pluck to go into the interior of the country to endeavour to do something to redeem it to civilization. The Prime Minister and his colleagues have spent the greater part of their lives pleasantly in the eastern cities. If they had lived in the back country, if they had ever travelled 50 miles on a dry track without a drink of water, if they had undergone the perils and hardships and sufferings of the men in the back country, they would not be so ready to tax every little commodity which they use.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

-Why, we have two explorers in the Ministry.

Mr MAHON

- I have recognised always that the Minister for Defence is a man who has done the best he could for his own State and for his country. I believe that right honorable gentleman's desire has been always to do the best he could, according to his lights, for the people of Western Australia.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- The Minister for Home Affairs was at the top of Capricorn when he was a boy.

<page>6616</page>

Mr MAHON

-I am glad to see that the honorable member has got into a more congenial atmosphere. The Minister for Defence has been a good friend to the farmer, and rightly so, because the agriculturist is the backbone of every State. Can the right honorable gentlemen show me in this Tariff a duty which will be of any advantage to the farmer 1 Here is a list of -

British and Foreign Household Commodities hitherto imported Free into Western Australia, but now taxed by the Commonwealth -

Every one of these articles was admitted into Western Australia free of duty by the Minister for Defence when he was at the head of the Government of that State, and I give him every credit for his action. Every one of these articles is of almost daily consumption in the homes of the people. In 1900 their value amounted in the aggregate to £197,216. The Treasurer's estimate is that the revenue from the duties on them will be £53,134, and that sum is to be raised by taxing a small population of 191,000 in respect of articles of household use. I have applied the Federal Tariff to the consumption of these commodities during 1900, and I say that the true revenue which is to be expected from them if the consumption continues as it was during 1900, is £76,674 per annum. That is not what the people of Western Australia expected when they made sacrifices for federation. As I have stated already, the tables compiled show the value of these commodities to be £197,216, and I have added to that amount, although I do not know whether I am right in doing so, the value of 8,757 tons of sugar imported into Western Australia, free of duty in 1900, but now taxed by the Commonwealth, at £128,889. That gives a total value of £326,105 in respect of goods hitherto imported free into Western Australia, but now taxed. These are all new duties on goods consumed in every little home, in every hamlet and village and town in Western Australia, and, according to the Treasurer's own estimates £78,468 is to be raised in this way. That is a nice tax to be placed upon 191,000 people. Yet we are told that this Tariff has reduced taxation in Western Australia to £1 lis. 7d. per head. Is this Federal finance 1 I think that it looks more like "Federal Bank" finance: I am not referring to any honorable member of this House, but we cannot fail to remember the statements which were published in 1893, when people were robbed by unconvicted thieves who are still at "large, and who paid a farthing in the pound.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order. That matter has nothing to do with the question before the chair.

<page>6617</page>

Mr MAHON

- I bow at once to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but I think my remark can be connected with the question before the chair. I wished to show that this sort of statement is on a par with the statements which deluded the people in 1893, and led to their being robbed of the hard-earned money which they had placed in the banks. That is an argument in support of my contention that those who compile these statements should be careful to place accurate figures before us. However, I do not wish to pursue the matter further. Here is a list of British and foreign commodities, used in mining and other industries, which hitherto have been admitted free into

Western Australia, but are taxed now by the Commonwealth Government. ' If I have made any mistake in regard to these items, which I have taken from the Tariff, Ministers will be able to explain them - I will admit that there is an exception in regard to certain classes of blasting powder. Coke, which is included in this list, is used in almost every mine. Wire rope is used also in every big mine, and is absolutely necessary for the protection of the lives of those who go down the shafts. The tax on galvanized iron is a scandalous one. Men going into the back country and in opening up the interior they must have some kind of hut in which to house themselves and their goods. Galvanized iron is the material used in all such buildings.

Sir John Forrest

- Galvanized iron was admitted free into Western Australia at one time, but a change was made, and a duty of £7 10s. per ton placed upon it.

Mr MAHON

- I have endeavoured to identify the items appearing in the Treasurer's papers, but it is a very difficult matter to do so, as the Minister for Defence will find if he goes through them. I know there were certain kinds of galvanized iron that were admitted free into Western Australia prior to the composition of the Federal Tariff. Sheet iron, and galvanized plain iron are free. Last year 6,361 tons 10 cwt. of galvanized plain sheet iron were imported into Western Australia, representing a value of £121,345. The whole of that iron was admitted free of duty. But under this Tariff galvanized plain sheet iron, hoop iron, plate iron, pig iron, and sheet iron are taxed.

Mr Kingston

- Pig iron is free of duty.

<page>6618</page>

Mr MAHON

- - Then a mistake has been made in the Minister's "Comparative Tariff." All these figures are taken from the beautiful comparative Tariff which has been compiled by the Minister for Trade and Customs. Of course I can make an allowance for errors representing a few thousand pounds, and still the position will remain a very serious one. Hose, forges, anvils, iron and steel wire standards and staples for fencing - articles which are very much used in diy country - are all taxed although they were previously free under the Western Australian Tariff. Metals, nails, screws, solder, timber in short lengths, and paper for printing are also taxed. Thus, the total value of the imports which are taxed for the first time is £789,975. These new duties upon mining and industrial appliances are estimated to yield a revenue, so far as the Minister for Trade and Customs has thought fit to enlighten us - because he will not inform honorable members how much cash he expects to extract from coke - of £26,754. But I calculate the amount at £115,222. I come now to the British and foreign commodities, upon which this beneficent Government, which was to do so much for Australia, has actually increased the duties. I heard the Minister for Defence say that the Tariff framed by his Government in Western Australia was a revenue Tariff with incidental protection. I could never see any protection (except as regards foodstuffs) in the Western Australian Tariff, because the duties were about 15 per cent, ad valorem all round.

Sir John Forrest

- Yes ; 20 per cent. <id valorem was the highest.

Mr MAHON

- I am sorry that 20 per cent, ad valorem is not the highest duty under this Tariff. The right honorable gentleman did a lot for the people of Western Australia, but I regret to say that he has not been able to prevent the Federal Government from increasing the duties upon further commodities which are used in the bush. The Western Australian duty upon coffee roasted has been increased by 2d. a lb.

Mr Chapman

- What about the Queensland coffee?

Mr Kingston

- Is it the swagman who uses roasted coffee?

Mr MAHON

- The swagman uses preserved vegetables, anyhow. Yet this sturdy democrat, the Minister for Trade and Customs, this rising star of Australian democracy, who, according to the gospel of a Sydney print, is the only man fitted to be Prime Minister of Australia, has increased the duty on preserved vegetables by 10

per cent. Formerly there was a duty in Western Australia of about 10 per cent, upon this item, but the Minister has increased it to 20 per cent. The right honorable and learned gentleman is thus going to collect as duty upon preserved vegetables from the men who go out into the bush to open up the country an additional sum of £1,236. Then I come to jellies and preserves. Upon this item I could not work out the difference between the duties imposed under this Tariff and the imposts which formerly prevailed in the State from which I come. Almost the whole of the jellies and preserves which enter Western Australia are British and foreign.

Mr Kingston

- I will guarantee that South Australia sends some.

Mr HUME COOK

- Hundreds of pounds worth go from Victoria

Mr MAHON

- It is immaterial where they come from ; the point to be considered is where they are produced.

According to the document which I have in my hand, they are British and foreign produce, and produce of other States is given separately. Of course the honorable member for Bourke may know more than is contained in this book. Possibly he does. Upon hops - out of which the poor man's beer is made - this great democrat, the Minister for Trade and Customs, has increased the duty by 2d. a lb. He will thus take an extra amount of £1,121 'out of the pockets of the poor man. The right honorable gentleman has also increased the duty upon potted meat by 5 per cent., upon extract of meat by 5 per cent., and upon preserved meat by 1£d. a lb. Thus another £1,000 is to be taken out of the pockets of the men who go out in the bush to develop the country. Then there is the item of milk.

Mr Kingston

- I suppose that they take their milk with potted meat ?

Mr MAHON

- The Minister makes merry about this milk question. But he should not sneer at the man who opens up the country.

Mr Kingston

- I do not, and well he knows it.

Mr MAHON

- It sounded a little like it. I know that the Minister would not do him any intentional damage, except to help the factory at Footscray or to assist the Richmond bootmakers or the Collingwood hat-makers. The right honorable and learned gentleman has increased the duty upon preserved milk, which was previously 15 per cent., in Western Australia by about 18 per cent. The unfortunate people in the bush will therefore have to pay, on the assumption that they use as much condensed milk this year as they did in 1900, an additional £12,300.

<page>6619</page>

Mr Mauger

- Surely Western Australia can condense its own milk ?

Mr MAHON

- Does the honorable member really know what he is talking about ? I do not think that he does. Let me tell him that it is not possible to condense milk in Western Australia, because there is Scarcely enough fresh milk there.

Mr Mauger

- It is possible to condense it here?

Mr MAHON

- Will the honorable member allow me to assure him that there is no milk condensed in Australia that is capable of withstanding the Western Australia summer climate. That is an established fact. The honorable member may be an authority upon hats, but I have a circular here from men who know more about this milk question than does he.

Mr Kingston

- Are they importers ?

Mr MAHON

- Undoubtedly. They are importers of Nestle's milk. The climate of Western Australia is very hot in the

summer.

Sir William Lyne

- The condensed milk will stand the climate of New South Wales and Queensland.

Mr MAHON

- These gentlemen, who have a very large business in Fremantle, stake their reputation on this statement

-

Owing to the high temperature of the climate, the want of grazing country, and absence of rainfall in our most-thickly-populated districts, condensed sweetened milk, as an article of diet, is an absolute necessity. We refer to sweetened milk more particularly, because the consumption of unsweetened milk, or, concentrated milk or cream is comparatively small, and does not equal a sixth part of the total quantity used in the State. The reason is that sugar being a preservative, sweetened milk will remain of good quality in the opened tin for a week or fortnight, while unsweetened or concentrated milk must be used at once. Condensed sweetened milk has never been successfully manufactured in Australia to stand a hot climate. y

Sir William Lyne

- That is not correct.

Mr Harper

- It is absolutely incorrect.

Mr MAHON

- Of course the honorable member for Mernda may be an authority.

Mr Harper

- I am, and I shall convince the honorable member that I am correct.

Mr MAHON

- I would Hire the honorable member to go into the interior of Western Australia for a week or two, and use this milk in a tent, when the heat is about 165 degrees outside and about 120 degrees inside. If the milk will keep I should say that the industry is a very good one, and ought to be able to get on without any Tariff help. With the 15 per cent, duty already in Western Australia, why does it want an extra duty of 18 per cent? Let it be remembered that this tax will fall upon a small population of men who are taxed up to the hilt, and are living under very hard conditions. Why should the Government want to take £12,300 extra from them? Taking the 15 per cent, duty in Western Australia now, and the 25 per cent, for the cost of importing the foreign article, is not 40 per cent, enough for the colonial manufacturers of condensed milk? If it is not, I think this industry is an exotic one. Evidently this sturdy democrat does not want the people to have carpets; he taxes carpets and floorcloths, and even hats and caps. He also taxes kerosene, and then he proceeds to increase the duty on lamps and lampware. A 20 per cent, increase on machinery is a nice tax to impose. The duty on iron tanks is so fixed up that I cannot find out what the increase is ad valorem. Again, he will not allow us to have pure water, for he imposes a tax on filters. Cement, too, is taxed, and even disinfectants, so that the Tariff even assails the public health. And coming down to the household, we find a. fresh tax levied on matches and vestas. We have a total increased impost of £76,136 - worthy effort of the great democrat, the rising star of Australia! I now come to boots and shoes; but I shall not weary the House with long details. In 1900 Western Australia imported £9,343 worth of boots and shoes of British and foreign make, and £5,189 worth of Australian make. Under the increased duties of the Federal Tariff) the British and foreign imports of boots and shoes will yield .£19,233. Where is that increase of £10,000 per annum going? Is it to go into the pockets of the eastern manufacturers? Is that what this sturdy democrat is going to do for Footscray, Collingwood, and Richmond? The people of Western! Australia are to be penalised on their boots and shoes to the extent of £10,000 in order that things may hum in Collingwood..

Mr Kingston

- Are there no boot factories in Western Australia?

<page>6620</page>

Mr MAHON

- I can get the production. The Treasurer's estimate of total revenue from imported boots shows what he means to give local manufacturers. Instead of £19,233, he expects to get only £4,500. Where is the £14,733 to go? Or is it that the Tariff will reduce the purchasing power of the people to the extent that

they will have to go have-footed] We are told that the tax on mining machinery is a small matter, since it can be manufactured here. I have the testimony of a gentleman known to the Minister for Defence as one of the first men in the mining world of Western Australia. He is a member of the Legislative Assembly, and occupies absolutely the first position in the State. What does Mr. Morgans say ? He objects, of course, to the tax on mining machinery, but he says -

The erection of machinery is a thing that has to be done only once, but the purchasing of stores must go on continuously.

Then, on the point which the honorable and learned member for Bendigo brought up the other night, that this mining machinery would be manufactured in Australia, and that the people in Western Australia would not have to pay any more for it, let us hear what Mr. Morgans, who has had practical experience, says - It will be argued by some people who believe in the principles of protection that the manufacturers of machinery in the eastern States will be able to supply all the needs of Western Australia. Such a proposition I am prepared to question. But even supposing they are in a position to supply our requirements, will they not as astute men of business take advantage of the Tariff, and raise their prices to the limit to which the Tariff gives them protection ? I think I can show that they will do this. This afternoon I was shown a telegram from a firm of manufacturers in the eastern States who had quoted for certain mining machinery to be supplied to a Western Australian company. The telegram announced that the former quotation had been cancelled, and that the manufacturers could supply the machinery only on the basis of an advance of .18 per cent, on the old quotation. So that the Tariff does increase the price. I might mention that the price first quoted was from 1 to 9 per cent, in advance of the cost of a similar article in England.

That is the testimony of a man who knows what he is talking about, and the Minister for Defence knows that there is no shrewder or abler man in Western Australia than Mr. Morgans.

Mr Kingston

- I know that when he was asked to give his figures, which somebody had quoted, he would not do it.

Mr MAHON

- A good deal depends on who asked him. I have no doubt that if the right honorable and learned gentleman had asked him for his figures he would have given them.

Mr Kingston

- He was asked by the Collector of Customs of Western Australia, and he could not give his figures.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- There is not much doubt about there being a heavy advance.

Mr MAHON

- Of course, I would not accuse the Treasurer of having presented any deliberate misstatement in the tables laid before the House. But it is quite evident that somebody has taken advantage of a lower population in former years in Western Australia to increase the estimate of the total taxation per head of the people, and now uses a different population factor to show that the new taxation proposed will be very much less. As the Treasurer is now present I may briefly repeat what I said. I find that the right honorable gentleman has used the population at the end of 1899 to ascertain the taxation per head for 1900.

Sir George Turner

- For 1899- Yes.

Mr MAHON

- The right honorable gentleman has used a population estimate of 170,000 roughly speaking, instead of 180,000, and by that means he has increased the figures representing the taxation per head of the people by several shillings. On the other hand when he comes to estimate the taxation per head under the Federal Tariff the right honorable gentleman uses a different population factor altogether.

Sir George Turner

- That is right.

Mr MAHON

- Surely the sacred cause of protection does not depend upon cooked accounts ? Surely protection is not dependent for its success upon deluding the House by statements compiled in that fashion 1 There is no necessity at this stage to further dwell on the injustice which this Tariff will effect. But I do say most emphatically that every honorable member who desires fair play for the great natural industries of the

Commonwealth, by which alone their stability and permanence can be maintained, will vote for this motion.

<page>6621</page>

Minister for Home Affairs

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

. - I did not intend to have taken part in this debate. I have been sitting quietly here for a very long time listening to the numerous speeches that have been made, and hoping to derive some information I was not already in possession of. I should not have arisen at this late stage in the debate had it not been for deliberate and determined misrepresentation by honorable members opposite in reference to myself, and had it not been also for the statements which have been made by the leader of the Opposition regarding myself. Having been in opposition to the right honorable gentleman for so many years, I am not much surprised at anything he says ; and the public, when they know him as well as I do, and most of them do in New South Wales, will not pay much heed to the assertions he makes.

Mr Wilks

- Yet 40,000 went to hear him the other night.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Make it 100,000 at once. I would go for 200,000 if I were the honorable member, as he would then be certain that he would not be under the mark. The right honorable gentleman and honorable members opposite have referred to an assertion which was circulated that I said that the Federal Government would bring in a Tariff of 15 per cent. ad valorem. In the first place, I never said anything of the kind. What I did say - and it was not said in a public place, but in a private room while I was chatting with some friends of mine - was that setting aside narcotics and stimulants, and putting them in a special list, as we all know that they are dutiable articles which will stand, and always have to stand a very heavy duty ; and allowing no free list, a Tariff averaging, if reduced to ad valorem, from 10 percent, to 16 per cent. - not 15 per cent. - would be all that would be required. That is very different from the statement that a Tariff of 15 per cent. was going to be brought in and placed on the statute-book by the Federal Government.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable gentleman was not reported in that way.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Perhaps I was not. I did not follow exactly what the report was. It was the Sydney Daily Telegraph that reported me, and it does not generally report what I say.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is the best friend the honorable member ever had.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member has been a good friend to me because he has always been opposed to me. I have taken a little trouble to analyze the position we are in now regarding this Tariff. It is estimated that the total value of taxable imports - including the Inter-State imports - would be between £63,000,000 and £64,000,000. In the first place, £29,000,000 of that is lost altogether to taxation.

Mr Poynton

- How does the honorable gentleman account for that ?

Minister for Home Affairs

Sir WILLIAM" LYNE

-I say that £29,000,000 of that is lost altogether in consequence of our not charging Inter-State duties. There is a little over £2,000,000 lost for specie and Government stores, and there is a free list of over £6,000,000. The increased internal production is set down at £5,000,000 ; and that is an estimate, I think, which is generally agreed to. That brings the total of taxable imports down to £21,000,000.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I wonder the honorable gentleman did not bring it down to £10,000,000.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member is gifted in such a way that he could do anything of that magical kind. However, these figures can be followed, and can be upset, 'if it is possible to upset them. After taking the revenue from narcotics and stimulants, as given under the Tariff, we have a balance of Customs revenue to find, as the Treasurer has stated, of £4,300,000, and if we do not allow for a free list, it would take just about

17 per cent. upon the balance of taxable articles to produce this sum of 4,300,000. Now, I want to know how far I was out in the statement I made, and what is the difference between that statement and the Tariff submitted by the Government?

Mr Thomson

- It is a good deal out. The statement was 10 per cent. to 16 per cent.

<page>6622</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Well, it is 1 per cent. out - that is, 1 per cent. above the 16 per cent. named. I said that it would range somewhere between 10 per cent. and 16 per cent. As I say now, that statement was privately made in an ordinary conversation, and I had made no very detailed calculation at the time. So much for the charges hurled at me of not adhering to the statements I made to my constituents when seeking election. When certain of my constituents asked me whether I had made the statement, I wrote to them on the subject, and they have my letters now in which I informed them that I made the statement as I have made it here. Those letters can be produced, and I simply mention this because I think it manifestly unfair that such assertions should be made. From the speech delivered by the honorable member who has just resumed his seat, one would imagine that those who voted for the federation of the Australian States thought that we should relieve ourselves of all the customs taxation that existed in the past, and that we should be in the splendid position of being able to carry on the government of the Commonwealth without any taxation at all, or with taxation of very little consequence. Honorable members must be reasonable - I believe that a few of them have commonsense. It is not to be supposed that, in view of the States requiring as much as they have had in the past, we could have provided for much less revenue. In dealing with the Tariff, the greatest trouble the Ministry had was to insure that the various States should not be prejudiced, from a financial point of view. That was the understanding which was entered into as between the States and the federal Government at the time the Commonwealth Bill was before the people. What was the object of the Senate? What was the object of giving the States power? What was the object of giving the States representation either in the Federal Government or in the Convention? Was it not to insure the stability of the States? Supposing the Government had brought down a Tariff which ignored the position of the various States? Would not honorable members on the Opposition side have been louder - if that were possible - than they are now in denouncing the Government? Would they not then have taken the part of the States, and desired to know how it was that some consideration had not been given to them? The Ministry, however, have done what they were called upon to do, and that was to see that there was as little risk as possible of financial trouble so far as the States were concerned.

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member does not believe in this Tariff himself.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- If I had an opportunity of constructing a Tariff free from the restrictions imposed by the Commonwealth Act, I should not frame a Tariff like this; but I have assisted in framing a Tariff which is a compromise, and which contains a very large number of free-trade revenue duties. It is these very duties that the free-traders are attacking. They have scarcely attacked one protectionist duty:

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Does the Minister call the duty on starch a revenue duty?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member for South Australia, as a freetrader, has attacked the duties on rice and on tea, and on many other articles which are purely free-trade revenue duties.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The duty on starch is not a revenue duty - it will bring in only £3,000 now, as against £15,000 last year.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is the revenue duties which have formed the principal subject of attack on the part of honorable members on the opposition benches, and I should like to know whether, if they had the opportunity of framing a Tariff, they would impose protectionist duties, or free-trade revenue duties such as are included in this Tariff. How would the members of the Opposition raise the revenue necessary, if they did not impose such duties as are included in the Tariff.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the Minister say that this is the best Tariff that could be framed under the circumstances ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I believe this Tariff is a fair compromise. I believe it will preserve the State finances as well as they can be preserved. But I do not say - and I do not think any member of the Ministry will say - that this is an ideal protectionist Tariff. I think it is ridiculous to imagine anything of the kind. It is a compromise Tariff, with the object to which I referred just now. I would not put any of these revenue duties on if I had my way and could act free from the restrictions of the Commonwealth Act. I said all through the electoral campaign that the Tariff would not be a free-trade Tariff, or a protectionist Tariff, but that it would have to be a compromise, and it is a compromise.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Will the Ministry stick to it in committee 1

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I am not like the honorable member, at one time a protectionist and at another time a freetrader.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Like the Minister's leader

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I have been a protectionist all my political life. But the honorable member twists about just as it suits him.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Like the Minister's leader.

<page>6623</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Honorable members opposite, after attacking the freetrade revenue duties, have complained of the Tariff as being too high, and as being a Victorian Tariff. I have just made a few comparisons between items in the Victorian Tariff and the Federal Tariff, and I am rather surprised that those honorable members who have made statements against the Tariff have not taken the trouble to analyze the duties.

Mr McCay

- They could not have made the statements if they had made the comparisons.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The following table shows some of the items on which duties are reduced under the Federal Tariff as compared with the Victorian Tariff:-

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Now give us the increases.

<page>6624</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- There are very few increases, except in the form of freetrade revenue duties. There are, from a protectionists' point of view, no increases, but there are increases where raw materials were not taxed under a truer protectionist Tariff than this is.

Mr Wilks

- What about the increases upon the New South Wales Tariff?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Of course, there are large increases upon the New South Wales Tariff, because New South Wales had one of the freest Tariffs in the world. But is it to be supposed that New South Wales is to dominate the whole of the Australian States where industries have been started and are now in existence ? Honorable members in opposition accused the Prime Minister of belying the words he delivered at Maitland, but I say that this Tariff is truly what was indicated by the Prime Minister when he spoke at Maitland.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What does Mr. Thompson - Mr. Barton's chairman - say ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- We all know Dick Thompson, and know that, like some of my friends opposite, he is a very nice fellow. I have known him for a great many years, and I like him, but I do not place very much reliance on his opinion as to the Tariff or any other matter, except Haw.

Mr Thomson

- The revenue that is to be raised is nearly a million more than was stated at Maitland.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is not a million more, but it is a larger amount than was then stated. At that particular time we did not know exactly what the requirements would be. Is it to be supposed that the exact amount could be stated by the Prime Minister before he had the report of the Minister for Trade and Customs! - before he had the figures given to him 1 Is it to be supposed that he could definitely fix what the Tariff, would be ?

Mr Thomson

- He had those.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member has no right to make a statement of that kind. It is only very lately that the Prime Minister had the figures supplied Mm by the Minister for Trade and Customs.

Mr Thomson

- The Prime Minister in his speech at Maitland gave the revenue up to the end of last year.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- If the honorable member had any experience of Cabinet work and of getting the foundation for framing a Tariff, he would know that it is not until the minutest details of every kind are at hand, that it can be said how much revenue will be required.

Mr Fisher

- And even then it is not known.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Just so. But supposing the Prime Minister did make a statement that less would be required, we find now that the Tariff, higher as the amount is, is not sufficient for the needs of Western Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania. When the Commonwealth Bill was submitted to the referendum, I took an early opportunity of making a speech, in which I expressed my opinion as to the amount of revenue that would be required, and on that occasion I said that there would have to be about £9,000,000.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What did the Prime Minister say ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Never mind what the Prime Minister said : I can answer for myself in this. The Sydney Morning Herald, in a leader on that speed i, said -

What was in Sir William Lyne's mind - and as a Minister he is in the confidence of the Federal Cabinet - was clear enough, when he told his hearers, at Adelong, that under a free-trade Tariff they could only raise ,£5,000,000, while it would be necessary to raise £8,500,000 or £0.000,000 every year. I find now that that leader was on a speech which I delivered during my election campaign. That is another proof my constituents knew what my opinion of the Tariff requirements was. It is a fact, however, that at a meeting in the New Masonic Hall, Sydney, in the first speech I made in reference to the Commonwealth Bill, I stated that £9,000,000 would be required. Events have borne out that statement, and even with £9,000,000 we have not sufficient to keep certain of the States in a proper financial position. If we are to throw these States on one side, and let them drift with all their financial troubles on their shoulders - if the Federal Parliament take the customs and excise as they are empowered to do under the Constitution - then we can do with a lower Tariff. But we cannot allow these States to drift, unless we belie what has been said to the people of Australia.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Does the honorable gentleman not think that the anti-Billites should have told the people that ?

<page>6625</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member should not drag in side issues. He knows there were certain provisions of the Commonwealth Bill in which I did not believe, and I fought the measure at the risk, perhaps, of my political extinction. Now that the Bill is law, and we are an accomplished Australian federation, it is my duty, and the duty not only of every one in the Federal Parliament, but every one who wishes well for the future of this country, to sink past differences, and do the best they can for the Commonwealth as a whole. No one can accuse me of not endeavouring to maintain New South Wales in a proper position. When I was in political life in New South Wales, and while I was Premier, I did what I conceived to be my duty to that State ; but now that we are a Federal Parliament, it is our duty to treat every State alike. Indeed, if it were

possible, it is our duty to scarcely know one State from another, should that course be for the common good. I am afraid, however, that honorable members on the opposition benches have been trying to keep up the State as against the federal feeling. As a Federal Parliament, if we are true to our oath, we must help the Government and the Commonwealth to move along as swiftly, strongly, and as fairly as possible. I do not intend to deal with many figures, because of these we have had a deluge - an avalanche. I desire, however, to say one or two words in reference to the leader of the Opposition. I did not expect that right honorable gentleman to be present tonight, because I know from my experience of him of old that when anyone is replying to statements of his, he is generally absent. I regret his absence.

Mr Wilks

- It is the other way round.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- When I have had to reply to the leader of the Opposition in the New South Wales Parliament, I have known him quietly get up and walk out, refusing to "take his gruel," as he should. But the public inconsistencies of the right honorable and learned member can scarcely go further than they have now gone. I notice from statements in the press that the right honorable and learned member delivered a speech in Sydney the night before last to a large audience, and then practically told the people of New South Wales, and especially of Sydney, that they were going to be ruined - that the Tariff was going to destroy Sydney and the people of that State. I was in Sydney on Monday morning, and I saw in the Sydney Morning Herald a report of a press interview with the right honorable gentleman. Amongst other things, he said -

In Victoria, the feeling amongst the housewives is very strong against the Tariff. It is also very strong amongst the workmen, because wages and salaries in most industries over there are very low indeed. The federation, which the workers of Victoria looked forward to as the beginning of a new era of prosperity, has grievously disappointed them. Instead of Victoria overrunning the markets of Australia, as they expected, the result has been the very opposite. The people of Melbourne are trembling at the prospect of the free competition of Sydney, hence the large firms in Melbourne and Adelaide are establishing branch factories in Sydney. And it is becoming too evident to Melbourne people that the effect of federation will be to transfer a large portion of their manufacturing pre-eminence to the mother colony, thus making things worse than ever in Victoria.

That report appeared in the newspapers on Monday morning, and on Monday night the right honorable gentleman delivered a speech at a public meeting, telling the people of New South Wales that under the Tariff they would be absolutely "wiped out" of existence. I do not think any one could go further in inconsistency than is shown in the instance I have cited.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Is the honorable gentleman going to quote from the speech of the leader of the Opposition?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I shall quote some of the speech presently. The horror with which the leader of the Opposition, and others to whom I shall refer regard the Tariff, is extraordinary as will be realized, when I read two or three extracts, from speeches made by those gentlemen, during the last two years or two years and a half. The leader of the Opposition, speaking at Goulburn on the 13th of May of this year, said -

We do not need the committee, in order to know that the Customs Tariff of this Federation must be enormously higher than any Tariff needed to place us in the same position as we would be in before federation.

He also said on the 30th May, 1898 -

I am bound in honesty to tell you that tin's union will involve, owing to the absolute financial necessities of the other colonies, a larger burden of taxation through the Custom-house than has ever been known in the world.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- How does the honorable gentleman know that the leader of the Opposition said that?

<page>6626</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is reported in the Sydney Daily Telegraph. On the 16th January, of this year, speaking at Launceston, the right honorable member said -

It was essential in framing the fiscal policy to consider the other States, and so far as Commonwealth politics is concerned, I am not pledged to a free-trade Tariff.

That is what he said of the financial position when he was addressing an audience in one of the smaller States. In the Parliament of New South Wales - I heard this deliverance myself, and I take the quotation from Hansard - he said -

We all know that whatever Government is in power there must be a high Customs Tariff. I frankly admit that. If I stood up here before the House and said anything else I should simply be sinning against my own knowledge.

I should like to know how often the right honorable member has sinned against his own knowledge ! I admit it, and give it to every one for what it is worth, that there must be a high Customs Tariff under federation, and that it is one of the sacrifices that some of us are prepared to make for federation.

Mr Thomson

- A high total.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Oh, no ! that will not do at all. Now, sir, I should like to quote another honorable member who sits opposite to me. When I first knew him he was a protectionist, and made some very vigorous, and, to my thinking, pleasing speeches, in favour of protection. I am not sure that he did not to some extent induce me to be a more ardent protectionist than I otherwise should have been.

Mr Isaacs

- Who is this ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- He is sitting opposite to me at this moment. On one occasion, in 1887, just after he had returned from England, he was so imbued with what he had seen of the low wages and the pauperism of the people under free-trade, that he wrote a letter in which these sentences appear -

I have seen with my own eyes men, with pretty constant work, die like rats from sheer starvation, and all because of the decline of the export trade, and the increase of the imported article. Let me give one more fact to show what is transpiring every day in free-trade England.

Then he goes on to say -

We sell at the lowest analysis our flesh and blood, our independence, our credit, and persistence in this time of banter will lead to ruinous results. The Herald writer alludes to "the degeneracy," "loss of independence," of the British workman. Here is a tacit admission of the baneful effects of the fiscal policy upon the morale of the nation. There is a loss of independence, and why ? The soul of the worker is ground completely out of him by the competition to which he is subjected.

It was the honorable member for Parramatta, Mr. Joseph Cook, who wrote that ! He said also at Lithgow, on the 14th of May, 1898-

Mr. Coghlan's figures would mean probably a

Tariff of 25 per cent., and then New South Wales would have to find £800,000 or £900,000 from direct taxation. He would not object to this heavy taxation if it was guaranteed that the large colonies would have a fair voice in the distribution. In June, 1899, he said -

A Tariff similar to South Australia was sufficient. He hoped the Treasurer would not impose enormous taxation to finance the small States.

These are three extracts from speeches delivered by the honorable member opposite, in reference to the policy of protection. He said that he would be satisfied with a tariff of 25 per cent. The Tariff of the Government is not 25 per cent, on an average.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What is the honorable member quoting from ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- From the Lithgow paper.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What is the honorable gentleman's point ? That is my position now.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Then, does the honorable member say that he would vote for a 25 per cent. Tariff?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No !

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Then what is the honorable member's position ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is described in last part of the quotation.

Mr Chapman

- He has no position.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- AVe say that this Tariff is too high.

<page>6627</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member distinctly said that a 25 per cent. Tariff would be needed. Now, sir, I will I refer to another honorable member, who, I am sorry to say, is not present to-night. Amongst other things, he said, referring to the Tariff-

Did they know that there were five countries: outside New South Wales in which there was a. distinct tendency to protective principles, and that there had been no diminution of that feeling during the last few years ? Was it likely that the policy of those colonies was going to change all in a moment, and that the people of this colony were going to retain absolute free-trade as they had it now, when they joined hand in hand, their 1,250,000 of people, more or less, in a mass community representing 3,500,000 1 Those men who now denounced federation on the free- trade basis, and who, at the same time, said that this Constitution denied the rights of the majority, were talking the most absolute and sheerest nonsense.

The same honorable member said -

There should be an uniform Tariff instead of a local Tariff. The Federal Parliament would have to bring out a Tariff to meet the whole of the condition of the various colonies.

Again he said -

He believed the ultimate fiscal policy of the Federal Government would be intercolonial freetrade and protection against the outside world.

Those quotations are from speeches by the honorable member for Wentworth, Sir William McMillan ! He said further in 1897-

Instead of a local Tariff the Federal Parliament will have to bring out a Tariff to meet the whole of the conditions of the various colonies. - A Voice : Protection. - Mr. McMillan. - Incidentally so. . . . No Tariff can be framed to meet the immediate exigencies without being more or less protective in its incidence. Those statements were made at different times.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We will quote the Prime Minister on the honorable gentleman now speaking, directly !

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I can stand all that. I have not done with this honorable member yet. He said, speaking on the Tariff on the 19th of January of this year - I think Mr. Barton's speech was one of the ablest and mostcomprehensivethat he has ever delivered. On all the questions touched upon, except the fiscal question, nothing could be clearer or more explicit, and oven on the fiscal question, from his point of view, he probably said as much as can be said until the details of the Tariff are ready for publication. He made it clear that the chief object was revenue.

I say that this Tariff in its object is revenueproducing.

Mr Wilks

- The Minister for Trade and Customs says it is otherwise.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- No doubt there is a strong protectionist incidence in the Tariff, but there is also a strong free-trade incidence in it. The part that has been attacked by honorable members is the free-trade - revenue part.

The honorable member for Wentworth (Sir William McMillan) also said -

But he very candidly admitted that it would not be a Tariff purely on revenue lines ; in fact, that it would be framed so as to disturb as little as possible the so-called vested interests of manufacturers living in a hitherto protected colony. I think that the Tariff proves that we have gone as far as it is possible to go. In another speech he said - It means that whether we like it or not we must create a federal Tariff

protectionist in its character.

Mr Harper

- What is the date of that?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The 12th March, of this year. On the 27th November last he said-

No Tariff can be framed to meet the immediate ends of the various States without being more or less protectionist.

Mr Thomson

- He did not approve of it.

Mr McCay

- No; but he was prepared to accept it then, and he is not now.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The following extract is from a speech delivered by an honorable member, and reported in the St. George's Advocate, 16th July, 1898 : -

He remembered when Sir Henry Parkes brought forward in the House the question of federation, and he also remembered having heard Mr. Reid deliver a scathing tirade against it. But by-and-by Mr. Reid advocated federation, not because he believed in it, but because he thought it was a good thing for him to take up. Mr. Reid was the best wind and weather watcher in the colony. Now this colony had elected to the Convention ten men, who were as great, intellectually, as any other ten men the colony could find. They went into the Convention untrammelled, unfettered, by any condition. They helped to frame the freest, purest, and best Constitution the world had ever seen, and had helped to complete as sound and honorable a compact as could have been entered into by any number of States. That was Mr. Barton's view. Mr. Reid also said so. But how did Mr. Reid act afterwards ? He spoke against the Bill, and then told the people he was going to vote for it. What was this compact the Premier at first admired and then afterwards condemned ? It was a deed of partnership among a number of peoples, therefore, a transaction of compromise. Mr. Reid said at first it was a fair and honorable compromise, and afterwards declared it to be unfair. Why was he trying to block the Bill? Because he was not elected leader.

Mr SPEAKER

- I must ask the honorable member to connect the passage which he has read with the question before the Chair, which is the fiscal and financial proposals of the Government.

<page>6628</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I have read those remarks as a preliminary to certain statements with reference to the Tariff which have been made by the honorable and learned member for Parkes (Mr. Bruce Smith). On the 14th February of this year he stated, when speaking at Petersham -

Victoria had been running so many years on protective lines, and they could not now ask her to adopt direct taxation and do away with her Custom - houses. All Commonwealth revenue must of necessity come through the Customs. Referring to the leader of the Opposition he made this remark - They knew there was a musical instrument called the aeolian harp, an instrument which they put in the window, and which played tunes according to the direction whence the wind played over it. Although he had not yet applied it to anyone, he knew that they would " see it. " It was the very best illustration that could be given of Mr. George Reid as a politician. The honorable and learned member said last night that he had not been supported by the Protectionist Union in Sydney ; but when a candidate for the Glebe electorate he was selected by that union, and he wrote the following acknowledgement -

I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 24th instant, in which you convey to me the resolution of your union to support me, as the selected candidate of the Federal Association of New South Wales, in the forthcoming political campaign. I desire to express my appreciation of the confidence your union has thus reposed in me.

That was his reply to a letter from the Protectionist Union conveying to him the following resolution : -

That as the success of the federal party under the leadership of Mr. Barton insures the realization of the hopes and aims of the protectionists of New South Wales, viz. - intercolonial free-trade and protection against the outer world, this meeting pledges itself to support the candidate selected by the Federal League to contest the Glebe electorate at the next general election.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- He was a strong federalist then, which the honorable member never was.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- On the 26th May, 1898, the leader of the Opposition said -

I tell this audience that the Federal Tariff must produce £25s. 3d. per head of the population.

I quote this statement in order to show that the right honorable and learned gentleman had a fairly good idea of what the taxation would be.

Mr Wilks

- What is the Federal Tariff per head of population?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It amounts to about £2 7s. per head. Three years have elapsed since the leader of the Opposition said that it would take taxation amounting to £2 5s. 5d. per head of the population of the Commonwealth to keep these States as they were, and that that amount would have to be raised through the Customs.

Mr Wilks

- On a population 200,000 less than at present.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The requirements are proportionately much heavier than they were.

Mr Wilks

- They have not increased in the same ratio.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Yes ; the ratio is still larger.

Mr Wilks

- Owing to the action of the honorable member's Ministry.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Nothing of the kind. I have before me a copy of the New South Wales Hansard, containing a report of the speech made by the honorable and learned member for Wentworth when he attacked the right honorable the leader of the Opposition in the New South Wales Parliament. That report has been published in the press, and therefore it is unnecessary for me to read it. I have also a report of the reply to that speech by the leader of the Opposition. It deals with the attack made upon him on 30th June, in the most unmeasured terms, by the honorable and learned member for Wentworth. In making that attack upon the leader of the Opposition, the honorable member used language which at the time I thought to be extreme, but which was substantiated subsequently. The leader of the Opposition, as reported by the Sydney Morning Herald of 4th August, 1896, said -

The historian will easily lay bare the petty feelings which have impelled some of the foremost leaders upon our side to endeavour to destroy their party. The last has shot his bolt. As leader of the party and head of the Government, I feel infinitely relieved. Most of my bitterest trials have been manufactured for me by pretended friends, and now that the last of the doubtful band has thrown his mask aside and avowed his hostility, my fear of a fatal thrust from behind, or in the flank, has disappeared. I spoke so late on Thursday that my reply could not be full. I will now make a more leisurely exposure of the deliberate unfairness of the honorable member for Burwood, chiefly from his own utterances. and so on.

Mr Wilks

- That was in 1895.

<page>6629</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- That attack was made upon the leader of the Opposition, then Premier of New South Wales, in regard to the financial proposals which he had placed before the Parliament of that State. The leader of the Opposition has stated that he would be able to carry on the Federal Government with a Tariff considerably below that submitted by the Ministry. I am going to show that if he attempts to do anything of the kind, the result will be a repetition of that which took place in regard to the finances of New South Wales. For years the revenue under the free-trade policy has not been sufficient to pay the interest on the national debt. The leader of the

Opposition knows well that that is the case. When the right honorable and learned gentleman commences to make promises such as he made previously in regard to the finances of New South

Wales, he is trying to mislead this House. What was the result of that speech ? It is shown in the report of the Finance Commission.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I rise to a point of order. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that on at least half-a-dozen occasions you have prevented honorable members on this side of the House reading from the same report. Is it in order now for the Minister for Home Affairs to read an extract from it which has no relevancy to the question before the Chair?

Mr SPEAKER

- I will not permit reference to be made to any matter which cannot be closely associated with the financial and fiscal proposals of the Government. If I find that the honorable the Minister goes beyond that rule I shall certainly call him to order.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I do not think I will go beyond it. I am simply quoting from the report to show that the honorable member for Wentworth referred to this particular matter in the speech made by him in the New South Wales Parliament. I want to show that the leader of the Opposition stated that he had a surplus for each of the three years following j but that the finance commission stated most emphatically that that was incorrect.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable the Minister is decidedly going beyond what I have permitted other members to refer to, and I cannot allow it. It would be grossly unfair to other honorable members whom I have checked.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Do I understand you to say, Mr. Speaker, that you will prevent me from showing that this is an attempt on the part of the leader of the Opposition to repeat what took place under his Government in New South Wales, and that the finance commission stated that for the three years to which I have referred there was a deficiency of over £1,000,000?

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable the Minister must see that it would be unfair to allow him to take up grounds which I have refused to permit other members to take up.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I was not aware, Mr. Speaker, that you had refused to permit this report to be referred to. I look upon it as an extremely necessary document, which cannot very well be passed over in view of what took place in New South Wales when the leader of the Opposition in this House was at the head of the Government of that State. I have quoted really all that I desire to put before the House, but surely I can refer to it in reply to the question raised as to the finances of New South Wales. The statement has been made that New South Wales had plenty of revenue. This document proves that there was a deficiency of over £1,000,000 of money during the three years to which I have alluded. The speech made by the honorable member for Wentworth, to which I have referred, indicated beforehand what was coming, and it was clinched and proved by the report of the finance commission.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable the Minister would be quite in order in following a line which was intended to prove that owing to free-trade or protection, or owing to any principle included in a policy advocated or condemned, a certain result had accrued ; but, unless the honorable member can show that, he will be out of order in attempting to deal with the report of the commission.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I think I have shown that fairly well. I have listened to the lecture delivered by the honorable member for Coolgardie to the honorable member for Riverina, in which he accused that honorable member of failing to uphold New South Wales, as he ought to do as a representative of that State. Did he wish the honorable member for Riverina to state what was not the truth ? Much as I support and have fought for New South Wales, I think I should belie my trust if in this debate I allowed statements to go forth which were absolutely incorrect. I hold in my hand a document which covers the period ranging from 1884 to 1893. It shows that during that period practically £5,265,364 of borrowed money was used in order to pay the interest on loans.

Mr Wilks

- Prior to the institution of the free-trade policy.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- No; it was from 1884 to 1893. This document proves that the same state of affairs has continued year after year until the present time.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Who prepared that document 1

<page>6630</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is an extract from the official records of New South Wales.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Another of Martin's fakes.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It shows on its face what it is. When under free-trade in New South Wales we have had to borrow money to pay the interest on our debts, I think it shows that free-trade does not produce a wholesome or a healthy state of things. New South Wales in herself is strong. She is rich in minerals, she is rich in land - certainly for her size she is the richest of all the Australian States. If it had not been for her store of natural wealth and her vitality she would have gone down very low before this. It is only because of her vitality that she has been able to keep up under the weight placed upon her shoulders by the fiscal policy in force in that State.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member mean to say that money has been borrowed deliberately in order to pay interest on the loans of New South Wales 1

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I say that over £5,000,000 of borrowed money has been used for that purpose.

Mr Wilks

- That was up to 1893.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- That was up -to 1893. I have not had time to obtain the remainder of the figures. This document shows that during the first three years in which the present leader of the Opposition held office he had to borrow £1,000,000 more.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is a monstrously incorrect statement.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is absolutely correct. I want to see this condition of things altered. As a matter of fact New South Wales has not had a fair and legitimate revenue in any one year. The £2,000,000 which is annually derived from land sales should have been expended either in carrying out the public works of that State or in reducing its public indebtedness. The New South Wales Governments have sold. £44,000,000 worth of land, which money has gone to swell the revenue of that State instead of being devoted to either of the purposes which I have just indicated. That is not a healthy or wholesome state of things, and until the finances of the mother State are placed in such a position that she has a legitimate revenue with which to meet her true expenditure, a healthy condition of affairs will not be established. 19 | 2

Mr Wilks

- The Minister knows very well that New South Wales cannot sell more than 200,000 acres annually.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I know that the State in question annually receives £2,000,000, partly from land sales and partly from rent. At the present time there is £11,000,000 owing to that State by the conditional purchasers. But I wish for a moment to direct attention to another matter. The leader of the Opposition and the honorable member who immediately preceded me attacked the Tariff in reference to the duty which is placed upon iron. But the honorable member for Coolgardie forgot that there is no duty upon the class of iron to which he referred. A duty upon that class. of iron can be imposed only by proclamation. We must have a bonus first, and then a duty.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Why did the Government not have the pluck to put a duty upon it

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- If we had had the "pluck," as the honorable member puts it, he would immediately have said that we had done what was wrong.

Mr Wilks

- Does the Minister believe in the system of imposing duties by proclamation 1

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I do. To my mind we should do everything that we can to establish industries in the Commonwealth. We have an abundance of coal and iron, and yet we do not produce one horse-shoe from our own iron ore.

Mr Wilks

- If the Ministry believe in it, why did they not impose a straight-out protective duty 1

<page>6631</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- When I was assisting to frame the Dibbs Tariff, the Government put a duty of 10 per cent, upon raw iron. This duty was to take effect twelve months after the introduction of the Tariff. The step was taken in the hope of inducing a company to erect iron works before the expiration of the period mentioned. But at the end of that time the works had not been erected, and the 10 per cent, accordingly went on to the raw material, despite the fact that it was not manufactured in the State at all. The present Government wish to avoid a repetition of that experience. We therefore propose on this occasion to grant a bonus to encourage the development of the iron industry until it has been firmly established, and then by proclamation to impose a duty which will protect it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- There was never a duty upon iron in New South Wales.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member is absolutely wrong. What I am stating is perfectly accurate, and the honorable member is mistaken. The leader of the Opposition has attacked the Government for putting a duty upon raw material in the shape of iron. Probably honorable members will be surprised when I tell them that the Government of which the right honorable and learned member was the head offered to pay a higher price for the manufacture of iron by 10s. to £1 per ton than has been offered by any other Government in New South Wales. In attempting to start iron works in that State, the right honorable and learned member offered to contract for the supply of 150,000 tons of steel rails. To this end he negotiated with Mr. Mitchell, who, I regret to say, has since died. The late Mr. Eddy, who at that time occupied the position of Railways Commissioner in New South Wales, wrote a minute to the effect that the right honorable and learned member was offering a great deal too much for the iron - more than it would cost. When I invited tenders for the supply of steel rails I offered to give the f.o.b. price with insurance added, and to take the price in America or England as the standard. But the right honorable and learned member, when attempting to enter into negotiations for the establishment of the iron industry in New South Wales, wrote -

As several overtures have been made to the Government with the above object in view, I have to state that the Government is prepared to encourage the venture in the following way : -

By giving the promoters a Government contract for 150,000 tons of steel rails, &c, manufactured in the colony from native ores, and deliverable at the rate of 15,000 tons a year ; also, supply of all iron work required by the Government. The Government will be prepared to pay £6 a ton for the steel rails, with a range to £6 5s. if prices go up, and £5 15s. if they go down ; the exact increase or reduction to be calculated each year upon average prices for that period.

That minute was written in 1898. The late Mr. Eddy then wrote a note saying that the present leader of the Opposition was offering too much, and the difference between the amount which Mr. Eddy said the rails would cost and that which Mr. Reid was offering, ranged from 10s. to 20s. per ton. Seeing that the right honorable and learned member was prepared to take this action in New South Wales, I ask whether he is prepared now to stifle the iron industry in Australia?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Why does the right honorable and learned member attack the Government, not for having placed a duty upon iron, but for having made provision under which a duty can be levied! after the payment of the bonus has ceased when there will be no increased cost in its manufacture, and when employment will be

given to our own people? The position is absolutely inconsistent. The right honorable and learned member is the most extraordinary leader of a Government of whom I have ever had any knowledge. One cannot bind him down to anything. In the one instance it will be seen that he offered to give 10s. to £1 per ton more than I offered to give, and yet he now says that the Government have no right to make any provision for the encouragement or protection of the iron industry. I think we have made provision for dealing with that industry in a manner more equitable than that which he proposed. I notice that in one of his recent speeches he says it is not the foreign exporter who pays the duties which are imposed, but the local consumer. If that be so, how is it that during the past few days we have had such an outcry against the Tariff from New Zealand, Fiji, Germany, and other places? If the people within the Commonwealth pay the duty upon New Zealand produce, what does it matter to New Zealanders? If we pay the duty upon Fijian bananas, how are the Fijians prejudiced? Also, if we pay the duty upon goods made in Germany, why should the Germans object to our Tariff?

Mr Brown

- If they pay the duty what does it matter to us?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Then the honorable member should not object to this Tariff. When we impose a duty upon any article for purely revenue purposes, and do not expect its manufacture within our borders to increase, the consumers have to pay the duty, but when we levy a duty for the purpose of protecting our industries and thus get increased competition, that increased competition keeps down the prices so that the people do not pay the duty.

Mr Wilks

- Will this Tariff do that?

<page>6632</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It will in a great many instances.

Mr Wilks

- Then it is a protectionist Tariff?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- No doubt in some cases it is, and as the Prime Minister said at Maitland, he was not going to allow our industries to be destroyed by taking off the protection which they had had.

Mr Wilks

- There will be some industries destroyed in New South Wales by imposing protection on them.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- They will be very few and far between, because there are not many of them.

Mr Wilks

- I know one that employs 1,100 hands.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Is that one which is going to pieces now?

Mr Wilks

- No; it is Mort's Dock and Engineering Company.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It will not go to pieces.

Mr Wilks

- It is a most substantial industry.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The coal industry will go down, too.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I do not want to weary the House, but I desire to read one or two letters which bear on this question. The three boot manufacturing firms to which the leader of the Opposition referred are the largest importers in New South Wales, perhaps some of the largest in Australia, and the slipper importer, Mr. Solomon, is the largest importer in that line. Seventy boot manufacturers met and approved of the Tariff. It was only the importers who objected to it; and they bring in the product of cheap labour to compete with the manufacturers, who employ our own labour.

Mr Wilks

- Is it not a fact that the same meeting increased the prices of boots ?

Mr SPEAKER

- Will the honorable member allow the Minister to make his own speech ?

Mr Wilks

- I am helping him.

<page>6633</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

-I am not aware that that is so. Mr. Jackson, a large bootmaker - and the statement is true for I saw him - has, in consequence of the Tariff, increased the wages of every one of his employes. The Sydney Soap and Candle Company are in full work again, and an increase has been given to the whole of their hands. In other industries the same thing has been done. I propose to read a letter, which I think is an important one, from a large business man who is living in my electorate. He went to New South Wales a year or two ago, and when he was here he was a strong free-trader. This is what he writes to one of my colleagues -

I would have written you before, giving you some experiences gained on this side of the river, but that I thought the debate would have been sooner ended. The free-traders are attacking the Tariff, that is the protection portion of it, but the consumer objects most to the revenue duties. Most articles that are produced in Victoria are still the same retail price, but we hear the most grumbling at the rise in price of sugar, tea, kerosene, and tobacco, and rice. I came here a strong free-trader, but let me give you some results of my business experience which made me a protectionist. Starch first. We paid 26s. 6d. per cwt. for Harper's Silver Star starch in packets, and 27s. 6d. per cwt. in 1-lb. packets, and 28s. per cwt. for Colman's in packets. We sold Colman's at 4d. per lb., net weight, and Harper's at 4d. per gross weight. Yet the public have preferred Harper's, as we have sold ten times as much as Colman's. The increased price we shall have to pay for Harper's is consequent on the revenue duty on the raw material, rice.

Reaper and binder twine. - We have used colonial (Miller's) for the past two years, although we were free to buy the imported without duty. This year, before the Tariff, we had an offer of Italian hemp at special prices and terms, 65/8d. per lb., gross weights, for twine 600 feet to the lb., free on rails Spencer-street, for net cash, as against 7d. per lb., less 5 per cent. and 21/2 per cent, for pure Manilla twine 650 feet to the lb., free on rails Spencer-street. The farmers on this side who have used colonial twine are thoroughly satisfied with the quality, and this year before deciding to buy the colonial twine, we submitted the sample of Italian hemp to several of the best farmers in this district, who, on quality, pronounced in favour of the colonial. This was before the duty of 8s. per cwt. , and our price to the farmers is still the same. If of any use to you, I can send you the correspondence.

We have sold and are selling, in competition with the imported, or rather in preference to the imported, colonial jams, blue, soaps, baking powder, blacking, lemon peel, canned fruits, meats, sauces, &c, and at the price the public prefer them. If the imported were relatively cheaper or of better quality, of course, as business men, we would prefer them, but as they are not we are protectionists.

Then, in draper}, we sell Victorian-made shirts, ties, collars, moles, umbrellas, clothing, underclothing, blankets, flannels, boots, &c. In Sydney, last winter, a firm were making a special line of Victorian blankets and flannels. We find, as with the groceries, that at the relative price, compared with imported goods, the above colonial lines are the better value. The test is the public here prefer them, and we can invariably buy cheaper from the colonial manufacturer than from the importer.

The importers have their associations - I will not say rings - and regulate their terms, and discounts and prices - protection for them while the discounts from the manufacturers, trade as well as cash, vary with nearly every one of them. We have to pay for our goods and so have the public, and it is immaterial to either whether the profits enrich the importer and the foreign manufacturer, or the colonial one. But most Australians will prefer to enrich their own. Are the public of Victoria - the bulk of them - worse dressed, wearing Victorian clothing, hats, shirts, ties, and boots than their brothers in New South Wales ? We venture to say no, and at no greater cost. The so-called "bogus" duties have raised the price of oats in New South Wales, by shutting out those from New Zealand. The American flour and the Chinese eggs have also been shut out to the benefit of the local producer.

Mr Wilks

- Who says that?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I shall not mention the name, because it may do the writer harm. It is a very large firm.

Mr Wilks

- I thought it was a political writer to the Age.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I shall now read a letter which is addressed to myself by a gentleman in the farming districts, and which refers to the speech of the honorable and learned member for Illawarra -

I have been reading a report of Mr. Fuller's speech on the effect of the Tariff on the dairying industry. I hope it will not be allowed to go unnoticed, and that some member will go into the matter vigorously in refuting his statements. If there is one of our primary producing interests more than another that will benefit by the Tariff, it is the one followed by such a large number of his electors. It is true in a sense that the butter producer will not benefit to the same extent as others engaged in the dairying industry, but even he will in a measure obtain advantages, for even now, if there is any scarcity, and when he hopes to have the market for himself for his reduced supply, it is denied him, and butter rolls in from New Zealand and America. It may be true that the dairy farmers in the northern portion of Illawarra, who supply Sydney daily with fresh milk will not benefit, but those who are now engaged in parts more remote and apply their attention to cheese-making, condensing, and the bacon industry, must benefit in a very large measure. It is wise, too, to consider the other important branches of the industry, for I am of opinion, in a very short while, if we do not turn our attention to other branches, and use our largely increasing milk supply for other purposes than butter, we shall not only have a surplus in the spring and summer months when we export to meet the shortage in the old country in their winter, but we shall have a surplus in the winter also, when individual supplies are limited, and when they have, up to the present, obtained fair prices. Should this prediction come true, our farmers will cry very loudly when, in winter, they have to export a surplus to meet the spring supplies of the United Kingdom and the whole of Europe in London. It is true, as he points out, that we started the industry; but it was in Victoria it became developed while we were sleeping. It was the policy of Victoria which produced an article fit for export, and it was Victoria that established the market for our surplus in London. We followed.

Mr Wilks

- Who is "we"?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I am speaking of Mr. Hay.

Mr Wilks

- That was Mr. Fuller's political opponent.

<page>6634</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The letter continues -

But it was the Victorian policy which awakened our energies. Even at this early period, and before the Tariff has actually passed, there is sterling evidence of increased activity in the other branches of the industry. In Saturday's Daily Telegraph you may have noticed that at Singleton a meeting was held in order to pave the way for cheese-making and condensing. The honorable member for Coolgardie said that the milk could not be kept in Western Australia. I know of other centres where steps are being taken to do likewise. At Berry, this week, I met about 300 farmers, and submitted proposals to pay them 11/4d per gallon for milk for condensing over that which they could, under the most economic management, obtain for the same milk made into butter. By way of illustration, let me put it roughly to you, in order to convey the advantage of condensing, instead of butter making: At our factory at Berry we turn out about 900 tons of butter yearly. 11/4d per gallon increase for milk is equal to about 3d. per lb. on butter, and 3d. per lb. is equal to about £27 per ton; and that, on £900 tons, is equal to about £24,000. That amount will be distributed from this one factory. Honorable members opposite know the Messrs. Hay. They know that they have spent a great deal of money on their property, and that they have been most liberal to all their farmers. They know that they have established these butter making works, and they know also that the proposal now made will be carried out. The Messrs. Hay can carry it out, and they are taking steps under the Tariff to do it. The writer adds - This is a large benefit, and there is every

evidence of its being readily accepted. I need not go into the other advantages which are likely to accrue to those engaged in the industry. Those are two letters which prove once more that an ounce of fact is better than a great amount of theory. Those are letters I have received from stable men. Now, I have another letter here from Parsons Brothers, of Sydney, and I was surprised at what they had to tell me. I have heard it said that it is impossible to grow coffee in Australia, but I find that since the Tariff was put on they have been offered three tons of coffee from Cairns. They are negotiating at the present time to get this coffee, and the sample is as good as anything they require. If the Tariff remains in force they are prepared to get the whole of their supplies from Queensland.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Has the coffee been grown since the Tariff was put on ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- No, it was grown before under the Queensland Tariff, but they had no market for it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable gentleman said that they got it from Cairns under the Tariff.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- No, it is there, and since the Tariff has been announced offers have been made to go into this industry on a large scale. I stated that I was not going to weary the House any more than I could help in quoting figures. I have a large quantity of matter here which, I think, would show clearly, as has already been shown, that where an article is worth protecting the duties imposed do not ultimately increase the price to the consumer. That is absolutely true.

Mr Wilks

- This Tariff is not protectionist enough for the honorable gentleman.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I should like to see it still more protectionist, but I cannot have everything I want. I have a paper here which gives a list of articles which were protected under the 15 and 10 per cent, duties of the Dibbs Tariff, and the prices of which were cheaper during the existence of that Tariff than they were during the existence of free-trade. This is the list -

I know that before the Sydney Soap and Candle Company, and Arnott's Biscuit Company were in existence the prices for these manufactures were from 7d. to 8d. per lb. under the rings of the importers before the articles were protected - this and protection and the internal manufacture cut the prices of those articles down to 4½d. and od. per lb.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Nonsense !

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is an absolute fact, and the honorable member cannot deny that it is quite true.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I know the contrary.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is also true that when the right honorable the leader of the Opposition took off a portion of the duties, the price went up again under the importers' rings, and now the prices are coming down again.

Mr Wilks

- Does not the honorable gentleman know that Mr. Arnott is a great free-trader ^

<page>6635</page>

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Yes, but he takes advantage of every protectionist Tariff that is brought in, and I do not know that he is now quite such an ardent free-trader as he was formerly. I wish to say now that the right honorable the leader of the Opposition in his speech in Sydney, made an attack upon myself. He said that I will never go before the electors of New South Wales again, that I am going to take some snug billet, and that Mr. Barton is going to do the same thing. I hurl that insinuation back at the right honorable gentleman, and I say that if he waits until I take a billet, he will wait until he is a very much older man than he is now. I intend to go back to the people of New South Wales. I have lived my political life amongst them and I shall see the right honorable gentleman out of it so far as politics are concerned. His assertion was an insult, and I take it as an insult. That I came here for the purpose of accepting a billet of any kind is an

absolute untruth. I have followed on the track of the right honorable gentleman for the last twenty years and I beat him at last. I shall follow his track if I live so long and beat him and stop him from hoodwinking the people of this community.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Will the honorable gentleman read what was said? I do not think it bears the interpretation he has put upon it.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The right honorable gentleman is reported to have said that -

He would take level betting that Sir William Lyne would put himself where he would not have to face the electors.

What does that mean ? There can be only one meaning to it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Read on.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I shall not read any more. I have read it, and it is insulting enough. As to the effect of this Tariff, I say that if I had the framing of the Tariff I would do without the revenue duties. As a protectionist, I do not approve of them, but when we are forced into the position that we have to raise money, we must adopt these duties, and we must raise the money in the best way we can. I venture to think that unless this Parliament adheres to a combined Tariff, a Tariff that will not be absolutely protectionist or absolutely freetrade, it will do a gross injustice to a number of the smaller States. I am quite satisfied that that is not the intention of the people of the community who entered into this bargain, whatever the intention of honorable members sitting on the opposite benches may be! It is all very well for the honorable member for North Sydney to say that he could do with a Tariff of- I think it was £7,500,000.

Mr Thomson

- No, it was over £8,000,000.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- But the honorable member must know that by his proposal Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia would be thrown deeper into the financial mire than they are now, and would have thrown upon them the responsibility of imposing direct taxation

I say that is not fair: If we return a large sum of money to New South Wales, they have use for the whole of it, and they can apply some of the money they are getting from their land sales to a redemption fund, to pay off a portion of their indebtedness.

Mr Thomson

- They ought to do so.

Mr Wilks

- They have already anticipated it.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is a very good thing, because, as I think I showed before, they have never had a legitimate revenue in New South Wales, and they never will have until they get the advantage of a Tariff such as we propose.

Mr Wilks

- The honorable member declared a surplus under the same policy.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I declared a surplus after the right honorable gentleman had borrowed nearly £2,000,000 of money, and put it to the credit of revenue.

Mr Wilks

- The honorable member did the same thing.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I did not borrow one penny and credit it to revenue, but I did devote some money to a debit fund in connexion with the contingent expenditure caused by the outbreak of the plague. Neither the people of New South Wales nor the people of any other State can expect to be more lightly taxed than their neighbours in the Commonwealth. Under the peculiar circumstances in which we are now placed, we have to depend on one general uniform Tariff. It occurs to my mind just now that the honorable member for North Sydney, who the other night was deploring the fact that the Tariff was too high, last week signed

a contract for the building of a large clothing factory in Castlereagh-street, Sydney.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Suppose the honorable member did, what of that ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable member for North Sydney signed a contract last week for the building of a big clothing factory, which would never have been thought of but for the fact that there was to be a Tariff something like this.

Mr Thomson

- The honorable member evidently knows more about the matter than I do myself .

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

-I do know something about the matter, because I happen to have seen the contract.

<page>6636</page>

Mr Thomson

- Will the honorable member allow me to say-

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member for North Sydney may explain later on if he so desires.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I mention this matter in order to show what is being done at the present time under this dreadful Tariff, at which the Victorians are trembling - the Tariff under which New South Wales is going to be ruined, and wages are to be reduced to the lowest possible depth. Indeed, it would appear from some statements that are made that under this Tariff we are not to have prosperity of any kind. At the same time, the honorable member for North Sydney is assisting in starting industries under the Tariff, as any man with his wits about him would do, because I have no doubt that New South Wales, with its coal-fields, will be the great manufacturing centre of Australia. Victoria can supply some things which New South Wales cannot produce, and Tasmania can ; Send her barley, oats, and potatoes, while other States can provide what New South "Wales cannot grow for herself. Taking Australia as a whole, I think the Tariff will do great good, and that the people of New South Wales will realize that that State will prove to be the great commercial centre of Australia.

Mr Wilks

- How will the Victorians like that?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Victoria is more self-contained at the present time than is New South Wales.

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member's anti-federal speeches were very different.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- My anti-federal speeches were not different, and the honorable member has not read them, or he would not say so, or would not have played such antics as he has since he came into the House. The accusations made against the Prime Minister are uncalled for, ungenerous, and unreasonable, as are the accusations made against the Ministry for bringing in a Tariff which should receive the support of the gentlemen from whose speeches I have quoted. It ill becomes those honorable members to now make an attack which may possibly mean the striking out of the revenue-producing duties, or some of them, thereby making the Tariff still more protective. The leader of the Opposition said in Sydney that he would put duties of 7£ per cent, on all necessities, and 15 per cent, on all luxuries without a free list; but such a Tariff, without a free list, would bear more heavily on the poorer people than the proposals of the Government.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What did the Prime Minister say ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- Never mind what the Prime Minister said. The proposals of the leader of the Opposition would be no relief to the poor man. A Tariff, with a free list of £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 in value, and with, in some cases, duties of only 10 per cent., is much easier for the poorer classes. I shall not detain honorable members longer. Had I spoken earlier I should have gone into the question of wages and two or three other matters, but at this late stage, when the debate is pretty well exhausted, and when we desire to

bring it to a conclusion to-morrow night, I have contented myself with exposing the inconsistencies of honorable members opposite, who have ventured to hurl at us the accusations with which I have dealt, although they themselves live in such flimsy glass houses.

Mr Thomson

- In making a personal explanation, I can only deprecate the introduction of private affairs into a debate of this sort. I have already said that the honorable member apparently knows more about the transaction to which he has referred than I know myself. It is quite true that, with others interested, I did sign a contract for the erection of a building to be leased to a firm in Sydney, though I think the statement that that building would not have been leased but for the Tariff is altogether incorrect. I do not know absolutely, but I think such a statement is altogether incorrect, because the negotiations began many months ago.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- How long ago ?

Mr Thomson

- I cannot say, but it was a number of months ago. I may further tell honorable members that the tender for that building was submitted before the Tariff was declared, and if the contractor had not been able to get his supplies without the advanced prices under the Tariff, the work would not have been undertaken. I make this explanation as much for the others interested as for myself, but I do deprecate the introduction of these private matters into an important debate on the finances and federal Tariff of Australia.

<page>6637</page>

Mr E SOLOMON

- At this late hour I do not intend to take up much time. I have listened very attentively to the many speeches on both sides, which have been of an educational nature, and from which I have gained a good deal of information. More particularly would I mention the speech the other evening of the honorable and learned friend for Indi, who dealt with the subject of liberty. To my mind, liberty is expressed in two words. I take it that liberty is embodied in that glorious institution under which we have the honour of being gathered here - an institution of the most democratic nature, namely, that of responsible government. - government, which is carried on for the people by the people. Therefore, we should certainly show a large amount of liberality in dealing with a question such as this Federal Tariff, and should so arrange the duties that they will not press more heavily upon one class than upon another. We should deal with the question of freetrade and protection in a national spirit, and should treat all the States with liberality. As far as Western Australia is concerned, it was understood that there would be scarcely any difference between the policy of the Federal Government and free-trade principles as understood in that State. It was expected that the Tariff would be of a uniform character, and that the duties would not be more than 15 per cent, all round. I appeal to the Minister of Defence, who was in Western Australia at the time that State was being urged to join the federal union, to bear me out in saying that the impression there was that the Federal Tariff would be of such a character as would insure a sufficient amount of revenue for carrying on the Commonwealth, and at the same time not press too heavily upon the taxpayers. The honorable member for Gwydir stated last evening that there were only 2,100 persons engaged in connexion with the mines of Western Australia.

Mr Cruickshank

- I meant 21,000.

Mr E SOLOMON

- I think it is a pity that honorable members, when dealing with figures of this kind, do not make themselves acquainted with the facts beforehand. I have looked up the matter, and I find that instead of there being 2,100 persons employed on the mines of Western Australia there are 21,836. The total number of persons engaged in mining throughout the whole of the Commonwealth is something like 118,898. Turning to factories we find that the males employed in Victoria number 44,041, in New South Wales 47,063, in Queensland 27,200, in South Australia 12,941, in Western Australia 8,641, and in Tasmania 3,438, making a total of 143,234. The females employed in Victoria number 16,029, in New South Wales 8,538, in South Australia 2,214, in Western Australia 7,680, and in Tasmania 191. The total number of females thus employed is 27,785, and the grand total, is 171,109 males and females. Out of the above numbers in New South Wales and Victoria 36,395 are under the age of twenty. The honorable member for Richmond stated that the Government of Western Australia had imposed certain taxation

within the last few days. That is perfectly true, and that action has been rendered necessary in order to make up the amount which will be lost to the State as the result of entering the Federation. The Government of Western Australia have now put on the duties that were taken off some time ago. The people of that State are very much disappointed with the Tariff, and I feel sure that if it had been known before we entered into the Federation that such a Tariff would have been proposed, that State would not have joined the federal union. It was under some degree of pressure that that State entered the federation, but it did so on the understanding that it would receive special consideration in connexion with the Inter-State duties. There was also an implied promise, of which, I am sorry to say, no notice has been taken, with regard to surveys being made for the construction of a transcontinental railway line. No provision is made in the Estimates for the expenditure that would be incurred in carrying out this work, and thus an implied promise has, so far, remained unfulfilled. Western Australia stood out of the federal movement for a considerable time, and it was only on the understanding I have mentioned that the State came into it.

Sir John Forrest

- The people on the goldfields threatened separation.

<page>6638</page>

Mr E SOLOMON

- I desire to give a resume of the good that has been done in Western Australia since we commenced, reducing the customs duties there, with the object, ultimately, of approaching as nearly as possible to free-trade. The first move in the direction of reducing the Tariff was made in 1893, and in 1895 and 1896 further reductions were made.

Sir John Forrest

- All of them on items that free-traders wish to get revenue out of.

Mr E SOLOMON

- This action was taken to a certain extent under pressure from the people on the gold-fields, with a view to secure what was called a free breakfast table. Western Australia has progressed in every way - in the way of population, and in exports and imports, owing to the reduction of the duties and other causes. The opening of the goldfields, of course, had a great influence in this direction, and our object in reducing duties was to make living as cheap as possible, and thus offer inducements to our present population to remain with us, in the event of the mines becoming worked out. The population of Western Australia in 1890 was 70,000 ; in 1901 it was 190,000. So that it will be seen that in ten years we had an increase of population of 120,000 people. Our imports in 1891 were £1,280,093. In 1900 they had risen to £5,962,178. The exports in 1891 were £799,466, and in 1900 they were £6,852,054. The total trade in 1891 was £2,079,599. In 1900 the total trade was £12,814,232. So that honorable members will see that the total trade had risen from £2,000,000 in 1891, to over £12,000,000 in 1900. In respect of gold, we exported in 1891 the small amount of £115,182. In 1900 our gold exports had risen to £6,007,610. So that nearly the whole of the total gold exports for one year were £6,000,000, as against only £115,000 ten years before. Our timber exports in 1891 were £89,176, in 1900 they had risen to £458,864. Our exports of wool in 1891, were 8,783,073 lbs. In 1900 they were 9,094,743 lbs. Thus I have mentioned our three principal exports. . It will also be noticed that there has been a great increase in the Customs revenue. In 1891 our Customs revenue was £237,686. In 1900 it was £978,170. I should like to mention the amount of the trade between Western Australia and Victoria, to show that to a great extent we have assisted this State. Of course I mention Victoria because the largest volume of trade between Western Australia and any other State, is done with Victoria. The imports from Victoria between 1895 to 1900 were £9,834,664. Those six years show a yearly average of trade of £1,639,110. At the same time we exported to a large amount. Our exports to Victoria from 1895 to 1900 were £8,257,952- an average of £1,376,325 - showing a difference in favour of imports to Western Australia of £262,785 per year for six years. So that the average per year in favour of the imports from Victoria into Western Australia was to the tune of: £262,785. That shows the dimensions of the business between Victoria and Western Australia. I mention these figures to show what has been the effect, so far as Western, Australia is concerned, of the repealing of the duties. I do not think it is necessary to go over the Western Australian free list, because that has been done sufficiently by the* Minister of Defence and the honorable member for Coolgardie. According to a section in the Commonwealth Act, when Inter-State free-trade came into force we were not

able to increase our duties but had to make a reduction of 20 per cent. every year, so that at the end of five years we shall be on an equal footing with the other States of Australia. I should like to mention that our shipping has increased to a very large extent. The total shipping inwards to Western Australia in 1891 was. 1,045,555 tons. In 1900 it was 3,232,028. tons. Our revenue from all sources in 1890 was £414,314. In 1899 it was £2,633,081. The surplus revenue over expenditure for the year 1899 was £236,633. So that we could have still have increased our free list as our population increased. Our land settlement on the 31st December, 1899, was as follows : - There was in process of alienation or absolutely alienated, ant area of 96,793,881 acres. The selection in agricultural areas amounted to 333,447 1/4 acres. Our progress in agri- culture was also very defined.

Sir John Forrest

- There were protective duties to assist it, though.

Mr Watkins

- Western Australia has; not been doing badly under protection.

Mr E SOLOMON

- We were reducing the Tariff.

Sir John Forrest

- On things which we did not produce we reduced the duties.

Mr E SOLOMON

- It was a very low Tariff on articles which we did not produce. I do not think our highest duty was more than 15 per cent.

<page>6639</page>

Sir John Forrest

- There was a duty of £1 a ton on flour, and there was a duty on potatoes and other articles of food which we could produce.

Mr E SOLOMON

- I will show what the duties were on things which we did not produce. Take wheat first of all. For 1890 to 1891 Our production of wheat was 465,389 bushels. In 1899-1900 it was 966,600 bushels.

Mr Watkins

- That was protected, was it not?

Sir John Forrest

- Yes; there was a duty of 6d. a bushel on barley.

Mr E SOLOMON

- That duty has always been on, and yet we have had to import As to maize : in 1899-1900 we produced 1,526 bushels, and in 1899-1900, 2,263 bushels. Of oats, in 1899-1900 we produced 38,791 bushels, and in 1899-1900, 73,555 bushels.

Mr Watkins

- Evidently Western Australia was doing very well under protection.

Mr E SOLOMON

- No doubt we have done very well, owing to the increase of population, and we have endeavoured to keep our people there by making articles of consumption as cheap as possible, so as to makeup for inconvenience in other directions. In Western Australia we have been giving land away to induce people to settle upon it, and now that it is proposed to put duties upon implements, I have received letters from all parts of the States, protesting against their imposition as a hardship upon those who have just settled upon the soil, and are only commencing to feel their feet. I have also other letters in regard to the Tariff, some of which I shall read. The following is a letter, dated 11th October, from a chemist in Fremantle, who says : -

I take the liberty of writing you on one gross piece of flagrant jobber}' which is evident in the proposed Tariff, although it may very likely escape the notice of the ordinary lay mind.

Glassware N.E.I., 8d. per cubic foot outside measurement, and 15 per cent. ad valorem.

This includes bottles, and will bring the cost of ordinary 8 oz. bottles, which is the size generally used, from 17 1/3d. per dozen (1s. 5 1/2d.) to 5s. in Western Australia, 5d. each. Before the Tariff was tabled they came in here free. Therefore you will see what an enormous impost they have put on this line, which so far as I know will benefit the Melbourne Glass Bottle Company only, the principal shareholders of which

are Messrs. Felton and F. S. Grimwade, M.L.C. The freight on this sort of goods is in itself a good protection, and say 10 per cent. duty would perhaps be reasonable, but the 8d. per foot outside measurement of case, straw, and package is an imposition. Granted that competition in the manufacture may bring down the price, but in the meantime we are being victimized, and will press hard not only on the chemists, but public and friendly societies. On fancy glassware it would be perhaps justifiable, but on bottles, which are so largely used in this country, it is outrageous. If a person had to buy, say 1s. worth of any article, and had to pay 5d. for the bottle to put it in he would object very strongly. There are several other lines which are protected over 300 per cent. on their cost in England, which I could point out, only the necessary technical details would take too much time. Most of them are manufactured in Melbourne, such as acetic acid. The present Tariff is over 300 per cent. on the cost of the article at home. I am not alluding to vinegar, but the acid itself. The Tariff is purely protective, and not revenue ; and will take away population from Western Australia to Melbourne, and depreciate household property here. So far as can be seen here the general opinion is that it will lead to an agitation for the removal of the five years sliding scale which we have, and if that goes, we will have to cease public works, and the people will have to leave here for the East.

Sir John Forrest

-Where does the jobbery come in ?

Mr E SOLOMON

- I suppose that is the way he expresses his opinion that the duty is altogether too heavy, as it will almost make it necessary for him to close his business. With regard to the duty on milk I have a letter which concludes with this remark -

With the usual increase in trade next year, Western Australia in its small population would contribute in duty, collected on condensed milk alone (at 6s. per case), a three-hundredth part of the total revenue required for the purposes of federation.

The following letter is from the Secretary of the Perth -Chamber of Commerce : -

Perth, 23rd October, 1901

I have the honour by direction to inform you that at a special meeting of this Chamber held last night the following resolution was carried, and I was instructed to transmit same to you: - "That in the opinion of this Chamber the Commonwealth Tariff as framed, is not calculated to serve the best interests of this State, it being absolutely essential that foodstuffs and machinery and mechanical requisites be admitted free in order to promote the development of the natural resources of the country and the prosperity of the people.

Sir John Forrest

- Foodstuffs never have been free there.

<page>6640</page>

Mr E SOLOMON

- Complaints against this Tariff come from all the States, and though I know from experience that a Tariff never gives universal satisfaction, yet, as we are now framing duties to apply to the whole Commonwealth, we should try to make the Tariff such as will satisfy the majority of the population. As it is now, the majority have to pay for the up-keep of the industries in, at least, one of the States.

The following extract from the Age of 17th September, 1897, in regard to the American trusts may prove interesting in this connexion : -

Every now and then there is a violent ebullition of public wrath in America (writes our New York correspondent) against the exactions and tyrannies practised by the trusts, and an attempt, generally futile, is made to curb their voracity. The Tobacco Trust is a particularly malign institution, and recently it has been put through the trying ordeal of a criminal prosecution. The District Attorney of New York took action, much to the delight of the public, against the directors and officers of the American Tobacco Company for conspiracy to restrain trade. This company practically controls the huge cigarette business of the country. It attempted to crush independent manufacturers in the most shameful manner. It just said to the retailers, " If you deal in other people's cigarettes at all, we will not supply you with ours, and you must have ours or cease to exist." After a long hearing, the jury failed to agree on a verdict ; ten out of twelve were for a conviction.

In the Age of 28th June, 1899, the following statement appears : -

Unless something is done, and promptly, economic liberty will be extinct in the American Republic. The New York Journal of Commerce says that the total capital in trusts and combinations, held in the form of stocks and bonds, now reaches the enormous sum of 5,832,882,842 dollars, and that the trusts embrace close on 90 per cent, of the manufacturing and mechanical industries of the United States. It has become practically impossible for any private individual in America to commence business, either as a manufacturer or producer. He must enter through the gateway of a trust, or keep out of it altogether.

Then, in the Age of 6th September, 1899, it is stated that -

There are signs that the democratic party in the United States will make the abolition of trusts the principal plank in their platform for the next presidential campaign. The operation of the trusts is beginning to be felt very severely, "for more than 25,000 commercial travellers are, or are about to be, dismissed from their employment. Where there is no competition there is no need for "drummers," as the ambassadors of commerce are termed in the United States, and all the touting for orders can be done by letter.

I find that the following are put forward as some existing Victorian trusts, which will, to a certainty, cover all Australia., and others, besides the flour trust, the formation of which can be foreseen : -

Nail and barbed-wire works, comprising all such works in Victoria.

The Australian Paper Mills Company, which owns all the paper mills and the strawboard mill i in Victoria.

The American Tobacco Company, which in. Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, has cigarette factories; 60 per cent, of the share capital of each, being held by the American Tobacco Trust.. These three establishments will certainly be combined into one, and two of the factories closed.

Reaper and binder twine factories (two) act. under agreement to quote the same price.

Shot manufacturers (two) act under agreement, to charge the same price.

Candle factories (three) act under agreement to. charge the same price.

Colonial Sugar Refining Company owns, refineries in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and. Adelaide, and has only two small competitors gives discounts to buyers who bind themselves to. deal exclusively with company. Has .absorbed, competitors in the past, and will probably absorb, its present competitors if protection be given..

There is only one other matter which I' desire to mention, and it has reference to. our national system of education. It is an. item of 'duty that possibly may have been overlooked. We know that the States have done everything within their power to provide free education all over Australia.. Schools exist throughout the country and in some cases children are required to walk, several miles in order to attend them, f find, however, that under this Tariff a duty of 25 per cent, is imposed upon exercise books and copy books used in theseschools.

Sir John Forrest

- They are madehere.

Mr E SOLOMON

- That is immaterial. This duty means an increase perhaps of 1d in the price of a book, the cost of which is usually 3d. While the States on the one hand are providing free education, the Commonwealth is imposing this duty on school requisites. Pencils and pens and slates are admitted free, but the Government have omitted to place exercise and copy books on. the free list.

Mr Barton

- Does not the honorable member think that exercise books can be produced where the children are produced ?

<page>6641</page>

Mr E SOLOMON

- We might as well say that they can produce the money required to give free education to the children.. I do not intend to take up the time of the House any longer. In supporting the leader of the Opposition, I feel that he was. in honour bound to take up the stand which he has adopted. It was promised throughout the States that the Tariff would to a. large extent be on revenue producing lines and when it is found that it is of a protective character, the leader of the Opposition) could not honorably adopt a course other than that which he is now pursuing. It is far better that he should come here with a straight-out vote of want of confidence than haggle about the matter without any definite object.

Sir John Forrest

- The Tariff will not produce enough as it is. What are we to do in regard to the deficiency if it is reduced ?

Mr E SOLOMON

- I have no doubt from the figures which have been quoted by honorable members on this side of the House that the deficiency could be made good. It has taken the Government a considerable time to prepare the Tariff, and every credit is given them for the work they have had to perform. At the same time a principle is involved in regard to the way in which the Tariff has been framed, and it is necessary for honorable members on this side of the House to take up their present position.

Debate (on motion by Mr. Watkins) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Victorian Fifth Contingent - Miners in Western Australia - Personal Explanation.

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr PAGE

- I desire to ask the Prime Minister whether the following report, which appears in the Age of this morning's issue in regard to the Wilmansrust disaster, is correct : -

The Prime Minister yesterday made public property certain sections of the report of Major McKnight to the Victorian Military Commandant, supplied on 21st October, giving an account of the Wilmansrust disaster and the alleged mutiny ; in the Fifth Contingent. The document supplied to the press is an emasculated one, passages relating to the alleged mutiny being cut out. Ministers justify this course by saying that the information given is not over pleasant, and is only second or third hand. " Seeing," adds Mr. Barton to this explanation, " that General Beatson has been removed, it does not seem fair to publish hearsay evidence."

Mr Barton

- I did not say that the information given was not pleasant.

Mr PAGE

- It would have been better if the Prime Minister had published nothing rather than have allowed such an emasculated report to be given to the press. I thought also that honorable members of this House would have seen the report before any portion of it was handed over to the press. Now that a portion of it has been put before the public I should like to see the whole report. I know why it has been emasculated. I am so accustomed to military arrangements that I feel as confident as if I had seen the report itself that there is something in it which is derogatory to the Imperial officer, and that it is owing to the influence exercised by Imperial officers in Australia that portion of it has been kept back. I should like to ask the Prime Minister if he intends to lay the full report on the table of the House. As soon as the want of confidence motion has been disposed of, I propose to move that the whole of the correspondence relating to the Wilmansrust disaster be laid on the table of the House, so that honorable members and the public generally may be able to judge for themselves.

<page>6642</page>

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- As reference has been made on one or two occasions to the figures which I quoted last night in my speech to the motion of censure, I should like to set myself right with the House. In dealing with the number of miners and persons employed in factories in Australia, I quoted certain figures, I should like to explain that in preparing my notes I marked certain passages in Mr. Coghlan's Seven Colonies, and requested my clerk to type-write the figures given there. In doing so, however, he inadvertently set forth that the number of miners employed in Western Australia was 2,100, instead of 21,000. I read out the figures as they were given to me, and thus the error in question occurred. I stated that the figures were taken from Mr. Coghlan's Seven Colonies. I thought at the time that some mistake had been made and accordingly looked the matter up. I should, like, therefore, to correct my statement as it appears in Hansard.

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie). I think there is a great deal in the remarks of the honorable member for Maranoa. The custom appears to be growing up in regard to federal matters of giving official correspondence to the newspapers before Parliament has had an opportunity of perusing it. That is a course of action which is very much to be deprecated. Parliament has the first right to see documents of public interest which are in the possession of Ministers. It is not for the representative of the Age newspaper to go to the Prime Minister and obtain official information which Parliament has been denied

an opportunity of seeing. All correspondence relating to matters of public importance should be laid upon the table of this House, and all newspapers should have an equal opportunity of obtaining the fullest information regarding it so that the public may be able to judge of the merits of any particular case. In one newspaper today it is stated that the Prime Minister yesterday made public certain sections of the official report dealing with the matter mentioned by the honorable member for Maranoa. The honorable member has stated his belief that there is something of importance in this connexion to which publicity has not been given. There should be no suspicion of anything of that kind. The fullest information should be given to Parliament in regard to that matter so that honorable members may be enabled to judge whether any wrong action has been taken. Upon several occasions I have noticed that one newspaper has published information which has apparently been denied to others.

Mr Barton

- There is no favour given to one newspaper over another. Any one who says that there is - a thing which the honorable member will not say - is stating what is untrue.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It appears to me that a number of inspired paragraphs regarding the intentions of the Government appear in a certain newspaper. I think that that paper receives its information from the members of the Ministry.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- It is a protected factory.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It may be. All I wish to point out is that in matters of this kind, Parliament should have an opportunity of reading official correspondence before certain newspapers are allowed to publish portions of it.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I am the first to acknowledge the right of Parliament to information upon all matters of public interest where the papers are of sufficient importance to warrant them being laid upon the table. There are, however, a number of documents which pass through every department from day to day, and in regard to which, as it is not advisable to lay them upon the table and print them, it is only right that information should be given to the public through the press, so long as that is fairly done. The honorable member for Macquarie is labouring under a very great misapprehension if he thinks that any distinction is observed between the newspapers in this particular. No member of the Government desires to give one section of the press an advantage over another. The fact of the matter is that I am either the happy recipient or the victim of two daily visits from representatives of the press. They all come at the same time, and receive the same information. If they differ in their statements it may be because there is more ingenuity in that portion of the press which supports the honorable member than there is in any other portion. We know that news must be given, but we do not always know how it is made. The honorable member for Macquarie may be able to tell me a good deal about that, but I shall not cross-examine him. Upon the general question, all I have to say is that a report came in from Major McKnight which told us about the affair at Wilmansrust, in which he was a participator. He also made statements about the other matter, but not one of those statements was made by him from his own personal knowledge. In one case the statements had value because they came from a man who had seen what took place; but, in the other case, they had no value whatever, because they consisted only of what he had heard.

Sir John Forrest

- And were secondhand, too.

<page>6643</page>

Mr BARTON

- Yes; second-hand and sometimes third-hand. I drew the dividing line by giving to the press what had some authentication from this gallant officer's own observation, and by not publishing, what he had simply heard, because what he had heard was subject to all the variations of opinion as to whether it was authentic or not. At the time that I received and read this report a matter which had agitated Australia very considerably had been dealt with, and dealt with in a manner which, I think, all will acknowledge was a happy termination to a most unpleasant incident. That is to say, the men who had suffered the condemnation of very severe sentences, and whose sentences had been commuted had, upon a further

investigation - which investigation was, I think, very largely, due to the action of this Government- been released, whilst at the same time the officer whose conduct had been complained of, had been superseded in his command. The matter had, therefore, come to a happy termination, and I did not think it right that the whole incident should be opened again on a mere hearsay report. I shall not have the slightest objection to lay the whole of the correspondence dealing with this matter upon the table, if only because of one remark by the honorable member for Maranoa, who has stated: his belief that some influence on the part of Imperial officers has been brought to bear upon the Government. I can assure him that this Government is not subject to the influence of any Imperial officer in any of its actions, and is not likely to be. I shall lay the entire report upon the table, so that any suspicion of that nature may be promptly set at rest. I could, of course, show the document privately to any honorable member, and that might be an advisable course to take in the case of those who would like to see it, because they might agree with me that there are some terms used in it which it would be better not to publish. But in my judgment those terms have no reference whatever to the merits of the trouble which has occurred, which merits have been so amply met by the decision that has been arrived at in England. There is no desire on my part to give official correspondence to the press before it can be given to Parliament. Generally speaking, it is only in minor matters - where it is not necessary to lay documents upon the table - that I do that. Where documents are of sufficient importance to justify Ministers in laying them upon the table, I think honorable members will say that I have generally recognised my duty to Parliament. If any honorable member asks to see this report it will be placed at his disposal, and he can read it for himself, and then exercise his own judgment as to whether it should be laid upon the table or not. With that end in view, I shall keep it back for a few days, and if there be then any general desire that it should be laid upon the table I shall adopt that course.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

<page>6644</page>

23:30:00

House adjourned at 11.30 p.m.