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1901-05-31

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker

took the chair at 2 p.m.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address in Reply

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Debate resumed from 30 May (vide page 540) upon motion of Mr. W. H Groom : -

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

May it please Your Excellency : -

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

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

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

Mr.F. E. McLEAN (Lang.)- The discussion which has taken place upon the Address in Reply to the Governor-General's speech has so far resolved itself into a debate upon the fiscal question, and, to some extent, upon the relative prosperity of the two States of New South Wales and Victoria. I can understand objection being taken to the pushing of these comparisons too far, on the ground that they have the effect of producing State antagonisms which are utterly opposed to the federal spirit which has brought us together in this Parliament ; but I think that honourable members on both sides of the House will admit that there are distinct advantages to be gained by making legitimate comparisons between two States which have grown up side by side under similar conditions of government, though pursuing opposite fiscal policies. There is an object lesson in economics for the whole world in these two self-governing communities working out their destinies under opposite fiscal policies, and, so long as the comparisons are fair, and the spirit of State antagonism is not introduced, we may, in laying the foundation of a fiscal policy for the whole continent, profit largely by their experience. It must always be borne in mind, however, in making these comparisons, that there are differences between the natural conditions of Victoria and New South Wales. It has been remarked by honorable members who have spoken from the Government side of the Chamber that New South Wales possesses a territory four times as large as that of Victoria, and consequently must, under ordinary conditions, attain to a higher degree of industrial prosperity. But to that argument it has been fairly replied by honorable members on this side of the House that the cost of developing the resources of our greater territory has been proportionately much larger than it has been in Victoria.

As was pointed out a night or two ago, close settlement has been brought about in Victoria by natural conditions, 'while in New South Wales we have had to seek legislative aid to obtain it. Therefore, in making comparisons between the condition of the two States, it must be remembered that, while New South Wales has the larger territory and the greater natural resources, these advantages are to some extent counterbalanced by the greater proportional expense of government, and the fact that a large part of our territory is not suitable for settlement, its mid nature making it a source of concern and anxiety to the community. What is more valuable for the purposes of legitimate comparison is to ascertain what New South Wales has been able to do under the policy of free-trade, and to show that the imposition of protective duties, so far from assisting the development of her resources has failed to assist it. Since the repeal of protective duties in New South Wales, there has been no diminution in the number of hands employed in her factories, but, on the contrary, a substantial increase, and, notwithstanding the imposition of direct taxation, the number of persons following agricultural pursuits and the area of land under cultivation has considerably increased.

Mr. Madge

r. Does the honorable member compare the industrial progress of New South Wales, since the removal of protective duties, with the industrial progress of the other States in the same period 1

Mr F E McLEAN

- Unquestionably. The progress of New South Wales has been most marked during the last few years.

Mr. Mad

abr. There the honourable member is altogether wrong.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Every statement that comes from this side of the House appears Wrong to the honorable member. The area of land under wheat in New South Wales in 1891 was only 333,333 acres, but in 1895 it had increased to 647,483 acres, and in the next four years to 1,319,503 acres, the free-trade policy having been re-established in New South Wales in 1895. Last year there was a still further increase, the area under wheat then being 1,426,166 acres. So that the area now under cultivation in that State is four times as large as the area, which was under cultivation in 1891, although since 1895 we have been following a free-trade policy, and, according to the honorable member for Echuca, have been trying to slaughter our farmers by the imposition of a land tax.

Mr MAUGER

- Victoria had no more land, so that her people had to find scope for their energies elsewhere.

Mr F E McLEAN

- If the honorable member means to say that in his opinion Victoria has reached the point at which she is supporting her maximum population, I do not think he will find himself supported by the Attorney-General. In that sense she has not reached her point of overflow. A country with 80,000 square miles of territory, with a genial climate and good land, cannot be said to have reached its highest point of development until it is supporting a population of 10,000,000 or 12,000,000 of people. Whether the future policy of Australia is free-trade or protection, millions of people will yet settle and prosper on the lands of Victoria, and upon the lands of every other State of the Commonwealth.

Mr Kingston

- Did not New South Wales have free-trade before the Reid Tariff was imposed 1

Mr F E McLEAN

- Yes.

Mr Kingston

- Then why did she not progress then 1

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Mr F E McLEAN

- If the Minister imagines that no progress was made by New South Wales before our farmers engaged in the cultivation of wheat, he does not understand our conditions. There are stages of industrial development through which every country must pass, and my honorable friend will admit that the stage of close agricultural settlement does not arrive very fast where there is a wide territory and a sparse population. During the past few years we have begun to have closer settlement, and our own farmers, and farmers from Victoria, are now taking up our lands with avidity. So far from our farmers having been ruined by the adoption of free-trade, it is the testimony of land agents, all over the State, that there is an absolute dearth of land for settlement, and that it is impossible to satisfy the demand. Honorable members, like the honorable member for Riverina and the honorable member for Eden-Monaro, know that when they were members of the State Parliament of New South Wales their greatest difficulty was to get sufficient land thrown open for selection to satisfy the legitimate demands of those who wish to settle on the soil. I shall complete my remarks concerning the wheat production of New South Wales by pointing out that while our yield of wheat in 1891 was only 3,649,216 bushels, it had increased by 1899 to 9,276,216 bushels, and last year was 18,604,166 bushels. I am prepared to admit that the agriculture of New South Wales would have grown under any conditions; I am quoting these figures only to show that the removal of protective duties and the imposition of direct taxation has not retarded its progress; but that, on the contrary, there has been a steady and consistent increase each year. I feel certain that the experience of the farmers of the State of New South Wales will be repeated by the farmers in every other State.

Mr MAUGER

- If the New South Wales farmers have prospered under freetrade why do they always elect protectionists to represent them in the State Parliament?

Mr F E McLEAN

- Unfortunately, the spirit of retaliation is very strong in New South Wales, as it is in Victoria, and our protectionists have always been returned by constituencies situated near the bottlers of protected States.

Mr MAUGER - They have been able to see the benefit of protection.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The spirit of retaliation has grown up in our State as in every other State, but I hope that with the disappearance of the bolder duties and the spread of the federal spirit, which we heard so much about during the electoral campaign, there will be an end to it. I feel certain that the disappearance of the desire for retaliation will be the beginning of the end so far as the protectionist policies of the States are concerned.

Sir William McMillan

- Federation has scotched it.

Mr F E McLEAN

- A great deal has been said about the manufacturing industries of Victoria, and statistics have been quoted by honorable members on each side of the chamber to show how much employment is given by the manufacturing industries of both States. I wish to point out, however, that the number of persons employed in manufacturing industries in any State is a very small proportion of the whole working population of the State. I have taken my first figures from the report of the Government Statistician of New South Wales, because they were nearest at hand, and I find that there is not a great difference between the proportion of ' manufacturing employes to the whole working population in New South Wales and in Victoria. According to the census of 1891, there were at that time 382,000 breadwinners in New South Wales, and, to allow for the increase of population since that time, I have increased that number by 60,000, so that my estimate of the number of bread winners in the State of New South Wales to-day is 442,000. On the same basis I estimate that there are to-day in Victoria 400,000 bread-winners, and of these only about 60,000 are employed in manufacturing industries.

Treasurer

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- That is one-third of the total population. I think that the honorable member's figures are too high.

Mr F. E. McLEAN.- I hope that they are. I have taken the figures from 1891 from the New South Wales census of that year.

Mr MAUGER

- Why not stick to the census figures?

Mr F. E. McLEAN- Because I have not the proportion of the census in Victoria, but I suppose the proportion is the same in both States. I suppose men begin to work at about the same age in Victoria as in New South Wales, and become incapacitated at the same age. Assuming that these proportions are the same, you may say that there are about 400,000 bread- winners in Victoria, and that out of that number only 50,000 are employed in the manufacturing industries. The inference I wish to draw is that in both the States, after all only about one-sixth -certainly not more than one-fifth- of the bread-winning population are earning their living in manufacturing industries. I challenge any honorable member who thinks these figures are wrong, or that my estimates are exaggerated, 'to have them revised by the Statist of Victoria.

Mr Mauger

- Does the honorable member take those directly employed, and leave out those who are indirectly employed?

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Mr F E McLEAN

- My reply is that the bulk of the population are indirectly concerned in the great native industries - that is, in the great producing interests. We are all more or less indirectly concerned in the rural industries, and the larger proportion of those whose employment cannot be traced to protected industries are undoubtedly indirectly interested in the rural industries. At the outset of this Commonwealth are we asked to establish a system of taxation for the express benefit of one-fifth or one-sixth of the population, and to

ask the - other four-fifths to tax themselves for the sake of the manufacturing industries 1

Sir William McMillan

- That is democracy !

Mr F E McLEAN

- I do not think it is democracy. It is an extremely narrow policy to adopt. We have reached the point where our agricultural industries require no State assistance. Probably our friends in Queensland are not so well provided in that respect as are the other States, but still there is a sufficient surplus of production in those States which are producing largely to supply any deficiency that may exist in the smaller States. Practically we may say that Australia has a fairly wide margin for export. We have reached a point in our agricultural development when no protective policy can increase the output or check the competition of other lands. The only time when we could be brought into competition with other countries as far as our agricultural products are concerned, is when our harvest might fail, and there might be a legitimate demand for the importation of products to supply the shortage. I do not think the most rabid protectionist in this House or the Commonwealth would advocate a policy which would prevent us from buying at the best possible advantage at a time when there was a shortage in our production. I find that in New South Wales there are 95,906 persons actually employed in agricultural industries. Practically 100,000 persons are so employed, or 50 per cent, more than are employed in the manufacturing industries. In the pastoral industry, 26,313 are employed. Altogether 122,324 persons are employed in the agricultural and pastoral pursuits of that State. This is vastly in excess - twice the number - of those engaged in manufacturing industries. We admit that in Victoria agricultural development has reached a higher stage and that there are more persons employed indirectly in agricultural industries than in New South Wales; and here there are twice the number of persons employed in agricultural pursuits as in manufacturing industries. No amount of protection that can be imposed upon the people of this Commonwealth can benefit the agricultural producer in Victoria to the extent of a single shilling. He cannot be benefited to any extent by the imposition of restrictive duties. He has now reached the position when his produce must to a great extent be exported, and the price of exported produce is necessarily regulated by the price obtained in the markets of the world. I had intended before passing from this part of the subject to refer to the fact that in spite of the free-trade policy of New South Wales, since the repeal of the somewhat protective duties of the Dibbs Government there has been a steady increase in the number of persons employed in manufacturing industries. In 1895, the last year the Dibbs duties were in existence, there were 43,833 employed in the manufactories of New South Wales. In 1899 there were 50,747 persons employed in those manufacturing industries.

Mr KENNEDY

- Has the honorable member the classification of the factories f

Mr Mauger

- Has he the corresponding figures for Victoria ?

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I am not making the comparison for the purpose of pointing out the differences between one State and another. I simply say that since the repeal of the import duties and the imposition of direct taxation in New South Wales, there has been a steady growth of employment in the manufacturing industries, as well as a development of the agricultural industries of the State. That is an absolutely fair thing to say. It seems to me that we are more likely to come to a better understanding of our own positions as individual States by relating our own experiences than by seeking to make comparisons that can only set State against State and create a feeling of antagonism that will prevent us from arriving at satisfactory conclusions on the fiscal question. For good or evil, we are now banded together in federal union, and it is our duty as members of this House to try and come to an understanding of the conditions which prevail in the various States. If I put figures before this House, culled from the compilations of the New South Wales statistician, I do it in order that the House may appreciate the position from a New South Wales point of view, so that there may be a proper understanding all round. I should not indulge in any comparisons except, it may be, to reply to the remarks that have been made by the honorable member for Richmond. He is a New South Wales member, but he made some very disparaging remarks about the financial position of the State he represents. I really think that had the honorable member made himself a little better acquainted

with the figures of his own State before projecting himself into this discussion he would have saved us from a very serious misrepresentation of the position. The honorable member told us that New South Wales derives something like £2,000,000 annually from the sale of her land. He afterwards qualified that, in consequence of an interjection made by the honorable member for Wentworth that a considerable amount of the revenue was derived from occupation. I find that the actual position is this. There was , £3,009,000 of revenue derived from the land last year, out of which conditional purchasers contributed £1,105,000. But since under our conditional purchase system the annual instalments are extended over a very long terra of years, and there is something like £14,000,000 of money owing to the Treasury on selectors' balances, it is reasonable to place the amount of interest earned on those conditional purchase instalments at something like £400,000, which would only represent 3 per cent. on the outstanding balance. So that out of that £1,100,000, £700,000 would represent sales and £400,000 interest, which is a perfectly legitimate means of revenue.

Mr A McLEAN

- Had the State sold its land for cash the money would have borne interest.

Mr F E McLEAN

- We do not want to sell our land for cash. The policy of the State has been to encourage settlement by offering this land to the population on the most extended terms and the most reasonable conditions ; and when you take into consideration that those payments extend over very long terms of years - I think as much as 64 years at the maximum - you will see that this revenue represents a very large alienation of Crown land and means a very considerable settlement upon it

Mr HUME COOK

- What does the average amount of land revenue per year, direct or indirect, amount to?

Sir William McMillan

- £2,000,000.

Sir George Turner

- Does that include interest?

Mr F E McLEAN

- It includes interest on conditional purchase, the £665,000 from pastoral occupation, and £47,000 from mining occupation, as well as £92,000 for miscellaneous receipts in the way of payment of licences and various fees for surveyors, all of which are legitimate items of revenue.

Mr Chanter

- How much are auction sales?

Mr F E McLEAN

-£108,000 in the year 1899. So that it will be seen that one half of the land revenue of New South Wales for ' the year is a perfectly legitimate revenue. If in New South Wales we have pursued what may by some be considered an unsound policy in carrying the receipts from land sales to ordinary revenue, it must be borne in mind that the public works expenditure of New South Wales, even out of revenue, has been vastly in excess of the public works expenditure of Victoria, If I quote figures to show the diminution in the expenditure on public works in Victoria, I again say that it is not with the object of disparaging this State.

Mr A McLEAN

- Does the honorable member count the municipal works in Victoria? There are none of those in New South Wales.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- Let the honorable member bear in mind that the very fact that we have not got in New South Wales the perfect system of local government which exists in Victoria, is responsible for a larger proportion of Government expenditure on public works in that State. In the year 1890-91 there was expended on public works in Victoria £644,000. In 1898-9 the public works expenditure of the State was only £172,936. It may be to the credit of the Government and the Treasurer of Victoria at that time that they reduced expenditure on public works on account of the reduced revenue of the country. I am not going to utter a word to depreciate what may have been sound and prudent administration on the part of the Government of this State. I only mention that there was a diminution from £664,000 in 1891 to £172,000 in 1899.

Honorable members will see that in New South Wales it was absolutely impossible to stop expenditure on public works in that way, because that Government had to keep pace with the growing requirements of a large State, and there has been, and had to be necessarily, a continual expenditure on public works. A very large proportion of the £1,000,000 of land revenue has been expended upon public works. No less than £500,000 on the average during the last seven years - I believe it was £800,000 in 1894, and was down to £450,000 in 1898 - but on the average, £500,000 has been spent per annum on public roads.

Mr Deakin

- Does the honorable member reckon the municipal subsidy paid by the Government in Victoria ?

Mr.F. E. McLEAN.- No; only public works.

Mr DEAKIN

- All the municipal subsidy in Victoria is spent on roads, and that ought to be reckoned in order to get a fair comparison.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The Attorney-General perhaps ignores the fact that there is a subsidy to municipalities in our State, though not so large a subsidy, I admit, as in Victoria.

Mr Deakin

- The subsidy in Victoria is for the very purpose of making roads, in country districts especially. It is now, I think, about £400,000.

Sir George Turner

- It was that amount, but the subsidy has been cut down.

Mr F E McLEAN

- In New South Wales we are compelled, without a perfect system of local government, to spend £500,000 per annum. I believe the road vote has assumed large proportions in the last year or two, and that in the present year it amounts to £750,000. All this goes towards the cost of administering the Government in a large territory like that of New South Wales, where the conveniences and the requirements of the people must be studied by any civilized Government. I find there has been a decrease in Victoria in the public instruction vote, which in 1890-1 stood at £845,000, and in 1898-9 was reduced to £621,000.

Sir William McMillan

- Their education was complete.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I do not say that; but there has been a considerable saving, and we would not have been able to effect such a large saving in connexion with the growing territory of New South Wales. A large amount has to be spent on public instruction, and large amounts expended from loan funds on reproductive works, and also on some permanent works that cannot be called exactly reproductive. The honorable member for Echuca, who is not in the Chamber, quoted the fact that New South Wales had expended something like £9,000,000 of loan moneys during the regime of the Reid Government, as against a very small amount, slightly over £1,000,000, expended in Victoria. But two-thirds of the loan moneys expended in New South Wales was actually expended on railways.

Sir William McMillan

- Which are interest bearing.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- Which are interest bearing, and good interest bearing, works. These railways are actually returning to the State, according to the last returns, 3.83 per cent., free of all outgoings and expenses. I have the list from the 30th June, 1899, which shows a total expenditure of £62,000,000 from loan funds, out of which the railways and tramways stand charged with £41,000,000, but those railways earn £454,000 over working expenses, or at the rate of 3.83 on the cost of construction. The tramways are earning a smaller amount, certainly, namely, 3.99 on the cost of construction. In addition to the £41,000,000 which has been expended on railways and tramways, there is £1,000,000 against telegraphs and telephones, which are also interest bearing ; £8,000,000 for water sewerage, which is also interest bearing ; and, I understand, a small amount of £617,000 for water conservation and artesian boring is also reproductive. So that actually £51,000,000 out of the £62,000,000 of New South Wales loan expenditure, up to 30th

June, 1899, was spent on works that may be called interest bearing and reproductive in the truest sense. I would also remind honorable members that the expenditure on wharves, harbors, and rivers in New South Wales is very much in excess of what it is in any of the other States ; and a great deal of this work, although not interest bearing, is reproductive in the truest sense, because it is developing the vast resources of parts of the country which would be absolutely neglected and unproductive if these large sums were not spent. No Government - I do not care whether the Government calls itself protective or free-trade - would undertake the high responsibility of spending those large amounts of public moneys out of revenue on the harbors and rivers of a State like New South Wales, unless they were permitted to spread the expenditure over some fair and reasonable term of years. I mention these facts to show that the so-called loan expenditure, which has created a great deal of adverse criticism in this Chamber and in the other States, has not been fairly understood by honorable members of the House. Of course, there are critics in our own Parliament in New South Wales, and also amongst the members on this side of the House, who do not approve of till the financial methods of that State, as, I dare say, there are gentlemen on the Government side of the House who do not approve of everything done in their own States. Members of the State Parliament of New South Wales have criticised many of the financial methods adopted there, and have sought to obtain better methods ; but I wish the House to properly understand that the vast proportion of our loan expenditure has been on railways and tramways, which are highly profitable to the State, and that, at least, £10,000,000 of the other loan expenditure has been on works which are interest bearing and fairly reproductive. I am a free-trader and shall advocate free-trade in this House as the policy of the Commonwealth, because I sincerely believe that a policy of unrestricted commercial intercourse between nations is best calculated to promote the interests of all nations. I do not lay this down merely as a doctrinaire principle, because we have proved by the experience of the old country, and by the experience of New South Wales, that free-trade has tended to the expansion of all our great capacities, and has, so far from retarding progress, greatly increased progress in Britain and in our own State. We believe we are perfectly justified in asking the House to consider, at the outset of our Commonwealth life, whether we should burden the people by the imposition of duties that must to some extent restrict their free energies and prevent them from following those occupations and lines of industry they would naturally choose for themselves if commerce were unhampered. An honorable member from Queensland who spoke last night, after giving a very sound piece of advice to the Government on the question of white labour, concluded by saying it was impossible for men to believe in a white Australia and still be free-traders, and he argued, probably with great sincerity and conviction from his own point of view, that we must protect the white labour of our own Commonwealth from the unequal competition of Japanese, Chinese and other races who work for lower wages in other parts of the world. If that doctrine be correct, we shall need a variety of Tariffs to suit the different nations of the world, according to the rate of wages in each. We should want a Japanese Tariff, a German Tariff, and an Anglo-Saxon Tariff - we should want a Tariff to meet the varying rates of wages in different parts of the world. But instead of that, I suppose honorable members, when we come to discuss the Tariff, will prefer one which will exclude everything and give us the home market. As a matter of fact, the competition that we most fear in every walk of life is not the competition of the most degraded people, but the competition of those who most nearly approximate to our own standard of living. Does America fix her Tariff to keep out imports from Japan or China, or does she not rather fix her Tariff to strike a blow at British trade ? The British people are those who most nearly approximate to America in the standard of comfort, and the fear is of the most highly civilized people and the most civilized nations, where the best wages and the best conditions prevail among the working population. There is no gainsaying the fact that the Tariffs of America have been directed against the trade of Great Britain and Canada, and have been directly intended to prevent the flow of British trade. America has not been concerned about the so-called pauper labour of foreign countries. Take Japan-

An Honorable Member. - Japan has no commercial past.

Mr F E McLEAN

- It is said that if the ports of Australia are allowed to remain open, Japanese goods will pour into the Commonwealth, and our condition will become even as that of the Japanese - that our rates of wages will lower themselves to the Japanese rates. But the port of Sydney is now open to Japan, and there has been no great inundation of Japanese goods. Certainly we imported more Japanese goods than Victoria

did last year, but then we exported about twice as much as did Victoria to Japan, and it was a mutual trade. We imported ?100,000 worth of goods from Japan, and exported ?120,000 worth to that country. It was to our interest to sell the Japanese our goods, and to our interest to receive their goods in exchange.

Mr Mauger

- Would it not possibly have been more profitable to produce the goods in New South Wales 1

Mr F E McLEAN

- It might have been so, and I am not prepared to argue the point.

Mr Mauger

- That is just the point

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Mr F E McLEAN

- But I say we must trade with those who are prepared to trade with us, and those prepared on the spot to buy our goods, and give' their goods in exchange are good customers. Certainly we are not going to find fault with those who are large dealers in colonial produce.

Mr Mauger

- Surely trade is a means to an end.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Trade is a means to an end, and a method of production, and if the method be hampered, burdens are imposed and production hampered. Trade is only one of the many methods of production, and is a thing not to be crippled. To hear honorable members speak, one would imagine trade was a bad thing, and that it ought to be put in irons and restricted. If trade be one of the many forms of production, as, after all, it is - one of the means to enable the producer to sell his goods to the best possible advantage and the highest profit to himself - why should we, as a producing country, seek to restrict trade? I do not think very disastrous results have followed from the unrestricted commerce that has been pursued in the adjoining State.

Mr Mauger

- Does the honorable member not think that the home market is better than the foreign?

Mr.F. E. McLEAN. - And the home market will come as population grows. The very argument that I was using about the increase of wheat cultivation in New South Wales proves that as population increases and settles itself around the people who are producing, the number of producers will increase. It is only population that will give us employment for our manufacturing industries. Nothing but population will do that. But free-traders take up the position that any artificial attempt, either to increase population by immigration, or by fostering under the core of the State, particular forms of industry, will produce in their train more evils than they will bring blessings. The attempt at the artificial coddling of industries has never proved a success either in Victoria or in any other part of the world.

Mr Mauger

- Nor in Germany, nor in America?

Mr.F. E. McLEAN.- My honorable friend ' refers to Germany and America, us though a country like America would not be a thickly-populated and prosperous country under any conditions. Just as we are bound to admit that there has been prosperity in England and New South Wales, in spite of those countries having had no protection, we are compelled to say that the prosperity of the United States has not been due to its fiscal policy, but has been due mainly to the remarkable physical conditions of that country. More' than all, we owe most of our prosperity right through the English speaking world, to the indomitable, pluck and energy of the people who inhabit these countries. Whatever the fiscal policy of Australia may be, and much as I dislike the policy of protection, I venture to say that the British people will make progress under any policy, although the freer the policy is the less artificial it is, the more it is in harmony with natural conditions, and the more we allow the people to follow the bent of their own inclinations and energies, the more likely we are to develop the spirit of self-reliance that has been the chief characteristic of the British people throughout their history. I do not wish to pursue my remarks at any great length, because I understand it is the intention of the Government to have a short sitting this afternoon. On other matters in the Governor-General's speech, I am very largely in sympathy with the policy of. the Government, and I only hope they will redeem their promise to give us a white Australia. As far as I am concerned, I shall vote with those who take up the most extreme attitude on that question, and

who are anxious to bring about the abolition of black labour in Australia at the earliest possible moment.

Mr Mauger

- Is that natural?

Mr.F. E. McLEAN.- It is natural. The greatest of all free-traders that we have had in Australia, and the father of this federal movement- the late Sir Henry Parkes - although decorated with the colours of the Cobden club, held that we were perfectly justified in maintaining the British character of the population of these States. I say that whether the honorable member likes to throw it across this Chamber as a taunt to free-traders or not, he will find that we are for upholding the British character of the population, and for preventing the influx of those races which would contaminate it.

An Honorable Member. - Yet the honorable member allows the product of their labour to come in unchecked.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- We allow the product of their labour to come in when it is to our mutual advantage to exchange the products of our own labour. But if my honorable friend imagines that he is going to improve the condition of our own labourers, or to raise their wages, by putting a tax on the people, he will find that he is very much mistaken.

He may have tried the experiment - I do not know the State from which he comes-

Mr Mauger

- From good old Victoria

Mr F E McLEAN

- If it is from Victoria all I have to say is that the workmen of Victoria are not so well off as are their brethren in New South Wales.

Mr Mauger

- What about the strike now in progress in New South Wales ?

Mr F E McLEAN

- I am not perfectly acquainted with the whole of the conditions of that strike. I do not know the rates of wages paid in that industry in all the States.

Mr Mauger

- Twelve shillings a week less in New South Wales than in Victoria.

Mr F E McLEAN

- .That-is not true.

Mr Mauger

- I thought the honorable member said he did not know.

Mr SPEAKER

- I regret that I did not at once draw attention to the honorable member's assertion that the statement of another honorable member was untrue. I cannot allow such a remark to be made, and I must ask the honorable member to withdraw it.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Did I say that the honorable member's statement was untrue ?

Mr SPEAKER

- Yes.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I certainly withdraw it, because I did not intend to impute that the honorable member was making an untrue statement. An interjection was made at my elbow that the manager of the Mort's Dock Company had said that the statement was untrue, and I intended to repeat that statement.

Mr Mauger

- In any case they are asking for the Victorian rate.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The Victorian artificial rate.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I only wish to point out that in this State of Victoria, where protection has prevailed for 30 odd years, it has been found absolutely necessary to protect the wages of the people by regulation. I am not going to

find fault with the politicians of this State for having done that. Had I been a member of the Victorian Legislature, under the conditions prevailing here, I certainly would have supported an attempt to regulate the rate of wages, and to give the workmen a fair share of what was exacted from the people in the way of protective duties. That is where the policy of protection in itself has absolutely failed. A few years ago, in New South Wales, when protectionists were trying to convert us from the error of our ways, we were told that if we had the home market to ourselves and high protective duties, we would want no regulation of wages - that there would be employment for all classes of the people, that wages would naturally respond to the demand for labour, and that, without artificial conditions, there would be a higher rate of wages prevailing amongst our artisans. But, in Victoria, it has been proved by experience that we cannot increase the wages of the 'artisans by a protective policy, and Parliament has had to supplement that policy by legislation to prevent the 'employers of labour from sweating their employes.

Mr Mauger

- Purely if that is a supplement, the main thing must have been a large factor.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- My honorable friend is propounding conundrums". I hardly grasp what he means. The Victorian worker was told protection would give employment for him, and that the demand for labour would mean increase of wages, in short, that wages would rise by the natural operation of a policy of protection. Wages did not so rise, and it became necessary, by hard and fast regulations under the factory laws, to fix the minimum rate of wages that should be paid in factories. Surely, this is evidence to the whole of Australia that the policy of protection in itself,, will not give the industrial comfort promised. But I was drawn on one side from what I was saying about the black labour question by an interjection. I will help the Government in any honest attempt that they may make to put an end to this black labour difficulty, and, notwithstanding the great many warnings we have received from Queensland representatives, I say that One of the strongest inducements held forth to the workers of that country to accept federation was a promise that we would have a white Australia as the result of its accomplishment. Are we to be disappointed ? Are we to have federation, and still to perpetuate these abuses that have grown up through the want of that sound principle of preserving the British character of our population, which permeates the whole of the States? In New South Wales and Victoria the feeling is too strong to be resisted, and if these two States had been joined together without the other States, there can be no question but that the motto of a "white Australia" would have been accepted unanimously. But Queensland has entered this federation, thoroughly understanding the strong spirit of antagonism to black labour that obtains in the southern States, and whilst we should be prepared to show the utmost consideration to those who have engaged in industries in which they have embarked a large amount of their capital, we cannot overlook the social troubles, and the great political troubles that are bound to arise in this Commonwealth if we do not put an end to this system at' the earliest possible moment. I do not intend at this hour to prolong my remarks. I have had no intention, in making comparisons between any of the States to foster a spirit of antagonism between one State and another, and I hope that in all our debates there will be a disposition shown to realize the point of view from which each honorable member speaks, and to understand the conditions that prevail in the various States, with a view to arriving at a policy which will prove of ultimate good to the whole of the people of Australia.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- Like many other honorable members, I feel the responsibility of my position, and I suppose I may enter upon this debate with the usual expression of diffidence and trepidation. I may say that it has not only afforded me very great pleasure to listen to the discussion, but that I have felt a very great interest in the large amount of information that has been given to this Chamber. I feel that on on occasion like this, the first meeting of this great Australian Parliament, we have a duty to perform in regard to our future legislation - the duty of assimilating the laws that have been built up under the States that have had their own political rights, and their own political institutions. We are now asked, as one great Parliament, to take from all these States the settlement of questions of a national character, and to assimilate their laws in such a way as will best build up an Australian continent and an Australian people. In debating the first Address in Reply to our Governor-General's speech, we cannot but feel the responsibility of what we are called upon to do. I do not propose to traverse at great length the speeches that have been delivered on

either side of the House, but I may deal in 'one or two words with that of the last speaker, who seems to me to have created an impression in this House, which it is our duty to try and suppress as representatives of the protectionist party. The honorable member for Long has dwelt at considerable length on the exchange of goods between New South Wales and Japan. He has spoken so freely as to say that it has been a free exchange and an encouragement of enterprise on both sides. Probably, when we look at the true position from our point of view, we shall say that it would have been much better for New South Wales if the wages spent in converting the raw material into manufactured articles had been spent amongst the labourers of our own country. I find, on referring to "The Seven Colonies" - which, I think, will be taken as reliable - that Japan, a protected country, has removed the duty from wool. It says this -

As mentioned above, Japan has established a national line of steamers to foster the trade with the countries of Australasia, and with the abolition of her duty on wool and the benefits to be derived from wearing woollen clothing impressed on the people, there ought to be a good opening in that country for the staple products of these colonies. The foundation of such a trade is already laid down. The exports of wool from New South Wales to Japan in the year 1899 were valued at £78,000.

That shows that, of the £120,000 referred to by Mr. McLean, £78,000 represents the raw material from the State of New South Wales that the labour of Japan has had the benefit of turning into manufactured articles and returning to New South Wales free of duty, and without contributing in any way to the cost of the Government of that State.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member know that Japan has sent back any woollen goods to New South Wales ?

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I have the honorable member's words that there has been a very large trade done, and I take it that whatever has come from Japan to the State of New South Wales has been in the shape of manufactured articles, and not in the shape of raw material. I have come into this House as a supporter of the Barton Government, and I shall be ready to take my share of responsibility for upholding their actions. I do not think that the Prime Minister received from the electors of New South Wales the consideration which he should have received. During the elections he had practically the whole of the New South Wales press against him. Party issues were dragged in, and statements were made which those who supported the right honorable gentleman had no opportunity to refute. But, notwithstanding all that was done by the leader of the Opposition and those who followed him, the Prime Minister has entered this Chamber with a majority, and he has put before us a policy for which he, and those who supported him, are responsible to the people. Before I pledged myself to follow the Prime Minister, I did what probably most other honorable members have done - I read the speech which he delivered at Maitland on the 13th January, and with which every speech which he has delivered since is in accord.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member would have supported the Prime Minister in any case.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I knew that the protective character of the Victorian fiscal policy would be drawn into the issue, but when the Prime Minister said that the adoption by the Commonwealth of either free-trade or protection was impracticable, and that we must have a revenue Tariff, I agreed with him. From the very beginning an attempt was made by the Opposition to discredit the statements of the Prime Minister by quoting the utterances of the Attorney-General and the Minister of Customs in Victoria and elsewhere. But I take it that those who were on the platform from which the Prime Minister delivered his speech, on the 18th January, are to be held responsible for his utterances, and before I pledged myself to follow him I found that there were on the platform on that occasion the Minister of Internal Affairs, who is a strong protectionist ; the Attorney-General, who was there as representing Victoria ; and the Minister of Customs, who was there as representing South Australia. It is said now, however, that those who are following the Government are giving up their policy, and are inclined to accept the policy of the Opposition. That, however, is not the case. The policy laid down in the Governor-General's speech is thoroughly in accordance with the utterances of the Prime Minister at Maitland, and those who have tried to defeat him by introducing party issues, and drawing innumerable herrings across the trail, are now

coming to the Government, on bended knees, to ask to be allowed to share their POLiCy Under the name of revenue tariffists, we find these honorable members coming back to the policy which was laid down by the

Prime Minister at Maitland. If the right honorable gentleman had been fairly treated in New South Wales, he would have come back to this Chamber with an overwhelming majority from that State.

Mr Chapman

- If the free-traders had not the Sydney Daily Telegraph behind them, one would not be able to find them with a microscope.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What about the protectionists and the Melbourne Aye f

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- The honorable member for Echuca, when speaking yesterday afternoon, referred to the amendment which has been moved, as an amendment which somehow or another has got lost in the debate. No doubt the honorable member for Parramatta, who does not like to be left out of these discussions, moved the amendment either to gain prominence in the eyes of other honorable members, or to fulfil some promise made in an unguarded moment to a small section of his constituents. One cannot realize why the representative of an electorate like Parramatta, coming from a State like New South Wales, should take such a very keen interest in the black labour question of Queensland as to find it necessary to move an amendment which his responsible leader would not move, and which, if carried, would prove disastrous to the Government.

Mr Chapman

- This is the first time that the amendment has been mentioned during this week.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- The policy outlined in the Governor-General's speech is so thoroughly in accord with the utterances of the Prime Minister that every honorable member should have made up his mind in regard to it, and the honorable member for Parramatta must have known that as the supporters of the Government have pledged themselves to give the Prime Minister a fair opportunity to carry out his policy, they would not tolerate the amendment which he has moved. If he calls for a division upon it, he will see that he is trying to force upon the House an amendment which it will not tolerate, while, if he does not call for a division upon it, he will show those whom he represents that he has been throwing dust in their eyes in order to carry out some petty promise made to them in an unguarded moment.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What does the honorable member think I should do ?

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Mr CRUICKSHANK

- The honorable member should take the first train and go home. The black labour question is too important for the Government to be asked by an amendment like that of the honorable member for Parramatta to be more emphatic in regard to it than they are in the Governor-General's speech. Is it to be supposed that, before we have dealt with the fiscal question, and decided what the sugar duties are to be, and before we have provided machinery for the working of the Constitution and the proper administration of affairs, we can consider legislation to deal with the black labour question? There are 22,000 people who are connected with the sugar industry of Northern Queensland, and several million pounds have been expended in its development. Is it likely, then, that the Government will, at this early stage of the session, when other legislation requires to be dealt with, and before honorable members have had a fair opportunity to consider the matter, propose legislation to deal with the black labour question? I am sure it is the wish of every honorable member to assist the Government in passing, at the earliest opportunity, such legislation as will tend to create a white Australia, but I should be sorry to support an amendment, the passing of which would not hasten the abolition of kanaka labour, but would, on the contrary, tend to delay its abolition, and would prove disastrous to the interests of other legislation which must be first undertaken. One of the first matters which the Government must deal with is the appointment of a High Court of Appeal, and I am glad that the subject has been given a prominent position in the Governor-General's speech. I regret that the Government will not be able to deal with the old-age pensions question for some little time to come; but there are in existence in the various States laws which

make provision for the granting of such pensions until such time as the Commonwealth can take over their administration, and provide for the payment of these pensions from the federal revenue. But inasmuch as, by doing that, the Commonwealth must undertake very large financial obligations, I think we should receive from the State Parliament some consideration for the relief which we give them. I come now to a matter with regard to which I differ from some honorable members. It seems to be the general impression that it is not necessary to create the Inter-State Commission for some time to come.

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- That is not the general impression; it is a very isolated view.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I have heard several honorable members express that opinion. I think, however, that as soon as the Inter-State duties are removed the InterState Commission should be created. The trade between the States amounts now to something like ?29,000,000, and trade of such volume must require regulation. I think, therefore, that the Government would be wise in appointing the InterState Commission very soon, and I hope that the members of the commission will be men who will have a knowledge of the questions with which they will be culled upon to deal, so that Parliament may be relieved of a great amount of responsibility. ' The appointment of the Inter-State Commission should take place immediately upon the abolition of Inter-State duties and the throwing open of the ports of Australia to the free interchange of the productions of the States. I wish now to say a few words upon what is really the question of the day - the proposed Commonwealth Tariff. Honorable members' on both sides of the House seem agreed that the principle measures in the Governor-General's speech are measures which they can support. They are in accord with the greater part of the Government policy, although there are some honorable members who are prepared to light the Government at every point if it is. likely that they can turn them out of office.

Mr Wilks

- Nonsense.

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Mr CRUICKSHANK

- The leader of the Opposition does not want any Tariff introduced that he thinks will be suitable to the majority of the people of this country, because such a Tariff would rob him of his best weapon for fighting the present Government. There are honorable members sitting on the opposition side of the House who would not vote with the Government on any matters of policy they could bring forward. I should be very sorry to see the Government disappointing the leader of the Opposition and such honorable members as the honorable member for Dalley, the honorable member for Parramatta, the honorable member for Macquarie, and others who have taken their seats on those very prominent benches opposite ; but I may tell the Government at the same time that they will bring down no policy whatever that will obtain the support of those gentlemen. We have in this House men like the honorable member for Parkes who took a very active part in bringing about federation. I was one of the association which worked with that gentleman for the. same object.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member mean that?

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I was a very energetic worker in the cause.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This is the first I have heard of it.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- But the honorable member never goes north. He lives about the mines at Lithgow, and never travels into the country. The Tariff policy, us laid down by the Prime Minister, was thoroughly approved of at the time. A speech was delivered in praise of it by the honorable member for Parkes. The honorable member was also interviewed by one of the leading papers in Sydney, when he said. - "I have read Mr. Barton's speech, and I think it offers a very fair solution of the fiscal question."

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I say so now. It is his colleagues I object to.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

-Upon the platform upon which the speech to which I have alluded was delivered there were present the

Minister for Customs, the Attorney-General, and the Minister for Home Affairs. Those honorable gentlemen acquiesced in the speech delivered by the Prime Minister, as did also the honorable member for Parkes ; and I believe that had it not been that the free-trade whip was cracked the honorable member would have been at present one of the supporters of the Government. The leader of the Opposition - self-appointed at that time, but now the properly constituted leader - took the responsibility of creating an issue that should never have been introduced. In consequence of this, men who were at first in accord with the Prime Minister's policy became servile followers of the Reid policy. I was very sorry to see men like the honorable member for Parkes led off the track, and deserting the party which appreciated his services very much at the time of the struggle for federation.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Those Ministers who were present on the platform when the Prime Minister propounded his policy came back to Melbourne by the first train, and talked undiluted protection in Victoria. That is why the free-traders are sitting on the opposition side of the House.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I can find no record of such speeches. The speech of the honorable member for Parkes is in print, but I do not know where the speeches of the Ministers to whom he refers are to be found. I have not seen any such speech from the Attorney-General, nor from the Minister for Customs. Therefore I must take the utterances at Maitland. I was very much interested in listening to the address of the honorable member for Parkes, in which he said that he had been for a great number of years a close observer of the protective policy of Victoria, and that he recollected well the time when that system was introduced into this State. The year was 1863.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I said 1866.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I have looked it up, and I find that the year mentioned in the records is 1863. The honorable member said he was here at the time, and was horrified that the protective policy should have been introduced, as he felt that it would be disastrous to Victoria. He said he had watched that policy grow up, and had seen occur all the disasters he had anticipated. But I find that at the time this took place the honorable member was only eight years of age.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- The honorable member is quite wrong. I did not say I took a keen interest in it, but I said I remembered it very well. I was fifteen years old at the time. I was born in 1851, and the policy of protection was inaugurated in 1866.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I think the year was 1863. However, I accept the statement of the honorable member. I will now come to the actual results of protection in Victoria. What do we find in regard to these " disasters " that have happened to Victoria 1 First, I find that New South Wales has borrowed £62, 000,000, whereas the State of Victoria has only borrowed £46,000,000. The State of New South Wales, to govern the same number of people, has for a number of years had an income of £12,000,000 a year. She has had nearly £10,000,000 of ordinary revenue, as well as £2,000,000 a year of borrowed money, and has spent this in governing 1,250,000 people.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Wrong again.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I have taken my figures from Coghlan.

Sir William McMillan

- Is the honorable member in favour of borrowing under any circumstances?

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Mr CRUICKSHANK

- Yes, to put money into reproductive works. The more we borrow for reproductive works the better for the country. That is why I would vote for a State bank. "We do not borrow sufficiently for reproductive purposes. But when we And money borrowed and expended for such purposes as buying candles to light the caves at Jenolan, we begin to suspect the sincerity of the advocates of reproductive public works." I

wish to come back to some of those old questions that are always brought up when free-trade and protection are discussed. I am speaking for the purpose of showing that there is not such a great dividing line between the present Government and the members of the Opposition. The Tariff policy as laid down by the Prime Minister is such as, if the Opposition were sincere, would be acceptable to the majority of them.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- What percentage would the honorable member recommend 1

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I should recommend our acting as one body, because honorable members could then render to their country the best service they have ever done. As soon as the Tariff question is debated you always have brought forward on the one side the evil effects of imposing restrictions upon trade, and on the other side you have protests made against the importation of goods made by prison and coloured labour. What I feel is that the people of this country want a Tariff such as was laid down by the honorable member for Wentworth in his address during the federal elections in New South Wales. That was a Tariff which, if it had been advocated in the year 1891, when we had the great fiscal fight in that State, would have been dubbed a protectionist Tariff. I am a moderate protectionist myself. I believe in duties all round. I believe in deriving revenue through the Custom house; and where those duties are incidentally protective I think they should be preserved. More than that, I believe thoroughly that we should give employment in natural production to the people of our country - to our own workers.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member believe in direct taxation ?

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Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I do not object to direct taxation. I do not believe that any one who owns property should be allowed to escape taxation ; but while we have in these States land taxes and income taxes, and while we pay municipal rates and have to sell our products in the local market) we should not allow to come in free the products of land-owners who have cheap land in other countries, and who contribute nothing whatever to the cost of our government. I would make every one who uses our markets contribute to the cost of government. The fairest policy that can be instituted is an all-round Tariff on all products which come into this State. I do not say that there should not be a free list. Every one admits that there must be. But it is a most absurd thing to propose doing away with duties on goods that can be produced here. I do not believe in any extreme policy of protection, but I hold that, where we can impose moderate duties that will have the effect of encouraging native industries, we should do so. If such a Tariff does not bring industries into existence, it is the best proof that such industries as cannot exist are not native industries. The industries should stand on the system of ad valorem duties, or on their own feet. I was struck with one remark in the speech of the honorable member for West Sydney. He laid down a proposition which I think is very acceptable to the supporters of the present Government. The words he used were these : - " A revenue Tariff places all men and industries on the same footing." That was a wise expression. A revenue protective Tariff has already been advocated by the Prime Minister. Such a Tariff is a revenue producing Tariff while protecting our native industries. I saw lately an able article which may* have been written by a prominent honorable member of this House. It appeared in United Australia, and was founded on the method of dealing with the Tariff by any incoming Government. The figures the writer based his argument upon were these: that the total trade of Australia is £63,000,000, and that the Inter-State trade is £29,000,000 ; that the articles that would be put on the free list were articles not produced in the States and would amount to £8,000,000 ; and that that would leave a trade of £34,000,000 on which the Government could fix their Tariff. We receive, something like £3,500,000 on spirits, narcotics, and such luxuries, and from excise about another £1,000,000, which makes £4,500,000 ; and taking that £4,500,000, and the actual value of the articles which are imported, there is left £32,000,000 value, which, if the Government imposed a duty of 15 per cent., would give the amount of revenue required. That is, I think, laid down by well-known free-traders and leaders of politics in the States ; so that we find prominent free-traders, supporters of the Government, and men like the member for Bendigo prepared to take the most moderate view of the Tariff question. We all realize that both free-trade and protection are impracticable, and that we must have a revenue Tariff. The post and

telegraph department requires about £2,000,000 a year, and we know we are not likely to derive any income for a considerable time from federal territory ; and consequently all the money required for the necessary expenditure for the Commonwealth must be obtained through the Custom house. Let me turn for a moment to an industry which I represent, and in which I take a great interest, namely, the landed industry of New South Wales. I did not think there would be so much of party feeling created, as it were, between New South Wales and Victoria. Representatives here should speak for Australia as a whole, and I have been pleased to hear members from Western Australia and different parts of Queensland speaking in very generous tones, and showing that they desire to give the Government a fair chance of carrying out the programme that has been placed before us. We have in the state of New South Wales 197,000,000 acres of land, some 50,000,000 acres of which have been sold to private individuals, and about 90,000,000 of which are under pastoral occupation, and let to large pastoral tenants. The rest of the land is let under settlement or homestead lease, improvement lease, sold to selectors, or is in the hands of small holders of various kinds. At the present time holders of land under all kinds of tenure are coming to the Government for relief. Those lands contribute to the State Treasury of New South Wales £2,100,000 a year, and, in addition, Crown tenants generally in New South Wales pay more under direct taxation than do the Crown tenants in any other State of the Commonwealth. In New South Wales some £800,000 a year is contributed under the head of direct taxation ; and we have Crown tenants of all classes - from the large pastoral lessees in the Western district to the settlement lessees and conditional purchasers in the central and eastern divisions - applying to the Government for relief, for re-appraisal of the capital value of their land, and for reduction of rents, because they feel the enormous taxation they are paying is more than they can bear. The general feeling among this portion of the community is that they cannot bear any further burdens, and that there must be no further direct taxation. When the Premier was speaking at Maitland he said there would be no direct taxation except under urgent circumstances; and, therefore, we must look for our revenue to the Custom house. We cannot look to the land at the present time for further revenue, because the land cannot bear higher rents and further burdens, and I ask if the Government, in framing their Tariff, will have regard to that fact. I think I speak generally for the people engaged in the landed industry of New South Wales when I say that a large proportion of them would like to see the revenue obtained through the Customs house. In assimilating the laws of the various States we desire, as far as possible, to protect the industries which have grown up in each of the States under existing laws, and have been created under the machinery of Government, and, while we would like to see all native industries encouraged, we desire employment given to the people of our own State.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is the honorable member speaking for the landed industry of New South Wales?

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- Yes.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is the honorable member suggesting that it is protectionist?.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- Yes.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is not.

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Mr CRUICKSHANK

- I represent large districts which return protectionists to the State parliament, and which returned me to this Parliament as a protectionist. I have as much to do with the landed industry as any member in the Chamber, and I feel I speak with authority on the subject. I do not regard the honorable member for Parramatta as an authority. The feeling of those engaged in the landed industry is that the Commonwealth must look to the Custom house for revenue to carry on the machinery of Government, though at the same time we hope to preserve the rights that have grown up in the various States, and to assist and give every encouragement to native industries in those States. I do not intend to detain the House at any great length, because, no doubt, we shall have an opportunity of debating the fiscal question at a very early date. All I would like to say is, that I shall not be found a talker or an obstructionist. I came here with the object of doing work, and will be glad to give the Government

whatever assistance I can. When the Government are dealing -with the question of the federal capital I would like them, if they appoint a Royal commission, not to forget that there is a very suitable locality on the table land of New England.

An Honorable Member. - In whose electorate ?

Mr CRUICKSHANK

-Not in ray electorate, but in the electorate adjoining. It is a place I have some interest in, and sometimes go to, and I am always struck with its fitness and suitability for the site of the federal capital. It is a very attractive centre, and is not getting sufficient consideration from this House, merely from the want of knowledge on the part of honorable members. I do not think Armidale has received due consideration, but I hope the suggestion I have made will be entertained by the Government.

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Mr BAMFORD

- I may premise my remarks by saying I had no intention of addressing the Chamber during this debate, but was perfectly willing to sit here to listen to the words of wisdom and other words, which have fallen from the lips of the wise men who have preceded me. This is one of those cases, however, in which evil example destroys the most admirable intention, and had it not been for the honorable member for Brisbane, I should not have trespassed on the complacency of the Chamber. The honorable member made some statements to which I feel it my duty to myself, and also to the people who have sent me here, to give the flattest and most emphatic contradiction. The honorable member does not appear to be a man to do anything of a wild or rash nature, but at the same time he has made statements of that character in reference to the question of alien labour. I have been returned for absolutely the blackest spot on the continent, and, therefore, I pose as an authority to some extent on this matter ; and I say, without hesitation, that not only the member for Brisbane, but also the member for Oxley, has put his case in an altogether improper light before the House. The labour party, to which I have the honour to belong, have been painted as revolutionists and iconoclasts, and as a class who have come here specially to destroy a particular industry. We have come here with no intention of the kind, but with the idea that we are going to put the sugar industry on a proper and substantial basis. We have no desire to injure the industry in any way whatever, and I can assure the House that if the lines we propose, and which we hope the Prime Minister will give us the opportunity of discussing, were accepted by Parliament, the industry would be in a better condition than ever. During my candidature I emphatically stated I did not wish to do anything of a drastic nature. We wish to give time to the people who employ alien labour to substitute other labour, and the honorable member for Brisbane, in the position he has taken up, is quixotically tilting at windmills of his own creation. He has painted the labour party as industrial thugs - as people who come here 'with the determination to ruin a very estimable class in our own State. I may say that amongst my own constituents there are a great number who, whilst they are not wedded to black labour, and have shown their ability to grow sugar entirely with white labour, are supporters, not only of myself, but of the other members of the labour party. I have not much time to go into this matter, and as the House intends, I think, to adjourn at 4 o'clock, I trust the Prime Minister will fulfil his promise, and give us an early opportunity of debating this question in its entirety. When that opportunity arrives, I shall go into the matter in more detail than it is possible to do at the present moment. I take this opportunity of saying that not only I myself, but the party to which I belong, will oppose to the best of their ability any attempt to foist on the country a Royal commission to inquire into this matter. We know very well in Queensland what that means. In 1898 Queensland spent ?14,000 on Royal commissions, and I do not think that half-a-dozen of the recommendations of those commissions have been adopted. Therefore, we consider that commissions are simply a farce. While on this question of black labour, I may mention that there are three gentlemen from Queensland who have come here specially in connexion with this question of coloured labour. I dare say honorable members have had letters from the council of the Chamber of Commerce on the subject. These gentlemen have no authority to come here. Queensland has already expressed a most decisive opinion on the matter, and if anybody knows anything at all about the subject, surely it is the people who are so deeply engaged and interested in that industry. One of the gentlemen who comes here as a delegate in connexion with this black labour business was very badly beaten in the late federal elections upon this very issue. That gentleman, therefore, has no right to appear here as an authority on the subject. We have heard of the three tailors of Tooley street, and now we can

refer to the three kanakaphiles of Queensland, who have approached this Chamber by circular. It is only about a year ago since from one end of this continent to the other there was a wave of patriotism. Everywhere one went, whether in the drawing-room, in the kitchen, or in the street, one heard the most patriotic songs being sung or played.

Mr O'Malley

- The They had it bad.

Mir. BAMFORD. - They had it bad, as the untamed terror of Tasmania says. That partiotism was played upon by the Jingoistic papers 'of this continent. We were told, and we believed it - and there are members here who believe it yet - that an Englishman was competent to tackle three or four Frenchmen, four or five Germans, and an unlimited number of other foreigners. Yet honorable members will probably tell this Chamber that a white man is not equal to a kanaka. This is the position which the supporters of black labour take up, and I hold that it is an untenable position. I say from what I know, that white men are now growing a very large proportion of the cane that is grown in Queensland. I will say nothing more on this subject, but will devote the time that is left to me to the Tariff question. I do not' intend, to inundate the House with figures, or to flood the Chamber with statistics from Coghlan, or drawn from the very bowels of Mulhall. We have had any amount of that during this debate. We have on the Opposition side free-traders, and on the Ministerial side protectionists. We have revenue tariffists, we have moderate tariffists, and we have in the honorable member for Bendigo - who, if he will permit me, I should like to compliment upon his most excellent speech - a reasonable tariffist. I am going to add a new note to the tariffist discord, and am going to term myself a fiscal atheist. I stand here, as most of my compatriots of the labour party do, as a socialist.

I utter the word with almost bated breath, the roof remains intact, and no yawning chasm open at my feet to swallow rae. up.

An Honorable Member. - We are all socialists.

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Mr BAMFORD

- I look at the question from my own particular stand-point. I listened with very great attention to what has been said from the other side of this. Chamber and from the Ministerial side, and I must congratulate the honorable member* who have spoken upon the very great pains they must have token in the preparation of their speeches. But I must indorse to a great extent what fell from the honorable member for Dalley, who said that he did not believe that what was uttered in this Chamber would have the slightest effect in convincing any honorable member either one way or the other. I can -quite understand that, because most honorable members have come here with their opinions formed and a great majority ave pledged to their constituents to adopt a particular line of conduct regarding this fiscal' question. I also listened with considerable interest to the remarks of the honorable member foi' West Sydney on this subject. He pictured to us what has happened in America. He drew a picture of the millionaire on one side and the unfed, unclothed, uneducated pauper on the other side. The honorable member might have gone further and have taken us into his confidence regarding the multi millionaire. He referred to the gigantic strikes that occurred in America- and we know that the Americans do everything on a large scale. There is no doubt about it that things in America are in a very remarkable condition indeed. They have these enormous strikes there as well as in other parts of the world. But in America there is no doubt of it, things are very much mixed. If we shake the dust of protected America from om' feet, cross the Atlantic Ocean, and land on the shores of the dear old mother country, what do we 'find? Are the conditions there any better than they are in other places 1 Looking at it from our particular stand-point, I say they are not. They are not one whit better. We find there the most abject poverty on the one side, contrasted with the grandest affluence on the other side. They have in that dear did country their laws of trespass and many other laws, such as the gome laws, which do not commend them selves, at any rate to us from a socialistic stand-point. The honorable member for West Sydney did not attempt to trace any connexion between these fiscal policy of the respective Governments and the social conditions of the people. In fact, there is no connexion whatever. In England, we have all sorts of panaceas recommended to the people. In 1846, or a little earlier, when the Chartist riots commenced, we had free-trade. That was a nostrum that was to give every one happiness ; but at the present time, although the corn laws have been repealed it is just as difficult for the proletariat to obtain a loaf as it was before the corn laws were abrogated. The

conditions may have improved to a great extent, but that is not owing to the fiscal laws, but in spite of them. The improved conditions have been brought about by the class to which I have the honour to belong, by the people who have fought and bled, and in many cases died to accomplish reforms. In America and England one has the two poles of the fiscal current, and so far as the great masses of mankind are concerned, both these poles are negative. Whatever the fiscal policy may be, we always have the two first robbers. In the first case we have the importing robber, in the other case the manufacturing robber. Irrespective of what the fiscal conditions may be, the financial vulture will bury his beak deep in the flesh of writhing humanity and gorge himself, not to repletion, because that never happens. His accursed appetite is ever growing by what it feeds on. I will go back for one moment to the alien labour question. The honorable member for Dalley referred to the way this question had been treated by the Minister for Defence. The honorable member said that the Minister treated it in a light and airy fashion. To me it appears that the mind that can conceive anything of a light and airy nature, either in the personal ponderosity or the elephantine emphasis of the Minister for Defence must be a mind of a very peculiar type indeed.

Sir John Forrest

- Is that a joke?

Mr BAMFORD

- Yes, in a purely Pickwickian sense. Before concluding I wish to refer, as I think I have a perfect right to do, to certain omissions from the speech of the Governor-General. One of these has been incidentally touched upon by the honorable member for Bourke, that is the question of a State bank. I did hope to see in the speech some method propounded by which the Federal Government would take to itself at any rate a considerable amount of the coin reserves in our banks, and guarantee a note issue. Another omission is I think more regrettable. In sub-section (12) of section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act, provision is made for coining by the Commonwealth. I have been looking up statistics in a perfunctory sort of manner, and I find that in Queensland in 1898 there was £38,000 of silver specie imported. In Victoria there was over £60,000 imported. Now, as we all know, the actual value of silver bullion is about 50 per cent. of its face value, and taking these two States as a line, it may be safely assumed that at least £200,000 of silver is imported every year. Assuming also that we can buy silver for half its face value there is a profit of from £80,000 to £100,000 to be made by the Commonwealth coining its own silver, not to mention what might be gained by its copper coinage, which, however, I allow is not a great matter. This appeals to me as something worthy the consideration of the Ministry. The coinage of silver is one of the ways in which the dear old mother country gets home on its beloved colonies. I sincerely thank the House for the reception which it has given to me. To me, as a new member, it has been particularly gratifying, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for having had the opportunity to address the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr. A. C. Groom) adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr DEAKIN

- In moving-

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next, at half-past 2 p.m.

I trust that effect will then be given to the tacit understanding that has been arrived at that under any circumstances the debate will close on that evening. There is no desire on the part of the Government to deprive any honorable member of the opportunity to speak, but, meeting at half-past two as we shall on Tuesday, there should certainly be opportunity then for all those who desire to express their opinions to do so without a further postponement.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Then we must have no more three-hour speeches from honorable members supporting the Government.

Mr Watson

-Nor two-and-a-half-hour speeches from members of the Opposition.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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16:05:00

House adjourned at 4.1 p.m.