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1901-05-22

Senate.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

INAUGURATION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Vice-President of the Executive Council

Senator O'CONNOR

. - I wish to lay upon the table a letter from the Prime Minister enclosing a telegram from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, congratulating the Parliament of the Commonwealth upon the inauguration of the Federal Government. As Parliament was not sitting at the time, the Prime Minister answered the telegram, and I now lay upon the table his letter enclosing this telegram, and his answer to it. I move -

That the document be printed.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

QUESTIONS

Senator PULSFORD

- I desire to ask the Vice-President of the Executive Council the question standing in my name.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I would ask the honorable member to postpone the question until to-morrow or Tuesday. Following a well known -practice, I do not intend to answer any questions while the debate on the Address in Reply is going on.

Senator Pulsford

- I am agreeable to postpone the question until Tuesday next.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address in Reply.

Debate resumed from 21st May, vide page 75, on motion by Senator FRASER,

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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Vice-President of the Executive -Council

Senator O'CONNOR

. - For some reasons I regret that it has become necessary for me to speak without having heard the -views of some of the honorable members from Queensland with regard to the -matter of Senator Millen 's amendment, but inasmuch as that amendment 'is a direct challenge of the policy if the Government, I thought it right to meet that challenge at - once, and to state the views of the Government expressly and explicitly, upon the questions which have been raised. But before I enter upon the question of the amendment I would like to -make a 'few general observations with' regard to the debate so far. I would first like to express my hearty concurrence in what has been said already as to the speech of Senator Keating, and also to congratulate Senator Ewing, one of the young members of the House, upon the manner in which he has addressed himself to the subject in hand. -It is true that his view apparently has been opposed in many respects to that of the Government ; but at the same time I feel, what I believe we all -feel here, that we should take pride in knowing that we have able men in this assembly, whatever side they 'belong to, who can address themselves to public questions in the manner in which the honorable member I am referring to has done. Some observations were made by Senator Neild as to the powers of this House. I -would like to say, at once, that the Government take the view that this Senate stands in a very different position from the Legislative. Councils of the various States which we have been accustomed to.

Senator GLASSEY

- If that had not been so, many honorable members would not have aspired to seats here.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I quite assent to that position, and I feel quite certain that throughout Australia generally it is recognised that this House is co-equal with the other House in every respect, except to the extent of those limitations which are necessary to enable the machinery of government to be carried on. The only difference that has been made in the powers of the two Houses is the difference which is absolutely essential for the carrying on of responsible government. Inasmuch as the essence of responsible government is the power of the purse, the initiation of expenditure, it is in the House of Representatives that that power has been placed ; it is in the House of Representatives that taxation is initiated, and can be amended. In those respects the power of this House is curtailed ; but in every other respect it is co-equal, and I hope it will always assert itself to be co-equal with the representative House. Holding that view, it is the intention of the Government to introduce as many measures as possible into this House, in order to have the principles discussed, the details settled, and to have a great deal of the useful work of legislation done in this House while Bills are being similarly treated in the House of Representatives. We hope in that way that not only will the Senate - find abundant and useful occupation, but that time will be saved by work being carried on simultaneously in both Houses. I have no fear on the score of there being any difficulty in carrying out this policy, as suggested by Senator Neild. I am well aware that the provision with regard to dead-locks applies only to legislation which is initiated in the other House. The limitation was expressly placed there for the reason -that the dead-lock provision was inserted only for the purpose of preventing the continuation of disputes which would stop the moving of the machinery of government, and inasmuch as those disputes can only arise where money is involved, it was thought-

Senator Neild

- No, that is not so.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I think' the honorable member will see that what I am saying is perfectly correct, if he will wait for one moment. Inasmuch as those disputes are only likely to be of such a nature as to stop the working of the machinery of the Commonwealth in cases where money is involved, it was thought that it was only in those kinds of cases that it was necessary to have this mechanical provision, if I may so call it, for bringing dead-locks to an end. I heard an interjection just now from Senator Neild in contradiction of the position I have taken up. I quite assent that there may be most important disputes arising between the two Houses upon social questions, upon questions of the deepest importance to the whole of Australia. Those questions may be settled, or may not be settled, the Houses may dispute over them, but, dispute as they like, the payment of the expenditure of the Commonwealth will go on ; the collection of the revenue of the Commonwealth will continue; the financial policy of the Commonwealth -will be carried out. It is only -where you have measures involving the financial policy of the Commonwealth, measures upon which the raising of the revenue of the Commonwealth depend - it is only in those cases that you will have that kind of block to the carrying on of all Commonwealth business, which is to be avoided, and which we think can only be avoided by the adoption of the measures provided for in what has been called the dead-lock clause of the Constitution. I do not wish to pursue that subject any further. I have only mentioned it now because I desire at once to allay any apprehension that there may be in the minds of honorable members that any course we take in regard to the introduction of measures in this House is likely to be attended with any such difficulty. We shall take care for our own sakes, as well as for the sake of the people of Australia, that no measures are introduced here which are likely to raise any difficult questions which are likely to bring about constitutional trouble between the two Houses. And we shall take care also that the measures which are introduced here are such, as within the terms of the Constitution, this House is capable of initiating.

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Senator DAWSON

-We have not got an appeal to the Chief Justice.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I did not catch the purport of the interjection.

Senator DAWSON

- There is no reason why we should not have an appeal to the Chief Justice in case of any dispute between the two Houses.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I am dealing with the Constitution now, and it does not make any provision for such a thing. Coming now to the matter of the speech itself, I think it will be necessary for honorable members to try, if possible, to put themselves in the position in which the Federal Government - the first Federal Government - found themselves on being charged with the duty put upon, them by the Constitution. They were face to face with the position of having to bring together, first of all, by Executive action, the transferred services of six different States which had been working under different systems, and which under the terms of union were to work for ever together under one Executive. They were faced also with the position of having to devise legislation which would bring into working order the machinery of the Constitution. Therefore the first part of their duty is, and has been, to take such measures - executive and legislative - as will bring the working of the Constitution about, complete and effective, at the earliest possible moment. It is necessary, for instance, that the systems of Customs regulation which exist in all the States, and in which there is a considerable amount of difference, should be brought into uniformity. That, of course, is a different thing from a uniform Tariff. There are certain legislative provisions under which the public and the Customs houses deal. All these matters have to be put into a uniform system. That will be done by means of one of these machinery Bills - the Customs Regulation Bill. There are also matters of a similar kind dealing with Treasury accounts, with audit ; there are also laws regulating the post offices and the telegraph offices. All these have to be brought into uniformity. There are also, in order to complete the Constitution itself, two vitally important pieces of machinery which have to be brought into working order at the earliest possible moment. The first of them is the High Court, which is made the arbiter between the States and the Commonwealth, or between States and States, on all those questions which must arise regarding the limits of Commonwealth jurisdiction, and the limits of State jurisdiction. I need hardly say that it will be the desire of the Government to so constitute that Court as that it will be worthy of the high office which it has to fulfil in the Commonwealth itself, and that it will also be a worthy Court of Appeal from the Supreme Courts of the different States. I may say here, in reference to some observations from Senator Ewing, that the Government will uphold to the fullest possible extent the power which is given in the Constitution to the High Court. I myself, in common with many others who took part in the framing of the Constitution, believe that it would have been very much better for Australia, and very much better for the working of the Commonwealth itself, if the measure which we sent home for indorsement by the British Parliament had been passed just as it left the people of Australia.

Senator Neild

- No.

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Senator O'CONNOR

- I know there are differences of opinion on that point ; but however that may be, we know what the Constitution is now, and we know that it has been recognised in the Constitution even as amended that as a general rule, in all cases where questions arise involving the interpretation of the Constitution, it shall be interpreted by Australian courts and by Australian judges. There are exceptions which are known, but the Senate may be well assured that nothing will be done by this Government to whittle away in any degree the preeminence in regard to the decision on matters of Australian concern in the interpretation of the Constitution which has been given, to us by the Constitution itself. There is another matter of machinery which is really necessary also to carry out the principles of the Constitution, and that is the Inter-State Commission. Honorable members will recognise that it will be of very little value to the trading community of Australia to prevent interference with trade by the Customs house, if you allow interference with trade by rival railway systems to continue. Therefore, following the example of America and all other railway systems passing from one State to another, the Constitution has provided that there shall be a means by which there shall be fair dealing, and nothing more is asked, in all Inter-State traffic. It is our intention at the earliest possible moment to introduce a measure which is now ready for the purpose of appointing an Inter-State Commission, and for the purpose also of laying down the principles which will guide that commission in its decisions, and determining the tenure of office of the commissioners.

Senator Millen

- Does the honorable gentleman mean that that will be introduced here?

Senator O'CONNOR

- No, because it involves the appointment of commissioners and the appropriation of money ; otherwise there is no reason why "it should not be introduced here; but that makes it impossible. There are other matters of machinery, strictly so called, which I do not intend to mention now; but I have referred to these matters to indicate to the Senate that one of the first duties we feel called upon to discharge .in 'bringing this Constitution .into actual work for the benefit of Australia is the passing of these several machinery Bills, which must become law before the Constitution can come into practical effect, and the Government of the Commonwealth go on smoothly and satisfactorily. I think, if honorable members will look at this speech of His Excellency, they will find it contains nothing more than an expansion of the great duties which, in the initiation of this first Government, we find ourselves called upon to discharge. They will find, in the first place, that it contains an enumeration of the machinery Bills which I have already mentioned, and they will find also that it contains .a statement of legislation in regard to the' two or three great principles which are embodied in this 'union. In the first place, it embodies reference to the finances of the Commonwealth. There is no question more important than that, for two reasons. In the first place, in the very act of union we have taken from all the States of Australia a very large proportion of the revenue by means of which they have been accustomed to carry on their own State affairs ; having taken that away from them we must take care that such amount is returned to them, and in such a way as will enable them to carry out their responsibilities.

Senator Glassey

- We are taking over liabilities as well.

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Senator O'CONNOR

- I am quite aware of that, and that is the point of view I am not dealing with at the present time. I am simply dealing now with the aspect of the States in regard to Commonwealth finance, and I say in regard to 'that there is the responsibility of seeing that the States have returned to 'them, not necessarily what they get now, not necessarily the amount which they receive at present through-the Customs house, but such an amount as will enable them to carry on, whether by 'the supplement of their- own taxation or in some other way. Now, the system of Commonwealth finance involves also another point of view, which has been referred to by 'Senator Glassey, and that is that the Commonwealth itself has taken over great 'financial responsibilities. Necessarily' it has taken over from the States their obligations in many respects ; it has taken obligations upon itself which are involved in the expenditure which it is obliged to make ; and therefore, in arriving at a system of finance, one of the most important and early matters which must be dealt with is the passing of some system of raising revenue which will satisfy the. requirements of the Commonwealth itself, and will keep faith with the different States which have entered into this union. As a necessary part of that question is involved in the fiscal system under which the revenue is to be raised, I do not wish to .refer to that in detail at the present time. All I wish to say about it is that the question of finance and the fiscal system under which the revenue is to be raised are necessarily interwoven in such a way that one cannot be discussed without the other, and that the first duty of the Common- . wealth is, as stated in this speech. to raise the necessary amount of 'revenue ; and the second question is the method by which _ that revenue is to be raised. When I hear the speeches of some of my honorable friends, like Senators Gould and Millen from New South Wales, I often think that they seem to have forgotten when they have turned on the free-trade stock that over and over again, in every possible way, it has been stated by the Prime Minister, and it is stated in this speech, that the first responsibility of this Government is to find the necessary revenue for the purpose of carrying out the obligations of the Government to its own liabilities, and its obligations to the State. After that will arise the question of whether the money should be raised by a free-trade Tariff, a protectionist Tariff, or a revenue-tariffist's Tariff.

Senator Millen

- :The honorable member admits that the two .have to be considered together 1

Senator O'CONNOR

- It:always-has been admitted.

Senator Millen

- That is the answer to the honorable member's last statement.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I do not follow the honorable member. My statement and the statement of the Government always have been, and it is so stated in this speech, that the first question will be the raising of revenue, and the next question the method by which that revenue is to be raised.

Senator Gould

- The method is indicated in the Governor-General's speech, and, therefore, it is perfectly unjustifiable to talk from the stand-point the honorable member does.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I will follow the honorable member- more in detail later on.

Senator DAWSON

- "Would 'the senator not sooner the honorable member followed him 1

Senator O'CONNOR

- I would, but I am afraid he has got into very bad habits in New South Wales, and I do not know what a certain daily paper would say if the honorable member followed me. Now, there is another principle and a main principle underlying the union, and that is this : It has become the -fixed opinion of Australia from end to end that this continent shall be kept for all time for the white races. That is a principle which has been forced upon the people for social reasons - reasons so sound, to my way of thinking, that I have no hesitation in saying that whatever happened to the sugar industry, or to any other industry, I think that the social objections to the growing up in our midst of a race inferior to ourselves impossible to admit into our political system is fraught with so many dangers, and full of such possibilities of degradation to white people, that I should prefer to see that industry brought to an end rather than that the principle should ever be embodied in our Constitution of allowing the admixture of black with the white races of Australia. But, having Stated that principle, I say that in carrying it out we are brought face to face with another principle which underlies the -whole of this union, and it is this : Whether it is stated by the Constitution or not, we must remember that this is not only a Constitution embodying the machinery of the Government, but it is also a union of States ; it is not only a union of States, but is a union of the people of the States, and it .is, and must "be, 'an underlying principle of that "union that this Commonwealth -Parliament shall do nothing which should unnecessarily disturb or prejudice :any -existing interests throughout 'any portion of Australia.

Senator DAWSON

- What does the honorable member mean by " unnecessarily "2

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Senator O'CONNOR

- I will explain to the honorable member in .a moment what I mean, and he will see that it is in the meaning put in -actual fact upon the word, that the whole question of -how this black labour is to be dealt with hinges. I say that, first of all, it,must be admitted that that is one of the principles underlying all this union, and I apply it not only ito 'the question of sugar growing, or of black labour - I -apply it to fill the .industrial conditions of Australia ; I apply it to 'the industries which have grown up in "Victoria and other parts of Australia : I apply it to the interests which, my friends Senators Gould and Millen have so much at heart - the interests of -the .'free port of Sydney; I apply it to every .interest in every portion of Australia, and for -this rea- son. As I have said, it is not only a union of States, it is a: union of peoples ; and you cannot interfere to any serious -extent with any one industry which 'employs and .gives wages to men and women in this Commonwealth ; yOU cannot disturb or interfere with it without interfering with the comfort and convenience, the happiness and prosperity,. of certain individuals. I say you have no right to unnecessarily 'take away a man's living, or to interfere with the comfort and happiness of his wife and -children unless you can show some reason for the interference. It is an underlying principle of "this union that a compromise must take place in regard to a great deal of our legislation, and that no unnecessary wrong or .injury shall be inflicted upon any individual. Now, I make that broad statement for the reason that we are dealing with this question of black labour - not in :a debating society ; not in a place in -which we 'frame propositions in the abstract, good or bad ; but in a place where we are dealing -with flesh and blood, and where every piece of legislation will affect directly the individual people of the Commonwealth. Therefore, I say, in dealing with-the application of the principle of the abolition of kanaka labour, which, as I have said already, I take to be clearly and definitely agreed upon throughout all Australia, we must remember that, while it should be abolished with all possible speed, it should be abolished in such a way

as to not unnecessarily and harshly disturb the interests of any individuals in that part of Australia which is particularly interested. Of course, the extent and time of interference and its method' are matters which will be involved in the legislation which will be brought before you, and the details will be found such as to meet all requirements of the case. In the first place, let me tell something to the Senate of what the interests are that are involved. Much of what I am about to say may probably be an old story to honorable members who come from Queensland. I regret extremely that my honorable colleague, the Postmaster-General, who has an acquaintance much more intimate than I can possibly have with the whole of this controversy, is not here. Unfortunately he is away in the discharge of Ministerial duty with His Excellency, and I am afraid will not return until after this debate closes. In the meantime, it is necessary for me to tell what the interests are that are involved, and I think a great deal of what I have to say will be new to honorable members who have not had details put before them on former occasions. Now, in order to ascertain what we are really dealing with in carrying out this principle of the abolition of Kanaka labour, we must remember that it is a question which affects not only the large sugar works, the corporation, the syndicate, or the company, but which affects to a very large extent many men of small means and small holdings, who, under the system of central mills in Queensland, have been able to grow sugar at a profit.

Senator DAWSON

- And the hundreds who are looking for casual work.

Senator O'CONNOR

- And the hundreds who are looking for casual work. In connexion with this question, it must not be lost sight of that you have not only to deal with large syndicates and property holders, but with a very large number of what may be called the yeoman class who are engaged in this industry. I would like to read to the House what Dr. Walter Maxwell, the great sugar expert employed by the Government of Queensland, says. Dr. Maxwell does not deal with this question of black labour, but simply deals with the chemistry and the commercial side of sugar growing.

Senator Millen

- And the negligent methods employed in the cultivation of cane.

Senator O'CONNOR

- A great deal has to do with that. There is one part of his observations which I think will be of interest in relation to the matter I am speaking of now. He says -

It is found that most of the large sugar growing estates, which were originally in the hands of large planters, have been cut up into farms, and rented or sold to numerous cane-growers.

Senator Millen

- That applies to only one district.

Senator O'CONNOR

- The honorable member will find that it applies to the whole sugar-growing territory.

Senator DAWSON

- It includes north and south.

Senator O'CONNOR

- It includes the whole of the sugar-growing area. The honorable member will find that Dr. Maxwell divides the sugar growing into three districts. The first is the Bundaberg district, including Bingera, Woongara, and Isis ; the Mackay district; and the Cairns district, which includes all the sugar-growing localities north of Mackay. Dr. Maxwell makes this statement : -

Particularly in the case of the owners that are furnishing cane for the Government central mills, the growing is done by farmers who have taken up and own or occupy those lands. These facts place before us a situation that is almost unique and peculiar to Queensland. In other cane sugar-growing countries the estates are in the hands of extensive owners or controlled by large corporations, which state carries with it the consequence that a minimum number of white men are located on the land. In this colony the ownership or occupancy embraces a vast number of strong, representative, and progressive white men, who are planted over all the sugar-growing area. These men furnish the material which puts the mills into operation, and as the mills depend wholly upon the field, it appears that the future of the sugar industry of the colony is very much in the hands of those numerous and small cane-growers.

He goes on to point out that that condition insures sugar-growing in Queensland on a most healthy basis.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- It would be a great advantage to senators if that pamphlet were circulated

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Senator O'CONNOR

- That could be done, but I think the pamphlet has no bearing on this particular question, save for the passage I have read. What is the importance and significance of this state of things I say it is this - the smaller the areas, the larger the number of these proprietors, the more these men do their own work, and the less and less is kanaka labour involved. At the same time, more and more regard must be had to the individual interests of every one of the men concerned. Now, I find that, taking the statistics of employment, there are something like 22,500 white men employed in the sugar industry in Queensland.

Senator Dobson

- White men or persons?

Senator O'CONNOR

- White men actually employed ; not persons dependent on the industry.

Senator Dobson

- Some one said yesterday there were 20,000 persons dependent upon it.

Senator O'CONNOR

- That is not so. There are 22,500 white men actually employed. Of these, 13,500 are permanent hands ; that would include men who are working on the farms, and engineers, clerks, and others engaged in various capacities in the mills, or in other ways connected with the industry.

Senator DAWSON

- Where does the honorable member get that information from ?

Senator O'CONNOR

- I obtained it from some Government statistics. I have not got them here, but can find out from the papers.

Senator DAWSON

- We have had nothing for the last ten years in Queensland.

Senator O'CONNOR

- These statistics have been supplied to me from what I regard as an authoritative source. I will be able to give details as to particular localities, but, as to these general figures, I am unable to tell him now the source from which they came. Of these 22,500, as I mentioned before, there are 13,500 permanent hands, and some 9,000 intermittent workers. I take it they are the kind of men that Senator Dawson referred to as casual hands.

Senator Stewart

- Casual employes are much more numerous than permanent hands.

Senator O'CONNOR

- That may be so in some localities.

Senator Stewart

- It is so all over Queensland.

Senator O'CONNOR

- In the absence of a census these things must be more or less a matter of guesswork, but it is possible to arrive at something like an adequate idea of the interests we have to deal with, and that is really what I wish to bring before the Senate. I think it is possible to get at something like the number of persons involved in the industries we have to deal with under the question of the abolition of black labour, even by perhaps nothing more than a rough estimate. Apart altogether from the men actually employed, there is something like ?5,000,000 of capital invested . in the industry.

Senator Charleston

- More than ?7,000,000.

Senator O'CONNOR

- It has been stated that the capital invested is from ?5,000,000 to ?7,000,000. It is at least ?5,000,000, and I say that in dealing with an industry that involves not only that large sum, but has so large a body of persons dependent on its condition for their daily livelihood, it is of the utmost importance that nothing should be done harshly, or with any unnecessary haste in carrying out the principle of the abolition of

kanaka labour. Before we carry out that principle, we must be very careful to deal fairly and justly with every one concerned. I have some details here, but I do not intend to trouble the Senate with many of them. From one establishment, however, I have obtained a return showing the proportion of employment of white men and kanakas. I am reading now from the records received from Messrs. Gibson and Howes, of Binger a plantation, Bundaberg for the season 1898-9, and published in the Bundaberg Mail of 6th March, 1899-

Labour employed to crop 90,000 tons of cane, convey it to factory, and convert into sugar (exclusive of Government employes) : -

Senator Higgs

- That does not show for how many months of the year they were employed.

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Senator O'CONNOR

- No, it does not; but I have another set of particulars which will give you something like the information required on that subject. I do not care how many white men the employment of black men tends to give wages to. The principle that we are determined to carry out stands above all such considerations, and therefore we are not concerned with the extent to which white men may be found employment by the use of black labour. I merely state the position in order to show how many white men are involved in the labour and operations of these plantations.

Senator DAWSON

- Have you the number of white men out of employment in Queensland 1

Senator O'CONNOR

- I have not. But take another aspect of the matter. I have some particulars here of the number of men employed at the Millaquin and Yengarie Sugar Company's Works. The employment is divided between the slack season and the next juicy season, which I assume means the next busy period. The company has a mill and four plantations, and employs 173 kanakas at wages aggregating £3,456, in addition to 330 white men, whose wages and salaries amount to £17,402, that is in the slack season. In the busy season, according to this estimate, there are 197 kanakas employed, and receiving wages amounting to £2,025; while 620 whites are engaged, whose wages aggregate £19,502.

Senator Millen

- For what period are the wages of the kanakas mentioned there 1

Senator O'CONNOR

- The estimate refers to the yearly rate, I presume. I think I have shown enough, however, to satisfy the Senate, or those senators who are not already satisfied, that in dealing with this question it is necessary to take the utmost care that the interests of the large number of persons directly and indirectly concerned in this industry are not unnecessarily disturbed. Now I come to the question of how the Government have proposed, as set forth in the speech, to deal with this matter. The paragraph which is referred to more particularly in the amendment moved by my honorable friend Senator Millen is this-

Bills for the firm restriction of the immigration of Asiatics, and for the diminution and gradual abolition of the introduction of labour from the South Sea Islands, will be laid before you

What my friend objects to is this : He says - "I am not satisfied with the gradual abolition of the introduction of black labour. I want more than that."

Senator Glassey

- The gradual restriction of immigration.

Senator O'CONNOR

- The exact words used in the speech are -

Bills for the firm restriction of immigration of Asiatics, and for the diminution and gradual abolition of the introduction of labour from the South Sea Islands, will be laid before you.

The position taken up by the Government is that, from the moment they introduce legislation, this immigration shall begin to diminish, and shall diminish gradually at such a rate and on such terms as are fair to every one concerned.

Senator Matheson

- Another sliding scale.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Western Australia ought to know something about a sliding scale, considering that for five years it is to have its own sliding scale with regard to the imposition of customs duties.

Senator Matheson

- That was done at the instance of Sir John Forrest.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I do not care whether it was at the instance of . Sir John Forrest or any one else. It makes no difference to us. . We know that in the Convention the whole of the delegates from Western Australia demanded it. The demand was not merely confined to Sir John Forrest, and the provision is in the Constitution under which Senator Matheson comes here. Therefore, I do not see how it lies well in his mouth to interject in that sneering way about a sliding scale. Those who have had the benefit of a sliding scale ought to be the very last to complain about it.

Senator Matheson

- We do not benefit under it. We suffer from it.

Senator O'CONNOR

- That is another instance of how it often happens that when persons seize what they think is an advantage it turns out not to be an advantage after all.

Senator Millen

- That is what protection always does.

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Senator O'CONNOR

- Senator Millen is not satisfied with the proposition of the Government. I say it is impossible to deal with this question in any other way if we are to consider the interests of persons concerned in the sugar industry, not only in the employment of kanakas who are actually in the country, but of those who may be coming here or who may be required in order to prevent the business coming to a sudden stop. What my friend Senator Millen says is that the importation of such labour should be at once prohibited.

Senator DAWSON

- That is a direct negative, and it is a question whether it is in order

Senator Charleston

- Whom does the honorable member include under the term Asiatics ? Does that cover Japanese ?

Senator O'CONNOR

- It covers any native of Asia. That is a very large country.

Senator Charleston

- Is that the honorable member's definition ?

Senator O'CONNOR

- This is a little off the track of what I am dealing with now. I say it is impossible to deal fairly and reasonably with, the existing condition of- things, to deal fairly and reasonably with the interests of all these persons involved in the growing of sugar, by taking any such course as that proposed by Senator Millen. I will point out reasons which, I think, will satisfy the Senate in a very few moments of the soundness of this position. In the first place, senators are aware,, no doubt, that these kanakas are- imported under the provisions of. a statute which compels the employers to keep them, under an agreement, for three years. To keep them during that period, and then to return them.

Senator McGregor

- If they want to go back.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I am coming to that. It compels them to return the kanakas if they want to go back. If they do not wish to return, they may be engaged for a further period of twelve months ; and all that the employer has to do is to deposit with the immigration agent 25 for the passage money of each. man. when he wishes to go home. Thus, when this business comes before us by-and-by, we shall have to deal, not only -with the restriction of the importation of kanakas, but also- with the serious question of what is to be done with those already in the country, and a great many more under engagement. I do not think there will be much difficulty in dealing, with their position as far as employment is concerned, but Senator Millen takes up the stand that you. can deal fairly with this quesimmigration by bringing to a stop, at once, any further importaimigrations of coloured labour. I would remind the Senate that these three years' agreements

may begin or end, at any time. You may have on the one plantation a planter with four or five, or, perhaps, six different agreements; one is going to end in three months, probably another may have two years to run.

So that you will deal with the position in this way: A man whose agreements are terminating in three months' time must at the end of that period bring the working of his plantation to a standstill, so far as kanaka labour is concerned, while the man alongside of him, whose agreements are running for over two years and a half, may for that period carry on the growth of sugar by kanaka labour. We should deal with this matter reasonably, but how is it possible, by drawing a hard-and-fast line in that way, to have fairness or justice? That is what the honorable member requires, and I can well understand now why it is that he is left to move this amendment. His leader did not move it.

Senator Millen

- Who is his leader in this chamber?

Senator O'CONNOR

- I suppose there is a leader of his party outside this chamber to whom the honorable member will owe allegiance. That leader is one of the most astute politicians in Australia, and I take it that he is far too astute to move, or to attempt to move, any such amendment as the honorable member has moved. We all know that honorable members sometimes like to rush into the fray to identify themselves with a particular form of a popular question. I do not impute any motives to the honorable member, but it is a most unfortunate thing for him that his leader, who would make a proposition of this sort with some responsibility, because he would be bound to carry it out if he came into power-

Senator Millen

- No.

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Senator O'CONNOR

- He does not make it, but the honorable member here makes it, who might as well make it in a debating club, who is under no responsibility whatever, and who places his leader under no responsibility whatever, even, if it is carried. I do not blame the honorable member a bit from the party point of view. He thinks, that, perhaps, he may give the Government an uncomfortable quarter of an hour. If it pleases him to think that he has done that, I am perfectly satisfied. The Government have no apprehension: whatever upon the result of this amendment. I treat it, and the Government treat it, as a censure upon them, and they must so treat it. The Government have given every guarantee possible, that they are staunchly and straight out in favour, of the abolition of kanaka labour; but, at the same time, they feel themselves under an obligation to those interested in this industry in Queensland not to allow the carrying out of that principle to be effected in an unnecessary harsh manner or in an unfair manner. I think this House will rather trust the Government, under the policy as stated by them in this speech, to do justice to every one than affirm the principle enunciated by the honorable member, which involves on the face of it the grossest want of uniformity and the grossest injustice in dealing with the individuals whose interests are involved.

Senator Stewart

- What do the Government propose to do?

Senator O'CONNOR

- Really, if the honorable member has not gathered from what I have been saying what the Government propose to do, I do not think I can help him.

Senator Stewart

- No one can gather from what the honorable member says what the Government propose to do. It is beautifully indefinite.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Perhaps the honorable member does not recognise that there is a difference between a Bill which contains all the details of the Government proposal and a general statement of principle. All the Government are concerned with now, and all they are bound to do now, is to state their general policy to the House, and just as it would be a wrong thing for the Government to take action in this matter without full inquiry, so it would be a wrong thing for them to bind themselves to any details which might operate unjustly when inquiries can be made. Do not let me be misunderstood on this question. I do not mean to

say for one moment that it is the intention to hang this thing up by appointing a commission. I do not mean to say that it is the intention of the Government to make any delay by pretending to inquire into tilings which are obvious and patent no*, but it is their intention to make all the inquiries necessary in order to do justice.

Senator DAWSON

- Numbers nine and ten of the notices on the business-paper show that.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Let me put another very strong reason why it appears to me that this House should not adopt the amendment. This question of the dealing with the kanaka labour and the interests of the persons who are employed, and who have capital invested, in the sugar industry cannot be fairly considered apart from the fiscal issue. If you put no duty on sugar, and, therefore, make very much worse the condition of the planter and those whom he employs than it is at present) it may be that, it would be grossly unfair to put upon him the hardship of a rapid diminution of coloured labour. On the other hand, if you give him by a reasonable duty what is a compensation to him - if you give him that which increases the price of sugar to him - then you may all the more quickly put him in a position to get rid of his kanaka labour. I think I have only to state a few figures in order to show honorable members how directly this question of the imposition of a duty upon sugar will affect the sugar grower. Honorable members will find that the consumption of sugar in Australia at the present time is 170,000 tons. Of that quantity Queensland supplies 130,000 tons, New South Wales supplies about 25,000 tons, and the balance comes from other places. So that the supply in Australia itself is about 15,000 tons short of the demand. The inference from that is obvious - that where the supply is less than the demand and a duty is imposed the producer gets the benefit of practically the whole of the duty. If any duty is put upon the production of sugar, and any duty is put upon the importation of sugar, the benefit of it is directly felt by the sugar producers throughout Queensland and other parts of Australia. Therefore, I contend that when you are dealing with the question of how you are to bring about fairly and reasonably the abolition of the introduction of kanaka labour, you cannot do it without knowing to what extent you are going to help the sugar-grower by the imposition of duty.

Senator Pulsford

- Those figures as to production are within about 10 per cent, of the total consumption, and the possibility of assisting an industry by a duty is gone directly you have passed that margin.

Senator Playford

- If there was no protective duty what would be the result ?

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Senator O'CONNOR

- I do not agree with the honorable member at all. It seems to me that that is a different question altogether. What we say is that this question must be considered as a whole. We must find out in the first place how we can help you with our Tariff. If we can help you much, then this kanaka labour must be brought to an end very speedily. If we can help you less, it may be that we may have to give you a little more time; but, whatever it is, we must consider both together, and we shall then arrive at a reasonable and fair conclusion. The honorable member would abolish the duty altogether. He would say - "Let us have free-trade ; let us take away the protection which the sugar-grower gets now," and on that side lie would attack him. He would also put an immediate stop to the importation of the kanaka, and would stab the sugar-grower on that side too.

Senator Pulsford

- He is not getting any protection to-day

Senator O'CONNOR

- We are dealing here, as I said before, with a practical question in a practical way, not with abstract propositions, but with men and women, with flesh and blood, and we cannot act on that principle.

Senator Millen

- As Queensland exports sugar, how does the grower of that sugar receive any benefit from a protective duty at present ?

Senator Playford

- Why not?

Senator Millen

- Because he exports.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I am dealing now with the question of what we propose to do under uniform duties.

Senator Millen

- The honorable gentleman spoke of me as having proposed the removal of a benefit which they already get.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I beg the honorable member's pardon. I did him an injustice in saying that. What I ought to have said was that his amendment would prevent the grower from getting one of the benefits of federation, while, on the other hand, it would enforce in the most reckless possible way against him the carrying out of one of the principles of federation. Perhaps that is a more correct way of putting it. I have taken up some time on this question, because it appeared to me that it was a matter on which the Senate requires the fullest information. It became my duty at once, directly the position of the Government was challenged, to state plainly the principles upon which they intend to act, and the reasons why the House should trust the statement of principle in this speech rather than rush into an affirmation of this abstract proposition, which could have no effect whatever but to temporarily embarrass the Government, and to bring about an injustice if any one had the hardihood to carry it out.

Senator Dobson

- Will the honorable and learned member kindly clear up a point ? Senator Dawson says that the re-engagement clause is for twelve months. Senator Groom told me that it is for three years, and the amendment is based on three years. If it is not for three years I presume that the honorable member will withdraw his amendment.

Senator O'CONNOR

- It is under an amendment of the Pacific Island Labourers' Act 1S80 that the re-employment comes.

Senator Millen

- I think it is the amending Act of 1885.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Under the new agreement it may be for any period not exceeding three -years. The original Act provided that the agreement should be for three years.

Senator Millen

- That was the first agreement.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Yes ; but under a later Act the second agreement is for a maximum period of three years. There is no doubt that many of these agreements are made for only twelve months, but the maximum is for three years. They cannot be made for more than three years, but they may be made for less than that period.

Senator Dobson

- Then Senator Millen is correct; if not, his amendment is gone.

Senator O'CONNOR

- There are a few other matters which I think it would, perhaps, be as well to refer to very shortly. I do not intend to take up any time in dealing with the statement of the fiscal policy. That has already been stated so clearly in the speech itself, that I do not think it requires any explanation.

Senator Charleston

- Will the honorable gentleman explain to what extent the Government intend to restrict the immigration of Asiatics, Hindoos, and Japanese.

Senator O'CONNOR

- The principle that is intended to be followed is that all alien coloured labour is to be shut out.

Senator Charleston

- Aliens only.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- How about British subjects?

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Senator O'CONNOR

- British subjects are dealt with in many places as coloured labour. It is impossible to deal with British subjects on the same footing as you deal with other coloured people, but there is a way of dealing with them by the education test, which is known to operate very successfully in some countries.

Senator Millen

- You have the law in force in New South Wales to-day.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Exactly. As we all know, there is a very rigorous law excluding: Chinese. A large number of; Chinese come from, the Straits Settlements who are British subjects, and yet they can be excluded. It is only a question of the assent by the King to legislation dealing - with British subjects. However, that is a matter which does not affect the question put to me by Senator. Charleston. His question is in regard to Asiatics. The principle - which the Government intend to apply will be applied all round to all coloured aliens. Of course, the method of application may be varied in different cases, but with regard to the two kinds of coloured aliens - that is the Chinese and the Japanese - there is a political danger behind the employment of these people, and the allowing: them to congregate in large numbers in Australia; which is of immense importance. With regard to the kanaka, you have to deal only with a social question; for there is no power behind him. With regard to the Chinese and the Japanese, if you once - allow these people to get a footing in any large numbers, and to acquire any rights in Australia, then you have a powerful nation behind each of them which may involve you, in a quarrel for the purpose of enforcing those rights. The only way in which Australia can protect herself is at the earliest possible moment, and before any footing, of that kind has been obtained, to take care that the stream is stopped at the very beginning. I was speaking about the fiscal question. I do not intend to say much about that, except that the policy of the Government will be dominated, in the first place by the necessity for raising, a certain amount of revenue, but in the raising, of that revenue duties must, be imposed. My honorable friends opposite admit that duties must be imposed, and possibly that high duties. If there is one principle more than another that is true in fiscal matters, it is that - whenever you impose a duty upon any article of local production you surround that production with a protection. I do not care whether you intend it or, not. I do not care what your motive is in putting, the duty on. When once you put the duty on, then you protect the production of that article.

Senator Playford

- Except you have an excise duty.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Except you have an excise duty, which of course is another matter.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- That is the way they equalize it.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Exactly. I know there are some of our free-trade friends in New South Wales, and I dare say they still hold the same opinion, who would be quite willing - to put a duty of 7s a ton on sugar with the one hand, and impose an excise duty of 7s a ton with the other.

Senator Millen

- It was Sir George Turner who suggested that.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I beg the honorable member's pardon. Sir George Turner never made any such proposition.

Senator Pulsford

- He was the first gentleman, in Australia who suggested, on a public platform the imposition of an excise duty on sugar.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Yes, an excise duty on sugar, which left a reasonable margin between the excise and the Customs duty.

Senator Pulsford

- He did not say so.

Senator O'CONNOR

- What I say is that you cannot impose a duty without creating protection. If the honorable member is willing that duties shall be imposed for the purpose of collecting, revenue, how can he make a selection of articles without giving some of them protection? But the honorable member's principle is this - he says: "I

will impose duties, but I will take care that I treat all products and industries alike." Does that mean- that he would, tax every product, or that he would adjust his- Tariff in such away as to give- no possible benefit to anybody?

Senator Playford

- No free list.

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Senator O'CONNOR

- Of course' that involves that there-shall.be no free list. On the other hand, we say that revenue must be raised in the first instance; but wherever we can impose a. duty -which will raise revenue, and at the same time will give: a certain amount of protection, we will do so. We believe in a policy which will preserve the markets of Australia for the Australian people. That does not mean for- one moment that we are to put duties, upon articles the manufacture of which can only be fostered and coddled by the imposition of a. heavy duty, because if you put a duty of that kind on, it fails in its object of raising revenue. Therefore of - necessity the amount of our duties must be moderate if they are to be revenue producing. When- we are taunted, as we have been by honorable members opposite, with abandoning protection, I say the circumstances compel us in certain instances not to follow out protection to its logical issue. A great many of us would prefer to follow out entirely our protectionist principles, but I say we cannot do it under all circumstances, because our first and supreme duty is to take care that sufficient money is raised by this revenue to satisfy the requirements of the Commonwealth, and to keep faith with the different States. That can only only be done by the imposition of a Tariff, following the principle laid down here, which will be reasonable in amount, which will operate principally in the collection of revenue, and which will also have a protective effect. And above, all things, we should be careful that in raising a revenue we should not wreck the industries that have already grown up in different parts of Australia under the protection which has been given to them in the different States, and that we should not interfere with them any more than is absolutely necessary. Now there are one or two other matters which I find it incumbent upon me to deal with, but I shall not take up much time with them. Some reference has been made to the public service appointments under the Commonwealth, and particular reference was made by my honorable friend, Senator Millen, to the appointment of Mr. Atlee Hunt. First of all, with regard to the principle upon which these appointments are made, I am quite willing to admit that, in regard to the transferred services, it is only right that, wherever possible officers who are now in the service of the States should be retained and employed ; and that persons outside of the service should not be introduced. I say in the case of the transferred service, the Commonwealth, although not restricted absolutely to employ only those who are already in the transferred services, ought to show a very good reason for employing any one outside those services. But when you are dealing with a new department, with new duties - when you are not taking over a department from the State - why should the Commonwealth be restricted in its choice of officers to a particular class of persons in Australia, whether they be public servants or not ? In regard to the selection of an officer to perform the duties of Under-Secretary to the Prime Minister, my honoured chief has been guided by the consideration of the peculiar fitness of Mr. Atlee Hunt. I feel quite confident that the interests of the Commonwealth are better served by a selection made in that way than if the Prime Minister had endeavoured to pick out of any of the States another gentleman who would be likely to accept such a position. I may say in regard to this particular gentleman, who was spoken of rather contemptuously by Senator Millen as an electioneering secretary for Mr. Barton, that I happen to know that he is a barrister in practice, of very great ability, and making a very fair income at the bar. After he was appointed as Mr. Barton's private secretary I had an opportunity of seeing the way in which he conducted the multitudinous duties, involving all kinds of considerations and all kinds of topics, which devolved upon him, and I know he carried them out with conspicuous ability. It must be remembered that in the early part of the administration there were no organized departments. Everything came into the Prime Minister's department, and all sorts of tilings had to be dealt with. Mr. Barton has authorized me to say that it is impossible that any man could have discharged those duties with greater ability than has been displayed by Mr. Hunt. I have no hesitation in saying, without any disparagement to any official in any part of Australia, that I do not know of any man who is able more accurately, faithfully, and intelligently to carry out the important duties placed upon him than Mr. Hunt; and I feel quite satisfied that his appointment is very much in the interests of the Commonwealth. In regard to the matter mentioned by

Senator Keating, that honorable member must remember that the section of the Constitution regarding transferred services protects every officer taken over ; all his rights are preserved, but it does not give him any new rights. In regard to the employment of persons from Tasmania, the honorable member will know that already some very able officers have been appointed from there, and that part of Australia, as well as every other part, will be fully considered in the selection of officers fitted to carry out important duties. There is just one other matter I wish to speak about, and that is the Western Australian railway. The reference in the speech is a reference which I think honorable members will see is simply an indication that inquiries are being made for the purpose of seeing whether the undertaking can be carried out or not.. The Speech says -

The question of the construction of a railway connecting with these eastern communities the vast and hitherto isolated State of Western Australia has been under consideration. Examinations of the country intervening between the railway systems of South and Western Australia are now in progress, together with other inquiries. It is hoped that they may result in showing that the undertaking is justifiable.

Senator Smith

- The honorable member might as well read the next paragraph.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I will read it if the honorable member likes. It says -

Isolation was the chief obstacle to the early adoption of the Constitution by Western Australia, until the hope of closer connexion influenced the people of the West to risk the threatened perils of that political union of the continent which their vote at the referendum did much to complete.

Honorable members are no doubt aware that the power of constructing a railway of that kind is a power which can only be exercised by the Commonwealth with the consent of the States. It would require the consent of South Australia and Western Australia before that railway could be considered. There is nothing to prevent the Government of the Commonwealth carrying out that railway after the fullest inquiries have been made or to prevent them making conditions and arrangements with those two States or with other States through which the railway may pass. Honorable members may be well assured that before any action is taken Parliament will be consulted. The fullest possible inquiry will be made, the liabilities of the Commonwealth, and the difficulty of raising revenue will be considered, and the Commonwealth Government will consider this question as they will any other question of expenditure.

The line is not to be undertaken at any hazard or at any cost, but if there is a reasonable prospect of its being a satisfactory railway, and if at the time the finances of the Commonwealth justify it, the railway will be carried out, but not otherwise. All that is being done at present is that inquiries are being made ; they will be carried on and supplemented, and when the result is before the Government some action will be taken in the direction of furthering the project or the contrary as may appear good to them. Now, I do not think it is necessary to occupy the time of the Senate at any great length. I only wish to say, in conclusion, that this policy which is set out in the speech is one which we believe. embraces all those measures and matters of policy which it was incumbent upon us to announce at the beginning of this session. We stand here in a very different position from ordinary Governments announcing their policy. We are charged with a duty for the first time of launching the actual working of the Commonwealth. In launching it we say that certain principles - main basic principles of the Constitution. - must be observed. We have announced our intention of bringing in measures to deal with them. We say that certain machinery must be brought into operation, and there are other matters upon which the people of Australia have spoken, in a definite way which must be dealt with at the earliest possible moment, such as old-age pensions, and the settlement of labour disputes by conciliation and arbitration. I may say here that I am fully in accord with the gentleman who stated that arbitration and conciliation is of very little value, unless there is some compulsory process attached to it. All these are measures that will be dealt with as early as is convenient, but the main matters which we have to deal with are embraced within three principles. In the first place we must give the people of Australia the gift of free Inter-State communication, free from the Custom house, and free from the restriction of differential railway Tariffs. In the second place we must see that the finances of the Commonwealth are placed on a satisfactory basis, and we must see to the fullest possible extent and with reasonable regard to existing interests a white Australia brought about ;is soon as may be. I say with regard to these other matters of legislation, that at the earliest possible moment they will be brought before the House so that this policy, although it may not be carried out in one session, is I believe

a policy which will carry out the will of the people of Australia in the working of this Constitution, and will result in the prosperity and happiness of the States that have entered into this union.

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Senator MCGREGOR

- In addressing myself to the subject now before the Senate, J. wish to compliment both the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. We have had some very sensible advice from both of those gentlemen, and I may say that, as far as the debate has gone, the manner in which it has been carried out reflects very great credit on the Senate as a

Legislative body. Very little feeling that could be called reprehensible has been as yet exhibited, and I hope at all times that we, as representatives of the people, will so behave towards each other that we may have all the confidence in each other that the country expects of us. I know sometimes, when debating questions that may come before the Senate, we may speak warmly; but I hope, that as far as the party to which T. belong is concerned, not a single member of it will ever be accused of carrying personal feeling to any undue extent into the debates. I hope when our terms of office in this Chamber expire, and we go again to the country, no insinuations of disorderly conduct will ever be advanced against any of us. Now, I am here to-day not only to represent my own opinions, because I have laid no claim to be independent; I am here to represent the opinions of the party to which I belong, and I think it is wise that every section of the House should express its opinion. It gives the Government an opportunity of measuring its own strength, and measuring the support it is likely to get from all sides. It gives the Opposition also an opportunity of measuring the length of the bait they may offer to the different sections of the House for a following. But, up to the present time, I think the Government may congratulate itself on the weakness of the Opposition. Who is the' leader 1 Those who have already spoken adversely of the Government, and what may be termed the liberal and democratic side of the House, are not entirely agreed as to who is their leader. When an amendment on the Address in Reply or any amendment that conveys in any shape or form a censure on the Government is moved, it is generally moved by the leader of the Opposition himself, but we have had an amendment of that description moved, and the very senator who has moved it repudiates the position of leader. It appears to me that all the Opposition are leaders. I was going to say that they are all suns round which no planet revolves. If they do not like to be criticized in that manner, then they must be comets, as the brilliancy of some of them would indicate. And yet comets come from no one knows where. They go back to the same place. They do no good to anybody while they are here, and only keep the people of the world in a state of confusion. A healthy opposition, I will admit, is very beneficial ; and I hope, therefore, that the Opposition here will come together, and will be less independent and more to be relied upon, because as long as they cannot depend on themselves they cannot expect members of this House to give any adhesion to their opinions. I do not. see why those who are prepared to stigmatize the policy of the Government as set out in His Excellency's speech, as consisting only of indications and promises, should do that unless they are prepared to come forward with something better. I as the representative of a party am waiting. We are for sale, and we will get the auctioneer when he comes, and take care that he is the right man. The bid that has been made this time is worse than useless. I am confident that when it was made it was put forward with the .intention of causing some little dissension among the party to which I belong. I do not believe, or at least I can scarcely believe, unless the mover of the amendment distinctly says that he consulted no one, and that no one consulted him - that the amendment emanated from the brain of one individual. It is of too great magnitude ever to have been hatched or matured by any one member of the Opposition who has yet spoken. I desire also to indicate to the Government how they can not only secure, but also continue to secure, the adherence of the party to which I belong. We have a platform. We are not so independent or so dependent that we cannot put one of our members on a formal committee to draft an Address in Reply for fear we would offend some one else. We have- more independence than that. I want to show the Government what they have to do if they intend to secure our support. Of course, that will also be an indication to the Opposition of what they will have to do, and they will have to do a lot more than they have attempted up to the present time.

Senator Millen

- That is an indication of the sort of whip you can use.

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Senator McGREGOR

- Oh, yes, we are never afraid of the whip ; we have been too well acquainted with bullocks for that. I desire to show the Government what our policy is, and I would say we are going to adhere to that policy as far as we can. No matter whether it is the Government or the Opposition that attempts to divide us, they will find that a much more difficult task than they appear to imagine at the present time. Nothing has been said by the Opposition in connexion with one item of policy contained in the Governor-General's speech. I refer to the question of the franchise for Australia. Here we are in Melbourne, assembled as a legislative body, or we might say as two legislative bodies. Some are representative of the whole -of the people, some are only representing the manhood of the people, and some even a kind of double breasted manhood. I do not think it is fair to Australia ; I do not think it is fair to those who are representing the manhood and womanhood of South Australia and Western Australia, that they should be associated with others who are only representing what we call a portion of the people. I know, Sir, that it is the feeling of every member of the party to which I belong, no matter from what State he may come, that adult suffrage must ultimately be adopted as the franchise for federated Australia.

Several Senators. - Hear, hear.

Senator McGREGOR

- I am very glad to hear, so many senators say " hear, hear," That gives me great encouragement, and I hope the leader of the Government will take notice of it, because we intend if we possibly can to force such questions as these to the front with all reasonable haste. I am not like our honorable friends of the Opposition, who have accused the Government of taking every political question from Dan to Beersheba, and including it in their policy. The more progressive legislation the Government puts in their policy, the better I will like it. I would also ask the leader of the Senate to look at one point of the policy that has been put forward, because I am not going to say that a thing has been explicitly or plainly put when it has not. I refer to old-age pensions. We are told by the Government that when the finances of the Commonwealth will permit- this matter will be considered. That was not the way with the majority of candidates when they were before the people. A few of them made provisos of that kind, but the great majority were prepared to make provision for the mothers and fathers of the nation. It is a standing disgrace to a civilized country that we should have old men and old women at the corners of our streets in the State capitals selling newspapers and matches - men and women who are monuments of misery. That is a disgrace, and it only shows the selfishness that exists under our civilization and our so-called Christianity. The Commonwealth has to provide now for its aged and its infirm. The old men and old women of Australia are not taken out and hanged like dogs. They are supported - if not in benevolent asylums, or by the charity of their fellow men and women - in gaols, because we will not allow them to beg in our midst. If they are supported by private charity, the money required comes out of the pockets of the people somehow. If they are in benevolent institutions it is exactly the same, and if they are in gaol, the record of any of the States will show it costs as much to keep them there as it would to allow them an amount sufficient to enable them to remain with their friends, or very probably with their relatives. There is great anxiety displayed by some of our very good people in regard to the danger which they say would be run by doing something good for those who have not been thrifty in the days of their strength. I have been very pleased to hear from the Opposition side, that some senators there are prepared to do all they possibly can to wipe away the disgrace that has been hanging over Australia and other parts of the civilized world so long. I am sure they will get all the assistance we can possibly give them to carry out that good intention. With respect to those who have not provided for their old age when they have had the opportunity I contend, and I am sure the majority of the Senate will agree with me, that it" is impossible for a man, his wife, and four or live children to make any provision for a rainy day out of a weekly wage of from 25s. to 30s., and more especially when the worker is out of employment for a third or for, perhaps, half of his time. Very little attention ought to be paid to those croakers who are always talking about thrift, but who give so few opportunities for the practice of the very thing they preach. It is said by many it would be very injudicious and very wrong to give old-age pensions to people who squandered their means in an improper manner.

A Senator. - In riotous living.

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Senator McGREGOR

- Very little riotous living some of them have had. Probably when some of them do earn their wages the miserable homes they have induce them to go to brighter scenes. Because of this they are said to be individuals unfit for the extension of national hospitality. I am happy to say. that in Australia there are very few who are so prodigal as to do anything of this kind. I would call the attention of some of our religious friends to the teachings of the past. Have we not been told that if one just person be in the midst of 1 00, or even 1 , 000, the whole will be spared on his account? Yet there are those who talk about thrift and prodigality, who say that, because there are one or two unfortunate individuals who have not controlled their own passions, all must be punished. I think senators will, see the ridiculousness of the position : and, if the labour party does worry the Government occasionally to do something for the aged poor of Australia, I hope we shall get their unanimous support. I am now endeavouring, as far as I possibly can, to give our policy to the Government and to the Opposition in order, to see what we can do with them. The leader of the Senate has referred to industrial conciliation or compulsory arbitration. The Government; I believe, will do something in that direction ; but we want them to do it as soon as they possibly can. We will assist them in carrying other necessary measures so as to get them out of the way in order that social legislation of this description may be passed. Every one knows, of course, that not only in Australia, but in all parts of the civilized world industrial wars have taken place between capital and labour. They have been, in many instances, the ruin of both: and no man can justly say that labour has been entirely responsible for the great disasters they have created. There is only the one weapon placed in the hands of labour. It is the only weapon the workers have been able to use, and, that being so, no one can blame them for using it. If they have done so, it is equally true that in many instances those who have had better opportunity for learning the evil of using it have employed a similar instrument against labour. Our desire to do away with strife of this description is both intense and earnest. There is not one of these pieces of policy that I have referred to that very probably could not be much better dealt with by other members of my party, and they may give the Senate information necessary and beneficial for its guidance. I do not think I should dwell at too great length on any of these questions. It is my desire to inform the Government that it is part of the policy of the most democratic' section of the community that the railways and navigable rivers all over the Commonwealth should be taken under the control of the Federal Government. If that were done, there would be no great necessity for the country going to the expense of an InterState Commission, or any tribunal of that kind. I think it would be the most commonsense way of putting our commercial people in the different States on a fair footing after intercolonial free-trade has been brought into existence. I want now to deal with a question that has been exhaustively treated already. I refer to the coloured labour trouble, or what some people call the principle of a white Australia. There were very few candidates that I have yet heard of who were not prepared to advocate a white Australia. I do not know whether it was because they agreed with it or not, or because they knew it was popular. The result of the elections has shown that it is a popular movement: that the people of Australia want Australia to be white. The policy of the Government on this point is really not definite enough, and I desire also to show that the policy, or the very infinitesimal part of a policy,' which was unfolded by Senator Millen is also vague. The one policy tells us that a Bill will be introduced for the purpose of dealing with the introduction of coloured aliens, and that, as far as the kanaka is concerned, he will be dispensed with as speedily as possible. The other little bit of a policy tells us that the kanaka will be dispensed with at once, but it does not say a. word as to Japanese, Chinese, coolies, or other aliens.

Senator Millen

- Pardon me, it does.

Senator McGREGOR

- That is where the thinnest of the whole subterfuge comes in, and that is where it makes itself apparent to those unfortunate simpletons which it was intended to entrap. Queensland is not the only place that suffers from this coloured agony, or whatever you may call it.

Senator DAWSON

- It is the white agony.

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Senator McGREGOR

- Yes, the white man suffers, and I will show some of the directions in which he has suffered. I am told by those who come from Western Australia that the north-west coast of that State was once a . very

profitable ground of labour for the white diver. But by degrees they introduced not only coloured people of one description but coloured individuals of almost every description, and today there are very few white men who do the diving at all. No one can say that the white man is unable to do it ; originally he did it, and he can do it still, because, so far as I can see, the white man has not degenerated. Then, besides providing for the immediate stoppage of the introduction of the kanaka you must also, in the interest of the white workers in these States, legislate to prevent the interference of these coloured races with that industry which they originally started and which they are still prepared to carry on. But we do not need to go to the Northern Territory, or to the northwest of Western Australia, or even to Queensland for evidence of the evil that has been wrought by coloured labour in Australia. In marvellous Melbourne itself I have seen the furniture trade almost ruined by the operations of individuals who could work 25 hours out of 24. as the nigger boy said. When a man was told that there were only 24 hours in the day, he answered that he would get up an hour before day. The Chinamen have done it here and in Adelaide - and the introduction of these people has had the very same results in Sydney. When I was in Sydney three or four years ago I went to Paddy's Market, but not a Paddy could I see there. There was not a solitary individual there but Chinamen, and outside the market there was one poor unfortunate white man - I do not know what nationality he belonged to - helping a Chinaman to unload his vegetables. That was what these people had done for an industry that might have given employment, and might have given a means of living to hundreds of people of our own flesh and blood. Yet we have had men in our State legislatures who would do as little as they possibly could to prevent anything of this kind recurring in Australia. The negligence of those people who had it in their power to effect a reform na.3 made us suspicious to-day of the very same people who have found their way into the Federal Parliament. But there is another evil that the coloured man, particularly the Chinaman, has brought into Australia. I suppose we cannot say that it was they who brought in the bubonic plague, it must have been brought in by Chinese rats. All this sort of thing comes from China, or from countries in very close proximity to it. Who was it that brought leprosy into Australia ? Was it not the Chinamen particularly, and the other coloured races ? It did not exist among the white people who first emigrated to this country. I have heard some of those who have defended - and look at the ridiculousness of the position - the existence of leprosy amongst us, say " It cannot be helped, because if you will only look back the history of Europe, you will find that leprosy was in Germany and Great Britain in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries." We know how it got there. It got to Europe in just the very same manner as it would come to Australia to-day. At that time the crusaders were going to Palestine and to Asia Minor to fight the Turk and the Saracen, and they contracted the disease there, and brought it back with them. There were no quarantine laws to control them, and they did bring it back with them. But so soon as quarantine was established, so soon as they ceased to be contaminated by mixing with these people, the disease disappeared. The very same thing may occur in Australia. When any members of the party I belong to refer to a disease of this description, they do not refer to it with the intention of discrediting the State in which it exists. We have sympathy with every State, and that sympathy extends so far as to prevent, if we possibly can, such a terrible disease as leprosy creeping in. Four or five years ago I went to Queensland for the purpose of finding out the conditions that exist there with respect to coloured labour. I know that commissions have been appointed, and have gone from the different States - they have gone from Brisbane itself - to inquire into the sugar industry. Gentlemen have gone on their own account into Queensland, and visited every part of that State where sugar was grown, but unless they were very persevering, unless their intentions were of the very strongest kind, they never found out where the leper station was. The Queensland Government never told them where it was ; nor yet was any single commission ever escorted there by the authorities for the purpose of finding out the evil results of the introduction of coloured aliens into that country. When I made my first visit I found there were nine white lepers. On the banks of the Brisbane River, at the old Immigration Station, there was a tent, and outside that tent was standing a young woman, under twenty years of years, who had been smitten with leprosy in Queensland. Down on Stradbroke Island with the other lepers was a boy under eleven years of age, who had been taken from the Normal

School in Brisbane smitten with leprosy. In a country where they try to keep out bubonic plague, typhoid fever, smallpox, and everything else, they pay less attention to leprosy. If I am informed correctly, even now the regulations with respect to that disease are not stringent enough to prevent many of the lepers

going about the country unknown to the authorities. On my second visit, I found there was an addition of two lepers to the number. One of the two was a gentleman named Taylor, who was over 60 years of age, and well connected, and who had been concealed by his friends for over four years. He was there isolated with the rest. Of course, his dignity kept him away from the common lepers, but he was on the station all the same. A gentleman who accompanied me wrote a truthful account of what he saw on Stradbroke Island, in the interests of not only the white workers but the white population of the Commonwealth. He made one simple mistake through not having correct information. He said there were over 100 coloured lepers, and it transpired that there was not that number on the island. There were only 14 lepers there at that particular time, although we had not information of how many had been deported. Besides that, all the Chinese lepers, as soon as they are discovered, are sent back to China. This exists in Queensland, on account of the introduction of alien coloured labour. When I went back to that State, merely because my friend had made that simple mistake, the Colonial Secretary would not allow me to take another friend down to Stradbroke Island to see what I had seen before. He said that we had misrepresented the colony. It was not I that did it, if anybody did : it. What was written about Stradbroke Island was the absolute truth. The only fault was a simple mistake which was made from the want of better information. We were told that because there was a number of lepers in New South Wales, and we did not mention that fact, we were not "acting fairly towards Queensland. We had nothing to do with New South Wales at the time. When I have an opportunity I shall visit the leper station in New South Wales, and in the advocacy of a white Australia I shall do everything I possibly can to give publicity to the evil which is growing amongst us, and which we have a right, in the interests of the children of Australia, to do all we possibly can to eradicate. Of course, we have been told by the representative of the Government that a certain time must elapse. I, in all fairness to Senator O'Connor, must say that he put a very good position with respect to one planter having kanakas for two years and a half, and another only having them for three months ; but when there is a possibility of re-engaging them for any period not exceeding three years, and it is our earnest desire that no more kanakas shall enter Queensland than are there to-day, I think that something should be done immediately to stop the introduction of any further immigrants of that description from the South Sea Islands. It can do no injury at all. If there are 8,000 kanakas in Queensland today, assisting in the growing of sugar, and if their time will expire within one month or twelve months, and they can be re-engaged for a period not exceeding three years, then I do not see that any very great injustice can be done, because the time can be equalized by any Act that may be passed by the Federal Parliament. I want to tell both the representative of the Government and the Opposition that I do not think they will find the labour representatives here unreasonable. If there are arguments placed before them that thoroughly convince them that it is absolutely necessary that something more should be done, I think they will give every consideration to them, but the men from Queensland ought to know better than anybody else. I want to state my experience there, so as to do away with the idea that white men cannot do the work. On my first visit to Queensland I went through the sugar plantations, and visited many of the sugar mills. One afternoon a party who was with me called at a planter's house. Although he knew from the introductions we received that we could not be very favorable to the employment of kanaka labour, he treated us very kindly. I asked him " Is there anything on the sugar plantation or in connexion with the sugar industry that a coloured man can do which you cannot do?" His reply was - "I shall be 65 years old in a few days, and I would be ashamed to acknowledge that there is anything anywhere that a coloured man can do which I cannot do twice as well." That is the sort of Britisher I like to meet. It does not matter whether it is a hot or a cold country, the same remark applies. I do not want to meet men who say that the descendants of those who carried the British flag across India, across Africa, and everywhere else, whether it was hot or cold, are not prepared to work in any position that a coloured man can work in, wear him out, and produce far more than he can. A little light may be thrown on an interjection I heard made here to-day about careless cultivation. What induces careless cultivation to a greater extent than inferior labour ? If you get the pigs to dig your garden it will not be done very well, or at least it will be done very irregularly, and very likely what you want to be left there will be dug up. Exactly in the same way in proportion to the superiority of the animal or the individual that has got to do anything, work will be done. The same gentleman who told me that he had been connected for 30 years with the sugar industry in all parts of Queensland, told me that there might have been a time in that State when the kanaka was of some assistance - that was because the white man

was not there - but he said, if the white man had been here, and had been so long connected with the sugar industry as the black man, his genius would so have exercised itself that long ago machinery for the improvement of the cultivation and the treatment of sugar-cane would have been introduced, that would have rendered the production greater to-day than it is. These are things that we have to consider." The longer we keep the kanaka or coloured man of any description there, the less chance there is of improvements being made, and careless cultivation and careless treatment will still go on. But there is something else that we have a right to consider. This same gentleman - I take him as an authority, and any one can get his name, because he is still there - said that with improved implements and machinery the white man would be ultimately the cheaper. "How is it," I asked him, "that you have fourteen kanakas living with you and working on this plantation?" "Well," he said, "they are here, and of course we must make use of them, and we must go on just as everybody else does." That is the explanation of the fact that even some of the small planters are working kanakas in some parts of Queensland. These small planters have more to contend against than the larger holders had in the earlier days. The latter got the land cheaper : to my knowledge, from £10 to £12, and even £30 an acre has been charged to the small settlers for land on which sugar had been grown for some time. It was Mr. Turner - that is the name of the gentleman to whom I just referred - who said that the kanaka might have been of some use originally to clear the land. I alluded to the high price paid by some of the small holders for their land, and I asked him whether it was any advantage for a settler to get land which would, probably cost a good many pounds to clear. He said that, as far as the sugar industry was concerned, the man who got the land with the scrub on it was the best off, because he was amply repaid for any expense he was put to in clearing. On the other hand, if sugar is grown for six or ten years on the land, it is of, comparatively speaking, less value than it was when the scrub was growing on it.

Senator Fraser

- It wants capital to clear it, though.

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Senator MCGREGOR

- Yes, but a man with a growing family may take up 10 acres of that scrub land, and may have a small amount of capital. He is not in the same position as the person who takes up 1,000 acres. It is only by the subdivision of labour and capital in that manner that Queensland can have any hope of prosperity for its sugar industry. When there is only one individual making a large fortune, and 100 kanakas living at starvation rates, the industry is neither profitable to the State nor to anybody else. Then again, our friends who are prepared to wipe away the kanaka have been fairly replied to by the leader of the Government, who said that some consideration should be given to the claims of the sugar-grower, whether he is a large or small grower. If you are to deprive him of cheap labour and compel him to compete with the products of other parts of the world where that cheap labour is still in use, then I say you are of the essence of sweaters. I do not mean that offensively. If to get our crystallized sugar at from 2d. to 2-1/2d. per lb. we are compelled to take the product of cheap labour, we are encouraging sweating. It would be far better in the interests of white Australia for the people to pay 2-1/2d. for that for which they now pay 2d. than do what they are doing now. What does 1/2d. a lb. on sugar mean? It means 4-10s. a ton; consequently, if the public of Australia are prepared to go on using the sweated article, sweated under the vilest conditions, then the blame be on themselves. If they are prepared to pay a little more so as to bring about the proper conditions that ought to exist in a civilized country, then they will be doing the most humane thing they could possibly do, and those who prevent them are not acting in the best interests of Australia. The revenue tariffist or the freetrader, I do not care which he is, who puts the planter in the position of having to compete with cheap labour from other parts of the world would, in imposing a duty on sugar, be bound to impose also an equal excise duty. But would that be carrying out the policy of assisting the industry by giving it support when they take away this cheap sweated labour? Now, I think those gentlemen who are so anxious to abolish the Kanaka to-morrow ought to tell us what they are going to do to enable the sugar industry to still compete with other parts of the world. They have made no attempt to do that yet, and until they do they have no right to talk about shifting either black labour or any other labour. They should not say a word, but sit still and listen to what other people have to say. I may have a word to say on the fiscal question in a few minutes, but I am not going to say any more about supporting the sugar industry in the way I have described at the present time. The Government

have told us that they are going to endeavour to do something of that kind, but those other gentlemen have told us nothing but that they are going to abolish the kanaka. I want to point out something else, and this is for the information of the Government. Very probably it may be thought presumptuous on my part to tell them anything, but I do not believe that. I believe the leader of this House is prepared to receive any information that any member can give him, and I believe, if he can prove that information to be correct, as far as he is concerned, the Government will act upon it. I want to tell what occurred in Bundaberg within the last twelve months or so. There were 100 to 130 kanakas brought in by one of the slavers - no it would be wrong to say slavers - one of the recruiting vessels - one of the blackbirders, and do you know there were 200 " walk-about " kanakas sitting on the bank of the river watching them land, and there were also about 30 or 40 white men, who were out of work, standing on the bridge. That shows that they were bringing kanakas into the

State when they were not necessary, and I think the Government ought to stop the wholesale introduction of kanakas in that way. I would like also that something should be done immediately to prevent those who are carrying on this business doing what the free-traders or revenue tariffists would do. If the latter had the opportunity of knowing what duties were going to be imposed they would lay in a large stock of the articles about to be taxed, so as to make a large profit. These kanaka' employers would do the same thing, and I want the Government to see that nothing of that description occurs as far as Queensland is concerned. There are other things in connexion with the sugar industry that I could refer to if I thought it necessary, but I think I have said enough. Another opportunity, no doubt, will arise when more can be said, and very probably be said to greater purpose and even with more effect than this afternoon. Consequently, I leave it to the Government to judge as to what action they should take if they expect to get the support of the party to which I belong, as far as the coloured labour question is concerned. I have given an indication of the lines upon which the legislation should run that would be approved of unanimously by our party, but I want to show that I am a little independent. I want to say that neither the Government nor the Opposition will have the slightest chance of slipping the labour party up on the fiscal question, because we are as free as we possibly can be as far as that is concerned, and you will not make us kick up any rows with each other, no matter what sort of amendment may be brought in at any time. The attempt to slip us up on the coloured labour question has failed.

Senator Millen

- It never was made.

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Senator McGREGOR

- Well, I am very glad to hear it was not. I do not know whether it was intended or not as an attempt, but I certainly thought it was. I do not know what the object of it was, and will have to learn that some other day. I want to point out that, although I belong to the labour party, I am perfectly at liberty, as far as the fiscal policy is concerned. I was returned for South Australia as a labour member advocating the policy of protection. It is not only necessary that the Government should see to the protection of certain industries ; whether they raise revenue or not there are some articles which require to be protected, and it will be necessary if we are to prosper that attention should be paid to quite a number of other industries. I am very glad that the Government have come to the conclusion that, as far as existing industries are concerned, they will do nothing to endanger them or cause them to decline. But there are things we want to encourage that have as yet received no support. Is the inventive power of the world at a standstill 1 Are we never to have anything but what is in existence . to-day ? Why, if the people who were old 50 years ago were alive to-day they would be astonished, and we who are here to-day, if we could come here again in another 100 years, would also be astonished: consequently, to say that we are only to pay attention to industries that have been established is only half a policy; it is a policy without any strength in it. I would like the Government to say that where an opportunity of encouraging an industry is afforded they will be strong enough to do all they possibly can in the interests of Australia to encourage that industry. I will give them an example. Come back again to the sugar industry for a moment. You could encourage that industry by putting an amount of duty upon it that would be equivalent to what you are robbing it of in the shape of cheap labour.

Senator Walker

- - Does the honorable member call it robbing?

Senator McGREGOR

- I am not calling it robbing in the ordinary sense. I am calling it robbing in the same sense as if you took a shoe ' off a horse and put it on another horse. It is not robbing in the sense of taking anything from them that they have a greater right to than any one else, but it is depriving them. If you are depriving them of one thing that they claim to be necessary, you must give them something else, and a duty that would probably cost the consumer of sugar a pound more would be a substantial help to the industry. Few men know much about the price of sugar. I had to ask my landlady last night what she paid for it. I have not known since the time 30 or 40 years ago, when I had to go for a pound of sugar for my mother, what the price of it was. Other things can be done to encourage industry. What has been done in Queensland is that they have established central mills to encourage the sugar industry. Of course, that assists the sugar industry, but it does not assist the grower or the worker in the cane-fields to the extent that the Queensland Government very probably intended it should do. The establishment of these central mills is only like putting the shoes on the two fore feet of a horse, and leaving them off the hind feet, where they are more necessary. What occurs now with these central mills is that the cane is sent there, and the juice is sent to the works of the Colonial Sugar Kenning Company. I understand that this year that company have not declared so big a dividend because this question is before "Parliament. They have put more to the reserve fund. It would not do to declare a big dividend, in case we found them out, and we might endeavour to get the Federal Government to do something in the direction of further assisting the sugar-growers. If central mills can be established for the purpose of crushing the cane, why not establish refineries so that the grower of the sugar may get some of the benefit, instead of being at the mercy of a great corporation? Unless the Government keep their eye on matters of that kind they will not be carrying out their duty to the country, and there are other industries that might be quoted that require assistance at the same time. I am going to say a few words as an advocate of protection, not an advocate of protection merely for the purpose of raising revenue, because when protection does nothing but raise revenue it does not protect at all, and we- must give some measure of protection. I want to speak to some of our Western Australian friends, Senator Ewing particularly, who wanted to know what benefit Western Australia could get from protection. We are in the Commonwealth now. An industry might not be started in Western Australia, but it might be started in some other State in the Commonwealth with great benefit to Western Australia. I will give an illustration which is connected with mining. In connexion with the cyanide treatment such things are required as filtration plates. One firm in the old world had a monopoly of those plates and the amount they charged in Western Australia was ?600. The head of a firm in South Australia, I refer to the firm of J. Martin and Co., went over to Western Australia, saw those filtration plates, took contracts for their manufacture, went back to Gawler, established a plant there, and carried out his contract at a price less than they were paying for the article sent into Western Australia by the outside firm. This outside firm had agents in Western Australia who communicated with the principal and advised him that local contractors were taking the work at lower rates. A telegram came back - "Take off ?50." That was done. The head of the South Australian firm was yet able to compete, however; he took other contracts, and carried them out at a still greater reduction. Then the agents sent home once more, and in reply received a telegram - "Take another ?100 off, we must have no local competition." We ridiculous unfortunate individuals who advocate protection do not think that the mechanic, the engineer, the workman, or any one else here, is unfit to compete with those in any other part of the world. Their hands are as cunning and their brains as keen here as anywhere, but this is the kind of competition you want to protect them against. There are many senators who can cite dozens of instances where unfair competition has had to be met. This is where protection is necessary. As Senator Fraser has said, if there is a firm here prepared to put 500 reapers and binders on the market at a cost less than that of the imported article, it ought to be encouraged in some way or other. Of course it would be in the interests of the whole Commonwealth. This is the kind of protection that would be advisable, and those senators who -object to it are only encouraging unfair trade that would ruin this or any other country. Some wise senator or other - I forget for the present who he was - remarked, " What benefit does the mechanic going along the street, the mason, or the miner, get from protection ? How can you protect them ? " But if, by a system of judicious imposition of duties or anything else, you enable an industry to be started in a country, and give employment to only 100 persons, you do good. Those 100 individuals will very probably

have wives and families, and will require homes to live in. Does not the bricklayer or the mason get employment in that way, when otherwise he might be walking about, doing nothing? This is how a duty gives to those who are not directly protected, and to the whole community, substantial good. I know there have been industries in this country that have received a considerable amount of protection. I have heard some people talking about a little industry, a hat factory, started in Adelaide, which gives employment to 20 or 24 individuals. There is a revenue of £8,000 derived from the duty on hats. The revenue tariffists or free-traders say it would be better to pay these 24 individuals £100 a year and let them be doing nothing, and that the community would thus save money. That is a very plausible argument, but I want to put it in another light to those who take an interest in questions of this kind. You require revenue, as the leader of the Senate has already stated. Even the revenue tariffists admit that. I want revenue to be raised that will do some good, and at the same time bear most lightly on those least able to pay for it. Every one will agree they do not want to oppress the poor, that they do not want to go to church and hear that preached, and then come out and disregard it. They would not do it for the world. If this £8,000 derived from a duty on hats has had the effect of giving employment to 24 persons, is that not better, as far as the poorer classes are concerned, than raising £8,000 on tea. Let us look at it fairly. For every very 1 lb. of tea that the wealthy classes use, the poorer classes consume 10 lbs., and for every hat that the poorer classes wear, the wealthy classes who can best afford to pay duties of that description wear ten. There are dozens of arguments of that description that could be advanced, but I wish to say a word or two about the ridiculous statements which have been made with respect to the relative positions of different countries in the old world and different States in the Commonwealth. We are told to look at the experience of the past, at the great advance which the British Empire has made since she adopted a half-and-half measure of freetrade. Is there any senator here to-day who, remembering the progress of machinery, the strides that have been made in science, and in every other respect, would say that Britain should stand still because she has adopted free-trade? Was she not bound to go along? The question is not whether Britain has made progress or not. The question is whether other countries have not made greater progress under different fiscal systems. Will any one deny that America has made ten times the progress within the last 50 years that Great Britain has made?

Senator Stewart

- It is a young country.

Senator McGREGOR

- Of course, that is so. Senator Gould referred to the butter industry. He said the butter industry had increased 60 per cent. in New South Wales, while it had only increased 3 per cent. in Victoria. I want to show the ridiculousness of comparisons of that kind. South Australia was exporting no butter at all some time ago: then in one year she exported five tons. Can any one tell me what was the proportion of that increase? Then a butter bonus was granted, and the following year showed an export of 175 tons of butter. In the succeeding year there was an export of 500 tons. Then the industry steadied. The same thing has happened in Victoria. The butter industry was started in this State years ago. It has had its rapid rise, and it has begun, to steady. In New South Wales it was only started the other day. To come to the comparison between America and Great Britain. It has been asserted by a senator that the amount per head collected in Great Britain under a low Tariff is greater by something like 3s.6d. than that received in America under a higher Tariff. Surely senators can see that as the population of America is nearly double that of Great Britain, a comparison of that description goes for nothing. The population is greater, and the business done is larger. I have no desire to compare Great Britain with America. I do not desire to compare a new country of vast resources with an old country having only a limited area. I would draw a comparison between Great Britain and Germany. Supposing two persons were in a race, and one had a start of 50 yards or 50 years; if, at the end of 50 years they were close up, who could say which was making the most progress? Great Britain has been going pretty fast these 50 years, but she cannot go as fast as she used to do, so that Germany and France are overtaking her.

Senator Millen

- Then the New South Wales butter industry must be going faster than that of Victoria.

Senator McGREGOR

- Yes, it may be at this particular time; but make a comparison of the progress during the last ten or fourteen years and you will arrive at the truth. Senator Eraser was right when he referred to the

Norddeutscher-Lloyd steamers. I worked on that company's steamers 20 years ago, and I know the progress it has made. Do the people of Germany live under worse conditions to-day than they did 20 years ago ?

Senator Smith

- They have 20,000 unemployed.

Senator McGREGOR

- There are unemployed here and in England, and I can indicate how prosperity in time may result in a number of persons being out of work. I want first to prove, however-, that Germany under her policy has for the last 25 years gone faster than Great Britain under her policy. That is what we want to arrive at. It is not a question of whether she has overtaken her or- whether she has not ; the point is which country is making the greater progress.

Senator Charleston

- Have the working classes in Germany improved faster than the working classes in England ?

Senator McGREGOR

- Certainly they have. Recent arrivals will tell you that the condition of the working classes in Germany is fast coming up to that of the working people of England, although they were 100 years behind 30 years ago. I can point out how prosperity may bring us the unemployed.

Senator Charleston

- Necessarily ?

Senator McGREGOR

- Yes, necessarily. I remember that in 1884 there was great depression not only in South Australia, New South Wales, and Tasmania., but in New Zealand, now one of the most prosperous places in the world. What was the condition of Melbourne at that time?

Senator STANFORTH SMITH

- Bung.

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Senator McGREGOR

- Certainly not. I was one of those who came from Adelaide to Melbourne to seek employment at that time, and I got it. Eleven thousand persons landed in Melbourne from Adelaide within three months, and obtained work here; an even larger number came from New South Wales, and there were arrivals as well from Tasmania and New Zealand. All obtained employment. For six years the prosperity of this State was proverbial. What was the result ? This is a matter which you must regard not from the stand-point of protection or free-trade. Attribute everything to its just cause. I made a calculation at the time, and am able to say that the strangers in Melbourne then were even more than those now . in Western Australia, although Senator Ewing has chided us in this part of the world on that point. As a matter of fact, we had to go to Western Australia to help the people there to develop their country. My estimate was that over ?150,000 a month was being sent away from Melbourne to the capitals of the other States. I made the estimate on a basis lower than the amount I was sending away myself, and I was only a labouring man. Surely no country could stand anything of that kind very long? The prosperity which existed brought more people here than it was capable of keeping employed. What was the result? There was bound to be a collapse, and the collapse came. That would take place in any part of the world. It might be brought about by free-trade or protection.

Senator Sir John Downer

- Or by neither.

Senator McGREGOR

- That is only a revenue-tariffist's way of putting it.

Senator Sir John Downer

- But I am on the honorable member's side at present.

Senator McGREGOR

- If it is brought about neither by protection or free-trade, then it must be due to a revenue Tariff.

A Senator - How many thousands have left protected Victoria to save themselves from starvation ?

Senator McGREGOR

- How many thousands have left Great Britain and come to this country to save themselves ? What I do

object to is the attempt to attribute effects to causes that have nothing to do with them. We are told to look at the progress of New South Wales. She has gone ahead of "Victoria within the last ten years. The first portion of the last ten years was the very time that the terrible collapse was brought about by this undue prosperity. What has occurred in New South Wales during that time? Was it free-trade that brought about prosperity there? Was it not the immense amount of money which they borrowed and had to expend within the last ten years in excess of what was borrowed by Victoria ? Was it not the amount of money that came into the coffers ' of the Treasurer of New South Wales through the sale of Crown lands ? They were living on their fab, and were bound to suffer ultimately. Then you talk about an increase of population. Did not 15,000,000 acres of fairly good agricultural land fall in, and was not a good deal of it apportioned to agriculturists ?

Senator Millen

- When was this?

Senator MCGREGOR

- Within the last ten years. " Senator Millen. - It is not available yet.

Senator MCGREGOR

- A great portion of the area has been made available and has been settled on, because I know some of the farmers who have gone there to live.

Senator O'Connor

- There has been more good land thrown open within the last ten years than there has ever been before.

Senator MCGREGOR

- These are circumstances that 'have nothing to do with the fiscal policy of the country at all.

Senator Charleston

- The land tax may have had something to do with it.

Senator MCGREGOR

- The land tax in New South Wales is a beautiful land tax. In a country with an area of 340,000 square miles, the land tax does not return ?300,000. What is the use of putting a ridiculous proposition like that before anybody ?

Senator Millen

- Does not the honorable member remember that the bulk of that is Crown land?

Senator MCGREGOR

- Allow me to finish. You compare New South Wales and Victoria. The total area of Victoria, Crown lands and all, is only 87,000 square miles.

Senator Charleston

- Victoria is overpopulated.

Senator MCGREGOR

- Talk about over-population. There is room here for millions yet. Any comparison between Victoria and New South Wales must be a long' way in favour of Victoria. You might as well compare a farmer with 10,000 acres of good land to a farmer with only 1,000 acres of land of the same character. Look at the immense coal industry that New South Wales has had the advantage of. See what that has done for her. See what an immense amount of wool she has got off that large area, and the wealth it has brought into New South Wales. If New South Wales had been well governed, industries might have been established. When I asked those who were praising the position of New South Wales to name her industries they did not do so ; they did not give me an opportunity of showing them how those industries were fostered. Everything that is in' New South Wales has been provided for the people by Providence, and they have scarcely done anything for themselves. They have not straightened their streets yet.

Senator Gould

- Providence made a mistake then in giving us crooked streets

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Senator MCGREGOR

- Providence did not do anything of the kind ; they could not agree among themselves in which direction they ought to go. I know- there fire others who are willing to take up the same position as has been taken up with respect to New South Wales. I want to point out one industry in New South Wales that is in a nourishing condition without protection. At Lithgow they turn out about 130 tons of corrugated galvanized

iron every month - that is very good. They turn out an immense quantity of wrought iron, bar iron, and angle iron. I have seen them doing it, and so I ought to know something about it. It is of very good quality, because it is made of scrap. There is scarcely any iron used in it but scrap, and yet there is any amount of coal, and any amount of iron ore in New South Wales. Some persons may say that the ore in New South Wales is not of the very best quality. I leave that for the New South Wales people to say - I won't say it. If it is not of the very best quality there, we can give them any quantity of first class ore from Tasmania and from South Australia, and they can manufacture that with the coal they have. They could get the crude ore and give us the finished article in New South Wales if they only had the facilities to do it. They are doing this at Lithgow, and they tell us they are doing it in a free-trade country, but they do not tell us how they are doing it. In many other respects the same thing is done in that State. I was told by the proprietor of the Lithgow works that the reason why he can do it is because he has obtained a concession from the Railway department. Everywhere west of Lithgow he has an advantage of from 37s. 6d. to 42s. 6d. a ton on everything he sends away 100 miles outside Sydney, but he cannot send a ton into Sydney, where the greatest demand is for the article. Is not that a beautiful policy for a civilized people to adopt? That is not the most ridiculous part of it. Although this manufacturer can send his manufactured iron into Sydney he cannot sell it there, but he can send it another 100 miles north of Sydney - away towards New England - and sell it up there, and compete with any importer. That is a very ridiculous policy. You may ask, do you want to pay that amount of duty so as to rob the people? It is not robbing the people, because I believe in Australia they can produce the article as cheaply as it is imported. Then you will say - "Why don't they do it if they can?" I will tell you why they don't. It is because they would be treated in exactly the same way as that poor unfortunate individual was treated who tried to manufacture filtration plates.

Senator Millen

- Did Mr. Sandford, say that, in return for this concession of railway freights, he was under contract to pay the Railway Commissioners a certain sum for the scrap iron he used?

Senator McGREGOR

- Certainly, but there is nothing in that. That is all the better for the commissioners and for Mr. Sandford, because the more he uses the better it is for himself. It was to do that very probably that the Railway Commissioners gave the concession to him.

Senator O'Connor

- It was a good business arrangement on both sides.

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Senator McGREGOR

- Some persons may say - "Why do we not support them if they can compete," but I think they would be treated in exactly the same way as Mr. Martin was treated over the filtration plates. As soon as they would attempt to do it, down would come the price, Is there any one of the senators possessing thousands of pounds who would be prepared to put his capital into a business in New South Wales, or anywhere else, even although he knew that he could produce more cheaply, when he had to run the risk of unfair competition of that description? Not one of them would do it. They must be protected before they' would risk their capital, and although it would be a benefit to the country they could not do it, and no one should expect them to do it. It is to protect even the capitalist himself against unfair competition like this, that every Government should pay some little attention to its fiscal policy. The reason why the working classes have not been so much enamoured of protection, as very probably they would have been, is because they have never received the advantages of that policy. But that is no fault of the principle. It is no fault of the police system, for instance, if some policemen are dishonest, and steal a drunken man's gold watch or purse. It is no fault of a fiscal principle if the workers are dishonestly treated by those who have received the greatest benefit. I would ask the Government of the Commonwealth, in any case where the capitalist is protected, to take precautions that the working classes receive protection to the same extent. If that were done, then the workers would get a benefit, and they would know who were their best friends. Until that is done the workers will feel the same distrust. They have had a distrust of the free-traders in the past. They have also had a distrust of the protectionists, because they were all independents and nobody could believe in what they said. It is only now that the workers have realized the idea that they can be protected, and they have sent representatives here to carry out the principles which they imagine will do them good. I believe, in the very near future, a greater impetus will be given to the protectionist

movement. It will be in the best interests of every class in the community, in the best interests of the whole of the Commonwealth. I do not think it is necessary for me to continue to speak on these lines much longer. I only want to make it clearly understood that the labour party are perfectly free with respect to the fiscal policy. It is an open question with them, and I hope that their best judgments will prevail. I believe in the honesty of all those who have been advocating their different principles. They may believe that they are absolutely right. Those who believe in the opposite direction may not have had the intelligence or the ability to put their case fairly before them. We may improve as we go on, and if they do not convert us we may convert them. I have made the statement I have done for the purpose of giving the Government an idea of the support" which they may expect and the Opposition an idea of the magnitude of the bait they can offer in the future.

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Senator WALKER

- Although I sit on the opposite side of the chamber to Senator O'Connor, I am not one of those who are going to criticise unfairly the programme in the Governor-General's speech. At the same time, as an out and out free-trader, and one who is not ashamed of the name, I intend to oppose their policy in that regard. With reference to the Tariff, we have heard that probably it will have to yield ?8,500,000. May I be permitted to say that when we take off the intercolonial duties the consumers of the goods will have so much more money remaining in their pockets, and it will be for each State Government, if the finances are disarranged, to get the money they need from the people in some other way, whether by direct taxation or not. It is for them to see that the exigencies of the State are attended to. It has been alleged that certain great sources of revenue are being transferred from the State to the Federal Government. At the same time it must be remembered that certain great outgoing departments have also been transferred. I take it that the original expenditure of the Federal Government will not exceed from ?350,000 to ?500,000 a year. That being the case, it seems to me that the total extra amount taken out of the pockets of the taxpayers ought not to exceed that sum. I notice in the Governor-General's speech that banking legislation is going to receive our attention. I understand that there has been a conference of bankers here lately, and that the Federal Treasurer will shortly bring in a Bill which, no doubt, will contain some of the recommendations of that conference. When that time comes I, probably, shall say something on the subject. We have had such a long debate already that I shall not speak at any great length. I shall support any good legislation, whether it comes from the Government or from the opposite side, if it is, in my opinion, for the benefit of the whole community. With regard to the question of old-age pensions, Senator Gould drew attention to the fact that if the Federal Government is going to undertake to legislate on the subject it will mean an enormous increase of taxation. I think that the respective States, knowing what their own outlay will be, should voluntarily, by Act of Parliament, hand over the equivalent to the Federal Government, and so enable them to undertake the duty. It seems to me very anomalous that while a man or woman who has remained twenty years or longer in a State is entitled to a pension, a person who has spent twenty years in different States should be at a disadvantage. It would be a great advantage to a man if he could not make an honest living in one State to be at liberty to go to another State without endangering his chance of getting a pension. With regard to the transcontinental railway, that matter requires to be looked into very carefully from the financial point of view. My sympathies are altogether with those who wish to see a connexion between the east and the west of Australia, and between the north and the south. It may not come immediately, but it ought to come for defence and other purposes. I shall make no unreasonable objection when the schemes are produced. With regard to the civil service, I think that merit, and not patronage, must govern promotion. At the same time, Senator O'Connor has given a very good reason for the particular appointment to which he referred. From what I know of the Under-Secretary for External Affairs, I believe that all Senator O'Connor said is absolutely true. For the information of some honorable members, I may mention that Mr. Atlee Hunt is a pronounced free-trader, so that the Government have not let that fact interfere in the case of this appointment. An important question, from a New South Wales point of view, is the choice of the site of the federal capital. I trust that not only will a good selection committee be appointed, but that it will contain men with some practical knowledge, not only of soil, but of building. We have amongst us a gentleman who, in days gone by, was a splendid contractor, and I hope that his name will not be left off the committee. I refer to Senator Ferguson. Another matter I wish to allude to is the question of the federal franchise. For years I have

been a believer in the Hare-Spence system of representation. I think it is necessary that we should have one suffrage for the whole federation. It seems to me that if they have adult suffrage in South Australia and Western Australia, we should have adult suffrage throughout the Commonwealth. In like manner, when the question of the northern territory comes to be considered, I think, in justice to our South Australian friends, who have behaved so well in the past, we should recognise that it is a federal duty to take over that territory. It also seems to me somewhat ridiculous that South Australia should include the greater part of North Australia. I hope the time will come when we shall have a territory there under the control of the Federal Government. A great deal has been said with regard to the sugar industry. Having lived in Queensland for 25 years, and having been connected with it for 39 years, much that has been said here has surprised me. I think Senator McGregor is not very far wrong when he says that if you do not have protective duties on sugar you should not deprive the sugar-grower too hurriedly of the labour on which he depends. I am on the unpopular side. I am a free-trader, not only in regard to commerce, but also, under proper restrictions, labour. I think a free-trader ought to be a free-trader all round. I gave no pledge in New South Wales but the one pledge, that I would adhere to free-trade under all possible circumstances. This black labour question is a larger one than we may suppose. The British Empire consists of something like two-thirds of persons of coloured races, and it is therefore surprising to me that any British subject should wish to deprive another of the right of going from one part of the British dominions to another. So long as we are a component part of the Empire I think that that is a matter upon which we shall have to consult the Imperial authorities. We have heard a great deal about the Kanaka labour being cheap. It may be or it may not be, but it is at all events reliable. When we have Kanakas engaged, they work honestly and diligently.

Senator Higgs

- "Do not whites?

Senator WALKER

- They do, but unfortunately should gold-fields break out or any other inducement be offered, white men frequently do not care two straws for their agreements. After all, a number of the kanakas who are imported into Queensland come from the New Hebrides, which are under joint British and French control, and it seems to me that there is a great deal to be said in favour of a very careful and gradual reduction. It is all very well for us in this cold climate to speak about Northern Queensland, and to say that the white man can work as effectively there as the black man. But I heard only the other day from a gentleman who has made a close investigation into this subject that on one plantation where they have 70 white men employed all the year round, the sugar planter told him that he had had 420 going through the mill in a year ; that is, they only remained an average of two months at a time.

Senator Millen

- The shearing industry depends on men who move about.

Senator O'Connor

- We are glad to know the attitude of the party on this question.

Senator WALKER

- - I am not speaking for the party; someone has said that we are all independent.

Senator O'Connor

- I thought you were united.

Senator WALKER

- We are united on the principle of free-trade. I will never give up my independence on other matters.

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Senator Playford

- What principles of free-trade are you united upon ? We have; never heard of them yet.

Senator WALKER

- With regard to the principles of protection, at all events, I call upon any honorable member present to name a single industry in which the consumers of the articles produced are not more numerous than the producers, and it therefore stands to reason that if a duty is put upon them it is done for the few at the expense of the many.

Senator McGregor

- I could prove otherwise.

Senator WALKER

- Of course I am one of those who always have believed that in course of time the Commonwealth Government should, with the approval of the States, have the complete control of all the railways, and amongst other advantages to be gained would be a uniform gauge. The late Mr. Eddy, the New South Wales Commissioner, laid great emphasis on that fact, and declared that the annual saving in working expenses would much more than pay the interest on the cost of the alteration. He further said that every year we postponed making the gauge a uniform one the greater the expense would ultimately be. I take the liberty of suggesting that when we go into recess, it might be well if an opportunity were afforded to us to take a trip right up to Northern Queensland, and see more of Australia than some of us have had the opportunity of doing. With regard to the kanaka question, I hope the Government will see their way to appoint a Royal commission composed of all sections of Parliament to take evidence once and for all, and let us act on that evidence.

Senator McGregor

- That has been done already.

Senator WALKER

- The Commission to which the honorable gentleman refers was negated by the action of the Queensland Government. Sir Samuel Griffith, seeing the mistake he had made, afterwards extended the time during which kanakas could be introduced into Queensland.

Senator McGregor

- He was like Mr. George Reid; he got frightened.

Senator WALKER

- With regard to Senator Milieu's amendment, I shall consider it my duty to vote against it. No leader has been appointed to this party, nor will be, I understand, until a fortnight hence. I may say, for Senator McGregor's information, that in a sense we are going on our own at the present time, - but I trust that if it is found that a certain section intends to oppose the whole crowd, the two other sections will keep it in order.

Senator McGregor

- We will help you. '

Senator WALKER

- With regard to the High Court, I was one of those who did what I could, to have the right of appeal to the Privy Council maintained. I trust, when we come to make appointments to the High Court, we shall remember that if it is necessary to appoint gentlemen who may be Judges in other States at the present time, we should endeavour to get fair play for those gentlemen by asking the respective Parliaments of the States to make proper provision for them. Supposing A.B. is asked to be a Judge of the High Court. He may have served perhaps ten out of fifteen years. In fifteen years he would be entitled to a pension. If we take him away to the High Court, I think we ought to endeavour to see that he suffers no loss, and that if he is entitled to a pension in fifteen years and has served ten, he shall get two-thirds of that pension when he ultimately retires from active duty; otherwise we should find our choice somewhat restricted. It is scarcely reasonable to expect that we can obtain the services of the best judicial minds unless we adequately remunerate them. I agree with Senator McGregor that if you get a good workman you ought to pay him well, and that is just as true with regard to the legal professions as it is with regard to others. Alluding to the matter of Asiatics, I am willing to await the legislation that is to be brought in. I am as much in favour of a white Australia as other people. I do not want to see the races mixed. I should like to see this continent peopled by a purely white race. But, at the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that we should do unto others as we would be done by. Why should a person be put under a ban for a fault that is not his.

Senator McGregor

- The Almighty has done that.

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Senator WALKER

- After all, I presume the Almighty knows best, and I refer honorable members who do not know it to Prichard's Natural History of Man, where they will discover that Adam and Eve were, after all, probably red people rather than white. We have been told to-night by our friends the protectionists that we are

protectionists, but I have never yet met a protectionist who was not in practice a free-trader. He gets, the best price he can for the article he sells and he likes to get the best value for any article he buys. I do not think I will take up more time. I recognise that the Government are doing their best under the circumstances. I sympathize with them up to a certain point. I recognise that, in the long address of the Governor-General, it was necessary to refer to a great many subjects, because the outside public required to be educated as to what are the powers of the Federal Government.

Senator MATHESON

- I can congratulate Senator McGregor on the very able speech he has made, and on the very able way he handled matters from his point of view, but I feel that in one or two instances he has proved almost more than was quite desirable for the case he advocated. In dealing with freetrade and protection, he introduced a most interesting argument based on certain work which was done in Mr. Martin's factory at Gawler, and he pointed out how Mr. Martin found- himself in a position to turn out filtration plates at such a price that he could easily compete with the foreign manufacturers. He told us how, on a reduction of price of some ?50, Mr. Martin still found himself in a position to compete with the English producer. If that argument was in favour of anything it was in favour of free-trade and not protection. The honorable member completely forgot to tell the House that those plates were imported from England and South Australia to Western Australia under exactly the same Tariff. What that Tariff was would depend upon the year in which the importation was made, but I suspect in both cases those plates would carry a duty of 5 per cent. A gentleman comes over from South Australia, and is in such .a strong position that he can compete with the European manufacturer in the open markets of the world.

Senator McGregor

- He could have done it in Western Australia if he had the chance.

Senator MATHESON

- He could have done so, but he did not care to take advantage of the 5 per cent, duties, because he was making such substantial profit at Gawler. That is the only legitimate deduction to be drawn from the statement. He could have made an extra 5 per cent, profit by starting the works in Western Australia, but he was content to lose it, and enter into open competition in the markets of the world. I do not propose to follow the example of some members and make what might be called a hustings speech, going into the question of free-trade and protection, and pointing out the advantages of one side and the disadvantages of the other. We have had that matter dealt with in all its aspects during the past six weeks, and I therefore propose to leave it alone until it crops up in connexion with the question of the Tariff. I will again deal with Senator McGregor, alluding shortly to his arguments as to the employment of kanakas, and the restriction of their importation. The honorable member gave us . a lot of most interesting information, and ex- . celled himself by bringing out the very point we wanted brought out from our point of view. I may state that I intend to support the , amendment. The honorable member, after dealing with many other questions, finished up his arguments by stating that he had been in Brisbane or Rockhampton, and had seen a shipment of kanakas come in, while alongside on the river banks were other kanakas bathing their feet in the water, and white men loafing. Well, was that not an argument of the strongest character that could be adduced in favour of the amendment of Senator Millen. The amendment was to the effect that the further importation of kanakas should be immediately stopped. AVe had expected to hear something very interesting from Senator O'Connor on this question, but after giving us all the data he could place at our disposal, and after quoting statistics, he has not proved that it would be inimical to the interests of the planters if the immigration of Kanakas' was immediately stopped. He brought forward no evidence of any sort in support of that contention. He simply placed before the House his ipse dixit that it would be detrimental to our interests to adopt the amendment. On the other hand we have Senator McGregor who supports him ;

Senator McGREGOR

- The honorable mem is making a mistake ; I am not supporting ' him.

Senator MATHESON

- I thought from the gist of the honorable member's remarks, and the sarcastic way in which he alluded to the mover of the amendment, that that was his intention. I am glad to find I am ; mistaken, and that he will vote for the ; amendment.

Senator McGregor

- Too thin.

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Senator MATHESON

- The honorable member must vote one way or the other. . He said he did not intend to support Senator O'Connor. If not, I presume he intends to support the amendment ; that is. a fair deduction, and one which I feel extremely pleased to be able to draw. He pointed out that there was a surplus of kanaka labour. He pointed out that ships were coming in with kanakas, whereas other kanakas were waiting for employment. They may possibly have been going away by that very ship ; but if that was their intention, or if the honorable member had the least idea that that was their intention, he should have called attention to that fact.

Senator McGregor

- I know they were going to stop.

Senator MATHESON

- What is the position that we take up with regard to this great question ? We - and apparently the Government agrees with us - say that this form of immigration ought to be put as top to as soon as it reasonably can be. That is, I think, the length to which we go ; and the point at issue is : When can we reasonably commence to put a stop to it ' ! If we had been able to get anything definite from Senator O'Connor - if he had got up and said that the intentions of the Government were something definite in this direction - it is possible that Senator Millen would have been pleased to withdraw his amendment. But I appeal to the Senate to say what did we get from Senator O'Connor beyond empty verbiage, the empty verbiage of the paragraphs in the Governor-General's speech. We now have it held over us as a sort of threat to those who advocate free-trade and the abolition of black labour that if we intend to stand up for our Tariff and do our best to get a reduction of high duties on sugar we shall be defeating our own object by placing in the hands of the Government an opportunity of lengthening out the term of employment of kanaka labour. I appeal to members whether I have not put a fairly accurate construction on the words that fell from the honorable gentleman, and I do not think any one can say that I have stretched fi point. That was undoubtedly the impression that he wished to convey to every one who listened to him. What a half-hearted way that is of dealing with the question. Here is a Government that admit they must do everything they possibly can to create a white Australia, and do away with the blot that besmirched the whole of this continent in the employment of coloured labour. Yet, though we hear from other senators who object strongly to black labour that while the area under sugar cultivation in Queensland has been doubled, the number of kanakas has not been increased, we are asked to believe at the same time that if a gradual diminution of the number of kanakas employed was made, as the result of Senator Millen's amendment, it would be impossible for certain planters to carry on their work. Visit possible to reconcile these two arguments ? The Government propose, sooner or later, to carry out this very work ; to gradually diminish the number of kanakas until they shall all have disappeared. I want the Senate to realize that. They admit it is their intention to do so, and why should we hesitate to-day to stop one planter from having six kanakas, if next year we are going to stop another from having six, and so on until we do away with all the others. I fail to see how it is possible to make any arrangement by which the blow can fall on all equally at the same moment.

Senator McGregor

- Why does not the honorable member shave one half of his face at a time ?

Senator MATHESON

- Because the honorable senator will see, if he looks at me, that I shave neither side.

Senator McGregor

- I only wanted to prove the effect of the experiment.

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Senator MATHESON

- I fail to see the logic of the honorable senator's interjection. I want to make it perfectly clear to the Senate that if fin injustice is going to be done to one, it is going to be done, sooner or later, to all of them ; but, if ground can be put under cultivation for sugar at the present moment without kanakas - because that is the only conclusion we can draw from statements before the Senate - it is perfectly clear that no greater hardship will be done to one planter to-day than will be done to the whole of them in the course of

the next few years. I like to look logically into what I do. The Government desire to procrastinate. They never want to say anything definite. They deal with nothing but generalities. They do not give you a single concrete fact to go on. Take the Governor-General's speech. It is simply a vague statement of a policy to be spread over several years. Who ever heard of a speech from the Throne dealing with a policy intended to cover several years'? The Government do not give us the least indication of what Bills are to be dealt with during the present session. They are simply generalizing ; simply waiting to see how much they can dare to keep back. I was going to say it is all humbug, but I am afraid it would be out of order to use such a word.

Senator O'Connor

- Oh, say it; it would be just as well for the honorable member to get it off his chest.

Senator MATHESON

- It is very difficult to find another word to express what I mean.

Senator O'Connor

- See where the honorable member's party will be in the division.

Senator MATHESON

- Of course we may not be in a majority, but we will have the satisfaction of knowing we voted soundly. Those who vote against the amendment will have the dissatisfaction later on of knowing that they voted illogically on this subject. Senator McGregor throws cold water on the amendment whether he intends to support it or not.

Senator McGregor

- There is nothing definite in it. It would not turn a hair on the head of a kanaka.

Senator MATHESON

- The honorable senator is doing his best to prevent it turning a hair of the Kanaka question. When he deprecates Senator Millen's action, he takes the very step that makes that action useless. He is afraid to support this amendment, although really ho is in favour of some similar motion, simply because it emanated from this side of the Senate.

Senator Playford

- A very good reason, too.

Senator MATHESON

- No doubt, Senator McGregor thinks that later on in the session he will move a private motion to the effect " that in the opinion of this House it is desirable," and so on, and so on, and no doubt he will rely on our support and obtain it; but what earthly good would such a motion be to him % The Government would simply smile ; the motion would not affect them.

Senator McGregor

- What will be the effect of the amendment on them ? It must be the very same.

Senator MATHESON

- It will have the very best possible effect on them if carried ; if it would not, why do they fight it ?

Senator Millen

- They accept it as a challenge.

Senator O'Connor

- A challenge ! Hear, hear !

Senator MATHESON

- I have made it clear that this amendment is one which should receive the support of every senator who desires to see a white Australia. It is ' not a very drastic suggestion that the importation of Kanakas should be stopped straight away ; there is nothing very terrible about it, because almost immediately the Government follows the line indicated by Senator O'Connor, a Bill will be introduced to stop them gradually. What we want to do is to take an active step at the present moment in the right .direction. Senator McGregor referred to the question of adult suffrage. I agree with him in saying that the suffrage and electoral laws are practically the basis upon which the Senate is to be returned in the future ; practically the basis of the whole parliamentary constitution of these two Chambers of the Commonwealth. I certainly agree with him that two of the first things the Government ought to bring in are an Electoral Bill and an Adult Suffrage Bill, and if the honorable member has the courage of his convictions to move an amendment to the Address in Reply, pointing out the absurdity of referring to

these matters as questions to be dealt with after the necessary data has been collected, I, and others on this side of the Senate who share my opinions, will be prepared to support him. Let him prove that he is in earnest ; let him bring forward a proposition that he is prepared to actively support.

Senator McGregor

- I do not want to bamboozle any one.

Senator MATHESON

- I have gone out of my way to show Senator McGregor how he can be consistent. I have pointed out to him, in the most friendly spirit possible, how he can take active and proper steps to remove this blot without loss of time. Now is the time to deal with such matters. It is better to dispose of them when you are dealing with the Address in Reply, and when any motion of this House, if carried by a sufficient majority, carries weight with it. If the honorable member has important amendments and important topics which he thinks should be brought before the House as urgent matters, he ought to remember before he twits other senators that he is not prepared to take the steps necessary to make his own proposals effective.

Senator McGregor

- I only want the honorable member to indicate his policy

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Senator MATHESON

- There is one point in the Governor-General's speech which affects members for Western Australia most materially, that is the question of the Inter-State line necessary to connect the railway system of Western Australia with that of the eastern States. I was surprised to hear the representative of the Government in this Senate say in a loud tone last evening that no pledge whatever had been made that this railway would be constructed. It is true that no pledge exists in writing. No document has been given, signed and sealed with the seal of the Commonwealth or bearing the signatures of the Federal Ministers. Senators, however, must have a very short memory if they forget that to all intents and purposes this railway forms portion of the defence scheme which was the original basis of the federation of Australia. I do not think any senator is prepared to challenge me in that statement. In case he should be, however, I have brought into the Senate a report made by Major-General Edwards in 1889 on the military forces and defences of the Commonwealth.

Senator O'Connor

- Is that a parliamentary paper ?

Senator MATHESON

- Yes, a Victorian parliamentary paper. I would like to remind honorable members whose memories are deficient, or who may not have followed the sequence of events which led to our meeting here, that Major-General Edwards made this report on the defence question for the whole of Australia. Quoting from Mr. Garran, Sir Henry Parkes, on that report, called a conference in Melbourne in 1890. This report formed absolutely the basis on which that conference was convened. A convention followed in Sydney in 1891, and the Commonwealth Bill was drafted, which practically led to the existing Federal Constitution. I would call the attention of senators to the special paragraph in the report dealing with Western Australia, and I only propose to quote extracts dealing with Western Australia and this railway. He states - Nongeneral defence of Australia can be undertaken unless its distant parts are connected with the more populous colonies in the south and east of the continent. If an enemy was established in Western Australia you would be powerless to act against him..... The interests of the whole continent therefore demand that railways to connect Western Australia with other colonies should be made as soon as possible.

We, in Western Australia, have never for one instant allowed the existence of this report to slip from our memories. In talking of federation, we have always discussed it on the basis of Major-General Edwards' report, and it comes entirely new to senators representing that State to find how completely these facts have dropped out of the memory of some honorable members from other States. It is perfectly clear, from the tone of the debate last night, and from the utterances of Senator O'Connor this afternoon, in dealing with this question of the initial responsibility of the Commonwealth for the defence of Western Australia, that the fact that this was laid down as an essential to follow on Federation as quickly as possible has completely escaped the memory of all those honorable gentlemen.

Senator O'Connor

- Are those the grounds on which the honorable member says the Government is pledged to build this railway?

Senator MATHESON

- Those are the initial grounds, most . undoubtedly. Unfortunately, I fell into somewhat of a trap which was laid for me by Senator O'Connor. I forgot that I was talking to an eminent lawyer, and perhaps I did not weigh what I said sufficiently carefully.

Senator O'Connor

- The honorable member does not say seriously' that I laid a trap for him ?

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Senator MATHESON

-Not quite a trap, but a trap in the parliamentary sense. I unfortunately did not weigh my words quite so carefully as I should have done. When the honorable and learned member asked me if I based my statement that there was a contract with the Government on Major General Edwards' report, and treated the Government as a representative of the whole of the Commonwealth, I certainly said - "Yes." What I should have said was that there was an implied contract with the whole Commonwealth that this railway should be built, just as much as there was an understanding that the forts necessary for the defence of Australia should be taken over by the Commonwealth. When I said yes to his question I was simply alluding to the Government in the large sense in which it should be taken to represent the whole Commonwealth of Australia. I absolutely fail to see how any gentleman who advocated the federation of these States, on the basis that for the defence of the whole Commonwealth it was necessary that federation should be accomplished - and I think there is hardly a member in the Chamber who has not advocated federation on those grounds - can afford to ignore the particular paragraph to which I called attention in Major-General Edwards' report. The language is absolutely conclusive. He deals with all the other branches of defence, which were necessary, and in no one of the paragraphs dealing with those branches does he speak with any tiling like the emphasis that he uses when dealing with this question of the line to "Western Australia. Still, so that honorable members may have it sufficiently in their minds, I shall repeat exactly what he said. He said this : -

No general defence of Australia can be undertaken unless its distant parts are connected with the more populous colonies in the south and east of the continent. If an enemy was established in Western Australia you would be powerless to act against him.

The interests of the whole continent therefore demand that the railway to connect Western Australia with the other States should be made as soon as possible. I put it to the House, could anything be more absolutely emphatic than those sentences, and were we not justified in Western Australia in believing that if the Commonwealth were prepared to take over the defence of the whole of the States, that line was an essential portion of the defence system of the whole Commonwealth? We, in Western Australia, have never for an instant questioned that this was a liability to which the Commonwealth was committed. Where the question has arisen in Western Australia, and where we asked for assurances from the Premiers or from the leading statesmen of another colony was entirely in a different direction. Senator O'Connor pointed out in his speech that the Constitution was framed in this way, that any one State through which the Commonwealth desired to run' a railway might object, and that in that case the Commonwealth would be powerless. I will admit that Western Australia had considerable doubts as to what the attitude of South Australia would be on this question. Many of our representative men led us to believe that in South Australia a very large section of the community were opposed to the construction of this line, and that was one of the things which our Premier, Sir John Forrest, always used in debate as a very great argument against federation. For weeks and months, in discussing this question, he always raised the point, not that the Commonwealth was not bound to construct this line, but that South Australia a night object to that portion of the line which would run through her territory, and when Senator Ewing was speaking on the subject the other day, and mentioned the assurances that we in Western Australia had received from the statesmen of South Australia, he had in his mind the assurances which we received from Mr. Kingston and Mr. Holder as to the attitude of the South Australian Parliament in case the Federal Government set to work to build this line. It is thoroughly well brought out by correspondence which was laid before both Houses of the Parliament of Western Australia. I propose to

quote two extracts. The first is a paragraph from Mr. Kingston's letter of the 28th August, 1899, to Sir John Forrest, as follows : -

Replying to your letter of 22nd inst., South Australia has already intimated favour of federal undertaking of railway connecting east and west.

Sir John Forrest, however, was not satisfied with that assurance. He communicated with Mr. Kingston, and so we find on 4th September Mr. Kingston giving this further assurance to Sir John Forrest -

The federal construction of this railway is in our opinion -

Mark you, sir, that Mr. Kingston is evidently speaking on behalf of his Ministry - entirely the best means for carrying out this great Australian undertaking. We hope it will not be long before Western Australia and South Australia are co-operating in the Parliament of the Commonwealth to bring this about.

After reading this correspondence can any one entertain the least doubt that the Commonwealth is pledged to the construction of this line? If there had been the least doubt on that subject that would have been the topic of correspondence between Sir John Forrest and Mr. Kingston. All that Sir John Forrest required from Mr. Kingston, the Premier of South Australia, was an assurance as to the attitude which the Parliament of that State would adopt towards the construction of the line. There was further correspondence, which I have been unable to turn up in the parliamentary papers: the file here does not seem to be complete. Speaking from recollection, eventually Mr. Kingston, on behalf of his Government, sent a pledge to Sir John Forrest that so soon as the Parliament of Western Australia was willing to pass a measure enabling the Federal Government to construct this line, the Government of South Australia was prepared to introduce a similar measure into their Parliament. Those were the assurances to which Senator Ewing was alluding to last night. What I want to impress on honorable members is, that there can be no doubt whatever - and I speak with authority - that if we in Western Australia when we voted on the referendum had had the least doubt that the Federal Government would construct this line the vote given then in favour of federation would have been very different from what it was. But what was the position? We had stumped the whole country. Knowing that the conventions which constructed the Commonwealth Constitution were based upon this report of Major-General Edwards, we believed and we endeavoured to make the people believe that there was no doubt whatever about the Commonwealth constructing this line, and on these grounds we agreed to federate. I assure you, sir, that when it becomes known in Western Australia that senators have questioned the right that we have to demand the construction of this line by the Commonwealth it will create a most serious and unfortunate impression. I trust that other speakers, before they express any opinions hostile to the construction of this great national undertaking, will look into the subject carefully, and satisfy themselves that I have not misrepresented the facts so far as I have stated them. Now, to deal with the paragraph in the speech which alludes to this question. An honorable gentleman last night somewhat jeered at a statement in the third paragraph of the speech that isolation was the chief obstacle to the early adoption of the Constitution by Western Australia, and he suggested that when the members for Western Australia came to discuss this question it would be well if they "gave some explanation. If the honorable gentleman had gone a little further he would have found a still more inexplicable statement, and one to which I intend to call the attention of the House. Reading on we come to the following statement in the paragraph : -

Isolation was the chief obstacle to the early adoption of the Constitution by Western Australia. Only the hope of closer connexion induced the people of the West to risk the threatened perils of that political union of the continent which their voting at the referendum did much to complete.

I wish to ask Senator O'Connor what was in the mind of the Federal Government, the Government which includes Mr. Barton and Mr. Deakin, when they spoke of the threatened perils of that political union, of the continent which their voting at the referendum did much to complete? I am completely at a loss to understand what threatened perils could possibly have been in the minds of the Ministers who were the leading advocates of federation. We never heard them mention, when federation was being discussed, the threatened perils of the political union of the continent. It is not as if the paragraph said the threatened perils of that political union with the continent, which would have made it apply to Western Australia if it entered as a State into the Commonwealth. It distinctly alludes to threatened perils which affect the political union of this continent, and it seems to me a most inexplicable thing that gentlemen who have advocated federation as the greatest gain that could possibly arise to the whole Continent of Australia should be found expressing themselves in this way in the speech which they have put into the mouth of

the Governor-General. Really when you come to associate the rest of the paragraph with the first portion, it is impossible to avoid coming to one conclusion, and that is that this speech is a patchwork composition, and that the authorship of this particular paragraph' may be attributed to the Minister for Defence.

Senator DAWSON

-Was not the honorable member on the committee?

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Senator MATHESON

- I have been on no committee in connexion with this House that I am aware of. The perils connected with the political union of Western Australia with the rest of Australia have been dealt with ad nauseam, by that gentleman, and by that gentleman alone, out of all the responsible politicians in Western Australia. The isolation which was the chief obstacle to the early adoption of the Constitution by Western Australia appears to me, if you come to point it out, to be the fear of the isolation which that right honorable gentleman now experiences in his situation in this Federal Parliament. I have no doubt that that is the isolation which was in his mind when he drafted this paragraph, if he did draft it. The isolation was the isolation which he felt sure he was bound to experience, and which, as events have proved, he is experiencing. But still I submit it is a most extraordinary thing that the responsible Government of this great Commonwealth should sit down and pass a paragraph in which they admit that there were threatened perils in the political union of the Commonwealth. It only goes a long way to confirm what I said, that this whole concoction is simply playing with both Houses of this Parliament. There is another point to which I wish to call attention. In the third paragraph on page 2 of the speech, we find that Bills for the firm restriction of the immigration of Asiatics are to be introduced, but no word is said there about the restriction of Africans. I do not know whether the gentlemen who form the Cabinet have thought that Asiatics is a sort of embracing term which includes every black race, but, if so, I venture to suggest that when their Bill comes before the Senate, it will be found quite inadequate to deal with the purposes which the rest of Australia expect them to deal with. To my mind, the immigration of Africans is just as objectionable as - even more objectionable than - the immigration of Asiatics. On that subject I cannot help alluding to the expression of opinion that fell from Senator Walker, in reference to Asiatics and black labour generally. I think, for an honorable gentleman who says that he advocates a white Australia, he certainly has the most peculiar views I have ever heard expressed. While, on the one hand, he says distinctly that Australia should be white, on the other hand he says - consider that the black people have to live. We all admit that the black people have to live. What we say is that the black people should live in their own country.

Senator Walker

- This was a black fellow's country before it was a white man's country.

Senator MATHESON

- The honorable gentleman said that to me privately yesterday, and he seemed to think that that settled the question. He fails to recognise that we have taken this country from the blacks, and made it a white man's country, and intend to keep it a white man's country, so that there is no earthly use in the honorable gentleman saying that 100 years ago this was a black man's country.

Senator Walker

- There are still 100,000 aborigines in Australia.

Senator MATHESON

- We are aware of that fact, and it is very regrettable, and the only consolation we have is that they are gradually dying out. If the honorable gentleman had had any knowledge of Western Australia he would have known that very large portions of the very best pastoral country in that State are almost barred from pastoral occupation on account of the savageness of the blacks. I am not a person who advocates the attitude that persons in the West are taking up towards the blacks. I consider that it is an extremely reprehensible one. At the same time, I will say that the result of enforcing law and order there has been that large portions of the very best pastoral country cannot be taken up for pastoral purposes, simply because they are inhabited by extremely savage blacks.

Senator Walker

- Who own the country!

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- They object to the admission of white labour.

Senator MATHESON

- They object to the admission of white men who kill their kangaroos and sport. But this is not a matter to be treated in a jocular manner. This is a most serious matter.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- It is very serious for the blacks.

Senator MATHESON

- Nobody who has had any knowledge of America ; nobody who has read any books on the subject from the American point of view, can fail to recognise the enormous danger to the white race through any admixture of a black or coloured race.

Senator Charleston

- They do not mix there much.

Senator MATHESON

-There the honorable gentleman is mistaken. In the Southern parts of America the experience is that they intermarry to a very large extent, and the result is a race of people who are very often of extreme beauty. There is no possible means of ascertaining .that, they have been tarnished by a black strain, and the result is that they intermarry with families who would infinitely prefer to keep themselves pure in blood without any suspicion being entertained at the time that such an inter-marriage of races is going on.

A Senator.- It is a question of the moral standard.

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Senator MATHESON

- It is not a question of a moral standard. It is a question of the progeny of these females who develop the ancient savage instincts of the original race. If the honorable member will read any book dealing with the question he will find many examples of the relapse of children who should have been absolutely white into the savage dom of their black ancestors, and that is what we want to avoid in this country. We want to keep the race pure, and the only way in which we can keep the race pure, in spite of Senator Walker's suggestion, is by shutting out rigorously any form of coloured immigration.

Senator McGregor

- Senator Millen's amendment does not provide for that.

Senator MATHESON

- Why won't the senator be content to take half a loaf if he cannot get the whole ? I quite agree with the honorable member that the amendment does not go far enough, but it goes quite as far as we can go in justice to other people. I go to a large extent with Senator O'Connor when he says we must deal fairly with the people who have sunk their money in the industry, but nothing that he has said proves that we are dealing more unfairly than he is prepared to deal with the sugar planters. I thoroughly believe .there is no more logical-minded man in this Chamber than Senator McGregor, and I maintain that if he is found voting against this amendment he will be found in the lobby of the " Noes," because he objects to the source from which this amendment has proceeded. I say so emphatically, and his friends who know him in private life, and those of his party who sit behind him, will bear me out.

Senator McGregor

- I am not independent j I can be depended on.

Senator MATHESON

- The honorable gentleman is now beginning to experience some of the irksome cares of office to which he so feelingly alluded when speaking of the free-traders. Now, if J were to deal with all the other questions in this speech which really should be dealt with, I am afraid I should detain the House beyond its patience. I have dealt with most of the important matters, and I do trust that those honorable members who sit behind Senator McGregor will not be disturbed by any fears of what may happen on the Government bench, but will vote absolutely according to their consciences in this matter of black labour. If they want to see black labour stopped, let them vote for stopping it by degrees because they will never succeed in stopping it right off.

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Senator DOBSON

- I should like to say a few words in reference to several matters in which I take a considerable interest which are dealt with in the speech. It has always been supposed that if a debate exceeds a day on the Address in Reply it is to a great extent waste of time, but I do not think that opinion can be applied to the debate now proceeding. The circumstances are altogether unique, they are historic. Members have met here to assist the Government to lay the foundation of the edifice upon which this great nation is to be based. Many of us are utter strangers to one another, and that alone is a reason for discussing this speech at some length. I am aware that it is the duty of the Government to lay down their policy and carry it out, but this is not a time when we should enter into a conspiracy of silence and leave them alone ; it is a time when every honorable member in both Chambers should assist the Government by giving them every fair and generous assistance. I think the Government have a right to expect honorable members to devote two or three days in debating the momentous subjects mentioned in the gracious speech His Excellency the Governor-General delivered. A matter of very great interest to me is the work which the Senate will have to take up and the position which it is entitled to occupy under our Federal Constitution. It is very few weeks ago since I wrote to the Prime Minister and suggested that there would be great disappointment unless he had a certain number of Bills ready so as to give to this House its due share of initiatory legislation, and I am very glad that the honorable gentleman who represents the Government in this Chamber has promised us that. But there are so many Bills which must originate in the Lower Chamber that I am afraid Senator O'Connor will have all he can to do to give us the amount of work to which we are entitled. I do not think it is at all likely that the 36 members of this House will take the same amount of time in legislating as the 75 members in another place, and I quite agree with the suggestion that the Senate should meet one day a week less than another place. Now, the machinery with which we have to work is the machinery called democracy, and I suppose almost every honorable member would be insulted if we did not admit that he was a full-fledged democrat. This system of government of the people by themselves should be made a success by every one of us if we can make it a success. Democracy is to a large extent on its trial, and it remains to be seen at the end of this century, or before half of it has gone by, whether we have the common sense and ability to make it a success. It is too early to pronounce democracy a failure, but we have signs of the great dissatisfaction with it. On all hands the people are crying out to take from us work with which they have trusted us as their representatives. They would have even the most complicated matters, - such as the fiscal issue settled by means of a referendum. It is our duty to make democracy a success, and two methods which will help to make it a success are, I think, by introducing the system of proportional voting, and by taking care that in all these bicameral systems of legislature we have a strong controlling Upper Chamber. Some of my fellow senators may be of opinion that the system of proportional voting in the State to which I belong has not been a success, but I must differ from them. I do not think it has yet had a fair trial. I am convinced that it is the only proper and right system. I do not say the Hare system is the best you can obtain, because I believe Senator Best, in a measure which he introduced into the State Parliament of Victoria, got hold of a system which was an improvement upon the Hare system. It stands to reason that people ought to get no more than their fair share of representation according to the strength of their particular section of the community, and they ought to be given no less. That is what the -proportional vote will insure. In Tasmania we returned a certain gentleman who, in the opinion of a clique, ought not to have been elected, but that does not say that the Hare system is not a fair system. I recollect reading in one of the Melbourne papers about a candidate for the Senate who, when speaking about the fiscal question - and -whether he was being pressed rather closely, or heckled, I do not know - gave an answer which I well recollect. It was to this effect - that he, if elected to the Senate, would have very little to do with the fiscal issue, because he presumed the Senate would not think of altering a uniform Federal Tariff which had come to us straight and complete from another place. I cannot agree with that view for a moment; and we should be failing in our duty to ourselves if we did not suggest alterations in every single item of that Tariff if we thought it was our duty to do so.

A SENATOR - And stand by them.

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Senator DOBSON

-- Whether it is to be a free-trade or protectionist Tariff, we must stand by what we think is right, and we must see that no Bill goes out of this Chamber unless we believe it is supported by the will of the majority,

after the majority know what they are doing, and have sufficient knowledge on which to make up their minds. I would like to quote here a word or two from Mr. Gladstone, because every democrat appears to justify his position by saying that he has the will of the people at his back. What do we mean by " the will of the people " ? Is it the will of the people made up by the man in the street or the clever electioneering tout, or the will of the people estimated by some clever leader in politics, who is more charlatan than statesman? Or is it the will of the people expressed at an election upon some particular question ? If it is that it is not as Mr. Gladstone said - the surface will of the people, but the deliberate judgment of the people." It will be the duty of this Senate to see that such legislation as we allow to pass shall be stamped with the deliberate judgment of the people, and whenever we think that such legislation is not backed by the will of the people, or that the people have not made up their minds, it will be our duty to put it in the waste-paper basket and give the people further time for consideration. I consider that one of the dangers of the present day is that we want to go ahead a little too fast, and we have evidence of that in what has taken place during the last few hours. My friends from New South Wales should have possessed their souls in patience, and should have been content to wait until they had got the Government Bills before them. Although these Bills are to be introduced in a constitutional manner in another place, an attempt has been made to forestall them, and I must say that I can imagine nothing more improper than the amendment which has been moved in all good faith by Senator Millen, and the bad example which Senator Neild has followed in trying, by an abstract motion, to give colour to probably the most important measure that could be introduced in this Chamber. The whole thing is most improper, and I wish we had standing orders which would put them out of order. Unless we proceed regularly, and in accordance with the rules that must govern the conduct of business and debate, we shall get into trouble and bring about ill-feeling.- I should like to say that the criticisms which I have heard on this speech appear to me to be absolutely meaningless. One honorable senator says the speech is nebulous, another can find nothing in it, a great free-trade leader says it contains three years' work, and yet at the same time he will expect the Government, and I think wrongly, to introduce the Tariff within a month or two. The last speaker has gone one better, and says he finds several years' work in the Governor-General's speech, and yet, with all that work before us, members are not willing to wait until the Bills are regularly before them. I have looked up the speech delivered in the Federal Parliament in Canada when they were commencing their federal history, and I will quote a few words to show how meaningless all the criticism which we have heard appears to me. We all know how absolutely generously and sympathetically the Imperial Parliament treated our Constitution Bill when it came before them, and the tact and patience with which Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues listened to the very persistent arguments of my friend, the Prime Minister, and his brother delegates.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Persistent and successful.

Senator DOBSON

- I think the representations made by Mr. Barton, though I admired his persistency and courage, went a little too far, and I wish they had not been so successful. I have never wavered in my opinion that it was not the duty of the Convention to take from me or any other man a right which the Crown had given me, independent of Australian unity. The Convention met to enlarge Our powers of self government. I contend that they had no right to take away from me my right of appeal to the highest court in the empire, and I have never been in accord with the way in which that right of appeal has been restricted. The patience and generosity with which the Imperial Parliament treated our delegates was something to admire ; and I should have liked to have found in the Governor-General's speech one or two paragraphs which I see now in the Canadian speech before me. That speech says : -

In a similar spirit of respect for your privileges as a free and self-governing people, the act of Union, as adopted by the Imperial Parliament, imposes its duty, and confers upon you the right of reducing to practice the system of government which it has called into existence, of consolidating its institutions, harmonizing its administrative details, and of making such legislative provisions as will secure to her Constitution, in some respects novel, a full, fair, and unprejudiced trial

In another place it says :

In the discussions which preceded the introduction of this measure in the Imperial Parliament between the members of Her Majesty's Government on the one side and the delegates who represented the provinces

now united on the other, it was apparent to all those who took part in those conferences that, while Her Majesty's Ministers considered and pressed the principle of union as a subject of great Imperial interest, they allowed to the provincial representatives every freedom in arranging the mode in which that principle should be applied.

Senator O'Connor: In the case of Canada there was a series of resolutions not arrived at by a convention of the people, but taken to London by a delegation, and put into the form of a Bill. That is what is referred to. Here we have the will of the people stamped on a document which goes from Australia. That is the difference.

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Senator DOBSON

- That is a very difficult argument to answer. But I would ask what the honorable gentleman thinks the will of the people is worth on the question of the right of appeal to the Privy Council. Not one man in a thousand knows anything about it. Although the honorable gentleman has given me theoretically a strong argument, I do not think it is practically any argument at all. My point is that the House of Commons were so generous in dealing with this Bill, and in giving up their own convictions and Imperial principles, that I should like to have seen some sentences in the speech thanking them. I think honorable members will be very much surprised at the precedent I am able to give them for the speech delivered by the Governor-General. There are sixteen or seventeen different subjects alluded to or promised, and when the last speaker was talking about seven years' work I counted the number of measures mentioned in the Canadian speech, which was exactly the same. A most extraordinary coincidence is that the last measure alluded to is "a measure defining the privileges of Parliament and for the establishing of uniform laws relating to elections and the trial of controverted elections." I do not suppose many honorable gentlemen have read the book from which I have quoted, and I will point out that the very criticisms which have been hurled against this speech are really meaningless if this is any precedent whatever.'

We are starting as a young nation and I think we have had a great deal too much of party politics. That brings me to the proposition which you, Sir, brought under the notice of the Convention - whether federation would kill party government, or party government 'kill federation. So far as I can see from my experience of the last 45 years of federal life there is not much chance of party government being killed yet, because I think in this Senate I can see already a little too much of it. It appears to me that the whole criticism uttered by the Opposition has really no foundation to go upon at all, and that it displays an anxiety to get our friends off the Treasury benches and to substitute the Opposition in their stead. To my mind it is a momentous fact in the history of our empire that at the very time when we were fixing up the unity of the Australian States the sons of Australia and of Canada and of other colonies were fighting side by side with British soldiers in field and ditch. At last we have brought about the unity and consolidation of Greater Britain. I think that the Imperial federation which has thus been achieved is a far more momentous fact than even the Australian federation. I desire to say first that before all things I hope I am and shall ever remain a true Imperialist, and shall do nothing in my position as a senator which 'could in any possible degree tend to break the few remaining' links that bind us to the motherland. I shall never believe in the principle of appointing our own State Governors. Of course, we should all vote against any proposition of that kind, and I hope the Governor-General, as well as the State Governors, will continue to be appointed by the Crown of Great Britain. I know of no other ties at all, except that if we want to alter our Constitution the Crown has to assent to it, and that we have a right of appeal to the Privy Council - a right which I think has been wrongly limited. Whatever the Imperial links are, however, I shall do all in my power to strengthen them. Proud as I am to be a Tasmanian, and proud as I am to be a member of this great Commonwealth, I am prouder still to belong to the British Empire. I should like to say a few words about the fiscal issue. I do not think there has ever been, in regard to this question, that clear-cut issue which our friends from New South Wales and certain other

States would desire. I happened to be enjoying the hospitality of the New South Wales Government on the 1st January last, and watched with great interest the magnificent celebrations in connexion with the inauguration of the Commonwealth : but within 24 hours of the Prime Minister being sworn in party politics commenced their tricks. The free-trade leader and the Daily Telegraph framed this issue, which, I maintain, has been a false issue. There can be no possibility of a free-trade Tariff, and I hope there will be no possibility of what is known in Victoria as a protectionist Tariff. The Tariff must be a compromise on

every point. As Mr. Wise, 1. remember, said, for New South Wales to impose on protectionist Victoria anything like the Tariff of which the people of the mother State are so proud would be a cruel injustice : and for 'Victoria to impose on New South Wales anything like her so-called Tariff would bring about something like a revolution. Mr. Wise is a good sound freetrader.

Senator Millen

- Many of us doubt it.

Senator DOBSON

- He happens to have written a book.

Senator Millen

- He is rather sorry for it now.

Senator DOBSON

- I always understood that he was a free-trader, but if we are going to doubt each other, I suppose party politics must go on.

Senator O'Connor

- :Mr. Wise always puts Australia before faction.

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Senator DOBSON

- Hear, hear. And I put Australia before party government. In reference to this great issue then I take it that no effective criticism can be indulged in by any one till the Tariff has been laid on the table. Let us look at one or two sentences on both sides. The Prime Minister has promised that he will frame an Australian Tariff for an Australian people. That is a very nice sentence, but what is its meaning? The only interpretation of a sentence like that will be seen when the duties are placed on the table. The Prime Minister said, also, that he would have a revenue Tariff which would not be destructive of industries. That, also, is a magnificent phrase, which, no doubt, gained many votes. But what does it mean ? We shall have to wait till we see the duties on the table. What do our friends of the Opposition say? They talk about- "a system of commerce," "an ocean of human freedom," "channels of human industry," and a lot of stock phrases of that sort. What do they mean? Probably, what they meant in New South Wales, namely, that you would have a freetrade policy with a "but" in it. The moment an industry begins to cry out ; the moment it calls out - " If you do not mingle a little of the waters of protection with this ocean of freedom, you will not remain in it much longer," the free-trade leader responds to it. He deliberately gives these sugar planters a measure of protection.

Senator Millen

- No.

Senator DOBSON

- With all respect to my friend, Senator Millen, if I read my Sydney Morning Herald and DailyTelegraph correctly, they asked for it as protection, and they got it as such, and it is rather ingenious for the free-trade party to say that in giving them protection pure and simple they were simply acceding to what they knew would have to be done. Perhaps that was an afterthought.

Senator Millen

- It was not an afterthought. .It was made the basis of a statement at the time.

Senator DOBSON

- I believe whatever my honorable friend tells me, but I read the statement in the Sydney press as a request for protection.

Senator O'Connor

- Yes, and it was followed by a visit on the part of Mr. Reid to the sugar district itself. He looked at the case, and prescribed the medicine of protection.

Senator DOBSON

- - It is hopeless to go into details, but I want to touch upon a question of great importance. I alluded a few minutes ago to the mistake we are making in trying to proceed too fast. Rome was not built in a day, and you will not construct the foundations of this edifice at the rate at which some of us want to go. In the work before us, as set out in the Governor-General's's speech - the work we have to do in creating the machinery of the Constitution, and setting it going - there are three or four months of solid hard labour, and I do not think it possible for Ministers to find time to do justice to the framing of a Federal Tariff this

session. I am aware the commercial trader tells us we are dislocating his business by delaying this question. But he is uttering sentences which, while they have a scintilla of truth in them, are a gross exaggeration. He is suffering inconveniences which he knew he must incur when he voted " yes " at the referendum.

Senator Besttells me that when he was amending the Victorian Tariff it took the experts three months to frame it, and they had no Commonwealth celebrations to interfere with the work. ~We know it is difficult to work when celebrations of that magnitude are going on. It not only took them three months to frame the Tariff, but it took Senator Best nearly five months to pilot the Bill through the committee stage. If there is to be this great fight between free-trade and protection, between moderate protectionists and revenue tariffists, how is it possible after we are worn out with the work of setting the federal machinery in order to enter upon the three months' additional labour which must be involved in the discussion of this fiscal issue. I have no doubt that the only course which will enable us to do justice to ourselves and to this enormous piece of work is that we should devote three or four months to setting the federal machinery in motion, and then to separate, but not before we have obtained a distinct pledge from Ministers to call Parliament together early in January or February, and lay the Federal Tariff on the table in the first week of our meeting. Then we should come fresh to the work, and we should be able to devote the whole session to it. Then and then only could we do justice to the issue.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- What come fresh to the work in the hot weather of February ?

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Senator DOBSON

- The Convention met in this magnificent building in January, February, and March to give the final touches to the Federal Constitution, and we were very comfortable. I do not think the hot weather interfered with the work of the Convention. I do not want to delay the work. I believe Tasmania is going to benefit more by free-trade than any of the other States. Almost the whole of her industries are natural. Her fruit, her pulp, her minerals, her wool - we have hardly a single industry which is to gain by protection. All our industries in Tasmania are natural, and I yield to no one in my desire to have free-trade as soon as possible. Is that any reason, however, why I should desire to face the work when it is likely to be ill and slovenly done, and when I know that neither the experts engaged in framing the Tariff, nor the Ministers employed in settling it, have had time to give to the proposals?

Senator O'Connor

- The preparation of the Tariff has been going on for some months.

Senator DOBSON

- That may be so, but Senator O'Connor will recollect that many other things have been going on at the same time, and neither the Minister of Customs nor ' any other member of the Government has been able to give a tenth part of his time to the framing of this measure, because they have had too many other things to attend to. I trust that time will not be found to bring in the Tariff proposals this session. I hope that every measure which is required to set the federal machinery in motion will be carried into effect, but I do not believe we shall be able to attempt to deal with the Tariff. Another matter to which I desire to make reference is the question of old-age pensions. I think it will be admitted by all of us that the making of some better provision for our old men and women is a duty we owe to our civilization and to our common humanity. There is, however, a right and a wrong way of doing it. If I may say so, I consider that the Victorian Act is a very ill-devised measure.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Hear, hear.

Senator DOBSON

- It was passed with undue haste. I do not think that either of the State Chambers devoted five minutes to debating the important economic principles that underlie the whole movement. I undertake to say that the mere passage of that Bill has embarrassed and will embarrass this Parliament in dealing with the question in a statesmanlike way. I shall be asked, I suppose, by senators constituting the labour party, what my intentions are in regard to old-age pensions. It is perfectly certain that no such scheme can be brought into being for one, two, or three sessions to come. It is absolutely essential to fix up not only the fiscal, but the financial problems before we can go into any such proposals. I shall insist upon each State

knowing how it stands financially before I consent to any federal expenditure that can possibly be avoided, and I do not believe it is possible to arrange for any system of old-age pensions for the next two or three years. Still, that is no reason why we should lose a year in beginning to look into the matter, and in setting up inquiries which will enable us to deal with it in a statesmanlike manner. My suggestion is, therefore, that the Government should appoint a select committee of both Houses to take up this question and inquire into it from the federal stand-point. The committee could report to Parliament either next session or the session after: What are the questions? First, it has not yet been settled whether it is the right thing for the Federal Government to take this up. Two leading States have already passed pension Acts of their own. It is a very grave question indeed, knowing that the Federal Government will have difficulty in obtaining the large amount of revenue necessary to satisfy the pensions, whether we should not wait and see how the States which have entered upon the system get on. In adopting a federal system, I should say at once that I would like to see some encouragement given to those who have exercised that thrift about which Senator McGregor has spoken. I hope I shall earn his respect and his approval in regard to this question. It is no use talking of the old men and the old women that have not made provision for their old age. Who are they? They are soldiers of the industrial army - soldiers not of the sword but of the ploughshare, 'who have done their work, who have helped to enrich the farmer, the squatter, and the merchant in every State, and they are entitled to be looked after in their old age. The old men and women in every State are entitled to the promptest and best relief we can possibly give them. But in Victoria Parliament eliminated the question of thrift, practically stating to all their young men - and that is what I object to - "Pitch your savings bank book into the fire, you need not trouble yourselves about the future, do not belong to the friendly societies any more; get out of them what you can and leave them alone; when you are 65 years of age go to the State and there is a pension of 10s. a week for you." If we can pass an Act of that sort and really sap the human nature which alone can make us true men of the race to which we belong, we shall deteriorate, and instead of having a higher national life we shall have a lower national life because we have not pluck and courage to do the right thing in a radical manner.

Senator McGregor

- Ten shillings a week is a magnificent fortune to look forward to.

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Senator DOBSON

- I cannot answer all my honorable friends at once, and I think I had better content myself with not answering them at all. I am trying to show that

I want immediate relief for those old men and women who are entitled to relief, but that I do insist so far as my humble voice goes upon having a Pension Act based on thrift, - which will encourage those who exercise thrift, and which will help those who help themselves. In a word, I would say to the young men of the future - "If you are not thrifty, when you reach 65 years of age there will be something for you in spite of your misdeeds; " and to the other man who put by the price of a pint of beer a week - 3d. a week - and who consistently and persistently tries to help himself, I would give so much more. And I would give to the soldier, to the volunteer, to the militiaman, who as I hope will in time become our citizen soldier, a more liberal pension on account of the services which we hope he will render to the defence of the Commonwealth. These are, shortly, my ideas about an Old-age Pensions Act, and I think the Government would do good service by appointing this committee at the earliest moment, and putting on it men like Senator Neild, men like our friends on the right, and others who have considered this subject, and then we shall have an Act, if we ever adopt one, which will be worthy of the Commonwealth Parliament. Now, on the question of the InterState Commission, I would like to see the Government carry out my principles of economy, for economy is a great revenue. I still have the same objection to that commission as I had when I was a member of the Federal Convention. I do not believe it is necessary at this early stage of our Federal life. It appears to me that if you are going to have three highly-paid Judges, as you must have, that if you are going to have three, or, as some persons suggest, five highly-paid commissioners to settle your railway rates, which is a very simple thing, you will have highly-paid officers for the first ten years who will not have half a day's work each. It appears to me that the InterState Commission is not wanted, for this reason - that these questions of differential rates and differential Tariffs, by which one State is trying to cut trade from another by an unfair rate, ought to be settled by the Federal Court; that

these questions could be settled by a provision in the Supreme Court Act, whereby a simple statement of facts could be put before that court and the question could be argued out at once, and the Federal Judges would have before them the very men who would have been your commissioners. The whole of the experts and engineers of the Commonwealth would give their evidence,, and then the people of the Commonwealth would not only know that the decision of the Federal Court was based upon the full: expert evidence which the Inter-State Commission could give them, but in addition they would have a judicial decision by men who have had a judicial training and are accustomed to weigh evidence. If ever I belonged! to the mainland, and my State was engaged: in a dispute with another State about a differential rate, if I had absolute belief in the justice of my case, I would ten times mucin sooner go before the Supreme Court, with, all the expert evidence before it, than leave it to experts alone without the judicial tact which alone judicial training can give. As it is of no use arguing against a thing which the Constitution says shall be, I would submit to Senator O'Connor whether it would not be constitutional and legal for the first year or two, or so long as the Judges can do the work, to appoint the three Judges as the Inter-State Commissioners. When we all desire economy, when we all desire to see the financial problem settled, it is of no' use to pay highly-paid officers if the money can be saved, and if there is no work for them to do. And I do submit with all deference that there will not be enough work for the Inter-State Commissioners and the Judges during the first three or four years. I shall refer now to a matter which, is touching on delicate ground, and I do not know that I would have done so had not one senator alluded to what he thought was the effect of forming our Federal Court from the Judges of the State Courts. In every State the Supreme Court is composed of men that we look up to with every re'spect. We know that they are worthy of their offices, that they are a credit to the State in which they administer justice, and that perhaps all of them would be ornaments to a federal bench. Put is there any reason why we should assume, as the senator did,' that the High Court is to be selected from the State benches? Have we no men amongst us who have earned their spurs in the federal fight, and who have a right to look to some of these positions of honour and credit? I have always considered that if ' the Prime Minister desired to be Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, there is no man more entitled to the appointment than he is. I may think of: another Chief Justice who has perhaps a very great claim, but as he has won his spurs, and as he has passed up to the very highest position to which he can attain, there is no reason that I can see why we should take him away from that post and pass over another man who is entitled to the position, I think, if he wants it. My venerable friend on my right, and my friend Senator O'Connor, it appears to me, have a claim to these positions. I do not say for one moment that some of our State Judges have not also a claim, because they are all most able men. I only mention this matter because a senator who preceded me seemed to assume that the Judges of the High Court will be chosen from the State benches.

Senator Fraser

- I did so for the sake of economy.

Senator DOBSON

- I find on looking at my notes that I forgot to give what I consider the most important reason why the introduction of the uniform Tariff should be delayed. Although I have admired extremely the splendid fight which our great free-trade leader in the mother colony has made, the magnificent -policy which he has engrafted on its statute-book, I think that when he and his lieutenants get into comparisons between the two great States as arguments for or against free-trade or protection, they are simply dealing with a foundation which is absolutely rotten. Senator Walker, I think, disposed of a great many of the arguments. But there are half-a-dozen reasons why any comparison between New South Wales and Victoria is utterly beside the question, and is no evidence whatever either that free-trade is a success in one State or that protection is a failure in another. The senators on the Opposition bench allude to free-trade England, but no one I have ever heard or read of has alluded to the fact that during the last 50 years steam, electricity, machinery, and so forth have been invented, or to the important part which those factors have played in the progress of old England. It is absolutely impossible to say how far these factors have made old England what she is.

Senator Neild

- Or what part they have played in the competition of other countries.

Senator DOBSON

- I am not dealing with that point. I am pointing out that all those senators who quote free-trade

England as evidence of progress on account of her free-trade system never take into account the fact of electricity, railway communication, and steam, making the comparison simply meaningless. Senator McGregor mentioned four points which make any comparison between Victoria and New South Wales meaningless ; but he did not tell us of one which, I think, is very material, and that is that Victoria had a boom. I hope that Victoria will never have another boom like that one. In the words of a local poet -

Tis better to have boomed and bust
Than never to have boomed at all.

Victoria had a most enormous boom, and the slump and the depression which followed upon that boom were simply disastrous. New South Wales had nothing equal to that boom. When twelve banks in Victoria shut their doors as the crash came, no wonder that people scuttled away from the colony.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- "Why did not protection prevent all that ?

Senator Best

- So it did. It pulled her through.

Senator DOBSON

- After that dreadful financial crisis is it any wonder that some thousands of men went away to the rich mines of Johannesburg, or to the rich mines of Western Australia, and that some of them went away, if you like, to the farms of New South Wales. When twelve banks and scores of other institutions absolutely failed, when credit was gone, and when the whole system of business was paralysed, it is absolutely unfair then to compare Victoria, which went through that disastrous crisis, with New South Wales, which did not. There are two evidences in favour of the free-trade policy from which I think I can show that we are standing on firm ground. First of all, there is the position of Canada, which, after twenty odd years of protection, under Sir Wilfred Laurier, went in, not for a free-trade Tariff, but for a considerable measure of free-trade.

Senator Playford

- Nothing like it.

Senator DOBSON

- For a great reduction of duties, and a preference of one-fourth of the duty in favour of goods from the mother country.

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Senator Gould

- She has a higher Tariff than Victoria has at the present day.

Senator DOBSON

- I believe she has.

Senator Neild

- Worked out on different lines.

Senator DOBSON

- The honorable member must bear in mind that the Tariff of Victoria is scientifically protective.

Senator Fraser. - So is Canada's.

Senator DOBSON

- Canada is now governed by what is called the free-trade party, as opposed to the conservative party. Canada is giving a preference of a fourth of the duty in favour of the mother country. That has been a success, and she is now giving a preference of one-third, and, as I understand, there is no clanger of the electors of Canada reversing the verdict of the polls, or turning back to the high protection which their country enjoyed before. Canada, therefore, has progressed, and she has travelled year after year in the direction of free-trade. The other instance, which I think is the best instance, is that the industries of the mother colony, under the magnificent free-trade policy of Mr. Reid, have not only not suffered, but have progressed and are flourishing. That is a fact that nothing can alter. Therefore, I would say to my protectionist friends of Victoria that when the Tariff does come before us, it is of no use their - to use the word which our free-trade leader uses so often - whining and saying that these industries cannot live if a 40 per cent. duty is lowered to less than 20 per cent. Absolutely the same industries are carried on across the border. The manufacturers of iron, boots, shoes, soap and candles are all living under a policy of absolute free-trade, and therefore it cuts from under the ground of Victoria for ever their saying that they

have not had enough protection - that they have not had enough bolstering up, and that they require to be wet-nursed longer. That, I think, is a hint to Ministers to take care that their Tariff is a moderate one, to take care that their first duty is to make it produce revenue, and if your 15 per cent, duty will give, as I believe it will do, a reasonable amount of protection, I, for one, shall not be ashamed of it or sorry about it. If I can get the same revenue as we want, and a 15 per cent duty will give, as it will, a most reasonable amount of protection to an industry, I shall be glad to aid that industry, because I think that justice is the foundation of all national life, and you have a right to consider the different industries of the States to some extent at least. Then

I am face to face at once with the question : are Ministers going to propose in their Federal Tariff any preference with regard to goods coming from Great Britain? I sincerely hope that they will, and I point to Canada as an instance of a State within the empire which has made the policy a success.

Senator O'Connor

- Canada is not at all satisfied that she is going to get anything out of it.

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Senator DOBSON

- This opens up a very wide question indeed, and it is a question which I know Canada is thinking about for herself. Is it worth while to give something for nothing ? It has been pointed out that owing to Canada having given this preference to the mother country she has disenthralled herself at the hands of Germany to the most favoured nation clause. Because she allows the goods of Great Britain to go in at a cheaper rate than she allows German imports to go in, Germany therefore has a right to cut her out of this treatment which she is bound to give to England and her colonies. Germany now contends that Canada has drifted from that treaty, and that she can impose on German goods any duty which she pleases. It becomes an important question for Ministers to consider whether, if they propose a preference, as I hope they will, for the goods of old England, they will be in the same position as Canada occupies, and whether we shall at the hands of our German cousins be liable to have our goods taxed at a greater rate than the goods of Great Britain are taxed at. This brings us face to face with the much bigger question, and to my mind the greatest question, which is now before the empire of Greater Britain, and that is whether we are, or are not, to have an Imperial Zollverein ; whether we are, or are not, to have an Imperial -trade preference. If it is a good thing to have a trade preference between one State and the mother country - Canada says that it is, and if I remember aright, a majority of the candidates in their election speeches said it would be - it is the thin edge of the wedge, and we are face to face at once with the question whether the right thing to do by the mother land, and to develop the great empire to which we belong, is not to have an Imperial preference whereby the goods of the different States shall go into the mother country free, whereas some small duty, small as you please, which will bring in an enormous amount of revenue, shall be levied on the goods of other nations. This, I suppose, will make our free-trade friends hold up their hands in horror. It might to an infinitesimal extent increase the price of bread. It might to some extent increase the price of the raw material with which some of the great industries of Great Britain are carried on, and no one, I hope, would do anything to seriously injure the trade of the British manufacturers, unless there was some very great advantage on the other side.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Would not Great Britain have to become highly protected before you could do that 1

Senator DOBSON

- Great Britain would simply have free-trade within the empire, and would put on a small duty of 2¹/₂ per cent, or 5 per cent., which we would look upon as too infinitesimal to be considered. Suppose she imposed a duty of 1s. or 6d. a quarter on wheat ; suppose she put on any small duty you like to name, it would bring in an enormous amount of revenue, and it would-

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Tax the food of the people.

Senator DOBSON

- I have just said that it would be taxing the food of the people in an infinitesimal way ; but you quite forget that it opens up the question of the defence of the Empire, and the defence of this trade and commerce, without which there can be no empire. If you can -protect to some slight extent the trade of the empire and the States, it would bring in an enormous revenue and help the mother country to increase her

position, and enable us to defend that very commerce which is really the backbone of our power.

Senator Fraser

- And it would affect four-fifths of the trade of Great Britain.

Senator DOBSON

- - I venture to say that something will be heard about this question later on. It is the most important problem now before the Empire, and I venture to think that the Secretary of State for the Colonies would not have suggested it unless he had well thought it out. I desire to point out that there are resolutions from Canada besides the statement of Mr. Chamberlain and other Ministers who favour to some extent the preference to which I have referred, and I think this should make our Federal Ministers pause before they bring in a Tariff that they have not had time to adjust. On the question of defence I should like to say that I hope we shall get our Commander-in-chief from the old country; that we shall change him every five years, and that he will be an up-to-date man. I have had the advantage of reading many articles on the question of defence both in the Spectator and the Times since the war in South Africa began. Some writers advocate a system of conscription, such as they have in Germany, but the bulk of them contend that the liberty loving subjects of the Empire would never consent to anything like that. They suggest going to the other extreme, and letting their defences be based on the voluntary system. I cannot take that view of the matter, and I hope that in any defence Bills which Ministers introduce there will be a slight measure of compulsion, which none but the loafer will feel irksome, and which will establish a citizen soldiery without which Australia cannot be defended. We must have a certain number of men who will be liable to be drilled once a week, who will get their uniform and ammunition, and a small capitation fee, of something like ?5 a year, and who will form an army on which Australia can depend.

Senator Gould

- You will have to pay more than that.

Senator DOBSON

- I do not know that we will. Every schoolboy should be drilled and taught to use the rifle, and when he has left school there is no harm in saying that between the age of, say, 14 to 25 he shall give at least two hours of one day a week to drill.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- As a matter of compulsion ?

Senator DOBSON

- As a matter of compulsion. If you deal with the question of defence at all, deal with it on business lines, let the compulsion be as slight as you like, but let it be there so that we may know what we are doing.

Senator O'Connor

- You cannot have slight compulsion ; it must be compulsion or no compulsion.

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Senator DOBSON

- Let the application of the measure of compulsion be slight. If you do that between the time a boy leaves school and arrives at man's estate you will have your citizen soldier. Instead of doing as they do now in the old country, losing sight of the men, you should have them registered, and until they are 45 they ought to be liable to present themselves once a month to carry out their drill and keep up their efficiency. In this way, it appears to me, we may, without very much increased expense, have a decent army. I should now like to call the attention of honorable members to the very serious question which this Parliament has to face in the matter of naval defence. The defence estimates at home used to be something under ?29,000,000, and out of that, if the whole of the colonies paid their fair share, it would amount to ?5,250,000. Honorable members will be surprised to hear that the whole of the colonies - Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa - pay only ?162,000. As the estimates have been increased up to ?31,000,000, I presume the quota of the whole of the colonies would be about ?6,500,000, and if the mother country calls upon us to do any thing in the way of subscribing more generously to the defence of the Empire, an enormous expenditure looms in the distance. We read in the cables only 48 hours ago that it has been suggested that the colonies ought to bear a larger share of the naval defence of the Empire. That is a most important subject, because it opens up to this Commonwealth the fact that there are certain avenues and channels whereby we may have to find an enormous amount of money if we do not proceed cautiously and slowly and with economy. I should like to ask Senator Eraser what he meant

by saying that money was cheaper in Australia than in Great Britain. I am aware that money is being loaned on mortgage at 4 1/2 and 5 per cent., and I believe it is just as dear in England, but I would point out that the £60,000,000 war loan raised in England averaged 2 13s. per cent.; the English Government got it at 17s. per cent, less than Germany paid for her loan of £15,000,000, and 22s. per cent, less than Russia paid for her loan of £16,000,000. Germany pays about 3 10s. per cent.; Russia, a little under 4; and Great Britain.. 2 13s. It appears, therefore, that money in Great Britain is as cheap as ever, when a loan of £60,000,000 can be issued at 2 13s. per cent. It will be seen that Great Britain's financial ability is not so decadent as the honorable member imagines. I now desire to deal with the question of a white Australia. Australia has spoken in no uncertain voice, and the verdict is that the kanaka must go. I think every honorable member will agree with that.

Senator Higgs

- The aliens must go.

Senator DOBSON

- The aliens, of course, must go ; but the kanaka must go, although he has been supposed in the past to be necessary for the development of the sugar industry. The only possible question is when he should go. It appears to me that the mandate of the electors is that he is to go in a way consistent with justice being done to the industry, and I believe from what I have read and have been told by Mr. Groom that when protection has been wanted the arguments for retaining the kanaka have been exaggerated. A sum of £650,000 has been invested by the Government of Queensland in mills and machinery, and by cutting up the large, plantations into small plantations I believe the industry can be carried on by the white man ; but I think as a matter of justice we should concede to the planter two or three years in which to put his house in order, and provide for the disadvantages under which he will labour by the kanaka being withdrawn. I have only a few words to say about the amendment, and that is that it is very much out of place. When a Bill has been introduced in another place to deal with this question, can we not wait and see what that Bill says? What right has a private member to anticipate the policy, of the Government, and force their hands. If the amendment had emanated from one of the Queensland members I could have understood it better, because those honorable gentlemen are charged with a mandate from their electors, and I think Senator Millen will acknowledge upon reflection that he has done an unwise thing, and I am sure he would be very much surprised if he passed the amendment.

Senator Millen

- Does not the honorable member see that our sugar industry in New South Wales is subject to most unfair competition, if by the removal of the border duties it is left to compete with kanaka grown sugar.

Senator DOBSON

- We ought, I consider, to abolish kanaka labour as quickly as is possible and as is consistent with justice.

Senator Millen

- The honorable member seems to think it is only a Queensland question?

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Senator DOBSON

- I think, although New South Wales may be interested in it, it is really a Queensland question, and I think my honorable friend would have done well if he had waited until the Government measure was brought down and seen whether their policy was unsatisfactory. I do hope the Government will receive every generous assistance and support from members of this Chamber. Let us banish party spirit until we have the machinery in motion. I hope that we shall recollect that we have a most important duty to perform, and that we can perform it much better if we leave party considerations out of the question.

Senator DAWSON

- I rise to a point of order. I do not wish to stop any discussion, but I would like to know exactly how we stand. We have the Address in Reply, and an amendment before us, and since the amendment has been moved and seconded, we have gone right over the whole ground of the Address in Reply. I want to know if honorable members are in order in discussing the general question on the amendment now before the Senate, and whether if the amendment is defeated that will mean that the Address in Reply is adopted.

The PRESIDENT

- As senators know, we have no standing orders, and therefore I have to resort to the usual practice of public meetings. It seems to me that an amendment having been moved, it is competent to discuss the

whole question on the amendment. I do not see how members can discuss the amendment without discussing the main question. Of course, it does not follow that if the amendment is negatived the Address is passed. The question will be put that the words proposed to be added be added. If they are added, I will put the question as amended. If they are not added, I will put the question as not amended.

Senator SMITH

- In spite of the very learned disquisition of Senator Dobson, I must confess to great disappointment at the policy of the Government as it appears in the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General. I had been led to hope that a Government composed of such prominent men in local politics would, in creating such an historical document in initiating the first policy of an Australian nation, have exercised more originality and statesmanship and exhibited a larger grasp of the necessities and exigencies of our young nation than appears to have been disclosed. In this policy, it seems to me, there is an attempt to clothe it in such ambiguous language that it might be thought that the object of the Government was to please both sides of the House. This is strongly illustrated in the case of the fiscal question. We find the Cabinet composed of members, every one of whom is an avowed protectionist, bringing forward a tariff which is neither protectionist or free-trade in its incidence, and which, to use their own words, "prohibits a rigid adherence to fiscal theories." That was not the attitude of the protectionists some months ago. They were very loudmouthed in their insistence that protection was a policy that must be adopted by the Commonwealth; that the Commonwealth would go to the dogs unless it had a protective policy. After the result of the ballot box there was a different tale to tell. The people of Australia showed that they were tired of that fiscal heresy called protection, and they insisted on duties being regulated for revenue purposes. The next paragraph makes reference to the inadmissibility of destroying substantial industries. No reputable person wishes to destroy any substantial industry, and I am sure no one wishes to injure any industry whatever so long as that industry is not inimical to the best interests of Australia. But if they mean by "substantial industries" those fragile and anaemic industries for which it is necessary to place the whole of Australia under tribute, then the circumstances are very dissimilar. I consider that the whole of this speech is contradictory in its nature. It is ambiguously worded, and the paradoxical nature of some of the proposals is only veiled by its vagueness and incoherence. I should have thought that one of the first principles to be embodied in the Constitution would be adult suffrage. In my opinion, no nation can be stable and prosperous unless the Government of that nation is broad based upon the people's will; unless Parliament is the reflex of the wishes of the people. That cannot be if we do not have Parliament elected by the people. We find that in no less than four States of the Commonwealth one-half of the taxpayers are disfranchised. Our electoral laws are so vague that we really do not know if a question arises whether some of the people are legally elected. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that a dissolution may take place.

Senator Best

- Do not say that just yet.

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Senator SMITH

- No doubt the senators on that side of the House view such a possibility with fear. If such an event should take place, are we to go back and have an election on the same unequal franchise in the various States; to have an election under the same extraordinary laws that we had last? There is another matter of great national importance, the principle of old-age pensions. This important question has been quietly shelved by the Government. I think there is no higher indication of the degree of civilization to which a nation has attained than is shown by the attention paid to those who through old age or sickness are prevented from providing themselves with the necessities of life. I hope it will never in future be said of Australians that those who have built up this grand young nation, who have borne the heat and burden of the day, and whose distress demands our sympathy, have been neglected in their old age. I admit that an Old-age Pensions Bill cannot be introduced until the taxation proposals have been fixed. Such a proposal would probably cost £1,000,000 per annum. It must be borne in mind that in Victoria and New South Wales, whose populations comprise three-fourths of the population of Australia, they have already got their schemes in operation. The extra cost to the community is about £250,000; and I think it is very much better to spend the money in this way than to expend it on fantastical military training, navies, and things of that description. If we have in Australia a proper volunteer service and an adequate coastal

defence, that is all we require.

Senator Keating

- Would the honorable member make the system national only where that system exists ?

Senator SMITH

- No ; I would relieve those States that have so nobly recognised their duty by that amount of taxation, and make it a national affair.

Senator Keating

- The honorable member would take it out of the surplus ?

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Senator SMITH

- I would simply make it a national scheme, and not recognise the State pensions. It would be much better and fairer to have a Commonwealth pension, because under the present schemes great hardships are inflicted. Those States which have neglected their duty should be made to contribute to the support of the old people, just as New South Wales and Victoria are doing. In order to carry this out, it may be necessary to raise further taxation. In doing so, great care must be exercised not to unduly encroach upon the powers of taxation possessed by the various States. We must as far as possible leave every avenue open to the States ; but if we free them of so great a burden, I think, in such a case, we might impose additional taxation. It is not for me to suggest what form it should take, but I think that an absentee tax, which could be better administered by the Commonwealth than by the separate States, would certainly bring in something towards the old-age pension scheme. There are other sources of revenue which the Minister might discover, that would not necessitate extra taxation. "We, as a great silver-producing country, are just as much entitled to coin silver as to mint gold, and we should be able to coin sufficient silver for our requirements under the same regulations and safeguards as apply to the Imperial Mint. If that were done, it would be a great source of revenue to the Commonwealth, because 40 per cent, of the amount of silver coined is clear profit. In regard to the transcontinental railway, the Government have stated in their usual "yes-no" style that when they get the surveys made they will consider whether the matter is. "justifiable." It appears to me that, instead, of approaching this great national question in a statesmanlike manner, they view it very much as a shopkeeper would regard some little commercial transaction. They stop to consider whether it would pay interest from its very inception. The people of Western Australia have been given assurances that this line would be constructed. Until such a line is built we shall be in very grave danger from a military point of view, for if a combination of foreign nations, which is not altogether impossible, held the balance of power on the Australian coast,, the people of Western Australia and those of Eastern Australia would be as entirely isolated as if they lived at opposite ends of the world. Federation, although accomplished in letter, can never be accomplished in spirit till we have the means of ' communication between these two great peoples. We have nearly 200,000 people in Western Australia, and a railway connecting them with the eastern States, is justifiable from a national point of view. Senator Keating asserted yesterday that of the two he would prefer a railway to the Northern Territory. I am afraid he could not have thought out the question before he made that statement. In the first place, he would be running a railway to the Northern Territory for the benefit of Chinamen and Japanese, I am sorry to say that the Northern Territory is practically controlled by the yellow race.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- That is because there is no railway to it.

Senator Smith

- I know Senator Symon is bar racking for a line to the Northern Territory. He wants it to run from a place called Oodnadatta, and because the State Government will not build it, the Federal Government are asked to step in. Senator Symon, however, has a logical mind, and he must admit that we have the logical side of the question. We can show that we are more entitled to a Western Australian line than are those who call for a railway to the Northern Territory. Coming to the question of alien labour, I still think the Government have decided to take the middle course between pro-kanakas and those in favour of an absolutely white Australia. They speak of the firm restriction of -the immigration of Asiatics. What does that mean ? It does not mean stopping them with a firm hand ; it certainly does not mean absolute prohibition. It suggests that they are to come in under certain safeguards.

Senator O'Connor

- What is the meaning of restriction 1

Senator SMITH

- I should like to know the honorable member's definition of the word.

Senator O'Connor

- It is used in its grammatical sense ; it means " exclusion."

Senator SMITH

- Then they propose to gradually diminish the introduction of labour from the South Sea Islands. In Victoria, some years ago, they spoke of a protective tariff of 10 or 15 per cent, being put on and gradually abolished ; possibly the Government are going to abolish Kanaka labour in the same way at some future date. I should like to see a comprehensive Bill for the absolute prohibition of the immigration, not only of Asiatics, but of all alien labour, whether British subjects or not. It is a question of our nationality, and all other considerations must be set aside. "

Senator O'Connor

- The honorable member means coloured aliens ?

Senator SMITH

- Yes. We have had a glorious inheritance placed in our hands.

Senator Charleston

- We took it, I think

Senator SMITH

- I don't say that, but we should see that our race is not contaminated by the incursions of aliens. If we consider for a moment we shall see that Australia is a continent nearly as large as the whole of Europe. It is populated by a little garrison of white people numbering about four millions, and it is surrounded by alien races, some of whom are numbered by hundreds of millions, who are casting hungry eyes on this land. If we allow a stream of aliens to come in, that stream will grow until we will be unable to stop it, and in a short space of time we will be fighting not for sentiment but for very existence. If we turn to history, we will find that the cotton planter in the sub-tropical portions of the United States said they required black labour in order to work their plantations. The result is that there are two races growing up there - a black and a white - each hostile to the other, with strong racial feuds, and we hear from time to time of lynching, murders, and other atrocities. This is a matter that has exercised the minds of ' patriotic sons of the United States. It has exercised the thoughts of her greatest men, and is a problem that can never be solved. I think we should take a lesson from the pages of history. The Northern Territory is swarming with Chinese and Japanese. I understand they are nearly the sole inhabitants, and they could take possession of the whole of the Northern Territory.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- That would be a very severe task.

Senator SMITH

- Perhaps so ; but they would be able to form a base there, from which Japan could send supplies to assist them. If we absolutely exclude these aliens we can keep a white Australia, and hand down this great inheritance given us with added lustre to those who follow. In the Governor-General's speech the Government have touched on nearly every one of the 39 articles in some form or other. Some they have merely patted on the back, such as old age pensions, which they are going to relegate to the distant future. Perhaps the only thing they have not mentioned in the speech is the subject of astronomy.

Senator Charleston

- They deal with the Celestials.

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Senator SMITH

- But only in a halfhearted way. I think it is not wise to make lengthy speeches on the Address in Reply, and waste valuable time, when we want a great deal of social legislation brought in as speedily as possible. Senator McGregor, in referring to protection, made mention of cyanide vats that were being made for the gold-fields of Western Australia. He spoke about the bad effects of free-trade in that particular matter, inasmuch as one mau was enabled to charge such high prices for these vats. Then he went on to prove that a local firm was able to supply them at a less price until the two rogues fell out, and

the unfortunate miner found that he was paying ?100 too much for each of these articles. The only moral I can draw from that statement is that the poor miners - and as a representative of Kalgoorlie I can feel great sympathy for them- were robbed by two rogues.

Senator McGregor

- The honorable member's premises are wrong, and his conclusions are worse.

Senator SMITH

- Senator McGregor made a splendid speech, but I think he is very wobbly on his fiscal theories. And I hope before this debate is finished he will be able to draw more correct conclusions from fiscal deductions, and will in the end be sitting here as a free-trader. Only the other day I was speaking to an American about the great rings that are formed in his country. I asked what was the cause of these terrible things in the United States, which were causing such a great amount of injury to the people of the Union. He said that it was caused by protection, and I asked him to give an illustration. He said - " In America there was a cheap kind of hat, which was made for half a dollar. The duty on that hat was a dollar and consequently the manufacturers of the hat - and there were a great many of them - calmly put their heads together, formed a ring, and said, ' Wa'll, if we can all agree amongst themselves we can swindle the public, and although we can make a profit by selling the hat at half-a-dollar, we shall put the price up to a dollar, and by that means we can make 50 per cent. or 60 per cent. profit.' " They did that, and outside healthy competition could not come in, because of the dollar duty, and consequently they were able to rook the public more than double the actual cost of the hat. This is only one illustration in a thousand of the effect of protection. When you build up these great fiscal barriers, then you allow every facility for bringing in these trusts and rings. I trust that the Government will bring up their fiscal proposals as soon as possible, because I am sure that it will take a considerable time to debate them in the other-House. I can assure the Government that -when they come here it will also take a very considerable time ' to debate them. I would be sorry to think that the Government would bring them in to the other House at a later date, and foist them on to the Senate almost at the end of the session, in the hope that we should put them through with other hurried legislation.

Senator Dobson

- That is what is going to happen if they don't introduce them soon.

Senator SMITH

- I can assure the representative of the Government that it is not going to happen so far as I am concerned. I am going to debate the fiscal proposals clause by clause. I believe that other honorable gentlemen are going to do the same, and we are not going to allow the prestige of the Senate, or our rights in the great matter of the Tariff" to be subservient to the whim of the Government as to when they should introduce such an important measure as the Tariff Bill.

Debate (on motion of Senator Sir Josiah Symon) adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Days and Hour of Meeting

Motion (by Senator O'Connor) proposed -

That the Senate, at its rising, do adjourn until half-past two o'clock to-morrow.

Senator GOULD(New South Wales).May I suggest to Senator O'Connor that it would be more convenient if the Senate were to meet at an earlier hour to-morrow? If the Senate were to meet at about half-past ten o'clock, with a view to giving many honorable members an opportunity to get away away to Adelaide or Sydney by the afternoon train, it would be a very great convenience to them. I am sure that a large number of honorable members would only be too pleased if it could be arranged. I recognise that it may, perhaps, be inconvenient to the member of the Government who has to be here in charge of business, but at the same time I think it would materially assist in meeting' the convenience of a large number of members.

Senator O'Connor

- Can we insure finishing the debate to-morrow night?

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Senator GOULD

- That I do not know. I believe that a large number of honorable members desire to speak. If we met at

half past ten o'clock, and sat on until four, or even half-past that hour, it would give us six hours ; but if we meet at half-past two o'clock and go on until a similar hour, it will not give us very much more time.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- The suggestion of Senator Gould is certainly very sudden, and while I am sure there is the utmost wish on the part of those who are permanent residents of Victoria to meet the convenience of those whom we may look upon as visitors and guests, still it is exceedingly inconvenient that a sudden change of this nature should be made. I have made engagements for the whole of to-morrow morning ; had I had the slightest idea that such a suggestion would be made I could have made other arrangements, but it is now too late to put off my engagements. I shall always be prepared to yield to the convenience of a majority of the House. In a case of this kind I must absent myself. I certainly could not be here to-morrow morning.

Senator MCGREGOR

- This is another evidence of that independence which gives nobody else a chance. I also have very important engagements that will occupy me all the morning. If any suggestion of this kind had been made two days ago, I am sure it would have been earnestly considered by a good many of the representatives of other States. I come from another State, and I have as much desire to get away to-morrow afternoon as anybody has. But then when we get no intimation of what is going to be proposed, and people do everything on their own without consulting anybody else, they cannot expect to be supported.

Vice-President of the Executive Council

Senator O'CONNOR

. - I am quite certain that Senator Gould sees that, as his suggestion is not acceded to by a majority of the House, I can only follow the usual course. I think most honorable members will assume that the sitting tomorrow will begin at half-past two o'clock. In these circumstances, especially as I can have no guarantee that the debate will close to-morrow, and as we probably must sit next week, I am afraid that I cannot accede to the suggestion of the honorable member.

Senator GOULD(New South Wales). - With reference to the complaint made that my suggestion was rather sudden, of course I am quite willing to bow to the feeling of the House. I may state that it will probably be suggested by a large number of honorable members that we should have one day regularly fixed for a whole day's sitting. It is in contemplation to suggest that Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays should be sitting days, and that on Fridays we should commence at 10.30, so as to give honorable members an opportunity of getting to their homes at the end of the week, and spending a day or two there, and then coming back to do the business of the country. I should like honorable members to be aware of the fact that such a suggestion will be made, and I hope that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government will fall in with what I believe will be the wish of a large majority.

Senator O'CONNOR

- With reference to the suggestion made by Senator Gould I may say that as long as the Government have sufficient days given them on which to do the public business, and as long as there is sufficient time for members to do their private business, it is of very small moment whether we sit on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, or Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. I have had to make a proposal selecting some days, but I am bound to consider what will suit the majority of members. It is not a party matter - it is a matter in which the convenience of members should be consulted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

Heating of Senate Chamber

Motion (by Senator O'Connor) proposed -

That the Senate do now adjourn.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- There is one matter, Sir, to which I may perhaps be permitted to draw your attention in the interests of the House. I do not know whether it is possible that this chamber may be warmed a little more than it is. I know that in some parts where we sat on the other side during the afternoon it became terribly cold.

A Senator. - It will be warmed by warmth of language later on.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I shall be very glad to be warmed up with anything, but at the present time I am appealing to the

President to know whether there is anything which; until that warmth of language comes, will introduce a little caloric into the chamber.

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The PRESIDENT

- In answer to Senator Sir Josiah Symon I may say that Senator Sir Frederick Sargood wrote me a letter on the same subject, and that the

Government architect will be here tomorrow, or the next day to discuss this and some other questions which have arisen, when we will see if something can be done. One of the difficulties I understand is that up to the present moment the State Ministry has not handed over this building. We cannot do anything until that has been done.

Senator DAWSON

-I wish to ask whether the Votes and Proceedings will be circulated to members in the morning if it can be managed.

The PRESIDENT

- I may explain that what is called a club-room is being fixed up with boxes for honorable members, on which their names will be placed, and the votes will be put in the boxes early each morning. There are various small matters which have to be arranged, and if honorable members will have a little patience things will be all right in a day or two.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I understand that the Minutes of Proceedings were sent out to honorable members this morning.

Perhaps, by some accident, Senator Dawson did not get his.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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21:45:00

Senate adjourned at 9.45 p.m.