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1901-05-23

Senate

The President took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address in Reply

Debate resumed from 22nd May (vide page 167) on motion by Senator Eraser -

That the Address in Reply to His Excellency's speech, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted.

Upon which Senator Millen had moved, by way of amendment -

That the proposed address be amended by the addition of the following words: - "but while fully concurring in the proposal for the gradual reduction and ultimate relinquishment of the kanaka labour at present within the Commonwealth, are of opinion that the further importation of such labour should be at once prohibited."

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- This debate, I think we may fairly say, will be of great value. It will enable an interchange of views to be made- amongst the members of this Senate, many of whom, until they assembled here, were personally unacquainted with each other, and, naturally, not acquainted with each other's political views. I think I may fairly say that we have great reason to be gratified not only by the tone and temper of the debate, but by the vigour and intelligence with which views bearing on matters, many of them of very great moment, have been presented. In the natural differences which are incidental to the varying views of men dealing with matters of public business, I feel that there is at any rate a fair unanimity, that all of us may experience a sense of great pride in being members of this the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. However effective pomp and pageantry may be, there always seems to me something more impressive in the mere coining together of the representatives of the people in the first Parliament after the inauguration of this new nation of ours. I am sure those of us who have been permitted by the voice of the people of this country to take an active part in the progress of the events which have led to this great result experience a sense of profound satisfaction in the accomplishment of the union which has culminated in the convening of this Parliament. I feel that it is only proper that our minds should not lose sight of the successful accomplishment of this great union - that these great communities differing in many material and important respects, experiencing frictions and jealousies, many of them inevitable from long years of separation, should come together into this union cemented by goodwill, and we hope pledged to a long career of prosperity and peace. I join therefore in the felicitations of the Government in the earlier passages of the speech which is under consideration. I particularly join in the felicitations so far as they express satisfaction that this union is, I think I may say, the crowning glory of the most illustrious reign in all history, and we feel especially gratified that Queen Victoria, the most, gracious, and probably since the days, of King Alfred the most popular sovereign who has filled the throne of England, should have lived long enough to witness the achievement of our union.. A greater monument to that great reign, it would be impossible to conceive. I think that there is not one word too much, not one syllable of exaggeration, in the passages of the Governor-General's speech dealing with that aspect of the great national events which have brought us together. But I must also say that I think the most signal distinction of that great work is the fact that it is the work of the people of this country, as no other piece of legislation, as no other fabric in relation to government, has ever been. It was conceived by the people, framed by the people, and enacted in the best sense by the people at the referendum, and to my mind with a Constitution, so peculiarly the fabric of the people's will, the representatives of the people here as well as in the other Chamber stand on a commanding ground in embarking upon the labour of national legislation. And in considering the legislation which shall be adopted for the national progress and advancement we may well look at the power,, the wide democratic power, which is embraced in the Constitution - a Constitution framed to embrace all the States within one national scope, and at the same time to abstain from unnecessarily touching or trenching upon their powers of local self government. We are now, therefore, at the stage of establishing the national system - of giving effect to the Constitution ; and we may, in the first place, ask ourselves what part the-Senate is to play in that.great undertaking. I agree largely with the views expressed by Senator O'Connor. This Senate occupies a unique position. It

is unlike any Upper House within this continent. Its powers rest upon the popular suffrage. We are here on the same franchise and strengthened by the same power - the power of the people - as the other Chamber is. Furthermore, we must remember that this House is the States House. -Sometimes we scarcely realize what that means. It means that this House . is constituted peculiarly and specially to be the guardian of the rights of the States. "With that object the fundamental principle is engrafted on its Constitution of giving equal representation to each State. It is a House of review and revision, but in all legislative matters, with exceptions in connexion with financial questions, it is co-ordinate in its legislative powers with the House of Representatives, and I hope in discharging our duties as members of this Senate we shall never forget that we are occupying a position coequal, as the Constitution expresses it, with the House of Representatives, and that we shall be deserting the duty which is cast upon us by those who sent us here if we abandon that position in our relation to the legislation for the advancement and prosperity of this nation. There' is a limitation, but it is a limitation, . as I think, of method rather than of substance. There are limitations in connexion with Money Bills, with Bills imposing taxation, .and with Bills appropriating revenue, and these limitations are essentially necessary in order to the proper and efficient conduct of government. It would be impossible that the government of this Commonwealth could be efficiently carried on unless one Chamber, in preference to the other, had the power of -dealing to a greater extent with these financial measures. With that view, provisions have been inserted in the Constitution to enable the King's Government to be carried on. But, as I have said, these are merely limitations of method, and not limitations of substance. If a Bill of that character comes before the Senate it has powers of amendment, but the amendment is to be exercised by suggestion, as it is called, rather than by direct alteration. Whilst none of us desires that collisions should take place between the two Houses, I hope that we shall always be faithful and resolute to the rights of the people and the States whom we represent, even in relation to these Money Bills, which are surrounded with the limitations to which I have ventured to direct the attention of the Senate. If we fail in that regard, we abdicate our functions. I am not here to abdicate any function of mine on that subject, and whilst dead-lock provisions were introduced, mainly with the same object as the representative of the Government pointed out yesterday - mainly with the view of guaranteeing that the King's Government shall be carried on, in relation to financial measures - the power of this House remains wide and ample for all the purposes that devolve upon us under the Constitution. The stage then that we have reached is that of having to equip, in the first place, the Commonwealth ship of State for the voyage upon which she is about to enter, and we should be careful to take no false step in the initiation of our legislation and the initiation of our national system of Government. I feel ;what Senator O'Connor said yesterday - that no Government coming into office in so unique a situation as is felt in the Commonwealth at this juncture can fail to experience considerable difficulties; and, therefore, I think we shall all look towards their actions, so far as they are before us, with the friendliest possible, eye, however we may differ from them on great matters of policy, and shall not hesitate to criticise their actions in the freest possible way whenever we think they should be criticised. In connexion with the inauguration of our system of national government, I am extremely sorry that any honorary Minister should have been appointed. The only justification to my mind for the appointment of an honorary Minister is that our friend, Senator O'Connor, is in- this Chamber conducting the business of the Government. If it were not- for that I think my own personal objections, from a constitutional point of view, would be very much more keen, and I should feel disposed to give them more strong expression than I am inclined to do now. The Constitution expressly declares that there shall be seven Ministers and no more. I think .we ought to- adhere to that.

Senator Higgs

- Does the honorable member not think we ought to have more than one Minister in this Chamber ?

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Senator Sir JOSHUA SYMON

- I do. My honorable friend, Senator Higgs, has - exactly expressed my own view on that question, but the result is that the seven Ministers are absorbed by the House of Representatives. We have two Ministers here, one of whom is an honorary Minister, and we have nine Ministers instead of the seven provided for by the Constitution. Now, I do think that that was unwise and a mistake. In the State from which I come there never has been any particular affection for honorary Ministers. It was tried once, and the gentleman who occupied the position dropped out of it under the pressure of strong public and parliamentary f

feeling after he had occupied it only a week or a fortnight. Honorable members will understand that I have no personal feeling in the matter. Senator O'Connor will acquit me of anything of that kind. I am dealing with the matter from a purely constitutional point of view, and I express my regret that on the inauguration of this national government we should seem to be, even if there may be a difference of opinion as to whether we are or are not, infringing the letter of this glorious Constitution of ours. Now, I have no intention of saying anything about the appointments which have been referred to. If there was anything blameable as to one of them it has been remedied, and we have heard, so far as the other is concerned, the testimony of Senator O'Connor, who is not immediately concerned in any way, as to the capability and suitability in every respect of the gentleman who was chosen. At the same time, I think there is no reason to complain of the criticism on that score, because we cannot be too careful. At the inception of this Government we must be over scrupulous, if possible. As an illustration of that, I read recently in the Age newspaper- a powerful newspaper, well known to all of us - a reference to the appointment recently made by Mr. Drake to the office of Deputy Postmaster-General. It seems that Mr. Drake has appointed a Queensland official to that position, and the Age wrote thus -

Mr. Drake appears to have arrived at the conclusion that, although Queensland was somewhat bashful about entering federation, there is no need for modesty or reluctance when the spoils are being divided. The question as to whether the position of Deputy Postmaster-General should be created was not thrashed out at the recent conference of permanent heads ; but Mr. Drake indicated that he would have to select a general staff almost immediately, and that selection, like charity, appears to have begun at home.

Senator O'CONNOR

- If the fittest man is in Queensland, why should he not be chosen ?

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Undoubtedly. But there is a difference of opinion on the subject, and Mr. Gurr, the Victorian Postmaster-General, referring to this appointment, says - "Mr. Drake has made a grove mistake." He then went on, as we might expect- - " The right man for the position was unquestionably Mr. F. L. Outtrim, the present Deputy Postmaster-General of Victoria."

Undoubtedly, I say, choose the best man, but we see the liability there is to criticism upon these matters. It is a sort of " flog high or flog low, you cannot satisfy everybody," and I am sure the Government themselves will feel the necessity for temperate criticism - the criticism on these matters has been temperate - and that it should be extended to all appointments made from time to time in relation to the national service. I hope it will always be so, and the fact that criticism such as I have alluded to has been made confirms the view which I think most of us would be inclined to take. Now we come to other matters alluded to in the Governor-General's speech. Those matters divide themselves really into two sections - those which are matters of machinery, and those which are more or less controversial. No one, I think, even the most exacting critic, can possibly accuse the speech of sterility, and it is probably a necessity of the position that what has been referred to as indications should be given, not so much as to the actual amount of legislation which it is intended shall be carried out at this time as to all matters which must necessarily be expected to arise in connexion with the establishment and launching of the national Government. The complaint is rather, and probably there may be something in it, that it is full of finger-posts pointing to all sorts of roads, but not indicating which of them is to be taken. Well, it would probably be impossible that any more definite indication on many of these subjects could be given than is included in the speech. Now, with regard to the machinery Bills, I unhesitatingly say that I shall be found giving every possible assistance in my power to the Government to have them speedily carried into effect. I regard it myself as a national duty, as a federal duty. The greatest honour ever bestowed upon me was being chosen as one of the representatives from my own State to assist the Convention in framing the Constitution under which we meet in this Chamber, and I should feel that I were lacking in my duty if, now that we are engaged in completing that great work, I abstained from lending a hand towards its completion simply because there were points here or points there which were open to criticism according to my own judgment. We are called upon to assist in every way in equipping the national organization, and seeing that it starts upon its career with machinery and equipment embodied in legislation of which we can all be proud. Therefore, I do not hesitate to say that all of us will join in aiding the Government so far as these machinery Bills are concerned. Amongst them we have the Public Service Bill. Nothing can

be more important or more of a non-party character than that. We may disagree about the terms. We shall know them when the Bill is submitted to us, but nothing can be more important than that we should have this Public Service Bill introduced at the earliest possible date, and brought into operation without any delay. Then, again, there is the Inter-State Commission. Now, I quite agree with my friends who have expressed themselves upon the subject in regard to federalizing our railways. Throughout the whole of my connexion with the federal movement I have always, in season and out of season, advocated that the railways of Australia should be taken over by the Commonwealth.

Senator Fraser

- It is easier said than done.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It is easier said than done, and it was because there were serious difficulties in the way, which in the construction of the Constitution could not be immediately overcome, that it was not dealt with by the Convention, but until we have the railways federalized we must have the Inter-State Commission. That is absolutely imperative in order to secure to each State, not only freedom, but equality of trade. The object of the Inter-State Commission is to secure that no one State shall by bribes, if you choose, in the matter of differential or preferential rates, prevent the goods of its citizens being taken to other than its own ports. We desire that this equality shall be fully established, and in order to secure its full establishment this Inter-State Commission must be constructed. Then the High Court of Australia has to be established, and in regard to that court some little apprehension, I believe, prevails. The object of the High Court of Australia is to prevent any encroachment by the State on the functions of the Commonwealth, and the encroachment of the Commonwealth on the functions of the State. It must be supreme over all Australia, otherwise it would reduce the Federal Government to a position of imbecility. So long as we have a Federal Constitution we must have a judicial authority - eminent, strong, and learned, and possessing the confidence of the people, and which shall determine judicially the disputes which may arise between State and State and State and Commonwealth. Unless we have that, the whole system may be speedily reduced to a state of chaos and ruin. We know that in Canada the condition of things is quite different. There the Governor-General has a veto upon State legislation which he may consider conflicts with the Dominion legislation. The democracy of Australia would submit to nothing of that kind, and, therefore, it was imperative upon the framers of the Constitution to establish a tribunal to determine these questions upon judicial principles, and free from all partisanship and political influence of every kind and description. That will be the function of the court; and the question of appeal, which gives so much concern to some honorable members, need not give them any anxiety whatever. My honorable friend, Senator Dobson, I know, entertains different views, which he has always most courteously expressed in the Convention, in the Judiciary Committee, and elsewhere. He entertains views differing from my own in some respects. But the question of appeal was settled under the Constitution. That Constitution went to the referendum of the whole people. The people said it was good. They affirmed it. Amongst other provisions, many of which probably they did not understand in detail, they affirmed the provision with regard to the Privy Council appeal. They trusted those whom they sent to the Convention to settle the question.

Senator Sir John Downer

- They had to take the Constitution as a whole.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Of course they had to take it as a whole, and, having taken it, I am at a loss to understand how Senator Dobson can say, as he said yesterday, that we should be grateful for some generosity on the part of the Imperial Parliament in sanctioning and giving the will of Imperial enactment to the Constitution framed by the Australian people. "Generosity," forsooth! I would like to know where the generosity of the Imperial Parliament comes in. It was our right, and the duty of the Imperial Parliament to do justice to it. It was justice we were asking for. "We claimed that the Bill should be enacted, and there was no element of generosity of any kind or description."

Senator Dobson

- Is the honorable member not doing an injustice to the Australian people by cutting off their right of appeal?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The Imperial Parliament did it.

Senator Dobson

- Because the honorable member persisted in it.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Because the Australian people persisted in it.

Senator Fraser

- They would talk the other way if allowed now.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Not a bit of it. The Australian people would not allow interference with their lights of self-government. My honorable friend, Senator Ewing, was good enough to refer to the rather heated controversy which took place last year, and in which I took some part, but I can say with regard to that that I have not changed my mind in the least degree. I am proud of my action, and I should take exactly the same course again if I believed, as I believed then, that the rights of the Australian people to the highest form of self-government was in any way threatened.

Senator Ewing

- Was not the clause modified after some of the colonies had accepted the Bill 1

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I never heard of it.

Senator Ewing

- It was modified at home.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It was extended, and that was what I was coming to. What happened was this : As the Constitution left Australia the right of appeal was preserved in all private litigation. I will not go into the controversy again.

Senator Fraser

- Surely not.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My friend sitting over there is on the alert lest we should tread on the tail of his coat. I am not going to do it. The right of appeal was preserved in deference to representations that were made to the Convention. Whether we agreed with them or not, it was done, but we took the power under the Constitution to irrevocably and finally settle our own constitutional differences. Why, what are we if we cannot do this ? Are we a nation 1 What is the good of talking about the 4,000,000 people of Australia as a nation of free-born British subjects, proud of their right, if we cannot constitute and cannot interpret the laws which we are supposed to be capable of framing ?

Senator Dobson

- Why do we not appoint our own king ?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- We are quite satisfied with the King we have got. I am as imperialistic as my honorable friend Senator Dobson.

Senator Dobson

- The honorable member is not an imperialist.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes; absolutely imperialistic. The proudest moment of my life was when I heard of the mission of the King's son, and later on observed the record of the Imperial progress of the King's son as he came out on the momentous mission of opening this great Parliament. Why, nothing like it has ever been known, not even in the days of ancient Borne ; nothing so calculated to inspire the imagination as this. I am proud of it. I am as imperialistic as Senator Dobson.

Senator Dobson

- No ; the honorable member is not.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- At the same time my imperialism is true imperialism, which secures the strength of the nation here in Australia to which I belong, and I hope I shall never consent to anything inconsistent with imperialism and the rights of self-government possessed by Australia. The position is this, and I merely say it by way of explanation, and in order to calm Senator Ewing's uneasiness in regard to this Privy Council appeal, that

we preserved the private appeal.

Senator Ewing

- You would have done more if you could.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- No. In fact that was too much. We yielded to the weaker brethren. We were frightened of the banks. That was the state of things when the Constitution went to England, and as a result of the controversy, to which reference has been made, and through the efforts of the delegates - of whom, I think we ought to be proud - who went to England to secure the rights of Australia, the Imperial Government gave us a little more than was wanted. They gave this Parliament assembled here the power to limit the cases in which an appeal should lie to the Privy Council, and to deprive any one of an appeal upon a constitutional question arising between the States or between State and Commonwealth, unless certified to as a proper subject of appeal by the High Court of Australia. I call that one of the finest elements of our self-government within the four corners of this Constitution, because it preserves to an Australian tribunal the light of saying whether it is necessary or expedient that an appeal should go on a constitutional question or not. There is no proposal so far as I am aware - and Senator O'Connor yesterday confirmed my belief - there is no proposal to interfere with what has been laid down so clearly in the Constitution, and which, in my humble belief, will preserve our self-government in this most vital respect very effectually indeed. Now, I do not propose to say more than has been said with regard to its constitution. I think it should be eminent, that its powers should be comprehensive, and that it should be of such a character in every way - in learning, in standing, in intellect, in power of decision, in firmness, and integrity - that it should command the confidence of all Australia. If it is not it will be a blot upon our Constitution. I think it would be indecorous and inopportune to discuss matters of personnel, such as have been referred to, no doubt, with the best of intentions, or anything of that kind; but when the court is constituted I hope it will have amongst its members men who are saturated with the federal principle, and who breathe the very atmosphere of this Constitution. If not, it would be like having an alien tribunal, a tribunal not in harmony or sympathy with the Constitution to interpret it and ..guide us in carrying it into effect. I am sorry to learn that in another place a suggestion has been made about a temporary court consisting of Judges of the States. The being a Judge of the State is, of course, no disqualification for office as a Judge of the High Court; but the very essence of this High Court is that it should be aloof from the States; that it should be detached, so to speak, from the States.

Senator Dobson

- Then, to be a Judge of a State Supreme Court is an absolute disqualification.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Surely my honorable friend does not suggest that there are not Judges on the Supreme Court benches of the States who are not capable of disassociating themselves from State interests or sympathies.

Senator Charleston

- If they are so capable, why not let them act?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I do not say they are incapable of acting; but I say they have been brought up under a totally different system, and it would be an unfairness to - them to place them in such a position. Apart from the unfairness to them, it would certainly never do to place them there temporarily until the business had increased to such an extent as to justify the appointment of a larger tribunal upon a different basis. There is one other point in connexion with the judiciary to which I should like to refer. I see it is suggested in connexion with the Appellate Court, the Privy Council, or whatever the ultimate Imperial Court shall be, that with a view of making it more acceptable, may I say - if that is not an improper expression - to the States, colonial Judges should be appointed as Peers. I entirely dissent from any proposition of that kind.

Senator Fraser

- We do not want Peers.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I quite agree with my honorable friend.

Senator O'Connor

- Whose proposition is that?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The proposition has appeared in the press, and I understand the Ministry has appointed a delegate to some conference with a view of framing a measure for an Imperial Court of Appeal, of which this is to be one of the elements. I am not suggesting, nor am I asking, what is the policy of the Government in that matter, but I wish to state at the outset my opinion on the subject.

Senator O'Connor

- The view of the Government in regard to this particular matter is that no person holding a judicial office should ever be put in the position of speaking politically for Australia.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I cannot say how gratified I am to hear that intimation. An article which I read the other day in the Times caused me very considerable uneasiness on the subject. The Times put it as one of the great advantages of having an Appellate Court with Australians as its members and as Peers, that they would be able to voice the views of Australia in the House of Lords. How could the democracy of Australia ever agree to be represented in the House of Lords by a Peer, whether judicial or otherwise? "Why, the thing is outrageous. The whole essence of a proposition of that kind only shows that, greatly as the information and knowledge of Australia has extended in the United Kingdom, it has not gone quite as far as we hope it will in time to come. Even the education of the Times is not complete. We hope, by and by, they will find a better way of ennobling the eminent men in judicial offices throughout Australia than by any such system as that which has been suggested. There are some matters in the speech which are more or less non-controversial. I hope a uniform law will be passed in reference to patents and inventions before long. The conflict of law in respect of patents and inventions, and the expenses, the separate expenses in regard to them in each State, has long been a crying disgrace. Then there is another matter upon which I think there is considerable unanimity of opinion. I refer to uniform suffrage. It might have been a convenience for Parliament if the Government had been able to embody in one particular clause in the Governor-General's speech those matters which they consider urgent for the first session and those which may stand over. I feel that the existing suffrage, differing in each of the States, is a great absurdity. We must have a uniform suffrage. It is ridiculous to have a system under which some senators may be chosen upon the franchise of adult suffrage, while representatives from another State may be chosen on a different suffrage. It is just as if the people of one part of Melbourne were to elect their representatives in the local Parliament on a property qualification while those residing in the next district returned members on an adult suffrage.

Senator CHARLESTON

- Would it be an interference with State rights?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Not in the slightest degree. It is a national question. It is the national Parliament that has to be considered. If the State Parliament chooses to retain a differential suffrage let it do so, but so far as our national Parliament is concerned the sooner we have a uniform suffrage the better. It must be adult suffrage. We have it in South Australia, and as under the Constitution our suffrage cannot be narrowed, the uniform suffrage when it is introduced must be adult suffrage.

Senator Harney

- We have it in Western Australia.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I should like to say just one word in reference to the paragraph in the speech touching on the question of railways. I think the second paragraph about the isolation of Western Australia must have been intended as a joke. I never understood that the chief obstacle to the early adoption of the Constitution there was known by the name of isolation. I always thought it was not that the hope of closer connexion with the eastern States influenced the people, but rather that the dread of probable disruption influenced her rulers. My own sympathies are entirely in favour of connexion by railway if it can be done in such a way as not to cast too heavy a burden on the people.

Senator Dobson

- There is much virtue in the "if."

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- There always is ' much virtue in the " if." I regret to hear that it was said in another place that if we do not carry this railway, every constitutional means will be used to undo federation. That must have been a very indiscreet outburst. I do not think myself that an expression of that kind should be used, and I ask my honorable friends from Western Australia whether they consider it is likely to assist or further the adoption of this scheme for an Inter-State railway.

Senator PEARCE

- Do not make us responsible for the utterance.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I do not intend to hold my friends in the Senate responsible for an expression of that kind. I regret it was made.

Senator De Largie

- Let the other States act fairly in the matter.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- One word in regard to the coloured labour question. I intend to support the attitude of the Government in respect to the amendment moved by Senator Millen. My honorable friend, Senator O'Connor, convinced me yesterday that upon this question the true policy is to hasten slowly. I feel satisfied, from what he put before us, that it is a question surrounded with great difficulties, and that nothing should be done which would be likely to lead to any accusation of harsh or unfair treatment in respect of those who may be affected. I thoroughly agree with what the representative of the Government put forward as to the necessity of obtaining exhaustive information. I hope that every possible channel of information will be thoroughly ransacked, and that the Government, whether there is or is not to be a commission, will put Parliament in possession of the fullest results of their inquiries in order that we may exercise a clear judgment on this momentous subject. I would add, in addition to the reasons which my honorable and learned friend pointed out, that this question is a good deal more extensive than the matter of the kanaka alone. The paragraph in the Governor-General's speech deals with all Asiatics - with all coloured labour. And the subject involves, not merely the settlement of the kanaka difficulty, but the fate of all tropical Australia. That is what we have to decide. We must have a wide and statesmanlike policy on the subject, not limited to one particular section of the coloured race alone, but a policy which will deal with the whole subject of the development and prosperity of the tropical part of Australia. Because I do not imagine for a moment that it is suggested that if the kanakas are excluded you are going to admit Coolies or Chinese, or any other workers of that character into tropical Australia - at least I cannot understand that it is suggested to exclude the one, and to admit the other. You can only deal with that subject upon the broad ground of what is to become of tropical Australia. If tropical Australia can be developed without coloured labour, we have a great inheritance there. If tropical Australia cannot be developed without coloured labour it may mean that you must leave it desert and unproductive.

Senator Higgs

- Has not the honorable member made up his mind about whether we can develop it with white labour ?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I want to be guided by the Government policy on the subject ; but I have made up my mind on one subject, and that is that the Government, I think, if I may say so, should at the very earliest opportunity take into consideration, as indeed they promise to do, the acceptance of the responsibilities of the Northern Territory of South Australia. That is part of tropical Australia.

Senator Stewart

- Hand it over to syndicates if they don't.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- There is no knowing what may become of it. At present it means an annual burden of ?80,000 to South Australia.

Senator Fraser

- And you want to get rid of it.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The enterprise and the energy of South Australia - that small State in regard to population, and, for the matter of that, as to wealth - has developed the Northern Territory and opened it up with a



transcontinental line, and a portion of a railway, not for its own benefit alone, but for the benefit of the whole continent. And as my honorable and learned friend Sir John Downer, who knows a great deal more of the subject, says, the liability which is annually resting upon us in addition to the capital liability arises out of the national work South Australia undertook in connexion with the holding of that great part of the continent. It is essentially a matter of national concern, and essentially a matter that should be dealt with at the earliest moment, and particularly as the dealing with it is associated intimately with this great question of coloured labour. Therefore, I hope that we shall have every patience with the Government upon this matter, at any rate that we shall give them whatever time is necessary in order that they may not only consider the subject but be prepared to support whatever policy they bring down, and that they will not bring it down piecemeal, but will bring it down as a policy for the whole of tropical Australia. The last matter that I will refer to is one on which I part company entirely with the Government. On all these other matters, as I have said, if it were not my duty, it would be my choice to assist in carrying into operation all these machinery Bills and all those other measures to which attention has been called, and which are so vital for our interests. But on the fiscal question I part company with them entirely, and they shall have my steadfast opposition to anything in the shape of a protective Tariff. I have a little difficulty in quite grasping the paragraphs as they appear in this speech.

Senator McGregor

- Even if it protected the legal profession ?

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The legal profession never had any protection, and it would be such a new experience that probably I should be prepared to give that a fair trial.

Senator Higgs

- They have a very good trades union though.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It is just the very thing which does not happen to be a trades union at all. But I am not going to enter into any discussion of that kind, and I should be very glad to debate it with my honorable friend privately, or when the matter comes up for discussion in some way or other in the Senate.

Senator O'Connor

- But it never goes out on strike.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It never goes out on strike. We might say, as the gentleman said in Shakespeare, that " Sufferance is the badge of all our tribe." These, however, are matters which do not concern this question. We are not dealing now with the lawyers, but with protection as ordinarily understood. I have a little difficulty in quite apprehending what these paragraphs in the speech mean. If they mean, as I half inferred from what Senator O'Connor said yesterday, a revenue Tariff, only with such incidental protection as revenue Tariffs sometimes by accident give, I am with him. If that is what the Government policy is - if they are going for a revenue Tariff, that is a free-trade Tariff--

Several Senators. - No, no.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I am amused I will not say at the ignorance, because that would be disrespectful, but at the extraordinary peculiarity which permits that smile. A revenue Tariff is a free-trade Tariff.

Senator Playford

- Not necessarily.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- If you have a Tariff imposed for revenue purposes, what is that but a free-trade Tariff?

Senator Playford

- You cannot have a customs duty unless you have an excise duty as an equivalent.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend is mixing up excise duty with customs duty. We will leave the excise duty alone for a minute or two. Honorable members do not seem to understand - if I may put it so - what free-trade means. They do not like to call themselves protectionists. They call themselves moderate protectionists.

Senator O'Connor

- We have had so many definitions of it lately that we do not know where we are.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Honorable members do not.

Senator O'Connor

- Will the honorable member tell us what he thinks about it t

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend is coming so near to freetrade principles in proposing a revenue Tariff that he professes to be doing it unconsciously, and not wittingly. That is what I gather from his remark. I shall endeavour to enlighten him. If you have a revenue Tariff, you are simply utilizing the customs, which, like the poor, we always have with us. Free-trade does not mean a free port, surely. If we free-traders had our way, we should get rid of customs duties ' altogether, but that is not practical where the people of the country insist that they shall pay indirect taxation through the customs, and free-trade is to minimize those duties, to have nothing for protective purposes which goes into the pockets of the monopolists or the manufacturers who are intended to be benefited. Protection means taking a larger price out of the pockets of the consumer and paying part of it, or the whole of it - generally the whole of it - to the manufacturer, in order to enable him to compete with somebody outside who can make the articles very much cheaper. We have the whole tiling stated in this speech. We are told that revenue is what is wanted. If you go for revenue alone, there is an end of it. We are not considering anything else. If that is what you want to do we are all in the same boat, that is, free-trade. Freetrade is to impose duties on no more articles than is necessary to supply the coffers of the State, and to abstain from imposing any duty that is to go elsewhere than into the pocket of the State.

Senator McGregor

- That is a new definition.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It is not a new definition. The honorable member must read up a little more on the subject. The fact of the matter is that you propose a sort of double-barrelled arrangement. If you are going to give us a revenue Tariff, why we must be content with any incidental protection that may flow from it, and the only object of the free-trader is to get as near a revenue Tariff according to free-trade principles as he possibly can.

Senator McGregor

- Did not free-trade mean direct taxation 1

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- No.

Senator- McGregor.- Why did yon change it then?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- We have not changed it, and free-trade does not mean direct taxation. My honorable friend is entirely mistaken ; free-trade never did : mean direct taxation. He is thinking of the single tax.

Senator Millen

- It is the protectionists who pretend that they must ultimately have direct taxation.

Senator Best

- I never heard of it.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Exactly. My honorable friend puts it with great accuracy. Of course the essence of protection is that you do away with revenue. The ultimate goal of protection is prohibition, and every step you take towards protection, I do not care whether it is little or large, is receding from revenue ; it must be so. The Government- state in this speech that revenue must be the first consideration, but that existing Tariffs in all the States have given rise to industries that must be protected. That means, of course, not incidental, protection, but designed protection. If it does mean designed protection, then it shall have my strenuous opposition.

Senator DAWSON

- What is the difference between a revenue Tariff and protection ?

Senator Best

- A moderate free-trader.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I have never heard of such an expression, but I have heard of a moderate protectionist. I found lately there was the very greatest reluctance on the part of many protectionists, who wanted a protectionist Tariff, to call themselves by their right name. They called themselves moderate protectionists'.

Senator Playford

- And the other side' were revenue tariffists

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- That is a free-trade Tariff. My honorable friend is one of those who Galled themselves moderate protectionists.

Senator Playford

- Why not call it by its proper name ; why are you ashamed of your name ? Why not call yourselves free-traders?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Who says that we are ashamed of our name 1 Does the honorable member dare to say such a thing as that? Every free-trader has a just pride in calling himself "a freetrader.

Senator Playford

- You did not at the last election. .

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend was not justified in saying that we are ashamed to call ourselves free traders. Every free-trader calls himself a free-trader.- A revenue tariffist is a freetrader.

Senator McGregor

- No.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Senator Playford calls himself, I know, a moderate protectionist. I should be very sorry to express my own views on that subject, but I should like to read what the Aye said as to moderate protectionists for my honorable friend's benefit. I would not say that he was ashamed to call himself a protectionist. There is no dishonour in it ; you may be an honest man, and yet a protectionist. Nor do I say that it is difficult to fill, the two situations. All we ask is that you shall extend the same consideration to those of us who are on the other side.

Senator Playford

- So I did. I think you might have fought the elections on the ground that you were free-traders.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend knows quite well that I declared myself - as I declare myself now - an uncompromising free-trader. I fought the elections on that footing, and was returned, as my honorable friend knows, at the head of the poll, of which he was second, a very proud' position for both of us. But, to come to my friends of the Age, and I always like to go to the Agc when I want a high authority upon matters relating to protection.

In the elections which are before us some candidates ave seeking to avoid a frank statement of - their views by saying that they are moderate protectionists. They are of -the same-kidney as the high-low tariffists. They use words to deceive. A moderate protectionist may mean anything. People who talk about being moderate protectionists are free-traders- who lack the courage- to declare themselves.

Now, I do not say that fits Jny- friend at all. But the position is that the free-traders have never- hesitated to describe themselves as free-traders, and the free-trader seeks to establish a revenue Tariff for the Commonwealth of Australia. That, I think, is what we mean to fight for, and to get if we can. For the life of me, I' cannot understand how, in a democratic country, you can deny to any man or woman the right of buying and selling where and with whom he or she chooses. That -is the essence of my view on the subject.

Senator McGregor

- What about your policy with respect to coloured labour?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Coloured labour ! Why, that is the old threadbare attenuated argument about shutting out coloured

labour and admitting the product. Will my friends tell me what are the products of coloured labour they want to shut out?

Senator Sir William Zeal

- Tea.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- No, they admit the products of coloured labour. Do they want to shut out coffee, and tea, and chocolate ? It is absurd to use an argument of that sort - to get upon a platform and say to an unthinking audience - " Why should you shut out coloured labour and admit the products of coloured 'labour.'" I will give another illustration. In Australia, if there is one thing more than another that is advocated for free admission it is cornsacks and woolpacks, of which ?500,000 worth are imported every year. They are the products of coloured labour from India. Why do not my honorable friends try to shut them out because they are contaminated with the dark skins and the dark fingers of the people who make them? They admit them free, not because they are the product of coloured labour, or because they are not the product of coloured labour, but because they are necessary to the great producing interests of this country. That is the argument I offer to the minds of honorable members. Where does the wealth of this country come from ?

Senator DAWSON

- From the workers.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- From the workers, but 95 per cent. of. them are engaged, not in the stewing factory, or in the unwholesome dens and sweating houses; they are engaged in the open air. They are engaged under the sky and under the elements of heaven.

Senator McGregor

- Carrying their swags.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- They are engaged for the purpose of producing the wealth of this country, which is represented by its primary products. What protection do you give them ?

Senator O'Connor

- A good many of them are engaged in the open air- looking for work.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend interjects with an ad captandum argument which is unworthy of him. What is the use of such an interjection, unless it is set down to the existing condition of things here, where we have a policy of protection ? Does the unemployed difficulty not exist here? Does my friend mean to say there are no unemployed in Victoria? How could he possibly offer such an interjection as that on such a subject?

Senator O'Connor

- There is nothing like the same number here as in New South Wales.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I disagree utterly with my honorable friend ; but I do not care whether there are more in New South Wales or less. They exist everywhere, and that matter has very little to do with my point, which is, that it is the primary producers of this country from whom we obtain the wealth of the country. Do we not depend for our revenue upon the primary productions of the country - the wool, the wheat, the oil, the wine, the minerals? They are the sources of our wealth.

Senator Stewart

- Butter.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes, butter. As my friend Senator Fraser said, prosperity follows butter, and sometimes butter follows prosperity - where there is no prosperity you get very little butter. But what protection do you give to the primary producer? In this connexion, I refer my honorable friends to a phrase used by the Prime Minister which I dare say looks a little captivating. He says, " Revenue without destruction." The moment you introduce your uniform Tariff - I do not care whether formed on free-trade or protectionist lines - the moment you bring that Tariff into operation you sweep away every vestige of protection that now exists for the primary producer. And yet it is to be " revenue without destruction." If the. Tariff of the Government were accepted we should holus-bolus sweep away every particle of protection from our primary producer.

Senator Best

- Not every particle.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

-What do you keep ?

Senator Best

- Oats and wheat.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- What protection is there on wheat ? Where is the market which fixes the price of wheat ?

Senator Best

- Has New South Wales not imported any ?

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend has suddenly become very much concerned for New South Wales, but I think it is perfectly competent to take care of itself. It has been exporting wheat for the last year or two. I always read the honorable member's speeches with a great deal of attention and almost commit them to memory, and I think I remember him saying that the agricultural interest is the backbone of the community. What protection does he give to the agricultural community ? He charges them more on their implements.

Senator Best

- No, no ; that is a fiction. They are free.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Free ?

Senator Best

- Reapers and binders again.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Their food and clothing, their boots and shoes, and everything they wear costs just a little more than they would without a protective Tariff-

Senator Best

- Less in Victoria than elsewhere, as a rule.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Then, take the protection off; let us get rid of the unclean tiling; it has done its work. The speech refers to protectionist Tariffs having given rise to industries which are "substantial." After 30 years of coddling and watching they have become "substantial," and if they have become substantial, where is the necessity for still continuing to coddle them? My honorable friend referred to wheat - where are the markets ? Our farmers and our wool-growers have to sell their products at prices fixed in markets that are open to the competition of the world. They have their prices reduced to the lowest farthing which the buyer chooses to fix.

Senator McGregor

- Because you will not give him a chance to manufacture at home.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My friend is very heterodox on all economic questions. In return for compelling him to sell his produce at the bare price he can get in the world's market, you give him the privilege of buying everything he uses and consumes, and wears at an artificially raised price to bolster up a few manufacturers. Your free-trader says, "I want a revenue Tariff for revenue only ; I want to keep the duties as low as possible quite irrespective of those substantial factories." The protectionist says - "I want a double-barrelled system of protection - I am going to have revenue, and I am going to have protection on a certain number of lines." What is the protection for - is it not to increase the price of the article ?

Senator McGregor

- No.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- If my friend will deny that he will deny even Holy Writ. But if it is not put on to increase the price, what benefit does the manufacturer get?

Senator Best

- Home markets.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- That is what my friend the leader of the Government said yesterday, that the object of putting on these duties was to preserve the markets of Australia for the Australian people. Will the markets of Australia take our wheat, our wool, and our minerals ? What nonsense really it is. Even Senator Best will see that it is nonsense.

Senator Best

- I quite admit what the honorable member has stated in reference to the articles he refers to, but we do not refer to them.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Are these not things we rely upon for our wealth ? Is it not the happiness and prosperity of the country we are looking to? What do my honorable friends the protectionists want ? Is it not the greatest good for the greatest number? Of course it is, that is undeniable. Then I claim that on their own democratic principles, to which I give my entire adhesion, they should not come on the floor of this House and say, that 95 per cent, of the population should be taxed one farthing more than they ought to be for revenue purposes in order to put that farthing in the pockets of the manufacturers of the country.

Senator Best

- And the greatest number in Victoria have demanded protection for 30 years.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- They are gradually coming round ; it just shows how a long course of usage to a bad system perverts even the very best of men.

Senator Best

- Poor unsophisticated Victorians.

Senator Pearce

- Protection has not done very much for them any way. I do not think the revenue tariffists would do much more.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Very likely not. I quite appreciate what my friend says - a protectionist Tariff has done very little for them - a free-trade Tariff would do very little more ; but even if it did a little more it would be worth trying. Let us have a try at it. I do not contend for a moment that we are to go into figures, and that these comparisons are to be final. I am one of those who believe that if you have a lot of figures in hand, and are using them for a purpose, some one else will always find some other figures round the corner to show that you are quite wrong. England has not had a year, or two years, of free-trade ; she has had 60 years of free-trade, and she has done very well on it.

Senator Best

- And so has America and Canada on protection.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- America has done well in spite of protection. What have been the results achieved in England? The exported articles of local manufacture, which in 1836 amounted in value to £40,000,000, have since increased to £240,000,000. I think you may take it, therefore, that free-trade has not discouraged manufactures.

Senator Millen

- America has freetrade among a larger population than Great Britain.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I am not going into that. I think we may do well in following in the footsteps of Great Britain, to whom we owe so much, and whom we love so dearly. There is a great deal more which might be said on the subject, and which I should have liked to have said ; but, of course, another opportunity will come ; a more appropriate opportunity, when the Tariff is presented to this House. We are all animated by one desire, and that is to secure the progress of this country on the very best basis we can. We may differ about what is the better system to lay at the foundation of the finances of the Commonwealth, but let me say here that it is now or never. I agree that we cannot have this thing shifting about from year to year, or from period to period. The principle upon which our policy is to be framed must be settled now ; we must

determine now whether we are to have a free-trade or a protective Tariff.

Senator Dobson

- How can that be ?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend knows quite well that nothing disorganizes trade so much as these Tariff 'disputes. I, for one, believe that it is a question of now or never ; we must settle the principle on' which tins taxation is to be levied' in this Parliament, and probably in this session. think we must all feel that the happiness and prosperity of this country rests upon the success of the union at the foundation of which, so far as material prosperity is concerned, this question of finance very strongly lies. I hope myself that the dawn we are now witnessing may shine and strengthen more and more into the perfect day. I hope, myself, that we may look, as I believe we may, as a good omen, to the radiant path of prosperity, advancement, and progress which we have pursued well nigh for near a century, even in spite of separation. I believe that, with union, our prosperity will vastly increase. I hope that " Forward " will be our watchword, and that, as we are entering upon a national career, we shall write our annals broader and deeper than they have ever been written before. We have a noble Constitution, one which I believe in my heart is fit for any trials ; fit to withstand adversity ; and one whose fibre will not weaken, even in prosperity. We have a Constitution equal to all claims upon it, and all expansion to which it may be subjected ; one in fact fit for any trials except the madness or the folly of the people who have framed it, and to whom it belongs. I hope, if we are true to ourselves, true to the citizens of the country who have sent us here, true to this country itself, we shall raise on the- foundation of that Constitution an edifice of nationhood, within which we and our children, and those who may follow us for ages yet to come, shall dwell together in peace and in unity, unbroken by any sound of oppression, and giving everywhere, and to every man amongst us, peace and contentment.

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Senator HIGGS

- I feel some slight nervousness about addressing this Senate, but at the same time I am encouraged by the invitation which has been extended by Senator O'Connor to express a few opinions with regard to the topics mentioned in the Governor-General's speech. I would like to preface my remarks by saying that we from Queensland must confess that we are in a more comfortable atmosphere than has been our experience in the State Parliament. We have every hope that the great State we represent here will receive justice' at the hands of the various representatives from other parts of the Commonwealth. Our State has earned a very bad reputation, owing to the opinions of some of our conservative politicians, who have given the general public to understand that Queensland is a place unfit for a white man to live in ; that no people save the black or coloured races can carry on various industries there. Let me say at once that Queensland is a State in which you will find a great variety of climate ; in which every possible thing required for human comfort can be produced, and that we have millions of acres, such as the Darling Downs of Queensland, which are generally said by those who ought to know to be the garden of Australia. Now, sir, I wish to state my position on the fiscal question. I cannot hope to do so in the very eloquent terms which have been adopted by Senator Sir Josiah Symon in explaining his position as a free-trader. Although a representative of the working classes in the main, and I hope of the general community of Queensland, I must confess that the more I study the question of protection, the more I am driven to the conclusion that we, as descendants of British people, cannot hope to compete successfully against the productions of the cheap labour of other countries. It is all a question of competition. Can we, as a people who 'are accustomed to a comparatively high standard of comfort, hope to produce goods on equal terms with people like the Chinese or Japanese ? That appears to me to be the whole question. I agree with many of my friends who represent the labour party, but who hold freetrade opinions, that we may have protection and still have a great deal of poverty in our midst. Wherever we look, whether to freetrade or protectionist countries - there are not many free-trade countries - we will find a great number of unemployed. I agree with Senator Pearce, that we require to do something more than merely put on a number, of protective duties in order to. help the working classes of Australia. If our reform movement was merely to end there, we should not do much. I am a believer in what is called the new protection ; that is a protection which will protect the workers against the cheap labour of other countries, and, at the same time, encourage the eight hours system, put a stop to sweating, give the workers better sanitary

conditions, and carry out other reforms. I would ask Senator Sir Josiah Symon, who declares that the legal profession has no protection whatever, whether it has not a strong professional, if it has not a strong trades union. I am passing, I may say that I have a great admiration for the legal profession, and should like to be a member of it myself.

Senator Harney

- The union the honorable member refers to is for the benefit of the public, not for the benefit of any particular class.

Senator HIGGS

- The legal profession does not throw open its doors to every member of the public who would like to enter.

Senator Gould

- Examinations must be passed ?

Senator HIGGS

- I admit the examinations are necessary in the interests of the public, but the high fees which are charged act as a bar to a number of highly intelligent young men who would otherwise be disposed to enter the profession.

Senator Charleston

- What protection does the State give it ?

Senator HIGGS

- It gives the profession the protection of certain regulations by which all must abide. Let me put the case in this way. Would any legal gentleman have been induced to study for the bar if, instead of the fees he knew he would receive, there was reason to believe he would only get about one-sixth of the payments now legally made to members of the profession ? That is the position of many of the working classes of Australia. They are asked to compete with the cheap labour of China and Japan. It is only of recent years that Japan has become a producing power likely to interfere at all with us - only within the last 25 years.

Senator Best

- Less than that.

Senator HIGGS

- Probably less than that. We are only commencing to understand the danger which menaces us. Japan - and China is very rapidly following in her footsteps - has taken every opportunity of acquiring all the knowledge that can be obtained from German, American, and British experts, not only in the art of war, but in the art of industry. We have British and American capitalists taking their capital to Japan and availing themselves of its vast horde of cheap labour to produce commodities at low rates and send them here to compete with white workers.

Senator Fraser

- They are even building their own ships.

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Senator HIGGS

- Yes, and moving in every other industrial direction. Let us look at the wages paid in Japan. The highest wage paid to blacksmiths there is 2s. 6d. per day, the lowest 9d. ; while in Queensland they receive from 7s. to 10s. per day ; bricklayers are paid 3s. 8d. per day at the most, and 10d. per day at the least in Japan. In Queensland we give them 8s. to 12s. per day. The highest rate for cabinetmakers in Japan is 2s. 2-d. per day, and the lowest 8-d. I need not go further to show the small wages paid to artisans in Japan as compared with those earned by workmen here. The Japanese are sending into Australia manufactured goods of all kinds ; wearing apparel, blankets, boots and shoes, brushware, carpets, and so forth. How is it possible for Australian employers to pay the wages which white workers are accustomed to receive, and yet compete with the productions of the Japanese ?

Senator Keating

- They cannot do it.

Senator HIGGS

- There are 40,000,000 Japanese, and 300,000,000 Chinese within three weeks' sail of the Queensland coast. We are asking for the eight hours system for our workers, for a high rate of wages, and for all the conveniences which modern inventions entitle the workers to, but I say we cannot give them these if we



throw open our ports to the manufactures of people like the Asiatics. I try to keep an open mind on the question. I am aware that the free-traders have many eloquent men, who are able to present to us very telling defects in the system of protection. I have endeavoured to weigh the question in no partisan spirit, and I am driven, absolutely driven, to the conclusion that the people of Australia, if they wish to attain the position to which I think they should come, must keep out the production of cheap manufacturing countries. While we must keep out these cheap manufactures, we must also keep out the Japanese, Chinese, Hindoos, and similar low types of humanity. They will do us no good by coming to this country. Senator Walker has said it is not very creditable to us to preach that we should do unto others as we would like to be done by, and yet try to keep these people out of the country. He would throw open our doors to these and others. But there is such a thing as self-preservation, and I would like to ask Senator Walker whether he thinks we can preserve our race if we allow these Japanese and Chinese hordes to come into Australia. Some senators who sit behind Senator Gould have claimed that the Governor-General's speech is indefinite. I was very much re-assured by the speech of Senator O'Connor in reference to this coloured labour question. He has given us very definite information, and we shall be grievously disappointed if his opinions are not embodied in the Bill which he proposes. What have we to expect from that most eloquent leader, Mr. Reid, should we support Senator Millen's amendment and oust the Government? I was not very satisfied with Mr. Barton's speech at Maitland, but when I came to Mr. Reid's reply found he was still more indefinite. Mr. Reid said, in the course of a speech delivered at the Protestant Hall, Sydney, on the 4th February, 1891 -

I would like to say that there is one subject Mr. Barton took up that there can be no difference upon, and I feel delighted that the Federal Ministry has taken up every item of the policy which I advocated for years. I do not quarrel with them for doing it, as it is a grand thing to have your opponents doing your work. That subject is a white Australia. When Mr. Barton talks about a white Australia, I may say I had the honour of inventing that expression some years ago. The great leaders' of the free-trade party have held to it, and it has been the watchword of responsible politicians, who have carried out legislation in New South Wales on its lines when they passed the Chinese Restriction Act, which dealt with the coloured races of the world. So that on that subject we are delighted to find Mr. Barton true to liberal traditions.

How much is there in that upon which we can rely when we come to consider how Mr. Reid is likely to deal with the question of Asiatics. The Chinese Restriction Act imposes a tax of ?100.

Senator Millen

- And limits the number of Chinese who may be landed from each ship.

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Senator HIGGS

- That is something, but as Mr. Coghlan points out in his last volume, when the census returns are in we shall find there are a great many more aliens throughout Australia than ever we expected. They have been able to evade these restrictions. I do not think our party will do very much by turning out the Government in favour of Mr. Reid. I am very glad that our party has decided to give the Government a fair trial. We will give them a fair opportunity of carrying out their programme. We should give them every assistance. That has been the attitude of the labour party all through. Its aim has been to support whatever Government is in power in all the good legislation which it has brought forward. Just' a word or two about the sugar industry, which concerns Queensland more, I believe, than any other State. We are anxious, and I believe the free-traders are anxious, to give the sugar-growers that protection which they deem to be necessary to carry on the sugar industry with white labour. We in Queensland submit that the question of black labour is merely a question of a low rate of wages. We affirm that white men can be obtained to do any work in any climate, if people are prepared to pay them a reasonable amount of wages for a reasonable number of hours of employment. A year ago, at a protectionist conference in Sydney, which I attended, it was stated that Mr. Angus Gibson, now a member of the Legislative Council of Queensland, had written a letter expressing the opinion that if the Federal Parliament would impose a duty of ?5 a ton on imported sugars, the sugar-growers would be able to pay for white labour. Mr. Gibson is one of a firm who employ many hundreds of kanakas, and he is quite willing to dispense with them if he and his fellow sugar producers can receive this protection. The late manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company said the same thing. In order that there may be no doubt in the minds of honorable members about the capacity of white men to do the work, let me give the authority of some of the

prominent men in Queensland. Let us take the authority of the Chief Justice, who was Premier at the time when the provisions of the Pacific Islanders Act were extended. Sir Samuel Griffith, in his manifesto, published in Brisbane on 13th February, 1892, said -

It has been proved that in Queensland cane can be grown by white labour. I am aware that this position is still disputed, but it is admitted by most of the more liberal-minded planters with whom I have been in communication. .

The Brisbane Courier, the leading journal in that city, although now endeavouring to secure a continuation of black labour for a number of years, said on the 11th February, 1895-

It is true that the once prevalent belief in the total unsuitability of tropical field labour for the white man has been generally abandoned.

Mr. Grimes, who is now Chairman of Committees of the Legislative Assembly of that State, speaking after 25 years' experience, said -

All who had conscientiously studied the question knew that the industry could be worked with white labour, and his opinion in that direction had not been altered in the slightest degree.

Mr. Grimes went on in his speech to point out what he had asserted all along - that it was merely a question of wages, and that if the planters in Queensland could get white men to work for the rate of wages that the kanakas were prepared to work for, they would not have a kanaka in the place. He said - Two attempts had been made to introduce suitable labour, but they had been thwarted in every way. Sir S. W. Griffith was prepared to put aside money to introduce labour from the continent, but he was not met fairly by the planters. The first idea was to introduce Germans, who were to go on the land and supply the cane to the planters at a fixed price ; but subsequently it was decided that the planters were to instruct them in the growth of the cane. It was thought that the plan would succeed, and if it had he was sure they would have had a second Rosewood in Queensland, as the Germans would cultivate the cane more economically than could be done by kanaka labour. The terms offered to the Germans by the planters was 7s. 6d. per week with rations, and when the Germans already in the colony heard of the very low terms offered, they wrote home to their friends warning them not to come to Queensland. That was the way the planters met the proposals of Sir S. W.

Griffith..... Our sugar exports had amounted to £700,000 per year, and he was still of opinion that exports to that amount could still be kept up and worked by white labour. He spoke from experience, as he had been over twenty years in the sugar industry, and had never employed other than white men.

I hope that honorable members who have not been to Queensland will rest satisfied that white men can do this work if they are properly paid, and that the community of Australia has no right to expect to receive their sugar when it is not produced at a fair rate of wages. We know in Queensland, and I know it is within the experience of men in other places, that you can get men to go into the sewers of cities, and work for a very low rate - for 6s. 6d. per day. You can get men who are willing to work in the quarries, with Queensland's sun beating down upon them, for 7s. a day. You can get men . in the place where Senator Dawson comes from - Charters Towers - to go 1 2,000 feet below ground to work amid noxious gases for £3 a week. You can get men to go and do any work at all. When we are preventing the slave-grown and bounty-fed sugar from coming into this country by a protective Tariff, and we give the Queensland sugar producers the whole of the Australian market- because it will all be theirs - and they can then demand that the community pay a fair price, we also have a right to demand that they shall pay to white workers a reasonable rate of wages. There are one or two other matters which I shall refer to very briefly, in order that Senator O'Connor may know what my attitude will be. I hope that the Government will not delay in introducing a general Patents Bill. I think that a great deal of the prosperity of the United States - and the various communities throughout the world should be very grateful in that regard - is due to the facilities which its governments give to inventors to patent their inventions. Throughout Australia we seem to place every obstacle in the way of inventive genius. In the United States a man can get a patent protecting his invention amongst 75,000,000 people for £7 10s., whereas in Australia to do the same thing amongst a community of 4,000,000 an inventor has to pay about £93 10s. It is to be hoped that, inasmuch as it is not likely to be contested very much in this House, the Government will introduce a Bill at a very early stage, and if they do I am sure that it will give the greatest satisfaction to all. With regard to defence, we are strongly in favour of a citizen soldiery, and we hope that if the Government find it necessary to have any standing army at all they will not keep a standing army kept in idleness, but will rather adopt the proposals

which were made in reference to the British army in India - that the members of that army shall not be compelled merely to drill, but shall be given an opportunity to make their own clothes , and boots, and to bake their own bread ; then that shall have something to occupy their minds, and not be subjected to a period of enforced idleness. With .regard to conciliation and arbitration, we, as a labour party, are extremely glad to find from their speeches that so many senators are in favour of that method of settling industrial disputes. I do not think that any State has suffered so much from industrial strife as Queensland has done; employes and employers have both suffered, and a personal bitterness has arisen from these industrial disputes which, I am sorry to say, in some cases is not likely ever to die out. It was not the fault of the working classes and their leaders.

Senator Fraser

- Faults on both sides.

Senator HIGGS

- There may have been faults on both sides. We have been most desirous in that State that conciliation and arbitration shall be the method of settlement, rather than a resort to the old - time method of a strike. The question of old age pensions will receive our very greatest sympathy and support, whether it is brought up by a member of the Government or by a private member. Banking laws are laws which we in Queensland are somewhat interested in, because certain people in that State have suffered very greatly from the want of proper banking laws. In Queensland all that it is necessary for an auditor to do when he audits a balance-sheet is to put a certificate at the bottom of the balance-sheet that the above is a true and correct statement of the affairs of the bank according to the books. That relieves the auditor of all responsibility.

Senator Fraser

- He cannot visit the properties 1

Senator HIGGS

- That is true ; but he can take some responsibility, and sign a certificate stating that he has examined the securities.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- That is illegal.

Senator HIGGS

- We want to enact that an auditor shall be compelled to examine the securities. I ask any senator whether any importance can be attached to a certificate that the above statement is true and correct according to the books of the bank 1 There are other matters with which I think a general banking law should deal. There is the question of a bank occupying the position of a trust. Banks do now what it never was intended they should do under their original charter. They carry on trade. They take over a man's property and carry on his business, and in some cases they tell those who find it necessary to have an overdraft that they are expected to do business with the bank's customers. I think that when a bank finds it necessary to take over an estate it should dispose of it, and not carry on the business.

Senator Fraser

- That is only temporarily, as a rule.

Senator HIGGS

- The banks seem to be possessed of the greater portion of the pastoral properties in Queensland, and I have no doubt that applies with regard . to New South Wales.

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Senator Fraser

- They will be very glad to get rid of them. The Government will have them soon.

Senator HIGGS

- If they would be very glad to get rid of them, it is a very funny thing that they do- not endeavour to get rid of them.

Senator Fraser

- They could not sell them.

Senator HIGGS

- It is gratifying to us that the Prime Minister has stated that he is quite willing that the capital site -shall be federal property for all time, and that some principle of leasing shall be adopted instead of alienating the

land within the capital. I think that a very great opportunity is given to this Parliament to do something unique in the way of city building. I think that by adopting a principle of leasing and revaluing for rental purposes, we can secure sufficient revenue to the municipal council of the capital, or to the Federal Government, whichever body, it is decided shall deal with the matter, to carry on all the improvements which may be necessary in that great city. I do not think there is any other matter to which I need refer now, except a question concerning the Senate itself. I am very sorry to find that many persons have a depressing estimate already of what the power and the influence of this Senate are. I find that we are to be subordinated to the other House. Our friends, the press, have placed us already in a subordinate position. We have equal powers with the other Chamber, and we can claim to greater influence. We are elected by majorities of the States, whereas our friends in another place are elected by majorities of divisions of the States.

Senator Neild

- Parishes.

Senator HIGGS

- Parishes, if you like to call them so. I think with Senator Sir Josiah Symon that we should have more than one paid Minister in this Chamber.

Senator Sir John Downer

- If he is a good one, what does it matter whether he is paid or not?

Senator HIGGS

- I do not altogether object to honorary Ministers. Possibly that may be a probationary method of qualifying a man for a higher position. The politicians and statesmen of Australia gave an opinion that this Senate would be a "kind of Legislative Council, and many of the more capable and prominent men in Australia - I was going to say statesmen, but I suppose we are not statesmen until we have passed away - did not enter on a candidature for this Chamber. I think if we endeavour to maintain our position according to the provisions of the Constitution, we shall find a greater effort being made at the next election to get into this Chamber than was made at the election which has just concluded. I hope we shall not abandon the position to which we are entitled under the Constitution. If we were a subordinate House, elected by divisions of the State, then I should be quite willing that we should occupy a secondary position to the House of Representatives. But we must remember that we have been elected to this Chamber by majorities of the people of the States voting as a whole.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- We have listened with a great deal of satisfaction to the debate which has been proceeding. We are such strangers to each other that we need the introduction which can only come from hearing each other's voices: and it has been a great satisfaction to me to sit as it were at the feet of the various gentlemen who have spoken on subjects with which they were more immediately conversant than I am, and to get information on the subjects on which I particularly desired more news. I am sure we must all feel that the debate has been conducted in a way very worthy of the high position which we intend our Senate to assume. I agree absolutely with what the last speaker said as to the great importance of letting the other branch of the Legislature know that the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia is not a Legislative Council, but a body representing the individual States, or as it has been very well put by you, Mr. President, a State House apart from the people's House, and going to the very root of the Constitution, which is that the States must agree as well as the people in the States before legislation is determined upon. I was glad that my friend, Senator O'Connor, in the very able speech which satisfied this House so much, laid stress on the matter of the position of the Senate. Might I be allowed to tell my friend that I do not think he put it strongly enough. Might I tell him that when he used the words that under this Constitution responsible government was established, he omitted to say exactly to which House he was referring - whether to one or both Houses. That is a matter which we shall have to work out for ourselves. There is not the slightest doubt about it that there were a great number of gentlemen engaged in framing this Constitution, and I had a humble part in it myself, with my friends Senator O'Connor and Mr. Barton, who thought that the necessary end of all this Constitution would be the establishment of an upper and a lower House - the Ministry being elected practically by and responsible alone to the House of Representatives. That was the idea of a good many of those who voted for the Constitution, and I can say

certainly, of my own knowledge, that many members of the Convention thought that that would be so. But I never thought so, and I never said so. I said you have had your Legislative Councils, which were practically coordinate authorities with the Houses of Assembly, gradually emasculated in their powers.

Senator Neild

- Chambers of revision.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Because you have, on account of the inherent weakness of their position, induced them to retire from their constitutional rights, and cease to hold co-ordinate power with the other Chamber it by no means follows that this new body, the Senate, not elected by the people in different constituencies, but by the States, will be at all in the same position. We have founded our Constitution practically on the lines of the American Constitution.

Senator DAWSON

- With a dash of the Canadian.

Senator Neild

- And a little bit of Swiss.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- We spoke many languages at the Convention, but I think we got along pretty well altogether. We practically founded our Constitution on the basis of the American as far as it could be so founded with a Constitution under the Crown. You must always remember that whatever we do is subject to the Imperial Parliament of England, which can interfere with and alter everything we do, and alter our Constitution as well. The basis of the American Constitution and of ours is that the Senate shall be a body at least co-ordinate in authority with the House of Representatives. We could not give the Senate the power the American Senate has, because it is an Imperial body, and upon it rests the arrangement of all foreign affairs; those things of course we cannot interfere with at all, because they remain with the Crown under which we live. But, as far as we could, the struggle of myself and a good many more who were working on the same side was to establish a Constitution on a basis so firm that its identity would not be lost in any sudden wave of popular feeling that might sweep over the Continent of Australia, and to establish it on a basis so sound and firm that ultimately the people's will must rule as it always must, but still so that every possible safeguard should be interposed to guarantee that it was the popular will that was being expressed, and not the ephemeral excitement of the moment. Well, we did not get all we wanted, but we got a good deal, and whether we get all we want depends upon the manner in which this House uses the power given to it; the extent to which it proves itself worthy of the authority given to it, and proves itself equal to the responsibility of accepting the opprobrium which may at times fall upon it through taking up a proper constitutional position. It is true that we cannot introduce Money Bills; that is purely a matter of business arrangement between the two Houses.

Senator Neild

- Only two classes of Money Bills.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I was referring to the matter in general terms, because I did not want to be too minute. I used the generic term "Money Bill" because I am talking to gentlemen who, I am sure, would rather that I did not go into detail about subjects of common understanding. I say we cannot introduce Money Bills, and although it is provided that we cannot amend them, yet a power equal to that is given to us in the form of suggestion. So that, as a matter of fact, we can amend them in effect, and if the result is that our amendments are not agreed to, and come back to us with the disagreement of the other House, on the House which refuses the amendments rests the responsibility of the ultimate rejection of the measures, rather than on the House that proposes the amendments. At all events, we have the power; but whether we can exercise the power will depend, I have always said, on the personnel of the first Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia. Looking round at the honorable members I see here, I have the feeling that they are all game, and that whether Mr. Barton or Mr. Reid is in power, we will hold our own in the great constitutional position, and not allow our House to be subordinated to any party considerations.

Senator DAWSON

- Suppose they tack a Taxation Bill on to an Appropriation Bill?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- They can not do that. By the Constitution "tacking" is prevented, but still there are lots of -ways of getting over that provision, which might be tried from time to time. There may be a great public feeling displayed in the large centres of population which it may be hard for us to resist, but in proportion as we prove our power to resist will the Constitution be productive of good, and a blessing instead of a curse to us all. As far as the present Government is concerned, no Prime Minister ever came into power with the more universal approbation of the people than Mr. Barton. The Prime Minister was the selected of the select of Australia at the Convention to be their leader, and I know personally that it was a position he never sought- it was given to him voluntarily and freely. He handed himself over absolutely to the position, and carried the matter through. He sacrificed his own private concerns - sacrificed everything, in fact, to the great cause he had undertaken. Ultimately the cause was crowned with success, and who should be sent for to form the first Ministry but the man who was selected by the Convention to lead them, and the man whom the electors voted for by a huge majority when it came to the final issue. When Mr. Barton was so selected by the united voice of Australians, every one knew all about him. He was not a man of no previous political career. We knew what his principles were, we knew he had been on the side of protection, and in spite of all that he was accepted, and is now in the position of Prime Minister - I was going to say with the universal consent, but perhaps it is not universal - with the very nearly universal, consent of every man in Australia. That is the reason why he should have a fair chance. That is the reason why we should respect him in his position, hope the best from him, and trust him to the uttermost, until he proves that he is unworthy of the trust.

Senator Dawson - You even give a criminal time.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I have been listening carefully to this debate, and I have heard no suggestion of unworthiness of the trust. There is a great flag waving on high ; on each side is the motto, " Excelsior." On one side is written. " Free-trade," on the other side is written "Protection." It is the same flag. I have not been able to find any difference. It appears to me they are all waving the same flag, with a different motto. The substance is always the same, and I, at all events, am unable to discover any difference. When you ask a free-trader or a protectionist the difference between their policies, they generally say, as my friend Mr. Reid said, "I am not going to tell my policy, because Barton would steal it from me next day." I admire that sort of platform oratory ; I like a good fighter, and a fellow who says smart things, but we do not want fellows to say smart things, we want men who will teach us great things. I have been listening with a great deal of interest to the senators on the other side, to see if I could get a wrinkle from them of any kind in reference to this debatable question of free-trade and protection. They asked me at home where I came from, if I was a free-trader, and I said no ; they said, are you a protectionist, and I said "no." They said are you sitting on a rail, and I said "yes," a very high rail, too, from which I can get the perspective of what is going on, and can come down on this side and do what is best for my fellows, and then down on the other side, and do what is best, and then go up again, and not be grovelling in the dirt with a lot of beetles of men who cannot see an inch in front of their noses. I say all this talk about free-trade and protection is pure rubbish. We cannot find a true free-trader anywhere any more than we can find a true protectionist ; they are all opportunists, as they ought to be.

Senator DAWSON

- As they are.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Not following any shibboleth, but doing what is best for themselves and their fellows according to what they consider best. We hear of the immense benefit that our mother country has obtained in the past from the persistent pursuit of free-trade. Well, I was home at a conference in 1887 and I met a great many of the leading men of the old country, and I found there was a great difference of opinion about the unlimited advantages obtainable from free-trade. So long as they pleased, our worthy ancestors in Great Britain were protectionists ; but as soon as they found themselves ready to fight the outside world, with their coal and iron and other advantages, combined with their natural cleverness and ability, they said - " Send in your things, and let us manufacture them." Now, when the Germans and the Americans have found out the trick and they are surrounded with general competition by all the rest of the world, they are not so

sure. They were not sure in 1871 about it, and I know from my correspondents that they are much less sure about it now. I do not want to go into the questions of free-trade and protection. The free-traders have abandoned the name, and there is not a man connected with the politics of Australia who dares to call himself a free-trader.

Senator Harney

- We are all freetraders.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Undoubtedly ; and so were the smugglers. AVe want to get everything as cheap as we can, and it was a very happy term used on the west coast of England that the free-traders were professional smugglers.

We want to get everything as cheap as Ave can ; we are all agreed about that.

Senator Neild

- But the protectionists are professional sweaters.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I am not saying anything for them here. I am looking round, anxious for information, a humble lawyer in practice at the bar, who went into politics and held various public positions, but never had an interest in any mercantile concern, simply watching the game, that is being played always for greed, and trying honestly to find out the truth. I say, a plague on both; there is no truth in either. AVe have to do the best we can in the circumstances. Are we to pass an Act of Parliament in which we shall recite - " Whereas the people of Great Britain and Ireland up to 50 years ago, were a parcel of fools and idiots, and practised protection, but 50 years afterwards became a sensible people ; and whereas the rest of the world, including Russia, Germany, France, America, and Italy, are still fools and idiots ; therefore, for the purpose of bringing these people to a better sense of the wrong they have been doing, we are going to let them hit us as much as they like," and so on, supposing that 40 or 50 years hence, when we are all dead and gone, they will find out the monstrous mistake they are making, and come to a sense of how right and proper we are. I do not profess to be very selfish or unselfish, but I would like something during my life-time.

I do not want to postpone these benefits, all these countless benefits that are to come. I think we may approach this matter pretty much from the point of view that the Prime Minister took up when speaking in Melbourne. I have heard a lot of talk about views that have been retired from, and about the way in which they have been altered. I can only say, I know of no different statements made by the Prime Minister. What he said in Melbourne was- -"You, Victoria, cannot have your Tariff; New South Wales, you cannot have your Tariff ; Queensland, you cannot have your own Tariff; South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia, you cannot have your Tariffs. What we have to do is to make a Tariff which will be fair to every one." He called that protection. His opponents called it revenue Tariff. What on earth does it matter what either side calls it ? I do not care a little bit. I say, call it any name you like - pretty puppets, play with the dolls as much as you please - I want to know the substance. Our free-trade friends have dropped the free-trade cry. They call themselves revenue tariffists. I do not know whether the protectionists have dropped the term protection or not ; but I never thought before that Mr. Barton was a true protectionist. He said in his recent speeches that he had declared himself hundreds of times to be a protectionist. I always thought he was a fair-trader.

Senator Neild

- He was one of the most eloquent free-traders that ever spoke in New South Wales.

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Senator O'Connor

- That was before he got light.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER.- I suppose we have all gone through various stages. Naturally our first disposition 'is to get everything as cheap as Ave can. It is curious enough, and I am not sure that, as far as one portion of humanity is concerned, it could ever realize the justice of imposing duties. We go through these various stages, and we find how our cruder notions have to be applied to the harder facts of real substantial life. Is it not useless for us to suppose that Ave, a mere handful of 4,000,000 people, can stand and hold our OWJ: against the huge phalanx of the highly protective countries of the world unless Ave try to help ourselves to some extent. Every other nation is protected. Bismarck, speaking of the condition in which he discovered his country when he came into power, said he found it poor. He

found this doctrine of free-trade had been preached to such an extent that the people were simply inactive ; they were simply the receivers of goods from other places. He did not like protective duties, but he put them on. As the result of this, the people instead of depending on others for their requisites, have become producers themselves, and are pouring their produce into the places which formerly supplied them. " I found this country in need," said Bismarck, "I leave it prosperous." Free-traders say - "The whole concern is a mere delusion. They think they are happy, but really they are intensely miserable ; and so are the Americans, poor wretched, fools, living on in their own sense of fully enjoying this idle phantasm of prosperity, when they are really miserable under protection."

Senator O'Connor

- Canadians, too?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes ; and all the rest of the world, except a few merchants in Australia. All the rest of the world goes on in its career, thinking it is happy when it is miserable. All the countries seem to be prosperous and enjoying themselves, and we have only against that the statement of the free-trader that it must end in disaster.

Senator DAWSON

- Why not send Mr. Reid out as a special missionary ?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I think that would be a good idea. They could not send a more agreeable man, or one whose speeches would have more effect on them, or give more enjoyment to himself.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Send him to the only other free-trade country, Turkey.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER.- The only statement we have at present is the statement of the Government that they will bring down to us at the earliest possible opportunity this session a Tariff which will be fair and revenue producing. On that statement we have had all this discussion. I think it would be more advisable for us to wait and see what the Tariff is, and then we shall be in a better position to discuss it. Nevertheless, it is just as well that we should have some general talk on the subject.

Senator Neild

- It is very general.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- It has been so all round. So far as the Commonwealth Constitution is concerned, it provides not merely for the Senate and the House of Representatives, but for two other bodies that are of great importance in giving effect to it. They are absolutely necessary to it. One is the Federal Supreme Court, and the other is the Inter-State Commission. There is no body to whom the establishment of the Supreme Court is of greater importance than this Senate. In questions that have arisen under constitutional government between the Legislative Councils and the Houses of Assembly the respective Governments have had the control of the purse, and the Legislative Councils have had no authority to interfere with them. They might pass as many resolutions as they pleased, but there was no vindicatory power which would insure effect being given to those resolutions. The American Republic got over that difficulty through the Supreme Court. If the House of Representatives there asserts itself unduly as against the Senate, or the Senate against the House of Representatives, there is a tribunal above both of them, not for the purpose of considering the reasons on which the two bodies act, but for the purpose of seeing whether they have infringed each other's rights.

Senator DAWSON

- And it can even reject an Act passed by both Houses.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Exactly. It is a superior body, and can keep both Houses in their proper places. We have done the same thing in our own Constitution. That is what the Supreme Court is to be, and if senators want, at the earliest possible stage, to complete the Constitution and establish the only power which, in the event of disputes, can put things right between the two Houses, they should appoint a Supreme Court as soon as possible. The Constitution is incomplete without it. An Inter-State Commission may or may not be required at once. I quite agree with Senator Sir Josiah Symon, that the sooner the railways are federalized the better it will be; but the Inter-State Commission is required before that very desirable end



is reached.

Senator FRASER

- That will be a good many years hence.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes. Therefore the Inter-State Commission had better be appointed speedily. That would avoid any public disquiet which might be created by a sense of the possibility of our pretending to make all our ports free to each other when in reality we were adopting preferential rates which would have the effect of destroying the very object we are seeking to achieve. The

Court is in a different position, It stands between the two Houses. It is the protector of the Constitution, as it has been called in America. Woe betide those who call themselves true federalists who interfere or seek to postpone the establishment of this tribunal. Now I come to the question before the House, the amendment on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. The point is whether or not the paragraph in the Governor-General's speech about kanaka labour is satisfactory. Of course we know that the amendment will not be carried. Senator Millen will probably withdraw it so as to avoid the necessity of taking a vote.

Senator DAWSON

- We may as well have a vote on it.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- If he wishes to withdraw it I will assist him. I think it is a pity that it has been moved. The Governor-General's speech was clear and distinct on the subject, and the remarkably lucid explanation which the honorable gentleman in charge of the Government business in the Senate gave us yesterday was quite unanswerable. The Government has shown a further proof of their genuineness by giving notice of a Bill on the subject. When we have the Bill before us we can discuss the question calmly and deliberately. The speech just made by Senator Higgs is to my mind the most straightforward statement of the case against coloured labour that I have yet heard in public. It was bold and fearless but abominably selfish. It was unmistakably clear. He did not go into the question like the honorable senator who talked about lepers and people of that kind. You will find such persons among all classes of the community. Senator Higgs went to the root of the matter when he said these coloured aliens could starve us out, and it was a question whether we should allow them to come in and starve us out.

Senator McGregor

- Better to starve us out than rot us out.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I object to both. In both these speeches the rights of others were absolutely ignored. The goby was given to the question whether any one else in the world has a right here except ourselves. I have heard it said in South Australia - " If you cannot work the Northern Territory satisfactorily without coloured labour, then do not use the Northern Territory at all ; let it lie idle."

Senator McGregor

- But they had a chance of using coloured labour, and they did not use it.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Where ?

Senator McGregor

- The Indian Immigration Act is in existence still.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Exactly, and a pretty inoperative Act it was. I am talking about arguments which Senator McGregor has heard used, and he knows by whom. That Northern Territory is a huge burden upon us - I am speaking for South Australia now - which we have to bear without the introduction of coloured labour on account of the great pressure brought to bear upon us from the other colonies against allowing coloured labour to come in.

Senator DAWSON

- I tried to get work at Port Darwin, and I could not, and I was told point blank that I had better get back to Queensland if I wanted work.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Exactly . So far as that is concerned there has been a strong pressure brought to bear on South Australia from the other colonies on this coloured labour question. We never wanted coloured labour in South Australia proper. You never wanted coloured labour in Victoria proper, nor did they ever want coloured labour in New South Wales proper.

Senator McGregor

- "Who gave Miller the chance to bring Chinamen there 1

Senator DAWSON

- There is not a white man working in Port Darwin.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- There are very few men, either white or black ; but they do not allow any more now, whether they are white or black. I wish honorable members to understand that I am not saying that there ought to be black labour. I am giving that question the go-by at the present moment. I am simply saying that so far the arguments which have been used by Senator Higgs recommend themselves to me very much, because they are the true direct arguments from the point of view of pure and absolute selfishness, which is the only reason that can be applied. It may be a good argument, for it may be that, after all, it is a question whether Darwin is right in his view as to the survival of the fittest, and whether we have to kill all the rest, or keep them down somehow or other, if they will interfere with our means of earning our livelihood. But, so far as the kanaka question is concerned, I am delighted to find that Senator McGregor is not going to support the amendment. Of course, he saw through it at once. When it was moved the thing was as thin as thin could be. The senator who moved the amendment does not object to kanaka labour at all. They have no kanakas in New South Wales, but they have sugar factories there, and although the kanaka labour was proving a tremendous failure in Queensland, so that the cultivation had largely increased, presumably by labour other than kanaka labour, and which showed that kanaka labour is practically ineffective, yet at a later stage when the matter came further to be discussed, we had an interjection from that honorable gentleman that the effect of not carrying the amendment would be to put a handicap on New South Wales from the kanaka labour in the other place when the restrictions were removed.

Senator McGregor

- That was only an afterthought.

Senator Gould

- The honorable and learned member is not very fair to Senator Millen, because he has no ulterior object to serve.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I do not want to be unfair.

Senator Gould

- He is honestly advocating what he believes to be right.

Senator O'Connor

- No one suggested anything to the contrary

Senator Sir JOHN" DOWNER

- Who suggested that? I have known lots of men who have advocated their own interests with the most perfect frankness and thought that they were in the right, but I have not known so many men who have advocated a thing against their own interests and felt so clear about it. What prejudice have I 1 I am here to obtain instruction from everybody who is kind enough to give it to me. I simply listened here, and I wondered why this hot kanaka feeling came in so strongly, all at once, into a New South Welshman ; but when I found, later on, what was not mentioned at first, that in spite of kanaka labour being so destructive to Queensland, and they are so much better without it, and that the moment the embargo is removed, and there is freedom of trade between the States, it handicaps New South Wales, which has no kanaka labour, I put two and two together, as, I suppose, many others did. I thought it did not come so much from the view of benefiting the poor kanaka, or the poor Australian, as from the view of helping a particular industry in New South Wales against a similar industry in Queensland, and that is what any one else would have thought in the circumstances.

Senator DAWSON

- The Colonial Sugar Refining Company

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- There has been some discussion with reference to the appeals as they stand at present to the Privy Council, and there is no doubt about it that amongst us we have made a pretty good mess of this part of the Constitution. I do not think that Senator Dobson has quite realized what a very innocuous thing this restriction on appeal is as it stands. In the Convention of 1891 - and I think, sir, you were there - we agreed on a clause which prevented appeals to the Privy Council except in cases in which the Imperial Government considered that their position with other countries was involved - an obviously fair and proper proposal, and, besides being fair and proper, a proposal without which we could not have expected to have the clause carried. That was a clear and distinct issue. The Convention of 1891 thought that we were quite competent to manage our own judicial affairs amongst ourselves. That opinion I vehemently contended for at the time. That opinion I have never moved from up to the present moment. We had a judiciary committee at the last Convention, and during the course of the debates the clauses in the 1891 Bill were more and more whittled away, but still there was something of them left. Then the Bill went home, and we have had a pean of rejoicing throughout certain sections of Australia on the victory we obtained when practically all we were contending for was taken away. Let us see how it stands now. The High Court has original jurisdiction - that I do not need to speak about now - on questions referring to the Constitution and so on. It is also a Court of Appeal in all cases from State Supreme Courts. But it is not the only Court of Appeal in any case, because in every instance the right of a private suitor is left untrammelled to appeal to the Privy Council or anywhere else he can go, just exactly as he can do now.

Senator Harney

- Not direct.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes, it is so. If the honorable member will allow me, I really do understand this question.

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Senator Gould

- One man can go to one court and the other man to another court.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER. - The disaffected suitor has the choice of whether he goes to the Privy Council or whether he goes to the High Court. The primary idea we had was to be our own ultimate judges and not to have any appeal out of the Commonwealth, except in matters which might involve the old country in trouble with other people. What we have done has been to reserve every appeal that every man, woman, and child has got just as it is now.

Senator Fraser. - A good job, too.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Perhaps it is ; but I only want to show how strenuously they have carried out the honourable member's view. We have, in addition, given them another court of appeal to go to if they like - that is, the High Court. But we have done still more than that. We have given them the power of going on from the High Court to the Privy Council, except in a certain limited number of cases, and those are questions relating to the construction of our own Constitution. If I disapprove of the judgment of our Supreme Court, whether it is on a matter referring to the Constitution or on a matter referring to anything else, I can go to the Privy Council if I like, or I can go to the High Court if I like ; but, if I go to the High Court, and it is on a constitutional question, I cannot go beyond that Court. I have to take their finding and be done with it. I need not go there unless I like, but in every other case I can go to the High Court, and take the other fellow on to the Privy Council as well afterwards. So that I do not think we have very much to be proud of in that part of the Commonwealth Act.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Who was responsible for that ?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- A good many. I am not, and that is the person I am most interested in.

Senator FRASER

- The lawyers are responsible I am afraid.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I have heard much satisfaction expressed at the triumphant victory that was obtained at home, how we

got the better of the fellows at home, and kept the thing entirely to ourselves, but that I have never been able properly to realize. It seemed to me rather-

Senator Gould

- That the boot was on the other leg.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I thought so. Perhaps I was wrong.

Senator O'Connor

- The honorable member will find that the Act defining the jurisdiction of the High Court gives us power to define certain subjects of original jurisdiction which it takes away altogether from the State Courts.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- That is another thing.

Senator O'Connor

- In all these cases there is only one appeal, and that is to the High Court.

Senator Harney

- There are still three appeals in a private case.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes. I have heard so much about this that I think it is only fair to tell my honorable friend that I do not congratulate ourselves so much on the victory that we achieved as other honorable gentlemen appear to have done.

Senator DAWSON

- Must not a man have the consent of the High Court to appeal' to the Privy Council ?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- No; you can go to your own Supreme Court, and appeal from its verdict to the Privy Council or to the High Court. If you go to the High Court, you can appeal from the High Court, too, except in cases in which some question of the construction of the Constitution is involved.

Senator McGregor

- And then the High Court can allow you to appeal if it likes ?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes.

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Senator DAWSON

- Must you not have the consent of both sides 1

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER.- No; that is the worst of it. It is the disaffected suitor who can do this.

Personally, I agree entirely with what we tried to do in 1891. I do not agree with Senator Fraser in this matter, and we are very good friends too". I think that a time has to come when we can say, as we are capable of making laws so we are capable of interpreting them. Suppose my honorable friend's appeal goes to the Privy Council, and that court says that our statute means something different from what our Supreme Court said it meant; we pass a statute which says that the Privy Council is wrong, and that we meant what the Supreme Court did say. That is quite within our jurisdiction to do, and if we had the power by a declaratory statute of declaring what the law is, why should not we have the power of establishing a body to declare it in the first instance? Besides, we know that in all questions of the administration of justice it is not on big points, not on clear points, that the divergences come. It is on points of so much doubt and difficulty that really it matters very little which way it is decided.

Senator Fraser

- Often great principles are involved.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- That is the very thing, and yet you will find seven Lords of Appeal saying that the principle is one thing, and eight Lords of Appeal saying that the principle is another thing. Don't you see, that that is bringing it down to a very fine point, and that it would be better to have speedy justice occasionally, although that fine point happened to be missed 1 As the result of the experiences of my life, I consider that it is more important that justice should be speedy than that it should be absolutely just.

Senator Fraser

- Even if it is wrong ?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes, let it be wrong once in a way and cheaply bought j better that one man should suffer than a thousand.

Senator Ewing

- What is wrong? It is only a matter of opinion in most cases.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- It comes to such a fine point that you have seven .Lords of Appeal who say one thing, and eight Lords of Appeal saying another thing.

Senator Ewing

- And the eight prevail.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- So that the judgment is that of one.

Senator Ewing

- It is the same judgment throughout the British dominions, and if you find the High Court colliding with the Privy Council you have two judgments equally powerful.

Senator Keating

- The Privy Council and the House of Lords have come into conflict, and we do not know what the law is.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I am leaving out the question as to whether we have the best Court of Appeal. That is another question.

Senator Keating

- The House of Lords has disregarded the Privy Council's decisions, and we do not know which of them is correct. There is no final court of appeal for the whole empire.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Leaving that matter out altogether, is the time never to come when we are to be self-sufficing even in matters concerning ourselves immediately ? Can any one answer this argument ? If we are competent to pass statutes, and afterwards if you please to pass declaratory statutes upsetting the decisions of the courts of appeal at home, do you not think that we might be competent to give those decisions in the first place without going through all those inter media tory courses ?

Senator Fraser

- If we were dealing very largely with home people we would be very much inclined to favour ourselves in the matter of decisions.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I do not know. I admit that my experience of life is not so large as that of my honorable friend - but one of our proudest boasts has been that the administration of justice has been absolutely pure - utterly beyond suspicion.

Senator Fraser

- There is the unconscious bias.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Let me tell the honorable member that if it were not absolutely pure it would relate to questions .of law and not to questions of fact, for there is no appeal to the Privy Council on questions of fact. There is no man, not even my honorable friend, who would cast the slightest imputation on the absolute purity of the administration of justice.

Senator Fraser

- AVe all acknowledge that.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- There are many questions in this speech which it will be quite impossible, as has been said, for us to consider during this session, or pro\* probably during this Parliament. I think it was the duty of the Government to give us a sort of panorama - a sketch if you like, but something, so that the most ordinary gazer could see what was proposed - a panorama which would, as a matter of course, extend far beyond the possibility of our doing the work during this session, or perhaps during this Parliament. That was the duty of the first Government, and it is a subject for congratulation that they have performed it, and by no means a subject of reproach. Then the question of industrial disputes is a good subject to talk about. We have tried legislation in different places. AVe have an Act in South Australia which is never availed of.

Senator Pearce

- It is not compulsory.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- It never will be compulsory, because the very persons who ask for it will not have it.

Senator DAWSON

- Yes they will.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- They never have. However, these are questions which it is very proper to discuss with a view of preventing men being set against men, but they require much consideration, and certainly during this session I do not think we shall have the least earthly opportunity of considering them. As to uniform suffrage I suppose that will have to come. The "Victorians who, at one time were mostly opposed to it, are now mostly in favour of it.

Senator Fraser

- Very doubtful about it.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I look upon that as a question for each State to deal with, It is purely a question for them to decide, and we ought to follow their inclinations rather than endeavour to unduly force them.

Senator Ewing

- It must be uniform though.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Why 1

Senator Ewing

- I think so, surely.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- No ; if it is uniform it has to be on the model of South Australia, but it need not of necessity be uniform except on the general principle that everything should be uniform.

Senator O'Connor

- If there is a federal law passed on the subject it must be uniform.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes, but until the federal law is passed on the subject it will not be uniform, and if a federal law is passed it must be adult suffrage and nothing else.

Senator Ewing

- We cannot distinguish between States.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I say I would undoubtedly support adult suffrage if the States wished it ; but I would like the opinion of the States on the subject rather than that I should force theirs. I do not see that the mere fact that adult suffrage is established in South Australia would be a reason for insisting on every other State adopting the same principle.

Senator McGregor

- The States have all approved of it.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Then there can be no objection to it.

Senator McGregor

- It is only the Legislative Councils who have rejected it in the States.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Then the matter will be very easily managed and we shall be able to follow the opinion of the States rather than to unduly force their inclinations. Well, I do not know that there is any other subject that I wish to address the Senate upon at the present time. We have had some very interesting speeches, but we have had no opposition to the Government except in an amendment that I suppose we may treat more as a matter of form than substance; we have had no arguments at all used which would interfere with the present status of the Government. Whether the Government will have our support, is a matter for future

consideration. Speaking for myself, I say that if on the fiscal question, which has been the paramount consideration in the elections throughout the Commonwealth, the Prime Minister adheres to the views he has expressed in his speech in Melbourne, he can depend upon me as an honest and consistent supporter. I know no justification that anybody has for saying that the Government will not prove itself worthy of the confidence originally reposed in it, or that any circumstance is likely to arise to make the Prime Minister and his colleagues depart from the programme they have officially announced.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia). - I have very much pleasure in rising to speak to the Address in Reply, on behalf of that great State, Western Australia, and I trust that we who represent that State will be able to convince the representatives of other States of the importance of this Parliament devoting some attention to that great tract of territory we are sent here to represent, because I believe that the future of Australia, to a large extent, will depend on the use we make of that portion of our continent. Although now occupied by a mere handful of people, the time will undoubtedly come when it will form a very important part of our nation, and when it will be inhabited, not merely by a few thousands, but by many millions of the subjects of our empire. I trust that the representatives of the various States will remember, in dealing with any legislation which may peculiarly affect our State, that they are dealing with a State which enters into the Federation under different circumstances to those surrounding the entry of other States. We have only had ten years of responsible government; and in our public works and various services we have not reached that stage which has been reached in the eastern States. It will therefore be necessary to devote a larger expenditure to the public services than can be claimed for the eastern States. I trust that that will be remembered, and that honorable members will view such proposals as the Inter-State railway and the extension of our postal and telegraphic services with consideration. We have only had ten years during which to extend that branch of our public service, and to cope with the immense increase of population which has taken place. In reading through the Governor-General's speech I think we must admit that most of the subjects which are dealt with are within the region of practical politics, though I confess that many of them have been dealt with in too indefinite a manner to give me that satisfaction which I otherwise would have had. In regard to the question of the federal territory, I should like to have heard some more definite proposal as to the extent of the territory to be acquired, and also some definite expression as to what line of policy ought to be adopted as regards the ownership of the land. There is a general consensus of opinion that the land belonging to the territory should be the property of the Commonwealth, and remain its property, but the speech would bear the interpretation that only that land which may be used for public purposes is to remain the property of the Commonwealth. I do not know if that is a just interpretation to put upon the speech, but I trust it is not, and that the meaning is that the whole land acquired - for federal purposes shall remain the property of the Commonwealth. I also hope that the area mentioned in the Constitution, 100,000 square miles, will be considerably extended, and that we shall have a territory given over to federal purposes which shall remain the property of the whole people. With regard to the coloured labour question, I certainly think there was some justification for the amendment. The Government could have been more explicit in their statement as to their method of dealing with the question. There can be no question that Australia has spoken very definitely on the subject, especially those portions of Australia which are more immediately concerned, such as Queensland and Western Australia. I would remind honorable members that we have in Western Australia this black labour trouble. We have, in the north-west of our State an industry which will be in the future, and is now, a very valuable one, and will become more valuable. I refer to the pearling industry, which, though owned by white men, is worked entirely by coloured labour. We have had it on the authority of reports from Government officials that there is no reason why it should not be worked by white men, and we also know that in the north-west of our State the population is mainly coloured. There is growing up there a state of affairs which is a disgrace to our civilization. We think that the people of Australia have no wish that such a state of things should longer continue. Let the Federal Government have power to deal with it effectively and promptly. A great portion of the coloured races were brought into Western Australia under an Act similar to that existing in Queensland. They were brought there under an agreement to return them to their homes at the end of twelve months. But those agreements have not been respected. I do not know whether it is possible to enforce them, but if it can be done it should be done, and those people who have come into the country with the understanding that they would be deported eventually should be treated in that way. I refuse to recognise that they have a right to remain

now they are here. The Federal Government has a right to see that the agreements are carried out, and that the law is respected. As regards the kanaka question, I think it has been effectually proved that white men can carry on the industry. The verdict of Queensland is that white men can do so. As has been said by Senator McGregor, the labour party have no wish to inflict any injury on the sugar industry of Queensland, and therefore we are not in favour of any harsh immediate action which would injure that industry ; but, speaking for myself at any rate, I think the importation of these kanakas should not extend beyond the end of the present year. If their introduction is terminated then, and if, as we know, the agreements extend over three years, that would mean that Queensland would have kanakas for three years and seven months longer. We think that that is a fair period within which to terminate the kanaka labour, and we therefore trust that the Government, when placing its proposals before the House, will look at the matter in that light, and remember that the people of Queensland, who are most interested, have proved themselves to be in favour of the termination of the introduction of these people. In regard to the question of compulsory arbitration, the last speaker has said that in some of the States it has been tried. Well, there are only two States which have tried the measure : Western Australia and South Australia. In Western Australia the Act is a fairly good one, but it has only come into force recently, and we have not had time to see how it will work. "But in South Australia we have an Act on the statute-book which is shorn of its chief merit simply because of the lack of the compulsory element. It is merely an Act providing for conciliation, and if the parties to disputes refuse to come together there is no power given by which they can be brought before the Conciliation Board.

Senator Barrett

- It is the same in "Victoria, and it has been a failure.

Senator PEARCE

- In the colony of New Zealand the principle of compulsory arbitration has been tried. I am sure most politicians have directed their attention to that legislation, and they know that it has had the effect of doing away with industrial strikes and steadying the commercial life of New Zealand. It has done away with those disastrous disputes between employer and employee.

Senator McGregor

- Not the conciliation.

Senator PEARCE

- No, the arbitration. I wish to emphasize the point that I think we should be only wasting time by bringing in the question of conciliation, because the experience of New Zealand is that very few cases are settled before the Conciliation Board, and that those applying for agreements ask for more than they want, because they know the agreements will be watered down in the Conciliation Court, and if they are not accepted, they are brought before the Arbitration Board and still further watered down. In every case the dispute does not stop at the finding of the Conciliation Board. Why should we load our statute-book with legislation which is so inoperative? I trust the Government will follow the example that was followed in New South Wales, and introduce a bill that deals only with compulsory arbitration. Let them leave out all reference to boards of conciliation which have proved inoperative. There is another feature which deserves the attention of honorable members. The Government have declared their intention of bringing into force navigation laws. There is a question which has engaged the attention of the mercantile portion of the community as well as most of the labour people, and it is this - while by our organizations we have been enabled to compel capitalists to pay on the steam-ships trading between Australian ports a certain fixed rate of wage, yet they are constantly coming into competition with foreign-owned vessels which are not amenable to our labour organizations, and which do not pay the same rate of wage. We must admit that that is unfair, and I believe that by some method of working between the Navigation Act and the Arbitration Act you could compel boats trading between Australian ports to register at their port of call, and compel the owners to come under the operation of the Arbitration Act so that they might be obliged to pay the same rate of wages as we have compelled our local capitalists to pay. I trust, therefore, that those who might not be disposed to view favorably this interference with private enterprise will pause ere they oppose it, and will see the position as I have put it, that the existing state of affairs is unfair to local capitalists. I think this is a ground upon which the representatives of labour and capital could join hands to the advantage of both.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood



- Victoria passed an act last session.

Senator PEARCE

- I trust the Government will bring in such a measure as the New Zealand Parliament has passed, which has had the effect of enabling the merchants of New Zealand to protect themselves from the unfair competition of these foreign-owned boats. In our own State I know from practical evidence that there are what are called ocean tramps trading from port to port and paying a rate of wage only half of what is paid by the Adelaide company.

Senator Fraser

- They keep down the freights for the farmer.

Senator PEARCE

- Yes. We shall be able, and the workers will avail themselves of the opportunity, to compel local capitalists to pay the local rate of wages. Foreign capitalists whose vessels come here should have to do the same.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- How are you going to compel them ?

Senator PEARCE

- Through the arbitration court.

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Senator Sir William Zeal

- You cannot compel .the foreign capitalists.

Senator PEARCE

- We compel them to comply with our navigation laws when they are trading between the A.u strahan ports. We can make them amenable to our laws while they take part in the coastal trade.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- Hear, hear.

Senator PEARCE

- In that way we would do a great deal of good to our local labour and our local capitalists. I have listened with much interest to the debate on the fiscal issue, but I must say my knowledge of the subject has not been advanced by the statements I have heard from either side. Whether there is a free-trade Government or a protectionist Government in office, unless they say they are prepared to raise their revenue by direct taxation, they will be compelled to create a revenue-producing Tariff. I presume, from what I have heard from the Government side, that we are to have a revenue-raising Tariff, but if there is an article which can be produced locally, upon which they can place a duty and give a certain amount of protection, they will place it on that article rather than on one which cannot be produced in Australia, although it is in consumption here. They will get a certain amount of revenue and protection at the same time.

Senator O'Connor

- That marks the distinction.

Senator PEARCE

- I fail to recognise any vital distinction between the policies of either side. If it came to a clear-cut issue between free-trade and protection my vote would be in the direction of free-trade. ' If it came to putting a duty on tea, which is an article largely consumed here, but which cannot be produced locally, or of putting it on boots, which can be produced, I would be prepared to put it on boots. I take it that the position adopted by the Government is that they will show they can raise sufficient without putting a duty on both.

Senator Matheson

- They will put an unnecessarily high duty on one, and shut it out.

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Senator PEARCE

- If they come forward with any high duties they will find me in opposition. If it is a .matter of putting a duty on tea which cannot be produced here and boots which can, I shall be found on the Government side. I attach no importance to the question of fiscalism. Undue prominence has been given to it, both during the election and during this debate. I am not going to be led astray by the Opposition, and induced to vote against the

Government on this point. There are questions of far greater importance, and I am prepared to give my vote to that party which will give to the people I represent the greatest measure of social legislation. It is of no importance to me whether the party which advocates a duty on tea is in office or the party which advocates a duty on boots. Senator McGregor has told the Senate that the labour party is free. I fully recognise that much of the arguments used by the free-trade party against protection can be proved up to the hilt ; and if it were a question of free-trade and protection there might be some justification for a direct attack upon the Government on this question of fiscalism. As it is absolutely a question of a revenue-producing Tariff, there is very little difference between the Government and the Opposition, and, therefore, our vote will be determined by the amount of legislation which either party is prepared to give us. The time will come when it will be possible, I believe, to impose direct taxation through the Federal Government. I see no reason why the Federal Government should not impose an absentee tax. It is not availed of by any of the State Governments, and it would bring in a certain amount of revenue. In order to secure direct taxation we must look to the freetrade party. I have less hope of obtaining it from the party that advocate protection, because the policy of protection builds up vested interests which will always clamour for the continuance of that taxation which has enabled them to establish their manufactories. Therefore, we who favour direct taxation will always meet with greater opposition from protectionists than from those who advocate taxation merely for revenue purposes. Direct taxation is the most equitable in its bearing on the people. You can place it on the shoulders of those best able to pay, and thereby adjust some of the incidence of the wealth of the world. I believe the time will come when we shall be able to ask the people to settle the question whether there should be a policy of free-trade or protection by a direct vote. That should be done by electing members pledged to submit this question to a referendum. Ultimately, I think, the question will be settled in that way. I am glad to see the Government is prepared to bring in a Bill to give a uniform electoral law and uniform adult suffrage to the Commonwealth. In Western Australia we have had to put up with a very bad electoral law which has disfranchised more than half the people. If it had not been so, we should have heard more of the voice of the people of Western Australia,, and less of the voice of a certain individual. I trust the Government, when dealing with the matter, will give every facility to those who are qualified to get on the rolls ; and that they will not allow officials to remove the names of qualified persons, which has been done in Western Australia and Queensland. It is gratifying to find that the Government recognise the importance of the transcontinental railway question, but I think greater prominence should have been given to it. We have been told that defence is one of the essentials of federation. If that be so, every part of the Commonwealth has a right to claim its full share. Western Australia has just as much right to be fully defended from foreign aggression as the State of "Victoria, and the defence of the Western State can only be completed by the construction of this line. The Governor-General's speech indicates that its construction will depend on the question whether it will pay. I am not prepared to say that it would at the outset. It would not, however, be many years before it would become a paying concern.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- It would not pay the cost of the coal consumed on it.

Senator Matheson

- What proof has the honorable member got of that 1

Senator PEARCE

- I believe I can indicate one source of traffic at the present time which in itself would be more than sufficient to pay for the coal. Every one knows that West Australia is dependent on the eastern States for its meat supply, and that stock has to be driven to the coast line of those States, shipped round to Fremantle, and carried 300 or 400 miles into the interior by rail.

Senator Matheson

- At a heavy percentage of loss.

Senator PEARCE

- If this line were built, the stock would be sent by railway, and distributed all over the interior in three or four days.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- What would be the condition of the cattle after four days in a railway truck ?

Senator PEARCE

- Under the present conditions, they have to spend two weeks in a steamer before they reach Fremantle and are sent inland. By means of this line they could be sent direct to the eastern gold-fields of Western Australia within three or four days.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- What would be the cost per head ?

Senator Matheson

- There would be a saving of ?6 or ?7 per head.

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Senator PEARCE

- I am not prepared to say that. There is another source of revenue I might mention. Fremantle is the first port of call for the mail steamers from Europe, and those vessels always bring a certain percentage of globe-trotters on the look-out for investments. If the line were built they would leave the steamer at Fremantle, travel across country by rail, and see the splendid opportunities for the investment of their capital. The attraction of the more comfortable journey by rail to the eastern colonies would in itself produce no inconsiderable amount of passenger traffic. Then we have to consider possible further discoveries of new goldfields. We have no guarantee that in the enormous stretch of auriferous country lying to the east of Kalgoorlie greater discoveries may not be made. We know that at Tarcoola recently an auriferous belt was discovered, which is opening up well. I trust that when the time arrives for the proposal for a trans-continental railway to assume concrete form, the representatives of other States will deal with it, not in so far as it may affect their own States, but from a national stand-point. Of course, it has been said that whenever a railway will not pay, or is not a paying concern, or it is one which the State does not care to take up, it will be called a national concern, and they will appeal to the federal authorities to construct the line. But I think honorable members will agree that this line has greater claims to be called a federal line than has any other line that is at present projected. If we take the line to the Northern Territory, we find that it is constructed wholly within one State. There is a difference between that line and the line proposed to Western Australia. Whereas the line to Western Australia would connect the eastern States with the nearest port of any importance in Australia to the European nations, the line to Port Darwin would connect us with the port which is nearest to the eastern nations, and not to the port nearest to European countries.

Senator O'Connor

- What length of line would it be necessary to build to complete the scheme ?

Senator PEARCE

- I believe it is necessary to build 700 miles of railway between the port of Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta. The line will have to be built on a broad gauge, and that part of the line which has been built on a narrow gauge will have to be altered to a broad gauge. But we shall have that same difficulty to overcome in connexion with the line to the Northern Territory, which, so far as it has been constructed, has been built on a narrow gauge, and purely within the territory of one State. I think we naturally look to an expansion of our trade with Europe rather than with eastern nations. The tendency certainly seems to be that our trade will grow with the mother country and the countries of Europe rather than with eastern nations. If that be so, then I think that a railway which will bring us to the eastern States several days nearer to the European markets ought to have preference over a line which is only going to serve one State, and which will not bring us any nearer to our European markets, but may bring us some days nearer to the eastern markets. In considering the question of defence, we have to consider the question as to where foreign aggression is most likely to come from. Undoubtedly we have more reason to fear foreign aggression from eastern powers than from European nations. I think it will be conceded that if any European nations were engaged in a war or a quarrel with the Empire, their resources would be taxed to the fullest extent to defend their own shores. But there is always this possibility that in the event of Great Britain being involved in a dispute with a foreign nation - that did we, for instance, through our coloured restriction laws, become involved in a dispute with Japan or China they would seize the opportunity to raise this question, and I believe that the opinion of Australia would be such that they would go to the length of a war in resisting the repeal of those laws. If this is so, we have therefore a greater fear of foreign aggression from eastern nations than from European nations. In fact, I cannot see the possibility of any of the European nations for the purpose of conquest, which would be their only purpose, opening

up a war of aggression on Australia, whereas there is a possibility of the earth hunger in eastern nations leading them to pick a quarrel with Australia for the purpose of securing these valuable and only partially populated lands. If that is so, then, for the purpose of the defence of the eastern States, they too have a direct interest in this trans-continental railway, because it is to their interest to be able effectually to defend the nearest and most vulnerable spot in our armour, and the nearest and most vulnerable spot at the present time is the western coast of Australia. The port I make most reference to is the port of Fremantle, which will be in a very short time a good port for a naval base, a good port for the accommodation of the navies of any nation which might wish to take Australia. It is absolutely essential for the safety of Australia, therefore, that we should be connected with the more populous eastern States, which, in the event of such a contingency, would be able by means of that railway, and only by that means, effectually to defend the western coast from the aggression I have spoken of.

Senator DAWSON

- What about Albany ?

Senator PEARCE

- Albany is not anything like so convenient a port as the one I have mentioned for the purpose of eastern nations. For these reasons, I trust that the mere consideration of the expense of construction and interest on the capital outlay will not weigh with honorable members ; that they will not forget that there are other contingencies to be remembered ; that they will deal with this question from an Australian spirit rather than from a provincial spirit. There is another thing I wish to mention for the information of those who are not acquainted with the class of country through which this line will have to pass. I believe it will be found to be one of the cheapest places in Australia in which you can construct :a railway. If honorable members will look at a map of Western Australia they will find that the State Government, at a very small expenditure, have provided a network of railways for that State. They have been able to do this simply because the work of construction is so light.

Senator McGregor

- What is the gauge of the lines 1

Senator PEARCE

- The gauge is 3ft. 6in at present.

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Senator McGregor

- What is the average cost per mile %

Senator PEARCE

- It varies. It has been constructed from as low as ?1,200 per mile up to ?5,000. The cheap cost of construction is due to the fact that the country is very flat. That country has very few mountainous ranges ; it is absolutely destitute of rivers, and the consequence is that there are no engineering difficulties to overcome. You would be able to construct that line on a much cheaper basis than any line which has yet been constructed in the eastern States. With regard to the defence of Australia, I certainly think that we should be careful not to be plunged into any question of a standing army. I think that recent experiences in South Africa have shown us that a citizen army is by far the most effective means of defence. For raising a citizen army we have all the material in Australia, and that citizen army will be as well able to defend Australia as they have shown themselves able to act on the aggressive in South Africa. I believe that every encouragement should be given to the formation of rifle clubs rather than to the parade ground. , I believe that in the past we have given too much attention to the parade ground and to gold lace, and not enough attention to rifle clubs. The rifle club will provide us with a citizen army, and the men will be able to shoot straight even if they do not know the goose step. I trust that the Federal Government will inaugurate a different system from that which has been followed by the State Governments.

Senator McGregor

- The gold braid and brass buttons must be there.

Senator PEARCE

- They are not .essential. I also trust that the Federal Government will take such steps as will insure that the clothing of the officers of the Postal department and of our military is manufactured under fair conditions. I do not know what system has obtained in the eastern States, but I know that in Western Australia the Government has allowed contracts to be let for the clothing of the military and postal officers,

and that those contracts have been carried out regardless of all fair conditions of trade. I trust that, as we are going to inaugurate a national system of government, we shall do away with some of the abuses which have been allowed to go under the State Governments, and that in any such contracts which the Government let, they will see that precautions are taken to have a proper rate of wages paid to those who make the clothing and to have proper conditions of labour observed. In this way we can insure that the money is spent to the best advantage, and that the taxpayers get a benefit from the expenditure.

Senator McGregor

- I suppose that Senator Gould would import them.

Senator PEARCE

- The question of importation does not enter into it at all, because if we make the conditions the same for the importer as for the local manufacturer, then our local manufacturer can beat him every time. By providing in the contract for a fair rate of wage's and a minimum number of hours and proper working conditions, you will give our local manufacturer the same conditions to work under as the importer.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon and Senator Sir John Downer have raised the question of the High Court of Appeal. If I understand rightly, Senator Sir John Downer's view of the case is that the High Court should be allowed to interpret the Constitution, should a difficulty arise between this House and another place. I think that is a power which we shall have to watch and guard very jealously because, if I have read American history aright, times have arisen when there have been differences between the two Houses, and when this third power has been called in, and it has overridden the will of the people. I believe that if there is a difference between the two Houses of this Parliament, we should allow the will of the people to decide and not the judiciary.

Senator O'Connor

- There is no power to interfere in disputes between the two Houses.

Senator PEARCE

- To interpret the Constitution. "

Senator O'Connor

- It cannot arise in that way.

Senator PEARCE

- What I understood from Senator Sir John Downer was that, in his opinion, this power should be given to the High Court. Whether it is given now or not I am not in a position to say.

Senator Sir John Downer

- Of course, it has to be appealed to in the ordinary course of law, but then the High Court can do it.

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Senator PEARCE

- In conclusion, I trust that as we are entering on a national life, the Government will not, if occasion should arise, hesitate to step out of the old groove as regards legislation. We have heard various methods of raising revenue expounded during this debate. There is one method of raising revenue which has not been touched upon, and which is perhaps not within the region of practical politics yet, and that is, that the Government, if occasion should arise, instead of allowing the ownership and production to be in private hands, should become the owner and producer of some of the industries which in Australia and other countries are practically monopolies. I trust that when the time does come we shall have in federated Australia a Government which is original and powerful enough to step out of the old groove in much the same way as the State of New Zealand is doing to-day. Let them become owners, for instance, of some of our coal mines, and owners of the liquor traffic, and in this way confer a benefit on the nation, provided that they will not be at the dictation of private enterprise when occasion arises, as it does, in the supply of those requirements to the people.

Senator CAMERON

- As regards the general policy of the Government that has been laid down in the large document which has been placed in our hands, I fancy that every one will acknowledge that it is like the excellent old Scotch dish that we used to have, the sheep's head, which has been described as a dish with a deal of confused fine feeding in it. I hope no one will imagine that I say anything in disparagement of the document. I mean by the expression and the illustration I have used to say words in praise of it. The most important question, to my mind, is that of defence. I consider that the power of carrying into effect all that

has been said about the fiscal policy, and the subject of social legislation, rests upon the safety and security of the new nation which we are about to found. Let no one run away with the idea that what I am about to utter means that I have a desire that we should become unnecessarily an aggressive nation.

Senator DAWSON

- What does the honorable member mean by "unnecessarily?"

Senator CAMERON

- I mean . that when the necessity arises we shall be found to be aggressive and prepared to be aggressive.

Senator DAWSON

- -And when it does not?

Senator CAMERON

- And when it does not that we shall still be ready to say to every one who dares to look with covetous eyes on this new nation of ours - "Hands off."

Senator DAWSON

- Does the honorable member mean to say that he will not be aggressive until the necessity arises ?

Senator CAMERON

- Until the necessity arises.

Senator DAWSON

- I wish the honorable member had kept to that.

Senator CAMERON

- I think, with due submission, that the word unnecessarily conveys that meaning to most minds. In this document the great department of Defence is mentioned as being taken over, and I find these words used : -

As soon as practicable after the necessary Act has been passed, means will be taken for the judicious strengthening of the defence of the Commonwealth. Extravagant expenditure will be avoided, and reliance will be placed, to the fullest reasonable extent; in our citizen soldiery.

What we have to do, I think, is to decide upon a sound principle on which we can build up the defence of the country. The defence consists of two necessary divisions. There is the defence by land, and there is the defence by water. The defence by water has hitherto - been unfairly undertaken by the Imperial Government.

Senator McGregor

- We have a few colonial war-ships.

Senator CAMERON

- I admit that we have.

Senator DAWSON

- We pay a subsidy for the Imperial war ships.

Senator CAMERON

- I shall be glad to answer the honorable member presently. I shall give him every consideration if he will, not interrupt me. What I want to do is, if possible, to try and show the position we are in now and the position we ought to start from in building up our defence.

Senator McGregor

- We only want to help the honorable member.

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Senator CAMERON

- I know ; but please do not waste the time of the House by interjecting. At present we are for our defence absolutely at the mercy of the British Government. The British Government provide the means for our safety and security, in its Royal navy. We must not forget the fact, that it is in reliance on that we build our social schemes, all our financial conditions, and look forward to the prospect of prosperity in the future. But I would ask the Senate to remember that the time may not be far distant when the navy may be required for purposes that will necessitate its withdrawal from these shores to other latitudes ; and also that the frontier of our empire on the sea is not confined to our land shores, but is wherever the enemy's ships happen to be. Now if that cardinal fact be realized, as I am sure it is, it must be apparent that we may be in a position such as that mentioned by Senator Pearce, that our shores may be liable to attack,

not only from European nations, but from the localities where the people exist that we are trying to exclude from our midst. If that be so, surely it behoves us to lay down a clear and decided foundation to start from, in order that the manhood of our nation may be available for the defence of our shores in times of national emergency. To tell me that it is only necessary to have a few paid men to form a nucleus, to have a few odd rifle clubs here and there, is beside the question. I do not care to which party we belong, whether it is the labour party, the Government party, or the Opposition party - I hold that it is a national duty for all of us to combine to see the foundation of a proper system of defence laid, so that this heritage of ours may be secure against being in any way invaded or endangered by foreign aggression.

Senator McGregor

- We shall, have to do most of the fighting.

Senator CAMERON

- I shall be very glad to see the honorable member in the firing line when the time comes. Now comes the question, what are we to do in laying this foundation? I suggest - and I only make the suggestion as an individual - that the proposal embodied in the clause of the speech to which I allude should be carried out in the spirit to make it a success. As a general principle, we should lay it down that our citizen soldiery should be given every opportunity of becoming, and be encouraged to become, what is absolutely necessary in these days, expert shots. It is the man behind the gun - it is not the gun itself we have got to train. We may have arms, and we may have men with courage, capable of deeds that will equal any of the heroic deeds of times past - and they have got their full work to do to try and emulate them - but it is not sufficient to have courage, nor is it sufficient to have the rifle, we have to train the manhood of the nation and utilize both man and rifle in the defence of our country. Although those who have passed the meridian of life now have the same courage and pluck, and desire to live and die for their country as had those who went before them, we cannot expect that if they have not learned to shoot they should go to school again and do so.

Senator McGregor

- We can neither fight nor run now.

Senator CAMERON

- I am very sorry to hear it; the time may come when you may be required to do both. I am sure I will get the absolute and unanimous assistance of every working man in what I suggest. I propose that we should make the training of the children from a certain age when they are at school compulsory. We should make them conversant with ordinary discipline. We should make them conversant with the use of a rifle suitable to their age, and when we have done that we shall have got the basis of a citizen soldiery. That is the basis of the structure on which we must in the future depend, for our citizen soldiery.

Senator DAWSON

- Boys and girls.

Senator CAMERON

- I dare say you may like, in a campaign, to have the girls with you. I do not. If we start on a sound and simple and useful basis of that description, there is not a labouring man in the country - there is not a man of means in the country - who would not be proud and pleased to have his children trained by the State and qualified to take their position in the fighting line of their country. That is the basis upon which I hope the Government and the Legislature of the country will move in founding what I wish to call "our national defence force."

Senator McGregor

- Both efficient and economical.

Senator CAMERON

- I think so. Now we come to a matter more of detail. The matter that now has to be considered is not to let the useful training of these children in their early days be lost, and I hold that every inducement should be held out to our young men to join either rifle clubs or cadet corps or various and sundry commands, in order to keep up and maintain what they have learned in their early days at school. That would enable us as a population to have the whole of the manhood of our country capable of using the rifle, and becoming able to qualify for what I consider is the duty of citizenship - the duty of protecting one's country.

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Senator DAWSON

- What becomes of the text, "Peace on earth and goodwill towards men"?

Senator CAMERON

- If you adopt this principle you will have a better opportunity of carrying out that text than if you do not. Gives pace pen-atebellum. I come now to another matter of detail - the defence of our ports. We must, in addition to the manhood of our nation being expert shots, have a large and strong body of trained artillerists. An artillerist is the product of training. A man can no more become an artillerist by looking on than he can acquire skill in other branches of work by looking on. Consequently, in order to provide that necessary part of the defence force, expense must be incurred in that quarter, and when the proper time comes, I shall be prepared to give my adhesion or withdraw it, according as I find the Government prepared to support the Bill laid before the House. On the subject of a paid militia, that is a matter of detail also which we need not go into just now, but I hold, that you should have a proportion of men available at all times to proceed at once to the front, and who are drilled regularly from year to year, and accustomed to being handled by their officers. You require the nucleus of a militia force to be available at a moment's notice.

Senator MCGREGOR

- In case of a strike, or anything like that?

Senator CAMERON

- Well, you might want them - you might be very glad of them. All classes of gentlemen have at times been very glad to come to me as a soldier, for my assistance - both rich and poor. That is all I claim on this question at the present time, and I have sought to treat it from a national stand-point. What I wanted to say I think I have said, and what I seriously commend to the consideration of the House is the enormous potentialities of the future. With the competition that is going on in the social world, with the possibility of there being quite a combination against our mother country England, with the consequent necessity of England having a free hand not only with her own navy, but with the ships Senator McGregor spoke of, even thing that we have got may have to go to the service of the Empire, and we must then be in a position to let the Empire know that we are absolutely secure from invasion or injury of any kind.

Senator McGregor

- The honorable member would rather depend upon the rifle than upon the missionary.

Senator CAMERON

- I am very pleased to hear the honorable member, he is so amusing. I dare say that at the right time we will introduce the subject of the missionary. We shall be very glad to allow the honorable member to do any missionary work he chooses amongst our soldiers. I will not say anything further about the defence force. I hope I have said enough, and have said it clearly, and that it is understood. As regards the great question which every one seems to think is so important - the fiscal question - when I went before the electors in my own State I said that I would support in this Chamber Mr. Barton's Government, but I qualified that by saying that a revenue Tariff must be introduced, and that I would see that injury was not done to existing interests in the States unnecessarily. I also said that in case it were of national advantage to assist the labourers to get work and employment I should support reasonable measures for that purpose. On the subject of old-age pensions I was, I hope, quite clear. I said there, as I say here, that I will stand second to no man in my desire to do what is right and just towards those amongst us who have reached old age and are unable to obtain the comfort that old age should have. But let it be thoroughly understood that I am against old-age pensions being given indiscriminately. Let that be clear, straight, and decided.

Senator McGregor

- Age and necessity is not a sufficient qualification with the honorable member.

Senator CAMERON

- I will not go into that question at the present time. So much for the question of old-age pensions. Now comes the question of black labour in this Commonwealth. I say here, and I will say it anywhere, that we have recently had a visit of men from India, wearing medals on their breasts earned in the service of the empire - men who have helped to build up the British Empire, and to give us the advantages that we enjoy here to-day, and through no act of mine, nor through any influence which I can exercise will I do anything to exclude such persons from these shores.

Senator DAWSON



- What about the Indian hawker ?

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Senator CAMERON

- Now comes the question of the employment of South Sea Islanders. I am just as strongly in favour as any Queensland representative is of giving as much employment as possible to white men. But on this question of kanaka labour, I feel that I shall require a little bit more information. I understand that there is going to be a Royal commission appointed, and we shall then have the whole of the details placed before us.

Senator DAWSON

- We do not want a Royal commission.

Senator O'Connor

- I do not know anything about a Royal commission.

Senator Dobson

- We are to get a report.

Senator CAMERON

- That will give us the information. Until I hear something more upon, the subject I will reserve my decision.

Senator DE LARGIE

- After the very martial strain of the speech just delivered by the gallant Senator Cameron, I think it fitting that a man of peace like myself should make a few remarks in order that the great powers of Europe may understand there is no offence meant, and that the first national act of the Commonwealth will not be to declare war. I am sure the gallant senator has no such intention. Nevertheless, to avoid misapprehension, it is just as well this assurance should be promptly given. If there is any difference of opinion among senators, so far as I have been able to gauge the tenor of the speeches, it is very slight. With the exception of the fiscal proposals of the Government, and the point which, has been introduced by Senator Cameron in regard to the citizen army, there is none. The fiscal question has come in for a great deal of criticism, but as one who has tried to follow the opinions voiced on both sides of the Senate, I cannot see any great difference between the proposals of honorable members on the right and left. Neither party is going to carry out its principle of free-trade or protection. Both have made certain demands in regard to the fiscal issue, but these demands mean neither protection pure and simple, nor out-and-out free-trade. They have advocated a kind of fiscal expediency. So far as my knowledge of political economy serves me, a new term has been introduced, viz., that of revenue tariffism. I have been unable to find it either in the works of the political writers of the Manchester school, the followers of Cobden and of Bright, or in the writings of that great American philosopher, Henry George.

Senator McGregor

- Henry George, in his latest work, says it is worse than protection.

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Senator DE LARGIE

- I dare say it is more confusing. I quite understand that the aim of both parties is to avoid direct taxation. That seems to be the object of their various proposals. Therefore, seeing that that revenue is to be collected through the Custom house, the question of raising it is a mere quibble between them, and is hardly worth the great efforts which have been put forth on this occasion. When we come to the determination of this question, we shall find it very difficult indeed. We have had it with us for a very long time, and, like the poor, it will remain with us, unless some better method of settlement is adopted than we have hitherto tried. I am quite willing to allow to both sides what they are entitled to : credit for sincerity of purpose. So far as their lights go, they believe they are right in their fiscal proposals for the Commonwealth, but the mode of deciding these proposals seems to be the great bone of contention. A similar state of affairs has existed in New South Wales for a very long time. If the country is to prosper, it is said we must have stability. With that I heartily agree. A country that is ever changing its Tariff disturbs its trade in such a way that very little stability can be assured. If both sides are as anxious to have a settlement as they would have us believe, I would suggest a new and a better way of determining it than has yet been attempted in this country. We have had the Constitution of Australia submitted to the people and dealt with in a very satisfactory manner. Why should we not be able to submit the question of

free-trade or protection to a referendum of the people ? If that were done, the fiscal issue would be settled for ten or twenty years, and we would have a far better chance of passing legislation that the country demands. Unless we do that we shall have this squabbling going on for a very long time. We are not likely to have it decided at a general election. No general election in New South Wales has ever settled it, nor will a general election for the Commonwealth. There are so many considerations that have to be taken into account on such occasions. The two parties claim to have a majority behind them, and surely they should have no objection to submitting their fiscal proposals to a direct vote of the people. I am pleased that the Government has given the question of a white Australia a prominent place in their programme. The matter, so far as it affects the kanaka, is a very minor one, however, and we need attach but little importance to it. As far as I am able to judge it is almost settled already. The high death rate among the kanakas in Queensland has practically determined it. They are dying out at a rate which means that a few years hence we shall not be able to recruit them from the South Sea Islands. They will give us as little trouble as the aborigines have caused Tasmania.

Senator Dobson

- We have not had any aborigines there for many years.

Senator DE LARGIE

- Exactly. More danger is to be apprehended, in my opinion, from other coloured races. Coming as I do from the gold-fields of Western Australia, I have been amongst them. I have been able to watch their operations, and I am certain they are a greater menace to white Australia than the kanakas are. I can assure the gallant Senator Cameron that if he were on the Murchison gold-fields, and saw how the Afghans there are growing in number, he would recognise the advisability of modifying his views about the Indians in Australia. They went there as camel-drivers. Now they are teamsters, and are extending their operations in the distributing trades to such an extent as to seriously affect the white carrier - the hardy teamster so well known in Australia. This is an aspect of the question that I would recommend to the serious consideration of Senator Cameron. When it comes to a question whether black or white is to be the dominant race, there is little doubt as to the side on which the people will cast their votes. I should like to say a few words as to the attitude of the Government on the transcontinental railway, because I have seen, with a great deal of disappointment, an indication that certain senators, including Senator O'Connor, are opposed to it. I hope I am mistaken. If that is to be their attitude it will be a great disappointment to the people of the State I represent. It will be more so to those of us who had to battle so hard against the conservative element over there in our efforts to bring about federation. We who favour federation used the building of this railway as a trump card, and in that way induced the conservative element to throw in their lot with us and make a united Australia. If these people find that they were deceived it will have a very bad effect. I believe, however, that when the surveyor's report comes before Parliament it will prove that the work is not likely to be costly, nor one that any reasonable Government should oppose. The railways of Western Australia, more particularly those running to the gold-fields, were built so cheaply, and have proved to be so remunerative, that I believe the Commonwealth Government would be standing in their own light if they refused to proceed with this work. I hope, therefore, that the Government will enter upon it directly. It is a national undertaking. Senator Pearce has pointed out the necessity for its construction as a means of defence. It must recommend itself from this national stand-point. Meantime, I think it is the duty of the Western Australian representatives to give the Government the support that the address, as it presents itself to me, deserves. It would be unreasonable to adversely criticise the Government measures at the present time when we have really so little indication of what they are likely to be.

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Senator STEWART

- I have much pleasure in congratulating the Government upon the programme they have submitted. It is perhaps the most progressive, the most humane, and the most patriotic programme ever presented by any Government to any Parliament. If the performance is at all equal to the promise, then I think Australia is to be congratulated upon the fact that the present Government is in power. Of course, we will be able to judge of that later on. Let us look at the list for a moment. We have such items in it as a white Australia, old-age pensions, adult suffrage, the development of Australian resources, the resumption of the Northern Territory, and the railway to Western Australia. I do not think it would be possible for any

Government to come before any Parliament with a programme more progressive than that, and if the Government translates its proposals into the laws of the country, then it shall have my continuous and cordial support. This question of coloured labour is the most important that is before the people at the present time. If we are going to succeed as a nation, we must build upon the foundation of a white Australia. We must lay the foundation of this young community in the purest unci whitest of marble without streak or stain. That is an absolute necessity. I was, therefore, much grieved and pained to hear one discordant note raised in this Senate. I trust Senator Cameron is the only senator, and the only person holding any position of authority in the community, who entertains such notions as he has expressed. I trust, also, that he will shortly see the error of his ways and assist us in securing a white Australia. With regard to this question, I was very pleased to hear the distinct pronouncement of the senator who leads this Chamber. He said that, even if it were proved to him that the sugar industry could not be carried on without the aid of the kanaka, the kanaka must go. I applaud that sentiment. That is the sentiment on which I and my fellow-members from Queensland were returned to this Parliament. I was not so well pleased, however, with the honorable gentleman as he went on. He seemed to labour very considerably. He seemed unwilling to state definitely, or even to make any approach to stating with definiteness, what the Government intend to do. He said that nothing would be done to unnecessarily harass those engaged in the sugar industry. We who come from Queensland, believing that the industry can be carried on without the aid of kanakas, have no mandate to support any legislation, which will unduly harass those who are engaged in the industry.

Senator Dobson

- That is just what Senator O'Connor said.

Senator STEWART

- But we know that there is a powerful party in Queensland which only wants time. There is a powerful party in Queensland which always says to-morrow and to-morrow, which is never prepared for anything definite in regard to this question. That being the case, and knowing, as we do perfectly well, that that party has used all its influence with the Government, it is our duty, as watchdogs of the Queensland electors, to be on our guard. Very shortly the proposals of the Government will be laid before us, and it will be time enough then for us to say what we think of them.

Senator Matheson

- It will be too late.

Senator STEWART

- Too late?

Senator Matheson

- Support the amendment.

Senator STEWART

- I was just coming to the amendment.

Senator Barrett

- That is dead.

Senator STEWART

- If it were not that the Government proposals are shortly to be laid before us there might be some reason for asking us to support the amendment. But who moved the amendment 1 The gentleman who leads the Opposition in this House did not move it.

Senator DAWSON

- Who is he ?

Senator STEWART

- In fact, the honorable member is not in sympathy with the amendment.

Senator Matheson

- There is no leader here.

Senator STEWART

- There is one honorable member acting as leader of the Opposition, although he may not have been formally appointed.

Senator Gould

- No.

Senator STEWART

- In any case it really does not signify, because the point I am about to make is, that the leading members of the Opposition are not in agreement on this question. Senator Gould says that he favours the appointment of a Royal commission. That means that he wants time : that he wants more information. Senator Millen does not want any further information. He is prepared to stop the kanaka at once. But who is Senator Millen that we should support him ? Senator O'Connor told us that if the amendment were carried it would be looked upon as a vote of censure.

A Senator - The Governor-General will have to send for Senator Millen.

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Senator STEWART

- Who is going to succeed this Government ? We know who leads the Opposition in the other Chamber] If there is no leader of the Opposition here, there is a leader of the Opposition elsewhere, and we know what that light honorable gentleman's ideas on the question of black labour aim. He promised before the federal elections that he would go up to Northern Queensland in April, - -I suppose he meant to start on the 1st - and that he would investigate the question of black labour for himself. He has not gone yet. His mind is still in a state of suspense ; he is still open to conviction if pressure can be brought to bear from the proper quarter. AVe have nothing to hope from the leader of the Opposition, so far as we have yet been able to discover, on this question of black labour. Therefore we support, and will continue to support, the Government until it proves itself unworthy. I wish to mention one or two facts relating to the question of black labour. I have no doubt that many senators know just as much about the question as I do. With regard to the general statement that white men cannot work in the cane fields, I think that has been proved to be entirely fallacious. They can do the work well, and it is merely a question of payment. Others' say that the sugar industry cannot afford to pay white wages. I shall state one fact, and leave honorable gentlemen to ponder over it and come to their own conclusions. There is one company which is extensively engaged in the sugar industry, and that is the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, It carries on its operations principally in Queensland ; no doubt, to a smaller extent, it is engaged in business in New South Wales and in Fiji, but its principal operations are carried on in Queensland. How much profit did it make hist year? During the last six months it paid ?93,000 in dividends - -that is a dividend of 10 per cent, on its capital - and it carried to the reserve fund an equal sum.

Senator McGregor

- -It was afraid to pay 20 per cent.

Senator STEWART

- Its profits during the last six months were ?180,000, and its profits during the last twelve months were ?340,000.

Senator Fraser

- Has the honorable member got a balance-sheet ?

Senator STEWART

- I have not got a balance-sheet. Does the honorable gentleman mean to insinuate that this company, which has braved the battle and the breeze for nearly a century, is putting forth a false balance-sheet ? I have not got a balance sheet, but I have got the information which has been published by the authority of the company, and I take that to be conclusive and correct. If the honorable gentleman doubts it-

Senator Fraser

- - I would like to see it.

Senator STEWART

- It is just as open to the honorable gentleman to see as it is to me. I think it is the duty of honorable gentlemen who come into this Parliament, and propose to legislate on questions which seriously affect the welfare of the people of this continent, to inform themselves on the subjects with which they have to deal, and I am certainly surprised to find that an honorable gentleman who occupies, I believe, an honoured and honorable position - an influential position - in financial circles in Melbourne has not the information which I have just given to this Chamber.

Senator Fraser

- I have never seen it.

Senator STEWART

- Seeing that this company has made during the last twelve months, at the very lowest estimate, a profit of ?300,000 on its operations, that proves to me conclusively that the sugar industry is paying somebody. The leader of the Opposition in another place discovered, when he went to Toowoomba, that there was about ?7,000,000 invested in the sugar industry. He never knew that before. He was surprised to receive the information; in fact, he seemed to be staggered by it. ?300,000 is more than 4 per cent, on ?7,000,000. Does not there seem to be a screw loose there ? When we from Queensland were touring the State, and asking, to be favoured with the confidence of the electors, we pointed this out, and we advocated the establishment of State sugar refineries. I believe that if the central mills in Queensland, which, no doubt, have done a great deal for the cane - growers, were supplemented with central refineries, then the question of alien labour would be within measurable distance of settlement, without injury to any one.

Senator Dobson

- Does the price of the cane to the producer enable him to exchange the black labour for the white labour ?

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Senator STEWART

- There are a great many elements which enter into the question, In the first place, the cheapness with which labour can be obtained has led to a great deal of speculation in sugar lands. The industry, to my mind, is very seriously over-capitalized, and that, I think, must be apparent to the honorable gentleman. I have no intention to ' enter lengthy into this question to-night. I have merely indicated one or two general features which, it appears to me, ought to influence the minds of honorable gentlemen when they come to decide the question. With regard to the other measures which the Government have promised to bring forward, we have had mentioned here an Appeal Court, and, I find that the word appeal is very dear to the lawyer's heart. He rolls it like a sweet morsel under his tongue, and claps it to his bosom as his very very dearest possession ; and accordingly we find lawyers to the right of us, and to the left of us, and all round the building, advocating more and . more appeal. One honorable gentleman complained very seriously that the right of appeal to the Privy Council in Great Britain is limited. I am sorry that it is not altogether prohibited. Why should we be compelled to go to Great Britain for our decisions on questions of law 1 Can we not trust our Australian Judges? When we make the laws here, are we not capable of interpreting them? How can a Judge living 10,000 miles away say how a particular law is to affect people about whose circumstances, whose conditions, and whose surroundings he knows nothing whatever ?

Senator FRASER

- He might get the sack by the Government if he did not decide in a certain way.

Senator STEWART

- The honorable gentleman evidently has a very low opinion, not only of the Australian Judges, but of the Australian people. I am astonished at the honorable gentleman. Does he really mean to insinuate from that seat that there is neither honour upon the bench nor honour among the general public of Australia?

Senator Fraser

- Everything is possible.

Senator STEWART

- Everything is possible, certainty.

Senator Dobson

- Tn a democracy.

Senator STEWART

- It is quite' possible that this House may be struck by a comet next week, but it is not very probable. As the honorable member says, everything is possible, and as another senator says, everything is possible in a democracy. I am glad to think that a great many things are possible in a democracy, which would be simply impossible in an autocracy, which I believe the honorable gentleman favours.

Senator Dobson

- I was making a quotation.

Senator STEWART

- Senator Fraserapparently has no confidence in our Australian Judges.

Senator Fraser

- I did not say that.

Senator STEWART

- What did the honorable gentleman say ?

Senator Fraser

- I said guard against accidents.

Senator STEWART

- If the Australian bench is not pure, what warrant has the honorable gentleman that the English bench is pure? I believe there is a movement on foot to send a colonial Judge to England to advise with the English Judges on questions of Imperial law. There is a movement on foot to establish an Imperial Court, and all this is being done in the interests of the British money lender'. It is claimed that he must be represented on the bench, otherwise justice may be denied to him. If we are to have an English Judge to decide Australian questions, let him come out here and be a member of our High Court of Appeal. That would be a much more practicable method of doing the thing, to my mind, than the method that is proposed. I trust that instead of increasing the powers of appeal from the Australian Courts to the British Courts as time goes on they will be completely shut off. How many of the people of Australia have the money to go to the Imperial Court ? Not one in a hundred thousand. Here is the difficulty, that while we in Australia make the laws, the decisions of the Imperial Court will rule the interpretation of those laws.

Senator Harney

- We get our principles of law from there.

Senator STEWART

- We do not get our principles from there, and I trust that our principles are much older than the British Empire, and they will endure for a much longer period I have no doubt. I can quite understand the legal profession advocating the establishing of Courts of Appeal. I dare say they are very sorry that there are not more Courts of Appeal. Of course it is all right for them.

Senator Dobson

- Ah appeal to the English Court would be cheaper than an appeal to the local court.

Senator STEWART

- More appeal mean more fees, and fees are the breath and life of the legal profession. I have indicated very clearly what my opinions on this subject are, and I trust that the Government which is in power, or any other Government, will keep this in view - to try and have the Australian Courts supreme within Australian territory. There is the question of defence. We have had a military expert speaking here this evening. We all know what the soldier is. He is continually crying out wolf. The army is his profession, and it is his business to keep the question of defence continually before the people.

Senator McGregor

- He is as bad as the lawyer is with the law.

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Senator STEWART

- He is just as bad as the lawyer is with the law. I believe that no country is so favorably situated for the purpose of defence as Australia is. We are much better situated than either Great Britain or the United States of America. We have water all round our country. I believe that no single power of Europe - I go further, and say that no combination of powers is able to effectively assail Australia. I believed that before the lessons which have been taught us by the Transvaal war became so apparent. I believe it much more strongly now. So that I do not think there is any great reason to trouble much about defence.

Senator FRASER

- We would have a poor show if England did not support us.

Senator STEWART

- I do not think anything of the kind. I think we are quite able to defend ourselves, even without the assistance of Great Britain.

Senator Fraser

- - Little Japan would knock smoke out of us.

Senator STEWART

- I do not believe anything of the kind. I do not believe that Japan is going to try to do so. While I do not think that we are under any obligation to incur very great expense on the scheme of defence, yet I think

we ought to be prepared to defend ourselves when the emergency arises. I believe in a citizen soldiery. I do not believe in the professional warrior at all. He is a necessary evil under existing circumstances.

Senator Dobson

- Order.

Senator STEWART

- We must have him, and I trust that when we get a Commander-in-Chief for Australia he will not be an ornamental individual. I would almost go the length of saying that he should be a man who has risen from the ranks. I would say that he should be a soldier in the true sense of the word, not one of those ornamental popinjays who hold the position of officers so largely in the British Army.

Senator Cameron

- I think the honorable member ought to withdraw that.

Senator STEWART

- I am not going to withdraw a single word I have spoken.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- The honorable member ought to.

Senator STEWART

- I believe the fatal blot on the British Army is the fact that the position of officer is practically shut against the common soldier.

Senator Cameron

- No., there is Sir Hector MacDonald.

Senator STEWART

- One man amongst 200,000 or 300,000. Why does not every soldier in the British Army occupy the position that Napoleon said every French soldier did - "Carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack"?

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- So he. does.

Senator STEWART

- So he does in theory, but does he in practice? I tell you. the position of an officer in the British Army is as much shut against the poor man as the kingdom of heaven is said to be shut against the rich man. It is a very good thing in theory to say that a man can win his spurs.

Senator Cameron

- Exaggeration.

Senator STEWART

- It is nothing of the kind. Unless a man has a private income he cannot be an officer in some British regiments. If -he is promoted, and has no private income, his fellow officers boycott him and send him to "Coventry."

Senator Cameron

- Does the honorable member know that from personal experience % 1 never heard of such a thing.

Senator STEWART

- The honorable member's experience may be extensive, but I. know that such things exist.

Senator Cameron

- In the honorable member's mind.

Senator STEWART

- Yes, and in the minds of a great many others. Why should the position of officer be reserved for some one who can pay his way into the upper ranks. Why should not. the positions be open to every man in the army who shows the capacity and the courage, and the energy to raise himself.

The PRESIDENT

- Does the honorable Senator think his remarks have anything to do with His Excellency's speech ?

Senator STEWART

- If I am transgressing I beg your pardon. I was discussing the question of defence, and perhaps may have been led off the track by interjections.

Senator DAWSON

- Which were disorder] v.

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Senator STEWART

- As I said, I believe in a citizen soldiery, and I believe in something else. I believe that our policy as a nation should be one of peace. I believe it should be one of non-interference in the quarrels of outside countries. I believe we should make it known to the world that we do not desire to interfere in the brawls which are constantly taking place up and down the highways of this little planet, but we should also let it be known that we are determined to resist any invasion of our shores. If we make it publicly known to the countries of the world that that is our position there will be very little danger of our being entangled in the quarrels which are constantly going on in other countries. Senator Fraser, and also Senator Cameron, seem to be very anxious that we should have a fleet. Well, if we are going to embark in the luxury of a small standing army and a fleet, I do not know where the cash is to come from. In any case, I really do not see the particular necessity for a fleet. All that we have to do is to have our men ready to defend our shores.

Senator DAWSON

- We want to get away, though.

Senator STEWART

- I would like to say something here to our free-trade friends, by way of interpolation. As Senator Sir John Downer said, I am neither a free-trader nor a protectionist, but "I believe that to make ourselves as early as possible self-sustaining is almost as good as to have a fleet. What would it matter to us if a fleet blockaded our shores if we had sufficient food to eat and clothes to wear.

Senator FRASER

- We would be insolvent in six months if we could not get our produce away.

Senator STEWART

- Does the honorable member contemplate that any power will blockade our ports for the period of six months. I would, remind the honorable member that, after all, peace is the normal condition of the world, and not war. Men have to live by the ploughshare, and not by the sword. War is only a casual irruption and explosion, like the eruption of a volcano. It is a thing that happens perhaps, only once in half a century. Notwithstanding that, we ought to be prepared in greater or lesser measure for it, but we ought to avoid centring all our attention upon it;- and wasting.. more money upon it than is absolutely necessary. Now, with regard to old-age pensions. I was not a bit surprised to find that several honorable members who preceded me favour the proposal, but I was very much astonished at the number of "buts" and "ifs" which thrust themselves into the discussion. When Senator Cameron was discussing an army and a fleet, and when Senator Fraser was pressing for huge subsidies to steamship companies, and a great many other very important and extravagant things-

Senator Fraser

- I did nothing of the kind.

Senator STEWART

- There was not a single word said then about the expense, but the moment you mention the question of old age pensions, honorable members hold up their hands in despair, and ask where is the money to come from? Well, it is no use asking where the money is to come from. We have the warrant of the electors of the

Commonwealth to provide old-age pensions. They have told us that they are ready to furnish the money, and it is for us to ask them for it. I trust, therefore, there will be no more dilly-dallying with this question. We are told that the "Braddon blot" prohibits effectively this question being dealt with for a number of years. I cannot see that. It does not do anything of the kind.

Senator Sir RICHARD BAKER

- We will sponge that out.

Senator STEWART

- In any case it is no obstacle to carrying out this scheme. I

Suppose honorable members are familiar with the section in question. I will read it for them :-

During a period of ten years after the establishment of the Commonwealth, and thereafter until the Parliament otherwise provides, of the net revenue of the Commonwealth from duties of customs and of excise, not more than one-fourth should be applied annually by the Commonwealth towards its expenditure.



That refers simply to customs and excise. But why should we limit taxation to those two sources ? Can we not impose direct taxation ? Is it not our duty to do so under the circumstances ? Have we not the authority of the people to find ways and means of compassing what is undoubtedly their will ? I know, as far as Queensland is concerned, that if this promise of old-age pensions had not been embodied in the Constitution that Constitution would have been defeated, and we would have had no Commonwealth to-day. So that I say it is incumbent on the Government to carry out this proposal at the very earliest opportunity, irrespective entirely of what is popularly known as the " Braddon blot." Now I come to the very vexed question of the Tariff, and I must say that I am surprised to find this question exciting so much attention. How is it that we cannot separate the question of taxation from the question of the development of Our industries? We want to raise a certain amount of money annually and the question before us is how we are going to raise that money. We have on the one hand persons who call themselves, free-traders, and on the other persons who call themselves protectionists.

Senator DAWSON

- Revenue tariffists.

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Senator STEWART

- The revenue tariffist is a later idea. Up to a recent period they have been in the habit of calling, themselves free-traders and protectionists. Now my idea of free-trade is absolute freetrade. A man is either in prison or he is out of it. He is either bond or free. What I mean by free-trade is unrestricted interchange of goods. Senator Sir Josiah Symon in that splendid and inspiring speech of his gave us quite a different definition. But I have not the slightest doubt that in giving it he laughed up his own sleeve. He knew he was neither deceiving himself nor deceiving other people. He might deceive the gallery, but he could not deceive honorable members who sit in this Chamber. It appears to me that this question of free-trade or protection, or revenue tariffism, is merely a duel between the cities of Melbourne and Sydney. Sydney aspires to be the great port of the continent, and I have no doubt that owing to its natural situation and advantages it will be the great port of the continent. Melbourne aspires to be the manufacturing centre of the continent, and each of these two cities tries to impose on the Commonwealth a policy which will serve to accomplish its own aggrandisement. I am not here to help either Sydney or Melbourne, or to hinder either. I am here to try and devolve a policy which will enable Australia to develop her resources in the best interests of her people. I do not believe that what is commonly known as free-trade will do it, nor do I believe that protection will do it. I am a protectionist of a kind, but not after the heart of some honorable members. Not only would I protect our people against cheap labour- and sweated labour from other countries, but I would protect them against tire usurer and the land grabber, who is with us now. I would protect them against the monopolist who is with us now. I would do everything in my power to make the resources of this country as free and as available as possible. But I do not find that that policy meets with favour either from the protectionist or the free-trader. What does free-trade mean if carried to its legitimate conclusion ? It means that you do not get any revenue ; you must impose direct taxation. I find that neither free-traders nor protectionists are prepared to impose direct taxation ; both of them are antagonistic to any proposal of that character. Suppose a motion is made here to impose an income tax.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- We cannot do that.

Senator STEWART

- It appears to me that the taxation powers of the Federal Parliament are unlimited.

Senator Dobson

- He means that you cannot do it in this Chamber.

Senator STEWART

- I am not speaking particularly of this Chamber, but suppose that in this Parliament an income tax was proposed, or a tax on land values and an absentee tax, we would then have both the protectionists and the free-traders up in arms.

Senator Smith

- Where would the States get their revenue ?

Senator STEWART

- The States I suppose would have to get it some how. ' There appears to be a common agreement between the free-traders and the protectionists that the burden of taxation should be borne by the workers of this continent. We seem to be quite prepared to squabble amongst ourselves, but we will put our hands into the pockets of the tax-paying public.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- Perfect rubbish.

Senator STEWART

- The honorable gentleman is entitled to say it is perfect rubbish. The honorable member probably thinks so.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- I am sure of it.

Senator STEWART

- He is just as welcome to his opinion, and to the expression of it, as I am at liberty to say what I think; and I say the wealthy classes should contribute something more to the cost of government than they do. I favour an income tax, and also a land value tax. Every man in Australia who wields a pick, every man who uses a pair of shears in a shearing shed, every man who follows the plough, is contributing to the enhancement of 'land values in Melbourne and Sydney, and all the other, great cities of the Commonwealth. Why should the private speculator pocket all the unearned increment ?

Senator DAWSON

- Because he is a superior person.

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Senator STEWART

- I can assure honorable member's that I have been sent here to try and get this superior person to contribute something more towards the cost of government than he has been in the habit of doing hitherto. I think, also, that we ought to impose more taxation on people living away at the other end of the globe, who draw huge revenues from their investments here. We ought to make some attempt to tax absentees. If some foreign foe were to attack this country we who are living here would not only be compelled to pay the cost of repelling the foe, but we would have to enter the breach with our bodies - we would have to offer our lives in defence of the property of these absentees. That being the case, it is only fair and reasonable that some attempt should be made to compel them to contribute a fair share towards the cost of the government of this country, and I trust the very enlightened and progressive Government which we have at present in power will direct attention to this question.

Senator FRASER

- There are very few absentees now.

Senator STEWART

- There may be very few personal absentees ; but there is a very great amount of money invested in Australia, the dividends of which go to the mother country and are spent there.

Senator Clemons

- They are specially taxed now. Absentees from Victoria pay 100 per cent. more income tax than any one else, and 25 per cent. more land tax.

Senator STEWART

- Well, it ought to be very much increased. The land tax in Victoria, as far as I can discover, is a very light one indeed.

Senator FRASER

- Very heavy indeed.

Senator STEWART

- Of course, all taxation which is imposed on gentlemen of property is very heavy indeed. I remember a phrase used by the right honorable the leader of the Opposition in another Chamber in connexion with his efforts to impose a land tax in New South Wales. He said it was the most difficult task he had ever attempted - that the people who had property fought like tigers to resist any taxation on their property. Now, with regard to the Northern Territory, I think the Federal Government has a magnificent opportunity, and I hope it will not be slow to seize it. If that is not done, it will probably be handed over to syndicates, just as they are attempting to do with the northern portion of Queensland. There is some of the finest

country in all Australia there, and I believe it to be the duty of the Federal Government to take control of it as soon as possible. I may say I am in favour of constructing the Western Australian railway. The sooner the east joins hands with the west, the better it will be for all of us do not know what the cost will be ; it has been said in the Senate that the length of the line would be about 700 miles.

Senator Fraser

- Nearer 1,000 miles.

Senator STEWART

- A senator who. represents Western Australia says the distance is about 700 miles.

Senator Fraser. - I would like to see the figures.

Senator STEWART

- Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that it is 1,000 miles I heard a statement made in another place last night that the estimated revenue is somewhere about £330,000 per annum, but I have no means of judging the correctness of that assertion. Say that the cost of constructing this line will be £3,000 per mile.

Senator MATHESON

- £2,500.

Senator STEWART

- That would mean a total cost of £3,000,000. The interest on that would be £90,000 per annum, and thus, if Sir John Forrest's estimate is correct, there would be a very fair margin. We have to remember, too, that the traffic would be continuously increasing. Of course, the railway would be made for defence purposes, but I attach more importance to our industrial army than I do to our military services. The main object in having this railway constructed is to facilitate communication between the eastern and western parts of Australia, and I hope the Government will take it in hand as soon as they can. There is just one other matter to which I should like to refer. Senator Dobson, who comes from Tasmania - that land of sleep, that land of lotus-eaters, that land where it is always afternoon, where day is so pleasant and night so beautiful that life is one continual linger - beseeched us last night not to hurry. I can quite understand that the honorable gentleman, who is somewhat in the position of a political Rip van Winkle, being shocked when he is caught on the whirling wheels of the Commonwealth. So far as our party is concerned, I may say we have not brought a brake with us. The Upper House has always been looked upon as a brake on the wheel of progress. We have forgotten our brake. We have brought a stock-whip instead, and if things do not go as quickly as they should we will apply it.

Senator Dobson

- It does not matter what you apply if you have not got a brake.

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Senator STEWART

- My complaint has always been that legislation moves too slowly. We have a long time to be dead, and we want to see as many reforms as possible made while we are alive. I am anxious to see progress made and the most advanced ideas put into operation.

Senator Harney

- We are also anxious to see that.

Senator STEWART

- If we were to act in our ordinary occupation as we do in politics, we should never make any advancement. Take the man on the farm. He is continually on the look out for new methods to make his industry more profitable, to increase the productivity of his land, and if any one has something new which is likely to bring about those results he adopts it right away. In politics the very opposite seems to hold good. A certain portion of the public is always afraid to make a move. In some ways I do not blame that section. Our social system, so far as it is concerned, is all right. No doubt Senator Dobson, for instance, has never felt the pinch of poverty.

Senator Dobson

- I have had the pleasure of putting some very progressive gentlemen through the bankruptcy court, and you do not want that with the Commonwealth.

Senator STEWART

- I have not the slightest doubt about many progressive men going through the court, but a great many go

through who are not progressive.

Senator De Largie

- Some good old conservatives.

Senator STEWART

- If we had more progressive legislation we would not have so many going through. Not long ago I was in the island from where Senator Dobson comes. It is a beautiful country, it possesses a splendid climate, and excellent land, but the poor man who wants to take up a block has the utmost difficulty in obtaining it at a reasonable price.

Senator Dobson

- That is not so.

Senator STEWART

- The sooner this state of affairs is rectified the better it will be for all, and I would counsel the honorable gentleman to take heart of grace, and not be afraid that he will move too quickly. Legislative-machines are proverbially slow, and if this one, which has been so auspiciously inaugurated, be sufficiently quick, even with the stock-whip, I shall be agreeably surprised. I thank honorable senators for the patient hearing they have given me, and trust the Government will translate its written policy into actual legislation.

The PRESIDENT

- Is there any other senator who desires to address himself to the question?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- Several honorable members have had to leave the Senate to-day, Mr. President, in order to attend a public function in Sydney. They are very anxious to speak upon this question, and they requested me to obtain from the honorable gentleman who represents the Government the concession of an adjournment of the debate until next week. With the concurrence of Senator O'Connor, I should like to ask, on behalf of Senator Pulsford, for an adjournment of the debate.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I have no objection to that course on this condition, that honorable members will sit on Wednesday, as late as is necessary, to conclude the debate. I think very full time has been allowed for the discussion, and that we should be able to conclude it on Wednesday. On that understanding, I have no objection to the honorable member's proposal, with the addition that the debate take precedence over all other business on Wednesday next.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- Very well. I beg to move -

That this debate be now adjourned, and take precedence over all other business on Wednesday next.

Senator DAWSON

- Before the question is put I should like to have a clear understanding as to what it means. Senator O'Connor has stated that he will accept the proposal if senators agree with the Government to conclude the debate at the next sitting. I absolutely object to any such condition. I see no reason at all why other honorable members should not speak to-night. In the event of a late sitting next week is the last speaker to get as complete a report as the first?

Senator Dobson

- Let us go on for an hour.

The PRESIDENT

- I asked whether any other honorable member desired to speak, and no one was prepared to go on.

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Senator MCGREGOR

- I do not think it is fair of honorable senators to leave the chamber without consulting other honorable members. They go to their homes either in Sydney, Adelaide, or elsewhere, leaving us to keep a House, and then ask us to allow them to come next week and discuss the question, without regard to our convenience. I would rather that the Government had adjourned last night over this week. If they had done so we could have all gone home if necessary. Of course, the senators from Western Australia and Queensland cannot do that. If senators are paid for doing their duty here, they have no right to crave the indulgence of others when they go away without saying a word about it.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- They have not gone away to suit their own convenience.' They have gone to Sydney to discharge public duties.

Motion agreed to : debate adjourned.

#### THE COMMONWEALTH CONSTITUTION ACT

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- It would be a very great convenience, Mr. President, if you could cause bound copies of the Commonwealth Constitution Act to be supplied to honorable senators.

The PRESIDENT

- The Government Printer has already been requested to carry out that work.

#### QUESTION

#### DAYS OF SITTING

Senator MCGREGOR

- I desire to ask the leader of the Senate whether we are, without notice, to sit on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays ? If other senators can be suited, I should like to be suited, too. I want to go away next Thursday evening. It is all very well for honorable members to say they are going away on public business, but that explanation should be given before they go.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Perhaps I may be permitted to answer the honorable member's question. I intend this evening to give notice of motion that Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday be the sitting days. I am going to give notice of that to come on next Wednesday, but probably this debate will not give much time for anything else on that day.

Senator DAWSON

- What about reporting the debate if we have a late sitting?

Senator O'CONNOR

- So far as Hansard is concerned, the same report is taken of every speech.

#### STANDING ORDERS

Senator O'CONNOR

- I now lay on the table certain amended standing orders, and I beg to move -  
That the document be printed.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Unresolved motion by Senator O'Connor -

That the Senate at its rising do adjourn until Wednesday, 29th May, at half-past two o'clock p.m.

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21:31:00

Senate adjourned at 9.31 p.m.