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1901-12-09

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

MILITARY COMMANDANT

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I was asked a few days ago, when, making a statement regarding the command of the Federal Forces, when it was likely that Sir -Edward Hutton would arrive in Australia. I have now the pleasure to say that a telegram, has been received intimating that he sails in the Orient mail steamer Austral from Marseilles on the 27th of this month, and will arrive in Melbourne on 29th January next.

QUESTIONS

VICTORIAN LETTER CARRIERS

Mr HUME COOK

asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

When the Victorian letter carriers and sorters who have been in receipt for three years or more of the maximum salaries of their classes, as provided under the Public Service-Act of 1883, will receive the long service increment to which they are entitled under the Act, of December, 1900.

Mr BARTON

- The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows -

There are no Victorian letter carriers or sorters entitled to receive the long service, increment as provided in section 9, sub-section (3), of the Public Service Act 1900.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MONEY-ORDER OFFICERS

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Mr MAHON

asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

'Whether, having reference to his answer to question No. 1 of 27th November last, that money orders issued by Western Australian officers after 2 p.m. on week days, other than Saturdays, and after 11 a.m. on Saturdays, are necessarily "delayed-until" the following day, because they are too late for despatch by the mail trains, he is aware that the mail train from Kalgoorlie to Perth does not leave Coolgardie until after 4 p.m. daily.

Whether, under the existing system, the money-order officials are not required to balance accounts twice, instead of once, daily, and, if so, whether he proposes to continue a practice which unnecessarily withdraws the officers from attending to public requirements.

Mr BARTON

- The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow : -

The Postmaster-General is aware that the mail train from Kalgoorlie to Perth does not leave Coolgardie until after four p.m. daily. He has now been advised of a further difficulty in connexion with money orders, in consequence of a local Treasury instruction that a receipt from the bank, which must be obtained before three p.m., must accompany the postmaster's remittance statement to be forwarded by the same mail as the money orders are sent by.

In consequence of the arrangement referred to, it is necessary to make a small addition to the afternoon balance, which, however, seldom takes more than two or three minutes, and the department is not aware that any complaints have been made of consequent delays to business, or of any inconvenience that has been sustained by the public. Other arrangements will be made from 1st January next.

CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION.

Mr PHILLIPS

asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, upon notice -

Is it a fact that the Customs department is at present collecting a duty of 20 per cent, on tartaric acid, bicarbonate of soda, caustic soda, citric acid, and cream of tartar ?

If so, is this not contrary to the intention of Parliament, as this House has not agreed to any such duty ? Will he immediately issue instructions to allow these articles to be introduced free of duty ?

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- The answer to the honorable member's questions is as follows -

An alteration made by the committee was construed by the officers to include these goods as dutiable : but though this meaning could be justified, the Government, recognising that this was not so intended by the House, have directed the free admission of these goods.

AUSTRALIAN RIFLEMEN.

Mr PIESE

asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice -

Whether there has been any promise made by himself or the right honorable the Prime Minister to consider the advisability of sending a representative team of Australian riflemen to

Bisley next year. 2., If such promise has not already been made, will the right honorable the Minister for Defence take the matter into his early consideration, and inform this House of his determination, so that the necessary arrangements may be made in due time?

Minister for Defence

Sir JOHN FORREST

- The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow : -

No promise has been made.

No provision has been made on the Estimates for the purpose, and nothing can be done without funds being first provided.

CONTRACTS, QUEENSLAND POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr PAGE

asked the Minister for Home Affairs, upon notice -

What fs the reason for the non-payment of contractors having contracts with the Postal department in Queensland for contracts finished and passed by the Works department months ago, and will he see that they are paid promptly in the future ?

Minister for Home Affairs

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The answer to the honorable member's question is . as follows : -

The only case of the character mentioned by . the honorable member which can be traced in my department is that of the post-office, Juudah, and from the information available it seems that in April last year the State Postmaster-General approved of tenders being called for additions to this building. Owing to the drought prevailing, the work was not commenced until April this year, and it is presumed was not finished until about September or October. When the matter was brought under my notice about three weeks since, though in somewhat an irregular way, I immediately telegraphed to the Minister for Public Works, Brisbane, asking that his department would pay the contractor. No direct reply was received, but the Deputy Postmaster-General, Brisbane, telgraphed that the Works department had intimated that they had no vote from which to pay. With a view to expediting the matter, I then asked the postal authorities to pay the amount, promising to recoup them. I will make inquiry as to any other cases.

POST-OFFICE REPAIRS.

Mr BAMFORD

asked the Minister representing the Postmaster - General, upon notice -

What arrangements, if any, have been made for the supervision of work being done by way of painting, repairs, Sc., to various post-offices in the Commonwealth ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows : -

That pending permanent arrangements for the establishment of a Public Works Branch of the Department of Home Affairs, work such as mentioned by the honorable member is approved by the Minister for Home Affairs, and carried out for the Commonwealth under the supervision of the Public Works departments in each State.

THE TARIFF.

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In Committee of Ways and Meant.

Consideration resumed from 6th De cember(vide page 8419).

Division V. - Special Exemptions.

Apparel and Attire - Minor Articles for : -

Bindings and Stay and Boot Laces (except of Leather), Braids, Buckles and Buttons (not for adornment), Busk and Stay Fasteners Protectors and Shields, Bodice and Skirt Steels, Ferrettings, Filletings, Hooks and Eyes, Tapes, Webs, Waddings, Webbing, Wire, and Wire Ribbon.

Diving Dresses.

Bags and Sacks, viz. : - Bran, Corn, Flour, Potato and Onion, Gunnies, Ore, Sugar Bags and Mats, Woolpacks.

Elastic Stockings, Surgical.

Meat Wraps, made up or in the piece.

Hats, Miners'.

Hats-

Minor articles for : -

Buckles, not for adornment.

Plaits.

Helmets, Firemen's.

Parasols, Sunshades, and Umbrellas -

Minor articles for : -

Cups, Ferrules, Notches, Ribs, Rings and Runners and Handles, not containing gold or silver.

Felt Sheathing, Bunting.

Milling Silk.

Cotton and Linen Piece Goods, viz. : -

Italians, Silesias, n.e.i., Pocketings, Flax Paddings, Buckrams, French Canvas, Wick, Lamp and Candle.

Hair Cloth and Hop Cloth.

Canvas, Hessians, and Brattice Cloth.

Yarn, Angora.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I wish to ask the Minister if it will be possible, before we finish with the Tariff, to reconsider the decision of the committee in regard to cotton goods. I am certain that if the duties are allowed to remain as they are, the Customs officers will not be able to know what to do, and further consideration confirms me in the view that cotton goods should either be free or should have a duty placed upon them all round. In my opinion, it is an unwise thing to accumulate exemptions. I understand that an honorable member intends to move that prints be added to the list of exemptions. It must be recognised, however, that in regard to lines like that, there are low-priced goods and high-priced goods, and it is impossible to differentiate between the goods consumed by the wealthier classes and the goods consumed by the poorer classes. In the interests both of the revenue and of commercial convenience and morality, it would be well to reconsider the position of cotton goods. I should like to see an all-round duty of 5 per cent. imposed on such goods, because such a duty would not be felt by the consumers, and would be beneficial to the revenue. If we go on adding to the list of exemptions, we shall have the most fearful dislocation of trade throughout the Commonwealth, and I do not want embittered feeling to be created by the manner in which the Customs department is administered.

Mr KINGSTON

- I appreciate the tone of the honorable member for Wentworth, and recognise his desire for a workable Tariff. There is, however, this difference between the position of the Opposition and that of the Government. The Government consider that a differentiation should be made between cotton goods of the commoner and cheaper kinds used by the poor, which we think should be exempt from taxation, and the better quality goods used by the rich, which we think should bear a not immoderate taxation. Therefore, we do not propose to abandon the principle which the committee have affirmed. There is some little difficulty in preventing overlapping, and doubts and differences in the administration of the department ; but we are sanguine that we shall be able to overcome them, and are giving our best attention to the matter. We are receiving and are considering various suggestions, and we hope very shortly to submit our proposals in a clearer way, though preserving the principle to which I have referred.

It is possible that the existing difficulties have been exaggerated, but no time or trouble will be lost in overcoming them.

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Mr MACDONALD PATERSON

- I have just been astounded to hear that on Friday afternoon last the honorable and learned member for Darling Downs moved and carried an amendment to include sugar bags in the list of exemptions. A good deal of conversation was going on in the chamber at the time, so that it was impossible for those sitting on the benches where I sit to hear the question put, and I was unaware that it had been moved until I heard of it to-day. To make such an exemption is to act against the interests of the bag-makers, not only of Queensland, but of the whole Commonwealth ; and I feel sure that the honorable and learned member for Darling Downs made his proposition on the spur of the moment, without due consideration of the circumstances. I should like to see an even higher duty proposed, and am surprised that the suggestions I have made by correspondence to the Minister for Trade and Customs, supporting the existing duties upon these articles, should have been lost sight of. I have received a batch of correspondence on the topic. If sugar bags are retained on the free list the whole of the business will go to the coolie workers of India, and hundreds of persons in Australia will be instantly thrown out of work. The duty on sugar bags has been 15 per cent, in Queensland, and 25 per cent in Victoria. I ask the Minister to agree to a reconsideration of the item. I am informed that owing to the babel of voices in the chamber at the time, quite a number of honorable members did not hear the proposal to place these articles on the free list.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN

- I was not present at the time when sugar bags were placed on the free list, but I am advised that a great many honorable members were not aware of what was being done. I know from interviews I have had with manufacturers that the course taken on Friday will have a very serious effect on a large number of workers here. That course will assist only the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company, and I therefore urge that the item may be reconsidered. I believe that the honorable and learned member for Darling Downs will admit that he was not aware at the time what effect his proposal would have on a very large industry.

Mr L E GROOM

- My amendment was really moved in the interests of sugar-growers who have cooperative mills. As the farmers and others were receiving some consideration, it seemed to me only fair that a concession should be made to sugar-growers. I have since ascertained that the amendment affects Victoria and Queensland to an extent more than I realized at the time it was moved. As it was passed very hurriedly, I would like the Minister to consent to a reconsideration of the item, in accordance with, I believe, the wish of a good many honorable members. I desire to have the matter re-argued. I looked at the question from only one point of view at the time, but it now seems to me that there are other aspects which deserve consideration.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I do not desire to see made dutiable any article which has been proclaimed free. But I understand that some bags are subject to a duty of 25 per cent, ad valorem - for instance, bags for rolled oats. I do not think it is possible to distinguish any difference between the flour bag and the rolled oats bag I hold in my hand, except that one bears a representation of John Bull, and the other a picture of a kangaroo. While I am against the imposition of any duty, I am as strongly in favour of the 1 Tariff- being dealt with in such a way that people may know what they are doing. I do not wish the Customs to be unnecessarily troubled, nor do I desire to give an opening to fraudulent importers. All I wish to do is to simplify the Tariff. I am not here to see that there is any duty put on an article which is free, but I think several items in this division will have to be reconsidered in the light of the debate during the last day or two.

Mr KINGSTON

- As regards the item of sugar, bags, there seems undoubtedly to have been a misconception on the part of some members of the committee, especially on the part of the honorable and learned member who persuaded us to place it on the free list. Under these* circumstances, the Government, if the committee so wishes, do not offer any objection to the reconsideration of the item. At the same time we do not desire it to be taken as a precedent. It will be reconsidered as early as the Chairman rules that it is possible. We should, be very much obliged if honorable members would give notice of any amendments they propose to move, so that the Government, before they meet the committee, may have an opportunity of obtaining

reports from the . experts in order to advise honorable members as to what is the best conclusion to come to.

Mr HUGHES

- If we are going to reconsider item 64 we should wait until the department has disentangled the sheep from the goats, as it were, so that it can thoroughly make up its mind, and the Ministry are in a position to say what they consider should be included under the heading of exemptions as originally set' down.

Sir George Turner

- We are not dealing with item 64, which relates to piece goods. We are dealing with made-up articles.

Mr HUGHES

- If anything is to be reconsidered, I think that item 64 should be reconsidered, unless the department can do something in the way of facilitating business. The .way in which the department in Sydney is giving one decision, and that in : Melbourne another is heartbreaking.

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Mr Kingston

- That is not so.

Mr HUGHES

- I have placed in the hands of the Minister some facts which go to show that what I say is thoroughly true. I only hope that whatever we may do we shall have all the facts placed at our disposal before it is done, and shall not have to undo our work any more, because both sides of the chamber wish to get on with the business. I do not know what the differences between these bags are, but we certainly should come to some decision.

The CHAIRMAN

-The usual practice is to consider the Tariff in detail, and come to a conclusion, and then recommit, if desired. If there were any extraordinary reason for reconsidering one item at this stage, and if a great injury would otherwise be done, I should be prepared, with concurrence, to allow that . course to be taken. But as I understand that the reconsideration not of one, but of several items is desired by honorable members, I must adhere to the rule of procedure that a recommitment can take place only after the schedule has been dealt with.

Mr PAGE

- I move -

That the words " Friendly Societies' Regalia " be added to "special exemptions."

These articles are not made in Australia, but are specially woven on looms in the old country. For that reason I ask the committee to include them in the special exemptions.

Mr MAUGER

- A very great portion of the regalia of friendly societies is made in Australia. I am actively connected with nearly all the friendly societies in "Victoria, and have opened tenders for the supply of a number of these articles for years past. A large quantity of the regalia for Masonic lodges, for instance, is made in Australia. If the honorable member for Maranoa could separate the articles which are imported from those which are made here the position would be different, but to place them all on the free list would be a very great mistake. It is questionable whether a regalia which is largely ornamental should not pay its share to the revenue.

Mr. PAGE(Maranoa).- This material is not made for sale ; it is imported for the use of members of friendly societies. I am quite willing to make a difference between the imported articles and those which can be made here. I have been connected with friendly societies for twenty years, and we have had to import the material for the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows. The only regalia which is made in the States is that for the principal officers. The rest is specially woven in the old country.

Mr.Mauger. - I have no objection to the material being allowed to come in.

Mr E SOLOMON

- I support the amendment, because the majority of the friendly societies render a great service to the States by assisting those who otherwise might become paupers, thereby obviating the necessity for a great deal of public expenditure.

Mr. KINGSTON(South Australia Minister for Trade and Customs). - It is somewhat difficult to decide what course ought to be taken in connexion with this matter, first and foremost because the attitude of the

different States in regard to it may differ, and I doubt whether in framing a Tariff of this description - seeing that we have no power to legislate concerning friendly societies - we should prescribe it as a national policy that in all cases the articles referred to are to be admitted free. The second objection to the amendment is that a good deal of this regalia can be, and is, manufactured here. The third point; which is not unworthy of consideration, is that it is to some extent of considerable value, being not infrequently adorned with gold and silver. Therefore, it seems to me doubtful whether the Government can justify the total exemption of this regalia from taxation, particularly at a time when we are taxing such things as cotton goods. I hardly believe that the friendly societies - however much we may think of them, and justly think of them - would desire that this portion of their paraphernalia should escape taxation which is of such a general character as that which we are compelled to impose to-day. Under all the circumstances, whilst willing to look further into the matter, if the honorable member presses his amendment at the present stage, we shall consider it our duty to oppose it.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I think I may claim to know a little about friendly society matters. Some of this regalia, it is true, cannot be made here. It has to be specially prepared, and whilst that point might be one for consideration, still the fact remains that a large quantity of it can be, and is, manufactured here. If we were to exempt the whole of this regalia from taxation, we should be doing an injustice to local manufacturers. If the honorable member for Maranoa will leave the matter in the hands of the Comptroller General of Customs, I think he will be acting wisely, and I promise that if it is possible to differentiate between the regalia which can be made here and that which cannot, we shall be willing to allow the latter to come in free. I will take care to inquire into the matter, and if we can meet the wishes of the honorable member we shall only be too pleased.

Mr Page

- Very well.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I beg to move -

That after the word "cotton" the word " prints " be inserted."

We have already decided that calico and shirting of every description shall be added to the free list, and I fail to see why prints which are used by the large body of the people throughout the Commonwealth should not also be included in the schedule of special exemptions. The reasons which have been urged on behalf of cotton goods generally, will apply with more force to prints than to many other articles which are already included in the free list.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - This is just another of the anomalies which I have already pointed out to the committee. We have tried to differentiate between articles which ought legitimately to be placed upon the free list, and those which ought not, and yet we have omitted probably the commonest article of apparel worn by the people, especially throughout the tropical and subtropical portions of Australia, namely, print. I see no consistency in placing under the heading of special exemptions articles such as sheeting, cotton, calico, and dungarees, and excluding prints. Indeed prints are simply the calico printed. The one article is made for an under garment, and the other, with a little bit of finery upon it, for an outer garment.. These prints run from the very lowest prices, and certainly enter largely into the clothing of the great mass of the population. It is absolutely absurd to include some of the items upon the free list which have been so included, if we do not add to the schedule such an article as print, which forms the ordinary apparel of the people from one end of Australia to the other.

Mr FISHER

- The more I hear of this matter, the more apparent it becomes to me that the Government would have acted wisely in imposing a 5 per cent. ad valorem upon all these articles. The question which has been raised, is, I think, a very legitimate one. If we are to allow exemptions such as that which has been proposed, I think that we might very well allow others. I repeat that the Government would do well to reconsider the whole matter, and impose a general ad valorem of 5 per cent.

Mr WILKINSON

- I intend to move that umbrella silk, and silk for ties, cut up in bond, be placed upon the free list. In this

connexion, I merely wish to remark that a very large number of hands are employed in the manufacture of these articles, not only in Melbourne, but throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr KINGSTON

- I might point out to the committee that prints vary in value very considerably. I have in my hand a specification of 44 classes of prints, and I confess that the highest value which is there attached to them is not very much. Under all the circumstances, we propose to allow this article to be added to the free list. If afterwards we see any reason for inviting the committee to reconsider the matter, we are not pledged by the action which we are now taking to refrain from so doing.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment (by Mr. Wilkinson) proposed -

That after the words "milling silk," the following words be inserted: - "Umbrella silk, und silk for ties cut up in bond, as directed by the Minister for Trade and Customs."

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Mr KINGSTON

- We think that we have already done a very fair thing in respect of the umbrella and tie manufacturers of the Commonwealth. Upon umbrellas we have, placed a protective duty of 30 per cent., and at the same time we have given free admission to the great bulk of the articles used in their manufacture. Indeed, we have exempted from taxation nearly everything save the silk. We, therefore, think it is not at all unreasonable to require a small payment in respect of the silk itself. A similar observation applies to ties, which are taxed to the extent of 25 per cent. With a protection of that sort, we think that they might fairly pay the duty which is proposed upon - the raw material.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I quite agree with the Minister for Trade and Customs. Although I think that everything should be as free as possible, we shall be making a farce of the Tariff if we exempt a number of articles between which no man will be able to discriminate. By so doing we shall merely be playing into the hands of people who wish to defraud the revenue. I think that the amendment is altogether unreasonable.

Mr McCOLL

- I am not aware of the whole circumstances of this case. But I would point out that an appeal has been made by the tie-makers, which shows that they will be put to much greater disadvantage under this Tariff than that to which they were subjected under the old Victorian Tariff. Instead of assisting them in any way, they claim that the Government proposals, if carried, will put them to an immense disadvantage even if the raw material were admitted free. The statement made by the tie-makers is that formerly the duty upon ties was 35 per cent, ad valorem, whilst a similar duty was levied on material cut up in bond, whereas the present duty on made-up ties is fixed at 25 per cent., and there is a duty imposed upon material of 15 per cent., which means a protection of 10 per cent. I should like to hear the case of these people put by others who are better acquainted with it than myself, before any decision is arrived at by the committee.

Sir MALCOLMMEACHARN (Melbourne). - I hope that the Minister for Trade and Customs will allow this item to be placed on the exemption list. The industry depends to a large extent upon ' having this treatment meted out to it. Especially is this the case in regard to the manufacture of ties. A special exemption has been given to umbrella sticks, and I trust the committee will also extend the same protection to umbrella silks and ties.

Mr HUME COOK

- I also should like to see the exemption as now proposed extended to cotton goods imported for the purpose of making umbrellas. I am not prepared to go quite as far as the honorable member who has opposed the amendment in regard to umbrella silks. If we limited the exemptions to black and brown silks, it would be sufficient ; but fancy umbrellas may as well be subjected to a duty. At the same time, however, if the amendment goes to a division, I shall vote for it, and trust that the Government will accept it.

Mr CONROY

- I do not understand the attitude of honorable members opposite with regard to this exemption. At one time they tell us that they want a duty because it makes tilings cheaper. Now it is proposed that an article shall be imported free of duty in order that the manufacturers may get their raw material cheaper. How honorable members can say that' the imposition of the duty makes things cheaper and dearer at the same time I cannot understand. Before I sit down, I wish to express the hope that cotton gloves will be

placed amongst the exemptions.

The CHAIRMAN

- An amendment to that effect was moved on Friday, and negatived on the voices. The honorable and learned member cannot debate the subject now, but will have an opportunity when the schedule is recommitted, ,

Mr THOMSON

- I think we are going to make " confusion worse confounded." It will be remembered that when we dealt with the item " piece-' goods," it was said that as they constituted the raw material for other articles we should, in dealing with those secondary items, know what duty had actually been placed upon the piece goods. We have dealt with the raw material of umbrellas and parasols by imposing a duty of 15 per cent, on silk and 10percent on cotton. With that distinct knowledge we allowed the highest ad valorem duty that has yet been passed, 30 per cent., to be placed on imported umbrellas and parasols. Now we are asked to go back upon that position.

Mr Kingston

- The Government are opposing it.

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Mr THOMSON

- But the supporters of the Government, after getting a decision, want to go back upon it by a side wind through the exemption list. If anything was decided by the committee, with its eyes open and with a knowledge of the duty on the raw material,, it was the duty upon umbrellas. In addition to that, this is only a sham sort of industry. It simply means bringing in the pieces and putting them together. Considering the nature of the industry, 'and that we have with our eyes open fixed the difference which should * exist between piece goods and the manufactured article, it is altogether wrong to ask the committee to go back upon its previous decision.

Mr. WILKINSON(Moreton).- In reply to the honorable member who has . just resumed his seat, I would say that whether this be a sham industry or not, the fact remains that it employs a large number of hands at wages very much higher than are paid to workmen and workwomen engaged in the same industry in other countries. I made inquiries during the time when honorable members were visiting some of the Victorian factories, and at one place I asked some questions as to how people in this industry were paid. One man in charge of an establishment" told me that whereas he received35s. a week in England, working 60 hours a week, he was receiving£5 a week in this country for 48 hours work. The object of social reformers is to improve the wages and conditions of labour of persons engaged in our industries. We have people engaged in this particular industry in this country working under conditions which we should like to see applied to the workers in other countries. Under these circumstances the industry is one we should do all we possibly can to encourage. If we are going to abolish sweating and other evils which cling like barnacle's to industries in which the working classes are concerned, we ought to encourage industries that pay good wages, and in which humane conditions exist. We cannot effectually abolish sweating in Australia if we allow goods produced under sweated conditions to be imported. Let them be kept out, and we can make the conditions for our own workers more advantageous. It has been pointed out by the honorable member for Echuca that to impose a duty on the raw material would hamper the industry, because although there is a duty of 30 per cent. on the manufactured article, the duties on the raw material reduce the net amount of the protection to 10 per cent., and this will not cover the difference between what is paid to the employes of the industry in Australia, as compared with the wages received in other countries where sweating conditions exist. There is therefore sufficient justification for the amendment, and I hope the. committee will accept it.

Mr WATSON

- If we allow umbrella silk to come in free, it means 'that we shall get very little duty from silk umbrellas, which are an important item. I am prepared to give some reasonable margin to the people engaged in the industry, but at the same time we cannot logically put duties upon other articles and allow to come in free such an important item as umbrella silk. Therefore I Cannot see my way to vote for the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. HUGHES(West Sydney). - I have supplied the Minister for Trade and Customs with a list of some twenty articles, which the trade generally would like to see added to the special exemptions. I feel certain,

however, that if we discuss the list now, we shall not arrive at any useful decision. If the Government will give us their assurance that after they have had an opportunity of thoroughly reviewing the situation in reference to exemptions, and of ascertaining what the interpretation of the word " linings " and several other items really involves, they will allow us to consider these items, I think it would be better to deal with them later on.

Mr KINGSTON

- At this stage I wish to introduce a further exemption, to which I am sure my honorable friend will not object. It will simplify matters, and remove some of the difficulties, with the result that when we have gone through the list, we shall find probably that there is not much necessity for further amendment. Of course we do not withdraw our promise to allow further consideration of the list. I move -
That the words " plain, white, or unbleached " be inserted before the word " Italians."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. WATSON(Bland). - I move-

That the words "bookbinders' cloth, label cloth, vellum cloth " be added to special exemptions. I propose, also, to move that the items saddlers' serge and collar-checks be placed on the list of special exemptions. I am informed that vellum cloth, which is used in the bookbinders' trade, is not really vellum, although it resembles that article.

Mr Mauger

- What is label cloth?

Mr WATSON

- It is part of the bookbinders' raw material.

Amendment agreed to.

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Mr KINGSTON

- The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, submitted a list of articles which he desired should be added to the special exemptions in item 64. We have had them reported upon, and I propose to place on the list those which have been recommended. I move -

That "saddlers' webs, upholsterers' webs, collar check, saddle serge and felt," be added to special exemptions.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. CONROY (Werriwa). - I wish to have cretonnes placed on the free list, unless they are exempt already under the heading of prints.

Sir GEORGE Turner

-. - I specially mentioned them as coming. under the 15 per cent. list.

Mr Conroy

- I see no reason why cretonnes, which are used almost solely by the poorer classes, should not be placed on the free list. They really belong to the cheaper class of prints.

Mr Watson

- Some cretonnes are very valuable.

Mr CONROY

- Very few. If this is to be a legislative committee, we should determine what goods are to be dutiable, and not leave it to the Custom-house officers to decide. We should make our determinations as clear as possible. In certain ports, one class of goods is being admitted free, while in another port 10 per cent, duty is being collected on the same class. When we find merchants asserting that there is great confusion in regard to these items, I think we should pay some attention to their complaints. I move -

That the word "cretonnes" be added to special exemptions.

Amendment negatived.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I would point out that in item 57 there is a sort of drag-net provision, - which may be held to include all sorts of incongruous articles, such as cotton pocket handkerchiefs, table-cloths, &c. These goods cannot be made here, and are not likely to be made here, and a 10 or 15 per cent, impost would be ample for purely revenue purposes. Whether handkerchiefs are cut into pieces or sent out in lengths, they are practically the same, and we should guard against the possibility of having these and many other every-day necessities of the poor brought

within the operation of the 25 per cent. duty.

Mr R EDWARDS

- Among the exemptions under item 62, firemen's helmets are included, and I understand that fire-engines and appliances are also exempted. There are a number of other articles used by fire brigades which should be exempted from duty, and I should like an opportunity of proposing that all fire brigade plant and appliances should be admitted free.

Mr KINGSTON

- If the honorable member desires to introduce a provision of that sort, he can do so when division -16 - miscellaneous - is under consideration. I trust, however, that honorable members, before they decide to provide for any general exemptions of that character, will consider whether such things ought to be regulated by the State or ought to be treated as matters of national policy.

Mr. McCOLL(Echuca).- I proposed last week that the duty on cotton hosiery should be reduced to 10 per cent., but I allowed the matter to stand over to permit of its further consideration by the Ministry. I would now ask the Treasurer if he has ascertained whether cotton hosiery is being manufactured within the Commonwealth. I have had two letters on the subject, one writer stating that he is about to enter upon the manufacture of these goods, and another stating that such goods are already being made here. These gentlemen have forwarded me samples of ordinary men's socks, but I do not regard this information as sufficient to justify our subjecting the goods to a heavy duty. ,

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- In connexion with the fire brigade plant and appliances, I wish to point out that the)7 have hitherto been admitted free of duty in Queensland, and I hope honorable members will take that fact into consideration when they are called upon to consider the matter.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- With reference to cotton hosiery, I might point out to the honorable member for Echuca that there has not been sufficient time since the House adjourned on Friday to allow of my making inquiries. I have received a letter from a gentleman who is manufacturing cotton hosiery for one of our largest firms at the rate of 3s. lid. per dozen pairs. He says that these goods are being largely imported from Japan, and if we were to impose a mere revenue duty upon them' we should not encourage the local industry. I can only ask the honorable member to allow the matter to remain in abeyance until we are about to finally deal with the Tariff. In the meantime we shall have opportunities of making investigations. Since it appears that these articles are being made here, we shall have to oppose any reduction of the duty at the present time.

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Mr McCOLL

- On the understanding that I shall have an opportunity of dealing with the matter before the Tariff is finally passed, I shall allow it to stand over for the present.

Special exemptions, as amended, agreed to.

Motion (by Mr. Kingston) proposed -

That division 5 (apparel and textiles), as amended, be agreed to.

Mr PIESSE

- I had given notice of my intention to propose an amendment in this division, but the revenue has been so depleted by the reduction of duties that, in the interests of the State I represent, I must conserve what little is left ; therefore I shall not carry out my original intention.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- It is desirable that we should know the intentions of the Government with regard to cotton goods, such as those referred to by the honorable member for Wentworth.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I have already intimated to the Government that it will be necessary to analyse item 57 more closely, and that I shall make a proposition on the subject later on. There will be no advantage in dealing with the matter in a piecemeal fashion, but it will be necessary to further consider it after full inquiry.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney).- The word "articles "in item 57 can be made to embrace an enormous variety of goods, if the Customs-house officers so decide. It is certainly necessary to have some understanding upon the subject.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- It is highly desirable that we should know what position we are to occupy. We shall not be able to deal with the whole of the Tariff before Christmas, and in the meantime a heavy duty

will be collected on a number of cotton articles which ought not to be subject to a impost of more than 10 per cent, at the outside. There is no guarantee that in cases where an excess of duty has been paid, a refund will be made, and the sooner we learn from the Minister for Trade and Customs how and when he intends to deal with these various items the better.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I endeavoured to have the word " articles " omitted from the item, but the committee refused to adopt my amendment, and therefore my only resource is to make out a case further on, which I am sure the Ministry will be willing to consider.

Mr KINGSTON

- If honorable members will give notice of their proposed amendments, we shall have them examined, and be prepared to give the fullest information in regard to them when the items to which they refer come before the committee.

Mr Conroy

- If I were to give notice of the exemptions which I should like to have made, it would contain the names of all articles which are imported into the Commonwealth.

Mr. McCOLL(Echuca):- Will it be competent for honorable members to give notice of amendments providing for the treatment of articles in the manner in which it is proposed in Division VIa to treat certain manufactures of metal. In almost every division of the Tariff a number of articles are mentioned which are not made here now, but which could be made here, and we could encourage their manufacture if we allowed people to establish their works without the community having to bear a heavy burden of taxation, and, in the meantime, allowing the articles to come in free. If the provisions of Division VIa were applied to a number of other articles besides those therein specified, it would mean a large increase of work here.

Sir William McMillan

- It is a very dangerous principle to apply.

Mr KINGSTON

- No doubt it is within the competency of honorable members to give notice of such amendments, but I am not prepared at this moment to express the opinion of the Government in regard to such proposals, except to say that all suggestions will be considered on their merits.

Division V, as amended, agreed to.

Division VI. - Metals and Machinery. -

Item 08 - Ammunition, viz., shot, bullets, and slugs, per cwt. 7s. fid.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - This is a revenue-producing item, I presume 1

Sir George Turner

- There is a shot industry here and -another in Hobart. We have the lead, and why should we not make the shot ?

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I see that the duty is estimated to return £588, which is very little. I think the rate might, be reduced. However, the matter is a very small one, and hardly worth bothering about.

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie). The duty seems to . me rather too large. Farmers and selectors have often to resort to the gun to protect their crops from rabbits, hares, flying-foxes, and other pests, and the fact that we produce lead in the country is a reason why the shot-making industry should be able to get on without a duty.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). - Now that the committee is sitting so frequently, it is impossible for honorable members to fully acquaint themselves with the conditions of trade in regard to the various articles on the Tariff, and at this moment I am unaware what the importations of shot and bullets into this country amount to, but the proposed duty, which is equal to 40 or 50 per cent., is a very high one, and the amount that it is estimated to return is very little. Considering- that these articles are used - almost entirely by the farmers and selectors to get rid of vermin, the tax is a very unfair one. If we continually tax the primary producers of the country, they will eventually sink into a state of poverty without parallel even in the condition of the Victorian farmers, because these latter have hitherto had the States -of New South Wales and Western Australia to flee to. Without that relief, heaven only knows to what depths of poverty they would have sunk. I move -

That the words " and on and after 10th December, 1001, free," be added.

Mr. McCOLL(Echuca).- While I do not agree with the honorable member for Werriwa that taxation always makes things dearer, because I know that in an enormous number of instances the imposition of duties has made commodities here cheaper, the proposed duty seems to me to be too high. Not only will it affect persons living in the country, but it will also be a serious tax upon riflemen and others.

Sir George Turner

- Riflemen are supplied at moderate terms by the State.

Mr McCOLL

- Only to a certain extent. The home price of these articles is £16 10s. per ton, and the price out here is £24 a ton, a difference which is altogether too great. therefore move -

That the words "and on and after 10th December, .1901, 5s." be added.

Sir William McMillan

- I would suggest to the honorable member for Werriwa that he should accept that amendment.

Mr Conroy

- I think my amendment should be put first ?

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie).- It is important that the committee should know how it stands in regard to this matter. If we agree to a duty of 5s. on and after the 10th December, will it be competent for an honorable member to move that on and after a later date the duty shall be 2s. 6d. per cwt ?

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - There has been a departure from the arrangement we made, that if an honorable member failed in his effort to place an item on the free list, he might move that the duty be a certain amount on and after a certain day. I consider that the honorable and learned member for Werriwa has been placed in a false position by negating the proposal, as his intention was, if the committee would not place the item on the free list, to move that the duty be 2s. 6d. or 5s. In my opinion, a duty of 5s. is a reasonable compromise on an item which, to my mind, is not a very important one.

The CHAIRMAN

- If the committee desire to have this item reconsidered, I shall offer no objection.

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear.

Amendment (by Mr. Conroy) proposed -

That the words "and on and after 10th December, 1901, free" be added.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I recognise that to do away with a duty is sometimes an extreme step to take. I should like to hear the views of those honorable members who think that it would be a great grievance to farmers and others to impose this duty.

Mr. PAGE(Maranoa). - In West Queensland a large number of men get their living , by shooting kangaroos. The railway freight on the shot and slugs is extremely high, and that is, I think, a sufficient burden for them to bear. These men do not follow any other occupation. As the estimated revenue from this source is only a few hundred pounds, the Government might well allow shot, bullets, and slugs to come in free.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I do not regard this duty from a revenue point of view, but from a protective point of view. The fact that it is estimated to yield such a small amount of revenue shows that we are providing for nearly all our requirements. Surely, when we have this industry established in Victoria and Tasmania, we should not take away the protection which has been given. When a duty of 7s. 6d., equal to about 40 per cent., was proposed, honorable members thought it was too high, and we willingly agreed that it should be reduced to 5s. Surely that is a fair compromise. I feel certain that the honorable member for Maranoa does not desire to take any step which might have the effect of preventing the shot factories in Tasmania and Victoria from carrying on their business.

Mr McCAY

- Up to the present time in Queensland, shot has been admitted duty free. Last year it imported £874 worth.

Mr Page

- But we make it ourselves with Broken Hill lead.

Mr McCAY

- If the Queenslanders make the shot, they need not be afraid, because the competition between the various factories will keep the price as it is. But even if it were increased by 5s. a cwt. - though I do not agree with that view at all - it would represent an increase of only £180 for the whole State which, divided amongst its people, would not amount to a very large sum per head. This small duty would benefit somebody and injure no one. Taking the figures for New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, the duty has varied from 20½ to 21½ per cent on the values, as shown in the Statistical Registers. In New South Wales the value is 23s. per cwt. at the port of entry, and last year the State imported 2,610 cwt., valued at £3,001.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). - I find that the figures are rather worse than I understood at first. New South Wales imports 100 tons, or about a third of the total quantity imported into the Commonwealth.

Mr McCay

- 130 tons.

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Mr CONROY

- Roughly, the Commonwealth imports 400 tons, which at £5 per ton would yield a revenue of £2,000. Without a Tariff, New South Wales has employed, in the manufacture of shot, two and a-half times more men than Victoria has done. Victoria has employed 38 hands, and New South Wales 101. A duty of 5s. is far too high. I should be willing to forego my amendment to place the article on the free list, if the Minister would agree to a duty of 2s. 6d. I feel a great difficulty in consenting to the duty being fixed at 5s., since I have learned that it is the desire merely to keep a few individuals going in the shot factories, to tax struggling farmers and selectors, who are trying to kill their vermin.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Mr.Conroy) negatived -

That the words "and on and after 10th December, . 1901, 2s. 6d. " be added.

Amendment (by Mr. McColl) agreed to -

That the words "and on and after 10th December, 1901, 5s. " be added.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 69. - Arms, viz. :-

Rifles, n.e.i., shot guns, revolvers, pistols, air guns and air pistols, bayonets, swords, fencing foils and masks, gun, revolver and pistol cover cases and fittings, loading tools, and cartridge belts, ad valorem 15 per cent.

Special, Exemption.- Arms, viz. :- Rifles, military and match.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - This is to a large extent a revenue duty, for I do not suppose that any small arms are being manufactured in Australia. Considering the great necessity for guns in all parts of Australia, and especially in the interior, we ought not to load too heavily those who will derive the least benefit from the Tariff. No doubt we can accept it as a general principle that the people who will get the least out of the Tariff are those who live in the interior. In accordance with the principle I have followed all through, I do not propose to move the omission of this item". Under all the circumstances, I think that a duty of 10 per cent. would be a very fair one. From my point of view, it would be a better revenue-producing duty, because a high duty would reduce the trade in these articles. I think it will appeal to the common sense and judgment of honorable members, on both both sides of the Chamber, that 10 per cent. is a reasonable duty to impose. I move -

That the words - " and on and after 10th December, 1901, 10 per cent. " be added.

Mr. PAGE(Maranao).- I think that the acting leader of the Opposition has offered a very fair and equitable compromise. He has pointed out in a clear and concise manner that this duty will principally affect the people who are resident in the interior of the continent. Surely they are deserving of some little consideration. The Government have imposed taxation upon everything consumed by the people of Western Queensland, and now they propose to tax up to the hilt even their tools of trade. The residents of the back blocks of Queensland have a very high regard for the present Minister for Trade and Customs ; but if he is anxious to retain their good opinion, he will accept the amendment which has been submitted.

Mr KINGSTON

- It is very difficult to resist an appeal couched in such terms as those employed by the honorable member for Maranao. But still our duty must prevail. The duty proposed by the Government is the one that we

want. I am sure that I shall be able to face the good people of Queensland when I tell them that in regard to this particular item, our proposal is to reduce by 10 per cent. the duty which they have hitherto been paying. They have been paying 25 per cent. whereas the rate which we propose is only 15 per cent. I fail to see, therefore, that they have very much cause for complaint. We must have revenue. This is not a big item, but "Many a mickle makes a muckle." Surely those who indulge in the use of arms can afford to pay this trifling amount to the revenue ! I would also point out that military and match rifles are at present exempt from taxation, and we propose to extend that provision to include even the cadet's rifles. But the proud possessor of a rifle or shot gun will not feel his patriotism diminished by being called upon to pay this low revenue rate for the enjoyment of those arms. I would also point out that the item does not refer only to rifles and shot guns, but includes revolvers, pistols, and air guns. Do the people in the back blocks go about with an air gun or a pistol, a bayonet, or a sword ? Do they go kangarooing in that way? Do they arm themselves with fencing foils, or put masks on for the purpose of preserving their complexions ? I think that if the honorable member for Maranoa looks at the matter closely, he will conclude that we are not asking too much. In point of fact, it is a pity that we did not fix a little higher rate.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- I. think that rifles and shot guns, at least, should carry a duty of only 10 per cent., as proposed by the acting leader of the Opposition. Sporting rifles and shotguns are exceedingly valuable auxiliaries in the destruction of vermin in the back-blocks. They are used to assist in the extermination of wallabies, wild dogs, rabbits, etc., the presence of which constitute a menace to the settlers' stock and crops. It does not matter very much whether we impose a higher duty upon revolvers, pistols, swords, etc., but I suggest to the Minister for Trade and Customs that he might reconsider his decision, and agree to place shot guns and sporting rifles upon the 10 per cent. basis.

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Mr KINGSTON

- I would point out to the committee that a great many of these rifles are pea or saloon rifles, which are chiefly used in cities. Upon an average, guns would not pay more than 4s. or 5s. duty, because they are usually invoiced at about £2 10s. Under all the circumstances, I think that the committee might let us have the item, as it stands.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be so added - put. The committee divided.

23

AYES

24

NOES

Majority 1

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. WATSON(Bland). - I intend to move that the duty on rifles, n.e.i., and shot guns be 10 per cent. I propose to leave the other articles in this item on the 15 per cent. basis, but sporting rifles and shot guns are so essential to the wiping out of pests that affect the farmer, that we should have a straight vote upon them. I was willing enough to come to a compromise if the Minister would have accepted it, but in default of that I had to vote for the amendment of the acting leader of the Opposition. I urge the committee to consider what I now wish to -propose, separately from the duty on other articles mentioned in item 69. Rifles and shot guns stand in a different position, and affect a class of the community who are already sufficiently burdened by means of the Tariff. I move -

That after the words " shotguns " the following words be inserted: - "15 per cent., and on and after 10th December, 10 per cent."

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bat- chelor) - I do not think the honorable member for Bland can move that amendment. He is proposing to go back. We have finished the whole of item 69.

Mr Watson

- We have not yet affirmed anything. We have merely decided that certain words shall not be added. That decision does not limit the right of an honorable member to pick out any one of the articles mentioned in the item for special treatment. All that has been put to the committee is whether certain words proposed

by the honorable member for Wentworth shall be added to the item. That amendment was resolved in the negative. But the committee have affirmed nothing yet, and I maintain that it is open for me to move the reduction of the duty on any particular article mentioned in the item.

Sir William McMillan

- While I did not intend to raise the question which the honorable member for Bland has raised, I think he is quite in order. The whole question with regard to the item has not yet been put, and when it is put it is open to any honorable member to move an amendment upon it. All that the committee have done is to reject one amendment. Apart from any technicality, however, the understanding come to was that every opportunity should be allowed for considering the details of items.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN.- I would draw the attention of the honorable member to Standing Order No. 135, which says" that -

No amendment shall be proposed to an³ part of a question after a later part has been amended.

That particular part of the standing order does not apply in this instance, but the rule also says -

Or, after a question has been proposed on an amendment thereto.

I think that does apply.

Sir William McMillan

- I think the point which is not fully grasped by the Acting Chairman, is that we had a distinct understanding that apart from any technicality arising under the standing orders, every opportunity should be allowed for discussion. I therefore think that, it would be better to allow the honorable member for Bland to proceed with his amendment.

Mr Kingston

- What I take to be the undoubted rule is that after a certain proposal has been negatived, it cannot be put again until a subsequent stage of our proceedings is reached. It is also clear that that applies to the whole item as well as to any part of it.

Mr Watson

- Oh, no.

Mr Kingston

- Have we not negatived the amendment that the duty on rifles and shot guns should be reduced to 10 per cent. The real position undoubtedly is that, if the honorable member for Bland had chosen, he could have asked for the articles mentioned in the item to be put separately. In that case he could have moved for a lower duty upon shot guns and rifles. But, having failed to exercise his right in that respect, and the whole question having been put, and the amendment upon it negatived, I think the Acting Chairman is perfectly right in ruling that no amendment can now be moved upon a particular article mentioned in the item.

Mr Watson

- If the right honorable gentleman thinks this course will facilitate getting the Tariff through, he is mistaken.

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Mr Kingston

- I regret that the honorable member should speak in that way. My opinion is that the Acting Chairman was undoubtedly right in ruling as he did, and it is my duty to express my opinion upon the subject in that direction. But, on the other hand, there is no doubt that the Government have promised to do all that is possible to facilitate a decision being obtained on the different items. . We are prepared to do anything which can fairly be asked for in that connexion. If the committee desire it, and the Acting Chairman sees fit to withdraw his ruling on the point, the Government have no objection to a vote being taken upon the amendment which the honorable member for Bland desires to move. At the same time it is my duty to point out what the real parliamentary position is, and that the Acting Chairman's ruling is absolutely right. If persisted in, it must be upheld by all who have a due regard for parliamentary practice.

Mr HUGHES

- Up to the present, every latitude has been given to honorable members for moving amendments upon items. I understand the ruling of the Acting Chairman to be that an amendment on the whole item having been negatived, it is not competent for the honorable member for Bland to move an amendment on a portion of it. But I believe that the honorable member for Bland did not think that the negativing of the amendment of the acting leader of the Opposition would preclude him from moving a subsequent

amendment. Consequently, the committee will be doing the honorable member an injustice if they do not give him the opportunity of obtaining a decision on this point. Under the circumstances, I think the Acting Chairman will do well to allow the honorable member for Bland to move his amendment, letting it be distinctly understood that, in future, it is not competent to decide the details of items after an amendment upon the whole item has been moved and negatived.

Mr Watson

- I should have nothing to say against the ruling of the Acting Chairman if we were following the usual course of procedure which is adopted when amendments are proposed in respect of Bills. In relation to the Estimates and Tariff proposals, the procedure which I have seen followed invariably elsewhere - and it has been followed here also - is to take the most extreme proposal first. The honorable member for Wentworth's proposition was the extreme of those suggested. He desired that all the articles named in this item should be placed on the 10 per cent, basis. Some of us are prepared to place only a few of them on that basis, and the course which I propose is less drastic than that suggested by the honorable member for Wentworth.

Mr Kingston

- All the articles in the item were voted upon.

Mr Watson

- The Minister knows that when Estimates are under consideration a motion may be tabled, for example, to reduce a salary from £500 to £200, and the negativing of that proposal does not preclude the discussion of the salary generally, and the tabling of a motion for its » reduction from £500 to £100 per annum.

Mr Kingston

- That is a different ques-« tion.

Mr Watson

- The question of degree and the method of putting the question are exactly the same. It is a question whether the committee will agree to certain words being added. I propose to add certain words to the list of exemptions, which are altogether distinct from the honorable member for Wentworth's proposal, and because of that fact I submit that it is competent for my amendment to be proposed. The arrangement which has been arrived at between the Government and the Opposition is a further reason why my proposition should be allowed to be put.

Mr Piesse

- I think that it would be in pursuance of the understanding arrived at, and I believe also that it would be in accordance with the practice if the honorable member for Bland were allowed to move his amendment. I am opposed to his proposal.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN. - I do not think the course proposed is in accordance with what has been the practice of the committee during the discussion on the Tariff, but, while I certainly cannot withdraw my ruling, I desire to meet the convenience of honorable members, and with the concurrence of the committee, I shall allow the honorable member to move, his amendment.

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear.

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Mr Kingston

- It will not be taken as a precedent.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- I submit that it will be a precedent, but we can discuss that matter when the occasion arises. I move -

That the words, "and on and after 10th December, 1901, rifles, n.e.i., and shot guns, ad valorem 10 per cent.," be added.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). -I was disposed at first to think that the honorable member for Bland was not quite correct in his contention, but I consider that he has clearly pointed out the difference between the affirmation and the negation of a motion. I intend to support the amendment.

Mr BROWN

- I hope that the committee will see its way clear to make the exception sought by the honorable member for Bland. In New South Wales, which, no doubt, is largely typical of most of the other States ' in this respect, settlers have great difficulty in fighting against noxious animals and birds. It is only by the very

liberal use of firearms that they are able to cope with the evil. Not only is this the case with graziers and farmers, but with gardeners and vigneron, and, in the interests of these settlers, the concession should be made. Personally, I should prefer to see the item placed on the free list, but, practically, the committee have already decided against that being done.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be so added - put. The committee divided.

25

AYES

23

NOES

Majority ... 2

AYES

NOES

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. WATSON(Bland).- Will the Government consider the desirability of placing "loading tools" also on the 10 per cent. basis ?

Sir George Turner

- Let the item go.

Mr WATSON

- Very well ; I shall not press the matter.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 70 - Iron, plate and sheet, viz. : -

Plain galvanized, per ton 15s.

Corrugated galvanized, per ton 30s. To continue only until the coming into force of "Division VIa, Metals."

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Mr KIRWAN

- I gave notice last week, in accordance with the request that was made, that I should move that plain galvanized iron should be placed upon the free list. Some honorable members have inquired why I do not include corrugated galvanized iron. I think it is better, however, that the two items should be dealt with separately, and when I have placed some particulars before the committee, I feel satisfied that the Government will, see their way clear to fall in with my proposal. The people I represent are among the largest consumers of galvanized iron - in the Commonwealth. This article is very largely employed in the construction of their houses, and for a variety of other purposes, and I am informed that very much the same thing can be said with regard to the gold-fields in northern Queensland and elsewhere. Galvanized iron is also largely used by farmers. On the gold-fields of Western Australia probably nine out of every ten houses are constructed of galvanized iron. In the early stages people lived in tents; these were replaced to some extent by houses constructed of hessian attached to wooden frames, and now that the stability of the old-fields has become assured, galvanized iron is an article of almost universal use there. Hitherto the article has been admitted into Western Australia free, and the duty now imposed involves an increase of £1 per ton in the price to the consumer. I am proposing now to deal only with plain galvanized iron, but I think that both plain and corrugated iron should be admitted without the payment of duty. I find that in 1900, 6,361 tons of galvanized iron, valued at £121,000, were imported into Western Australia from Great Britain and foreign countries. According to the return prepared at the instance of the honorable member for Kooyong, the galvanized iron industry is carried on in only two of the States, namely, New South Wales and Queensland. In New South Wales both plain and corrugated galvanized iron have been admitted free of duty, and there 297 hands have been employed in the local manufacture of the article.

Mr Watson

-Only about 40 men are actually employed in the galvanized iron works there.

Mr KIRWAN

- That strengthens my case. In Queensland there are 292 adults and 130 boys engaged in this industry.

Mr Kingston

- The statistics from which the honorable member is -quoting were the best we could obtain, but they are not too accurate, I am afraid.

Mr KIRWAN

- According to these returns, whatever they may be worth, there are 589 men and 130 boys employed in the galvanized iron industry within the Commonwealth.

Mr McDonald

- There are no galvanized iron works in Queensland.

Mr KIRWAN

- I am only guided by what the return states. I am told that the manufacture of galvanized iron, as carried on in New South Wales, consists of dipping imported iron plates in galvanizing baths ; and yet it is proposed to tax the whole of the people of the Commonwealth by increasing the price of galvanized to the extent of £1 per ton, with a view to assist an industry of this sort. Galvanized iron was purchasable in Sydney prior to the introduction of this Tariff at £21 5s. per ton, but the price has now been increased by £1 per ton, and similar increases have taken place in other States into which galvanized iron was previously admitted free of duty. In New South Wales both plain and corrugated iron were admitted free of duty, and even in Victoria no duty was levied. In Queensland there was a duty of 2s. per cwt., in South Australia the iron was admitted free of duty, and in Tasmania a duty of £2 was charged. Thus in four out of the six States galvanized iron was admitted free, and it seems to me that in seeking to impose a duty of 15s. per ton on plain galvanized iron, the Government have not been guided by the duties hitherto imposed by the States. Not only does galvanized iron form the principal building material used on the gold-fields of Western Australia, but it enters largely into the construction of the condensers upon which many localities are dependent for their water supply, and of the water-tanks, which are indispensable attachments to every dwelling-house. I, therefore, move -
That, the words, "and on and after 10th Decern-ber, 1901, free," be added to the duty, " Iron, 1 plain galvanized, per ton los."

Mr MANIFOLD

- I feel that I must support the amendment, and I am prepared to even go further and assist in securing the free admission of all galvanized iron, whether plain or corrugated. Galvanized iron is used more extensively throughout the country districts than in the towns. It is employed, not only for roofing purposes, but for the construction of water tanks, and is now being largely utilized in the more settled districts for covering haystacks. In fact, it is one of the most useful commodities that the farmer has at his command, and as it has hitherto been admitted into Victoria free of duty, I shall support the amendment.

Mr CAMERON

- My sympathies are entirely with the two honorable members who have just spoken, but at the same time I have to consider the peculiar position in which Tasmania is placed. She requires revenue, and if everything were put upon the free list she would come off badly. As galvanized iron is not produced within the Commonwealth, it seems to me, as a free-trader and an advocate of a revenue Tariff, that it is fair that a moderate duty should be placed upon it. I would point out that the information put before us by the Government in two sets of papers dealing with the Tariff is inconsistent, it being stated in the one set that under the Tasmanian Tariff plain iron was admitted free, while in the other it is stated that there was a duty of 42s. a ton upon it.

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Mr Kingston

- The papers to which the honorable member refers were issued at different dates. The last issued is correct. "Will the honorable member accept a duty of 10 per cent, all round 1

Mr CAMERON

- I think that a fair arrangement would be to charge 15s. per ton upon both plain and corrugated galvanized iron.

Mr KINGSTON

- The Government expect to get a good deal of revenue from these duties - £27,000 from the duty upon plain galvanized iron, and £13,000 from the duty on corrugated iron, or £40,000 in all. A duty of 15s. on the ton is equivalent to an ad valorem duty of about 5£ per cent., and it seems to me that if a mistake has been made it has been in fixing the duty at too low a rate. Something has been said about this article being used in various country districts, and particularly in Western Australia, but, though we must consider the necessities of each State and district, we cannot, in levying taxation, make an exception in

favour of any State or district ; nor could we, on the other hand, because an industry existed in one State only refuse protection to it. We must treat all alike. How can a duty of 5£ per cent, upon iron be considered unfair when we have agreed to a duty of 10 per cent, upon cotton goods of a certain value, and it' is proposed to tax tea at the rate of about 45 per cent., and a heavy duty upon tea is generally supported by free-traders? Galvanized iron is largely used in all parts of Australia, in the towns as well as in the country; and it should bear a reasonable amount of taxation. The Commonwealth must raise sufficient revenue to meet the requirements of necessitous States. Queensland, where the revenue is not coming in as well as we could wish, formerly had a duty of 40s. a ton upon iron, and in '1899 obtained £22,000. from it; but under our proposal she will get only about £9,000.

Mr Cameron

- Why is a distinction made between plain and corrugated galvanized iron 1

Mr KINGSTON

- Because we want to give a fair amount of encouragement to a local industry. As regards the value per ton, there is very little difference. I believe the corrugation of galvanized iron is an industry which is to be found in Western Australia ; I know that it exists in South Australia, and it also exists here.

Mr Isaacs

- What will Tasmania get from the proposed duties ?

Mr KINGSTON

- In 1899, she imported 365 tons of plain galvanized iron, upon which no duty was charged ; and 1,343 tons of corrugated galvanized iron, upon which, with a duty of £2 a ton, £2,686 was paid. In Western Australia, plain galvanized iron was formerly admitted free, and corrugated galvanized iron was subject to a duty of 20s. a ton. In 1898, 648 tons of plain galvanized iron, and 8,695 tons of corrugated .galvanized iron were imported into that State. In 1899, the importation was 1,412 tons of plain galvanized iron, and 2,755 tons of corrugated galvanized iron.

Mr Kirwan

- In 1900, . five times as much plain galvanized iron was imported into Western Australia as corrugated.

Mr KINGSTON

- That would account for the success of the corrugation works of Fremantle. In South Australia plain galvanized iron has been admitted free, and a duty .of 30s. per ton has been charged upon corrugated iron. We have not proposed an excessive rate on one item or the other. In one instance it is only 5J per cent., and in the other 10 per cent., the lowest rates to be found in any part of the Tariff, I think. When New South Wales was imposing a kind of protectionist Tariff, "iron, galvanized, in bars, bundles, sheets, or corrugated," was taxed at the rate of 40s. per ton. Here is an item taxed reasonably, which will yield a fair amount of revenue, of which we stand in need. I trust that the committee will approach the item with the desire to give us the revenue, and, if honorable members will consider the various points I have submitted, they will agree with me that we are not asking for an unreasonable rate.

Mr MAHON

- The Minister for Trade and Customs has concluded another fine specimen of special pleading. He comes here to advocate a duty on galvanized iron, and he minimizes, as far as possible, the fact that this commodity is used almost exclusively by one class - the people of the interior, who are opening up the country. i

Mr McColl

- It is used about the towns as well.

Mr Barton

- Can we raise revenue by taxing things which are not used 1

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Mr MAHON

- The action of the Government in imposing on other commodities duties that are practically prohibitive, necessitates the imposition of heavy duties on articles of this kind, which are used almost entirely by one class of the community. I admit that this iron is used in country towns. It is also used in the remote parts of the suburbs of Melbourne, but those who wish to erect in a city a good class of house can, and do easily, find other roofing material than galvanized iron. My objection to this duty is that, like the duty on condensed milk, it hits one section of the people, who get no compensation from the Tariff. The honorable

member for Kalgoorlie has pointed out that galvanized iron is used in almost every tenement on the gold-fields of Western Australia. It is a curious thing that the Minister for Trade and Customs is not yet in possession of the figures for 1900, which have been in the possession of honorable members for three months. He tells the committee that Western Australia consumes less corrugated iron than plain iron, and then he draws the curious conclusion that because it imports more plain iron than corrugated iron that must be an argument in favour of the Fremantle works for corrugating iron. He ought to know that the corrugation of iron is a very simple process. It is carried out by one man and a boy in almost every town on the gold-fields. A very little labour is required ; it is done mostly with a machine. I have seen iron corrugated and bent and converted into a tank in the course of a few hours on the gold-fields. The Minister has quoted the figures for Queensland and Tasmania simply because they have had high duties in these States, but he conceals the imports into Western Australia, which were free. Mr. Piesse. - The duty is not a high one any way ; it is only 10 per cent. "

Mr MAHON

- I understand that the duty in Tasmania was 40s. per ton. There must be something wrong in the figures given by the Minister. He said that a duty of 15s. per ton means 5-} per cent., and now the honorable member for Tasmania says that a duty of 40s. per ton means only 10 per cent. Western Australia imported for 1900, duty free, 6,361½ tons of plain galvanized iron, valued at £121,345.

Mr Kingston

- I over-stated the rate when I said 5½ per cent.

Sir George Turner

- That is 20s. per ton.

Mr Kingston

- I reckoned at only 14 per cent.

Mr MAHON

- An import duty of 15s. per ton on 6,316½ tons, would yield a 24 k revenue of £4,771 3s. 6d. This is a new tax on the people of Western Australia. When the Minister quoted what Queensland and Tasmania would give up in the way of revenue, why did he not tell us what Western Australia would pay - which was quite as important?

Mr Kingston

- They will tax the Victorian galvanized iron at the old rate.

Mr MAHON

- We hope not to get any Victorian galvanized iron.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- We do not manufacture any here ?

Mr MAHON

- Why did the Minister mislead me by telling me that the Victorians did 1

Mr Kingston

- I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr MAHON

- The honorable and learned gentleman said that they were going to send Victorian manufactured galvanized iron into Western Australia

Mr Kingston

- I did not.

Mr MAHON

- What would be the object in importing galvanized iron from England into Victoria, and then sending it to Western Australia? Why not send it straight away to Fremantle ?

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- We import the sheets, and galvanize and corrugate them here.

Mr MAHON

- The honorable member ought to know that it would not pay to do that here. It is a most remarkable thing that Western Australia never took a ton of Victorian iron in 1900. All the imported iron was British and foreign produce, and the market was quite as free to the Victorian product as to the foreign product.

Mr McCay

- It took nearly 400 tons from Victoria. In the table it says - " Not Australasian produce," because the iron is not Australasian produce.

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Mr MAHON

- Western Australia imported from Victoria 119 tons 1 cwt., but how is the honorable member to say that that was not originally British or foreign ? His contention amounts to this - that the galvanizing of that iron was done in Victoria, and that, therefore, it was a Victorian product. The Treasurer estimates that the duty on plain galvanized iron will yield a revenue of only £3,000. But as I have shown, the imports into Western Australia for 1900, at the same rate, would have yielded a revenue of £4,771 2s. 6d. What is the meaning of this estimate, that they will receive only £3,000 in a normal year ?

Is it that the people are to be so poor that they will be able to buy less galvanized iron - or is it that the mines are to be shut down, and we shall not require so much of the commodity, or is it that we are losing our population ? Western Australia shows a considerable increase of population every week, and by the end of this year we hope to have 200,000 people there. I do not understand how the Treasurer comes to under-estimate the revenue from this item by £1,771. Then again, take the next item of corrugated galvanized iron. Last year Western Australia imported 1,562 tons 14 cwt., which at 20s. a ton yielded a revenue of about £1,562. Under the Federal Tariff, that quantity would have yielded a revenue of £2,344, but the Treasurer estimates that he will receive only £1,500. The effect of this Tariff, as regards galvanized iron, will be a new tax of £4,771 on what hitherto has been free, and an increased tax of £781 7s. on what has been hitherto dutiable. The total new taxation on the people of Western Australia on this item alone will be £5,552 9s. 6d. In view of that fact, and in view of the fact that we are taxing these pioneers and bush-workers on commodities on which they never paid duty in the past, I appeal to the committee to reduce the duty on this item very considerably. If the Government cannot accept the Western Australian Tariff as a basis - that is, to admit plain iron free, and to tax the other at 20s. per ton, I think they ought to recognise the peculiar claims which the people of the interior have on their consideration, and on the sympathy of the committee, and reduce the duty on both items to 10s. per ton.

Mr. McCOLL(Echuca). - We hear a great deal about the enormous amount of iron which is used by the people of the interior. Certainly it is used very much by them, but I venture to say that more galvanized iron is used in 1 mile of a suburb of Melbourne than in 100 square miles in Western Australia. We are getting a little too much of this talk about the people in the interior. We have in and about this city half the population of Victoria, and, I suppose, seven-eighths of the places in Melbourne and its suburbs are roofed with galvanized iron. Therefore, it is not a commodity that is used simply in the interior. Moreover, we cannot afford to ignore all considerations of revenue. If we whittle down the revenue which is derived from articles of common use we cannot expect to raise a sum sufficient for our requirements from the taxation of luxuries. At the same time I fail to see why a difference is made between the amount of the duty imposed upon these articles. I think that a charge of 15s. per ton upon both plain and corrugated galvanized iron will produce all the revenue which the Government require. It does not seem to me that the corrugated iron industry will afford a very great amount of employment. This is evidenced by the fact that the import value of corrugated and plain iron is almost the same - in some instances the value of the plain iron is actually the higher of the two. In some of the home price lists I find that the value of corrugated iron is less than that of plain iron, showing that there is very little in corrugation as an industry. I think that the committee will do well to impose a duty of 15s. per ton all round, and then nobody will be unduly taxed.

Mr A C GROOM

- I should like to see this duty made as low as possible. If we cannot admit iron absolutely free, I think that the duty upon it should, not exceed 10s. per ton all round. Such a rate would produce as much revenue as will the Ministerial proposal. The Government say that they cannot agree to reduce this duty because revenue must be raised. But if the duties were lowered, I am inclined to think that we should get all the revenue which is really required, and probably a good deal more.

Mr PHILLIPS

- I intend to support the proposal of the honorable member for Coolgardie. I think that plain galvanized iron should be admitted free. Very shortly honorable members will have to deal with a most important item in the Tariff, namely, the duty upon agricultural, horticultural, and viticulture! machinery and implements.

As plain galvanized iron is largely used in the manufacture of agricultural machinery, and especially in connexion with strippers, harvesters, and winnowers, I intend to move for a reduction on the duties proposed upon these imple-ments from 15 per cent, to 10 per cent. I shall, therefore, certainly support any proposal to admit all the raw materials used in connexion with these industries free.

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Mr MCDONALD

- I merely desire to confirm the statement which has. been made in reference to the enormous amount of galvanized iron imported into Queensland. From the Gulf of Carpentaria, down through the back country of Queensland, New South Wales, and South Australia, nothing but galvanized iron is used by the settlers. All that iron has to be imported. Of course, in the coastal districts, where bark is plentiful, that material is largely used. But the settlers in the back blocks use only galvanized iron in the construction of their houses. They have to contribute their proportion of the taxation without reaping any advantage therefrom. They have no opportunity of sharing the benefits which are conferred upon those who reside in the more favoured portions of the States. It is perfectly true that there is a falling revenue in Queensland, and so long as the present Government remains in power the revenue will continue to decrease. Queensland should have resorted to direct taxation years ago, and will be compelled to do so sooner or later. It is no part of the business of this Commonwealth to provide that State with revenue because of the extravagance of its Premier. I urge upon the Ministry the desirability of fixing the lowest possible rate upon plain and corrugated iron.

Sir MALCOLM MCEACHARN (Melbourne). - The honorable member for Kennedy evidently forgets that hitherto the people of Queensland have paid £2 per ton upon imported iron, whereas the present duty is only 1 5s. per ton. But my object in rising is to call attention to the necessity for differentiating between the duty upon plain iron and that upon corrugated iron. Personally, I should like to see plain iron admitted, free, but I recognise that we must have revenue, and that if we are going to reduce all the duties upon items which are purely revenue items, the Government will sooner or later be placed in a difficulty. I think that the Ministerial proposal is a perfectly rational one, and I shall support it. At the same time I hope that the committee, if they reduce the duty upon plain iron, will allow a margin of 15s. per ton between the duty upon that article, and the duty upon corrugated iron.

Minister for Home Affairs

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

. - I desire to point out that the iron industry is one which affects New South Wales more than it does any other State. For many years past I 24 k z have taken a lively interest in that industry, and have endeavoured in every possible way to assist its development. Some years ago Mr. Sandford established large iron works at Lithgow, and in this connexion I regret the absence of the honorable member for Parramatta, who a short time ago presented a petition bearing upon this matter, signed by 400 of his constituents.

Mr Conroy

- He was returned by that constituency by a very large majority of free-traders.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- The honorable and learned member knows nothing at all about the matter. I am sorry that the honorable member for Parramatta is not in his place to defend the position which has been taken up by his constituents. Mr. Sandford and his company have expended a very considerable amount of money in laying down a large and up-to-date plant at Lithgow. I was present when their works were opened. The industry has not been an unqualified success, because even a small degree of protection has hitherto been denied it. All the plain and corrugated iron which has been produced by Mr. Sandford has been used in the western district of New South Wales, and I maintain that the imposition of a reasonable duty, in order to protect that industry, would not be felt in any way by those who use iron in that district, just as they use it in western Queensland.

Mr Watson

- Mr. Sandford has had big concessions made to him by the. Railway Commissioners.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- It is not fair to place such an enterprising and energetic man at the beck and call of the Railway Commissioners. Yet it is an undeniable fact that but for the concession which he has received from the

Railways Commissioners his works would have been shut down long ago. Mr. Dalton, the largest storekeeper at Orange, takes all his corrugated and plain iron from Mr. Sandford's works, in order to serve his customers out west. With an increased market I have no doubt that a very reasonable duty would keep this industry afloat. But unless there is a duty imposed, or unless there is a continuance of the concessions made by the Railways Commissioners, these works, which employ some hundreds of men, will have to be closed.

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Mr Isaacs

- They do not all depend upon the galvanized iron industry ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- I am referring to the galvanizing and corrugating industry.

Mr Isaacs

- How many men are employed ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE

- There are some hundreds of men, if we take into consideration those engaged in mining the coal. The coal mine belongs to the company, and the tunnel of the mine is in close proximity to the works, which are carried on as economically as any works of that description could possibly be. If these works are closed down a very large number of men will be thrown out of employment, as is evidenced by the petition presented by the honorable member for Parramatta, who, I am sorry to note, is not present to speak either in favour of or against that petition. The honorable member must know very well that it is necessary to protect this industry as far as Lithgow is concerned. I hope the committee will not place upon the free list' items of this character, which, I think, might reasonably produce a fair amount of revenue, while assisting to develop a struggling industry, which has been established at the instance of enterprising men of the character of Mr. Sandford, who has had to fight such an up-hill battle.

Mr. PIESSE(Tasmania). - I find that the revenue which it is estimated will be derived from this duty is £40,000. Last year's figures show that in Tasmania the amount yielded by corrugated iron was £3,669. If the suggestion of my colleague is carried, and we adopt a duty of 15s. per ton upon corrugated and plain iron, the revenue from that State, upon the basis of last year's imports, namely, 2,183 tons, will be £1,636. We shall thus be throwing away just £2,000 upon this one item alone. That is rather a large sum to part with on a purely revenue duty such as this. I think that on the whole the proposals of the Government are fair, though I am rather sorry that they have adopted a duty of 15s. on plain iron. I cannot see my way to support the reduction.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I feel very strongly on this question, because corrugated iron is an article that enters into the whole industrial life of the people of Australia. When we were debating Division 4-, we were dealing with articles that are consumed by all Australia, whether the people are living in the towns or in the country, and I warned my right honorable friend, the Minister for |

Trade and Customs, that the only way to deal with them was by means of a moderate duty, and not a prohibitive impost. Because, in the first instance, a moderate duty would give more revenue, and when we came to deal with other articles further on, we should be in a fairer position with regard to the people of the interior. How can we, in any equitable spirit, put a heavy duty upon an article which enters largely into the life of the population of the interior, seeing that we have put a duty of 25 per cent, on clothing, and have taxed them up to the hilt on other necessities of life 1

Sir Malcolm Meacharn

- There is a great deal of corrugate 1 iron used on the coast as well as in the interior.

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- Corrugated iron is the one article which enables the people in the interior to build houses. Go where we will, we find houses built of galvanized iron. It is all very well to say that the Ministry regard this as a revenue duty. But when we proposed to put a moderate revenue-producing duty on other articles, we never heard a word from honorable members opposite about revenue. I cannot, in fairness to the great primary producers of this country, consider the question of revenue in connexion with this item. Let the Government go back and alter other items, making them revenue-bearing items. If there is one article which, in the interests of the primary producers, should be free, it is this particular article. In dealing with

all these articles we must take the Tariff as whole. We must recollect what we have done, and those who have a knowledge of the schedule must remember what we are going to do. We must remember how this duty will bear upon the townships of the interior. Wherever there is a reasonable chance, we must give them some relief. We are now framing a Tariff which gives to the men in the interior absolutely no advantages whatever. We have filled up the Tariff with a lot of bogus duties which yield no revenue, and which can be of no use to those people. Here we have an article which affects their life-blood - their very existence. Corrugated iron is used not only for their roofs, but for the structure of the sides of their houses, and no question of revenue should have weight with us in considering it. The manufacturer ought not to be considered, because the making of this article in Australia is one of the smallest things that can be imagined. I appeal to the committee, in dealing with this item, to have regard to the interests of the people who are toiling and moiling in the interior of this country.

Mr SALMON

- I am astonished to find honorable members opposite working themselves into a frenzy of excitement over such a matter as this. We are dealing with galvanized iron, which is not an article of daily consumption. When a man builds for himself a house, he does not require a new one for a good many years. After all, what does the duty amount to 1 The proposal of the Government would not amount to more than 1d. a sheet on galvanized iron, and how many men building a house in the interior of Australia would use more than 24 sheets of 7 or 8 feet iron 1 Very few of them. For roofing purposes only, they would not even require that amount. Twenty-four sheets of iron at 1d. a sheet would mean a duty of 2s. Would that be a heavy impost on the poor, unfortunate people in the interior? It is not an impost that is likely to drive them into the Benevolent Asylum. I shall be with honorable members opposite in my willingness to reduce duties to the lowest possible margin when we come to the necessaries of life.

Sir William McMillan

- Is not galvanized iron a necessary of life to people in the interior ?

Mr SALMON

- To a very few people - under 1 per cent, of the population. The honorable member himself has often spoken of the way in which the population of Australia is scattered along the sea coast. Galvanized iron is just as much a necessary to the artisans of Melbourne as to the men living in the interior. We also have to recollect that we have within the Commonwealth a very large industry in this article. There has been presented to the House a petition signed by 411 persons, mostly working men, as any one can see by looking at their signatures ; and they say that the industry in which they are concerned will be injured by the reduction of the duty.

Sir William McMillan

- Are those 400 to be considered before 4,000,000?

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Mr SALMON

- The petition of these men informs us that -

In anticipation of the proposed duties on galvanized iron, arrangements had been completed for very large extensions of the works, the machinery purchased, and capital arranged for.

Then they say -

That the decision of the labour party to oppose the imposition of the proposed duty has had the effect of causing the abandonment of such proposals, thereby closing to hundreds of men an avenue for very profitable employment.

Will the honorable member for Parramatta, in whose district Lithgow is situate, say these men are not honest in what they tell honorable members in their petition ? They also say that -

The machinery is now lying idle, and all progress in regard to its erection has been stopped.

In view of the fact that this duty will amount to a very small sum indeed, and also having regard to the interests of the States which require revenue, I appeal to honorable members to hold their hands before, in the first place, they deprive the States of revenue, and, secondly, injure the industry at Lithgow. I frankly admit that if this were a purely revenue duty, I should not be in favour of it. I should like to see galvanized iron delivered to our farmers and to those in the interior as cheaply as possible. But when I see how little the individual would benefit from the reduction of the duty, and how the reduction would be used as an argument as to why we should not reduce duties on the necessaries of life, I feel compelled to

vote for the proposal of me Government-.

Mr. BROWN(Canobolas).- The honorable member who just sat down has made a strong appeal on behalf of the working men of Lithgow, but we have to consider also the interests of hundreds of thousands of men who will get no benefit from this Tariff. The plea has been raised that if we take the duty off galvanized iron we shall not give ourselves- a margin which will enable us to remove some of the proposed duties upon what are termed the necessities of life. That argument does not appeal to me. If the honorable member said that by keeping on this duty we should not be asked to remove the duties from some of the special protective lines, I could see some force in it; but to say that because we are asked to remove the duty on this line we shall not have a margin for the removal of duties upon the necessities of life is no argument at all, because this is as much a necessary of life to men who are engaged in primary production - in subduing the wilderness, and bringing the country into profitable use - as are other articles to which the honorable member alludes. Evidently the honorable member for Laanecoorie has not been out in the far West, where he could see how the working men live. He has been used to the palatial buildings of Melbourne, and has not studied the interests of the workers of Queensland and Western Australia. Galvanized iron is a material which enters largely into the buildings of the working classes, not only in Western Australia and Queensland, but also in New South Wales. Whatever benefits may be conferred upon a few producers by reason of the protective incidence on certain articles, no protection has yet been devised to confer any benefit upon graziers, farmers and miners, and it is largely among these sections of the community that this article enters into use. In New South Wales we are endeavouring to encourage increased settlement, and to bring the rich agricultural lands, and other lands well suited for closer settlement, into use. In doing so, however, we have provided that the settlement shall be of a bond fide character ; and one of the tests of a settler's bona fides is that, within a specified time, he shall erect a residence upon his land. Failure to do so within eighteen months of the confirmation of his conditional purchase, means forfeiture of the holding as well as all improvements. A number of these settlers have great difficulties to contend with under existing conditions. They are compelled to launch forth with limited means, and they have to expend their money to the best advantage in order to place themselves upon a proper footing. Not only do they use this iron for roofing purposes, but in many cases for the construction of the whole of a dwelling. In the outlying districts, it is the only building material that can be obtained at reasonable rates. It is all very well to say that this duty will amount to only 1d. a sheet, and that 24 sheets of iron will be sufficient for the average man's requirements. I do not agree with that statement. It will not be the plain, but the corrugated iron, which is made from plain galvanized iron, that will be used, and the increased charge upon it will be double the amount of this duty. I desire to see both lines placed upon the free list. I recognise, however, that if we cannot secure the placing of plain galvanized iron upon the list of special exemptions, there will be much less hope of placing corrugated - the completely manufactured - iron upon the free list. I find that under the Tariffs of the different States plain galvanized iron has been admitted free in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia. In Queensland the duty on the plain as well as galvanized corrugated iron has been 2s. per cwt. ; in South Australia the duty on corrugated iron has been 30s. per ton; Western Australia 20s. per ton ; and Tasmania 40s. per ton. The plain iron has also been liable to a similar duty under the Tasmanian Tariff. Out of the six States, no less than four have admitted galvanized iron free of duty.

Mr Isaacs

- I understand that plain galvanized iron was also admitted free into Tasmania.

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Mr BROWN

- That strengthens my contention. In making this request, that plain galvanized iron should be placed on the free list, we are only asking that the Commonwealth should follow very largely in the footsteps of the different States. The Minister for Trade and Customs made a strong appeal for the retention of this duty on the ground that it was necessary for revenue-producing purposes, while the Minister for Home Affairs was disposed to look upon the matter from the stand-point of protection. He claimed that the duty would have a protective incidence, and give advantages to a certain industry in New South Wales. This tax will be a disadvantage to the pioneers and primary producers to the extent to which it is revenue-producing or has a protective incidence. The Minister for Trade and Customs estimates to raise £8,400 per annum

from plain galvanized iron, and £4,200 per annum from corrugated iron in New South Wales, or a total of £12,600 for that State. In Western Australia it is estimated that £4,500 will be raised from these two items for the year ; and £9,000 from Queensland. The right honorable gentleman expects to receive a total revenue of £27,000 from the duty on galvanized plate and sheet iron, and £13,800 from the duty on corrugated iron. This shows the extent to which those who, it is said, will only have to pay in duty 2s. on iron sufficient to cover a house, are going to be taxed in respect of these items. It shows also the extent to which the material enters into consumption. I think, therefore, that I have every reason to complain. The primary producers and the toilers are the working bullocks of this Tariff. They are going to foot the Treasurer's bill to a greater extent than, will any other class, while at the same time they are going to receive the least direct benefit from the Tariff. Therefore, I propose to vote in favour of placing this line upon the free list, in order to give some little concession to the great primary producers. If I cannot get it placed upon the free list, I shall vote to get it as near as possible to the free list.

Mr ISAACS

- I should like to see the Government place plain galvanized iron and corrugated iron on the same footing. I do not think there is any element of protection worthy of consideration in this matter. It is purely a question of revenue. If it is not it is very little else, and the amount of duty that is to be imposed for revenue purposes, would probably suffice to help the industry named by the Minister for Home Affairs. I regard galvanized iron as an absolute necessity, and I think that, treating it as a revenue question only, we are justified in making the impost as light -as we can. It is the revenue duties which fall upon the people, the true protective duty does not, and I am going to see whether my honorable friends of the Opposition will follow us in reducing some of the truly revenue duties.

Mr Thomas

- There are more people employed in this industry in New South Wales than in many of the protected industries in Victoria.

Mr ISAACS

- So far as I have been able to ascertain there is very little human industry involved in the making of corrugated iron. A great deal of it is bent by machinery. The comparative amount of human labour employed, and the comparative amount of wages paid are remarkably small. Both in town and country galvanized iron is very largely used by the people. I cannot see why we should not have a reduction in regard to some of the revenue duties, especially in view of the fact that some of my honorable friends of the Opposition have been increasing the revenue lately, according to their own account. This is a favorable opportunity. Coming to the question of figures, we have been told by the Minister for Trade and Customs that this item represents a revenue of £40, 000, of which £27,000 is to be derived from plain galvanized iron. I do not propose to interfere with the duty on plain iron, but with regard to corrugated iron, which is expected to yield £13,000, I think the duty should be reduced by one-half. The Government might very well agree to make these- duties uniform at 15s. per ton, which would be "practically 5 per cent.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- No one. can say that I have been an advocate for a high Tariff, but in the case of an article such as galvanized iron, which is very widely used, a revenue duty should certainly be imposed. The Government are proposing the equivalent of an ad valorem duty of 5 per cent., and I do not think that is too high. So far as the farmer is concerned, there are many things which could with more advantage to him be placed upon the free list, and I would strongly favour admitting agricultural implements free of duty. No doubt galvanized iron is used by the farmer, but when his cottage is once covered, he is not called upon to bear any further expense for that purpose for many years. When we consider that galvanized iron is used so generally, the duty cannot prove very oppressive. The price of iron fluctuates greatly, independently of the duty that may be imposed on it. Two or three years ago galvanized iron could be purchased in New South Wales at from £17 10s. to £18 per ton, but last year the price was £22 10s. per ton, and there are frequent variations in the price of from £1 to £2 per ton. I should like to see galvanized iron on the free list, but there are other articles which could be put on the free list with much greater advantage to the primary producers, and I shall therefore support the Government proposal.

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Mr A PATERSON

- I should very much prefer to give a silent vote on this question, but I am compelled to explain my position. I regret to say that I cannot agree with the remarks made by the acting leader of the Opposition, because I do not think there is a single article in the Tariff that is better fitted to bear a duty than galvanized iron. Some honorable members have spoken as if the workers in Western Australia and in other parts of the Commonwealth 'ate galvanised iron every day for breakfast, dinner, and tea ; but when we consider the very small proportion of this duty that would be paid by the working men, it is not worth considering at all. A few sheets of iron would suffice for each man, and last him for ten, fifteen, or perhaps twenty years, and it is absurd to talk of the benefit that would accrue to the working man by admitting the article free of duty. AVe shall be much better employed in reducing the duties on what the working man eats and wears, and upon articles that he has to buy every week of his life. I am a freetrader, but I- am a patriot before being a free-trader, and I regard iron as a perfectly legitimate subject for taxation. I approve of the principle that we should levy the same duty on plain and corrugated iron, and if the Government agree to impose a uniform duty of 15s. per ton I shall support them. I do not advocate the placing of a special duty on corrugated iron, because I find that the men who corrugate the iron are dealers in iron, who do not deserve any special encouragement. Perhaps I might be expected to specially consider the requirements of Queensland in this matter, but I take a much broader view of my duty than that. My friends in Queensland write to me. telling me that that State requires revenue beyond everything, and that I must vote for revenue duties, but I do not think that on that account, or because Queensland formerly levied a duty of £2 per ton on iron, I should support the imposition of a similar rate of duty now.

Mr HIGGINS

- I think that in the discussion of these items we are losing all sense of perspective. The iron industry is one of the biggest and most important that we could possibly foster, and it will be worth almost any expense to us to develop it. This duty has to be considered in connexion with the duty on ordinary iron, but we should remember that the iron industry, in all countries where it is developed, brings in its train incidental enterprises of a most important character, and leads to the development of the country in every respect. This is not a Victorian matter, but is of the greatest importance from the New South Wales point of view, because in that State they have splendid mountains of iron' ore, which it is desirable to see utilized, and I am avowedly supporting this duty for the sake of New South Wales, and of Australia generally. I have also seen, in Tasmania, mountains of iron ore. It would be of the greatest advantage to us if we could start the iron industry here, and the primary producers will be prepared to make the small sacrifice of one penny per sheet of iron for the sake of encouraging it. I prefer to adopt the Government proposal than to make alterations for which no warrant has. been shown

Mr SKENE

- It is satisfactory to hear from honorable members on the opposite side of the Chamber that the great iron industry can be started in Australia, with the assistance of a 5 per cent. duty. We have had the matter placed before us from two or three points of view, and; the honorable member for Northern Melbourne has shown to his own satisfaction at any rate that we should be doing a great thing for Australia by imposing this duty. We would be content to go through the* whole Tariff, and impose a similar rate of"" duty if that would satisfy our protectionist friends. I feel very strongly that, the duty on galvanized iron should be reduced as much as possible. The honorable? member for Gwydir said that as the duty falls on everybody, it must be a light tax, but this duty does not fall upon everybody alike. The cottages which are being built; about Melbourne, and roofed with iron, which were spoken of by the honorable member for Echuca, belong to the humbler classes. The villas and mansions of the well-to-do people are not 'roofed with iron. Throughout the whole of the Commonwealth, galvanized iron is a commodity which is used mostly by the poorer classes. When the farmer puts up his homestead he roofs, it with corrugated iron ; and when he goes away to take up fresh land he buys iron toto put up stables for his horses, and erect his own dwelling. Even in the mining-fields, where the miners erect their huts of stringybark they require iron for their chimneys. The honorable and learned member for Indi has reduced the whole question down to a matter of £6,500, and I am prepared to go the rest of the way and give up that £6,500 for the sake of the poorer classes.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Plain galvanized iron has hitherto been admitted into New South Wales," Victoria, South Australia, and

Western Australia free of duty. It is still recognised as an article which is used mainly by the poorest people of the community.. Throughout the suburbs of Sydney or Melbourne the better class of houses are covered." with tiles or slates, whereas the cottages of the poor are roofed with corrugated iron.. In the city and suburbs of Adelaide, and throughout the towns and townships of the smaller States, corrugated iron is almost universally used as a roof covering. Sometimes when it is used on the larger houses, it is painted with a composition to make it somewhat resemble tiles. In the country you find that the farmers and tenantry nearly all use corrugated iron, and I know that scarcely a mail comes to me at certain times of the year that does not contain letters from tenants asking for corrugated iron. Where a man in the country cannot obtain corrugated iron, he roofs his dwelling with the bark of a tree, and for that reason a great deal of valuable timber is destroyed. The honorable member for Melbourne seemed to overlook the fact that you may get a great many more sheets of one gauge of iron to the ton than you get of another gauge. The honorable and learned member for Indi is under a false impression if he thinks that he is making iron cheaper to the consumers by imposing a duty upon it, and when I was in Sydney the other day I was informed that a firm there, which has been turning out corrugated iron without any protection, has increased its prices since the Tariff was introduced. The consumer of this article pays the duty if he buys iron that is imported, while if he buys iron made by Hordern's, or at Lithgow, or elsewhere throughout the Commonwealth, he pays to the manufacturer an amount equal to the duty in the shape of an increase in price. No doubt the large squatters who use iron could well afford to pay more for it, but they use a very small quantity in comparison with the requirements of the innumerable settlers throughout the Commonwealth, and of the occupiers of cottages in the suburbs of our large cities. I hope that the committee will strike out the proposed duties.

Mr. PAGE(Maranoa). - The honorable member for Gwydir told the committee that corrugated iron lasted for twenty years, and that he did not see why every one who used it should not contribute towards the revenue. But the honorable member has not been far into western Queensland. I can understand that he does not mind whether the duty is imposed or not, because all his buildings are erected, and before the end of twenty years he will be able to sell what iron he has at an enormous profit. But in western Queensland, everybody who builds a house has to use galvanized iron. I live in a house made of nothing but galvanized iron, with Cyprus pine studding - a dwelling of four rooms and a kitchen, which cost me £207 to build. Do honorable members think that I will allow the committee to impose this duty upon others like myself who have to build their houses of iron ? The honorable member for Capricornia states that he looks at this matter in the broadest sense, but will he save the iron industry by imposing a 5½ per cent. duty? If we do not look after the interests of Queensland, will the Victorians do so?

Mr Crouch

- Yes.

Mr PAGE

- They would look after them by putting a duty of 35 per cent. on woollens, and taxing everything that we wear. For the last five months we have heard nothing but New South Wales and Victoria. The smaller States have been looking on, waiting to be gobbled up by one or other of the larger States, I suppose. I am surprised that the honorable member for Capricornia does not look at this matter from the Queensland point of view, seeing that it was Queenslanders who sent him here to look after their interests first, and those of the Commonwealth afterwards. If honorable members read his election speeches, they could not believe that they were uttered by the man who addressed the committee this evening. So long as I am a member of the House, I shall do what I can to keep up Queensland's end of the log, and I shall vote to have galvanized iron put on the free list.

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Mr G B EDWARDS

- I do not think that the honorable member for Capricornia merited the rebuke of the honorable member for Maranoa. We are all here to study the interests of the whole Commonwealth. At first glance it seemed to me a very fair proposal to tax galvanized iron, particularly as I was against the imposition of taxation in other directions where it would bear more harshly upon the poor ; but, after consideration, I have come to the conclusion that, as it is playing a part in the development of the Commonwealth second to that played by no other article that is used, it should not be taxed. I am surprised that honorable members have not pointed out its use. not only for covering and building houses, but for the conservation of water. It is only

where you have galvanized iron or slates that you can be sure of getting clean water. Where there is a stringybark or a shingled roof, or even a tiled roof, the water cannot always be depended upon. The more facilities we give to those in the interior to collect and store pure water, the more we shall assist in the development of the country; and I wish to do all I can to help those who are engaged in that work. Therefore, I shall vote either to get rid of the duty altogether, or to considerably reduce it.

Mr. A.PATERSON (Capricornia).- No one appreciates the honesty and sincerity of the honorable member for Maranoa more than I do, and if it gives him pleasure to attack me he is welcome to do so, because no one enjoys it more than myself. He has furnished me with an argument for putting a tax upon galvanized iron - that it is used by men of substance. He talked of building a house for £207 as though it were nothing. I think that men who can build houses of that value should be prepared to contribute towards the revenue. What is the ordinary process of development in a new country? A man goes into the bush without any covering whatever. By-and-by he gets a hat, and under the Tariff miners' hats are free. Then he gets a tent, and tents are free, or he erects a gunyah or bark humpy, on neither of which has he to pay taxation. But when he builds a house, and uses galvanized iron, he must be in a position to contribute towards the revenue.

Mr Conroy

- Is he not being made to contribute by paying taxes on everything he wears and uses 1

Mr A PATERSON

- All through, our sympathies have been with the poor workman, not with the man who can afford to pay £207 for a house. The iron is used to protect property. A man who has no goods does not require to use galvanized iron. Why should the labour party object to impose a tax on property 1 I see no ground for receding from the position I took up in the first instance.

Mr. PAGE(Maranoa). - A number of the constituents of the honorable member for Capricornia are getting only 6s. a day. What has he to say on behalf of those men whose votes he solicited, and whose iron houses may be seen from the trains? I have not a penny mortgage on my place. I worked with my hands for every penny of the £207 which it cost me. There are plenty of men like myself in Queensland who are the backbone of the Commonwealth, men who are pioneering and living in iron houses. There are men living on the side of the railway in humpies that cost £40, £50, or £60, and no one knows that better than the honorable member for Moreton, who, as secretary of the Railway Employees Association, has travelled that State from one end to the other. Those are the men on whom this duty is to fall. From the sea coast to the western districts of Queensland the railway freight is almost equal to the price of the galvanized iron. Is not that a sufficient reason for asking the committee to reduce this duty? If we are here to study the interests of the Commonwealth, let us study the poor men as well as the rich.

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Mr KNOX

- In this case I shall not be able to vote on the same side as the acting leader of the Opposition. Galvanized iron is an article from which the Treasurer may expect to derive a moderate revenue. I shall be glad, however, if he will make the duty as low as possible. I deprecate this effort to place the necessities of one State against those of another. AVe are here to regard the question from one stand-point and that is the need of the Commonwealth. It seems to me quite justifiable to derive a suitable revenue from an article which is admitted on all sides to be of universal consumption. No one can complain that the duty is exorbitant. I. am pledged to see that the revenue is derived from customs and excise duties, and that no necessity is occasioned for raising revenue by direct taxation, or compelling the States to impose extra taxation. AVith the committee the dominant consideration should be the obtaining of the necessary revenue for the Common-, wealth. The honorable member for Maranoa says his house cost him £207. I learn from my honorable friend that the galvanized iron in the house did not cost half that sum, and that a large amount had to be paid in railway freight. But, allowing for the sake of argument that the galvanized iron cost £207; he would have to pay only £20 duty, and he has admitted that his house will last him for 22 years. But he only used 3 tons of iron, consequently he only paid £2 5s. duty. I do not think that he used a very strong or good argument. I simply look at the question from the stand-point of revenue, and for that reason solely I am prepared to support the Government.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa). - I regret extremely that one or two free-traders have seen fit to throw in their lot with the protectionist party on this occasion. AVe have the statement of the Minister for

Home Affairs that this is a protectionist duty. The Ministry do not appear to have consulted on the incidence of the duty. Directly after the Minister for Home Affairs had declared that it was a protectionist duty, the Minister for Trade and Customs rose and said that it was a revenue duty. How is it possible for the two Ministers to come forward on the same night and make these two antagonistic statements ? As I object to all taxation, it is perfectly competent for me at any time to oppose direct taxation on the ground that we should give as little as possible to the States so that they shall not become extravagant. But how the honorable member for Kooyong, who assented the other day to a duty of 6s. in the £1, can say tonight that he is against direct taxation I do not know. He would have been perfectly correct if when he said that he objected to direct taxation he had also said that he objected to tax the people through the Custom-house. When he is willing to sanction the imposition of this duty he should consider the class on whom it is to fall. It is not a duty which, as a rule, falls on the dwellers in the cities. The consumption of galvanized iron in the cities is not so great as it is in the country districts. If we are to have a duty at all, we are met with this consideration, that while there might be a duty of 15s. per ton levied against the people who live in the city it is perfectly clear, seeing that the cost of carriage is £2 or £3 per ton, that the people inland ought to be exempted. That is a clear proposition, viewed from the protectionist stand-point. The Minister for Home Affairs made an admirable appeal to the committee when he urged that a tremendous number of men are engaged in this industry. Assuming that his figures are correct, where are the 500 men employed ? Not in the States which imposed the duty, but in free-trade New South Wales. There a magnificent industry has been built up without the aid of a duty, and now he asks us, on protective grounds, to impose a duty for its benefit. Does he not see that he has stultified himself? The duty will fall almost solely on the toilers and the pioneers, who are taxed on their hats, boots, shoes, shirts, and clothes. When we have a chance to lighten their burden we should avail ourselves of it. From the protectionist point of view a great many working men ought not to live in houses, but ought to be compelled to flock into the towns, and go to the manufacturers and say - " We are starving, give us work at 1s. a day." The protectionists want to tax them out of existence, to prevent them developing the interior, because that policy means lower wages to the people in the towns, and so enables the manufacturer to get the cheapest work in the world. The imposition of this duty will raise the cost of galvanized iron to all the pioneers throughout Australia.

Mr. KIRWAN(Kalgoorlie). - Certain honorable members have said that galvanized iron is a suitable subject for the imposition of a revenue duty, and that the revenue tariffists, if in power, would take that view. It was news to me when I heard that statement. In New South Wales the revenue tariffists did not consider it necessary to impose a duty on galvanized iron ; it has been admitted free although it is the only State in which the galvanized iron industry is in existence. In three other States galvanized iron has been admitted free. In view of the fact that it has been admitted free by four States, surely it is a surprising departure for the Commonwealth Government to impose a duty of this kind ? I wish to refer to the arguments used by two honorable members for Tasmania, whose votes no one seems to be able to understand. One of them sits on this side of the House, and the other on the opposite side. It seems to me there is no part of the House that exactly suits them, unless it be the gangway. No one can understand how they vote. Their reason for voting on this particular question is that they have regard to the financial necessities of Tasmania. Mr. Piesse. - The honorable member can understand it, after all.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I cannot understand the way in which they vote upon many questions. But the reason I have just mentioned is that which is given for their action upon this occasion. I did not say that I understood their reason. I wish briefly to refer to these honorable members in order to show the dreadful financial position in which Tasmania will be placed in the event of galvanized iron being admitted free. In this connexion I would point out to the committee that the revenue which the Commonwealth expects to derive within Tasmania from this source is only £900. Yet, according to these honorable members, that State is in such a terrible condition that the loss of £900 annually will mean ruination to it. If for the sake of obtaining £900 for Tasmania, the rest of the Commonwealth is to be penalized, surely it would be infinitely better to annually vote that State the amount in question. These honorable members seem to forget that under the proposed rate New South Wales will have to contribute £8,400 yearly, Victoria £5,100, Queensland £6,000, South Australia £3,600 and Western Australia £3,000 in order that the financial necessities of

Tasmania may be met by £900 taxation upon galvanized iron. When these honorable members affirm that the duty is a revenue duty, and that the revenue Tariff party, if it were in power, would impose a similar tax, I reply that it is news to me to learn that it is the policy of that party to tax the poor and allow the rich to go free. Yet that is what will result from the imposition of this duty upon galvanized iron. It is the poor people who use that article. The honorable member for Laanecoorie, before speaking upon subjects of this sort, should be better informed. When he speaks in favour of placing certain surgical instruments upon the free list, I am prepared to listen to him, and to attach weight to his arguments ; but when he talks about galvanized iron, and says that 24 sheets of it are sufficient to enable a man to erect a house, he displays his lamentable ignorance. I have seen the temperature in galvanized iron buildings in the back blocks stand at 126 degrees Fahrenheit. I can well imagine that if the honorable member spent a summer's day in a house of that character, and upon coming out was met by some one who told him that in return for the luxury of living in such a place he would have to pay a tax upon the iron used in its construction, his language would be painful and free. But the honorable member displayed still more want of knowledge when he said that 1 per cent, only of the population lived in the interior. One per cent of the population represents 40,000 people. Surely, if there is any part of the Commonwealth which can be called the interior it is the district which I represent. It is in the very centre of the desert, and yet there are over 40,000 people resident there. That is but one of twenty other districts which I could mention ; and yet the honorable member, who talks so learnedly upon this subject, says that there are only 1 per cent of the people of the Commonwealth living in the interior. I do sincerely hope that the majority of the committee; will favour the proposal to place galvanized iron upon the free list.

Mr KINGSTON

- I am a little surprised to hear the observations of the honorable member who has just resumed his seat. He has put it that Kalgoorlie is practically the back blocks.

Mr Kirwan

- I said it was in the interior.

Mr KINGSTON

- That is not the sort of interior which we have in mind when we talk about the " back blocks." The honorable member might just as well argue that if we founded a city in the Macdonnell Ranges, its inhabitants would be entitled to be called " back blockers." Those whom we regard as " back-blockers " are the persons resident in the interior, and we do not think that the citizens of Kalgoorlie are so circumstanced. On the contrary, they enjoy as many luxuries as are to be found in any city in Australia. I should also like to say to the representatives of Western Australia, apart from those who sit on the Government side of the House, that it ill becomes them to taunt the people of Tasmania upon the somewhat different position they occupy as regards the question of federal revenue. Tasmania, having nothing before her in the nature of the grand prospects which Western Australia enjoys, entered the Federation, realizing that it would mean to her a serious loss of revenue, without attempting to exact any special terms. The people of that State are suffering a loss of £1 50,000, which they have freely incurred. Western Australia, on the contrary, had to be dragged into the Federation. From £250,000 to £300,000 is the price she exacts from the rest of the Commonwealth, while Tasmania claims nothing, and is here under circumstances which entitle her to all credit. I would not make this comparison, but when a representative of Western Australia reviles Tasmania, I should be a coward indeed if I did not do so.

Mr Poynton

- -The Minister's own colleague is responsible for it.

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Mr KINGSTON

- My own colleague is responsible for it 1 Let the honorable member go, and alter it. I will not say another word to the honorable member. What is the position 1 I will exemplify it in regard "to this one item. Here is Western Australia, doing all she can for the purpose of preventing a tax of 15s. per ton being imposed upon plain galvanized iron. Yet, as regards every ton of corrugated iron that enters Western Australia, does she admit it free, irrespective of whether it comes from the outside world or from the sister States ? Nothing of the sort ! She exacts 20s. per ton upon it, and will do so whilst the graduated scale continues. The position is that Western Australia enjoys a protection of 20s. per ton in favour of the local corrugated manufacture. Under these circumstances, what is the position ? At Fremantle an industry for the

manufacture of this article has been established, and is prospering. So that in regard to revenue Tasmania has a right to speak, as she wants it, without being taunted. Are our manufactures to be denied the protection which Western Australia has secured for hers ? Surely not. It is all very well for the honorable member for Kalgoorlie to talk as he has done, but if there are any honorable members in this committee who should be silent upon a question such as this, they are the Western Australian members, who seek to deprive the sister States of what they themselves enjoy and of what cannot be taken away from them. I confess that I am delighted when I get votes from Tasmania. Honorable members opposite should not turn round and revile those who have been associated with them as free-traders. Those who are consistent are those who are voting with the Government in "favour of a reasonable revenue duty upon an article which I claim is fairly subject to a duty of this description, which is moderate in the extreme. As a matter of fact, I understated the case from my own side just now, when I said that what we propose amounts to a duty of 5h per cent. It is less than that. The value of the article differs from time to time. The difference amounts to pounds. Honorable members know very well how the price fluctuates. Honorable members opposite are grumbling at a duty' of 15s., which they refer to as if it were going to ruin them. When I said that the duty would be 5£ per cent. I calculated the price at £14 or £15. I see from Western Australian statistics that the price is £20 or £21 a ton, and the duty would therefore only amount to about 4 per cent. Yet an outcry has been got up against this duty.

There is too much clap-trap talked about the back blocks. We are quite prepared to do the fair thing to all sections of society. But honorable members opposite have been attempting to set State against State, city against city, and class against class. We want to be fair to all, and not to have unfair exemptions in favour of those who can afford to pay. What does the honorable member for Maranoa say? He said, with that force which characterizes him, and which makes us like to hear his speeches, that his house cost him £207. I asked him how much galvanized iron was used, and he said there were three tons of it. Of course, a good deal had to be paid for cartage. What difference would this duty make? On three tons of galvanized iron it would make a difference of £2 5s. on a house which would last for a matter of twenty years. At 5 per cent, this would amount to something like 2s. 3d. per year on a £207 house. There is a practical illustration, from facts quoted by one of those who are most eloquent and forcible in urging whatever can be said against the proposal of the Government. What reasonable objection can there be to a tax of 2s. 3d. per year on a house that will last twenty years ? It is money which the proprietor of a house like that should be willing to pay. In the case of a smaller house the amount of duty would of course be less. It seems to me therefore that a great howl is being made about a very little matter. All honour to those who, departing from the traditions which bind them to their party leaders, have determined, when those leaders are wrong, to support the Government.

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie).- I am amused at my right honorable friend's excitement about this matter. In order to make out that the honorable member for Kalgoorlie was wrong, the Minister has stated that there is at the present time a duty on plain galvanized iron in Western Australia.

Mr Kingston

- I did not say that.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I understood the Minister to do so. The only question before the Chair is that of a duty on plain galvanized iron, and, therefore, the Minister had no right to mention any other article. I may point out that in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia there has been no duty whatever on plain galvanized iron. There has been a duty in only two of the States. The Minister applauds the Tasmanian representatives who are supporting the Government in this matter. I have no complaint to make against those honorable members. They have a right to take their own course. I applaud those honorable members on the Government side who intend to support the reduction. The only contention put forward by the Tasmanian representatives who support the Government, is that their State cannot afford to lose the revenue. I put the plain straightforward point to my honorable friends, that it is hardly fair to ask the whole of the people of the Commonwealth to pay this duty in order to consider the interests of Tasmania by raising a few hundred pounds.

Sir William Lyne

- It is not a high duty.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I do not say that the duty is high. When the Commonwealth Bill was submitted for the consideration of the electors one strong ground advanced in regard to the Braddon " blot" was that there would be no necessity to raise a large amount of revenue from the people of the Commonwealth during the first two or three years, because provision had been made by section 96 of the Constitution, whereby it was within the power of the Commonwealth Parliament to give assistance to any of the States. That reason was urged to show that there was no necessity for raising an enormous amount of revenue.

Mr O'Malley

- We do not want any assistance in Tasmania ; we are the richest State in the Union.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- But that statement is in direct contradiction of that made by some honorable members who have spoken. At all events, if Tasmania does require assistance, it would be far better for the Commonwealth to assist that State than to call upon the people to submit to a high rate of taxation to meet her necessities. It is hardly fair to ask the people of the Commonwealth to submit to a duty which we think unnecessary, in order to meet the requirements of one State. Far better would it be to take advantage of section 96, and to grant a loan under the conditions stated in the Constitution, by that means relieving the Commonwealth of a large amount of taxation. I take it that we have been called upon to submit to at least £2,000,000 additional taxation more than is necessary for the requirements of the Commonwealth,, because of the necessities of some of the States. Had it not been for the argument put forward by the Minister that the other States required assistance, at least £1,500,000 less than is proposed under this Tariff would have been sufficient.

Sir George TURNER

- If we took £1,500,000 off, most of the States would be in difficulties. Besides that, New South. Wales will soon want every shilling we can give her.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- She will if the Commonwealth takes away from her a lot' of money which there is no necessity to take. The Government are taking out of the pockets of the people of that State over £1,000,000 more than is absolutely necessary.

Mr Kingston

- We are putting it back, into their pockets.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- But it does, not get back into the pockets of the people who pay it in the first instance. It is taken from them in direct opposition to the* votes of the people of New South Wales. I rose principally to reply to the Minister in regard to the effect of this duty in the various States. My right honorable friend spoke of the clap-trap talked in connexion with the pioneers. But we have to consider them. My honorable friend the member for Laanecoorie spoke of only 1 per cent, of the whole of the people of the Commonwealth living in the interior. That would mean. 40,000 people, or only 8,000 families, on the basis of five to a family. When that calculation is made, honorable members will see the absurdity of the honorable member's contention. I have no hesitation in voting for the reduction.

Mr. THOMSON(North Sydney). - I wish to reply to one or two of the statements of the Minister. In the first place, he spoke of the desire of honorable members on the opposition side of the Chamber to set class against class, and district against district. If that desire has been displayed at all, it has been by the Government themselves. Have they not pitted the manufacturing class against the great producing class! Have they not legislated all in favour of city industries, and neglected the great country producing interests, which have to face the competition of all the labour of the world 1 These are the industries that, receive least consideration from this Tariff..

As to the position of Tasmania, I should like to say a word or two in reply, and to try once for all to remove any accusation of want of consideration for that State on the part of the Opposition. I am sure that honorable members on the side upon which I sit desire to give Tasmania the fullest amount of revenue. They would like, if it were possible, to give her the amount that she received before federation. But what prevents it ? Is it any action that we on the Opposition side have taken ? Certainly not.

Mr Piesse

- Yes.

Mr THOMSON

- What prevents it is this - Tasmania, before she came into the Federation was able to raise duties on her coasts whether the goods came from the other States or from abroad. What is the policy of the Government ? Is it not so to protect, that the cheapest market of supply shall be within the Commonwealth? Does not that mean a running down of the revenue of Tasmania? Is it not by the sternest compulsion - the compulsion of almost prohibitive duties in some cases - that the Government are going to force production within the Commonwealth, and compel Tasmania to draw her supplies from within the Commonwealth and consequently to raise no duty upon those supplies?

Mr PIESSE

- The honorable member and those who vote with him took £10,000 away from us upon the linen and calico vote the other day.

Mr. THOMSON Sam not going to say that some of our votes may not affect Tasmania by the reduction of her revenue.

Mr Piesse

- And the honorable member is going to vote for taking £2,000 off upon these two items.

Mr THOMSON

- We will see about that. I do not say that a particular vote given to relieve the people in certain classes - to lighten the taxation of the people as a whole - may not incidentally reduce the revenue of the people of Tasmania. But I would point out that that is a very different thing from the opposite policy, because the people will still have that money in their pockets.

Mr Piesse

- The honorable member knows that the Government of Tasmania cannot get it.

Mr THOMSON

- But it will be there. It does not matter whether the Government get it or not - the money will be in the pockets of the people. But if we impose a prohibitive duty and enable the manufacturers and producers within the Commonwealth to supply, whether that is the cheapest source or not, then Tasmania will have to pay a higher price for her goods, and will not be left with the money in the pockets of her people, nor will the money go into the public Treasury.

Mr Piesse

- The honorable member's own party supported the highest prohibitive duty yet imposed - the duty upon hats.

Mr THOMSON

- The honorable member gave as much support to that duty as did honorable members on this side of the committee.

Mr Piesse

- Twenty-five per cent. was what I desired.

Mr THOMSON

- But the honorable member did not call for a division.

Mr Piesse

- It was useless to do so, in view of the fact that the honorable member's party were against me.

Mr THOMSON

- We were going to vote for the honorable member's proposal, and I was astounded when coming into the chamber in response to the division bell I found that the demand for a division was withdrawn. The whole secret of the difficulty in Tasmania is not in relation to the imports from outside the Commonwealth, but is due to the fact that she will not be able to raise revenue on what passes to her from the other States of the Commonwealth. The policy of the Government which the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse, is supporting, is to compel production and manufactures to go more and more to Tasmania from within the Commonwealth, and, consequently, to reduce her revenue more and more.

Mr Piesse

- Does the honorable member mean to say that I have supported prohibitive duties 1

Mr THOMSON

- The honorable member has supported the Government.

Mr Piesse

- That is another thing altogether.

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Mr THOMSON

- I am not objecting to the honorable member for supporting the Government. I did not think it was a dishonorable thing for the honorable member to do so, and I will withdraw the statement at once if he regards it as an imputation. What I say is, that the policy of the Government is, in some instances, to absolutely compel Tasmania to obtain what she requires from within the Commonwealth, and thus reduce her revenue.

Mr Piesse

- And in those instances I am not helping the Government.

Mr THOMSON

- I know that the honorable member has not desired to vote for prohibition, and I am not questioning his action. He has his own vote, and, of course, he can do what he chooses. I recognise at once that he has endeavoured, in many cases, to reduce duties. I am not speaking of this as his policy. I am speaking of it as the policy of the Ministry. They will not deny it, because both the Minister for Trade and Customs and the Treasurer have preached it on a number of occasions. "Let us produce all we can here," is their cry. "Let us keep out the imported article if we can." ' Sir George Turner. - The honorable member has never heard me say that.

Mr THOMSON

- That policy must reduce Tasmania's revenue. I do not say it is followed with that object, but that must be the effect of it. If a purely revenue Tariff had been imposed, such as a party from this side of the committee would have imposed if they had been in power, it would have relieved Tasmania of a great deal of the difficulty in which she is placed by the policy of the Government.

Mr. PIESSE(Tasmania).- I think the committee will bear with me for a few moments, as I have been attacked in a very insulting way by the honorable member for Kalgoorlie. That honorable member could understand the reason which I put forward for my attitude, but he doubted whether I meant it. I feel, therefore, that I am called upon to make a short reply. What is my position ? By the Treasurer's own calculations, and according to the best that I can make of the matter, Tasmania stands to lose 28 per cent, of her former revenue. If Victoria, for example, were in such a position, it would mean a loss of over £600,000 per annum to her. The honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, who was the last to attack me, seemed to treat this matter very lightly; but if the State which he represents were in the same position as Tasmania it would mean a loss to her of £178,000 a year. Tasmania being in that position, what is my duty ? If I have any regard for honesty, and for what I hope will be ever the position of honorable members for Tasmania,

I must strive to enable her to pay her way as well as she can. The only way in which that can be done in these circumstances is by giving her as much revenue as possible from Customs. The honorable member for North Sydney said that the votes of his party did not prejudicially affect Tasmania, but subsequently he qualified that statement. The vote upon cocoa, as well as the vote upon linens and calico and the reduction of the items of woollens from 20 per cent, to 15 per cent., all affect Tasmania. In the latter case we have had 20 per cent, for years ourselves. It is a duty under which we have had to struggle in order to raise revenue, and we are not going to obtain any great increase by the reduction of the duty from 20 to 15 per cent.

Mr Thomson

- Tasmania would receive a larger supply from within the Commonwealth under a 20 per cent. duty.

Mr PIESSE

- Those who have supported the honorable member have not helped Tasmania, and when the honorable member for North Sydney says that if the Opposition had been at liberty to impose a revenue Tariff, it would have helped that State, I beg leave to express my doubts. "Unfortunately, the position of New South Wales is so much stronger than that of Tasmania that the revenue Tariff which honorable members for New South Wales would impose would be more suitable to the circumstances of their own State, and it would be coloured naturally by their adherence to their own policy. Even the honorable member for Bland, protectionist as he is, can support a lower duty simply because he is not concerned about the

question of revenue. He desires to break down the revenue.

Mr Thomson

- The only manufacturer of galvanized iron within the Commonwealth is in New South Wales.

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Mr PIESSE

- I am not referring to galvanized iron, but to the question generally. I do not know whether the honorable member for Kalgoorlie heard me, but I pointed out when I spoke last that the duty on galvanized iron proposed by the Government would mean to Tasmania a loss of £2,000 on the revenue collected there last year. Therefore, it is not a small item. If we are to allow item after item to be reduced, where is the revenue to come from? If I do my duty to the State I represent, I shall have to vote for a revenue Tariff for Tasmania as nearly as possible. As far as I can remember I have in no instance supported anything in excess of what has been the revenue rate in Tasmania.

Mr Thomson

- I admit that.

Mr PIESSE

- Therefore it is not for the honorable member to try and fix upon me and upon other representatives of Tasmania the responsibility for prohibition, or whatever may be the particular policy of the Government. I have felt constrained to vote against the Government on many occasions, although I support their retention in office for reasons, which I could give, quite apart from this question.

Mr. KIRWAN(Kalgoorlie).- A short time ago the Minister for Trade and Customs poured forth a volume of very vigorous language in general condemnation of honorable members from Western Australia, and especially referring to myself. His speech on that occasion was highly characteristic of him. It showed that high sense of justice - that strict impartiality - which always distinguishes the right honorable gentleman when he speaks in a heated manner. It was particularly characteristic of his sense of justice when over and over again he said that I had reviled Tasmania. I ask any honorable member who was present, and who has any sense of what is allowable in debate to say whether I uttered one word concerning Tasmania that was capable of such a construction. I am exceedingly sorry if any honorable member from that State considers that I said anything insulting towards him.

Mr Piesse

- The honorable member did.

Mr KIRWAN

- If the honorable member considers that I said anything insulting, I certainly apologize to him, but I did not think I said one word in regard to which any one could take offence. It seems to me that it is not the honorable member who expresses the opinion that it is remarkable that Tasmania should be so hard up as to be in absolute want of £900, who reviles Tasmania, but rather the Minister for Trade and Customs and certain honorable members for Tasmania, when they say that if a certain thing is done it will result in the ruination of Tasmania, because of a loss of £900. I rather defended Tasmania when I said that surely she would not be reduced to the position to which certain honorable members had declared she would be by reason of the loss of £900. The eminently fair Minister for Trade and Customs refers over and over again to the sliding scale whenever any honorable member for Western Australia proposes any reform. We are sick and tired of these continual references to the sliding scale which obtains in Western Australia. The Minister for Trade and Customs knows as well as I do the circumstances under which the sliding scale was granted. He knows very well that the members of the Federal Convention who asked for it were not representatives, but mis-representatives of Western Australia and that one of them is a misrepresentative of that State in this Parliament. He knows very well that the people of Western Australia did not require this sliding scale.

Mr Kingston

- Why do they not take it off?

Mr KIRWAN

- The Minister is continually inquiring why the people of Western Australia do not remove it. He knows very well that it is not in their power to do so. We have not yet secured fair representative government there. We have still the old pocket borough system; and as a democrat the Minister should have some sympathy with the democrats of Western Australia who have been fighting so long to secure the removal

of the sliding scale. Instead of that he is always utilizing its existence as an argument against any alteration of this iniquitous Tariff when it is proposed by any honorable member from Western Australia. The right honorable gentleman, with his characteristic unfairness, continually omits, to mention that this sliding scale is a diminishing quantity, and that it will be abolished at the end of five years.

Mr Kingston

- Is there any honorable member who who does not know that?

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Mr KIRWAN

- The right honorable gentleman is continually putting the other side of the case, and never mentions that, the sliding scale is a temporary arrangement. Whenever a representative of Western Australia, and particularly a member from the gold-fields, proposes anything in the nature of a reform in favour of the people in the back blocks, he is told that he is talking clap-trap. That is another way in which the fairness of the right honorable gentleman is exhibited. Does not the right honorable gentleman know that in the gold-fields of Western Australia, with a population of 60,000 or 70,000 people, there is not a man whose living expenses will not be raised to the extent of 20 per cent, by 'the operation of this Tariff? And there is not one -who will benefited by it to the extent of one penny. Yet 'because we 'fight against 'the Tariff we -are told we are talking clap-trap.

Mr Kingston

- Why do the people of Western Australia want £300; 000 a 'year from us, then ?

Mr KIRWAN

- The light honorable gentleman knows -very well that we did not want the sliding -scale. All we wanted was a guarantee that the transcontinental railway would be constructed. Instead of securing that, those who misrepresented Western Australia at the Convention stipulated for the sliding scale. I only wish the Minister for Defence were here, so that I might speak to him now as I have 'before spoken to him. No doubt he is largely influencing the Minister for Trade and Customs, and seducing him from his former democratic principles; and I wish both right honorable gentlemen joy in the unholy alliance that has arisen between them. The Minister for Trade and Customs can make fun of the men in the back blocks, who receive no benefit from the Tariff, but are taxed to the utmost ; but they are the men who deserve the most consideration. The Minister laughs and sneers -when we rise to defend the men who are developing the resources of the Commonwealth, and that is another example of his fairness.

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Mr O'MALLEY

- I deeply regret to see so much heat generated :by galvanized iron. I must confess that -I am a little amazed at' the position assumed by some of the honorable members for Tasmania. " I am sorry to see so much prejudice or bigotry displayed over this question. Prejudice is a 'bull-ring in the nose of ignorance, by which solemnity leads stupidity, and I regret that "honorable members should come into this Chamber filled with the provincialisms of the various little parochial districts they represent. Tasmania is not pauperized, but is the richest of the whole of the 'States in proportion to population. She has the two richest copper mines in the southern hemi.share, 'at Mount Lyell and North Mount Lyell ; she has one of the greatest gold mines in the southern hemisphere ; she produces the best sheep and the most eatable potato in the southern hemisphere, and she is an inexhaustible, unexplored garden of Eden.

How honorable members, therefore, can come here and talk about the pauperism of Tasmania, passes my comprehension. Tasmania will suffer no more in proportion from a 'financial point of view than 'South Australia or Queensland. "She 'has always met her Obligations, and is going 'to meet them in the 'future. Tasmania does not come here as a beggar on the threshold of the Commonwealth Parliament. "She wants 'no charity. The time will come When 'the people of Tasmania in 'their own State Parliament will readjust their financial position, and meet their obligations. We have money to throw at the birds and there is 'not a poor man in Tasmania, unless he has gone there from somewhere else. I hope that those" honorable members who have not been to that State will take an early opportunity of visiting 'it, so that they may be able' to realize how wealthy she is. I shall vote for the reduction of the duty on galvanized iron, because it means something to the great primary producers of Australia, and particularly to the west coast miners, who found Tasmania poor and weak, and made it 'rich and powerful.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - Most honorable members will agree with me 'that it is a great pity

that Tasmania has been dragged into this discussion. "I am perfectly satisfied that the people Of Tasmania sent their representatives into 'this Parliament to vote conscientiously for the interests of Australia, and that whatever may be the financial result, they are willing to face it on that compact alone. It is well perhaps that we should be 'reminded of the real issue before us. I have conscientiously voted for revenue duties, and I have not considered whether the Government were right or wrong, but what was the rate of duty that would bring in 'the largest amount of revenue. If we arrive at that rate, we must do as well for Tasmania from a 'financial point of view as for any other part of the Commonwealth. On this occasion, however, we do not base our arguments on a question of revenue, but we propose to put galvanized iron on the free list for two reasons. It enters almost universally into the industrial conditions of the great mass of the primary producers throughout Australia. We say, furthermore, that in two of the divisions of the Tariff already passed, the primary producers have been taxed up to the hilt, and that in cases where a reasonable revenue duty ought to have been imposed, the Government have imposed , prohibitive duties which will destroy competition and-revenue at the same time. The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse has stated that he has been moved by considerations of revenue in supporting the Government proposals, but the honorable member has actually voted for prohibitive rates.

Mr Piesse

- Where are they?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I cannot follow the Tariff right through, but the very fact that the honorable member has voted time after time against our proposals, proves that he voted for prohibitory, and not for revenue, duties. We have a great duty to perform in this matter, and I look to the miners of Tasmania, and the agriculturists of that State, as well as to those -all over Australia, to help us in carrying it out. The most interesting table we have to consult in connexion with this discussion is that which shows the natural productions of Australia, and how they are divided. I do not mean to say for one moment that the man who is working in the interior is necessarily better than the man who is employed in the town. Every man who carries on a decent and honest occupation deserves as much consideration as any other man ; but when we find this Tariff framed very largely in favour of the monopolist and the manufacturer, it is time for us to give some compensation to the men who are developing the country.

Mr Crouch

- And to the importing monopolists.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Not the importers.

Mr Mauger

- The importers are bigger monopolists than the manufacturers.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- This is the sort of thing that honorable members opposite do not like. We find that the industries of. Australia are divided into agricultural, pastoral, dairying, , and poultry farming, mining, forestry, and manufactures. Out of £112,000,000 that these industries represent, only . £20,000,000 represent protected industries. Galvanized iron is an article which enters into the everyday necessities of the men in the interior.

Mr Kingston

- So does . tea, and yet the honorable member would tax tea !

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- If we remove this duty we shall. give some compensation to those men throughout the country who have been taxed up to their eyes, and the article is one of such universal use that it would be almost a crime to impose such a duty upon it.

Mr. SALMON (Laanecoorie). - I tender my acknowledgment to the honorable member for Kalgoorlie for the lecture which he has given to me, and upon- which I place the value which one visually attaches to things that cost nothing. The honorable member laid great stress upon a remark which I made on the spur of the moment, in reply to an interjection, in regard to the number of people living in the interior using galvanized iron. The honorable member for Wentworth has fallen into an error in imagining that it is only in the interior that galvanized iron is used.

Sir William McMillan

- I said mainly in the interior.

Sir George Turner

- We use more for our fences in the cities than they use for all their buildings in the interior.

Mr SALMON

- I stated that only about 1 per cent. of the galvanized iron used in the Commonwealth was used in the interior, and, although that was only a rough guess, I think it is pretty near the mark. The honorable member for Kalgoorlie was good enough to sneer at the profession to which I belong.

Mr Kirwan

- My remarks were not meant in that way.

Mr SALMON

- That is how I took what the honorable member said. The attainment of a position in the profession to which I belong does not preclude the study of other than medical subjects, and as I represent the largest mining constituency in Victoria, and was brought up on a mining-field, with which I have never lost my connexion, I can claim to know something of the life and needs of those who are engaged in mining. I do not know how long the honorable member for Kalgoorlie has been in Western Australia, or whether he was ever on a mining-field before he went to Kalgoorlie.

Sir William Lyne

- How long has he been in Australia ?

Sir William McMillan

- That is unfair.

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Mr SALMON

- I ask the honorable member, before he again speaks on a subject like this, to make himself acquainted with the facts, and not to forget the possibility of another honorable member knowing as much, and perhaps more, on the subject than he does. I have had to buy and use galvanized iron, and I have lived under it, and when I spoke of a covering of 24 sheets, I knew what I was talking about. Twenty-four sheets of galvanized iron would cover a building 24 feet long by 12 feet wide, if it had a ridge roof, or a wider building with a skillion roof.

Mr McDonald

- In Queensland people could not live in a building of that size.

Mr SALMON

- The honorable member for Kalgoorlie, when he has been in Parliament a little longer, will discover that it is not customary for honorable members, who meet for the first time in a House of this sort, to get up and lecture other honorable members.

Mr Poynton

- That is a lesson which the honorable member himself has to learn.

Mr SALMON

- If the honorable member for South Australia was present when the honorable member for Kalgoorlie addressed the committee, he must acknowledge that the mild and dignified rebuke which I have just delivered was richly deserved.

Mr FOWLER

- I had intended to give a silent vote upon this question, because it has already been discussed at more length than seems to me really necessary. But, in view of the ferocious onslaught made by the Minister for Trade and Customs upon the honorable member for Kalgoorlie and Western Australian members generally, I feel obliged to say something in reply. The Western Australian sliding scale seems to act upon the right honorable gentleman as a red ' rag on a bull. I do not think he has ever replied to criticisms delivered by Western Australian representatives without dragging it into the discussion. But he is very unfortunate in attributing the existence of the sliding scale to the people of Western Australia, or to the representatives of that State in this Parliament. When the Federal Convention was constituted, the people of all the States, with the exception of Western Australia, were called upon to elect representatives in that great historical gathering.

Mr Kingston

- The Hobart Bill provided for the people of Western Australia having the same chance, but the present

leader of the honorable member for Perth altered it.

Mr.FOWLER. - The position was created by a Parliament which was utterly unrepresentative of the people of Western Australia - a Parliament composed largely of men who represented particular interests, and were chosen by constituencies of a hundred electors, or even fewer, if resident electors are taken into consideration. But the men who practically created Western Australia, and developed it, were debarred a fair share of representation.

Mr Isaacs

- How does that effect this question ?

Mr FOWLER

- The Western Australian Parliament decided that the people of that State should not be allowed to choose their own representatives in the Federal Convention, and if I were to relate to the committee the anecdotes which are told in connexion with the selection of the Western Australian members of the Convention, honorable gentlemen would be amused, if not edified. Those who came to the Federal Convention were not chosen by the people of the State, and the people of the State cannot be held responsible for what they agreed to.

Mr Kingston

- The people of- Western Australia are collecting £1,000 every working day from the people of the sister States.

Mr FOWLER

- Those who misrepresented Western Australia in the convention put forward a certain proposal, with the intention to conserve their own interests rather than those of the State. The sliding scale duties are chiefly duties upon the food of the people, and it was in the interest of the particular class which the Western Australian members of the convention represented that the duties should be continued as long as possible. If the sliding scale was objectionable, why did not members of the convention, whom I see in this Chamber, object to it ?

Sir George Turner

- It was the only way of getting Western Australia into the federation.

Mr FOWLER

- No, it was not. If the people of Western Australia had had the opportunity, they would have before very long declared for federation without a sliding scale.

Sir George Turner

- I did not hear any protests from them at the time of the Convention.

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Mr FOWLER

- The Minister for Trade and Customs has taunted us with being unfederal in our attitude. The only unfederal representative of Western Australia in the Chamber sits on the Treasury benches, and all its other representatives fought and battled as hard for federation as did the right honorable gentleman himself. It is unfair for the Minister for Trade and Customs to taunt the representatives of Western Australia sitting on this side with being unfederal, when he knows perfectly well that we are representing the federal interests of the people of Western Australia as against the contrary attitude adopted by his honorable colleague. I hope that we have heard the last of these charges which have been repeatedly hurled at the representatives of Western Australia with regard to the sliding scale.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I rise to make a few observations, since my name has been mentioned, and since the only corrugated iron industry in the Commonwealth is centred in my electorate. In my absence from the Chamber this afternoon, the Minister for Home Affairs said, amongst other things, that I ought to be in my place to say something in regard to this industry which is centred in my electorate.

Mr Kingston

- Is it the only place in the Commonwealth where iron is corrugated and galvanized ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is the only place where the iron is rolled as well as corrugated and galvanized. The industry is as much entitled to protection as are many other of the industries which have had it granted to them. Honorable members on the other side are justifying their vote, some of them against the duty and some of them in

favour of a very low duty, on the ground that it is a revenue duty only. That is true. What the Minister for Trade and Customs has told us to-night is that this duty represents 4 per cent, on the price of the article. I think that the Minister for Home Affairs will admit that 4 per cent, will do nothing to keep out galvanized iron, and therefore will do nothing to help the making or the corrugating of more iron at the works to which he alluded.

Sir William Lyne

- Do they not get a special concession from the Rail ways Commissioners 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What has that to do with this debate? The honorable gentleman tried to make the committee believe that this duty would give a protection to the industry ; but his colleague disposed of that idea completely when he said that it would not protect the industry, and was simply a revenue duty. Honorable members on the other side, as on this, will admit that it is simply a revenue duty, and according to their own statement, often repeated, it will increase the price of the article to the consumer and will not cause a single sheet more to be made. At the mills in my electorate between 120 and 150 hands are employed in the process of making galvanized iron. It is a legitimate industry, and is as much entitled to be taken under the aegis of the State as are many of those whose interests have been advocated from time to time. My course has been, I hope, a consistent one. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports has seen this industry, and he knows that what I am saying is precisely what I said there in his presence. The owner of this industry is a very worthy man. If any industry needs or merits the protective influence of the State undoubtedly it does. For myself, since I have been challenged, I shall vote in accordance with my principles.

Mr. MAHON(Coolgardie). - I regret that the Minister for Trade and Customs should have indulged in another splenetic attack on the defenceless representatives of Western Australia. Apparently it was characterized by a good deal of heat, and by his usual desire to make out a good case for himself, and a bad one for his opponents. Now, he might have told the committee the whole facts concerning this duty - that until the Federal Tariff was submitted, Western Australia admitted galvanized iron free, and charged corrugated iron a duty of 20s. per ton. He says he is sick of hearing of the pioneers and prospectors and miners out back, on whom the Tariff presses unduly, and to whom it gives no compensating advantage. If he is already sick of hearing of them, he will be much more sick by the time the discussion of the Tariff is finished, for I shall take care that the position of the pioneers is fairly placed before this House. In my judgment it is little short of an outrage that a Tariff should be forced through which presses on these people at every point, when it gives them nothing in return. The Minister for Trade and Customs has made merry about the sliding-scale duties, but he is much more responsible for their existence than is any one of the four representatives of Western Australia whom he censures.

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The CHAIRMAN

- Order. I am sure that the committee will recognise that I have allowed a considerable amount of latitude: As the Minister for Trade and Customs made some remarks with regard to the sliding scale of duties of Western Australia I have allowed a number of honorable- members to reply ; but the discussion has gone altogether too far; and I must ask honorable members to come back to the item before the committee.

Mr.Mahon.- I claim the same latitude that you have allowed to other' honorable members.

The CHAIRMAN

- Order. I have no desire to deprive the honorable' member of any privilege; but this discussion shows that I must act more strictly than I have been in the habit of doing. I have endeavoured to act fairly by the committee, and after a statement has been made by the Minister to give an opportunity of refuting or replying to it; but I should be wrong if I were to allow a general debate to take place on the question whether Western Australia was wise or unwise in entering the federation.

Mr MAHON

- I do not wish, Sir, to dispute your ruling, as it is the first duty of an honorable member to respect the authority of the Chair. I was rather astonished to notice that everyone else has been allowed to refer to the sliding scale of duties. A few sentences will suffice for what I wish to say. The Minister for Trade and Customs has no right to introduce the sliding scale of duties. That was a compact entered into for the benefit of the farmers and agriculturists in Western Australia who had just cleared their land, and the State Government is bound to carry it out. The advantage of the sliding scale was the inducement held

out to these classes to enter Federation. But it is not the sliding scale-duties that the people of Western Australia are complaining of, and the Minister is only using them to cloak up the monstrous burden which he is imposing. I have again to complain of the way in which the Treasurer presented the figures for Western Australia, when he said that the taxation is being reduced by so much per head.

Sir George Turner

- So it is, so far as the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament are concerned ? - what have we to do with the sliding-scale?

Mr MAHON

- I venture, with., great respect, to express the opposite opinion, and if. the Treasurer will listen for a moment I hope to convince even him. In 1899-the duties on British and. foreign imports produced £507,908 in Western Australia, and the. Treasurer estimates to get, from, exactly the same sources, £708,000. Yet we are told that the sliding-scale duties are doing all this oppressive work, and: that we should do away with them. The estimate is totally inadequate, and the October returns have supported the position which I took up. Although, the Tariff came into force on the.8th October, and most of. the merchants had cleared all their stuff before that time, yet in that month the federal duties and the sliding-Scale duties yielded £102,000, or at the rate of £1,2.00,000 a year ; which is £500,000 more than the Treasurer estimated he would get. Yet in that month £102,000 was received in spite of the fact that for a period of 23 days very little could be taken out of bond.

Sir George Turner

- Is. that not all the more reason why the honorable member should knock off the sliding scale ?

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Mr MAHON

- I have pointed out that the sliding scale is a compact between the other States and the agriculturists and producers of Western Australia, and we have no right to disturb it. It was upon that understanding that the farmers and those engaged in rural industries voted for federation, and it would be an act of treachery to deprive them, of the guarantee under which they came into the Union.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be so added - put. The committee divided.

Ayes 29

Noes 22

Majority 7

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr WATSON

- In connexion with the next article I move -

That the words "and on and after 10th December, 1901, free be added to the duty "Iron, plate and sheet", viz. : - corrugated galvanized per ton 30s."

I do not intend to delay the committee by discussing this matter, because I believe that what applies to plain galvanized iron applies with equal force to corrugated iron. I am thoroughly convinced that the amount of labour involved in the production of galvanized iron is. very inconsiderable. Then again this article enters so extensively into the domestic economy of a very large proportion of our population that it would be unwise to impose any tax upon it. I trust, therefore, that the committee will affirm that it be placed upon the free list.

Mr KINGSTON

- I wish to point out to honorable members that this article does not stand upon the same footing as the preceding one. As regards plain galvanized iron, it was pointed out that in a great majority of the States it had previously been admitted free of duty. In only one State, namely, Queensland, was it formerly taxed. The position with regard to corrugated iron is very different. In four out of the six States it has been subjected to duty. In Queensland it was taxed 40s. per ton, in South Australia 30s. per ton, in Tasmania 40s. per ton, and in Western Australia 20s. per ton. Under these circumstances there is very good ground for holding that we ought not to follow the decision which has just been arrived at. The Government are content to accept a lesser rate than that which is proposed, but they ask. the committee to pause before agreeing to place corrugated iron upon the free list. I should not object to making the duty 15s. per ton.

Mr MAUGER

- I hope that protectionists will think seriously before they vote for the amendment which has been submitted. I visited the galvanized iron works which have been established in the electorate of the honorable member for Parramatta, and if there is an industry which ought to claim the vote of every protectionist member of the committee it is this industry. It is a good industry, it pays good wages, and is struggling under great disabilities. I therefore appeal to honorable members to give it some little encouragement.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The fact that this industry is flourishing in New South Wales is conclusive proof that it requires no protection. I do not think that in connexion with the imposition of a duty upon an article of this kind we can set the interests of 200 or 300 men, at the outside, against the interests of the whole of the Commonwealth. The arguments that apply with reference to plain galvanized iron are equally applicable to corrugated iron. There is practically no difference between the two cases.

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Mr CAMERON

- I voted for the retention of the duty upon plain galvanized iron because I regarded it as a purely revenue duty. Upon this occasion, however, the Government have asked the committee to agree to the imposition of a duty simply for the purpose of protecting an industry. If the duty were for revenue purposes only, I should be prepared to support it, but as the Government ask us to support their proposal for protective purposes, I shall vote against it, and in favour of the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. At the same time I must object to being twitted by the Western Australian members. I always give my vote conscientiously and, as I believe in the best interests of the Commonwealth as a whole. The vote just taken will affect the other States just as much as it will affect Tasmania. For that reason it is most unfair that any honorable member should twit a Tasmanian representative, because Tasmania, being small, has a small revenue. I remind honorable members of the old saying - "It's the last straw that breaks the camel's back." I wish my reason for voting with the Government on the last division to be understood. I am going to vote against them on the present occasion, because the proposed duty is for protective purposes.

Mr KINGSTON

- Of course this duty would be protective to a certain extent, but at the same time it would be revenue producing. A sum of £13,000 is not to be "sneezed at" in these times. It would be a welcome addition to the revenue. Something has been said about the successful condition of the industry at the present time. The information I have been able to secure from head-quarters - from persons who know all about it - has left the impression upon my mind that it is highly necessary that there should be a duty of this description in order satisfactorily to maintain the industry. Such success as it has obtained is owing to the concessions made to it in connexion with the railway management. These concessions have I suppose been fairly enough granted, but at the same time their continuance cannot be relied upon. Commonwealth manufacturers ought not to be compelled to rely upon the favour of any particular State. I venture to think that it would be a highly undesirable thing that such aid should be given, and possibly would be contravening a fundamental provision of the Constitution. The industry is by no means too much of a success, and the withdrawal of the aid which, with due regard to the Constitution, must be withdrawn, will be disastrous to it. I certainly fear the consequences. Let us, under all the circumstances, follow the example of four of the States by putting a duty on the corrugated article, which duty will give us revenue and the protection which is required.

Mr ISAACS

- I do not see where the protection comes in with regard to this item. The plain galvanized iron is to come in free. There is nothing in the corrugation of the iron. It is work that involves the smallest amount of labour. It is principally done by machinery, and the human labour employed is infinitesimal. Is it worth while for the Government to persevere with their proposal, which only means a revenue of £6,500 to the whole of the Commonwealth? Considering that we have just struck off £27,000, it seems to me that this £6,500 is not worth fighting about.

Mr Kingston

- To-day I made the fullest inquiries I could as to the cost of corrugating, and found that it amounted to

10s. a ton.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I wish to know whether, if the amendment be agreed to, it will be possible to move that the duty be 15s.?

The CHAIRMAN

- If the amendment is carried it will not be possible to move that the duty be 15s., but if the amendment be rejected it will be possible to move such an amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 71-

Lamps and lampware u.e.i., and lanterns and lamp stoves, and all parts thereof (except chimneys, shades, and globes, gasaliers, and electroliers) ad valorem, 20 per cent.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- As far as I can understand very few lamps are manufactured in Australia. Those that are made here are principally what are called carriage lamps. In Victoria where the industry has had a duty of from 25 to 30 per cent., the employees in 1900 only numbered twelve. In New South Wales the employees numbered 123 in the same year without any protection ; whereas in 1893, when the Dibbs Tariff was in operation, the number was thirteen. In other words, whatever industry there was in New South Wales has nourished under free-trade. Therefore, it appears to me that we have to deal with this item entirely as a revenue duty. I apply the same principle to this item as I have applied to others. When we consider that 10 per cent, as a rule really works out as 12½ per cent, to the ultimate consumer, it will be realized that that is a fair revenue duty. As far as I understand, the question of free-trade or protection does not enter into this matter. If there had been any chance of the industry being established under protection it would have been established long ago. I need hardly remind honorable members that this is also one of those articles that affect the people in the interior. Although I might take up the position of wishing to lower the duty from that point of view, I really take up the position of lowering it for revenue purposes only. In other words, I say that if we make the duty 10 per cent, instead of "20 per cent, more lamps will be used, the articles will be cheaper ' to the people in the interior and there will be more satisfactory results from the financial point of view. When we consider what a tremendous duty 20 per cent, is, with all the charges and the natural protection and the price to which the article is likely to be raised, I say undoubtedly that that duty is absurd from the financial and revenue aspect. Some people think that larger duties should be levied upon luxuries. I do not believe that anybody will say that lamps are luxuries. Of course, one can buy very expensive lamps as well as cheap ones, but the ad valorem principle makes those who want expensive lamps pay in proportion. I do not intend to take up the time of the committee by labouring this question. Once we have come to the conclusion that this item relates to no industry worthy of consideration it is only a question of common sense for all of us. Lamps are used universally, especially in places where gas or electricity are not available - that is in houses in small towns and in the farmhouses of Australia - and I think honorable members will agree with me that 10 per cent, will be a fair and legitimate duty. It will be good for the Treasurer, and not a pressing duty on the general consumer. I move -

That the words, " and on and after 10th December, .1901, ad valorem, 10 per cent.," be added.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- To a small extent this is intended to be a protective duty. To a much larger extent, and more particularly in relation to valuable kerosene lamps and carriage lamps, it is intended to be a revenue duty. I cannot agree with the acting leader of the Opposition - and I am surprised that he should repeat the statement time after time - that with a 10 per cent, duty we are going to obtain as much revenue as we should derive from a 20 per cent. duty. My honorable friend cannot be serious. Certainly he will , never convince me that if we have a 10 per cent, duty instead of a 20 per cent, duty on lamps, double the quantity will be imported. He may repeat the assertion as often as he pleases, and he may persuade himself ultimately that it is true, but he will find it difficult to persuade any one else. However, many of these articles are used to a considerable extent, and as I regard the item more from a revenue than a protective stand-point, I admit that the duty of 20 per cent, is a little too high. We are not going to be told time after time that articles like this are used largely in the country without taking some notice of the statement. In connexion with almost every item that statement is made. If we could only follow the principle of taxing

heavily something which nobody uses we should be all right. But we have to deal with this matter more from a revenue than from a protective point of view, and having regard to the fact that a large quantity of the cheaper classes of lamps are used by those in less affluent circumstances, I think that we might fix the duty at 15 per cent, instead of 20 per cent. Our intention was to make the duty 15 per cent, when an article was widely used,' and, when I agreed to the duty of 20 per cent, being fixed for this item, I was under the impression that lamps were manufactured in the Commonwealth to a far larger extent than I find to be the case after further inquiry. The parts are imported, and in many cases simply put together. I have no desire to give a large measure of protection to any such industry. Nevertheless some very valuable lamps are imported, and we expect to obtain a fair amount of revenue from the duty. We estimated to receive £11,100 from this source for the year, but as the result of the reduction I am willing to make I am certain we shall not get as much. As the cheaper classes of lamps are used largely, I shall not object to a reduction of the duty to 15 per cent., but I shall certainly oppose a reduction to 10 per cent. Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I am anxious to facilitate matters as much as possible. There is no principle involved in this item. I recognise the fact that the financial authority of the Treasurer is very great, and, if it is the will of the committee, I will withdraw my amendment.

Mr CONROY

- I, for one, intend to vote for a reduction of this duty to 10 per cent., for the reason that it relates to an article which is used mainly by the working classes. The richer people use gasoline and acetylene.

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Sir George Turner

- I use nothing but kerosene lamps in my house. I do not know whether the honorable and learned member regards me as one of the richer class.

Mr CONROY

- I refer to the great bulk of the people. The Treasurer says it is only -when., an article is- used by a large number of: the people- that he desires to impose .a duty. I am glad to hear the admission from him that it is the poorer classes' whom he- desires to tax.

Sir GEORGE Turner

- I have as much sympathy for. the poor as the,' honorable and learned member, has. The poor do. not thank him for his sympathy - they are independent of it.

Mr CONROY

- The Treasurer's idea. of. sympathy for the poor is to. say when he meets a. man with 20s. in his pocket - " I will take 3s. out of. it." That is the amount of taxation which he- proposes to impose in respect to- this item. I hope- the honorable member for Wentworth will not. withdraw his- amendment.

Sir WILLIAMMCMILLAN (Wentworth). - I think we must deal fairly with each other in these matters. We have just had a great victory, from, our point of view, for the people residing in the interior,, and, no doubt, the revenue has had a very big fall in that respect. We have to put one thing against another, and there- is no particular principle in this matter. The item relates to an article that every one uses. After all, it is not a very expensive- article; and any one who desires to buy a cheap lamp can secure it. Of course, in my position as representing this side of the- committee, I have to try and adjust matters, as far as possible.

Mr Conroy

- Not fix the Tariff.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- The honorable and learned, member may vote as he likes, but the Opposition is going. to follow me

Mr Conroy

- Not at all.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- The honorable and learned member may vote alone, if he desires to do so, so far as I am concerned. Certainly I am. not going to allow my position to be jumped by any one. I tell the honorable and learned member that at once, and I hope he will take it to heart. I wish to withdraw my amendment, because I think there is no particular principle involved in this matter of a difference of 5 per cent., and I am sure- that I echo the feelings of honorable members on this side of the committee.

Mr McCAY

- I must confess that I am becoming rather tired of being, told, every time that a duty is proposed, which is not of a protective character to. any marked extent, that the- article affected is one which the poorer people and the people- in the- country always use ; that theGovernment and those who happen to think with them are once more imposing duties upon the poor, and seeking to make them poorer- still
Mr Watson

- But the acting leader of: the- Opposition has,- withdrawn the amendment.
Mr McCAY

-- I am not saying that every honorable member of the Opposition makes the assertion ; but these allegations are made. It is not fair to honorable members, who are trying to do their duty to the country, and who are looking to the future, to have these charges continually brought against them. How are we going to- obtain revenue from the Customs if we are not going to impose taxation on articles of general use ? If. honorable members -who take up the attitude to. which I refer would boldly say, "We are against all Customs taxation except that which is absolutely necessary for the Commonwealth's requirements, and we prefer some other form of taxation," the issue would be a fair one I feel that we are not treated, fairly by a few honorable members who are constantly making this charge against, us. To ray mind it is much better to have a duty of 20 per cent, on lamps, and to have kerosene admitted free of duty, than for the people to be called upon to pay 10 per cent, on their lamps, and 3d. per gallon on kerosene-. It would not require many gallons of kerosene to be burnt in a lamp in order to absorb the difference between the duty on the lamp at the higher and the lower rate if the duty proposed on kerosene were carried. The- community at large would be better served if they were called upon to pay a duty on things which they purchase occasionally, and given a reduction of duty on such an article as kerosene, which is constantly in use. The contrast is well exemplified in the lamp in which we burn the kerosene, and the kerosene which we burn in the lamp.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I desire to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs if gas fittings and electric light fittings are included in the last item " n.e.i. " ? If they are not, I intend to move that they be added.

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Sir George Turner

- They are not on the free list ; they come under " n.e.i., 2.5, per cent.," at the end.

Mr. CONROY(Werriwa).- In. spite of what the honorable member for Wentworth has said, this- is no compromise as. far as the people of New South. Wales are concerned. Lamps have hitherto been admitted into that State free of duty, and the highest impost that the Minister for Home Affairs led the people to expect was 15 per cent.

Sir William Lyne

- That is not correct.

Mr CONROY

- The statement of' the Minister at Cootamundra, was that the Tariff, would provide- for 10 per cent: or 15 per cent, duties at the most.

Sir William Lyne

- I called the honorable member's attention to the fact that what he stated, was- not correct;, and I ask. that he should he required to- accept my. disclaimer.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member from Werriwa must accept the- Minister's denial.

Mr CONROY

- May T read the report, of the honorable member's speech in which he made the statement t

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member cannot enter into a general discussion.

Mr CONROY

- I object to the 20 per cent, duty, as I think 10' per cent, is the very highest duty that it would be fair to impose, even as a compromise. I therefore intend to move that the duty be: reduced.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Wentworth, still has an- amendment, before the committee to the effect that' the duty be reduced to 10 per cent. That cannot be withdrawn, if. any honorable member objects.

Amendment, by leave; withdrawn.

Amendment (by Mr. Conroy) negatived -

That the words "and on and after 10th. December, 1901, 10 per cent.," be added.

Amendment (by Sir George Turner) agreed to -

That the- words "and on and after 10th December, 1901, 15' per' cent.," be added.

Item, as amended; agreed to.

Item 72: - Lead, sheet, and piping, per cwt., 2s. 6d.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I see that the. Ministry do not expect to derive any revenue from this duty, and I presume therefore that it has become inoperative. I think that it is scarcely worth while imposing duties of. this kind ; and the Government might very well consent to its removal from the Tariff.

Mr KINGSTON

- Lead pipes and sheet lead are manufactured, now in the

Commonwealth. These articles have been, subject- to a. duty in. every State except New South .Wales- and Western Australia. ? Th& amp; former- duties were, in, Victoria 2s. 6d. per cwt., in Queensland 2s.. per cwt., and in South Australia and Tasmania 2s. 6d.. per cwt;. In Canada the- duty is- 25 per cent, and in New Zealand: 1s. 6d per- cwt: I think it is just as well to retain the duty, and: I do not see any reason for striking it out.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I do not see why we should maintain a. duty of this kind for 'the purpose of enabling certain manufacturers to raise the price of the manufactured article to the consumers, within the Commonwealth. I have been told that a contractor in Victoria who wished to procure lead for building purposes, found that he could buy- the material at a cheaper rate in. Tasmania than in Victoria. Thus lead was supplied at lower, rates to those- outside the protected area, than to those within, it. In New South. Wales we have been able to carry on. lead* works, and- provide employment for- 101' people, whereas only 38 people are employed, in the same industry in Victoria. I move -

That the words, "and on and after 10th. December, 1901, free," be added.

Mr KINGSTON

- Life is too short to, bother about a duty of this kind, and I will let it go.

Amendment agreed to.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 73 - Mangles, clothes wringers, and washing machines, ad valorem 20 per cent.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I see that this is an item from which no duty is expected, and I think that in such cases we should avoid imposing prohibitive duties, which are calculated: to create monopolies in favour of the local producer. Therefore I move -

That the words "and on and after 10th December, 1901; 10 per cent." be added.

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Sir GEORGE TURNER

- We do not want to keep up appearances ; we want to. give a reasonable amount of protection to those who are engaged in making these articles, and a duty of 10 per cent, would give no protection at all. I am afraid that the honorable member for Wentworth is becoming accustomed to asking for duties of 10 per cent, in the hope- of getting duties of 15 per cent., and, while I do not mind meeting him occasionally, I think that on this occasion he might try to meet me. Mangles may be used by the poor; but they are also to be found in the houses of the rich, and if we reduce the duty . on them to 10 per cent., the chances are that the money which is now expended upon those employed in making them will go to persons in other parts of the world.

Mr. MAUGER (Melbourne Ports). - I hope that the Government proposal will be carried, because a large number of men are employed in this industry, and to reduce the duty would be to throw them out of employment.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be so added - put. The committee divided -

Ayes 14

Noes :... .. 25

Majority 11

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Item agreed to.

Progress reported.

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23:11:00

House adjourned at 11.11 p.m.